PREFACE

Indian liberation movement has become a matter of great concern both for the Indian historians and the western scholars also. They frankly admitted that the liberation movement was a struggle between the British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism. Soon after the formation of the Congress in 1885, the Indian leaders started challenging the exploitative and oppressive nature of the British rule. The Indian politics was hegemonised by the Congress leaders who belonged to the dominant sections of the Indian society. But after two decades, there emerged a new parallel leadership which became the champion of the people's movement. This leadership has been branded as the revolutionary-terrorists who began a relentless gradual struggle against the British raj and its oppressive and exploitative nature. It is unfortunate that the nationalist historiography has knowingly ignored the role of the revolutionaries in the freedom struggle. It is, undoubtedy, true that their ideology and programme did not get due consideration in their published works so far.

The Indian revolutionaries had their own programmes and politics which was different from the Congress movement. The efforts made by them in championing the cause of India's freedom struggle occupies a significant place in the annals of modern Indian history. Their counterparts of the first phase made all feasible effort to achieve support from the anti-imperialist and anti-exploitative forces of the world. Before the emergence of all the streams, tribal and regional forces also opposed the British and landlords’ taxation policies which were exploitative and oppressive in nature. All such regional agitations and movements were suppressed by the brutal policies of the raj. After that it was the revolutionaries struggle that genuinely worked for the growth of the national consciousness among the Indian masses which had to be prey of economic
ruination and cultural degradation at the hands of the imperial masters who often acted against the people's wills and wishes. Now it is quite relevant here to know the views of different streams about their role and contribution to India's freedom struggle. So an humble effort has been made in this piece of research to discuss several important trends of historiography of the revolutionary movement which were quite active during the period, 1924-31 in India's freedom struggle.

When British rule adopted the oppressive and anti-peoples policies and programmes, several groups emerged in Indian politics which played their own politics but side by side opposed the functioning the British raj. However, the elite politics was being officially dominated by the Indian National Congress but a group of Indian revolutionaries was also active in Indian politics that did not hesitate to give their blood to the cause of their motherland. The Indian youth gave leadership to this stream that became very popular within a very short period. The long standing politics of the Indian National Congress also bore some fruits gradually but it continued its struggle in India for a long period in order to get independence. The most potent factors such as the growth of English education, impact of western ideas, press, means of communications and transportation were instrumental in the growth of nationalist movement. The new education system made the people of one region possible to interact with the people of other regions which, consequently, broke the regional barriers. All such factors paved way for the rise and growth of many local and regional organisations throughout the country. The revolutionaries also formed Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Hindustan Republic Association, Hindustan Socialist Republic Association, Kirti Kisan Party etc. which intended all sorts of liberation be it political, material, economic etc. The leaders of the revolutionary movement were Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Chadnra Shekhar Azad, B.N. Sanyal, J.N. Sanyal, Manmath Nath Gupta, Batukeshwar Dutt, Jaigopal, Shiv Verma, Yashpal, Bhagwati Charan Vohra etc. They not only
believed in the fight for India's freedom but also intended to establish the dominance of peasants and workers in all walks of life so that the real socialism could be established in the country. It was, however, their most cherished goal as far as the interests of the subaltern sections of the Indian society were concerned.

A new turn came in Indian politics when the British Government published the Rowlatt Committee report (1918), Montagu Chelmsford reform proposals, promulgates martial laws in Punjab followed by Jallianwala bagh tragedy. The whole country witnessed Rowlatt Bill agitation. A new leadership was emerging in the Congress that had to handle the political situation arising out of the Rowlatt bills agitation throughout India. The new leadership intended to associate the Indian masses with the Congress. Before it, the Congress was the organization of the educated Indian class comprising of different professional groups. Both the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements created a favorable atmosphere for the Indian people to work in union for the nation’s cause. Several Constructive programmes were launched by the nationalist stream.

The British Government appointed a Commission under Sir John Simon to study and report about the constitutional aspects of India. But unfortunately no Indian was made member of this Commission. All the streams did no like the constitution of this Commission which was termed as 'White's Commission’. The Indian National Congress decided to oppose the Commission wherever it would visit. It was also decided to boycott and demonstrate against it every where. In one such demonstration at Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai protested and shouted 'Simon Go Back' and 'Down with Imperialism'. Lala Lajpat Rai who was leading a procession received a serious injury from the police lathis and consequently, died. His death created anti-British wave of Indignation throughout the country. Saunders who was a police officer was held responsible for charging lathis on Lalaji and the
former was shot dead by Bhagat Singh and his comrades. They revenged the death of Lalaji and this heroic activity made them popular among the Indian people. They had twin goals, one to liberate their country from the British imperialism and the other to establish the socialist state in the country. This stream emerged as the most popular stream and the attitude of different trends of historiography such as Imperial, Nationalist, Marxist, Regional and Communal becomes quite significant to probe in this piece of research.

The years 1917-19 were quite significant years when the Russian Revolution broke out, foundation of revolutionary organizations in the western world, the trade union movement also emerged which gave a new turn to the global politics. Socialism began to be popular among the Indian youth. Such situation, however, indirectly, if not directly influenced the Indian people. The Non-Cooperation movement was backdrop of such situation but its sudden withdrawal when it was on the climax was questioned by many Congress leaders. Violence was the only excuse with Gandhiji and many youth again attracted towards the revolutionary terrorism as the only alternative to the Indian political situation. Many global changes were taking place throughout the world. Emergence of working class movements in India, and spreading of socialism and Marxism did influence the youth in India. To organize the workers and peasants; to create spirit of patriotism among the youth; to work for economic, industrial and social movements free from communal sentiment were such crucial issues raised by the Indian youth at their platforms. Now it is important to throw some light on all such aspects in the chapterisation scheme of the research work.

**First Chapter : The Imperial Trend** basically deals with the approach of the British bureaucracy which was against the Indian revolutionaries as they were
involved in the rise and growth of the revolutionary terrorism. The govt. constituted a committee to enquire about its activities and how to end this movement. After consulting different records and discussions with many officials of the government, Criminal Intelligence Bureau prepared a **Blue Book** in which Indian revolutionaries were found in dialogue with the Soviet leaders. This book discussed how they adopted the marxian perception which was deemed beneficial for the Indian people. The Russian Revolution made them familiar with the Russian methods quite appropriate for the liberation of the world from anti imperialist and exploitative forces. Lenin in his **Manifesto** announced from the platform of the Communist International that the time had come now 'to eradicate the exploitation and oppression wherever existed'. Thus the British officials held Russian Revolution responsible for the outbreak of revolutionary – terrorism in India. The attitude of the British officials, their attitude towards the movement and other aspects have also been discussed in this chapter.

**The Second Chapter : The Nationalist Trend** highlights the formation of the Indian and its role in freedom struggle. National Congress AC Mazumdar, Girija Kumar Mukherjee, Pattabhi B. Sitaramayya, P.C. Ghose, S.R. Mehrotra, R.C. Majumdar, B.R. Nanda, Tara Chand etc have made an effort to discuss the rise and growth of the Congress and its contribution to the nationalist movement in India. The scholars of this stream have not only failed to describe the role of the revolutionary movement but have ignored their revolutionary activities in their works. The Congress stream did not like the revolutionary movement which had different technique and strategy from the Congress movement as far as the Indian politics was concerned. Why did the scholars of this school simply ignored their contribution to the national struggle and other issues have also been covered in this chapter.
The Third Chapter : The Marxist Trend came late on the scene but it supported their movement. The scholars of this trend believe that many revolutionaries were greatly influenced with the Soviet Revolution which was anti-imperialist and had strong urge for the formation of the socialist state hegemonising the peasants and workers policies in the decision making process of the state. D.D. Kosambi professionally a mathematician started this trend but further developed by R.P. Dutt, A.R. Desai, M.N. Roy, Hiren Mukherjee, Bipan Chandra, Sumit Sarkar, Devendra Kaushik, L.V. Mitrokhin, Bhagwan Joshi, Shashi Joshi etc. The scholars of this trend did appreciate their activities as they had a new vision suited to the Indian polity after independence. No other politicians of the period accepted them had no vision of planning and national programme for the future of India as they had in their minds. Many revolutionaries also wrote in the same way and appreciated their own ways of struggle and polity of post-independent India. Their struggle, approach, application of socialism in all walks of life and other related issues have been described in this chapter.

The Fourth Chapter : The Regional and Communal Historiography emerged after 1980s when some communal and regional organisations came into being. These organizations used regional and communal identities in order to hegemonies their communal and regional politics. Naresh Suri, Ragni Mitra, Nahar Singh, Kripal Singh Narang, GulCharan Singh, G.S. Deol, Nathan Singh alongwith many Arya Samajists, Akalis and casteists have laid great stress on the regional and communal aspects. The growth of an individual’s thinking basically becomes possible due to the religion, caste, society, family etc in which he is born. Such aspects play a significant role in the formative of his life. The revolutionaries were greatly influenced with such traits. Arya Samajist linked Bhagat Singh with Arya Samaj while the Akalis with Sikhism but in reality he had no any linkage with such parochial views. Bhagat Singh in his pamphlet has answered such
allegations levelled against him. Some Akali Granthis believe that he was an ardent Akali first and respected Guru Granth Sahib even in his last days. Now-a-days many caste organization are branding these national heroes as their caste heroes first and national heroes afterwards.

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