

***“Shahidon ki chitaon par lagenge har bars mele,
Wattan pe mitne walon ka baqi yahee nishan hoga.”***

Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich*

This popular song about the Martyrs of the freedom struggle fails to take account of Martyrs like Vishnu Ganesh Pingale from village Talegon Dhamdera near Poona who died totally unknown, cremated secretly in Lahore Central Jail on 16th November, 1915 along with six of his fellow revolutionaries of the little known Ghadr Party. This party was founded in U.S.A. in March 1913 by the Indians, mostly Punjabi Sikhs who had gone there just to earn dollars. But once they realized that they were from a slave nation and that is why they were looked down upon by Americans, they forgot all about the charm of dollars and pledged even their precious lives for the freedom of their Motherland. Pingale, who like his age-mate Kartar Singh from a village named Sarabha (Ludhiana) in Punjab had gone to USA to become an engineer, forgot all about his dream of becoming an engineer and imbibed the big dream of driving out the British rulers out from India. It is only the GREAT who accept the challenges like this. It was believed that the British rule over such a vast Empire on which the sun never sets. In other words it is such an invincible power whose sway extends to every nook and corner of the earth to the extent that the sun is always shining over one part or the other. So no one could defeat it!

Great and sublime were the dreams of these patriots who chose to raise the banner of complete independence when the Congress leaders were not even able to raise a demand even for a limited and weak form of self-rule. It was only in December 1929 that in the Lahore session of the Congress that for the first time Independence was declared to be the ultimate goal of Congress. In fact, when Pingales and Sarabhas raised the banner of revolt in 1914-15, the apostle of non-violence Mahatma Gandhi was working as the recruiting Sergeant for the British persuading Indian youth to join the British Indian Army. And what these youngmen had to fight for? Plainly to help the British to suppress the Indian people and the other slave nations! Can there be a greater injustice to History that these Heroes like Pingale remain unknown even to the fellow Maharashtrians whereas who remained almost unharmed in the tussle for the liberation of Indian enjoy International publicity as the prophets of freedom and have thus totally eclipsed the real heroes of the freedom struggle. I must also mention that in the list of movement recognised for the purpose of granting pension as freedom fighters there is no mention of Ghadr movement!

I had to approach High Court for this purpose and the case is still to be decided.

Can one imagine that ones like Sarabha and Pingale who were charged under Section 121 IPC for waging war against the “King Emperor” which carried a minimum sentence of life imprisonment and forfeiture of property and maximum to death by hanging, were not “freedom fighters”!

Above all these two youngmen refused to offer any defence in the trial. They flatly refused the services of any lawyer to defend them in the case where they were sure to be sentenced to death.

* V.P.O. Saketari (Near Gaushala), Distt. Panchkula - 134109, Ph: 0172-2556314
Email: mjswaraich29@gmail.com

On the outbreak of first world war in July 1914, the Ghadrites decided to sail back to India for the attainment of freedom and more than 6000 of them responded to this call to DO AND DIE. None bothered about their dreams of dollars or careers. These two youngmen, Pingale and Sarabha being young and educated moved like a whirlwind to prepare the people and the Indian soldiers in various cantonments of India for the proposed uprising which was ultimately planned for 19th February 1915. But to their bad luck and for the bad luck of India, a traitor had leaked all their plans to the authorities beforehand and the government was able to scuttle their plans.

As expected many of them were arrested and tried by a “Special Tribunal” which had all the powers to deny the accused the right to “Vakil”, “Daleel” and “Appeal”. So scores of them were hanged in Lahore Central jail secretly and cremated there. Their mortal remains lie buried there in some unidentified corner. The authorities made sure that none should be able to hold any “mela” over their “chitaa”! Even after 1947, the national governments too have followed the footsteps of their foreign predecessors to maintain the stony silence to maintain the myth that India attained freedom “without shedding a drop of blood”. Had the memories of these patriots been noted and celebrated, this propaganda of a “bloodless revolution” would have falsified.

Accordingly to the founder President of Ghadr Party, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, who was present in Lahore Central Jail in the same period, these Martyrs while mounting the scaffold on 16th November 1915, left a message for the nation:—

“Dear Motherland! We regret that we could not liberate you from the yoke of foreign rule, but we assure you that as long as this task is not achieved our souls shall not rest in peace and we shall yearn to be reborn to continue our mission. Bande Matram!”
