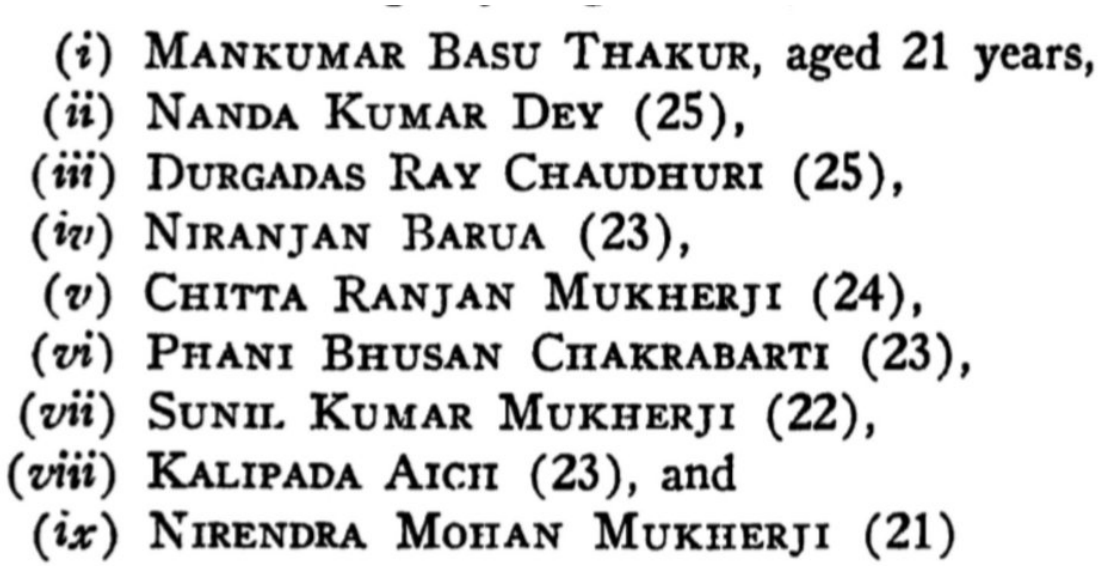
Twitter Thread by Amit Thadhani

Amit Thadhani
@amitsurg

Have you ever heard the names of these young freedom fighters, all aged between 21 and 25, who were tried and executed by the British? If not, don't be sad: you're one of 99.999% citizens of Bharat who don't.
Thread follows soon.



(i) MANKUMAR BASU THAKUR, aged 21 years,
(ii) NANDA KUMAR DEY (25),
(iii) DURGADAS RAY CHAUDHURI (25),
(iv) NIRANJAN BARUA (23),
(v) CHITTA RANJAN MUKHERJI (24),
(vi) PHANI BHUSAN CHAKRABARTI (23),
(vii) SUNIL KUMAR MUKHERJI (22),
(viii) KALIPADA AICH (23), and
(ix) NIRENDRA MOHAN MUKHERJI (21)

These brave soldiers were from the 4th Madras Coastal Defence Battery of the British Army and were among a dozen 'rebels' arrested on April 18, 1943, on charges of "acting against the Government and obstructing and/or adversely affecting the war efforts".

The British intelligence got news that these soldiers were planning "sabotage, incendiarism wherever possible, tampering with the loyalty of the forces by trying to cause desertions and encouraging tensions and rivalries amongst soldiers housed in army barracks."

A Court-Martial was held on July 6 and August 5, 1943, in the St. Andrews Church, Bangalore, where all the accused were convicted and the nine Bengali young soldiers were sentenced to death. Two were sentenced to transportation for life, one to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

They marched from their cells to the gallows in pairs, gave full -throated shouts of Bande Mataram, embraced each other with hearty smiles and gave up their lives on September 27, 1943, like heroes on the battlefields.

Their execution was held in Chennai as Mysore state refused to allow it in their state territory. This is the story of the 1943 army revolt, which has long disappeared from the pages of our history. Fortunately a few authors have recorded their sacrifices in their books.

Revolt in the Army

(1943)

It is a pity that so little is known of a band of rebels who had worked within the Army itself in their own way to advance the cause of Indian Independence. In fact, spirit of resistance or defections within the ranks made a foreign Government feel that it was no longer possible to rule over a vast country by the White paid servants alone without the help of loyal Indians, the native of the soil.

The secret military intelligence brought the report to the authorities that a section of the *4th Madras Coastal Defence Battery* had been contemplating sabotage, incendiarism wherever possible, tampering with the loyalty of the forces by trying to cause desertions and encouraging tensions and rivalries amongst soldiers housed in army barracks.

The military police arrested about a dozen 'rebels' on April 18, 1943, on charges of acting against the Government and obstructing and or adversely affecting the war efforts.

A Court-Martial was held on July 6 and August 5, 1943, in the St. Andrews Church, Bangalore, where all the accused were convicted and nine Bengali young soldiers, *viz.*,

(*i*) MANKUMAR BASU THAKUR, aged 21 years,
(*ii*) NANDA KUMAR DEY (25),
(*iii*) DURGADAS RAY CHAUDHURI (25),
(*iv*) NIRANJAN BARUA (23),
(*v*) CHITTA RANJAN MUKHERJI (24),
(*vi*) PHANI BHUSAN CHAKRABARTI (23),
(*vii*) SUNIL KUMAR MUKHERJI (22),
(*viii*) KALIPADA AICH (23), and
(*ix*) NIRENDRA MOHAN MUKHERJI (21)

were condemned to death.

Two were sentenced to transportation for life and one to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

The nine condemned prisoners were about to be executed in Mysore. But due to the fact that the trial had been held by a

British Court-Martial, the Mysore Government objected to the execution within the State territory.

As killing could be done at any other place with as much ease and with the same effect, the British Government removed the prisoners to the Madras Penitentiary where four (or six) other condemned prisoners had been hanged about a month before.

Remarkable courage was shown by the youngmen who were led in batch of two's from their respective cells. All of them gave full-throated shouts of *Bande Mataram*, embraced each other with hearty smiles and gave up their lives on September 27, 1943, on the gallows like the heroes on the battlefields.

The Madras rebellion was the first organised rebellion in the British Indian army. The court martial of those involved preceded INA trials by three years. But no famous congress lawyer came to their defence. Because for Cong, it was more important for Britain to win the war.

Martyrs of Indian National Army executed in India

Satyen Bardhan, Fauja Singh and Abdul Kader were sent as advanced party in submarine. Satyen Bardhan had landed in Kathiawar coast, and Fauja Singh in Chattagram. A group of Madras Coastal Battalion had come in contact with Satyen Bardhan in Madras jail. They were inspired by the message of Subhas Chandra Bose from Berlin. Man Kumar Basu Thakur and his associates Havildar Durgadas Roy Chowdhury, Jamadar Nanda Kumar Dey, Havildar Sunil Mukherjee, Naik Phani Bhushan Chakrabarty, Havildar Niranjan Barma, and Gunner Kalipada Aich were caught by the British Intelligence and were executed in September 27, 1943. This was the first instance of organized rebellion in British Indian Army. Mankumar Basu Thakur and his associates had covertly tried to influence and inspire rebellion in the ranks and file but were apprehended by the British intelligence, possibly by some treachery. Durgadas Roy Chowdhury wrote an open letter in jail as to why they were embracing martyrdom than serving British Army and Navy. They cheerfully embraced death while shouting the slogans of Vande Mataram and Jai Hind.