



SPEAKS

Valiant Freedom Fighters of India Part II

**Compiled by
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**Prime Point Foundation
Chennai**

First published	August 2022
Second Part	August 2023

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ISBN

Pages	116
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Price:	Free distribution
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Printer:	eBook
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Publishers:	Prime Point Foundation
14 Vasan Street, T Nagar,	
Chennai 600017	

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Introduction

Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The First Edition PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Former President of India



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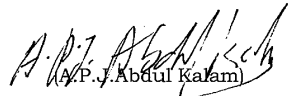
FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100th Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28th May 2015


(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)

Journey of Ezine PreSense - Milestones

Dec 1999	Launch of Prime Point Foundation, Publisher of the ezine.
Feb 2006	Launch of ezine, PreSense online by Dr Y S Rajan.
Aug 2006	Integration of Podcast with the ezine contents.
Aug 2007	Introduction of Guest Editors.
Feb 2008	Second Anniversary Edition with Dr Abdul Kalam's exclusive interview. Masthead changed.
Apr 2008	First ezine to become 'Media Partner' for a global event held at London.
July 2008	Introduction of cartoons – Cartoon Character 'Prince' launched by Dr Abdul Kalam.
Sep 2008	Change in layout, introducing photographs on the cover.
Jan 2010	Ezine's new initiative 'Education Loan Task Force' (ELTF) launched to create awareness among students and parents.
May 2010	Ezine's second initiative to honour top performing Parliamentarians, with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Award launched. Golden Jubilee (50 th) Edition launched.
Feb 2011	Diamond Jubilee (60 th) Edition.

A hiatus after 5 years of uninterrupted journey

Apr 2012	Ezine resumed in a new format of contents. The tag line changed from 'Communicate the Communication' to 'Spreading Positive Vibrations.'
Apr 2013	Tamil Nadu Governor launched a special edition on the Indian Parliament, coinciding with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Awards.

PreSense Speaks | Freedom Fighters of India-Part II

Jun 2013	Platinum Jubilee (75 th) Edition launched by the youth at three places simultaneously, across the nation.
Jun 2015	100 th Edition - PreSense 100 released in print format.
Mar 2016	Ezine's third initiative 'Digital Journalists Association of India' (DiJAI) launched.
Jun 2016	Second edition of PreSense 100+ released in print format
Dec 2017	Ezine's fourth initiative 'Digital Security Association of India' (DiSAI) launched.
Mar 2018	Third edition of Digest PreSense130 released in print format.
Aug 2019	Fourth edition of Digest PreSense150 launched in pdf format.
May 2021	PreSense Speaks Series – First volume released on Communication (compilation of articles published earlier)
Sep 2021	Fifth edition of Digest PreSense175 in 6 volumes released.
Jul 2022	PreSense Speaks Series – Second volume released compiling the Editorials published between 2020 and 2022
Aug 2022	PreSense Speaks Series – Third volume launched – Compilation of articles on Indian freedom fighters
Aug 2023	Compilation of articles on Freedom fighters Part II launched

The Journey Continues.....

Editorial Team – August 2022

Publisher and Managing Editor	K. Srinivasan (Prime Point Srinivasan)
Editor in Chief	Ramesh Sundaram , Senior Journalist, Ex The Hindu
Consulting Editors	C Badri , Former General Manager, Canara Bank and CVO, IOB, Chennai R Nurullah , Senior Journalist
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Cartoon Editor	Triambak Sharma , Editor, Cartoon Watch, Raipur
Associate Editors	Dipti Kumar , Senior Digital Journalist from US Suparna Gangal , International Video Journalist



Prime Point Foundation and its Initiatives

Prime Point Foundation, a Non-Profit Trust and NGO was founded in December 1999 by Shri K Srinivasan (popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan), a former Senior Banker and a Digital Journalist and Communication Professional, to promote leadership and communication skills among the youth. Very eminent persons are associated with the Foundation.

In the past 24 years, the Foundation has organised several seminars, workshops, training and interactive sessions, both offline and online, on various subjects of national interest. The Foundation manages various online discussion groups and podcasts on communication, and digital journalism.

The Foundation has formed 5 initiatives to create awareness in various domains. All these initiatives are managed independently by passionate experts. These initiatives are non-commercial and focussed on youth.

PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till July 2023, the Foundation has published 197 editions. This is a digital-only magazine. Digests, containing select articles up to 150 editions of the



eMagazine, have so far been published. Dr Abdul Kalam has written the foreword for the Digest of articles up to 100 editions. PreSense publishes the cartoon character Prince, which was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam in 2008. PreSense has published a Digest of select articles published up to 175 editions in 8 volumes.

India Book of Records has recognised PreSense for publishing maximum number of digital only eMagazine since 2006 through voluntary efforts. .

Sansad Ratna Awards: This is a flagship initiative started in 2010 to honour top performing Parliamentarians every year, based on various performance parameters, and selected by a Jury Committee of eminent Parliamentarians. Dr Abdul Kalam himself inaugurated the first edition of the Awards event in May 2010. Till 2023, the Foundation has conducted 13 editions and presented 106 Awards. IIT Madras was the supporting Partner up to the 9th Edition. 10th Edition was held at Raj Bhavan, Tamil Nadu. 11th, 12th and 13th Editions were held at New Delhi.



India Book of Records (IBR) has recognised Sansad Ratna Awards for maximum number of Parliamentary Awards (86) given and maximum number of award events (12) by the civil society based on the performance in consecutive years.

Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) is an off-shoot of Sansad Ratna Awards. This is a registered NGO operating since 2018. NGPL has organised several workshops online and offline, for young political leaders and aspirants. Ministers, parliamentarians, legislators and retired constitutional authorities have participated and shared their views. NGPL will shortly be instituting Awards for young promising politicians.



Education Loan Task Force (ELTF) was started in 2010 to create awareness about education loans, among students and parents. More than 30,000 queries have been responded to, through email, and more than 5000 serious complaints have been taken up with the top



management of the banks concerned, for redressal. Many policy issues have been taken up by Sansad Ratna Awardee MPs, in the Parliament for solution. ELTF does not facilitate loans.

Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI): DiJAI is an independent NGO founded in 2017 to create awareness about digital journalism and its implications, among the public and particularly among the journalists. DiJAI conducts several online and offline workshops and seminars, with panels of domain experts.



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Publisher's Note

On behalf of the Editorial Team of PreSense, we present the third edition of 'PreSense Speaks' Series. The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, for positive journalism. In March 2022, PreSense completed 17 years. We have published 197 editions till July 2023.

As readers are aware, we have published digests of select articles up to 100, 110, 130, 150 and 175 editions. We had the unique privilege of carrying Foreword from Dr Abdul Kalam himself for the 100th edition.

The first edition of PreSense Speaks series was released by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble MoS, Parliamentary Affairs in May 2021. The first edition was the compilation of articles on communication. As part of this PreSense Speaks series, we released the first part of the "Freedom Fighters of India", the compilation of articles published up to August 2022, on 15th August 2022. The Second part of the "Freedom Fighters of India" was released during the Independence Day celebration of 2023. This is the compilation of the articles published in the eMagazine PreSense from Sep 2022 to August 2023.

I thank Shri C Badri, the Consulting Editor, who has taken all pains to research and write the articles every month. I also thank Shri Ramesh Sundaram, Editor in Chief for the editing support.

I am confident that this edition will be useful for all our readers.

K. Srinivasan
(Prime Point Srinivasan)
Publisher and Managing Editor, PreSense



Andaman Islands – The Capital of Indian Freedom Movement

Indian History and Text Books Should be Rewritten with Factual Details of Freedom Fighters who Sacrificed Their Lives

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Jan 23)

The PreSense and Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) Team visited the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the first week of January 2023. The purpose of our visit was to spread democratic and Constitutional awareness amongst the students. With the help of Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma, sitting MP of the Islands, we could visit many schools and a few social projects. He also accompanied us to the schools and we had useful interaction with the youth. We offered to provide online training programme free of cost, to young students who want to join politics, irrespective of the party, on Indian democracy and Constitution.

After the First War of Independence in 1857, British Government transported around 30,000 aggressive and revolutionary freedom fighters to this Island in phases. It was known as Indian Penal Settlement. Freedom fighters were kept in Ross Islands (Now known as Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Island) and Viper Island. In 1906, the Britishers opened the Cellular Jail. Between 1943 and 1945, Japanese forces took control of this Island during World War II. Both British and Japanese authorities tortured our freedom fighters and even killed them.

Sadly, our text books do not talk about such great warriors, who sacrificed themselves to get freedom for us. We found many of the citizens of Andaman Islands are the descendants of one or other freedom fighter. They belong to different States, religion, language. They live peacefully like a family. Though the Island is separated from the mainland, by a distance of 1300 km, their patriotism towards Mother India is

enormous. When we visited the Schools, students greeted us with 'Jai Hind'.

A & N Islands consists of 836 small Islands, of which only 37 are inhabited. 84% of the Island is Forest. This Island is strategically important for Indian defence. Hence, the Lt. Governor of this UT is a retired official from the Defence.

Only three years back, this Island got 4G internet connectivity through a single cable laid from Chennai. If the Government adds one more cable and provide a seamless internet facility, many IT companies can set up their back-office and BPO facilities. This is an ideal place for IT Industry, with the availability of skilled manpower.

Though the Island is surrounded on all sides with sea and has 3000 mm of rains every year, the people do not get drinking water on a daily basis. Already, the local MP and the UT Administration are working on some projects. This is a serious issue to be considered by the Indian Government urgently.

Shortly, an International Airport will be opened there. This will open up more tourism opportunities. There is a great potential for Shipping and Fisheries, with rare kind of fishes available in the sea.

Though this Island is represented in Lok Sabha, the people feel that they do not have any Legislature and membership in Rajya Sabha.

Sadly, our text books do not carry the contributions made by Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the freedom movement. This is the Capital of the Indian Freedom Movement. Many freedom fighters were tortured and killed. Since many of the freedom fighters were members of Indian Independence League (IIL) and Indian National Army (INA), founded by Netaji, probably for political reasons, they might have been

ignored from the history. Only during the Morarji Desai regime, the Cellular Jail was dedicated to the nation as a 'National Monument'. Many of the freedom fighters who were killed by the British and Japanese authorities have not yet been declared as Freedom Fighters, though many of them have been declared as 'Martyrs'. The descendants of freedom fighters, with whom we spoke feel that their ancestors, who were killed by the British and Japanese authorities, be declared as 'freedom fighters'.

PreSense appeals to the Indian Government:

1. Andaman Island being the capital of freedom movement, Indian history and Text books should be rewritten giving the factual report about the contribution made by thousands of freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Indian Independence.
2. There is a great potentiality to improve this Island with more employment opportunity in Information Technology, Shipping, Fisheries and Tourism. They should be explored.
3. Above all, the residents should be provided with clean drinking water 24 x 7 x 365 days, besides improving Health and High Education facilities. That will be the greatest homage that we, Indians, can pay to their ancestors who sacrificed their lives for the nation.
4. Already Prime Minister Modi has named / renamed some of the Islands. There are many Islands that are not named. Prime Minister may consider naming them after many martyrs / freedom fighters who were killed by British and Japanese Authorities before Independence.

Every Indian should visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a 'Patriotic Pilgrimage' and pay homage to the freedom fighters.

Andaman - Patriotic Pilgrimage

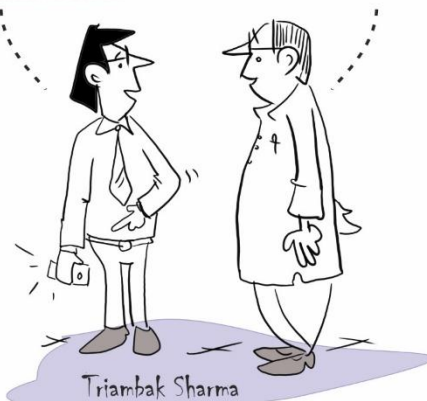
PRINCE

By Triambak Sharma



**Tickets are
booked
for
Andaman &
Nicobar..
we are
going for
PILGRIMAGE**

**I appreciate
your thought
Son..that place
is like any other
religious land
for us..due to
freedom fighters**



Andaman Islands – An overview

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Jan 2023)

Penal Settlement at Andaman Islands



Penal colony prisoners in 1880

After the First War of Independence in 1857, 200 aggressive and revolutionary freedom fighters were transported (literally exiled) to the Andaman Islands. They arrived at the Islands on 10th March 1858. They were kept in Chatham

Island in the open prison. That marked the beginning of the penal settlement in Andamans by the British. All life and long-term prisoners, from eighteen to forty years of age, who on some grounds have escaped the death penalty in India and Burma, were selected for imprisonment in the penal settlement of the Andaman Islands. This was also popularly called 'Kala Pani' (Black Water).

Four days after their first landing on the island, one of the convicts, Narain (Bihar), who had been convicted for sedition, tried to escape but was caught and shot dead. Another prisoner, Naringun Singh (Punjab), who was a deserter, committed suicide by hanging. 86 prisoners who tried to escape were caught by the Britishers and all of them were summarily put to death by hanging on a single day.

As the settlement grew, "hardened criminals" from undivided India and Burma were also brought in. The 'hard labour' of chain gangs quickly produced the necessary infrastructure. Palatial bungalows for the administrators and barracks for the prisoners, jail and formidable gallows sprung up on Ross and Viper Islands between 1864 and 1867. A saw-mill on the Chatham Island supplied the timber.



**The location where
Lord Mayo was
assassinated**

The Viceroy of United India, Lord Mayo, who was on tour at Andaman, paid a visit to the settlement. Sher Ali, serving the Life Sentence stabbed the Viceroy to death on 8th February, 1872. He was arrested immediately and hanged. In the Indian freedom movement, this is the only incident where a sitting Viceroy was assassinated. With the freedom movement picking up momentum, the number of freedom fighters sentenced to transportation also increased. The need arose for a high security jail that could hold a large number in solitary confinement.

Cellular Jail



Cellular Jail – Main entrance

The construction of Cellular Jail started in 1896 and completed in 1906. Spread as seven spokes of a bicycle wheel, this unique three-storied structure was the first of its kind in India as it had 693 cells specially built for solitary confinement of the prisoners. Extraordinary feature of the Jail was the

total absence of communication between prisoners housed in different wings since front of the row of cells faced the back of the other. The cost of construction at that time was Rs.5.17 lakhs.

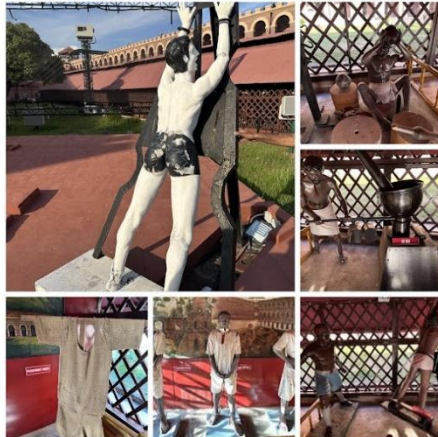


A model of the Cellular Jail with seven wings

A two-storied building on the left side near the entrance of the Jail was constructed to be used as the Jail hospital. On the plinth of this building now stands the

Martyr's Column. Near the compound wall at the right of the main entrance is the gallows where three persons could be executed simultaneously with a separate door in the outer compound wall to carry the corpses.

Many charismatic freedom fighters were imprisoned in this Jail. Savarkar brothers, Hotilal Verma, Babu Ram Hari, Pandit Parmanand, Ladha Ram, Ullaskar Dutt, Barin Kumar Ghosh, Bhai Parmanand, Indu Bhushan Roy, Prithvi Singh Azad, Pulin Das, Trailokyanath Chakravorthy, Gurumukh Singh, etc. were incarcerated here among others. Revolutionaries involved in Alipore Bomb case, Nasik Conspiracy Case, Lahore Conspiracy Case, Chittagong Armoury Raid Case, Inter-Provincial Conspiracy Case, Gaya Conspiracy Case were also brought to the Cellular Jail under long terms of imprisonment.



Instruments of torture

The Cellular Jail is the most prominent landmark of Port Blair and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The first stop for any dignitary visiting the Islands is the Martyrs Memorial inside the Jail. Many familiar with the history of the freedom struggle are moved to tears at the sight of the Chain fetter, Cross Bar fetter, Bar fetter, flogging frame with whipping, Jute uniform, oil extraction, Coir pounding to extract coir from coconut husk and the other instruments of torture on display in the Jail Museum. A 'must' on the itinerary of all tourists is the 'Sound & Light Show' every evening, which brings to life a dark chapter in the history of the Islands as a penal settlement. (Now stopped for some time for upgradation.)

The Jail celebrated its centenary on March 10, 2006. It has been a long journey for the Jail - from a torture machine to a National Memorial, from a dreaded prison to a place of patriotic pilgrimage, a place where the memories of brave freedom fighters are revived and patriotic fervour surges through the veins of the visitors.



Outer and Inner A view of the Cell

Today, the entrance block of the National Memorial houses Freedom Fighters Photos and Exhibition Gallery is on the ground floor. The first floor of the building has an Art Gallery, Netaji Gallery and a Library on freedom movement. A gallery on the First War of Independence and another gallery with rare collection of old photographs has also been set up on the premises. An eternal Flame "Freedom-Swatantrya Jyot" has been erected in the vicinity of the Cellular Jail in memory of all freedom fighters and martyrs.

Structure

Each of the seven wings has three stories upon completion. There are no dormitories with a total of 696 cells. Each cell is 13.6 ft × 7.6 ft in size with a ventilator located at a height of 7 ft. The name, "Cellular Jail", derived from the solitary cells which prevented any prisoner from communicating with any other. Also, the spokes were so designed such that the face of a cell in a spoke saw the back of cells in another spoke. This way, communication between prisoners was impossible. They were all in solitary confinement. The locks of the prison cells were designed in such a way that the inmate would never be able to reach the latch of the lock.



Gallows – Top: Place for ritual before execution | Bottom right: Execution chamber | Bottom left: Place for dead body after execution

Prison conditions

Conditions faced by prisoners in the Cellular Jail were horrible. They faced torture, medical tests, forced labour and for many, death. In response to poor conditions in the Cellular Jail, including the quality of prison food, numerous prisoners went on hunger strikes. Those who did were often force-fed by the prison authorities. It is also said that many of them died due to force feeding.

Andaman Island served as the ideal place for the British Government to isolate the aggressive and revolutionary freedom fighters from the rest of the society. These people were kept in solitary confinement in the Cellular Jail.

Massacre of 44 ILL Members

During the World War II, in 1942, Japan took over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Britishers left. Netaji Subash Chandra Bose arrived at Port Blair and hoisted the Indian Tri Colour in Dec. 1943 at Cellular Jail. After Bhose had left, on 30 January 1944, 44 Indians, the members of the Indian Independence League (ILL), were wrongly accused of spying and shot by the Japanese Army in what was known as the Homfraygunj Massacre.



After the end of World War II, Japan surrendered to the British Army and the British re-occupied the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. During this period of three years, Japan had committed more atrocities.

Cellular Jail was made a National Monument by Prime Minister Morarji Desai in 1979. The Airport is named after Veer Savarkar. Ross Island is named after Netaji Subash Chandra Bose by Prime Minister Modi. Also the

21 unnamed Islands were named after Param Vir Chakra recipients in Jan 2023 by Prime Minister Modi.

Just like every Indian makes a spiritual pilgrimage to Kasi, Mecca and Jerusalem, they should also make a 'Patriotic Pilgrimage' to the Andaman Islands and pay homage to the great freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for our Independence.

44 Freedom Fighters Were Shot Dead and put in a Graveyard at Andaman Islands

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Jan 2023)

Prem Shanker Pandey was one of the 44 members of Indian Independence League (IIL) martyred by Japanese Army on 30th January 1944 without any trial and buried in a 'L' shaped pit at Andaman Islands. Till now, these martyrs have not been declared as Freedom Fighters by the Government of India, though a monument has been erected and maintained by the UT Government to honour them. Gauri Shanker Pandey (87), the only son of Prem Shanker Pandey (35), is the lone surviving eye witness for the happenings. PreSense team met him at his residence on 6th January 2023. He recalled that sad episode from his memory. He has also authored four books on the freedom movement in Andaman Islands. During the course of the conversation, while narrating the incident of his father's arrest and killing, he became emotional on many occasions. Excerpts:



Prime Point Srinivasan seeking blessings from Gauri

Why did Britishers leave the Island enabling Japanese Army to occupy?

More than 30,000 people were settled in the Islands, in what is known as 'Indian Penal settlement', by the British after the first war of Independence in 1857. During World War II, Britishers left this Island in mid-March leaving all the Penal Settlers alone. After the Britishers left, there was no Government till Japanese Army occupied the island on 23rd March, 1942. Everybody was free to do whatever they wanted. At that time, the branch of Indian Independence League (IIL) was organized at Andaman in April 1942 under the President of Dr Diwan Singh. At the global level, Rash Behari Bose was heading the IIL. In June 1942, Indian National Army (INA) was founded. Both the organisations were created to participate in the freedom struggle and they were anti-British. Ramakrishna and my father Prem Shanker Pandey, were the Joint Secretaries of IIL. The members of IIL visited all the villages in the Island and increased the membership.

What led to the arrest of IIL and INA Members?

The IIL and INA, who were against British regime, were growing in the Island fast. This had created worries for British Government. Though the British had left the Island leaving behind all the penal settlers, they wanted to break IIL and INA. In January 1943, British sent spy agents to Andaman under the leadership of D.A.M. McCarthy, who was the Commander of Indian Military Police, during the British administration. Some of the Indian Military Police people had also joined Japanese Army as 'spies of British Government'. The messages sent by McCarthy were intercepted by Japanese forces and they got perplexed. Using this opportunity, the real spies working in the Japanese Army falsely implicated the members of IIL and INA as spies. The genuine freedom fighters were branded as spies. Some of the Indian Military Police were the real culprits.

How were they arrested? What happened thereafter?



Flogging stand – Prisoner would be tied to a stand and he would be beaten on the back side with whip

Immediately Japanese Forces arrested the IIL Members. In the first batch, 50 members were arrested and taken to Cellular Jail. They labelled the cases as first spy case, second spy case, etc. My father was arrested in the second group. One Muthuswamy Naidu was arrested as the first person along with 49 others in the first group. He was tortured heavily to make him admit that he was a British Spy. He was placed on the table with his hands tied. Water was poured through his nose. He was forced to say that he was a British Spy. He refused to say this, in spite of all the tortures. The water went into his lungs and he died due to the torture. All the other people were also tortured like this. The prisoners were tied to

the flogging stand and they used to bring their respective wives naked before them and tied. The husbands were tortured before wives and vice versa. They violated all the international norms. All prohibited war crimes were perpetuated. All the arrested members of IIL denied spying. There were even two or three lady members. Due to the torture many people died.

On 30th March 1943, Narayan Rao and six other leaders of IIL were shot dead and the bodies were handed over to their relatives. They were the people who initiated the establishment of IIL and INA at the Island.

Why was your father arrested?

Dr Diwan Singh, President of the Indian Independence League (IIL) met the Governor and sought his intervention to mitigate the people's misery. He also represented him as to how genuine people were arrested and tortured. But it was of no use. The second group of members of IIL, including Dr Diwan Singh and my father were arrested on 27th October 1943. In the spy cases, 630 people were arrested and tortured. Dr Diwan Singh was brutally tortured and died due to torture in the Cellular Jail.

What were the types of tortures they used to give to freedom fighters?

The Japanese beat and tortured them with water treatment, electric shocks, hanging them upside down, and burning heaps of paper under their thighs and private parts. A very large number of them died, while some committed suicide and a few made false confessions to save their lives. They were taken to a far-flung place, killed and buried.

Dr Diwan Singh was brutally tortured for 82 days, a parallel of which is difficult to find in human history. He was hung by his hair from the ceiling. On other occasions, his ankles were tied to ceiling, water was pumped through his mouth and nostrils.

He was tied to a table, his bones were crunched and was subjected to electric shocks. He died on January 14, 1944.

How was your father treated in the Jail?

I was a small boy of 6 years when my father was arrested and taken by Japanese forces. I still remember that my grandmother, my mother and myself were crying when he was taken by the Police. My father was around 35 at that time. My mother was also arrested 6 times and kept in Cellular Jail. Both were tortured heavily. I was the only son and had four sisters. Imagine the panic of the children when their parents were arrested and tortured in jail. We were staying with our uncle due to this uncertainty.

When did Netaji visit the Island? Why Netaji was not informed?



**Prem Shanker Pandey and
his wife**

He landed at the Island on 29th December 1943. INA gave him a Guard of Honour. He was received at the Airport by the IIL members and INA. He hoisted the Tricolour flag (the flag designed by the Congress then) at the Gymkhana Grounds on 30th December, 1943. At that time National Song "Vande Mataram Sujalam Suphalam

Malayaja Shitalam" was sung. Japanese forces did not allow any people to meet Netaji. He met the Governor and was immediately taken to Ross Island (now renamed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island). Nobody was allowed to go to the Ross Island. Japanese Army ensured that he was not given information about the arrest and torture of IIL and INA members. Ramakrishna, then President of IIL, handed over an amount of Rs.10000/- towards freedom struggle. Everybody contributed to the fund to Netaji. The descendants of these

settlers had enough courage to fight against the British. They formed the IIL and INA.

On 31st December 1943, the women's wing of IIL organised a meeting to hear Netaji at the Headquarters of the IIL and the INA. I remember I also attended the meeting with my mother and my grandmother. I remember it was a big crowd and the hall was full. The Women's Wing presented Rs.5000/- and lot of jewels to Netaji for freedom movement. That was the spirit of our people.

Coming back to your father in Cellular Jail, how was he martyred?

On 28th January 1944, our family was informed to come to Cellular Jail to meet our father. They asked us to bring one shirt and eatables. When we visited the Jail, I saw my father coming from the second gate with beard (Gauri Shanker Pandey paused for a moment here and broke



Freedom fighters lined up at Homfraygunj before they were shot by Japanese Army on 30th Jan 1944. Prem Shanker Pandey is third from right

down heavily. After a long silence, he continued the conversation). My mother, my grandmother and all the children were there. That was the last time, we could see our father. (broke down again and after a long silence continued). My father spoke to my mother and my grandmother. I do not remember anything further. We handed over the shirt and the food item to the police officials there.

On 29th January 1944, we got the information from Japanese Authorities asking all the family members to assemble on the next day morning (30th January) before the main entrance of Cellular Jail. When we reached the Cellular Jail on 30th January morning, we saw the relatives of some more prisoners also. All the 44 prisoners were brought from inside the jail one by one and members of the families were marshalled on the road side. My father Prem Shanker Pandey was the first to come out. I could see him from the distance of 15 or 20 feet but we were not allowed to go near him. Three military trucks were parked. All the 44 prisoners boarded them one by one. My father was the first to board. On seeing us, my father shouted, "Take care of the family. We are going to be killed on the false charges. We are going to die for the nation to get freedom for our country and not as spies. Jai Hind". On seeing him shouting, one Army Officer hit him on his chest with the butt of his rifle and my father fell down (Gauri Shanker Pandey paused and wept). After a long silence he continued:

All the prisoners were shouting 'Jai Hind'



Martyred freedom fighters – Soldiers pushing the bodies in the 'L' shaped pit

and the family members started crying. Out of this 44, three people could not walk. They were carried in a gunny bag like a stretcher. Nobody knew where they were being taken. I have seen all the 44 members

being transported to an unknown place. It was a horrible experience.

On the next day, one Japanese Police came to our house and handed over a packet containing the shirt worn by my father. This was the shirt given at the Cellular Jail by us on 28th January when we met our father. I only received the packet from the Police officer. The shirt had a 'bullet hole' and lot of blood stain. (After a brief silence, he continued). Only after seeing the shirt with blood and bullet holes, we realised that our father was killed.

When did you get detailed information about the massacre of 44 IIL members?



Left: Balidan Vedi – Homfraygunj – The memorial erected in 1977 | Right: 'L' shaped graveyard where martyrs were shot and buried

We came to know about the martyred place only later. Immediately after this incident, Netaji's Azadi Government was formed. Then Chief Commissioner Colonel A.D.

Loganathan visited Singapore reported to Netaji about this incident. Netaji sent Japanese judges to investigate into the matter. Due to the failure of Japanese intelligence and the Government, they could not locate the real culprits. After the World War II, Japanese surrendered to British forces. Again, Britishers occupied this Island on 7th October, 1945.

We could visit Homfraygunj, where the 44 IIL members were martyred only after two years, when the Japanese forces left the Island. All our family members went there in a truck, whose driver was the same person who drove the vehicle from Cellular Jail to Homfraygunj on that fateful day. The Japanese forces killed all the 44 IIL members and put them in a 'L' shaped graveyard. As the only son of my father, I had to perform the rituals without the body or ashes.

Are the family members of 44 martyrs are now connected?

All the family members of 44 martyrs got together to form a 'Homfraygunj Martyrs Memorial Committee' and I was the General Secretary of the Committee then. Now the third generation is leading it. Out of 44 families, 20 are in this Island and the others are in Mainland. We constructed a memorial in 1978. Every year on 30th January, in a solemn ceremony, we assemble and pay homage to the Martyrs. Now the UT Government is maintaining the Memorial. The Government has declared all the members of IIL, who were killed during the freedom movement as 'Martyrs'.

We do not want anything. We only want the Government to declare all the 44 martyrs as 'Freedom Fighters'. I feel proud that I am the son of a freedom fighter who has sacrificed his life for the nation.

Jai Hind. Bharat Mata ki Jai

Freedom Fighters of India

Babasaheb Dr B R Ambedkar

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor (April 2015)

With the 125th birth anniversary of Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) happening this year, we remember him as yet another legend forgotten in the annals of Indian history. He was the architect of the Indian Constitution, which has stood the test of time, braving various challenges of Indian politics and governance. He was a great philosopher, economist, lawyer, political activist and social reformer.

His Early Days - No Peon, No Water

Bhimrao Ramji Sakpal Ambavadekar (later Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar) was born to a Maratha family, as the 14th child to his parents. His community was considered 'untouchable' in the society. As a school student, he underwent much humiliation due to this social practice of caste discrimination. It is distressing to read about his personal experience because of 'untouchability' prevailing then.

Quote

While in the school, I knew that children of the touchable classes, when they felt thirsty, could go out to the water tap, open it, and quench their thirst. All that was necessary was the permission of the teacher. But my position was separate. I could not touch the tap; and unless it was opened for it by a touchable person, it was not possible for me to quench my thirst. In my case the permission

If the peon was not available, I had to go without water. The situation can be summed up in the statement—no peon, no water.

of the teacher was not enough. The presence of the school peon was necessary, for he was the only person whom the class teacher could use for such a purpose. If the peon was not available, I had to go without water. The situation can be summed up in the statement—no peon, no water.

Unquote

Mahadev Ambedkar, his Brahmin teacher was sympathetic towards him and supported him. He changed his original name in the school records from 'Bhimrao Ramji Sakpal Ambavadekar' to 'Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar,' adding his own surname of Ambedkar.

With his father's encouragement, Dr Ambedkar completed his graduation in Bombay. Although he was opposed to '*Manu Smriti*,' his writings reveal his deep knowledge of the ancient scriptures, Vedas and the Upanishads. Even in the Constituent Assembly, he favoured Sanskrit as the national language, although it was not accepted by the majority.



**Sayajirao Gaekwad
III**

Support from the Baroda Ruler

Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the ruler of Baroda was a social reformer who supported poor students from the 'depressed class (untouchables)'. When he met Bhimrao Ambedkar, he recognised his potential and offered him a scholarship to study abroad. Ambedkar completed his studies, including a doctorate at the Columbia University (USA), and at the London School of Economics (UK). In spite of the caste discriminations and untouchability practices, some good-hearted people like Mahadev Ambedkar and Sayajirao Gaekwad III recognised Ambedkar's potential and helped him to move to the higher

levels in academics. Ambedkar proved to be an outstanding student wherever he studied.

On his return to India, he served the Baroda ruler for some time. In 1918, he became the Professor of Political Economy at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. Even though he was popular with the students, the professors objected to his reformist activities such as sharing the same drinking-water jug that they all used.

Round Table Conference



Dr Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi in the Round Table Conference

The British Government invited leaders from different political parties to the Round Table Conferences held in 1930-32, to draft a new Constitution leading to the self-rule by Indians. Dr Ambedkar attended all the three Round Table Conferences. Mahatma Gandhi did not attend the first Conference due to a difference in opinion with Dr Ambedkar. During the First Round Table Conference

held in November 1930, Dr Ambedkar proposed the concept of a 'Separate Electorate' for the 'Depressed Class' (Untouchables). He argued that the problems faced by the untouchables were not social problems but political problems. More than 20% of India's population were from the untouchables category. Dr Ambedkar pleaded that the problems of such a sizeable portion of the population could not be ignored. He wanted a proportionate political power to resolve the issue. He suggested a 'Separate Electorate' for the

Depressed Class, meaning thereby that their representatives could be elected only by the untouchables and not by all the others. He even quoted from the Mahabharata that the kings and the ministers therein were from all communities, (including oppressed class, which is equivalent to the socially deprived people).

Since Mahatma Gandhi held a different view, he did not agree with the suggestion. He opposed it in the Second Round Table Conference. He feared that allowing a 'Separate Electorate' might divide the Hindu community further. He believed in a change in the social mindset of the people to eradicate untouchability.

Poona Pact

British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald made an Award in 1932 known as the 'Communal Award', providing 'Separate Electorate for Muslims, Christians, Upper Caste Hindus, Lower Caste Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Depressed Class'. The Depressed Class (Untouchables) could then elect their own representatives to the various provinces under the British rule. This was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi on the ground that it would disintegrate the Hindus. Gandhi was then in Pune Yerwada prison.

He went on an indefinite fast from 20th Sep 1932 against the 'Separate Electorate' for Depressed Class. After some lengthy negotiations, Ambedkar and Gandhi reached an agreement on 24th September 1932 to have a single Hindu electorate, with Untouchables having seats reserved within it. This is called the 'Poona Pact.' The text uses the term "Depressed Classes" to denote Untouchables. It was later called the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the India Act 1935, and then the Indian Constitution of 1950.

Reserve Bank Conceptualised

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1st April 1935 to address the economic troubles of the nation after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr Ambedkar as written in his book, "The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution."

Forming Political Party

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party, which contested in the 1937 Bombay elections to the Central Legislative Assembly for the 13 reserved and 4 general seats and securing 11 and 3 seats, respectively. Right from 1916, Dr Ambedkar began uniting all the untouchables in India. In July 1942, he organised a national conference at Nagpur under the banner of Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF). More than 75,000 scheduled caste people, including 25,000 women participated. In his historic speech, he demanded self-respect and freedom. Later, SCF transformed itself into the Republican Party of India (RPI).

Joining the Government

In 1942, he was invited to join Viceroy's Executive Council as Labour Member with three additional portfolios. As Labour Member, he influenced the British to concede 13% representation to Scheduled Caste (SC). The British gave just 8.33%. (Later, while writing the Constitution, he made a provision of 15% for SCs.) He continued in this position till 1946. He was responsible for reducing the working hours of labourers from 12 hours to 8. He also introduced the concept of Provident Fund and Dearness Allowance. He created the employment exchanges. He introduced maternity leave for women. As a believer of free market, he introduced the Gold Standard. He was the brain behind the Hirakud Dam and the

Damodar Valley Project. He was also the brain behind the India's Water Policy and the Electric Power Planning.

Constituent Assembly



*Dr Ambedkar with Members of
Drafting Committee*

Under the Cabinet Mission Plan 1946 of the British Government, a Constituent Assembly was set up in 1946 in the then undivided India to frame the Constitution for India. The members were elected from different provinces. Since Dr Ambedkar could not be elected from Mumbai, he was elected from East Bengal with the help of the Muslim League. These

districts were later identified for inclusion in Pakistan. To prevent Dr Ambedkar from leaving the Constituent Assembly, Dr Rajendra Prasad (President of the Constituent Assembly) wrote a letter on 30th June 1947 to the then Prime Minister of Maharashtra (as he was called then) to get him elected from Maharashtra Province. Thus, he got elected to the Constituent Assembly again. He was made the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee on 29th August 1947. Although there were 7 members in the Committee, he was practically the only one shouldering the entire responsibility and burden of drafting.

The Draft Constitution was presented by Dr Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly and was discussed and adopted by the Members. The Constitution was adopted in its complete form on 26th November 1949 and came into force on 26th January 1950, which is celebrated as the Republic Day of India. While adopting the Constitution, all the members praised the

extraordinary work done by Dr Ambedkar in drafting the Constitution.

Dr Ambedkar served as India's first Law Minister from 15th August 1947 in the Nehru Cabinet. Due to his differences of opinion on the Hindu Code Bill, which deprived equal rights to women, he resigned from the Cabinet in September 1951.

Defeated in the Elections

During the first General Elections in 1951 to Lok Sabha, he contested from Bombay North, but lost to a little known Congress candidate, Narayan Kajrolkar, who was once his assistant.

He became a Member of Rajya Sabha as a nominated member in 1952 and continued as a member till his death.

In 1954, he contested again in a by-election held in Bombay Bandra. Here too, he was placed third and lost to a Congress candidate.



Dr Ambedkar and his wife during 'Dhamma Diksha' at Nagpur

Sadly, Dr Ambedkar could not sit in the First Lok Sabha, the Constitution for which was created by him. The Second General Election was held in 1957 after his death in 1956. He could therefore not enter the Lok Sabha at all.

Conversion to Buddhism

He declared his intention to convert to another religion, public as a large section of the society was treated as untouchable by the Hindu section. Although Christians and Muslims

approached him to convert to their religion, he preferred Buddhism. On 14th October 1956, Ambedkar, along with his wife, converted to Buddhism in the presence of a monk. Thereafter, he persuaded thousands of people of the Scheduled Caste to convert to Buddhism. He passed away on 6th Dec 1956 in his sleep.

His Bold Views



Media Report – Dr Ambedkar for Sanskrit as Official Language of India

He was a great scholar and philosopher. He was bold in expressing his views. He preferred Sanskrit as the National Official Language. However, it was not approved in the Constituent Assembly.

When Prime Minister Nehru wanted him to draft Article 370, he refused as he felt that it would be against the interest of the nation.

While all the modern historians argued in favour of the Aryan theory, he wrote that there was no race by that name. He also said that the theory that Aryans invaded India through

Khyber Pass was false.

He openly criticised Mahatma Gandhi on various issues and even authored a book titled 'What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables'. In response to this book, Rajaji and K Santhanam authored a book 'Ambedkar refuted,' defending Mahatma Gandhi.

Forgotten Legend

There could be several people who had differences of opinion with Dr Ambedkar. But no one can deny the fact that Dr Ambedkar formed his views, based on his own experiences and despite the harassment he faced in the society. But for this legendary personality, India would not have got the time-tested and the much-acclaimed Constitution. Due to various reasons, he was not fairly recognised in the past by the Government and by the society. In 1990, he was conferred the Bharat Ratna Award posthumously, under pressure from political parties.



The Indian society little supported the architect of Modern India when he was alive. It is time to stand up and salute him for his exemplary contribution to Modern India because although Dr Ambedkar was an 'exclusive member', belonging to the 'Depressed Class', his lifelong work, activities and contribution were inclusive and to the benefit of the nation as a whole.

In response to an RTI activist, Rusen Kumar (Raipur), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting disclosed recently that a documentary film on Dr Ambedkar made by the

Government of India and Government of Maharashtra 14 years ago, is yet to be telecast through Doordarshan for public viewing.

The Indian society little supported the architect of Modern India when he was alive. It is time to stand up and salute him for his exemplary contribution to Modern India because although Dr Ambedkar was an 'exclusive member,' belonging to the 'Depressed Class,' his lifelong work, activities and contribution were inclusive and to the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Rajaji - Part I (Pre-Independence)

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (December 2014)

The Indian freedom movement produced many patriotic leaders from all parts of the nation. However, barring a few leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, the others are not so well-known to the present generation. Chakravarty Rajagopalachari (10th December 1878 – 25th December 1972), popularly known as 'Rajaji' and also as 'CR' is one of those great leaders India has produced. He was supportive behind every movement organised by Mahatma Gandhi.

First Person to Recognise M.K. Gandhi's Potential

After graduating in law, Rajaji began his practice as a criminal lawyer in 1900 at Salem, and even at a young age of 25, he was one of the highest paid lawyers in those days. When M.K.Gandhi (later popular as Mahatma Gandhi) was fighting against the South African Government through *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha*, in 1912, Rajaji distributed pamphlets about Gandhiji's activities. He was probably the first person to recognise Gandhiji's potential for fighting against the British through *Satyagraha*. After Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa, Rajaji was the first leader to support Gandhiji's *Satyagraha* movement in India. Although Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel had met with Gandhiji before Rajaji had, they were not impressed with Gandhiji's ideas at their first meeting. They accepted him as their leader only after Rajaji did.

Fight Against Untouchability and Liquor

As the Municipal Chairman of Salem (1917-1919), Rajaji fought against untouchability in spite of strong opposition from the upper caste. He also fought against alcoholism. When he

subsequently became the Premier of Madras State (as it was called during those days), he brought about an Act permitting the entry of the Dalit community into temples. He also introduced 'prohibition' (of liquor) in the state. Thirty years later, when there was a proposal to reintroduce sale of liquor in the state, he pleaded with the then Chief Minister against this move. Liquor was prohibited for a generation till then. His plea was rejected and liquor shops were re-opened in the state.



Similar to the Sabarmathi Ashram in Gujarat set up by Mahatma Gandhi, Rajaji set up the 'Gandhi Ashram' in 1924 in a village near Tiruchengode and lived in a small hut for 10 years with his children. Both these Ashrams played a significant role in India's freedom movement.

Similar to the Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat set up by Mahatma Gandhi, Rajaji set up the 'Gandhi Ashram' in 1924 in a village near

Tiruchengode and lived in a small hut for 10 years with his children. Both these *Ashrams* played a significant role in India's freedom movement. Rajaji was a great follower of Gandhiji. On several occasions, Mahatma Gandhi described Rajaji as his 'conscience keeper' and also his 'political heir.'

Shoulder-to-Shoulder with Mahatma Gandhi

On 6th April 1930, Gandhiji started his *Dandi Salt Satyagraha*. On 13th April 1930, Rajaji started his march from Tiruchirapalli to Vedaranyam to collect salt. He was arrested. These two marches galvanised the entire India.



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Visionary Ideas Not Understood

Rajaji was a great visionary. His ideas were always futuristic and he did not worry about the contemporary ideas. Most of the time, his ideas were misunderstood and he was criticised for his revolutionary ideas. It was only on a later date that people realised the worthiness of his ideas. Rajaji had both admirers and critics for his philosophy. Notwithstanding criticisms, he used to express his views freely, keeping in mind the interest of the nation and the people.

In 1942, when the British Government was engaged in World War II, Mahatma Gandhi announced the 'do or die' slogan and the 'Quit India Movement'. Rajaji at that time had advised against venturing into such aggressive movements, as the Government was engaged in war. He also suggested a friendly dialogue with the Muslim League, in preparation for the country's independence after the world war. Mahatma Gandhi and the other leaders rejected his idea and went ahead with Quit India Movement. Rajaji then resigned from the Congress and returned to Madras.

More than one hundred thousand freedom fighters, including senior leaders, were arrested. The *Ahimsa* movement turned out to be a violent event, in the absence of the leaders to guide the people of the movement. The arrested leaders and freedom fighters were released only in 1945 after the war was over. This was a setback for the freedom movement. Meanwhile, the Muslim League was aggressive in their stand for the partition of India since there was no Congress leader to engage them in dialogue. It was only then, that the Congress leaders realised that they should have heeded Rajaji's advice. Rajaji returned to the Congress in 1945 at the request of Mahatma Gandhi, to galvanise the freedom movement.

Though there was opposition against partition, Rajaji introduced a formula, popularly known as the 'CR Formula' before independence. Talks were held between the Congress and the Muslim League, based on the CR Formula. Many Congress leaders later felt that if the Quit India Movement had been abandoned and Rajaji's advice followed, the Partition would have been smoother and without bloodshed. At a critical time when India's independence was in the vicinity, all the senior Congress leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi were in the jail.

“Though there were oppositions against partition, Rajaji introduced a formula, popularly known as the 'CR Formula' before independence. Talks were held between the Congress and the Muslim League based on the CR Formula. Many Congress leaders later felt that if the Quit India Movement had been abandoned and Rajaji's advice followed, the partition would have been smoother and without bloodshed.



Rajaji – Part II –(Post-Independent Era)

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (December 2014)

Post Independent Era

After India's independence, when communal clashes broke out in West Bengal, Rajaji was requested to be the first Governor of West Bengal with effect from 15th August 1947. He played a major role in curbing the violence. In 1948, he was made the 'Governor General of India' (now renamed the President of India). Rajaji was the last Governor General of India and the only Indian to hold the position. As he was opposed by a section of Congress leaders for his non-participation in the Quit India Movement, he was not made the President of India after 26th Jan 1950. Pandit Nehru requested Rajaji to help him by joining the cabinet in 1950. Rajaji resigned in 1951 after a misunderstanding with Nehru.

In 1952, a large number of Communist candidates were elected to the Madras State Assembly (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra and part of Karnataka) and the Congress failed to obtain a majority. This resulted in political instability in the state. Prime Minister Nehru then approached Rajaji to help the Congress by becoming the Chief Minister of Madras State. Rajaji reluctantly took up the position as the Chief Minister of Madras State in 1952.

During his tenure, he brought about strict rules for good governance to function without political interference. He wanted corruption-free governance. He introduced an education policy known as 'The Modified Scheme of Elementary Education,' combining vocational courses with the academics, and with reduced academic hours. He wanted to encourage more children to attend school. At that time, less than 48% of children attended primary schools, and more than 50% dropped out after primary school. His critics opposed his

policy as a 'hereditary education policy' and accused Rajaji of supporting casteism.

A committee of eminent educationists known as the 'Parulekar Committee' endorsed his education policy and proposed that it be extended to all rural areas. President Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Nehru and the Central Advisory Board on Education too appreciated and endorsed the policy scheme. Rajaji defended the scheme saying it was necessary to train the students on various vocational courses, to make the country vibrant and progressive.



President Rajendra Prasad presenting the Bharat Ratna to C. Rajagopalachari on January 27, 1955.

His political opponents in the Congress party wanted him to withdraw the scheme. Rajaji preferred to resign from the post, rather than withdraw it. He resigned from his position in 1954. Kamaraj, who succeeded him as Chief Minister withdrew the Scheme. Several years later, India realised the need for more vocational and professional education.

Leaving Congress

Rajaji was the first recipient of the 'Bharat Ratna' Award, when it was introduced in 1955. Rajaji resigned from the Congress Party due to differences in opinion between him and its members. He founded the 'Swatantra Party' in 1959. In 1967, the Swatantra Party became the second largest party with 44 MPs. Rajaji never contested in the national elections in his political career. When the Congress was leaning towards left, he advocated liberalisation of economy and the removal of the 'License-Quota-Permit Raj.' Although the Congress did not accept his economic policies at that time, they introduced the very same economic policies later in 1991, after 32 years.

In 1967, he formed the first political alliance in India with 7 parties in Tamil Nadu and defeated the Congress, paving the way for DMK to come to power. Thus, even the powerful leader, Kamaraj was defeated in the elections. It is a different story that later in 1971, he formed an alliance with the Congress(O) led by Kamaraj to dethrone DMK but failed.

Rajaji as an International Leader

Rajaji was against nuclear weapons. In 1955, he appealed to the Government of India to refuse American aid if the country continued with its nuclear tests. This embarrassed Pandit Nehru too. Rajaji authored a book called "Mankind Protests,"



C. Rajagopalachari (second from right) and members of the Gandhi Peace Foundation meeting the then American President John F. Kennedy (centre)

opposing nuclear weapons. Mr. Nikita Khrushchev, General Secretary, USSR, got it translated into Russian for wide circulation in his country.

In 1962, Rajaji visited USA, along with the members of Gandhi Peace Foundation delegation, in response

to President Kennedy's invitation. This was the only foreign visit Rajaji undertook in his lifetime. He was the only civilian not in office, to be given a red carpet reception at the White House. President Kennedy was impressed by his presentation, and he spent more than one hour with him as against the allotted 25 minutes. Rajaji explained to Kennedy the dangers of embarking on an arms race, even one in which USA could win.

Multi-Faceted Personality

Rajaji was a prolific writer and in 1922, he was the editor of 'Young India'. He was a regular contributor of articles on a variety of subjects, to several magazines including 'Kalki' and 'Swarajya' from 1960 till his death. Rajaji authored among others, commentaries on important books like the 'Ramayana,' the 'Mahabharatha,' the 'Thirukkural' and the 'Bhajagovindam.' These have since been translated into several languages.

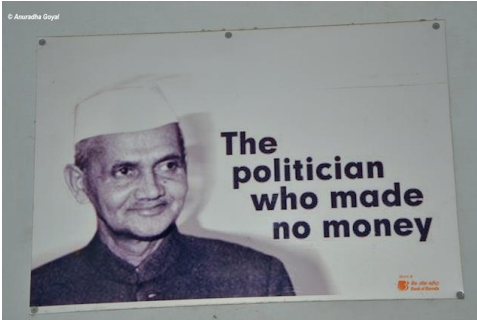
Rajaji died on 25th December 1972, after a short illness. It is interesting to know that when Rajaji's parents checked his horoscope at the time of his birth, the astrologer told them that the baby's future included the fortunes of a king, of an exile, of a guru, and of an outcast. The people would worship him; they would also reject him. He would sit on an emperor's throne; he would also live in a poor man's hut.

Rajaji was respected for his immaculate honesty, his integrity and his selfless dedication for the welfare of the poor.

Lal Bahadur Shastri

By Sukruti Narayanan, Editorial Team (January 2014)

Simplicity and Honesty



These days, when Indian politicians are accused of amassing illegal wealth and having Swiss Bank accounts, can you imagine that the second Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri died a poor man, leaving behind a

debt for the car loan availed by him from a bank? He was one of the freedom fighters of India.

Lal Bahadur Shastri did not own a car even after becoming the Prime Minister and the family members persuaded him to own a car. Being a simple person, he had only Rs.7000/- in his bank account. A Fiat car cost Rs.12,000/- those days. He applied for a bank loan of Rs.5000/-. When he died at Tashkent on 11th Jan 1966, his loan account was not cleared fully.

Mysterious Death of Shastri

After signing an agreement with Pakistan in Tashkent (Soviet Union) on 10th Jan 1966, he died in his hotel room on 11th Jan 1966 reportedly due to heart attack. Though his family members raised doubt about his mysterious death, till date the cause of his death remains unknown.



Lal Bahadur Shastri-Sardar Swaran Singh-Y B Chavan – one of the last photos at Tashkent – 10th Jan 1966

The Prime Minister's Office, while refusing information under the RTI Act on the cause and the circumstances of Shastri's death, said that disclosing this information could harm India's foreign relations and also violate Parliamentary Privilege. Unfortunately, the simple and efficient Prime Minister is

forgotten in history forever.

Shastri in Politics

Born into a teacher's family on 2nd October 1904, Shastri joined the freedom movement in early 1920s. He spent more than 9 years in the jail on various occasions. As General Secretary of the Congress Party, he played an important role in the landslide victory of the Congress Party in the Indian General Elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962.

He served as the Minister of Railways in the Central Government from May 1952. In December 1956, he resigned, accepting moral responsibility for a railway accident at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu that resulted in 144 deaths, even though the Railway Minister was not responsible for such accidents.

Shastri as Prime Minister

Lal Bahadur Shastri took over as the Second Prime Minister of India, after the death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 9th June 1964. At that time the country was facing a huge economic

crisis, besides troubles created by China and Pakistan in the border. He implemented the Green Revolution and the White Revolution in the country to increase grain and milk production. He even appealed to the people to give up one meal, so that the saved food could be given to needy people. He gave importance to the Jawans and the Kisans, by coining a slogan, "Jai Jawan; Jai Kisan."



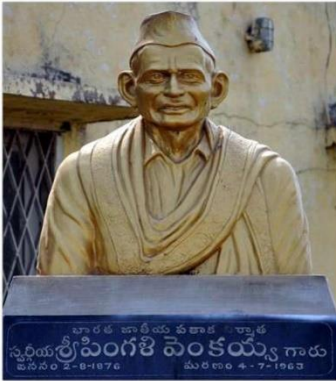
Shastri's greatest moment came when he led India to victory in the 1965 Indo-Pak War. It was during the signing of the Tashkent agreement between Pakistan and India that Shastri had mysterious death.

The nation remembers Lal Bahadur Shastri with reverence, and salutes him for his contribution to the nation.

Pingali Venkaiah

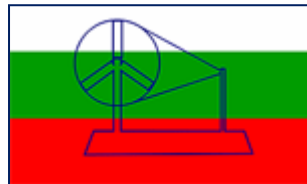
By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor (August 2014)

When we hoist the national tri-colored flag, most of us may not know the person, who designed the flag. Successive governments, post-Indian independence, have also ignored him and he has not been given his rightful place in history. The online survey conducted by your ezine, PreSense during this month, revealed that nearly 80% of the people who took the survey, were not familiar with his name. Interestingly, many associated this name with one of the better-known current political leaders.



Pingali Venkaiah was born on 2nd August 1876 in the erstwhile Madras Province (now Andhra Pradesh). He was an authority on many subjects, with doctorates in agriculture and geology. He was also an expert on diamonds and was popularly known as "Diamond Venkayya."

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi after meeting him in South Africa, Venkaiah actively involved himself with the freedom movement. It was during that time that he got the idea of designing a national flag for his mother country. He started research on the national flags of different countries. He authored a book, "A National Flag for India" in 1916.



During the All India Congress Committee meeting held in 1921 at Vijayawada, Venkaiah showed his model of the Indian flag

to Mahatma Gandhi. The model had red and green bands. Mahatma Gandhi suggested to him to include a white band on top and a spinning wheel in the center.



The flag underwent further modification with saffron color at the top, a white band in the middle and green at the bottom. Gandhiji's 'spinning wheel' was placed in the center. This flag was named the

'Swaraj Flag.'

This flag was hoisted by the then Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru on 31st December 1929, on the banks of the Ravi River in Lahore, in present day Pakistan. The flag of India was hoisted publicly across India by Congress volunteers, nationalists and the public. The year 1931 was a landmark in the history of the flag. A resolution was passed, adopting the tri-colored flag as the Indian national flag.

In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi, complimented Pingali Venkaiah, in his magazine 'Young India'.

On July 22, 1947, the Constituent Assembly adopted it as Free India's National Flag. The colors and their significance of the flag remained generally the same, ever since the Indian Independence. The only change adopted was the replacement of the spinning wheel with the Dharma Charkha of Emperor Asoka as the emblem on the flag. Thus, the tri-colored flag of the Congress Party eventually became the tri-colored flag of Independent India. Pingali Venkaiah's design became the prototype for the Indian National Flag.



Sadly, the person who designed the national flag was not recognized by the Government. He was not even listed as a 'freedom fighter.' Due to his poverty and ill health, he could not travel to Delhi to witness the hoisting of the tri-colored flag at the Red Fort. He died a poor man, on 4th July 1963. There have been representations from several quarters to confer the 'Bharat Ratna' on him for his contribution to the nation.



In 2009, the Government of India commemorated a postage stamp in his memory. In August 2014, the Central Board of Secondary Education conducted an online essay competition on Pingali Venkaiah, to create awareness about him among school children. The winners

were awarded on 15th August 2014 and they witnessed the flag hoisting by the Prime Minister at the Red Fort.

The country is used to the names of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru as leaders of the freedom movement. However, there are many other great people like Pingali Venkaiah, hailing from different regions of the country, who have contributed in their own silent way, in the freedom struggle.

Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathi

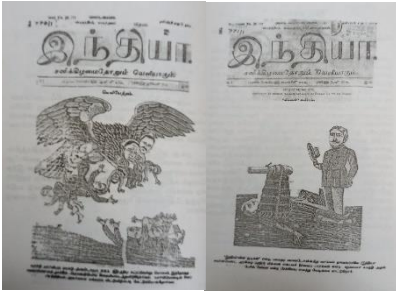
By Srinivas Gopal, Editorial Team (Sep 2021)

This September, the 100th death anniversary of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi (11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921), was observed across India. Mahakavi Bharathi was a celebrated poet, freedom fighter, social reformer and a journalist. He was the pioneer of modern Tamil poetry. He was proficient in 14 languages, including 3 foreign languages. Prime Minister Narendra Modi used to quote him very often in his speeches. Last week, he announced a Chair in the name of Mahakavi Bharathi at the Banaras Hindu University, for Tamil Studies.



Since his fiery songs kindled patriotism during the Indian Independence movement, British Government banned his poems, thus to make him popular. Through his thought-provoking poems, he emphasized the need and empowerment of women and fought against many social evils. His songs are still rejoiced in the Tamil films, in its original format and are still very popular.

Born in Ettayapuram of Tirunelveli district (present day Thoothukudi) in 1882, Bharathi had his early education in Tirunelveli and Varanasi and worked as a journalist with many newspapers, including The Hindu, Bala Bharata, Vijaya, Chakravarthini, the Swadesamitran and India. He was an outstanding cartoonist also.



***Cartoons drawn by
Bharatiyar against British***

He authored poems, 25 years before independence, celebrating the freedom and praising our spirit to Tricolor. He lived only for 39 years. Within that short period, he made a great mark in the Indian history. Sadly, during his lifetime, he lived in poverty and at the time of his funeral only 10 people participated.

Today, the whole world admires him and official requests have been made to celebrate Mahakavi Bharati in United Nation also.

Jai Hind Champakaraman Pillai

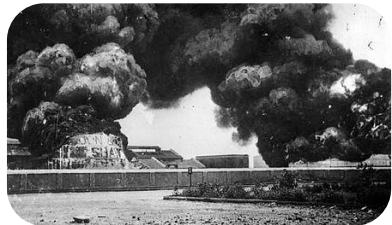
By C. Badri, Editorial Advisor (Oct 2021)

The entire nation, including our leaders irrespective of the political affiliation, use the magic word 'Jai Hind' without knowing who coined this word which united all the people. It was Dr Champakaraman Pillai (1891 – 1934) who coined this word Jai Hind even when he was a student and used it in 1907 to greet his friends.



Dr. Champakaraman Pillai

Dr. Champakaraman Pillai, a brave son of India was at the forefront in the fight for Indian Independence much before Mahatma Gandhiji, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Dadabhoy Nowroji, Lala Lajpat Rai and many other legendary freedom fighters. His thirst for freedom was so great that during his student days in Maharaja's College, Thiruvananthapuram he greeted all his friends with "Jai Hind", a slogan coined by him. He left India for Italy and then to Germany when he was only 17 years old. In the course of his short stint abroad he met many famous leaders including Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel (brother of Sardar Vallabhai Patel), M.N. Roy, Nethaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler and many other Nazi Party leaders. He was also an inspiration for Nethaji Subhas Chandra Bose.



Oil tanks on fire in the harbour following the bombardment of Madras by SMS Emden (1914)

An Engineer with doctorates in Political Science and Economics, he found an employment in the German Foreign Office. Later he was "Economic Adviser" to Kaiser Wilhelm II. In Germany he established Indian Independence Committee in 1914. When the World War I started Dr. Champakaraman came in the German war ship SMS Emden with its captain Karl von Muller in September 1914 and bombarded the Madras Harbor oil storage tanks and the British Naval Camps. The bombs targeted only British occupied places. Hence, none of the Indians were killed or injured in that attack. His plan of attacking Andamans for releasing the freedom fighter like Veer Savarkar could not fructify due to inclement weather at that time.

During World War 1, he is said to have printed and dropped pamphlets from the airplanes among the Indian Soldiers in France, exhorting them to turn against the British. Inspired from the Fourteen Points of Mr. Woodrow Wilson the then President USA, Dr. Champakaraman produced Eight Points' Proposal for the Indian Independence. His proposal demanded the French and the Portuguese to leave India. He launched "Pro-India," a monthly magazine published in German and English from Zurich, through which he highlighted the glorious past of India. He also started 'League of Oppressed People' with famous American author 'Edwin Emerson' and addressed many public meetings in U.S. and Africa in support of African Americans freedom.

After the World War I, when Hitler came to power, Dr. Champakaraman developed a working relationship with Hitler with a hope of getting military assistance to end the British Rule in India. But when Hitler had stated in 1931 that Indians deserved to be ruled by the British, Dr. Champakaraman protested immediately by demanding an apology. The apology came a day after the deadline he fixed.

He had the privilege of being the Prime Minister of Provisional Government of India set up in Afghanistan in 1915 with Raja Mahendra Pratap of Kabul as President. However, the defeat of the Germans in the War shattered the hopes of the revolutionaries. He was the forerunner of Rash Behari Bose and Subash Chandra Bose in organizing an Indian Army abroad to strike against the enemies at home. In 1933, Dr. Champakaraman met Subash Chandra Bose and jointly conceived the idea of Azad Hind. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had stayed with his family (including his father Motilal Nehru & his young daughter Indira) on a number of occasions in Dr. Champakaraman residence at Berlin.

He took vow to come back to India only after independence but he died in 1934 in Berlin due to suspected poisoning. Prior to his death he asked Lakshmibai, his Manipuri wife and adopted daughter of Madam Cama, to sprinkle his ashes in 'Nanjil Nadu' (Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu) and the



**Statue of
Dr Champakaraman
Pillai at Chennai**

Karamana River in Thiruvananthapuram. Lakshmibai returned to India with his ashes and travelled from Bombay to Trivandrum aboard *INS Delhi* some years after Independence and immersed them in the river Karamana during a Government-sponsored function."

In 2008 his statue, as a memorial to his honour, was unveiled in Chennai by the then Chief Minister Late Mr. M. Karunanidhi. Many patriotic people in India fought for Indian independence. At the same time the sacrifice and the contributions made by many Indians abroad is no less significant. Dr. Champakaraman was one such eminent freedom fighter.

Mrs. Lakshmibai, who was living in a flat in Bombay, died on 6th December 1972. Maharashtra Police broke open the Flat and took possession of all documents. It was also learnt that 17 Boxes containing various documents were sent to 'Archives India' New Delhi. It is presumed that the boxes might contain letters from Kaiser Wilhelm II, US President Woodrow Wilson, UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the apology letter written by Adolf Hitler.

Dr. Champakaraman photograph is also exhibited in "Revolutionaries Gallery" at Teen Murti Bhavan in New Delhi.

(With inputs from Dr. Sethuseshan, Assistant General Manager (Retd), Indian Overseas Bank and grandson of Dr. Champakaraman Pillai.)

Arya Bhashyam

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Jan 2022)

On 26th January 2022, India celebrated her 73rd Republic Day. During the freedom struggle, many patriots had come out and fought against the British Raj, spending the prime of their youth in prisons. These patriots had also contributed to the independence and freedom we now enjoy. Their families suffered. Many of these patriots' grandchildren lead very simple lives. Sadly, but for a few top national leaders, several thousands of great men and women are not even known to the present generation.



***Shri Arya Bhashyam,
who hoisted the Indian
Tricolor, after removing
the Union Jack in 1932
– a rare photo***

The media, especially the television channels rarely talk about the freedom struggle and the sufferings of these great men and women who struggled for this freedom. During the Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations, the mainstream freedom fighters are lauded, with no mention about the true Unsung Heroes. Our school textbooks to recognize only a couple of the leaders of the Independence period. Many citizens across the country prefer to spend these national holidays entertaining themselves. Many Indians are under the impression that our

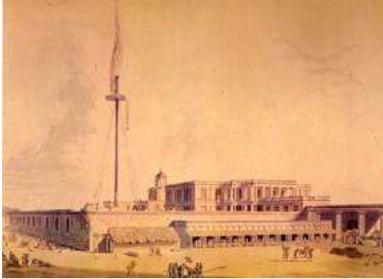
National Flag has been flying atop only since 15th August 1947. Very few are aware that on 26th January 1932 at 2 a.m., someone had dared to bring down the Union Jack and hoist the Indian Tricolor at the prestigious flag post of Fort St. George at Madras. This was by a 25-year-old vibrant youth named Arya K Bhashyam. In 1919, as a young 12-year-old student, K Bhashyam (Arya was his pen name) was disturbed

to hear about the massacre of hundreds of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh by General Dyer. He was also inspired by Vanchinathan, who shot and killed Collector Ashe in 1911 and later killed himself at Maniyachi Railway station. Bhashyam purchased four pistols secretly to kill the then Governor of Madras Province and later shoot himself. However, when he stood before the Governor face to face, ready to shoot him, a spark crossed his mind and he resolved not to resort to violence but follow Mahatma Gandhi. Spurred by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's vision of Swaraj, Bhashyam became a firebrand revolutionary and dared to do several feats protesting against the British colonial rule.

He was imprisoned several times and tortured by the police. The Fort St. George, Madras was built in 1644 by the British rulers as their first fortress in India. In 1687, they erected a 148-foot high flag post made of teakwood to stand as the tallest flag post in the country. The Union Jack used to be hoisted on that flag post every day. The British considered these two among the most prestigious imperial symbols erected by them.

26th January was considered the Swarajya Day by the Congress leaders then. Bhashyam wanted to hoist the Indian Tricolor on the Flag Post on Swarajya Day in 1932. Two days in advance, he personally made a large tricolor flag, using his dhoti and wrote in Tamil "இன்றிலிருந்து இந்தியா சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தது" ("From today India has attained independence"). He tied the tricolor dhoti on his waist to skip the notice of the security personnel. In the early hours of 26th January 1932 at 2 a.m., he arrived at the flag post. Arya Bhashyam climbed up the 148-foot flag post, removed the Union Jack from the ropes and hoisted the Indian tricolor. The Union Jack was torn into pieces. No doubt, seeing the Indian tricolor flying atop the tallest flag post infuriated the British and two days later, they arrested Arya Bhashyam and sentenced him to rigorous

imprisonment in the Central Jail. He was treated as a 'dangerous prisoner' and kept in quarantine. Netaji Subash



***Fort St George and the
Teakwood Flag Staff (100
years ago)***

Chandra Bose was also brought to the Madras prison during that time. Both Arya Bhashyam and Netaji became close associates. In an exclusive interview to the All India Radio during 1970s, Arya Bhashyam described the torture he faced with the police in the jail. He said he was given 30 lashes for questioning their atrocities.

He shouted 'Vande Mataram' repeatedly, while the Police mercilessly lashed him continuously. Bhashyam was an artist and sculptor. After independence, he returned to a quiet and simple life. He refused the pension given to freedom fighters. He died in 1999 at the age of 93. The Indian tricolor was first hoisted in all the States, including Delhi on 15th August 1947. But Bhashyam accomplished this, as far back as 1932.

Today, only a few records have registered his achievements. With great effort, PreSense traced his only available photograph. The teakwood flag post was replaced in 1994 with a steel replica by the State Government. In every district of the country, there were thousands of such Arya Bhashyams, who are not known to the present generation. Both the Central and the State Governments should identify these unsung freedom fighters and popularize their contributions, for the knowledge of the present generation. PreSense salutes these great heroes.

PreSense appeals to Hon'ble Prime Minister to consider installing his statue inside the Parliament House, befitting his stature.

Madurai A Vaidynatha Iyer

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (April 2023)

A Vaidyanatha Iyer also popularly known as Madurai Vaidyanatha Iyer was a freedom fighter and a social activist. During 1939 he led the temple entry movement for Dalits in the then Madras Presidency. A staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi, he actively participated in Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920-22, Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and Quit India Movement in 1942 and was a pillar of support to freedom movement against the British.



**AV IYER SPINNING WITH THAKLI
IN HAND**

Vaidyanatha Iyer was born to Sri Arunachalam Iyer and Smt. Lakshmi Ammal on 16 May 1890. He was the second child to them. Arunachalam Iyer worked in Pudukkottai Maharaja's School as Mathematics teacher. Vaidyanatha Iyer completed his SSLC in Madurai Sethupathy High School during 1909 and did his FA in Madura College. He was the recipient of the prestigious Neelakanda Shastri Gold Medal and the Fisher Gold Medal by the institution. Vaidyanatha Iyer after his FA examinations, married Akilandam at the age of 18.

During 1914 he completed his B.A. degree from Madras Presidency College. After completing his B.A. degree, he worked as a teacher for one year each at Bishop Heber Higher Secondary School in Trichy and at Masoolipattinam Hindu

Higher Secondary School. He then got qualified himself as an Advocate and enrolled in the Bar. Even from his early childhood days Vaidyanatha Iyer had been inspired by the speeches of the leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Bipin Chandra Pal, Chittaranjan Das etc. While he was studying in Presidency College, Madras, he attended a public meeting addressed by Bipin Chandra Pal at the Madras Beach. The Principal of the College who happened to be British got upset and Vaidyanatha Iyer was made to stand on the bench from morning to evening as punishment. But that did not deter him from involving later in the freedom movement.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Madurai once in 1919. During his second visit in 1921 Mahatma Gandhi draped a small dhoti around his waist to symbolically identify himself with the local farmers. He also addressed a public meeting which triggered inspiration amongst many youngsters and in later years many of them became leaders and social reformers. Vaidyanatha Iyer was one among them who went on to become a great leader and a social reformer.

In 1920, when Gandhiji announced the Non-Cooperation Movement, Vaidyanatha Iyer wanted to leave his lucrative practice as a lawyer and join the Indian National Congress as a full-time worker. However as per the advice of Chittaranjan Das and Mahatma Gandhi, who were touring Madurai at that time, Vaidyanatha Iyer continued his legal profession as advocate and simultaneously work for the Indian National Congress to inspire the youth and entice more volunteers to join the party. Thus he accepted the twin challenges of practicing as an advocate as well as a political and social activist.

Gandhiji sequel to the Non-Cooperation movement desired that the volunteers to take part in activities like Khadi promotion, Hindu-Muslim unity, empowerment of Dalits and the abolishing of liquor sale to public. He and his volunteers

promoted Khadi cloth and making handspun Khadi cloth in Madurai and the villages nearby. Vaidyanatha Iyer also introduced the hand-spinning wheel for making handspun Khadi cloth. He visited many nearby villages and propagated the importance of Khadi thereby boosting its production and sales. Consequentially Madurai District was ranked number one in the entire Madras Presidency and bagged the prestigious Silver Hand-Spinning Wheel.

In December 1929, the talks between Mahatma Gandhi and the British Government failed. Hence Gandhiji decided to conduct the Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi. Rajaji and Iyer met in Madurai regarding implementation of Salt March in South India and it was decided that the Salt March would start from Tiruchirappalli and end at Vedaranyam where the preparation of salt would take place. Gandhiji was arrested by the British government at the end of Dandi March and imprisoned for six years. Despite that the Salt March in South India commenced on 13 April 1930 at Trichy and ended after 15 days at Vedaranyam. Rajaji, who made salt there was arrested and put in jail. Vaidyanatha Iyer as suggested by Rajaji, did not participate in the procession. After Rajaji's arrest, Vaidyanatha Iyer and other leaders continued the Salt March ignoring the ban orders. The police suddenly stormed the place to disperse the crowd when Vaidyanatha Iyer was addressing a public meeting. In the process they attacked Vaidyanatha Iyer and dragged him for a furlong. He and the others who were participating in the meeting were arrested and imprisoned in Trichi jail. They were released only after Gandhi-Irwin Pact which was signed in 1931.

Gandhiji started the civil disobedience movement in 1932. Vaidyanatha Iyer campaigned against liquor and boycott of foreign made goods in Madurai. He met the expenses incurred for these campaigns out of his personal savings. When Gandhiji was arrested, a public meeting was organized in Madurai. The police entered the meeting and read Section 144

which was condemned by Vaidyanatha Iyer. He was arrested for resisting the act of the police. The court ordered his imprisonment for one year and a fine of Rs. 500. He was lodged in Vellore jail. To recover the fine amount the police decided to auction his car but none from the public came to buy the car. It demonstrated the love, respect and regard they had for Vaidyanatha Iyer. At that time Congress Committee also did not have adequate funds to continue the agitation. Coming to know that the Congress Committee of Madurai did not have enough funds to continue the civil disobedience movement, Vaidyanatha Iyer, before leaving for Vellore jail, planned through one of his confidants to dispose of some of his family jewels to raise money for the Congress Committee of Madurai. The jewels were pawned for Rs 7000/- instead of being sold and were later redeemed with Vaidyanatha Iyer's savings.

In 1940 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested and jailed in Kashmir, the people of Madurai protested and closed their shops. At that time Hindus and Muslims gathered with weapons at the junction of South Masi Street and West Masi Street and the situation became tense. Coming to know of this Vaidyanatha Iyer went to the spot and pleaded with both sides to calm down by falling on the ground with folded hands. The angry crowd calmed down and dispersed without causing any untoward incident. Thus what could have been a major clash was averted on time by Vaidyanatha Iyer. His contribution towards Hindu-Muslim unity was extraordinary to say the least.

In 1940, during the Congress Committee meeting held at Pune, Gandhiji called for individuals to take part in Satyagraha. Iyer selected the volunteers for the Satyagraha and led them in the Madurai. Akilandam Ammal, wife of Iyer, was also a volunteer. She too was arrested and imprisoned for three months in Vellore Jail. On 8th August 1942, Gandhiji announced the 'Quit India' Movement. The British Government

got annoyed and enraged. It jailed Gandhiji and several other Congress leaders. Curfew was also imposed all over India. Coming to know of Gandhiji's arrest, Vaidyanatha Iyer organized a public meeting at Thilakar Ground in Madurai by breaking the curfew. Police lathi-charged and fired at the people who attended the meeting. Several people lost their lives while many were injured. Vaidyanatha Iyer was arrested for instigating people and breaking the curfew and was sent to the Alipore Jail. He was in jail when his eldest son passed away. The news reached him quite late. He had to come out on parole and perform the last rites for his eldest son. Vaidyanatha Iyer also got his elder daughter Sulochana married while he was in parole. Vaidyanatha Iyer was released from Alipore Jail after six months. He was rearrested at the entrance of the jail and taken to Thanjavur Jail and then moved to Vellore Jail. As part of a general amnesty in 1945 he was set free from jail and he continued his practice as an advocate.

Vaidyanatha Iyer continuously emphasized and worked for cooperation between Hindus and Muslims in Madurai district. He too, like Mahatma Gandhi, did not like the division of India and Pakistan. While India attained independence on 15th August 1947 the whole country celebrated the occasion, the joy of leaders like Gandhiji and Vaidyanatha Iyer was tinged with sorrow at the India-Pakistan Partition.

While spreading the Khadi movement, Vaidyanatha Iyer also spread education and involved himself to abolish untouchability in Madurai and its neighboring villages. Iyer fought for the cause even before the Harijan Sevak Sangh and other such social reformist organizations were formed. He along with other prominent personalities like M.N.R. Subburaman, Dr. G. Ramachandran, Somasundara Bharathy, Manakkal Pattabirama Iyer, Cholavandan Chinnasamy Pillai and Mattaparai Venkatrama Iyer worked hard for the temple entry movement in Madurai. The members of the Meenakshi

Amman Temple Trust and its Chairman R.S. Naidu also supported this reform.

On July 8, 1939, Vaidyanatha Iyer entered Meenakshi Amman temple with a group of Dalits and members of other castes. At the entrance to the temple, they were honored by R. S. Naidu, who had made proper arrangements for them to worship the main deity of the temple. Vaidyanatha Iyer then announced that temple entry for Dalits was successful. Temple entry movement was one of the great reforms which was instrumental in abolishing untouchability. His contribution towards this is highly laudable as he fought against several odds to achieve this feat. Vaidyanatha Iyer breathed his last on February 23, 1955. A biography of Vaidyanatha Iyer titled "Harjana Thanthai Amarar Vaidyanatha Iyerin Vazhkai Varalaaru" (Biography of the Immortal Vaidyanatha Iyer, Father to all Harijans) was authored by Professor P. S. Chandrababu in 1991.

Every year on Iyer's death anniversary people pay respect to him by garlanding his statue. On that day, respects are paid to his memorial at the Chennai Thakkar Baba Vidyalaya School and the Madurai 'Sevalayam' which was started by Vaidyanatha Iyer in 1932 to serve the Harijans. A postage stamp was issued in his memory by the Government of India on 9th December 1999. The inspiring speeches made by Iyer in the Madras Legislative Assembly were compiled by Professor P. S. Chandrababu and released as a book titled "Voice of a Great Soul" by Gandhi Memorial Museum, Madurai.

Veerangana Jhalkari Bai

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Sep 2022)



India is an incredible country. The country had produced great Rishis, Saints, Religious Gurus, Emperors and Kings and produced a great culture since the evolution of mankind. The country also produced an incredible number of freedom fighters from all sections of the society including from the dalit community.

Jhalkari Bai is one such

brave and valiant freedom fighter who not only made the dalit community proud but also the comity of freedom fighters. A remarkable freedom fighter during the Rebellion of 1857 she was one woman driven by sheer fortitude and courage and was able to strike terror to the British army and leave behind a rich legacy for the future freedom fighters to emulate. The remarkably interesting factor is that Jhalkari Bai had close resemblance to the legendary woman freedom fighter Rani Lakshmi Bai.

Jhalkari Bai was born on November 22, 1830, to Sadoba Singh and Jamuna Devi in a village called Bhojla near Jhansi. She was the only child of the couple. When Jhalkari was young her mother passed away and so she was raised by her father as a single parent. The family belonged to Kori caste. Kori was a dalit community which was oppressed. Though the family was poor and as such she could not continue her schooling and peruse her formal education she had an opportunity to gain

experience in wielding of weapons and horse riding at an early age.

Jhalkari grew up as a very brave girl right from her younger days. Stories of her bravery is remembered in the various neighbourhoods in Jhansi even today. When she was young some dacoits tried to raid the house of a businessperson living in the village. Jhalkari foiled their attempts single-handedly, drove them away and saved the businessman. Also, when a tiger attacked her when she was passing through a jungle she killed the tiger with an axe all alone. She displayed extraordinary bravery from her early age itself without any fear or apprehensions.

Jhalkari's betrothal took place with Puran Singh who was a soldier in the Rani Jhansi's army. Puran Singh was a soldier of great calibre and his skills were quickly recognized by the Generals in the Army. During Gauri Puja, Jhalkari happened to go to the fort along with some women from the village. It was there that the legendary Lakshmi Bai spotted her and she was taken by surprise the uncanny resemblance of her with Jhalkari. She made inquiries immediately and came to know about the bravery acts of Jhalkari Bai. Jhalkari Bai was thereafter quickly inducted into the women's wing of the Lakshmi Bai's army. She was trained to shoot and ignite cannons since Lakshmi Bai's army was preparing for British invasion at that time.

The Mutiny of Sepoys on May 10, 1857, in Meerut gave rise to a number of rebellions by the revolutionaries across North and Central India. It was considered as the first war of Indian independence. Jhansi headed by Rani Lakshmi Bai played a pivotal role in the revolution and struggle for independence from the British raj. Rani Laxmibai spearheaded the rebellion and bravely took on the British forces.

Field Marshal Hugh Henry Rose of the British army in 1858, laid a siege of Jhansi to put an end to the mutiny. It has been well documented in history books that the brave queen took on the British forces from her fort with just an army of 4,000. She could have held on to the fort for long but she was betrayed by one of her own commanders making her defeat imminent. Counselling by her Generals to escape immediately, Laxmibai quietly slipped away from Jhansi on horseback.

That was the moment for Jhalkari and she sprung to action and exhibited an extraordinary bravery and commitment to Rani Lakshmi Bai. Without hesitating and notwithstanding the danger she disguised herself as the Rani Lakshmi Bai and went to the battlefield and took complete command of the army. She thereafter bravely walked to Field Marshal Hugh Henry Rose's camp. Upon reaching, she loudly yelled that she wanted a meeting with the General himself. This plan was both to keep the enemy forces at bay and also give the queen more time to evade capture and reassemble with renewed force to attack the British.

Jhalkari Bai's resemblance to Rani Lakshmi Bai completely confused the British army. According to Bundelkhand legend, when Field Marshal Hugh Henry Rose mistaking her to Rani Lakshmi Bai asked her what punishment should be given to her. Jhalkari Bai without any hesitation said that even she could be hanged to death. Field Marshal Hugh Henry Rose was taken aback as he never expected such a response from the captured Jhalkari Bai. It is reported that he remarked if even one percent of the women in India were to be like her the British would have left the country long ago. It was only a day later, when a man named Dulha Joo identified Jhalkari, that the British learned of the deception. There is some confusion regarding her death. Some accounts place the year of her death as in 1890 and some reports indicate that she was hanged to death by the British..

President Ramnath Kovind unveiled the statue of Jhalkari Bai at Guru Tegh Bahadur Complex in Bhopal on 10 November 2017. Jhalkari Bai memorial park was established in Lalbagh, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. A small park had been established in Jhansi where the statue of Jhalkari Bai was installed. In 2001 a postal stamp was released to honour Jhalkari Bai by the Government of India. There is a statue of Jhalkari Bai established in her honour in Gwalior who bravely defended her people and her country.



Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address at Rashtra Raksha Samarpan Parv in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh on 19th November, 2021 mentioned about Jhalkari Bai. ***"This land has also been a witness to the bravery and military prowess of Veerangana Jhalkari Bai, who was an integral ally of Rani Laxmibai. I also pay my respectful obeisance at the feet of that immortal heroine of the freedom struggle of 1857."***

Jhalkari's had been ignored in the history books for an exceptionally long time. However, in recent times there has been a concerted effort by historians to highlight the story of this incredible dalit Veerangana and other forgotten and neglected freedom fighters of India.

Tantia Tope- A Hero of 1857 Revolt

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Oct 2022)



Tantia Tope is one of the outstanding rebel generals during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 who left an indelible mark in the Indian History. Despite no military training he fought the battles with valour, leadership qualities and established himself as a great leader and a freedom fighter. Tantia Tope is considered as one of the best and a prudent rebel general during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Tantia Tope did not wake up to the reality of the British rule on the eve of 1857 but was a product of a strong anti-British tradition that continued even after the fall of the Marathas in 1818. Tantia got the title Tope which meant Commanding Officer. He was a follower of Nana Saheb of Bithur.

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that the 1857 revolt came to be interpreted as a "planned war of national independence", by V.D. Savarkar in his book "The Indian War of Independence, 1857". Savarkar called the revolt the first war of Indian independence. He said it was inspired by the lofty ideal of self-rule by Indians through a nationalist upsurge. Dr S.N. Sen in his book titled "Eighteen Fifty-Seven" considers the revolt as having begun as a fight for religion but ending as a war of independence. The rebellion of 1857 marked a significant turning point in the history of India and this led to far-reaching changes in the system of administration and the policies of the British government. Tantia Tope's nimble marches, his flexible war strategies and his undiminished spirit in the face of adversity are often compared to those of Shivaji.

Tantia was born to Ramachandra and Rukmadevi in 1814 in Yeola near Nasik. He belonged to the Maratha Vasishta Brahmin family. Growing up under the guidance of his father who was a scholar of Sanskrit, Tantia was well versed with India's polity. His passion for protecting India's freedom, that he demonstrated during his later years, was an inspiration from his early influences. His father Ramachandra was a prominent noble at the court of exiled Peshwa Baji Rao II in Bithoor. Tantia Tope became a close friend of Peshwa's adopted son, Nana Pant and popularly known as Nana Saheb. His other very important friends were Rao Saheb and Rani Lakshmi Bai. 'Tantia' was the nickname given to him since childhood and it means 'General' and 'Tope' was a title which was given to him later which means 'Commanding Officer.'

Tantia Tope's **role in the Revolt of 1857 is admirable.** Tantia Tope rebelled against the British when Nana Saheb was deprived of his father's pension because he was not a natural born child of Peshwa Baji Rao II. Nana Saheb assumed the position of rebel leader during the Cawnpore (presently Kanpur) rebellion and later on 25 June 1857 after the surrender of the British forces became the Peshwa. Tantia Tope was his Commander in Chief. However, General Havelock defeated Nana Saheb and recaptured Cawnpore in mid-July 1857. But in late November 1857, Tantia Tope gathered an army predominantly from the Gwalior contingent and took back Cawnpore from General Charles Ash Windham. However, in December the same year, he was defeated by Sir Colin Campbell and had to retreat to Kalpi.

Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi was under attack from the British forces led by Sir Hugh Rose in March 1858 and Tantia Tope came to her rescue and helped her to escape and welcomed her to Kalpi. When Kalpi was conquered by the British, the trio - Rani Lakshmi Bai, Tantia and Rao Saheb - moved to Gwalior. Tantia Tope enticed the soldiers of Gwalior to join the movement to attack the British. The Gwalior Fort was taken

over declaring as Hindavi Swaraj. Nana Saheb was announced as their Peshwa. In a subsequent battle with the British under General Rose on June 17, 1858 Rani Lakshmi Bai became a martyr and the rest escaped for the Rajputana.

After the defeat of Gwalior, Tantia Tope planned the strategy of guerrilla warfare over an extensive expansive area of the central part of India consisting of Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajputana and Khandesh. The guerrilla warfare caused a great impediment to the British and were not able to counter the same.

Tantia Tope wanted to cross the Narmada River to reach down south and garner popular support from the rulers and people for Peshwa, which the British did not want to happen. The British army under the command of Col Holmes, General Roberts and General Michel attacked him at numerous places, but each time he skillfully got away from their clutches. In many regions Tantia Tope convinced minor rulers to back the rebellion and at other places, he defeated and charged them fines. Due to this he was able to gather and sustain the army. The British tried to chase him for around 2800 miles across the hills, valleys and forest but such was his skill that they failed to capture him.

The British finally captured Tantia Tope as Raja of Narwar, Man Singh in exchange of protection for himself and his family handed over Tantia Tope. Tantia Tope was tried in a military court by the British but he vehemently denied any role in British civilian massacres. He challenged the sedition charges boldly declaring that his master was only Nana Saheb and not the British. The British claim that Tantia Tope was executed at Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh on 18th April 1859 witnessed by thousands of people.

The descendants of Tantia Tope denied that he was hanged. In a book titled, 'Tantia Tope's Operation Red Lotus' authored

by Parag Tope claimed that Tantia Tope died in January 1859 fighting against the British in a battle in Chhipa Barod and that he was not hanged. It is further mentioned in the book that the person who was hanged was one of the freedom fighters who continued to fight till April 1859 by disguising as Tantia Tope.



Nana Rao Park, Kanpur honoured eminent personalities of India's struggle for freedom. The park houses a statue of Tantia Tope along with

Nana Saheb and Rani Lakshmi Bai. Another statue of Tantia Tope stands at his hometown in Yeola in Nasik District, Maharashtra. Mahesh Sharma In 2016, the then Union Minister for Culture released a commemorative coin of Rs 200 denomination and a coin of Rs 10, in Tantia Tope's honour.



Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi on the occasion of the country's 76th Independence Day also specifically recalled the yeoman service made by Tantia Tope in his fight against the British for the independence of India.

Tilka Manjhji - A Tribal Leader

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Nov 2022)



Indian civilization is one of the oldest living civilisation and is estimated to be about 7000 years old. The real Indian history had been camouflaged with distorted facts by some western historians. The Manjhji Revolt against the British which was camouflaged is one such classic case in the Indian history. Tilka Manjhji was a valiant freedom fighter from Bihar. He belonged to the tribal community. He was the first to proclaim an open revolt against the British and incessantly fought for freedom from 1771 until 1784. He revolted against the British rule with bows and arrows way before Mangal Pandey took up arms against the British. He had fought the battle with courage, strong conviction and resisted the British rule for the atrocities and brutality committed by them. He was ultimately captured and was hanged in 1785 by the British. The fight against the British was a long-drawn affair and Tilka Manjhji's

fight against the British was the precursor to the tribal uprising followed by Bhumij Revolt (1798), the Chero Uprising (1810), the Munda Uprising (1819-1820), the Kol Rebellion (1833), the Second Bhumij Revolt (1834) and of the Santhal Hool (1855).

Tilka Majhi was born in a Santhal family on 11th February 1750 in a small village called Tilakpur in Sultanganj, Bihar. His father's name was Sundara Murmu. Since childhood Tilka lived in the forest and hunted wild animals for a living. His favourite activities were workouts, wrestling, climbing on the trees, walking in the valleys, playing with wild animals, roaming in wild forests, river fronts etc. Having been in the forest since childhood days amongst the wildlife made him brave and fearless. His weapons were bows and arrows.

Tilka since his childhood days witnessed the tyranny and the oppression of the British unleashed on the tribals and their family. The British forcefully grabbed their rights of the cultivation and the wild trees etc. The tribal people including the women, children and old people were mercilessly tortured. The mountains which were inhabited by the landlords kept the British in good books in return for the money. All these factors culminated and provoked Tilka to rebel against the British. The tribals under the leadership of Tilka were headed towards the forest areas of Bhagalpur and Sultanganj. During sometime around 1770, the Santhal Pargana was dying due to severe drought. The British instead of providing assistance like food and other relief material to the people exploited them mercilessly. This was the triggering point for the revolt of Tilka.

Tilka and the tribals led by him were in constant fight with the British forces. Cleveland and Sir Eyre Coote pitched battles with the brave Tilka's army. While the British army headed for a battle Tilka's tribals began to secretly hit arrows on the

English army. Tilka then climbed a palm tree and Cleveland came on a horse at that place. At that moment, Tilka fatally attacked Cleveland on January 13, 1784, with his arrows and killed him. The British got rattled with the attack and the death of Cleveland.

After the death of Cleveland, the British were on the look out to capture Tilka. One night, Tilka and tribals were celebrating with dance and songs and on the defeat of the British. Surprisingly a traitor Warlord Jaudah attacked Tilka's army. In this sudden attack Tilka survived but many of his soldiers were martyred and some were imprisoned. Tilka escaped from the scene and took refuge in the mountains of Sultanganj. The British English army then laid a trap for him in the surrounding mountain areas of Sultanganj and Bhagalpur. Tilka and his soldiers who were hiding in mountainous areas had to struggle a lot to survive. His soldiers died due to lack of proper food and starvation. By now Tilka changed his strategy and fought a guerrilla war with the British. In the process Tilka was trapped by the Britishers and was captured in 1785. The British after capturing Tilka tied him to a horse and dragged him all the way to the Collector's residence at Bhagalpur, His lacerated body was hung in public from a Banyan tree. Tilka will be fondly remembered eternally as a great son of Mother India.

After Indian Independence, a statue of Tilka was erected at the spot where he was hanged, which is located near the residence of Bhagalpur S.P. Bhagalpur University, in his honour, was also renamed as "Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University." A statue of Tilka was also erected at Dumka, Jharkhand in his honour.

Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Dec 2022)

The first half of the Nineteenth Century witnessed two significant developments in Indian history. While the British were rapidly expanding colonialism, the period also witnessed fierce resistance and defiance by different strata of Indian society. The year 1857 is regarded as the earliest large-scale revolt against the British. There were also many uprisings that broke out locally throughout India. And one of them was the Polygar Wars down South of India that occurred between March 1799 to July 1805. This



was one of the severest revolts faced by the British. It is very interesting to note that contrary to the most historians' claims, the British did not have an easy challenge as the Polygar Wars were the most serious and bloodiest challenge to their dominance. During the 6-year period the British had to face stiff resistance and they had to taste defeat in many battles. All the main participants in the Polygar Wars strongly challenged and overcame the British. However, the British took some cunning and treachery to capture and execute these brave fighters.

Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy belonged to the clan of Polygars who offered stiff resistance to the British East India Company and their rule. The Polygars were basically small-time lords. They became prominent during the rule of the Vijayanagar Empire. They were known for their combat capabilities and had private armies which fought during various battles. The Polygars were well trained and had experience in artillery. Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy was born to farmer Telugu

Palegaadu Malla Reddy and Seethamma in Rupanagudi village on 24th November 1806. He belonged to the Motati clan which is a subsect of Reddys in Andhra Pradesh. Malla Reddy was related to the Jagirdar family of Uyyalawada in Koilakuntla (Kurnool District) by his marriage with two daughters of the Palegar of Nossam. He had three sons and Narasimha was the youngest and only son of Seethamma, the younger daughter of the Palegar of Nossam. Narasimha Reddy and his trusted friend and Commander-in-chief Vadde Obanna fought for the freedom against British rule in 1847 along with 5,000 peasants who revolted against the British East India Company in Nandyal district.

Nizam ceded the Rayalaseema region to the British as a part of their agreement and the Polygars came under the British rule. Since the Polygars had large estates and wealth the British abolished the Polygar system and acquired them. In lieu of the annexing of the estates the Polygars were given some grants and pension in some cases. One of the Polygars was in Uyyalawada in the Kurnool district. Malla Reddy was the adopted son of Nosam zamindar Chenchumalla Jayarami Reddy. On the abolition of the Polygar system a pension of Rs. Eleven was granted to Malla Reddy but later on discontinued by the British since Malla Reddy was the adopted son of Nosam zamindar Chenchumalla Jayarami Reddy. This is the triggering point that made Narasimha Reddy furious and he decided to revolt against the British. Somewhere around the same time some of his relatives were facing certain proposals by the British for reducing their rights on the lands. Further in 1846, the British grabbed the land rights held by the villagers who had died in the villages of Koilakuntla, Goodladurty and Nossam. Encouraged by the discontent and dissent of the people Narasimha Reddy became the leader of the revolt against the British. Narasimha Reddy was also joined by other Polygars whose lands and assets were seized by the British. The Zamindars of Wanaparthy, Munagala, Penugonda, and the

Boya, Chenchu tribes in the Nallamalla Hills supported him by joining in his uprising against the British.

Narasimha Reddy along with a strong force of Boyas first attacked the Koilakuntla treasury on July 10, 1846. The Tahsildar was killed and beheaded. The Treasurer was also killed and the treasury was razed to the ground. The British then surprised by the attack, cracked down hard. They captured Narasimha Reddy's close associates Gosai Venkana and Obanna. The British then sent an army under Captain Knott and Captain Watson to capture Narasimha Reddy but failed to do so. Narasimha Reddy defeated the British army forcing Captain Knott and Captain Watson to withdraw from the scene. Narasimha Reddy once again attacked the British forces in the Nallamalla forests at Giddalur and forced them to withdraw. He kept the British on tenterhooks with a series of guerrilla attacks and hence they failed to capture him.

The British then captured and imprisoned Narasimha Reddy's family at Kadapa. When Narasimha Reddy came there to free his family, the Collector of Kadapa surrounded the area with his army. Narasimha Reddy's cook was bribed to mix toddy in his food to make him intoxicated and his gun was also disabled. Narasimha Reddy was captured on October 6, 1846, and was brought to Koilakuntla, along with several of his associates. A prolonged trial was held accusing Narasimha Reddy of revolting against the British. He was also charged with looting and murder. After the completion of the trial, he was found guilty and the death penalty was awarded. Narasimha Reddy was hanged in public on February 22, 1847, at 7 a.m, at Jurreti, Koilakuntla, Kurnool district. Later his head was displayed at the Koilakuntla fort as a warning to the general public revolting against the British.

Renati Chandrula Smaraka Samithi was formed to celebrate and preserve the memory of Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy

and the renowned philanthropist Budda Vengal Reddy both of whom belonged to Uyyalawada village. The Committee published a book titled *Renati Surya Chandrulu (The Sun and Moon of Renadu)* in Telugu and in English during the year 2015 which contains excerpts from research papers by historians. Kurnool Airport at Orvakal has been named Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy Airport in 2015. A movie based on Narasimha Reddy's life 'Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy' starring Chiranjeevi and directed by Surender Reddy was released on 2 October 2019. Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy is also known as Koilakuntla Narsimha Reddy. After his execution on 22 February 1847, incidentally ten years before the historic First War of Independence, his head was hung on a scaffold in the ort of Nossam where it remained till 1877. The heroic and patriotic attempt of Koilakuntla Narsimha Reddy inspired millions of people in the region. He is hailed as the hero who led the revolt in Andhra Pradesh against British rule.

Accamma Cherian: The Jhansi Rani Of Travancore

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Feb 2023)



Accamma Cherian was a freedom fighter from Kerala who protested against the ban on Travancore State Congress by Dewan of Travancore. *"I am the leader; shoot me first before you kill others"*. These were the exact words of Accamma Cherian who led a mass rally to the palace of Maharaja Chithira Thirunal from Thamapanoor to the Kowdiar. The rally was focused to get the ban on the State Congress lifted. Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed her as the

Jhansi Rani of Travancore for the courage exhibited by her. She is one among many unsung India's freedom fighters whose names have sunk into anonymity over the years. Kandathil Sebastian, a social scientist wrote "For more than 15 years she was probably the toughest woman in public politics in Travancore and was at the forefront of the momentous people's struggle in Travancore in the pre-independence era," Accamma was born to Thomman Cherian and Annamma Karippaparambil on 14 February 1909 in a Nasrani family (Karippaparambil) at Kanjirapally, Travancore. She was their second daughter. She had her schooling at the Government Girls High School, Kanjirapally and later at St. Joseph's High School, Changanacherry. She completed her BA in History from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam. During 1931 she took up teaching at St. Mary's English Medium School, Edakkara and she later became the Headmistress of the school and worked for six years.

Accamma joined the *Travancore State Congress* which was formed in February 1938. At that time the people of Travancore were pressing for a responsible government and started the agitation. The Dewan of Travancore decided to suppress the agitation since he was taking orders from the Maharaja and on 26 August 1938, the State Congress was banned by using his discretionary powers. This ban triggered to a civil disobedience movement which was the first of its kind in Kerala. The top Congress leaders like Pattom Thanu Pillai were jailed. This led to alter their course of agitation. The President of the State Congress was given powers to choose a successor and simultaneously the working committee was dissolved. All the eleven Presidents of the State Congress were arrested one by one and the movement was about to collapse. However, fortunately Kuttanad Ramakrishna Pillai, the eleventh president due to his foresight before his arrest nominated Accamma Cherian as his successor. Thereafter a Strikers' Union emerged and the Congress found their new leader in this bold and a dare devil woman. Accamma who was only 29 years at the time and she writes in her autobiography thus exhibiting her courage and leadership.

"I was aware of the seriousness of the assignment and knew what the consequences could be, yet I volunteered to do the job."

Accamma Cherian's Autobiography – Jeevitham Oru Samaram (Life Is A Struggle)

The Congress Party under the leadership of Accamma Cherian gathered local youth from every nook and corner of Thiruvithamkur from Vadakkan Paravur to Kanyakumari. The volunteers gathered at Thampanoor in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday October 23 to disrupt the birthday celebrations of the Maharaja. From the dawn, the streets were filled with a sea of people proudly donning white *khadi* dress and Gandhi

caps. The air was filled with slogans like 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' and 'State Congress Ki Jai'. The railway station grounds at Thampanoor was transformed into an ocean of protesters shouting slogans against the dictatorial rule of the Maharaja. E.M. Kovoov described the historical protest as follows:



"Not hundreds but tens of thousands wearing white Khaddar Jubbahs and still whiter Gandhi caps were surging forward in massive waves... Accamma Cherian was leading that white sea, standing in an open jeep, dressed in khaddar and a Gandhi cap, like Goddess Durga crushing beneath her feet evil and injustice; her hair played in the wind like black flags hoisted against autocracy."

The protestors under the leadership of Accamma then proceeded towards the Royal Palace to present the people's memorandum to the King. The protest continued despite various hurdles that it had to encounter and ultimately until the government yielded to release its prisoners and lift the

long standing ban on State Congress. It was one of the most momentous people's struggles staged in Travancore during the pre-independence era. Historians say that this protest is a pivotal moment in the freedom struggle in the state of Travancore (now Kerala).

In October 1938, Accamma was entrusted by the State Congress to organize the *Desasevika Sangh* (Female Volunteer Corps). She travelled incessantly to the nook and corner of the country and encouraged the women to join as members and participate effectively in the *Desasevika Sangh*. Her relentless involvement and work led to a surge a large number of women volunteers in the local bodies. By then Accamma's sister Rosamma Punnoose, and her brother KC Varkey had also joined the freedom struggle.

On 24 December 1939, Accamma participated in the annual conference organized by the Travancore State Congress. Consequently she and her sister Rosamma Punnoose were jailed and were sentenced to a year's imprisonment. In the prison she was tortured, harassed and verbally abused. After her release from prison, she engaged herself as a full-time party worker and later ultimately became the President of Travancore State Congress. In her first presidential address, she welcomed the Quit India Resolution passed at the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in 1942. Accamma encountered a series of arrests for violating ban orders and staging protests but it did not deter her from her mission. Accamma was duly elected without any opposition to the Travancore Legislative Assembly from Kanjirapally in 1947. She married V.V. Varkey, a freedom fighter and a member of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly during 1952 and they had one son George V. Varkey who later became an engineer. She quit active politics in 1967. She served as a Member of the Freedom Fighter's Pension Advisory Board for some time. Accamma died on 05th May, 1982 at Thiruvananthapuram.

In her autobiography, she summed up her life when she wrote.....



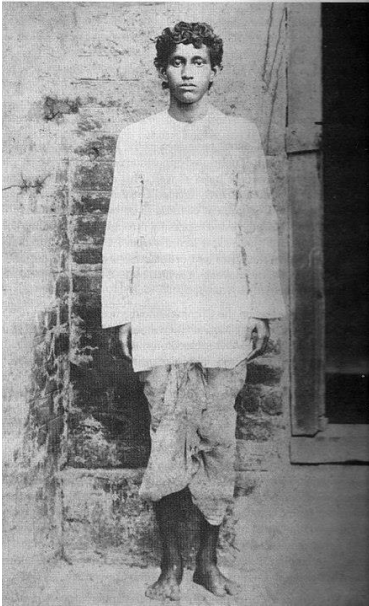
"Shakespeare has said that the world is a stage and that all the men and women merely players; but to me, this life is a long protest – protest against conservatism, meaningless rituals, societal injustice, gender discrimination, against anything that is dishonest, unjust...when I see anything like this, I turn blind, I even forget who I am fighting..."

A statue built in Accamma Cherian's memory stands in a park named after her in Thiruvananthapuram. A documentary on the life of

Accamma Cherian was made by Sreebala K. Menon the Sahithya Academy winner.

Khudiram Bose

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (June 2023)



Khudiram Bose was one of the earliest young Indian revolutionist from the Bengal Presidency who opposed tooth and nail the British Rule in India. He played an important role in the Muzaffarpur Conspiracy Case with his close associate Prafulla Chaki. Khudiram along with Prafulla Chaki attempted to assassinate a British Magistrate Douglas Kingsford by throwing bombs on the carriage he was travelling. But Magistrate Kingsford was travelling in a different carriage and the throwing of the bombs resulted in the deaths of two British women. Prafulla however fatally shot himself before the arrest. Khudiram was arrested and was tried for the murder of the two women and sentenced to death. He was one of the first Indian revolutionaries in Bengal to be executed by the British. At the time of his hanging Khudiram was only 18 years and 8 months old making him the second youngest revolutionary in India.

Mahatma Gandhi disapproved the act of Khudiram Bose and lamented the death of two innocent British women. He remarked that the Indian people will not win their freedom through these methods. However Bal Gangadhar Tilak, in his newspaper "Kesari", stoutly defended Khudiram and Prafulla Chaki and called for immediate Swaraj. Bal Gangadhar Tilak

was immediately arrested by the British Government on charges of sedition.

Khudiram Bose was born on 3rd December 1889 in a small village named Bahubeni situated in the Midnapur district of Bengal (present West Bengal). He was born to Trailokyanath Bose and Lakshmipriya Devi. His father was a Tehsildar and his mother was a housewife. He lost his mother when he was six years old and his father died a year later. His elder sister Aparupa Roy then took care of him and brought him to her house and got him admitted to Hamilton High School at Tamlak.

During the years 1902 and 1903 Sri Aurobindo and Sister Nivedita visited Midnapore and they held a series of public lectures and private meetings with the existing revolutionary groups and emphasized the need for freedom from the British. Khudiram, who was a teenager at that time was an active participant in the discussions about the revolution and freedom movement.

Khudiram joined Anushilan Samithi when he was hardly 15 years old and thereby came into contact with the network of Barindra Kumar Ghosh. Anushilan Samithi was a fitness club which was used as an underground society for anti-British rule. In the first two decades of the 20th century, Anushilan Samithi supported revolutionary violence as the means for ending the British rule in India. It was led by the nationalists Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh. Khudiram was arrested for distributing pamphlets against the British. Khudiram at the young age of 16 took part in planting bombs near the police stations and targeted the British Government officials.



Anushilan Samiti persisted in their attempt to kill Magistrate Douglas Kingsford. The activities of Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Ghosh and their associates roused suspicion in the minds of the Calcutta Police. The Calcutta police somehow came to know about the plans on Kingsford's life. The Commissioner of Police F.L. Halliday's alerting to the Superintendent of Police in Muzaffarpur were not taken seriously. Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki changed their names as Haren Sarkar and Dinesh Chandra Roy respectively and took up residence in a Dharamshala run by one Kishori Mohan Bandyopadhyay. Both of them monitored the activities and daily routine of Magistrate Douglas Kingsford. Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki successfully hid their identities for more than three weeks. Khudiram and Prafulla on the evening of 29th April itself were in place to execute their plans to kill Kingsford.

On the fateful day of 30th April, Kingsford and his wife were playing bridge at the European Club with the daughter and wife of Pringle Kennedy a British barrister. They decided to head home around 8.30 PM. Kingsford and his wife were in a carriage identical to the one carrying Kennedy and his family. As their carriage reached the eastern gate of the compound of the European Club, Khudiram and Prafulla quickly approached the carriage and threw the bombs into the carriage. A loud explosion was heard and the carriage was shattered and the Kennedy ladies sustained terrible injuries. Miss Kennedy died within an hour of the blast and Mrs. Kennedy died of injuries sustained in the attack, a couple of days later.

Khudiram and Prafulla went their own way to escape from being captured by the British. By the next morning Khudiram

had walked about 25 miles and reached a station called Waini. There he was confronted by two armed constables and was subsequently captured. They found 37 rounds of ammunition, Rs. 30 in cash, a railway map and a page of the rail timetable with him.

Prafulla travelled long arduous hours and around noon a civil named Trigunacharan Ghosh decided to save his life. He made arrangements for Prafulla to return to Kolkata the same night. He boarded a train from Samastipur and continued his onward journey with a train to Howrah. A Sub-Inspector of Police was travelling in the same compartment. He struck a conversation with Prafulla and realized him to be the other revolutionary. When Prafulla got down at the intermediate station to drink water, the Sub Inspector sent a telegram to the Muzaffarpur police station and later tried to apprehend Prafulla at the Mokamaghat station. Prafulla tried to fight his way through with his revolver but in the struggle, he shot himself in the mouth.

Khudiram was brought handcuffed from to Muzaffarpur on 1st May. The entire town of Muzaffarpur came to the police station to take a look at the teenage revolutionary surrounded by a team of armed policemen. Khudiram was then taken to the residence of Mr. Woodman, the district magistrate. The Statesman, a popular English daily, wrote on the following day, 2 May 1908. The Railway station was crowded to see the boy. A mere boy of 18 or 19 years old, who looked quite determined. He came out of a first-class compartment and walked all the way to the phaeton, kept for him outside, like a cheerful boy who knows no anxiety.....on taking his seat the boy cheerfully cried 'Vandemataram'.

The historical trial of Khudiram commenced on 21 May 1908. Judge Corndoff, Nathuni Prasad and Janak Prasad were the members in the Jury. Khudiram was tried along with

Mrityunjay Chakraborty and Kishorimohan Bandyopadhyay who were arrested for assisting the revolutionaries and accommodating Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki in his Dharamshala. Mrityunjay died during the trial itself and the trial of Kishorimohan was separated from that of Khudiram. Lawyers Kalidas Basu, Upendranath Sen and Kshetranath Bandyopadhyay represented Khudiram's defense. They were joined later by Kulkamal Sen, Nagendra Lal Lahiri, and Satischandra Chakraborty and all of them fought the case without any fees.

On 23 May, Khudiram gave a statement to magistrate denying any involvement or responsibility regarding the bombing. Khudiram initially was not ready to sign the statement but did so after he was persuaded by his lawyers. On 13 June, the scheduled date for the verdict and sentence the Judge pronounced the death sentence for Khudiram. Khudiram spontaneously smiled at the verdict pronounced by the Judge. The Judge asked Khudiram whether he understood the sentence the pronounced. Khudiram replied to the affirmative. When the judge asked him again whether he had anything to say as regards his sentence Khudiram in front of an anxious packed audience replied with smile that if he could be given some opportunity he would teach the judge the skill of bomb-making. Such was the courage of the young boy. The Judge instructed the police to escort the boy out of the courtroom.

As per the law prevailing then, Khudiram had seven days to appeal to the High Court against the verdict. However Khudiram refused to appeal against the verdict. But after some persuasion by his lawyers who reasoned out that on appeal if he receives a life sentence instead of getting death sentence, he would live to serve his nation once free as age will be on his side when such event happens. Khudiram reluctantly agreed after this argument and an appeal was preferred in the High Court.

The appeal of Khudiram in the High Court hearing took place on 8 July 1908. Narendra Kumar Basu defended Khudiram's case and concentrated all his legal skills and experience to save Khudiram. He challenged the verdict of the session court by saying that the judgement was not according to law, was flawed and that according to Article 164 of the Penal Code, the accused is required to submit his statement in front of a first class magistrate which was not complied with and during the first statement Khudiram was not told anything of the person's identity and position.

Secondly, Narendra Kumar Basu argued the provision in the Article 364 requires that all questions to the accused be asked in the mother tongue and all answers in his mother tongue be documented verbatim in that language but in Khudiram's case it was done in English. Further, Khudiram's signature was required to sign the statement on the same day and at the time of the statement in the presence of the magistrate was required. But, Khudiram was made to sign the day after and in front of an additional magistrate. Finally, Narendra Kumar Basu argued that Prafulla alias Dinesh (the name used in the trial) was stronger than Khudiram and he was the bomb-expert among the two of them. Hence it was likely that the actually "Dinesh" who threw the bomb. Further, Prafulla's suicide before the verge of capture only strengthens the possibility of his being the actual thrower of the bombs. But,

INDIAN BOMB THROWER SMILES ON SCAFFOLD.

Khudiram Bose, the murderer of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, was executed at Muzaffarpur, India, on the 11th instant.

Escorted by a number of armed police he was conducted to the scaffold which he mounted with his body erect. He was cheerful and smiling. His wrists were tied and he was blindfolded. Death was instantaneous. His cremation has been duly performed by his caste-men on the bank of Ganduck. The streets from the gaol to the ghat were lined by police and there were present on the ghat a large number of police officers including the Deputy Superintendent of Police. Numbers of people collected on the ghat, in the streets and in the by-lanes adjoining.

on a historical day, the British judges confirmed the conviction and sentence and dismissed the appeal.

The Amritha Bazar Part is one of the prominent newspaper of that era, carried the story of the hanging the next day, on 12 August under the caption "Khudiram's End: Died cheerful and smiling". The newspaper further wrote: *"Khudiram's execution took place at 6 a.m. this morning. He walked to the gallows firmly and cheerfully and even smiled when the cap was drawn over his head."* An established Anglo-Indian newspaper, *The Empire*, wrote: *"Khudiram Bose was executed this morning...It is alleged that he mounted the scaffold with his body erect. He was cheerful and smiling."* The *Kesari*, nationalist Marathi newspaper, observed on 26 May 1908: *"Neither the Jubilee murder of 1897, nor the reported tampering of the Sikh regiments had produced so much commotion, and the English public opinion seems inclined to regard birth of the bomb in India as the most extraordinary event since the mutiny at 1857."*

The Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote a touching poem to honour Khudiram. Khudiram is celebrated for his bravery and commitment to the Indian freedom as follows:

- Khudiram Bose Central College was established in 1965 as an undergraduate college in Kolkata, West Bengal. It offers courses only in arts and commerce and is affiliated to the University of Calcutta. Shahid Khudiram Station , a metro railway station near Garia in Kolkata.
- Shahid Khudiram Bose Hospital – a hospital on BT Road near Municipality Park.
- The Muzaffarpur Jail, where the freedom fighter was incarcerated and hanged on 11 August 1908, was renamed as Khudiram Bose Memorial Central Jail.

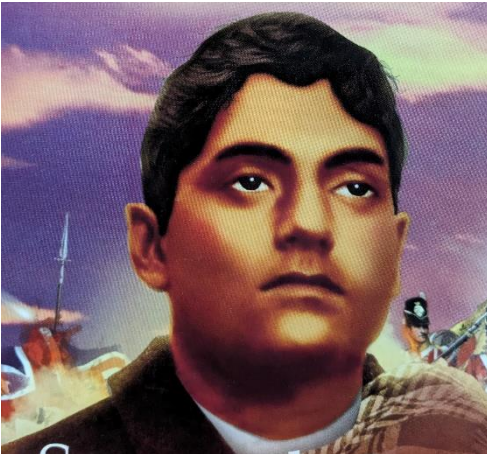
- Sahid Khudiram Siksha Prangan, a university campus for postgraduate studies of University of Calcutta, Kolkata. It is also known as Alipore Campus.
- Khudiram Anushilan Kendra which is located adjacent to the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indoor Stadium in Kolkata.
- Khudiram Bose Pusa Railway Station

Over the years, Khudiram Bose and his sacrifice have been represented in several films like Main Khudiram Bose Hun (a 2017 film) and Khudiram Bose (a 2022 film).

Bagha Jatin

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (July 2023)

“We shall die to awaken the nation” - These are the famous words of Bagha Jatin. It is an irony of history that the supreme sacrifice made by Jatindranath Mukherjee alias Bagha Jatin, as he is popularly known, is little known outside Bengal and Orissa. The history of the Indian freedom struggle highlighted the non-violence movement, relegating the enormous role played by various freedom fighters who took part in the armed struggle in spite of the fact that well-documented records in Indian history. One such freedom fighter who took to arms for the freedom of India from the British is none other than Bagha Jatin who during the freedom struggle took to arms to achieve India’s freedom. Bagha Jatin was a revolutionary who terrified the British.



In 1915, much before India was declared independent in 1947 by the British, an attempt was made under the leadership of Jatin to pull the country out of British rule by means of armed insurrection. Jatin’s attempt can be taken as a preamble to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s armed struggle for India’s

independence. He fought a frontal battle against the British and laid down his life for Mother India. On 10 September 1915, he succumbed to severe bullet injuries in Balasore Hospital following a fierce battle with the British police.

Jatin was born on 7th December 1879 to Sharathshashi and Umeshchandra Mukherjee in Kayagram village in the undivided Nadia district which is now in Bangladesh. His father Umeshchandra Mukherjee passed away when Jatin was five years old. After the death of Umeshchandra Mukherjee his mother Sharathshashi settled in her parent's home in Kayagram along with Jatin and his sister. Though he was not aggressive during his childhood days, the events in his later years proved his boldness. One day he came running to his mother terrified by a dog that chased him. Sharath immediately, knowing the reason, gave him a burning log and asked him to chase the dog.

Though Jatin hesitated initially, later he picked up courage and chased the dog away. That incident made him overcome fear forever. Jatin's uncle Basant Kumar presented him with a horse. In no time Jatin picked up the art of handling the horse and often he would do away with the reins and saddle, and he would hold the horse by the tuft of hair on its neck spur to make it run at high speed on the empty path. From another uncle he also learned to row a boat. Jatin married Indubala Banerjee in 1900. They had four children: Atindra (1903), Ashalata (1907), Tejendra (1909), and Birendra (1913). When Atindra passed away in 1906 Jatin, with his wife and sister, set out on a pilgrimage and recovered their inner peace by receiving initiation from the saint Bholanand Giri of Haridwar.

Jatin on returning to his native village Koya in March 1906, came across a Royal Bengal tiger and fought hand-to-hand with it. Wounded, he managed to strike with a small dagger (Khukuri) on the tiger's neck and kill it instantly. Dr. Suresh Prasad Sarbadhikari, the famous surgeon of Kolkata, took upon himself the responsibility for treating Jatin whose body had been poisoned by the tiger's nails. Dr. Sarbadhikari, impressed by the heroism, published an article about Jatin's heroism in the English press. The Government of Bengal awarded him a Silver Shield with the scene of him killing the

tiger engraved on it. The title 'Bagha', meaning 'Tiger' in Bengali, became associated with his name from then on.

"Anandamath" written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was published in 1882 and the call "Bande Mataram" triggered unprecedented patriotism amongst the young men of Bengal. Jatin read "Anandamath" when he was a student in High School and was influenced by the teachings which had a significant bearing on his future thoughts and activities. Jatin was also into social activities and actively involved when cholera broke out. Jatin, as a college student, joined a relief camp organized by Sister Nivedita. Nivedita, an Irish, was an ardent follower of Swami Vivekananda. She introduced Jatin to Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda impressed upon Jatin to take up the mission to encompass together patriotic youth with "iron muscle" and "nerves of steel" who could plunge into the service anytime for the freedom of the motherland. Jatin's meeting with Sri Aurobindo ignited his support for the uprising against the British further. Sri Aurobindo entrusted the task to Jatin to create a "secret society" for training patriotic youth for a revolt against the British. The secret society came to be known as Jugantar and Bagha Jatin became its leader. Jugantar later became an all-India movement. The Jugantar Party established its units across India and even established units across South-East Asia, Europe, and America.

It was the time when the entire nation was discontent with the activities and atrocities committed by the British on the Indians. At that time, Jatin gave a clarion call "***Amra morbo, jagat jagbe***" (**We shall die to awaken the nation**) which triggered the revolution against the British. Thousands of patriotic youths joined Jatin's clarion call and joined the freedom movement. It was an era of freedom movement where cultural nationalism and socialism had a unique blend of revolt against the British.

Armed Insurrection Against British

Jatin took the path of violence for the cause of *Purna Swaraj* (total independence) as opposed to the principles of nonviolence of the Indian National Congress. The First World War broke out in 1914 and Jatin looked towards Germany for help. Jatin contacted the German Crown Prince for the delivery of arms and ammunition for an insurrection to get freedom for India. The responsibility for raising the funds and procuring the arms and ammunition was entrusted to MN Roy, a trusted lieutenant of Jatin. In 1915, Roy left India in search of and arrange for the procurement of German arms. Roy later recounted in his posthumously published memoirs:

The plan was to use German ships interned in a port at the northern tip of Sumatra, to storm the Andaman Islands and free and arm the prisoners there, and land the army of liberation on Orissa coast. The ships were armoured, as many big German vessels were, ready for wartime use. They also carried several guns. The crew was composed of naval ratings. They had to escape from the internment camp, seize the ships, and sail... Several hundred rifles and other small arms with an adequate supply of ammunition could be acquired through Chinese smugglers who would get them on board the ships.

Balasore the coastal town, was selected as the place where the shipload of arms consignment from Germany was to be delivered. Jatin, along with his followers, were hiding at Kaptipada village in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha which was situated in the vicinity of Balasore to receive the arms and ammunition from Germany. However, their plans did not fructify. One E V Voska, a Czech spy who knew the plans of Jatin and his associates leaked the information to the British authorities. British authorities swiftly swung into action and ensured that the arms and ammunition were impounded while on their way. Jatin and his associates reached Balasore by walking for two days through the rough terrain and stretch of

Mayurbhanj. The British Army took position on a hillock at Chashakhand village in Balasore. On September 9, 1915, Jatin and his associates took up a position in a small trench at Chashakhand near Balasore. However, tempted by the reward announced by the British for providing any information to Jatin and his associates, the local villagers informed the British police about the whereabouts of Jatin and his associates. A large contingent of British police headed by top police officers reached Balasore to counter the revolutionaries. The British police were armed with sophisticated weapons but Jatin and his team fought only with Mauser pistols.

The gun battle lasted for two hours with casualties on both sides. In the gun battle Jatin was seriously wounded and the next day he succumbed to injuries in Balasore city hospital. Although the armed uprising could not take off successfully, Jatin's death and the battle of Balasore had influence and inspiration for the fight against the British Raj for freedom by the later youth and freedom fighters. Jatin's mounting attacks shook the British administration in London. The recorded documents showed that Earl of Minto and Charles Hardinge, the consecutive Governor Generals of India had shown their deep concern about the rise of the Jugantar movement under the leadership of Jatin.



From Kaya in Bangladesh to Balasore in Odisha in India, Jatin made a long-lasting impression in the hearts of millions of Indians. It was widely believed that Jatin inspired Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to fight against the Pakistani army during the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. Jatin's vision of independent India was far ahead of his time, that is - a modern India with politically free, economically prosperous and spiritually

progressive. Mahatma Gandhi had described Jatin as a 'divine personality'.

A locality in Kolkata had been named after Bagha Jatin. Barabati Girls High School situated near the banks of the river BudhaBalanga in Balasore town has a statue of Bagha Jatin as it was where the erstwhile Balasore district government hospital, where he breathed his last, stood. Chashakhand, a place near Phulari, which was only 15 km east of Balasore has a park in his memory. A postage stamp was released by the Government of India in 2007.

Appreciating the heroism of Bagha Jatin, Charles Augustus Tegart, then a top British police officer in India, wrote:

Bagha Jatin, the Bengali revolutionary, is one of the most selfless political workers in India. His driving power (...) immense: if an army could be raised or arms could reach an Indian port, the British would lose the war.

Augustus Tegart had once also told his colleagues:

If Bagha Jatin was an Englishman, then the English people would have built his statue next to Nelson's at Trafalgar Square.

Historian Prithwin Mukherjee, the grandson of Jatin, who vividly chronicled the detailed vignettes of the great freedom fighter from his birth until his death wrote:

Bagha Jatin chose to suffer and taught his followers to do so in the name of a future of India where citizens would be happy and prosperous amid the other free nations.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee wrote:

Jatindranath was the well-known and principal leader of the second episode in the history of the revolutionary movement who belonged to that band of fighters, who had written a blood-red chapter of their country's fight for freedom. Sacrificing all they had... they rushed to the ritual call of death and, inch by inch, by shedding their lives, they had left for us the relish of a greater life.

Referring to the Battle of Balasore – where Jatin fought with valor– renowned author Hirendranath Mukherjee wrote:

The Balasore battle where Jatin, with select comrades, laid down his life remains a luminous landmark in India's struggle for freedom from British imperialist subjugations.

Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna

By C. Badri, Consulting Editor (Aug 2023)

"I may die now but I will soon take birth again and come back to fight for my kingdom and the people until it is free from the clutches of the British."



These were the famous words of Sangolli Rayanna (15 August 1798 – 26 January 1831) popularly known as Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna the legendary Indian freedom fighter from Karnataka who rattled the East India Company and the British. The freedom struggle for India's independence had been a long-drawn fight against the British. The Historians who scripted the Indian freedom

struggle highlighted largely the nonviolent movement but sadly camouflaged the brave acts of various freedom fighters which included the freedom fighters from Kashmir to Kanyakumari who took upon themselves armed struggle and fought relentlessly and made freedom a reality at a later date. Many of such revolutionaries were not recognized and sung. One such great freedom fighter was Sangolli Rayanna a freedom fighter and revolutionary from Karnataka, who took armed struggle and fought valiantly against the East India Company and the British. He had not been adequately recognized by the Historians who scripted the Indian freedom struggle or by the textbook writers as it deserved. Interestingly, the readers may note that Sangolli Rayanna was one of the foremost Indian freedom fighters who adopted guerilla warfare against the East India Company and the British.

Rayanna was the contemporary of the great freedom fighter Rani Chennamma. Rani Chennamma married King Somashekara Nayaka in 1667 CE. After the death of Somashekara Nayaka's death in 1677, Chennamma took over the administration and efficiently ruled Kittur winning the administration of her people. Rani Chennamma had an adopted son by the name of Shivalingappa. Chennamma wanted to install her adopted son Shivalingappa to succeed Somashekara Nayaka after his death. The East India Company had another plan. They wanted to annex the kingdom of Kittur following their "Doctrine of Lapse". According to the "Doctrine of Lapse" a draconian law according to which a kingdom with no heir will automatically fall under the East India Company and the adopted son was not allowed to succeed the King.



The place where Sangolli Rayanna was hanged by the British army

Rayanna fought with the East India Company and the British on behalf of Chennamma. Sangolli Rayanna efficiently trained the army and was ready to take on the British soldiers. Sangolli Rayanna fought valiantly but they lost

the war, and Chennamma was captured. Rayanna went into hiding, taking Shivalingappa safely along with him to fight for his queen and his motherland.

Sangolli Rayanna participated in the rebellion of 1824 and was arrested by the British and he was later released. He continued his fight with the British and wanted to install the adopted son namely Shivalingappa as the ruler of Kittur and succeed Chennamma. He gathered able-bodied local people and started a guerilla type of war against the British. He and his army moved from the place and burnt Government offices. THEY waylaid British troops and plundered treasuries. Most of his land was reclaimed. Sangolli Rayanna was one of the first and foremost freedom fighters who used guerilla warfare tactics against the British. The British army could not defeat him despite their huge army. Hence the British by adopting treachery by befriending his uncle Lakshmanraya captured Rayanna in April 1830 and sentenced him to death. Shivalingappa, the adopted son who was to succeed Chennamma was also arrested by the British. Rayanna was ably assisted throughout his fight against the British by Gajaveera, a Siddhi warrior in 1829–30. Sangolli Rayanna and Gajaveera together caused chaos and destruction in any event which was conducted by or on behalf of the British. The British executed Rayanna by hanging him from a Banyan tree near Nandagad, on 26 January 1831 at the young age of 33 and he was buried near Nandagad.

Bichugatti Channabasappa a close associate and friend of Rayanna, planted a banyan sapling on his grave. Today the tree is fully grown and stands majestically on this day. An Ashoka Pillar was installed also near the tree and a small temple in the name of Sangolli Rayanna was constructed. At Sangolli village, stands a statue of Rayanna flanked by two wooden weights used for bodybuilding. The two wooden weights are to be the original ones that were used by

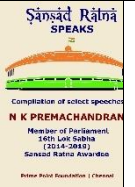
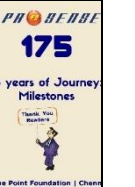
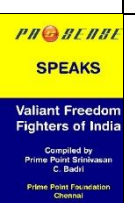
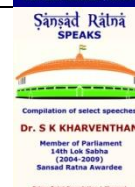
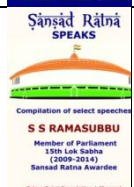
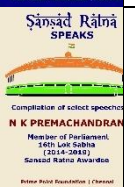
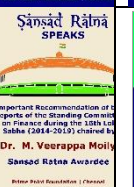
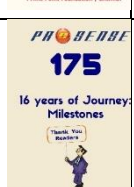
Rayanna for bodybuilding purposes. A community hall was also built in memory of Rayanna at Sangolli.

Many heroic folklore verses were composed in North Karnataka and several such songs are sung about Kittur Chennamma, Sangolli Rayanna and other figures of pre-independence who hailed from Karnataka. A life-size bronze statue of Sangolli Rayanna, riding a horse with an open sword in his right hand, was installed near Bengaluru City Railway station. In 2015 the main railway station of Bengaluru City has been renamed "Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station". A Kannada film *Kranthiveera Sangolli Rayanna* "starring Darshan, Jaya Prada and Nikita Thukral was directed by Naganna in 2012 based on his life history.

Sangolli Rayanna became an inspiration to the next generation of freedom fighters. He was respected for his love towards his kingdom and faithfulness towards his queen Rani Chennamma. Even to this day, the women in the Sangolli village follow a tradition where they tie small cradles to the banyan tree planted in his memory with a wish to have a son as brave and a committed freedom fighter as Rayanna. In the present days when freedom fighters are largely forgotten, we as citizens of India should remember freedom fighters who triggered the freedom movement in 1800 and inspired the later leaders to struggle and obtain freedom from the British. Though their efforts in obtaining freedom from the British did not fructify it certainly built a strong foundation for the leaders of the later generations to fight for freedom.

Incidentally, it may be noted that he was born on Independence Day (15th August) and died on Republic Day (26th January) – a great coincidence indeed.

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About this Book

This book is the collection of various articles on the Indian Freedom Fighters published in the eMagazine PreSense.

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