

## 6. Indian Struggle against Colonialism

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In this lesson we will study the Indian struggle against colonialism.

#### 6.1 Struggle before 1857

In 1818, the British East India Company took complete charge of Khandesh. The Bhils in the region of Satpuda, Satmala and Ajintha united against the British. Trimbakji Dengale, an advisor of Bajirao Peshwa II, was imprisoned by the British. He somehow managed to escape from the prison. Under the leadership of Godaji and Mahipa, nephews of Trimbakaji Dengale, the Bhils revolted against the British. There were 8000 of them who participated in the revolt.

Captain Briggs blocked all the supplies coming to the Bhils. At the same time Mount Stuart Elphinston, a British officer adopted a policy of pacifying the Bhils. They were recruited to protect the travellers. He offered them jobs and pensions. However, the policy of cornering the Bhils was also continued. Major Morin left no alternative for the Bhils but to surrender. Around 1822 the revolt under the leadership of Hariya Bhil was crushed by Captain Robinson. Another revolt of the Bhils, in which thousands of Bhils participated, was crushed by Lieutenant Outram. However, he also stayed among the Bhils and won their confidence. He tried to bring them in the mainstream of urban life.

He adopted measures like declaration of amnesty, land grants, agricultural loans (*tagai*), reprieve from the past crimes and recruitment in army to weaken the opposition from Bhils.



#### Do you know?

**Revolt of the Paiks :** Since mediaeval period there was a system of employing soldiers known as Paiks (soldiers on call, who own their weapons), who served the kings of petty states in Odisha.

They were given free farm lands for cultivation by these kings. When not on war, they lived by cultivating these lands. In the times of war they were called to fight for their king.

In 1803, the British took over Odisha from the Bhosale of Nagpur. The British seized the lands cultivated by the Paiks for generations. It enraged the Paiks. Also the salt tax had made salt an unaffordable commodity making daily life of people miserable. This situation resulted in an armed revolt by Paiks. Bakshi Jagbandhu Bidyadhar was the leader of this revolt.

Hansaji Naik ruled the region of Nanded. He refused to merge his territory in Nizam's dominion. He conquered some forts of the Nizam. A war was inevitable. Major Pitman, Captain Evans, Captain Taylor with a regiment of 400 soldiers joined Nizam for his protection. The war continued for 25 days. In the end Hansaji was defeated.

In Satara District the Ramoshi community revolted under the leadership of Chitursingh. Santaji Naik and Umaji Naik were among the captains heading the Ramoshi groups. They seized the consignment of some moneylenders that was in the transit from

Pune to Mumbai. In 1824 Umaji Naik seized the government treasury at Bhamburde (presently Shivajinagar, Pune). Both together, with their activities, made the British desperate. To put an end to their activities the British government declared an award of Rs. 5000 each, for catching Umaji Naik and his mates Bhujba, Pandya and Yesaji. Meanwhile Umaji Naik regularly held meetings with his people and planned further actions. To stop



Umaji Naik



### Do you know?

Umaji Naik had issued a charter against the British. The Charter said, "Wherever in our country, Europeans, if spotted, should be caught and killed without a concern to their official position. Whosoever, successfully does it will be rewarded by the new government in way of money, lands and Jahagirs. This is an opportunity for those who wish to reclaim their lost lands, rights and properties under the British rule. They may avail of this opportunity. The British military has recruited Hindi soldiers-mounted and foot soldiers. They should leave their jobs in the British military. They should not obey their superior's orders. If they do not follow this instruction then the new government will punish them. Put the bungalows of the Europeans on fire. Loot the Government treasury. Whosoever, does it will be allowed to retain the money with himself. Don't deposit the collected revenue in the government treasury. It is obligatory to comply with our orders for every person, may he be a Hindu or a Muslim. It's the time now for the prediction of a doom for the British rule, to come true."

it, the British government ordered the peasants not to offer the rebels any food, clothing, shelter and money. In addition people were also threatened with confiscation of their lands. They also ordered people to inform the government about Umaji's whereabouts, if they come to know of it. Captain Davis with the help of five companies of cavalry began chasing Umaji. However, he did not succeed in his task. The rebels were continuously at war with the British, often changing locations from Satara, Wai, Bhore to Kolhapur. Captain Mackintosh took over the task of capturing Umaji. Umaji ordered his mates to kill the British officers. However, the British caught Umaji near Bhore. Umaji was presented in the court and was sentenced to death. He was hanged at Pune.

In 1828 Phondsavant Tandulwadikar, the in-charge ('Killedar') of Mahadevgadh rebelled against the British. However the British promptly crushed it.

Angered by the British policies, the members of Sawantwadi aristocracy got together and revolted against the British. However, Spooner\*, the British political agent was successful in crushing it. Even after their defeat a few of the Sawantwadi aristocracy reattempted a revolt. By then the British had imposed military law in the area. Captain Outram finally managed to end the revolt permanently.

*\*A Political agent was a representative of the British government instated in the courts of an Indian princely state.*

In Kolhapur state, there used to be keepers of forts, called 'Gadkari'. A Gadkari was a salaried officer in the Maratha regime. However, the British government took away the authority of the Gadkaris and stopped paying them salary. The first resistance to this decision was raised at Samangadh near Kolhapur. Captain Outram arrived with his platoons to bring the Gadkaris under control. However, in the first run the rebels were

successful in taking charge of Panhala, Pavangadh and Vishalgadh. Later, more platoons arrived from Madras (Chennai) and the Gadkaris were forced to surrender.

## 6.2 Freedom Struggle of 1857

The freedom struggle of 1857 was the result of mounting pressures because of increasing discontent of Indian soldiers in the British army and also political, social, religious and economic reasons. The treatment given to Indian soldiers and the restrictions imposed on them were at the root of their discontent. The soldiers felt hurt because of many reasons, such as cuts in their allowances, being compelled to cross the sea, frequent humiliation during daily parade, partiality ruling large in matters of transfers, being left out during promotions, etc.

On the civil front, Lord Dalhousie adopted the Doctrine of Lapse\*. It created discontent among the rulers of princely states who were subjected to his policy. By implementing this policy Dalhousie annexed the states of Satara, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Udaipur, Nagpur and Jhansi to the British empire.

*\*Policy of not permitting an adopted son (Dattak) to succeed a deceased ruler of a princely state unless there was a pre-approval to such succession by the British Government.*

Annexation of the princely states put the soldiers in their army out of job. They returned to agriculture increasing the pressure on the cultivable land. Gradually, people also began to believe that through administrative policies the company government was trying to destroy their religion. Along with annexing the states the British government also seized inherited land holdings, which had made a large number of Indians unhappy.

The British government tried to introduce new land revenue systems like 'Kayamdhara or Jamindari' (permanent settlement), 'Ryotwari' and 'Mahalwari'. These revenue systems were formed without any concern to Indian tradition of revenue systems, Indian

cropping cycle and Indian climate. The new revenue systems introduced by the British made the common farmer penniless while making the government and the landlords rich. Earlier, the land tax could be paid by way of food grains and other commodities. Now the farmer had to pay it in hard cash. Despite of good or bad harvest, there was no option but to pay the tax. More so if there was a famine, the farmer was driven to a dire condition. Droughts, epidemics used to affect people and animals the most. However, the British outlook used to be absolutely unsympathetic. Thus, the farmer was caught between the government and moneylenders. Earlier, selling of agricultural land was not allowed. Now the British government defined agricultural land as sellable. The farmers who were in difficult situation had no alternative but to sell portions of their land, for getting some hard cash. Lands thus acquired, were used for cultivation of cash crops like indigo by the British owners. The labourers employed on their plants were exploited to the utmost. Their conditions were miserable. Unemployment, despair, disbelief loomed large all over India, which had made the life of common people very difficult.

### Try this.

Collect more information about 'Kayamdhara', 'Ryotwari', 'Mahalwari' land revenue systems and discuss it in the class. Also discuss the present land system of 'Anewari'.

Not only the monetary exploitation but also forced religious conversions, British policies with regard to Indian customs and traditions contributed to the increasing discontent among Indian people.

In the year 1856, Indian soldiers in the British army were given long range Enfield rifles and new cartridges for loading in these rifles. A rumour spread in army camps that these new cartridges are smeared with cow

and pig fat. In order to load the gun with a cartridge, one had to break it open with teeth. The idea of breaking a cartridge smeared with cow or pig fat, with one's teeth was repugnant to Indian soldiers for religious reasons. The Indian soldiers who refused it were forced to do so by the British. Finally, in the month of March of 1857, Mangal Pandey, who was posted in Barakpur Cantonment, gave a vent to the rage of Indian soldiers. The British punished him by hanging to death. This escalated the fury among Indian soldiers. Soon after this

incidence the Indian soldiers in Lucknow Cantonment revolted, followed by the revolt of cavalry units in Merath. In the chaotic situation created by the sudden revolt, Indian soldiers broke into rampage killing British individuals and taking revenge on their families, at times turning it into blind massacre, putting houses on fire and so on. Some soldiers began to march towards Delhi.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1857 Delhi was captured and was completely under the control of Indian soldiers. They handed over the reins



of the uprising to the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. He was reinstated as the ruling emperor of India, declaring him to be 'Shahanshah-i-Hindustan'. However, he was the nominal leader of the uprising. Its de-facto leaders



**Bahadur Shah**

were Nanasahab Peshwa, Tatya Tope, Rani Lakshmibai, Maulavi Ahmadulla, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Kunwar Singh and Senani Bakht Khan. The uprising was more intense in Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi and some parts of West Bihar. Bakht Khan took the responsibility of assuring the safety of Delhi.

On 27<sup>th</sup> May 1857 the British army attacked Delhi with an intention of recapturing Delhi. They staked their entire strength on this purpose. Brigadier John Nicolas was killed in the battle. Ultimately, the British could conquer Delhi because of Sir John Lawrence, a British diplomat and the Sikh platoon. British General Hudson was the one who arrested Bahadur Shah. After arrest, Bahadur Shah was sent to Rangoon (Burma/ Myanmar). He died there in 1862.

Prior to the capture of Delhi, the feeling of dissatisfaction had spread in many places and the riot was quickly intensified in Ayodhya, Lucknow and the Northwestern province. Very soon it spread like a wild fire in Aligarh, Itawa, Mathura, Bareilly, Azamgarh, Faizabad, Kanpur, Jhansi, and Ahmadabad.

The Indian soldiers at Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Multan, Sialkot in Punjab actively responded to the uprising. Similar instances took place in places like Gwalior, Indore, Mhow and Sagar in Madhya Pradesh. The uprising reached Nasirabad Cantonment and rest of Rajasthan.

The uprising also reached Dhaka, Chittagong and Madariganj, presently in Bangladesh and Bhagalpur in Bihar. In

Bihar, the soldiers at Dinapur, near Patna revolted under the leadership of Kunwar Singh who was a landlord from west Bihar. Kunwar Singh also received a good response from places like Hazaribagh (presently in Jharkhand) and Deogarh, Sambalpur in Odisha.



**Nanasahab Peshwa**

Kanpur. Sir Colin Campbell, the British Commander-in-Chief, defeated Tatya Tope and regained the control over Kanpur.

In this war Tatya Tope and Begum Hazrat Mahal were initially on the winning side. The British army under the leadership of Havelock and Outram was not very successful to begin with. Then the King of Nepal Jang Bahadur, arrived with his Gurakha platoons to help the British. Maulavi Ahmadulla led the army of Indian soldiers. Colin Campbell with his military skills and experience conquered Lucknow.



**Tatya Tope**

Governor General Lord Canning ordered Colonel Neil to march to Banaras (Varanasi) and Allahabad. The revolting soldiers had a great backing in these cities. Colonel Neil used canons to answer the rifles of Indian soldiers. His tactics took a cruel turn when he ruthlessly massacred and hanged many people. Hearing the news from Varanasi, the soldiers in Allahabad reacted by taking revenge on the Europeans in the city. Many Europeans were killed there. When Colon

Neil came to know this, he straightaway proceeded to Allahabad and indiscriminately killed the Indians. The British atrocities reached its climax.

**Try to do this:**

Vishnubhat Godse from Vasai was in Jhansi in 1857. Get the book, 'Maza Pravas' authored by him as the eyewitness of the happenings and read it.

In Jhansi the Indian soldiers rose against the British. They got organised under the leadership of Nanasaheb Peshwa, Tatya tope and Lakshmibai, the Queen of Jhansi. Field Marshall Sir Hugh Rose put Jhansi under siege. Tatya Tope came to the queen's rescue but he was

defeated by Hugh Rose. The British also conquered Kalpi. Lakshmibai, the queen died in the battlefield. Sardar Mansingh of Gwalior handed over Tatya Tope to the British by treachery. Tatya Tope was



**Queen Lakshmibai**

hanged to death in 1859. Nanasaheb Peshwa, wife of Bajirao Peshwa II and nephew Raosaheb escaped to Nepal and settled there permanently.

In Maharashtra Rango Bapuji Gupte attempted to organise a rebellion at Satara but he was unsuccessful. His associates were punished for it. Babasaheb Bhawe, the ruler of the Nargund state joined the uprising in 1858.

The British government got a whiff of the plan of revolt in Mumbai. Immediately the people, who were involved in the plan were blown to death by tying them to a cannon. The Bhils in Khandesh also joined in the revolt. Their leaders Bheema Naik and Kajarsingh Naik seized a government treasury worth seven lakhs. The Bhils and the British confronted each other at Ambapani (Jalgaon District).

At Kolhapur, Ramji Shirsat, who was awaiting the news of the uprising in the north, took charge of the government treasury and began to organise the soldiers and others under his leadership. In response to the uprising, Chimasahab, a member of the royal house of Kolhapur, also joined and took over the leadership of the rebels. The uprising was supported well by the people in Kolhapur, Belgaon and Dharwad.

The nationwide rage created by the war of 1857 could not be quelled in short time. It continued for more than a year. The number of soldiers, involved in the war at Delhi, Merath, Kanpur, Lucknow, Gwalior and some other places was considerably large, around one lakh. They were adequately armed. They possessed right state of mind, also not lacking in valour and yet they were defeated.

Queen Victoria of England acknowledged the rage of Indian people, which gave rise to the war of 1857. To establish peace, she addressed the issue by publishing a charter, known as the 'Queen's Proclamation'. She declared that all Indians were her subjects and she wanted to assure them of few things. Her assurance included a promise of no discrimination on the basis of race, creed (faith system), caste and birth place, employment on the basis of qualification and skills, no interference in religious matters, fulfillment of the agreements with the rulers of princely states, etc.

The war of 1857 also left a deep impact on the Indian society. Provincial and communal loyalties were gradually replaced by a feeling of being united as a nation and national loyalty. It was dawned on Indian people that they cannot win in an armed combat with the British and a need was felt to find more innovative methods to counter the British rule.

Becoming aware of the power of united Indian people during the 1857 war, the British adopted a policy of 'divide and rule'

in later years of their regime.

### **6.3 Background of Founding the Indian National Congress**

The founding of Indian National Congress that eventually followed the 1857 Independence war, was the key event in the independence movement of India. It was the first organisation in India that pulled people from all quarters of India.

Dwarkanath Tagore established 'Land Holders Association' in 1837 to safeguard the interests of landlords. In 1839, William Adams, a friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy established 'British India Society' in London to acquaint the British citizens in England with the conditions in British India. Later, George Thompson, a friend of Dwarkanath Tagore established 'Bengal British India Society'. In 1851, 'The Land Holder's Association' and the 'Bengal British India Society' merged together and 'British Indian Association' was founded. By the initiative of Harishchandra Mukherjee, this organisation dispatched a document presenting grievances of the Indian people to the British Parliament. At about the same time, 'Madras Native Association' also began to work on similar lines. In 1866, Dadabhai Nowrojee in collaboration with Vyomeshchandra Banerjee established 'East India Association' in London and began the work of creating awareness about Indian conditions. The 'India League' was active in this regard from 1875. Later, Surendranath Banerjee established 'Indian Association' and declared that this association would work for uniting Indians of various racial origin and caste, with the help of common political interests and aspirations. Indian Association called a conference of the representatives of various Indian provinces, in 1883 at Kolkata.

The 'Madras Mahajan Sabha' founded in 1884 was an important nationalist organisation. At about the same time English education and urge for social reforms resulted in the formation of 'Bombay Presidency

Association' in January 1885 by Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Pherozeshah Mehta and their associates.

### **6.4 Founding of the Indian National Congress**

On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1885 the first session of Indian National Congress was held at Mumbai, in 'Gokuldas Tejapal Sanskrit College'. It was attended by 72 delegates from various parts of India. Vyomeshchandra Banerjee presided over this session. Many eminent people like Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Nowrojee, Rahimtulla Sayani, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Gopal Krishna Gokhale participated in the proceedings of this session. Allan Octavian Hume, a British officer in India took significant lead in the founding of Indian National Congress. In this first session nine resolutions were passed. Through these resolutions, demands for appointing a commission to enquire into the British administration in India, to appoint elected representatives of people on central and provincial legislative assemblies, to employ Indians in the administrative services, to conduct civil service examinations in India, to curtail military expenses, to sanction more funds for higher education and to make provisions for technological education were put forth.

### **6.5 'Moderates' and 'Extremists'**

At about the same time, a debate emerged, especially in Maharashtra, arguing about the priority of political reforms over priority of social reforms. The 'Extremists' wing of thinkers insisted that independence should be the natural priority. An independent nation could provide a right set-up for social reformation. On the other hand, the Moderates thought that without social reformation independence was incomplete. They did not mind appealing to the British government to help in the task of social reforms.

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar was at the helm of those who insisted on the priority of social reforms. He used to say that we need to first



### Do you know?

#### Section 124(A) And Maharashtra :

On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1870, James Stephen added section 124(A) to Indian Penal Code. It is known as 'Sedition Law'. This law declared that, any act leading to insurgency, such as using provocative words, writing, signs or similar things against the British rule was a crime, punishable with fine or imprisonment or death sentence. 'Bangvasi' a weekly magazine was the first one to be charged for treason and tried under this law.

On 15th June 1897 'Kesari' the newspaper from Pune, published a Poem, entitled, 'Shivajiche Udgar'. This poem was supplemented by Lokmanya Tilak with his subsequent editorials. It included the editorials that appeared with titles like, 'To Rule, Not to Take Revenge' ('राज्य करणे म्हणजे सूड उगवणे नव्हे'), and 'What is Treason?' ('राजद्रोह कशाला म्हणतात?'). Lokmanya Tilak was the first editor in India to be arrested for treason and tried

under Section 124(A).

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 1878 the 'Vernacular Press Act' was implemented. This act was concerned with writing and printing articles that would lead to insurgence against the British government or creation of hatred among people on the basis of race, caste and creed. A conference was called against this law by native journalists in Kolkata. However, those who organised this conference were from Maharashtra - Ganesh Vasudev Joshi also known as 'Sarvajanic Kaka' and Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade.

By implementing this law, the British government had confiscated 210 Marathi books. Lokmanya Tilak, Shivram Pant Paranjape and Ganesh Damodar Savarkar were put under trial for sedition. '1857 - The First War of Independence', the book written by Swatantryaveer Savarkar was one of the confiscated books.

reform ourselves. On the contrary, Lokmanya Tilak, who was the leader of the Extremists, used to say that the home taken over by others should be recovered first, then only we can reform it.

Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale were the leaders of the Moderates. They felt that if they could convince the government about their grievances, with necessary proofs, the government will not disappoint them. Lokmanya Tilak, on the contrary, felt that British government will not yield to applications, requests and speeches.

The differences between Moderates and Extremists reached its climax in the session of Indian National Congress held at Surat in 1907. The Moderates wanted to avoid the resolutions of 'Swadeshi' and 'Boycott'. The Extremist wanted to stop these attempts of

the Moderates. This increased the tension during the session. Reconciliation became impossible. Ultimately the Indian National Congress split into two groups.



**Lokmanya Tilak**

In order to control the programmes of Indian National Congress, Lord Curzon planned the partition of Bengal. After the partition of Bengal, the British government began to take strict actions against the leaders of the Extremists. Lokmanya Tilak was sent to Mandalay prison for 6 years under the charge of treason. Bipinchandra Pal was imprisoned and Lala Lajpatrai was deported.



### Do you know?

Lokmanya Tilak had returned from Mandalay when the First World War had begun. Lokmanya Tilak proposed that Indians should take advantage of the situation resulted because of the war. The war had put the British government in a difficult situation. Hence, it was the right time for pressing the cause of Indian independence. The Governor of Bombay (Mumbai) called a meeting of Indian leaders for help. Lokmanya Tilak, in very clear terms, told the British that the Indian soldiers would be sent to fight, if only, British Government promise the 'Swaraj'. This policy of Lokmanya Tilak is known as 'Responsive Co-operation'. When the Governor stopped, Lokmanya Tilak got up and immediately left the meeting without bothering for anything or anybody.

Lokmanya Tilak returned to India after completing a six year term in the prison of Mandalay in 1914. After that there was a reconciliation between Moderates and Extremists and they came together in the Congress session at Lucknow.

### 6.6 Armed Revolutionaries in India

The Indian movement against the British imperialism took many forms. One of the movements was of armed revolution. The main objective of the armed revolutionaries was to weaken government administration, to dispel the fear of the government in people's mind and thus to uproot the British rule from India.

Ram Singh Kuka had planned a revolt in Punjab against the British government. In Maharashtra, Vasudev Balwant Phadke, was the one to do the same. Commissioner Rand's methods of treating people during

the plague epidemic in Pune were atrocious. Enraged by it, Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar, the two brothers killed Rand.

In 1899, with the initiative of Ganesh Damodar Savarkar and his brother Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, 'Mitra Mela' a secret organisation was established at Nasik. The same organisation was renamed in 1904 as 'Abhinav Bharat'. The same year Vinayak Damodar Savarkar went to England for higher education. From there he began to send revolutionary literature, pistols, etc. to the members of Abhinav Bharat. He wrote a biography of Joseph Mazini, an Italian revolutionary. He also wrote the book, '1857 - The First War of Independence'. The British government came to know of the activities of 'Abhinav Bharat'. Ganesh Damodar Savarkar was arrested by the British Government. Jackson, the British collector punished him with life sentence. Anant Lakshman Kanhere a young Indian revolutionary killed Jackson to avenge the punishment given to Ganesh Damodar Savarkar. The government held Vinayak Damodar Savarkar for Jackson's murder. He was arrested and had to face a trial in the court. He was declared guilty and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 50 years at Andaman.



Swatantryaveer  
Savarkar

A revolutionary organisation named as 'Anusheelan Samiti' was active in Bengal. Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh were at the head of this organisation. The organisation had a centre of bomb making at Maniktala near Kolkata. In 1908, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki of Anusheelan Samiti, made a plan of Kingsford's assassination who was an evil British magistrate. However, the horse cart which was bombed by them did not

carry Kingsford but two British women instead. They both died. Prafulla Chaki shot himself and Khudiram Bose was arrested and hanged.

Shyamji Krishna Verma had founded 'India House' in London. This organisation used to give scholarships to Indian students in England taking higher education. Madam Cama



Shyamji Verma

belonged to the group formed by Shyamji Krishna Verma. She was a socialist and a revolutionary. In the 'World Socialist Conference' in Germany



Madam Cama

she raised the issue of India's independence. She unfurled a flag representing India. Madanlal Dhingra shot Curzon Wyllie to death and was arrested and hanged for it.

Indians in America and Canada had established a revolutionary organisation, which was named as 'Gadar'. Lala Hardayal, Bhai Paramanand, Dr. Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje were among the main leaders of this organisation. Gadar means uprising. 'Gadar' was the name of the newspaper as well, published by this organisation. This newspaper gave the message of patriotism and revolution to Indians. Hutatma Vishnu Ganesh Pingale contributed in a great way in this work.

Ramprasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla, Roshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiri of 'Hindustan Republic Association' had masterminded a plan for raising money for revolutionary work, which came to be known as 'Kakori conspiracy'. They sacked a train which was carrying the government treasury, when it had stopped at Kakori station in Uttar

Pradesh. The government was prompt in action. All of them were captured immediately and hanged.

This was the time when some young people in India established the 'Communist Party' following the revolutionary thoughts of Karl Marx. Their aim was to uproot the colonial British rule and to establish the rule of working class people (proletariat). Members of the Communist Party were tried under the charge of attempting armed revolution. The Merath case and Kanpur case in this context received a lot of publicity. Comrade Shripad Amrut Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Keshav Neelkanth Jogalekar were among the accused in these cases.

The young revolutionaries Chandrashekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev had a secular way of thinking. In 1928, they established 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' in Delhi. Their goal was to free India from the British exploitation. They wanted to rip off the British system that exploited the farmers and labourers. Their organisation had an independent department called 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Army' for collecting arms and to execute their plans. Chandrashekhar Azad was the chief of that department.

The members of this organisation had completed several adventurous tasks. Bhagatsingh and Rajguru avenged the death of Lala Lajapat Ray. Saunders was killed to teach a lesson British officers. The British Government had submitted two bills in the Central Legislative Assembly, which were absolutely damaging to civil rights. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datta, exploded a bomb in the Legislative Assembly and surrendered to police. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev were hanged at Lahore in 1931 under the charge of treason. Chandrashekhar Azad became a martyr,

fighting the British forces in the Alfred Park in Allahabad.



**Bhagat Singh**

**Rajguru**

**Sukhdev**

Surya Sen was the leader of the revolutionary group working with Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, in Chittagong, in Bengal. He prepared a plan to attack on the British armouries. They carried out the plan. While they were nearing success, unfortunately, Surya Sen and some of his colleagues were captured by the police. Along with Surya Sen and his colleagues sacrificed their lives for the cause of nation. Kalpana Dutt, one of this group, got a life sentence. Preetilata Waddedar escaped the police, but sacrificed her own life. Shanti Ghosh and Suniti Chaudhury, the two school going girls shot Charles Buckland, the British magistrate. They were caught and sentenced to imprisonment for life. Beena Das, a member of Indian National Congress, attempted to kill Stanley Jackson, the Governor of Bengal, by shooting at him during the convocation ceremony of the University of Calcutta (Kolkata). She was caught and sentenced to nine year's rigorous imprisonment.

The revolutionaries have contributed significantly to the Independence Movement in India. They were courage and determination personified. Their loyalty to nation and readiness to sacrifice their lives are unmatched. Their sacrifice has been a source of inspiration to all.

### **6.7 Mahatma Gandhi: Non-Violent Resistance Movement**

The mantle of Lokmanya Tilak, after

his death in 1920, was passed on to Mahatma Gandhi. He became the leader of India's Independence Movement. Under his leadership the independence movement expanded considerably.

Gandhiji's work began in South Africa. The British regime in South Africa had reduced the natives and the Indians there to a very insignificant status. Several discriminatory laws and regulations were imposed on them. Gandhiji stood up against those laws and regulations. He was successful in it with non-violent means. In 1915 Gandhiji returned to India.

In 1917, he took up the issues of the farmers in Chaparanya in Bihar. The



**Mahatma Gandhi**

British plant owners there were pressing local farmers to cultivate only indigo. Not only that, they used to buy indigo from them at very low rates. Gandhiji decided to protest against this exploitation and to relieve the farmers from their misery by doing Satyagraha. Gandhiji was successful in his efforts and the British government banned compulsion of cultivating indigo. The farmers were relieved from the harassment of the British plant owners.

The British government formed a committee to suppress the national movement that was spreading rapidly. Sir Sydney Rowlatt, the British officer was the president of the committee. An Act was passed in 1919 by this committee which came to be known as the Rowlatt Act. This act authorised the British government to imprison any Indian without warrant and to put under trial without inquiry. Mahatma Gandhi decided to protest against this act through satyagraha. He appealed on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1919 to all people to go for a mass

protest (hartal) by closing down all daily transactions.

There were mass protests in Punjab. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1919 was the day of 'Baisakhi' festival. Thousands of people had gathered for the meeting held at Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar for celebrating the festival. Many of them were not aware of the ban put by the government on public gatherings. General Dyer opened fire on these people without any prior warning. About four hundred innocent people were killed and thousands of them were injured in this incident. It is known as 'Jalianwala Bagh Massacre'. It created a wave of rage all through India. Ravindranath Tagore criticised this act in very severe terms and gave up his title (Sir).



Ravindranath Tagore

The gory scenario in Jalianwala Bagh Massacre has been described by the celebrated Marathi poet, Kusumagraj (V.V. Shirwadkar) in his poem entitled 'Jalianwala Bagh'. He says:

रक्ताचे नच ओघळ सुकले अजुनि कुसावरचे  
विरले ना ध्वनि तुझ्या प्रेषिता, अजुनि शब्दांचे  
मंगल तव गीतांचा होतो मंदिरात घोष -  
“प्रेम, शांति अन् क्षमा यांमध्ये वसतो परमेश !”  
आणि आज हे तुझ्या पताका ज्यांच्या हातांत  
निःशस्त्रांच्या रक्तामांसामध्ये नाहतात  
मर्दांच्या बंदुका उडाल्या मुलांबायकांत  
जगजेत्यांच्या पराक्रमाची स्फूर्तिपद रीत !  
पाचोळ्यापरि पडली पाहुन प्रेतांची रास  
नयन झाकले असशिल देवा, तू अपुले खास;  
असेल ही वा सैतानाची प्रभूवरी मात  
एक जखम अन् नवीन येशू, तुझ्या काळजात !

In 1920, in the session of Indian National Congress held at Nagpur, a resolution was passed to start the 'Non Co-operation Movement' all over India.

Mahatma Gandhi was asked to lead the movement. It was decided to boycott all schools, colleges, legislative bodies, courts, government offices and imported goods.

Indian people responded to the Non Co-operation movement and boycott in a commendable way. Students participated in it on a large scale. Several highly acknowledged Indian lawyers stopped their practice and participated in the movement. Among them were Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, M.R. Jaikar, Saifuddin Kichalu, Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajgopalachari. At many places imported clothes were publicly burnt. The farmers gave tremendous response to Mahatma Gandhi's appeal of non co-operation. The working class also participated in the movement on very large scale. A nationwide series of public strikes was started. There were 396 instances of public strikes during the year 1921 alone. The leaders of Indian National Congress had organised these strikes at several places. 'Charkha' (the Indian spinning wheel) became the symbol of 'Swarajya' and 'Swadeshi' became a household term in India.

The British government had levied heavy tax on salt, an essential commodity in daily life. Mahatma Gandhi declared satyagraha to protest against this tax. On the day of 12<sup>th</sup> March 1930, he began a march from his Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi on Gujarat seacoast, against this unjust tax. On 6<sup>th</sup> April on the seacoast at Dandi, he broke the British law of salt with a token act of collecting a handful of salt from there.

## 6.8 Azad Hind Sena

In the year 1939, Hitler pushed Europe in World War II. The British government without the consent of its Indian subjects decided to involve India as one of the participant countries in the war. Mahatma

Gandhi and the Indian National Congress were against this decision of the British Government. In this war Japan decided to fight as Germany's allied nation. Japan conquered the regions under British rule in Southeast



**Netaji  
Subhashchandra Bose**

Asia. Many Indian soldiers in the British army were taken captive by the Japanese army. Rasbihari Bose built 'Azad Hind Sena' by recruiting these Indian soldiers and later it was reorganised under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose. In 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose established 'Azad Hind Sarkar' in Singapore. At the end of 1943 he had already conquered Andaman and Nicobar. "Tum Muze Khoon Do! Main Tumhe Azadi Dunga!" ("Give me your blood! I shall give you independence!") This speech by him turned into a key slogan among Indians. In 1944, he had conquered the Arakan province and the British outposts on the east border of Assam. The soldiers of Azad Hind Sena kept fighting in very adverse conditions. They could not reach and capture Imphal.

### 6.9 'Quit India' Movement of 1942

The executive council of the Indian National Congress passed a resolution at Wardha that the British should quit India.



**Maulana Azad**

This resolution was to receive final approval in the session at Mumbai. On 7<sup>th</sup> August 1942 the session of Indian National Congress began on the Gowalia Tank Ground in Mumbai. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the President of this session.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August, in this session Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presented the resolution

of 'Quit India' and it was approved with great majority. It was demanded that the British should immediately leave India. In this session it was also decided that the 'Quit India' movement should be taken forward with a non-violent approach under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to all Indians saying, "This movement is not of the Indian National Congress, but of all Indians. Every Indian man and woman should know in their mind



**Pandit Jawaharlal  
Nehru**

that they are free citizens from this very moment and they should prepare themselves to fight". While emphasising that this was going to be a very rigorous fight Mahatma Gandhi said, "Today I am going to give you the mantra, 'Do or Die'. This should be the oath to which we commit ourselves. Prepare to sacrifice yourselves for this oath." Gandhiji's words created a new spirit among Indians.

The British government tried to crush the 'Quit India' movement before it started. Before the day of 9<sup>th</sup> August could see sunlight, all prominent leaders like Gandhiji, Maulana Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel were arrested. The government put a ban on public gatherings, speeches, rallies and protestations. It sealed all the offices of Indian National Congress, in the country. The resistance put up by all, aged and young in the villages like Chimur, Ashti, Yawali, Mahad, Gargoti, etc. with steadfastness and courage will indeed be remembered for ever.

By the end of 1942 this movement supported by common people took a different turn. Its leadership was assumed by the young socialist leaders. Jayprakash

Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyutrao Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, S.M. Joshi, N.G. Gore were on the forefront among them.

**In order to mislead the British in the 1942 movement, some of the leaders had assumed pseudonyms names.**

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Sucheta Kripalani    | - Dadi, Bahanji  |
| Achyutrao Patwardhan | - Kusum          |
| Ram Manohar Lohia    | - Doctor         |
| Sadique Ali          | - Sushila, Satya |
| Baba Raghavdas       | - Didi           |
| Aruna Asaf Ali       | - Kadam          |
| S. M. Joshi          | - Imam Ali       |

Several revolutionary groups were established in the country at local levels. The groups like 'Azad Dasta' established by Bhai Kotwal, in Karjat Taluka, 'Lal Sena' in Nagpur established by General Awari left no alternative for the British government but pray god. In Mumbai Vitthal Javheri, Usha Mehta and their colleagues started a transmission centre, named 'Azad Radio'.



**Krantisinha  
Nana Patil**

In 1942, in some parts of India, people were successful in uprooting the British Governance. In Midnapur District (Bengal), Balia (U.P.) and Bhagalpur, Purnia (Bihar) near Azamgarh the British officers were forced to leave their offices. People took charge of the governance at these places. Krantisinha Nana Patil, a revolutionist established Pratisarkar (parallel government) in the Satara district of Maharashtra. He, with the help of his associates put an end to the



### **Do you know?**

#### **Echoes of India's independence movement in America and Singapore :**

**America** - During the time of World War II, 'Life', the weekly published in America demanded that India should be given independence immediately. Renowned Americans from various fields like Albert Einstein, Louis Fisher, Edger Snow, Wendell Willkie, John Gunther, Pearl Buck, etc. had signed this petition.

**Singapore (Shonan)** - Thousands of Indians in Singapore marched in a rally with placards saying, "India's independence without delay!", "India for Indians".

Under the leadership of the 'Indian Independence League' anti-British protestations were held in all big cities of Malaya (Malaysia). There were such protestations in Medan and Sumatra (Indonesia).

British regime in Satara district and established 'People's Government'. This government took over the administrative tasks like collecting revenue, maintaining law and order, solving the court cases, punishing criminals.

In this period the foundation of the British rule in India became weak. The 'Quit India' movement was an expression of the strong opposition of the Indian people to the British rule. The British administrators became aware that it will be difficult for them to rule the Indians any longer. The end of the British Empire was evident to them. The 'Rebellion of the Sailors of the British Indian Navy - 1946' added to the unrest against the British.

### Oral Sources of History

Bengal was struck with a famine after 1942. During the period of famine, the revolutionaries in Bengal announced a national government. The leaders of this government laid down an ideal for people. Ajay Mukherjee. (Who became the chief minister of West Bengal in post-independence India.) was interviewed by Shripad Kelkar, the author of the book, 'Chhodo Bharat'. This interview provides us with some ideas of how a national leader should lead his life, how severe a famine can be and how oral sources are important for understanding history.

The following statement made by Ajay Mukherjee is very important. He said, "During the famine we survived only on 3 chhatak rice (meaning cooked rice less than 1/4th of seer\*) and very little dal for the whole day."

\*1 seer = 0.933105 kilogram

16 chhatak = 1 seer

04 chhatak = 1/4th seer

Thus, 3 chhatak is less than 1/4 seer.

Thus, when the possibility of India becoming a free nation had become evident, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his party, the 'Muslim League' began to insist on a separate nation for the Muslims. There were many communal riots in many parts of the country. It finally resulted in the partition of the country. In the month of August of 1947, 'India' and 'Pakistan' two separate nations came into existence.

### Try to do this

Collect information and pictures about revolutionaries and freedom fighters from your area and make a presentation.

History tells us that it was India, the nation that created an example for the world of fighting successfully against the colonial rule. It gave inspiration to many countries who were suffering under the shackles of colonial rule.

The Constitution of independent India came into implementation on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision was the major force in shaping the 'Constitution of India'. The fundamental values on which the struggle for India's freedom was founded, included, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice. These values have built the foundation of Indian Constitution.

### Exercise

#### Q.1 (A) Choose the correct alternative and rewrite the statement.

1. The region of ..... had become a stronghold of Hansaji Naik.  
(a) Satara (b) Nanded  
(c) Pune (d) Nagpur
2. The British plant owners in Bihar were pressing the local farmers to grow only .....

- (a) indigo (b) tea  
(c) coffee (d) sugarane
3. The first session of the Indian National Congress was presided by .....  
(a) Dwarkanath Tagore  
(b) Vyomeshchandra Banerjee  
(c) Dadaabhai Nauroji  
(d) Surendranath Banerjee

**(B) Find the incorrect pair from group 'B', and write the corrected one.**

**Group 'A'**

**Group 'B'**

- |                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| 1. Kunwar Sinh       | Lucknow  |
| 2. Nanasaheb Peshwa  | Kanpur   |
| 3. Queen Lakshimibai | Jhansi   |
| 4. Chimasahab        | Kolhapur |

**Q.2 Write names of historical places/persons/events.**

1. The region of the regime of the parallel government established in 1942 –
2. The islands conquered by Azad Hind Sena from the British in 1943 –

**Q.3 Write short notes.**

1. The Extremists
2. Azad Hind Sena
3. Prati Sarkar

**Q.4 Answer the following questions in detail.**

1. Lieutenant Outram was successful in crushing the revolt of the Bhils by the end of 1822.
2. Ravindranath gave up his title (Sir).

**Q.5 State your Opinion.**

1. The rise of colonialism was the result of the spreading of European trade.
2. According to Swatantryaveer Savarkar, the Independence War of 1857 was the First War of Independence.

#### Activity

- (a) The Rising Ballad of Mangal Pandey
- (b) The Legend of Bhagat Singh
- (c) Khele Hum Jee Janse

These are some Hindi films. Watch them and verify the historical truth of the incidences shown in it.

