

CHAPTER 10

Rise of Revolutionary Activities

Around 1908, the decline of the militant nationalists and the rise of revolutionary activities marked an important **shift from non-violent methods to violent action**. It also meant a **shift from mass-based action to elite response to British rule**.

- **First Phase (1907-1917):** The activities of revolutionary heroism started as a by-product of the growth of militant nationalism. The first phase acquired more activists due to the fallout of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and continued till 1917.
- **Second Phase (After 1922)-** Will be discussed later after the Non-Cooperation Movement.

First Phase (1907-1917)

The methodology of the Revolutionaries involved individual heroic actions, such as:

- **Assassinations:** Organizing assassinations of unpopular officials and of traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves.
- **Dacoities:** Conducting swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for revolutionary activities.
- **Military Conspiracies:** Organizing military conspiracies with the expectation of help from the enemies of Britain.

Objective of Revolutionaries:

- To channelize their energy.
- To strike terror in the hearts of the rulers, arouse people, and remove the fear of authority from their minds.
- To inspire the people by appealing to their patriotism.

REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

Bengal

- **Jnanendranath Basu** organised the first revolutionary groups in Midnapore in 1902.
- **Anushilan Samiti**, an organized revolutionary association, was established in Bengal by Promod Mitter in 1902.

Other events that took place in Bengal

- **1906:** The weekly **Yugantar** was started in April 1906, by an inner circle within Anushilan (Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutta). It advocated revolutionary violence. Its aim was to preach open revolt and the absolute denial of the British rule and include such items as a series of articles containing instructions for guerrilla warfare.
- **1907:** Sir Fuller was the first Lt. Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The attempts were made to derail the train on which the lieutenant-governor, Sri Andrew Fraser, was travelling.
- **1908: Alipore Conspiracy**
- **Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage supposed to be carrying a judge, Kingsford, in Muzaffarpur.** Instead of Kingsford, two British ladies were killed. This resulted in the court trial in the name of Alipore conspiracy case. It is called as **Manicktolla bomb conspiracy or Muraripukur conspiracy**.

Result of the court trial

Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead while Khudiram Bose was tried and hanged.

The whole Anushilan group was arrested. The Ghosh brothers, Aurobindo and Barindra, were tried in this.

Chittaranjan Das defended Aurobindo. Aurobindo was acquitted of all charges.

Barindra Ghosh, as the head of the secret society of revolutionaries and Ullaskar Dutt, as the maker of bombs, were given the death penalty which was later commuted to life in prison.

During the trial, Narendra Goswami, who had turned approver and Crown witness, was shot dead by two co-accused, Satyendranath Bose and Kanailal Dutta in jail.

- **1908:** Barrah dacoity was organised by Dacca Anushilan under Pulin Das to raise funds for revolutionary activities.
- **1912: Delhi Conspiracy**

Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal staged a bomb attack on Viceroy Hardinge while he was making his official entry into the new capital of Delhi in December 1912. Hardinge was injured, but not killed. Investigations led to the Delhi Conspiracy trial.

Result:

- » Basant Kumar Biswas, Amir Chand and Avadh Behari were convicted and executed for their roles in the conspiracy.
- » Rashbehari escaped.

- **1914-18: Zimmerman Plan**

Bagha Jatin or Jatindranath Mukherjee was associated with western Anushilan Samiti.

The samiti emerged as the Jugantar party (or Yugantar).

Bagha Jatin was the commander-in-chief of the Jugantar Party.

He revitalised links between the central organisation in Calcutta and other places in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

During the First World War, the Jugantar party arranged to import German arms and ammunition through sympathisers and revolutionaries abroad. Jatin asked Rashbehari Bose to take charge of Upper India, aiming to bring about an all-India insurrection in what has come to be called the 'German Plot' or the 'Zimmerman Plan'.

In Berlin, the Jugantar Party collaborated with the Bolshevik revolutionary Manabendra Nath Roy alias Narendra Nath Bhattacharya.

Action of Jugantary Party and its Demise

The Jugantar party raised funds through a series of dacoities which came to be known as taxicab dacoities and boat dacoities, so as to work out the Indo-German conspiracy.

It was planned that a guerrilla force would be organised to start an uprising in the country, with a seizure of Fort William and a mutiny by armed forces.

The plot was leaked out by a traitor and the German plot failed.

Jatin Mukherjee was shot dead in Balasore in Orissa coast in September 1915.

Note: **Bagha Jatin wrote: "We shall die to awaken the Nation".**

Maharashtra

- The Ramosi Peasant Force in 1879 was led by Vasudeva Balwant Phadke. It aimed to get rid of the British by starting an armed revolt which would disrupt the communication lines. It used dacoities to raise funds for these activities. However, the force was suppressed prematurely.
- A secret society, **Mitra Mela**, was organized by Savarkar and others which merged later in 1904 with 'Abhinav Bharat'.
- **Nasik, Poona and Bombay** emerged as centres of bomb manufacture.
- The DM of Nasik, Jackson was also the victim of revolutionary terrorism.

Key Points:

- **Mitra Mela:**

Vinayak Savarkar and Ganesh Savarkar started Mitra Mela, a revolutionary secret society in **Nasik in 1899**.

It was one among several such melas (revolutionary societies) functioning in Maharashtra at that time, which believed in the overthrow of British rule through armed rebellion.

In 1904, in a meeting attended by 200 members from various towns in Maharashtra, **Swantraveer Vinayak Savarkar renamed it Abhinav Bharat**, taking after Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy.

Savarkar was imprisoned in the Cellular Jail in the Andaman Islands in 1910..

- **About Anushilan Samiti**

The Calcutta Anushilan Samiti and the Dhaka Anushilan Samiti were formed and organised on the lines of the secret societies of Russia and Italy.

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Pramathanath mitra, a Barrister and a leading figure in the revolutionary movement of late 19th and early 20th century Bengal founded the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti in 1902. Jatindranath Banerjee, a young Bengali who took military training in the army of the Maharaja of Baroda and barindrakumar ghosh, the younger brother of Aurobindo Ghosh, assisted him. The activities of the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti were initially confined to physical and moral training of the members and were not particularly significant till 1907 or 1908.

- **Anjuman-i-mohsiban-i-watan**

It was a secret society formed by Sardar Ajit Singh to support the agitations against Colonisation Bill passed in 1906. The agitation against these measures of the Government was led by Lala Lajpat Rai.

Other events that took place in Maharashtra

- **1890s:** Tilak propagated a spirit of militant nationalism, including use of violence, through Ganapati and Shivaji festivals and his journals Kesari and Mahratta. Two of Tilak's disciples—the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna—murdered the Plague Commissioner of Poona, Rand, and Lt. Ayerst in 1897.
- **1909:** Anant Lakshman Kanhere (member of Abhinav Bharat) killed A.M.T. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik.

Punjab

- Occurrence of Famines, increase in Land revenue and oppressive irrigation tax along with the practice of Beggar by the Zamindars led to rise of militant nationalism in Punjab.
- Some of these activists were:
- **Lala Lajpat Rai- who brought out 'Punjabi'** was one of the major extremist leaders.
- The motto of this journal was **"self-help at any cost"**.
- Ajit Singh- The uncle of Bhagat Singh organized the extremist organization by name of – Anjuman-i-mohsiban-i-watan in Lahore with its journal, Bharat Mata.

REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES IN ABROAD

London

- Shyamji Krishna Verma established an Indian Home rule society called **"Indian House' and a journal 'The Sociologists' in 1905 in London.**
- Savarkar and Hardayal also became the members of the 'India house'.
- **Savarkar was finally extradited in 1910 and transported for life for the Nasik Conspiracy case.** Anant Laxman Kanhere, a 17-year-old student of Aurangabad, shot **A.M.T. Jackson** (British officer in Indian Civil Services) on 21 December 1909 at a theater where a drama was to stage in his honor on the eve of his transfer. He was shot dead as he had committed Ganesh Savarkar (an Indian freedom-fighter and elder brother of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar) to trial.
- Madan Lal Dhingra who was also a member of India House assassinated the India office bureaucrat Curzon-Wyllie in 1909.

Paris and Geneva

- After London, new centers emerged in Paris and Geneva.
- Madam Bhikaji Cama- a Parsi revolutionary brought out 'Bande Mataram' and established contacts with French socialist.
- Ajit Singh also operated from these centers.

Berlin

- Virendranath Chattopadhyay set up his base at Berlin to carry forward the revolutionary activities and include sympathetic Germans as supporters for the cause.
- Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta, Lala Hardayal and others with the help of the German established the **Berlin Committee for Indian Independence** in 1915.

Missions sent from Europe

The Indian revolutionaries in Europe sent missions to Baghdad, Persia, Turkey and Kabul

- to work among Indian troops and the Indian prisoners of war (POWs) and
- to incite anti-British feelings among the people of these countries.

Kabul

- Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Barkatullah and Obaidullah Sindhi went to Kabul to organise a 'provisional Indian government' there with the help of the crown prince, Amanullah.

United States of America

- A revolutionary group known as the **Ghadar party** was organised with its headquarters at San Francisco. The
- revolutionaries of this party included mainly ex-soldiers and peasants who had migrated from the Punjab to the USA and Canada in search of better employment opportunities. Leaders like Lala Hardayal, Ramchandra, Bhagwan Singh, Kartar Singh Saraba, Barkatullah, and Bhai Parmanand were associated with this.

Sessions of Indian National Congress during 1907-1911

Session	President	Objective
Surat Session- December 1907	Ras Behari Ghose	The Surat Session of the Congress was marred by disturbances. Extremist leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal were pushing for resolutions on Swaraj, Boycott and national education while the moderate leaders like Surendranath Banerjee and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were advocating a softer approach. With no meeting ground between the two sections, the Session disintegrated into confusion and eventually had to be suspended.
Madras Session - December 1908	Ras Behari Ghose	Constitution of the Congress drawn.
Lahore Session- December 1909	Madan Mohan Malviya	Expressed disapproval over formation of separate electorates on the basis of religion.
Allahabad Session- December 1910	William Wedderburn	Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who was then a 44-year-old barrister and firmly with the Congress, decried the colonial government's decision to introduce separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims in municipalities and local bodies. He stated that this would disturb the amicable relations between the two communities.
Calcutta Session- December 1911	Bishan Narayan Dhar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Congress at its Calcutta Session in 1911, congratulated Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian community in Transvaal on the repeal of the South African province's anti-Asiatic legislation. • Annulment of Partition. • Jana Gana Mana was first publicly sung on 27 December 1911