

The Role of the Indian Diaspora in the Indian National Freedom Movement

The Role of the Indian Diaspora in the Indian National Freedom Movement

By

Neerja A Gupta

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



The Role of the Indian Diaspora in the
Indian National Freedom Movement

By Neerja A Gupta

This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2025 by Neerja A Gupta

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-4542-3

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-4543-0

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| Foreword | viii |
| Preface | xii |
| Chapter 1 | 1 |
| People | |
| Indians..... | 1 |
| 1. Queen Jinda Rani Kaur: Punjab's First Female Revolutionary .. | 1 |
| 2. Shyamji Krishna Varma: The First Revolutionary to Demand Independence | 3 |
| 3. Rash Behari Bose: Who Became the Friend of the British to Fight the British..... | 7 |
| 4. Madam Bhikaji Cama: Unfinished Sonnet of Women's Power | 14 |
| 5. Maulana Muhammad Barkatullah: First Prime Minister of the Azad Hind Government..... | 19 |
| 6. Venkatesa Subramaniam Aiyar (V. V. S. Aiyar): Early Tamil Revolutionary | 23 |
| 7. Madan Lal Dhingra: The Extended Pride | 26 |
| 8. Lala Hardayal: The Father of Ghadar Movement..... | 31 |
| 9. Champak Raman Pillai: The Freedom Fighter Who Coined "Jai Hind"..... | 34 |
| 10. Raja Mahendra Pratap: Founder of Azad Hind Fauj and the First Independent Government | 37 |
| 11. Manvendra Nath Rai: A Revolutionary Who Was also a Messiah of Laborers | 42 |
| 12. Rishikesh Latta: Founder of The Ghadar Party | 44 |
| 13. Sardar Kartar Singh "Sarba": Who Kissed the Hanging at a Foreign Land at the Age of 19 | 47 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Associates of Gandhi | 51 |
| 1. Doctor Manilal (Manilal Maganlal Shah) in Mauritius and Fiji | 51 |
| 2. Totaram Sandhya in Fiji | 56 |
| Notable Freedom Fighters of Various Countries from Former Undivided Bharat | 58 |
| Pakistan..... | 58 |
| 1. Bhagat Singh as a figure of daring..... | 58 |
| 2. Mir Masti Afridi as a celebrity with achievement..... | 60 |
| 3. Jogendra Nath Mandal as a ray of hope for the Bengali Population | 64 |
| 4. Ahmad Khan Kharal rises as a freedom fighter | 65 |
| Bangladesh | 67 |
| 1. Basu Binoy Krishna, a man of revolutionary activities..... | 67 |
| 2. Badal Gupta as a brave hero as an armed man..... | 69 |
| 3. Dinesh Chandra Gupta as a true hero..... | 70 |
| 4. Suraya Sen, full of bravery | 71 |
| 5. Rokeya Sekhwat Hossain being the greatest woman personality..... | 73 |
| 6. Matangini Hazra, the courageous woman | 74 |
| Burma | 76 |
| 1. Saraswathi Rajamani, a dedicated woman | 76 |
| 2. Lakshmi Sehgal, the wholehearted woman..... | 77 |
| 3. Janaki Thevar, a young enthusiastic girl | 78 |
| 4. V. Rathinam, an expert politician | 79 |
| Afghanistan..... | 80 |
| 1. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a man of milestone | 80 |
| 2. Emir Sher Ali Khan, a man of true faith | 81 |
| 3. Ghazi Amanullah Khan and his sovereign..... | 82 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 2. | 84 |
| Indian Diaspora Organisations in the Struggle for Freedom | |
| 1. The First Vedanta Society (Branches of Ramkrishana Mission) (1894) | 84 |
| 2. India House (1904)..... | 89 |
| 3. India Home Rule Society (India House) (1904)..... | 91 |
| 4. Abhinav Bharat (1906)..... | 93 |
| 5. Indian Independence (1907)..... | 95 |
| 6. Tolstoy Farm (1910) | 97 |
| 7. Ghadar Party (1913) | 99 |
| 8. Indian Independence League (1914) | 111 |
| 9. Indian Independence League and Government (1915)..... | 113 |
| Chapter 3 | 116 |
| Memorials | |
| 1. Tolstoy Farm (South-Africa)..... | 116 |
| 2. India House (London) | 117 |
| 3. The London India House (London)..... | 119 |
| 4. Apravasi Ghat (Mauritius)..... | 120 |
| 5. Neuve Chapelle India Memorial (France)..... | 122 |
| 6. Indian War Memorial (France)..... | 124 |
| 7. The Suriname Memorial (India)..... | 125 |
| 8. Ghadar Memorial Hall (Yugantar Ashram) (USA)..... | 127 |
| 9. Ghadar Party Martyrs Memorial Hall (Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Hall) (Punjab)..... | 128 |
| Appendix | 130 |
| 1. Centenary of Komagata Maru Tragedy | 130 |
| 2. The Forgotten Regiments (edited)..... | 137 |
| 3. Ghadar—Overseas Indians Attempt to Free India from British Slavery | 143 |
| References used in the Book | 159 |

FOREWORD

Bharat has always welcomed people from other nations and cultures with open hands and extended unconditional hospitality and shelter to those who were victims of religious or racial persecution. But whenever aliens crossed our borders with an intention to subdue us, to destroy our sociocultural structure and institutions, which were symbols of the collective life of our society and our way of life, we resisted it with all our might. It is this structure and value system that the Europeans tried to destroy. In their bid to establish hegemony over us, they dismantled the political structure of this nation.

However, our Freedom Movement was much more than a mere attempt to recapture political autonomy. What inspired people from all walks of life, regions and genders to take the plunge into the movement was the passion to reclaim our civilizational core—Swa-dharma.

Historians say that Bharat was never a strong state but a strong society: unlike China, which always boasted a strong central state but a weak society. What gave the society the power to sustain in the long periods of brutal subjugation by alien forces and onslaught on its cultural values was the dharma consciousness and the desire to keep our values intact. The driving force behind a slew of sociocultural, political, religious and reform movements unleashed by great visionaries at different periods has more to it than the mere transfer of power from one set of rulers to another. While they all aspired to build a new society—bereft of social evils accumulated over centuries through associations with alien and invading ideologies, strong enough to stand on its feet, face the world and play its role—they never wanted a “break with the past” or departure from the core Sanatana values that sustained this great civilisation. Though they adopted different methods, worked in different demographics, and chose different regions, the commonality in their approaches was the undying desire to re-establish the cultural essence of our nationhood—the Swa consciousness. The legendary Diwan of Travancore Velu Thambi raised the banner of revolt against the British when they tried to interfere with the culture and traditions of the Princely State with the intention to destroy it. In 1809, Velu Thambi warned the British intended to “....put their own guards in palaces, Sircar buildings and the fort gate, destroy the royal seal, do away with honorific palanquins and other distinguishing marks, suppress the Brahmanical communities and worship in (pagodas) temples, make

monopolies of salt and of waste lands, impose exorbitant taxes on paddy lands, coconut trees, etc., get low-caste people to inflict heavy punishment for slight faults, put up crosses and Christian flags in pagodas (temples)...”

Other parts of the country also witnessed several popular movements, which were basically manifestations of the awakening of *Swa* consciousness. On the basic idea that inspired the Freedom Movement, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote, "The spiritual note of the present Nationalist Movement in India is entirely derived from.....Vedantic thought." For them, nationalism was not a political idea, as it was perceived in the West, but an inclusive, sacred, spiritual concept. According to Sri Aurobindo, the nation (*Swarajya*) is the "Mighty Shakti" and nationalism is *Sanatan Dharma*. Therefore, fighting for freedom or working for society's cause amounts to the performance of a spiritual duty, which is *swadharma*. It is not the conduct of some caste obligations as some chauvinists want us to believe.

One of the pioneers who awakened the *Swa* consciousness in the Indian mind was Tilak. His path-breaking call that "Swaraj is my birth right" received momentous support not only from revolutionary freedom fighters, including Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Sri Aurobindo, but from the entire nation. Congress adopted the attainment of *Swaraj* as its goal, and *swadeshi*, *swabhasha*, *swadharma* and National Education were added as its other dimensions.

In *Bande Mataram*, Bipin Chandra Pal wrote, "Swaraj as the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of the "Satyyuga" (era of the truth) of national greatness, the resumption of her great role of teacher and guide, self-liberation of the people for the final fulfilment of the Vedantic ideal in politics, this is the true *Swaraj* for India. The groundwork of what may well be called the composite culture of India is undoubtedly Hindu. Though the present Indian nationality is composed of many races, and the present culture of more than one world civilization, yet it must be admitted that the Hindu forms its base and centre... The dominant role of Hindu culture, its sense of the spiritual and universal, will, therefore, be the peculiar feature of this composite Indian nationality.....And the type of spirituality that it seeks to develop is essentially Hindu."

Many Western-educated "liberal nationalists" (and, later, Marxist historians) used to dismiss cultural nationalism as communal. To those who recoiled at the idea of cultural nationalism because of their lack of understanding of the concept of *dharma*, the bedrock of the Indian civilisation, Tilak said, "By alien, I do not mean alien in religion." To such people, "who claim to have imbibed the spirit of nationality and patriotism from the West," Lala Lajpat Rai suggested, "Study a few chapters of the

Vedic literature with care and thought, and I am confident that this study will open a panorama of new ideas to our view.”

Our leaders believed that the principles of Sanatan Dharma were hidden in all aspects of Indian life—in its rituals, ceremonies, music, literature, theatre, industry, and religion—and that reviving those was the only way to unite the country and lead it to pristine glory. Several organisations were launched with this in mind. For instance, Nabagopal Mitra, the editor of the National Paper, started the Hindu Mela with the idea of rallying the people, particularly the educated youth, behind the concept of reviving the glories of the Hindu past and interpreting Western education and culture in terms of the indigenous civilisation. The aim of the Hindu Mela was to make the people aware of the glories of the Hindu civilisation, influence them to cultivate national language and ideas, and honour national symbols. Nabagopal Mitra's idea of fighting the cultural colonialism of the British by reviving the best of the ancient Hindu civilisation had the blessings of the Tagore family.

Similarly, Baba Ram Singh Kuka initiated the Kuka movement in 1871–72. Baba Ram Singh believed that political freedom was a part of religion. He built up a formidable organisation, which was committed to promoting Indian thought. He instructed his followers to boycott foreign goods and introduced non-cooperation as a political weapon against the British. Mahatma Gandhi adopted several principles of non-cooperation from this movement. Baba's followers wore only hand-spun, white attire.

A host of other initiatives were started over the course of time, including the Mitra Mela by Savarkar, Arya Mahila Samaj, etc. Several authors, artists and theatre groups brought out works that drew inspiration and ideas from Indian folklore, epics and history. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Ananda Math* and the song *Vande Mataram*, Tagore's *Shivaji Utsav* (1904), Madhusudan Dutt's *Sharmistha Padmavati* and *Krishna Kumari, Tilottoma, Meghanad Badha*, and several others gave a great push to the Hindu spirit consciousness of the self—Swa consciousness. As the former editor of the *Organiser*, K R Malkani, has rightly observed, in *The RSS Story*, all the great fathers of the Indian renaissance invoked the innate Hindu spirit and roused the people to action by touching the same chord of the Hindu heart.

Our great freedom fighters and national heroes had a clear vision as to how the national reconstruction should take place, even after attaining Independence, so that India could play her “civilisational role.” Dr Hedgewar started the RSS with the aim of leading the country to *param vaibhavam* (supreme glory). To attain this, he believed that the fuel that gives the energy for this effort is the Swa consciousness.

In his famous Uttarpara speech, Sri Aurobindo said, “His (Shivaji's) ideal of an organised Hindu commonwealth, based upon the law of righteousness as evolved in the religious and ethical life of the scriptures, is distinctly a great national movement with us as long as the protection of the permanent elements of our race consciousness will lie in future advancement of our nation.” He observed that the Hindu shall help the realisation of national ideals “not by ceasing to be Hindu...but by developing the higher features of his culture and civilisation.”

Inspired by the same ideals, several freedom fighters chose foreign lands to fight for Bharat's cause. The list is long: Subhash Chandra Bose, Lala Hardayal, Shamji Krishna Verma, Rash Behari Bose, Madam Bhikaji Cama, Champak Raman Pillai and Sardar Kartar Lion “Saraba” are some of the shining stars in the galaxy of patriots who took up the Bharatiya cause abroad.

An attempt has been made to study and document the contribution of such great men through this book, titled *A Preliminary Introduction to Role of Indian Diaspora in Struggle for Freedom (People, Places and Memorials)*, by the eminent academician and vice-chancellor of the Sachi University of Buddhist Studies, Smt. Neerja A. Gupta. The book, I am sure, will go a long way in giving a clear perspective on the ideals that shaped the Freedom Movement not only to the chroniclers of history but to the general public as well.

J. Nandkumar
(National Convenor of Prajna Pravah)

\

PREFACE

The Indian diaspora has been an essential bearer of nationalistic emotions. In the time of peace, it was the largest community of entrepreneurs, who have made their marks in almost all fields of life. Since pre-historic times, they have crossed the borders to propagate religion, culture, learning and arts; thus, widening trade and professions across the continents. The glory of India has spread due to their diligence and committed endeavours towards Bharat. Over the course of time, due to colonisation, after a long saga of struggle, their success story stands out remarkably amidst the tales of torture, disrespect, indentureship, and subjugation. The call from the motherland has always remained sacred for the Indian diaspora. The bond always brought them closer to shared destinies. This has been the main reason that freedom struggle for India was not only fought in India but also in nations that hosted Indians.

The struggle for freedom has been a combined effort where the diaspora community has experienced the complexity of migrants' experiences, on the one hand, and the different degrees of emotions to which they feel connected to their societies of origin, on the other. Like all other movements, the Indian diaspora is also the result of different waves of migration over hundreds of years driven by a variety of reasons—theology, religious tours, mercantilism, colonialism, brain drain and globalisation.

The destinies of India and the diaspora are intertwined. It is very necessary to acknowledge their efforts for a mutually contributing relationship. It's time to hear these loud voices and react to their implications. In addition to human efforts, many organisations, memorials and events also contributed to raising the spirit

The inclination towards nationalistic solipsism often disguises the complex set of global historical constellations, transnational political interactions and translocal ideological exchanges that are constitutive factors of most national movements. Fortunately, there are some exceptions to this rule, even among nationalists themselves. In his book *Young India*, the Indian political activist and amateur historian Lala Lajpat Rai acknowledged, for instance, the formative impact of global factors on

Indian nationalist politics. The book, published in 1917, contains a short chapter on the “world forces” that shaped the Indian national movement.¹

By and large, the narratives of the freedom struggle have charted a few known endeavours and celebrated their contribution, but have not yet recognised many other such attempts. Addressing this, today, becomes imperative, otherwise, as a nation, we shall fail in paying due homage to our freedom fighters in entirety.

The existing efforts cover examples from the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. All types of efforts created an overseas fervour among the people emotionally affiliated with India. Some were inclined to spread their patriotic connection through writings, others portrayed solid actions, while many were engaged in supporting the entire struggle with money, networking, or strategic support. It's high time that we recognise these efforts by the Indian diaspora. It's been a long time that they have remained unsung or underrated. Their glory must be restored. It's high time that their efforts were made public with reverences. Apart from individuals, several organisations too inspired monumental activities. So much so that memorials have been created out of these activities. Some buildings have become iconic over the course of time. Many times, events too have become landmarks in the history of freedom struggle.

The diaspora's endeavours in freedom struggle are divided into different segments. Bharat, then undivided, witnessed efforts from many quarters and people. Today, these people may be considered as other nationals or the diaspora. Countries like Afghanistan, Burma, Bangladesh, and Pakistan have been included because many freedom fighters have been forgotten by those countries. Bharat can never forget their contributions. Most highlighted, here, are the efforts by Bhagat Singh whom Bharat sees as an iconic martyr, but Pakistan doesn't consider him among their freedom fighters. Similarly, some incidents triggered the struggle for freedom, for example, books like *Hind Swaraj* by Gandhi.

Maharani Jinda Rani Kaur is considered to be the first revolutionary queen of Punjab and, due to her valour, at the time, she was called the “Lioness of Lahore.” She pledged that she would kill the British only by repulsing them, which is why she was considered the greatest enemy of the British. This heroine of Punjab was the youngest queen of Punjab Kesari Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on 27 June 1839, rivers of blood were flowing in Punjab. The British were targeting Punjab.

¹ Fischer-Tine', Harald. “Indian Nationalism and the ‘world forces’: transnational and diasporic dimensions of the Indian freedom movement on the eve of the First World War” *Journal of Global History* (2007) 3, pp. 325–344 ^a London School of Economics and Political Science 2007, p. 325.

In such odd circumstances, Empress Jinda organized her army, gave a speech to her troops to encourage them, declared her five-year-old son Dilip Singh the king, took the reins of governance, organised and worked. Lord Dalhousie, seeing her valour, said, “Rani Jinda is more powerful than all the military power of the State.” She was imprisoned but she escaped to Nepal as a sanyasi and met Begum Hazrat Mahal and Nana Saheb. She made a detailed revolutionary plan in Nepal to defeat the British, but it remained incomplete because, in August 1883, at the age of forty-four, Queen Jinda died suddenly. The forces involved in the freedom struggle were shocked but, by following the courage, valour and will-power of Queen Jinda, they were motivated by the spirit of freedom of that revolutionary queen.

The Indian National Army (INA) was formed in Japan and its founder, Rash Behari Bose, was successful in convincing the Japanese government to support their efforts. He, later, handed it over to Subhash Chandra Bose and, then, he nurtured Azad Hind Fauz. Parallel efforts were made by Jatindra Nath Mukherjee (also known as Bagha Jatin) who had a close meeting with the German Crown Prince, who promised to help the freedom fighters overseas with finance and arms in case of war. Bagha Jatin was successful in almost all prominent countries, like the US, Canada, and Europe, through *Jugantar*: a journal to engage Indian freedom fighters.

Two younger brothers of Swami Vivekananda, Tarak Nath Das and Bhupendra Nath Das, from California University and Georgetown University, met Lala Hardayal. A South Asian magazine, *Free Hindustan*, by Das, became the mouthpiece of the Indian freedom struggle. This effort led to the formation of the Ghadar Party. Many prominent freedom fighters like Gurun Ditt Kumar, Harnam Singh, Professor Suren Bose, M. N. Roy, Vhampekraman Pillai, M. N. Roy and Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya highlighted the freedom struggle until it was widely accepted by the community and governments.

Sarojini Naidu’s brother, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay, took charge of activities under *Plan Zimmerman* in Germany. This led to help for the freedom fighters in Germany, Italy, and France. It’s worth mentioning that Sarojini Naidu notified the British against her brother’s activities and he became much sought after by Scotland Yard police.

There came a time when the Jugantar leader, Bagha Jatin, came into contact with the Ghadar leaders and started fierce efforts. A planned activity began under the aegis of Rash Behari Bose and Bagha Jatin. There was an effort to form an Indian army of imprisoned Indians who could enter India from two sides, first from the Arab countries, from which they planned to enter through Peshawar, and second from Thailand and Burma, to enter at Calcutta. However, this plan was sabotaged and failed.

This failure didn't dampen Bagha Jatin and his efforts continued, one after the other, like Vessel Annie Larsen and S. S. Maverik, the Czech counter espionage network and Spy "C."

The Singapore Mutiny in 1915 has a special place in this list. For seven days, the revolt continued, and it surely unnerved the British government. At the same time, the Ghadar movement continued. The Berlin Committee, under Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh along with Maulana Barkatullah Khan, was successful in forming the first free provisional Government in Afghanistan in Kabul on 1 December 1915. Many countries recognised this government, including Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and others. In the Hindu-German conspiracy trial, in the US in 1917, many Ghadar leaders were convicted of this connection. This formation of government is neither widely talked about nor known. Most people think the government formed by Azad Hind Fauz, in Andaman, by Subhash Chandra Bose, was the first independent government, which was much later than the Kabul government.

This entire legacy impacted the young minds of India, including Bhagat Singh. There are many martyrs of World War I and World War II who laid down their lives fighting for the British. Though they were not fighting for Indian freedom, they fought for the assurance of freedom for India. Their efforts need due mention. Two villages in France, especially, commemorate their martyrdom in the form of memorials. About 30,000 lives were sacrificed in those two villages while about one lac soldiers laid down their lives in World War I and World War II. These memorials are known as Neuve Chapelle India Memorial (France) and La Gorgue Indian War Memorial (France),

The INA and Azad Hind Fauz led to several noticeable incidents in India, such as the Naval Revolt in 1946. This became a major threat to British, which they feared like the incident in 1857.

People, monuments, organisations, and events, thus, create a synthesised mosaic to portray the breadth and length of the involvement of the overseas Indians in the freedom struggle of India. Leaving other aspects and concentrating on human efforts would make the study limited; hence, an effort is made to record the role of the Indian diaspora in the struggle for freedom through the people, places, memorials, and events that made distinguished contributions.

It is time to pay homage to Madam Bhikaji Cama, whom we pay tribute to as the unfinished sonnet of women's power; Maulana Muhammad Barkatullah, the first Prime Minister of the Azad Hind Government; Venkatesa Subramaniam Aiyar (V. V. S. Aiyar), the early Tamil freedom fighter in Europe; Madan Lal Dhingra, the extended pride;

Lala Hardayal, the father of the Ghadar movement; Champak Raman Pillai, the freedom fighter who coined “Jai Hind” and reprimanded Hitler; Raja Mahendra Pratap, who created the Azad Hind Fauj; Manvendra Nath Rai, a revolutionary who was also a messiah of labourers; Rishikesh Latta, the founder of the Ghadar Party; and Sardar Kartar Singh “Sarba,” who kissed the hanging at the age of nineteen in a country that wasn’t his homeland. Among Gandhi’s prominent associates were Doctor Manilal (Manilal Maganlal Shah) in Mauritius and Fiji, and Totaram Sandhya in Fiji. Their voices led to the abolishment of many of the repressive acts of the colonisers. Moreover they played a pivotal role in sending news back home about the British atrocities, which impacted the freedom struggle and its intensity in India.

It is also noteworthy that many freedom fighters, from various countries, deserve recognition from the former, undivided Bharat. From Pakistan: Bhagat Singh, as mentioned earlier as a figure of daring; Mir Masti Afridi, as a celebrity with achievement; and Jogendra Nath Mandal, as a ray of hope for the Bengali population in the region of Pakistan, are now forgotten by Pakistan but Bharat cannot ever repay their contribution to the freedom struggle.

From Bangladesh: Basu Binoy Krishna, a man of revolutionary activities; Badal Gupta and his brothers, brave heroes as armed men; Dinesh Chandra Gupta, a true hero; Suraya Sen, full of bravery; Rokeya Sekhwat Hossain, the greatest women’s personality; and Matangini Hazra, the courageous woman who can’t ever be forgotten.

From Burma: Saraswathi Rajamani, a dedicated woman; Lakshmi Sehgal, the wholehearted woman; Janaki Thevar, a young enthusiastic girl; V. Rathinam, an expert politician.

From Afghanistan: Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a man of milestone; Emir Sher Ali Khan, a man of true faith; and Ghazi Amanullah Khan and his sovereign.

Several Indian diaspora organisations involved in the struggle for freedom have become the epitome of the freedom struggle: The First Vedanta Society (Branches of Ramkrishana Mission) (1894), India House (1904), India Home Rule Society (India House) (1904), Abhinav Bharat (1906), Indian Independence (1907), Tolstoy Farm (1910), Ghadar Party (1913), Indian Independence League (1914), and the Indian Independence League and Government (1915).

Among the prominent memorials, these landmarks in various countries can never be forgotten in the freedom struggle: Tolstoy Farm (South-Africa), India House (London), The London India House (London), Apravasi Ghat (Mauritius), Neuve Chapelle India Memorial (France), The Indian War Memorial (France), The Suriname Memorial (India), Ghadar

Memorial Hall (Yugantar Ashram) (US), and Ghadar Party Martyrs Memorial Hall (Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Hall) (Punjab).

What could be better than commemorating the efforts rendered overseas by India's diaspora at the celebration of the seventy-fifth year of India's independence in the form of "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava?" Let these narratives motivate many others who have left the motherland and settled afar. Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for ending institutionalised discrimination against Indians in South Africa became an inspiring legend for the enduring sentimentalism about the diaspora in modern India. Shyam ji Krishna Varma, Veer Savarkar, Madan Lal Dhingra and Lala Lajpat Rai are some of those tales about living inspirations who have become living legends and immortal icons in the tales of the freedom struggle of India. Swami Vivekananda used words, Lala ji used writings, and Savarkar, Dhingra and Gandhi used poise and actions. They created a saga of models, which became a vehicle for promoting the cause of Indian independence among the political elites of major countries. As the independence movement gathered momentum at home, it began to influence many Indian communities abroad.

Among the overseas efforts, some of the foreigners who played a pivotal role in the Indian Freedom Struggle must be mentioned here. Among the prominent players are Annie Besant, who was inspired by the relentless struggle for independence against British rule and gradually became an active part of it; Charles Freer Andrews, who played a significant role in persuading Gandhi to return to India with him in 1915—he took Gandhi to the Second London Round Table Conference and helped him negotiate with the British government on Indian autonomy and power transfer—(due to his contribution to India's struggle, he was referred to as Dinabandhu); Madeleine Slade, popularly known as Mirabehn, who worked as a dedicated activist in spreading the spirit of non-violence and was considered an essential participant in the Indian independence movement by the British; Satyananda Stokes, who was an American who worked incessantly for India's freedom and later settled in India. He was stunned by the Jallianwala Massacre, where the British killed thousands of people. This incident changed his life, and he decided to join Indian politics; Sister Nivedita, who was an Irish woman and a follower of Swami Vivekananda. After coming to India, she contributed to the India's struggle for freedom. She was a close companion of Annie Besant and Sri Aurobindo and played a paramount role in women's education; Mira Alphonse, popularly known as "Mother," who was born in Paris in 1978. Her role in enriching the rich heritage and culture was immense; Verrier Elwin was a colonial bishop who assisted leaders like

Mahatma Gandhi in their freedom struggles; and Alfred Webb, an Irishman and a close associate of the Dadabhai Noaraji, who explained the meticulous details regarding the draining of Indian wealth by the British and opened their eyes the intentions of the British.

As we celebrate seventy-five years of independence from colonial rule, it's time to reflect upon the efforts and missions of the Indian diaspora, which not only helped in raising the flame but also set the stage for much needed actions in the environment. It created an extended uprising from all nooks and corners of the world and rendered the highest level of support in regaining freedom for India.

The narratives compiled here shall move the discourse further. The need of the hour is not limited to academics or research, it has crossed over into exposing the truth. Coherence is ensured so that they contribute to the objectives of nationalism, and we pay due respects to their struggles.

The worldwide support received in writing this document has been very magnanimous. My immense gratitude goes to the respected Shri J. Nandkumar ji Bhaisahab for writing a foreword befitting of the spirit of this document and the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava celebrations: his deliberations, laboured facts and natural flow of thoughts have synchronised the necessary set up for this book. Further, I shall fail in showing my gratitude if I don't acknowledge the contributions of GOPIO International: the Late Shri Inder Singh ji, former chairman and president of GOPIO International; Shri Ashook Ramsaran, former president of GOPIO International; Shri Lal Motwani, founding president of GOPIO New York and executive trustee of GOPIO International; Shri Barjinder Sodhi, GOPIO Berlin president; Shri Mehen Poinoosawmy (GOPIO International Europe coordinator); and Ms Rita Abraham, former chairperson of the Women's Council of GOPIO International.

The research scholars Meena Singh and Raj Gohel, and the office manager of the Department of International Studies, Gujarat University, Ms. Diksha Radheyshyam, provided much needed secretarial support. I am also thankful to Bharat Shodh Sansthan for accepting the manuscript for publishing under its aegis, and the assistance from Mitika Sharma, SUBIS, has been very timely.

This write-up is to highlight the role of these diaspora freedom fighters and major revolutionary organisations, events, and memorials. However, this write-up doesn't include all of them. This debut effort is only the first step, and much remains to be explored and exposed.

Neerja A Gupta

CHAPTER 1

PEOPLE

Indians

1 Punjab's First Female Revolutionary: Queen Jinda Rani Kaur



(<https://lostgirls.home.blog/2019/09/02/maharani-jind-kaur-the-warrior-queen-who-fought-back/>)

Maharani Jinda is considered to be the first revolutionary queen of Punjab and, due to her valour, she was called, at that time, the “Lioness of Lahore.” She pledged that she would kill the British only by repulsing them. That is why she was considered the greatest enemy of the British.

The biggest enemy of the British, this heroine of Punjab, was the youngest queen of Punjab Kesari Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on June 27, 1839, rivers of blood were flowing in Punjab. The British were targeting Punjab. In such odd circumstances, Empress Jinda came out of the screen, organised her army, gave a speech

in front of it, encouraged it, declared her five-year-old son Dilip Singh the king, took the reins of governance, and organized and worked.

To expel the British from the motherland, they called upon several Indian kings to work together, shoulder to shoulder, and liberate the country from subordination, but no one supported them. *Veeraganna*, then, pledged to drive out the British alone. Lord Dalhousie, seeing his valour, had said, "Rani Jinda is more powerful than all the military power of the state."

In 1845, when the Sikhs and the British fought the war, Rani Jinda fought strongly against the British as a freedom fighter and showed the countrymen that even the brave heroes of Punjab were in the freedom struggle.

Not only this, but she also awakened the feelings of patriotism in the hearts of the countrymen. However, problems arose when the British merged her son Maharaja Dilip Singh with them. In this way, the British separated Queen Jinda from state functions and fixed an annual pension of Rs 1.5 lakh for her maintenance. Queen Jinda found it grossly insulting. She secretly continued preparations for rebellion against the British, but news of the queen's secret rebellion came to the British. The British tricked Queen Jinda by deceit and kept her in Ferozepur Jail. Later, she was sent from Ferozepur Jail to Banaras Jail.



(<https://lostgirls.home.blog/2019/09/02/maharani-jind-kaur-the-warrior-queen-who-fought-back/>)

Rebellion Erupted

When the people of Punjab received this news, the public erupted in rebellion. As a result, a fierce battle took place in 1849 in Villianwala. The

British lost this war but, again, there was a war in Gujarat in which the British were victorious. Hearing of the victory of the British, Maharani Jinda became extremely distraught and somehow managed to cut off the fetters of the prison—she took the form of sanyasi and escaped. When Queen Jinda was crossing the Ganges River by boat, the British pursued her but they did not succeed in capturing the queen. After this, Maharani Jinda, while wandering and escaping from the eyes of the British, reached Nepal in 1849.

Plan to Defeat the British

When the Revolt of 1857 started, Queen Jinda was still in Nepal. The queen started planning to defeat the British again. Incidentally, revolutionaries like Begum Hazrat Mahal and Nana Saheb also reached Nepal at the same time. When this became known to the British, special surveillance was kept on Her Majesty Jinda. At the same time, the British sent Maharaja Dilip Singh to England. At that time, Dilip Singh was just fifteen years old and the plan made by the Queen Jinda in Nepal to defeat the British remained incomplete. The reason was that, in August 1883, at the age of forty-four, Queen Jinda died suddenly.

The *Krantikaris* were shocked but, by following the courage, valour, and courage of Queen Jinda, they finally succeeded in getting motivated by the spirit of freedom of that revolutionary Queen.

2 The First Revolutionary to Demand Independence: Shyamji Krishna Varma



(<https://www.epichindi.in/2021/07/shyamji-krishna-varma.html>)

Overseas Indian freedom fighters were an integral part of the independence movement. The war of revolution that the revolutionaries fought against the British rule had its origins in London. Overseas Indian revolutionaries had advanced through contact with socialist parties and thinkers in London's public airspace and spread their activities to France, Germany, Afghanistan, Japan, Canada, America, Singapore, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia and Russia.

1857 the Birth Year

It started with the launch of Shyamji Krishna Varma, from India, in London. Living in India, it was not possible for him to carry out revolutionary plans. This warrior man, who was very meritorious and struggling to cope with British rule, was born in 1857 in village Mandvi, District-Kathiawar, Gujarat (on 4 October), into a poor family. He became the first Indian freedom warrior. On the strength of *medha*, he was the first Indian student of India to pass the entrance examination for Oxford and study there. Along with Marathi, Gujarati and Sanskrit languages, Shyamji Krishna Varma had gained so much authority in Greek and Latin that he was given the post of professor at Oxford. When Shyamji returned from passing his exams at Oxford, he started practicing in Bombay (in 1883). His fame had spread throughout the country because he was the first Indian to go to Oxford and become a professor there. Impressed by his talent, the Ratlam king appointed him his *deewan*. After some time, they started practicing in Ajmer. From there, he came to Udaipur where he was appointed a member of the State Council. After about two years, he was appointed Diwan of Junagadh Principality, on 6 February 1895.

Operation of Revolutionary Dynamics from London

Shyamji Krishna Varma was secretly working towards the dream of freedom for the country, even while on important posts, beside the revolutionaries of Maharashtra: Lokmanya Tilak and the Natu brothers, who were very close to Swami Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj. Lokmanya Tilak was also planning to recruit young people of revolutionary ideology through Shyamji and was praised by Damodar Chapekar, who had shot Commissioner Rand in Pune, on 22 June 1897. However, the regiment of Junagadh was rife with activities and independent tendencies. It considered Shyamji a dangerous man. A secret report was sent to the government and king dismissed Shyamji from Junagadh's Diwan post, accusing him of serious misbehaviour.

Publication of Newspaper

Under these altered circumstances, Maharishi Dayanand urged Shyamji to get ready to leave India and go abroad. Shyamji came back to London and started slowly connecting with Irish freedom fighters. He met Hindman. Shyamji established the “India Home Rule Society” and, under its auspices, published the *Indian Sociologist* newspaper with the aim of making the world community aware of the real state of the lives of Indians living under British rule. Shyamji, who had brought his monetary property from India, had started putting it into revolution work. He used one lakh rupees to purchase the Highgate London, and gave it its name, “India House,” which later became an important centre of revolution. Meanwhile Lala Hardayal also came to London to study at St. John's College in Oxford. Another person from Lahore Parmanand was also studying for their MA in London. In the same “London period,” Dadabhai Naoroji was also running the *London Indian Society*. In this way, youth power had started to get organised and the *Indian Sociologist* was beginning to reach the demands of self-government in an effective manner.

This was the first time that the demand for the “self-rule” of India had been raised by any platform. Lokmanya Tilak wrote a long article commemorating Shyamji's work in the June 1905 issue of *Kesari* and congratulated him on giving the wire. The Home Rule Society was a secular political-social institution of open-minded revolutionary youth and its president was Shyamji Krishna Varma.

It is worth mentioning that when Bharat Bhawan, “India House,” was opened by Shyamji, the building was inaugurated by the Irish militant leader H. M. Hindman. On this occasion, Dadabhai Naoroji, Madam Bhikaji Rustamji Cama and Justice Harry Kuhh, in particular, were present.

Demand for Complete Independence

The popularity of “India House” was increasing day by day, so much so that D. D. Reis, member of the British Parliament, wrote a letter to the Indian Secretary, in July 1907, warning him that Shyamji's activities were dangerous and that he was flaring up the public to revolt against British rule. The publication of the *Indian Sociologist*, which had begun in September 1907 in India, was, then, banned and Shyamji's stay in England was no longer safe. In June, he left England's “India House” to the responsibility of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and went to Paris. In the meantime, his work had spread throughout America, Paris and Egypt. With their help, the patriotic society was becoming the main organisation of the “Krantikaris.” Shyamji was the first Indian revolutionary to publicly

demand India's full independence and, for this, he believed that anything must be done, that nothing should be avoided, as the goal of freedom would not be achieved without fighting a constant battle.



(<https://kachchh.nic.in/tourist-place/shyamji-krishna-Varma-memorial/>)

Conquest of Ideology

Matching with Shyamji Krishna Varma's ideology, personalities like Lokmanya Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal were highly admired in India, while Turkey's leader Mustafa Camal Pasha was also very much admired. Sardar Singh Rana and Madam Bhikaji Cama, who came from India to the convention of the International Socialist Congress, held in Stuttgart in August 1907, unfurled the flag of independent India not only for the rightfulness demanded by Shyamji, but also for full independence.

It would not be exaggerating to say that Shyamji was the “think tank” of the revolutionaries of India, as well as *Bhamashah*, who kept on spending all his earnings on revolutionaries. Though he may have lived like a miser in his personal life, but he didn't lack any plan of revolutionaries to stop because of lack of funds. Since Shyamji had moved from London to Paris during the time, the British government was not able to catch him but, when the visit of Emperor George to Paris in April 1914 was confirmed, it signalled danger to him. After a lot of time, he moved from Paris to Switzerland.

Travel in Switzerland

After London and Paris, Shyamji built a beautiful house on the shore of Lake Manassas, which was his shelter. Meanwhile, after the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the equations of the world's politics changed. The suppression of the British and British-friendly governments over the revolutionaries increased rapidly and Shyamji was blown-in, like a silent flame. Gandhiji's ideology was becoming popular in India and many men were rotting in jail. Shyamji's health began to fall steadily in this period of desperation and, finally, at 6.00 p.m. on 31 May, 1930, the heavy moment came when this live dream of fire, cherishing the country's freedom in his chest, this wonderful warrior of freedom, far away from India's soil in the land of Switzerland, went away to begin the infinite journey of *Mahaprayan*.

Sardar Bhagat Singh was standing in front of a judge in India, during his trial in court, when he got this sad news; he paid homage to the departed soul by observing a two-minute silence. Maxim Gorki, the Great Russian writer paid him the best tribute by remembering him as the “magician of India.”

3 Rash Behari Bose: Who Became the Friend of the British to Fight the British



(https://www.indianetzone.com/54/rash_behari_bose.htm)

Rash Behari Bose was one of the warriors of the Indian freedom struggle, who said that the struggle was better than the dangers of hanging on the gallows, that we should make the enemy keep fighting to tire them, and that one should willingly embrace death before being trapped in their clutches. The generation of the second line of revolutionaries followed their “political philosophy,” in which Chandrashekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh, who fought for long periods against the British and were martyred even after independence, were prominent. He gave importance to the success of the revolutionary plan and attributed the strength in organisation to five things—resolution, continuous effort, vigilance, coordination, and destruction—and perhaps this was the reason that he became a continuous headache for British government; Rash Behari Bose never failed in any of his plans.

The quality of determinism had intensified in his personality since childhood. He surprised his father by saying that he was not born to work, and his goal was to liberate the country. In front of his friends, Shridhar Chand and Mohan Lal Rai, in Chandra Nagar, he pledged that, from that day, his life would be dedicated to his country. While there, he learned ways to make bombs. He was also in constant contact with contemporary revolutionaries. At every moment, he used his opportunities to create organisations and to dissipate the British from the country. In this same way, he got a job in the Forest Research Institute of Dehradun in 1906 so that he could get some explosive material to make a bomb in the chemical laboratory and he spread his organisation in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Meanwhile Lala Hardayal (in 1905) had gone to London and was involved in the formation of the Ghadar Party and Manendra Nath Roy was engaged in organising labourers in America and Mexico. As well as these two, Rash Behari Bose also made contact with Herambalal Gupta in Japan.

Bombs in Shobhayatra

The freedom fighters from Punjab, Delhi and UP also wanted to do some fighting, as had happened in London, on 1 July 1909; Madan Lal Dhingra had shot and killed Sir Curzon Wylie. Meanwhile, Rash Behari Bose had to go to his home in Chandra Nagar suddenly because his mother had become ill. Reaching there, it came to him that Lord Hardinge should be killed, and the chaos created by the sensation in Dhingra must be retained. The plan to throw a bomb at Hardinge had come into his mind because on 23 December 1912, as he was about to get the opportunity to fulfil it in Delhi. As Rash Behari Bose had that style of working, he first thought a lot in this direction.

Rebellion

Bombs were thrown at the procession eventually but there was a slight adjustment to the planned time. Lord Hardinge did not die; he was only injured but the bodyguard, who was sitting with his umbrella on the elephant, did die. As Rash Behari Bose Dehradun and other companions—Basant Kumar Biswas, Amir Chand, Balamukund and Awadh Behari—were sitting in the train for Lahore, one could not have imagined that a Mulazim (servant) of the Forest Department was planning rebellion against the government.

The Lord Hardinge bomb scandal had circulated with unprecedented enthusiasm amongst the Indian revolutionaries living abroad. Lala Hardayal, at Yugantar Ashram and in his newspaper *Ghadar*, described this bombing as a revolution. This event was going to last for a year and Rash Behari Bose wanted to strike again at Basant Camar at Laurence Gardens. Unfortunately, on 17 May 1913, at the honour ceremony of Laurence, a dori bomb started but, before leaving the door of the Lawrence Gardens, was torn apart by the feet of the peon; the bomb blast had already occurred and the peon died but the British government, like hungry dogs, started raiding the place and roaming to find the conspiracy sources.

Preparations for the Uprising

His trusted members of the Punjab unit were arrested and he himself was followed by the warrant. In January 1915, he reached Amritsar, with chalk-bound arrangements, but didn't reach Lahore. He addressed the meeting of important members in a hospital. Rash Behari Bose gave directions to Vishnu Ganesh Pingale, Kartar Singh Saraba, Pt Paramanand, Jagat Ram Bharadwaj and Shachindra Sanyal to work differently and the date for armed conflict was fixed for 21 February 1915. The date was reported to America's "Ghadar Party" and Germany's "Berlin Committee." From there, the groups of Krantikaris went towards India. The preparations for the uprooting of railway tracks, pulling of the telephone, cutting of telephone wire and rebellion in the cantonments were completed but, despite all their vigilance, a British spy, Krishpal Singh, had become a member of the organisation and he was sending all the information to the police. Rashu da had been betrayed in his "plan," which he had made anonymously, for 21 February 1915, and, on 19 February 1915, the information was sent to the police by the mole.

The weapons of Hindustani soldiers were taken in the cantonments, some patriotic soldiers were also killed and the revolutionaries coming

from abroad were arrested at the harbour. The practical efforts of the revolution failed again and again.

There was no alternative left except for Rash Behari Bose to leave India. The police were deployed to catch him and his companions. They got on the train at Lahore and went to Benaras, then to Kolkata. They reached Chandannagar, which was a French colony that was almost free from British rule.

Coming to Kolkata, Rasho da knew that Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore was going to Japan. \under the name of Priyamant Thakur, he decided to go to Japan.



(<https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/here-s-the-story-of-the-man-who-founded-ina-and-handed-it-over-to-netaji-subhash-chandra-bose->)

Forced to Leave India

Ditching the intelligence of the British Government, Rash Behari Bose boarded the ship *Sanakimaru* on 12 May 1915 at Kolkata, but his heart was very heavy. On the previous day, 11 May 1915, his intimate partners Amir Chand, Balamukund, Awadh Vihari and Bansat Kumar Vishwas were hanged on a hanging trap in Ambala jail. Going to Japan was so suitable for him because Japan was not yet an important centre for Indian revolutionaries and there wasn't the possibility of British detectives being aware of their occurrence in the long run. In Japan, as soon as he got there, on 5 June 1915, he got a new name: Hayashi Ichiro. Here, during his first

six months underground, he first learned the Japanese language and, then, Hayashi Ichiro was active in his own way in Japan.

Pressure on the Japanese Government

British detective D. Peteri also went to Japan. He had ascertained that Hayashi Ichiro was Rash Behari Bose. He tried to capture Rash Behari Bose several times with the help of Japan Police but failed. Then, he pressured the Japanese government for his deportation. This time, he was successful. This was a new problem for Rash Behari Bose. With the help of his peers, he met Japan's chairman of the Black Dragon Society, Toyama. Toyama introduced him to the Japanese family of Ajo Soma, who gave him shelter in his house. His wife Kokko Soma also gave her full support. This family was so influenced by the personality of Rash Behari Bose that he married their daughter, Toshiko, in 1918, who joined Rashu da in the fight for India's freedom for the rest of her life. After eight years of evading the British and Japan Police, in 1923, Rash Behari Bose managed to get citizenship in Japan. Even while underground, Rash Behari Bose was in contact with revolutionaries through Manvendra Nath Rai, Lala Hardayal and Ramchandra.

After eight years, living in eleven houses, it was time for Rash Behari Bose to come out into the open ground. He first formed the India Independence League institution in 1924 and handed it over to Hambal and Taraknath to open its branches outside. Although, despite being underground, Rash Behari Bose was not sitting waiting; during this visit to Shanghai, with the German ambassador, he had demanded arms for the revolutionaries of India and he also succeeded in delivering some logistics through the Chinese. At that time, Sanayat Sen was also in Japan and Rasho Da had made a lot of contacts with him. In the thirteenth year, the Indian Independence League had become an important institution of the Indian revolutionaries in Japan and the important leaders of Japan were sympathetic to the fight being fought for the freedom of the Indians.

Establishment of Azad Hind Fauj

Rash Behari Bose kept the British in the dark by forming an Asian youth federation—New Delhi for Asia and Asiais—on 28 October 1937. After four years of fighting China, Japan suddenly opened a front against America and England on 8 December 1941.

For India's independence, this was the golden opportunity to get Japanese help. On behalf of the Indian Independence League, Rash Behari

Bose met Prime Minister Tojo and prepared the Japanese government to provide military help to the Indian revolutionary movement.

Japan, moving the flag of Fateh on all the fronts, was moving ahead of the British government on several fronts. Rash Behari Bose's enthusiasm was very strong.

Battle Again

All Indian soldiers engaged in the British army were made prisoners of war and were now in the possession of Japan. Meanwhile, the Indian Independence League and the Japanese Factor of the Indian Independence League, together with Japan, established the Azad Hind Fauj and, once again, played for the spoils of the Indian independence struggle. To operate the Azad Hind Fauj, a war council was also formed, whose chairman was unanimously voted as Rash Behari Bose. Captain Mohan Singh was made the first commander of Azad Hind Fauj. The environment was quite favourable and the British were also defeated in Singapore.

Rash Behari Bose organised several important conferences by organising a military campaign and preparing the organisation at the conceptual level, out of which the Tokyo Conference, Biradari Sanman and Bangkok Conference are all important. They led to the proposition that “absolute independence is the main goal of our national movement and such freedom will not have any interference of any foreign power on India, and no freedom will be given to anybody other than the Indian on this freedom.” It is noteworthy that although Rash Behari Bose may have been fighting for the freedom of the country with help from Japan, he wanted independence to be fully autonomous and he was only favourable to a freedom that no other foreign power had any interference in.

Invitation to Netaji

Rash Behari Bose had set up an army against the British, but he could see that the leadership of the organisation could do with a skilled, healthy, and fearless warrior. Therefore, Rash Behari Bose, through the Japanese government, asked Subhash Chand Bose to arrange actions from Germany. Meanwhile, Rash Behari Bose made the headquarters of “Azad Hind Fauj” in Singapore, where one lakh soldiers were waiting for the next directive. Meanwhile, a dramatic incident took place: the resignation of Commander Mohan Singh (who was later made General) of the Military Administration of Japan due to ideological differences. Mohan Singh resigned and also ordered the dissolution of the “Azad Hind Fauj.” Rash Behari Bose made a four-member committee and handed over the