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National Revolutionism in Colonial Bengal: A Re-look at a Neglected History

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Abstract:

The Indian nationalist movement was a continuous process starting from small scale local resistance to an all-India movement. During the years following the Great Uprising of 1857, it traversed from a 'policy of appeasement' towards the British rulers to a movement of the people of India. During this period which spanned for almost ninety years from 1858 (Queen's Proclamation) to 1947 (achievement of Independence), the participants of the nationalist struggle followed variety of strategies, tactics, and mode of involving masses of different strata against British rule. These may be classified into four broad categories- a) Ideological Critique of the British colonial rule, b) Strategy of legal-constitutional advancement, c) Radical & Revolutionary activities and d) Mass mobilisation. The Radical & Revolutionary activities as an important strategy of national movement are of great relevance for study in this seventy-fifth year of Indian independence.

A re-look at the activities of the great revolutionaries and martyrs of the Indian nationalist struggle, the study of which was so long neglected in the tradition of mainstream history, is now the call of the hour. The attack by Chapekar Brothers on Rand in Pune in 1897 may be treated as first such event of radical activities. But it was Bengal which saw the upsurge of radical and revolutionary activities mostly from 1904 to 1934. The year 1934 saw the termination of explicit national revolutionary politics, particularly in Bengal and the United Provinces. After 1934, no act of violence had been perpetrated which indicates that the national revolutionaries, by that time, had lost their attraction in the politics of 'terrorism'. In the meantime, as the colonial repression went on unabated, most of the revolutionary activists belonging to different revolutionary parties and groups were under detention. About 2500 men and dozens of women were imprisoned in different jails and detention camps in the main lands. About 400 prisoners from all over India were imprisoned at Andaman Cellular Jail. It was during these detention years that the national revolutionaries found time for reviewing their strategies and tactics followed for the last thirty years. Most of the revolutionaries who were detained in various places in the mainland were released in 1937-38 (in the case of Andaman detenus, it was 1946). Many of them came out of the jail as staunch supporters of either Gandhism or Marxism and some of them dropped out of politics altogether. But none of them were in the mood of pursuing the former line of action and reverting to the old 'terrorist' path. The national revolutionaries who were still then in politics either joined the political parties already existing at the time or took part in forming new political parties in line with their newly acquired ideological preferences. Thus,

'terrorism' per se had become a thing of the past with all the parties. An attempt has been made here to delineate, in brief, the story of that most turbulent thirty year of India's struggle for full independence.

Keywords: *Terrorism, National Revolutionism, Anushilan Samiti, Jugantar, HRA, HSRA, BV, Chapekar Brothers, P Mitra, Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindrakumar, Kshudiram, Masterda Surya Sen, Pritilata.*

1. The Prologue:

The national revolutionary movement, generally known as 'terrorism', constituted one of the most significant aspects in the history of the Indian freedom movement. Imbued with the spirit of unrelenting fight against British imperialism, the national revolutionaries of India tried to set before the people of the country a bright example of personal courage and heroic self-sacrifice and thereby wanted to instill a mood of defiance in the minds of the people in the face of colonial repression. The revolutionary trend in the Indian freedom movement of the twentieth century was most ably represented by the *Anushilan Samiti*, the *Jugantar Federation*, the *Hindustan Socialist Republican Association - HSRA* (formerly *Hindustan Republican Association - HRA*)¹ and such other revolutionary parties and groups, and finally, by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and the *Indian National Army (INA)*².

For the present study, let us confine the term 'national revolutionism' following Gopal Halder, 'to describe a pattern of activity pursued for a prolonged period of thirty years, from 1904 to 1934'. (Halder, 2002: 195; Habib, S. Irfan, 2017: 2)³ Basing themselves on the methods and examples of the revolutionary movements and secret societies of the West, the national revolutionaries, during the period 1904-1934, were involved 'in organisation of secret societies, anti-imperialist indoctrination of their members, physical and moral training, collection of firearms, collection of funds by dacoities, assassination by bombs and fire- arms of enemies and traitors'. However, in spite of near unanimity among the writers on national revolutionary movement as to the methods and aims of the revolutionaries, there have been marked differences among them over the issue of choice of a proper term for denoting the same movement.

In Britain, the term 'terrorist' or 'terrorism' was popularized by British administrators who worked in India, for instance, Tegart's speech at Royal Empire Society, London on November 1, 1932⁴, and subsequent publication of 'Terrorism in India' pointed to a particular type of picture of revolutionaries of India, specially of Bengal. (Tegart, 1933/1983)⁵ Leaving aside this British-

¹ Deb, Bikash Ranjan (2018). From National Revolutionism to Marxism- Ideological Origins of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) in De, Soumitra, Ed. *Journal of Political Studies*. Dept of Political Science, University of North Bengal.

² *Ibid*, Note 1

³ Halder, Gopal (2002). 'Revolutionary Terrorism' in Gupta, AC (ed), *Studies in Bengal Renaissance-Third Revised Edition*. Kolkata: National Council of Education. Habib, S. Irfan, 2017. *To Make the Deaf Hear- Ideology and Programmes of Bhagat Singh and His Comrades*. Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective.

⁴ Tegart, Charles (1933). *Terrorism in India*. London: Royal Empire Society.

⁵ *Ibid*, Note- 4

sponsored label of 'terrorism', a term generally used in a derogatory sense, the revolutionary nationalist movement in India may be termed as, inter alia:

- A) 'Revolutionary Terrorism' (Gopal Halder, Bipan Chandra, David M. Laushey, Tanika Sarkar, etc.)⁶:
- B) 'Revolutionary Nationalism' (Tridib Chaudhury, Santimoy Roy, etc.)⁷:
- C) 'Petty-bourgeois Revolutionism' (B. K. Sinha, the accused Communist Party members in the Meerut Conspiracy case, Tridib Chaudhury, Shibdas Ghosh, Nihar Mukherjee, M.A. Persits, etc.)⁸: and
- D) 'National Revolutionism' (S. N. Mazumdar, G. Adhikari, Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, Nimai Pramanik, Sudhangsu Dasgupta, R. Ulyanovsky, M.A. Persits, Ashoke Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Suprakash Roy, S Irfan Habib etc.)⁹
- E) 'Regional Nationalism' (David M. Laushey)¹⁰

However, for avoiding any semantic confusion we may employ the term 'national revolutionism' for describing the uncompromising revolutionary trend of the Indian freedom struggle. The movement can be termed so because the struggle initiated by the uncompromising freedom fighters was basically a national liberation movement with a revolutionary content. However, national revolutionism failed to reach its logical culmination. The revolutionaries came to the realisation that their achievements had been disproportionately small compared to their sacrifices. As a result, by the thirties of the 20th century, a large number of national revolutionaries started feeling that their 'exclusively petty bourgeois movement ... had reached its climax'. It could not develop further. So, the national revolutionaries started engaging themselves in search for a new ideology and programme. A distinct swing towards Marxism was noticed clearly in many of the Indian national revolutionaries. But that is another issue and we would like to confine ourselves in briefly analysing the long thirty years of activities of the national revolutionaries, particularly in Bengal.

⁶ Chandra, Bipan (1999). *Essays on Colonialism*. New Delhi: Orient Longman. Laushey, David M (1975). *Bengal Terrorism and Marxist Left- Aspects of Regional Nationalism in India, 1905-1942*. Calcutta: Firma KLM.

⁷ Chaudhuri, Tridib (1970). *Why RSP? Historic Need for a Party of Socialist Revolution in India Today*. Calcutta: Lokayata. Roy, Santimoy (1993). *The Revolutionary Nationalist Movement – its Contribution to India's Freedom Struggle* Calcutta: Antaranga.

⁸ Ghosh, Shibdas (1946). *Oitihāsik Patabhumikay Revolutionary Socialism*. (In Bengali) Calcutta: Manoranjan Banerjee. Persits, M A (1983). *Revolutionaries of India in Soviet Russia- Mainsprings of the Communist Movement in the East*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. Sinha, Bejoy Kumar (1988). *In Andamans-the Indian Bastille-Revised Ed*. New Delhi: PPH.

⁹ Adhikari, G (1984). 'Development of Ideology the National Revolutionaries' in Ray, Nisith Ranjan *et al* (eds), *Challenge- a Saga of India's Struggle for Freedom*. New Delhi: PPH. Mazumdar, Satyendra Narayan (1979). *In Search of a Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme- A Study in the Transition from National Revolutionary Terrorism to Communism*. New Delhi: PPH. Bhattacharyya, Buddhadeva (1982). *Origins of RSP - From National Revolutionary Politics to Non-Conformist Marxism*. Kolkata: Publicity Concern. Mukhopadhyay, Ashoke Kumar (ed) (2009). 'Terrorism'- A Colonial Construct. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad.

¹⁰ Laushey, David M (1975). *Bengal Terrorism and Marxist Left- Aspects of Regional Nationalism in India, 1905-1942*. Calcutta: Firma KLM.

The national revolutionary movement in India mainly spanned for almost thirty years (1904-1934). But this does not mean that it had not its beginning a few years back and it did not continue even after 1934. The duration of revolutionary activities has been kept confined to these thirty years only to indicate that during this period, the national revolutionary movement was in its peak though sometimes it also passed through a period of slumber. We may discuss the whole process of national revolutionary movement in four phases keeping in mind its origins, tactics and strategies adopted, formation of alliances with other such groups and finally, the intensity of their efforts to liberate the country by way of armed rebellion. The four phases may be as follows: (A) *The First Stage from 1897 to 1914*; (B) *The Second Stage from 1914 to 17*; (C) *The Third Stage from 1921 to 1927*; (D) *The Fourth Stage from 1928 to 34*.

2. The First Stage of National Revolutionism (1897 - 1914):

An oppressive foreign rule, economic crisis, awakening of national consciousness and the restrictive conciliatory policy of the then Congress leadership may be said to have constituted the four main ingredients for the emergence of radical nationalism and its subsequent violent manifestations among the educated youth of India. (Mukhopadhyay, A K, 2009: xxi)¹¹. *The Mahabharata, the Gita* and the two festivals promulgated by Tilak, the *Shivaji Festival* and the *Ganapati Festival*, laid the foundation of radical nationalism in Maharashtra. Similarly, in Bengal — the Goddess of power, Kali and Durga, were seen as the fountainhead of nationalism by the leaders like Bepin Chandra Paul. The radical nationalist ideology and movement reflected a combination of militancy and orthodox Hinduism. Tilak, Bepin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo, Lajpat Rai and the other extremist leaders encouraged the use of religious idiom as a medium of mass contact. Tilak founded a cow-protection association and organised Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals to rally the Hindu sentiment. Aurobindo equated Goddess Durga with the motherland. This tradition of relying upon Hindu heritage and past glory was also visible in the ideas and activities of the national revolutionaries which resulted in alienation of other religious groups from this movement. Further, the life and works of the great Italian leader Mazzini greatly inspired the revolutionaries. The Bengal revolutionaries were also influenced by the Italian Risorgimento, by the Nihilist movement in Russia and by the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland.

June 22, 1897 saw the advent of the idea of political assassination and the cult of bomb as a form of revolutionary nationalism or the 'Age of Fire' (*Agni-yug*). On that day, in Poona, Maharashtra, Chapekar brothers assassinated Mr. Rand, the then Plague Commissioner of Poona. The Chapekars were sentenced to death; but the spirit was far from being crushed. Revolutionary secret societies continued their silent activities in that region of India through '*akhras*' or clubs of physical exercise which arranged for study of the literature of European

¹¹ Mukhopadhyay, Ashoke Kumar (ed) (2009). '*Terrorism*'- *A Colonial Construct*. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad.

secret societies and anarchism. (Halder, 2002: 203)¹². Even in the face of brutal British repression, the revolutionaries of Maharashtra continued to pursue their goal of building up a network of activists to target notorious British officials — to terrorise the colonial administration. Revolutionaries became highly active, particularly in Poona, Nasik, Satara and even in places like Gwalior, Kathiawad, Baroda- all Maratha bastions. (Halder, 2002: 203; Mukhopadhyay, A K, 2009: xxii)¹³. Several violent action programmes either had been undertaken or planned. The police tried hard to suppress the dissemination of militant activities of the revolutionaries. Most of the leaders and workers were arrested and many of them were implicated in Poona, Nasik and Satara trials. This led to the gradual weakening of revolutionary activities in Maharashtra. Till 1911, few such incidents were reported from that province. (Mukhopadhyay, A K, 2009: xxii)¹⁴. The activities of the revolutionary nationalists had become only occasional after that.

But, violent acts of militant nationalism were spreading across other parts of India, particularly in Bengal, during the same period. The tactics of political assassination as a weapon of militant nationalism in Bengal in the beginning of the twentieth century seemed to have been imported from Maharashtra. Aurobindo Ghosh and Jatindranath Bandyopadhyay were the pioneers. As a part of a long-term strategy, they first encouraged the setting up of gymnasiums to train the youth as bodybuilders and in the skills of fighting with sticks and daggers. Secret societies had indeed already appeared in Bengal though they were not yet prepared for terrorist activities or direct action against the alien rulers. *Anushilan Samiti (1902)*¹⁵, *Atmonnati (1897)*¹⁶ and *Suhrid Samiti (1901)*¹⁷, *Dawn Society (1902)*¹⁸, *Bandhab Sammilani (1902)*¹⁹, *Friends United Club (1902)*²⁰, were perhaps the earliest Samitis formed with a vague idea of freedom of the country, but primarily- if not solely - engaged in physical culture. (Halder, J, 2011: 97-99; Guha, n.d., 27)²¹. The *Anushilan Samiti* was the most prominent among all these organisations. As the name 'Anushilan' indicated, the Samiti upheld Bankim's philosophy of 'anushilan', the religion of culture and training. The *Anushilan Samiti* was soon to develop a well-organized political network all over Bengal from which sprouted many independent revolutionary groups, most important being Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* & *Jugantar*.

¹² Halder, Gopal (2002). 'Revolutionary Terrorism' in Gupta, AC (ed), *Studies in Bengal Renaissance-Third Revised Edition*. Kolkata: National Council of Education.

¹³ *Ibid*, Footnotes 11 & 12, Pp- 3-4

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Footnotes 11 & 12, P- 3-4

¹⁵ Guha, Arun Chandra (n.d.) *Aurobindo and Jugantar*. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad. Halder, Jibantara (2011). *Anushilan Samiti's Itihas – Second Enlarged Edition*. Kolkata: Sutradhar.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

¹⁷ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

¹⁸ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

¹⁹ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

²⁰ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

²¹ *Ibid*, Footnote 15, P- 4

The arrogant measure of Lord Curzon to divide Bengal in 1905 brought the Bengali discontent with foreign rule almost to a point of national revolt. Protest movements took the form of 'Swadeshi' and boycott of British goods and encouragement of national bourgeois enterprises. Gopal Halder has commented: 'Swadeshi was in fact the springtime of Bengali national life.' (Halder, 2002: 205)²² Swadeshi breathed a new life into the revolutionary movement as well and imparted to it a new soul that the revolutionary societies of Bengal had so long needed. The incipient phase of national revolutionism was over by 1905. The years 1906 to 1908 were years primarily of underground work when bombs were being prepared and tried by the band that Barindrakumar Ghosh led at the time. (Halder, 2002: 205)²³ The first overt act was the foundation of the Bengal weekly *Jugantar* in March 1906 by Barindrakumar Ghosh with the help of his friends, Dr Bhupendranath Dutta, the first editor and Abinash Bhattacharya. 'The *Jugantar* breathed revolution in every line and pointed out how revolution can be effected, by collection of arms, seduction of armed forces, by terrorism of the Russian type, armed rising, guerilla warfare and so on'. (Guha, n.d.: 29)²⁴ However, Pramathanath Mitra, the founder of *Anushilan Samiti* was not at all in favour of this move and opposed it. This might be said to be the beginning of the breach between the two sections. The publication of '*Jugantar*' as a weekly may be said to have started the beginning of '*Jugantar*' as a separate group — actively dedicated to the cause of a revolutionary movement. The *Jugantar* began to attract the young bloods with its positive doctrine of revolution. The open preaching and the teachings of violence began to dissatisfy P Mitra as the young men of the *Jugantar* paper were the members of *Anushilan Samiti* as well. In 1907, these young revolutionaries led by Barindrakumar formally dissociated themselves from the *Anushilan Samiti*. But the group took no formal name, adopted no constitution. (Guha, n.d.: 29)²⁵. Their group later on came to be known as *Jugantar* group.

When Pramathanath Mitra went to Dacca by the later part of 1906, he took initiative to form a branch of *Anushilan Samiti* there. Pulinbihari Das was selected as the leader of the Dacca unit. He, however, chalked out a somewhat different path from the parent body. Pulinbihari had link with the group led by Barindrakumar. That led to Mitra's difference with Pulin. The Dacca branch soon introduced many formalities such as a constitution, oath taking, centralised leadership etc. In fact, it took a more rigid form of a party than the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti*. It also took up the programme of overt violent acts — dacoities and murders in particular — to which Pramathanath were definitely opposed. Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* gradually drifted away from the Calcutta Centre, as the *Jugantar* section had earlier done.

²² *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

²³ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

²⁴ Guha, Arun Chandra (n.d.) *Aurobindo and Jugantar*. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad.

²⁵ *Ibid*, Footnote 24, P- 5

The police tried to suppress the activities since the very inception and so, as expected, the police oppression was in full swing. It posed a big challenge to the young revolutionaries. The challenge had to be accepted. The earliest acts of revolutionary nationalism in Bengal at the turn of twentieth century were primarily marked by dacoities and bank robberies to collect funds to buy arms among other things. The stress later shifted to the killing tyrannical British administrators and their Indian collaborators. The Bengal revolutionaries also learnt the technique of making bombs that contributed immensely to the revolutionary tactics. Between 1906 and 1907 the revolutionaries attempted several attacks. There were many attempts to kill Lieutenant Governor Andrew Frazer, but he escaped unhurt each time. Minor attempts during the time mostly failed. The blow that shocked the liberal politicians and electrified the whole country was the heroic deeds of Prafulla Chaki and Kshudiram Bose on April 30, 1908 in which they inadvertently killed two innocent European ladies instead of killing Kingsford, the District Judge of Muzaffarpur. In order to evade arrest, Prafulla Chaki killed himself. The other young man, Kshudiram stood the trial and paid the highest price. His death was mourned almost openly by the educated Bengalis at large. The supreme sacrifices of Kshudiram & Chaki created great upheaval in the minds of the educated Indians. (Halder, 2002: 206)²⁶. The bomb outrage at Muzzafarpur was followed by searches by police and the discovery on May 02, 1908 of the Maniktolla 'factory' of Barindrakumar and his friends. This led to the arrest of almost the entire group including its head, Aurobindo Ghosh. Thirty-four of them were sent up for trial at the Alipore Sessions Court in connection with what came to be known as the Alipore Bomb Case. Aurobindo was acquitted by that court on May 06, 1909 and fifteen of them were ultimately found guilty by the High Court (Feb 10, 1910)²⁷ of a 'conspiracy to wage war against the King - Emperor', and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and transportation.

It was a trial of historic importance. (Mukhopadhyay, A K, 2009: xxiv)²⁸. *First*, because the accused stood the ordeal undaunted and unconcerned; Barindrakumar, Upendra Banerji and Ullaskar Dutta became legendary figures in the imagination of their people. *Second*, even as the trial proceeded, one of the accused, Naren Gossain, who had turned 'approver' and was for safety segregated in jail was killed there in Presidency Jail by his two co-accused, Kanailal Dutta and Satyendra Bose. Both paid the highest penalty of law with courage and revolutionary audacity that thrilled the countrymen. Revolutionary morale reached its high watermark as their sacrifices were tried to be emulated by the later-day revolutionaries. *Third*, other acts of revolutionary retaliation in connection with the case also took place: the police inspector who apprehended Kshudiram was murdered; same was the fate of Ashutosh Biswas, the government pleader. The Superintendent of Police (CID) Samshul Alam who was all through in charge of the

²⁶ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

²⁷ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

²⁸ *Ibid*, Footnote 11, P- 3

case was also murdered. *Fourth*, the trial of Aurobindo brought Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das to the forefront of professional and political platform.

To suppress the 'terrorists', the British rulers took recourse to a number of repressive measures. But, despite all that, the way the revolutionaries ceaselessly carried out their activities throughout Bengal till 1914 was amazing. The partition and the sweeping acts of repression undoubtedly fed the flame. In the two years 1908 & 1909, there were a number of dacoities and secret killings. In East Bengal, such activities were carried out through the *Dacca Anushilan Samiti*, the *Bakhergunj Swadesh Bandhab Samiti*, the *Brati Samiti* of Faridpur, the *Suhrid Samiti* and the *Sadhana Samiti* of Mymensingh. In between 1910-1914, several acts of violence, big and small, were carried out. The *Dacca Anushilan Samiti* has been organised into a well-centralized body under the leadership of Pulin Das and had hundreds of branches in East Bengal. As the Alipore bomb case proceeded in Calcutta, the *Anushilan Samiti* along with four other Samitis of East Bengal was outlawed. Pulin Das and others were jailed under the *Regulation III of 1818*. But the *Anushilan Samiti* was far from making an exit. In 1910, the Dacca Conspiracy Case was launched against its members; fifteen were sentenced to imprisonments. The Samiti was thus deprived of leadership. But its younger men were undaunted. Men like Naren Sen, Trailokyanath Chakraborty and Rabi Sen not only held together the organization after 1910, but also spread it into new areas and established contacts almost all-over Northern India. (Halder, 2002: 209)²⁹ The *Anushilan Samiti* thus became a byword for revolutionary action, courage, discipline, secrecy etc. Such Samiti or secret revolutionary groups were by no means few. The Swadeshi movement had encouraged the formation of such local groups and each of them in its turn had its branches. The aim and object or the method and techniques were almost similar, but the counsels and loyalties of each were its own. For secret societies had to work isolated and could not risk their very existence in the name of revolutionary united front.

Jugantar, the suppressed weekly (banned in 1907)³⁰ served as a rallying point for the Aurobindo - Barindra group of Calcutta and the title had also been given to others of different groups who came later to be connected with the work of the paper. So, in 1910, the members of these different groups who were tried together in the Howrah Conspiracy case were termed by the prosecution as members of the '*Jugantar Party*'. The name was adhered to later by these groups and others which came into existence, though these groups never merged and the *Jugantar* never meant anything more than a federation of revolutionary groups. (Guha, n.d.: 33)³¹. *Jugantar* was not a formally organized party. Even when it acted as a party, it assumed the character of a federal party agreeing on the ideal as also the strategy. (Mukhopadhyay, A K,

²⁹ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

³⁰ *Ibid*, Footnote 24, P- 5

³¹ *Ibid*, Footnote 24, P- 5

2009: xxvi)³². In 1911, the revoking of the decision of the Partition of Bengal gave a big boost to the revolutionaries. Since then, apart from bombs, other modern armaments also were used by the revolutionaries. The message of revolution gradually spread to various parts of India, from Maharashtra to Bengal and from there to Punjab. Alongside Punjab, in Madras, Central Provinces, UP, Orissa and Bihar too revolutionary activities started picking up steam. But due to quick police offensive and ruthless persecution, the various revolutionary groups set up in a number of provinces gradually beat a retreat and ultimately vanquished. It was only in Bengal that the groups managed to survive.

3. The Second Stage of National Revolutionism (1914 - 17):

The tactics of individual terrorism were vigorously pursued by the revolutionaries during the time also, though, at the same time, both military and popular upheaval for freedom was their real objective. The attempt for an upheaval taking assistance from both inside & outside the country makes this second stage unique. The period saw intense activities, international organisational efforts and intricate plan and plots by involving a number of countries of Asia, Europe or America for a countrywide upheaval. Rashbehari Bose and Jatindranath Mukherjee are the two towering figures of this phase of revolutionary history; the former was to plan for defection of the Indian forces while Jatindranath remained in the field in Kolkata. An insurgence was planned and it was supposed to start on February 21, 1915. But the plot failed - Rashbehari was chased by the police and he, ultimately, escaped to Japan to pursue his revolutionary dream there. The emissaries and the leading figures with their associates in the British Indian forces were caught and executed. Jatindranath while trying to receive armed shipment from Germany was surrounded by the police force in Balasore, Orissa. He died a martyr's death along with one of his companions, Chittapriya, fighting to the last on September 09, 1915. All attempts to procure foreign arms failed by 1916 and the planned upheaval had become a non-starter and disaster as well.

A sort of 'hit and run' tactics could alone be adopted under the circumstances. That was played in 1916-17 with increasing courage – the toll of official life was heavy. Following these attacks, an intense period of repression led to the dispersal of the revolutionaries and revolutionary societies were mostly immobilised. Large number of revolutionaries were put into jail under *Regulation III of 1818* or interned in villages under the *Defense of India Act 1915*. An intense phase of activity drew to a close with the end of the War in 1918. However, there is no doubt that the activities of the national revolutionaries fired the imagination of the people, particularly of young men at a time when the whole country was facing tremendous police brutality and

³² *Ibid*, Footnote 11, P- 3

colonial oppression. The revolutionaries by showing exemplary courage, moral character and patriotic self-sacrifice became ideals to all. The reputation could never be dimmed by any propaganda of the Government or by the counsels of the wise and liberal leaders. (Mukherjee, J, 1963: 285)³³.

At the same time, a few among the leaders of the revolutionary movement were aware of the damages done by the activities like individual assassination and political robbery. Nalini Kishore Guha writes that doubts about the correctness of the policy of political robbery began to arise in the minds of some of the revolutionaries on moral grounds. He has further written that no important leader of the revolutionary movement had any attraction for robbery but in order to keep the activities running it was not possible to abandon it completely. This resulted in alienating the general masses of the country from them for fear of reprisals from the British rulers. Guha also writes that even from 1913 onwards a process of rethinking started among those who were formally strong advocates of terroristic activities. They began to realise that with arms procured by them they could at best create a disorder in the country but would not be able to win state power. Their reliance was then placed on the plans to organise mutiny among the Indian soldiers and obtaining arms from foreign countries. (Guha, N, 2012: 103-118, 141-147)³⁴.

It is a record of failure, no doubt, but it showed that the revolutionaries of India were not mere 'terrorists' but possessed political vision as well as realistic understanding of the time. However, the national liberation struggle by involving ordinary masses within its fold was then in the initial stage. The masses just started to enter the field of conscious political action. In such a situation, the revolutionaries raised the banner of complete independence. This by itself was a contribution of a great magnitude. By their shining examples, the revolutionaries succeeded in instilling among the people a spirit of undaunted defiance against the mightiest empire of the world. Even in the face of governmental repression, the revolutionaries were able to create a durable framework of secret organisations in Bengal and Punjab and to some extent in UP. The plan for mutiny with the help of Indian soldiers during the period created a panic in the government machineries. At the same time, the revolutionaries took the responsibility of voluntary service, relief work, nursing activities etc. These works were undertaken with a missionary zeal and devotion. (Halder, 2002: 214)³⁵. Even, their flood relief work in Bardhaman got the commendation from the then Governor of Bengal. (Guha, N, 2012: 104)³⁶.

The revolutionaries felt that in spite of their sacrifices their actual achievement was very little so far. The dream of freeing India remained a distant reality. A search for a revolutionary ideology

³³ Mukherjee, Jadugopal (1963). *Biplobi Jibaner Smriti*. (In Bengali) Calcutta: Indian Associated Publishing.

³⁴ Guha, Nalini Kishore (2012). *Banglay Biplabad*. (In Bengali) Kolkata: Mitram.

³⁵ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

³⁶ Guha, Nalini Kishore (2012). *Banglay Biplabad*. (In Bengali) Kolkata: Mitram.

and revolutionary programme started. They could not always draw correct lessons but at that stage the very beginning of the search for lessons was an outstanding achievement. (Mazumdar, 1979: 98-99)³⁷. Not all but a few national revolutionaries started realising that revolution is a social process governed by definite laws at different stages of social development and operating through the activities and alignment of the basic social forces in a given country. This realisation began to dawn upon the consciousness of a section of the national revolutionaries due to the impact of the November Revolution in Russia. But, the full realisation of this, in a large scale, was delayed till 1934.

4. The Third Stage of National Revolutionism (1921 - 1927):

In between 1917 - 20, the revolutionary movement had been in suppression as the cadres, in most cases, were in detention. Gandhiji launched the non-co-operation movement in 1921. This opened up opportunities for the militant nationalists who had been lying low till then, as also for those who had been imprisoned, but set free under the Royal Proclamation of 1919. The national revolutionaries gathered round Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. He appealed to them to give non-violent non-cooperation a trial and join the National Congress for that purpose. While the most of the *Jugantar* revolutionaries agreed to it in deference to Deshbandhu's appeal, the *Anushilan* held themselves aloof and sought to reorganise themselves a fresh. As the Congress launched a mass movement in 1921, the revolutionaries too had to reorganise and examine their potentialities. Militant activities, however, have not yet on their cards. (Halder, 2002: 215)³⁸. Taking advantage of the opportunity to participate in public agitations offered by the non-cooperation movement, the national revolutionaries tried to attract a large number of radical - minded young volunteers from the folds of the non-violent movement to secret societies. This opened up another phase of revolutionary agitation.

However, things came to upset them and their plan. Gandhiji's suspension of the movement in view of the incidents at Bardoli (Feb 1922) made them think of reorganising themselves again with a new crop of young man for revolutionary upsurge. New groups began to come into existence, notably the Chittagong group led by Masterda Surya Sen. A Dacca group was founded by Hemchandra Ghosh and later came to be divided into two halves, the *Sri Sangha* and the *Bengal Volunteers (BV)*. The second cause of the new trend was the impatient urgings of some these groups to launch terrorist actions as early as possible. During 1922 - 24, the national revolutionaries of Bengal, particularly, the *Jugantar* group made their presence felt with a series of violent actions. The matter came to a head with Gopinath Saha's attempt (January 08, 1924)

³⁷ Mazumdar, Satyendra Narayan (1979). *In Search of a Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme- A Study in the Transition from National Revolutionary Terrorism to Communism*. New Delhi: PPH.

³⁸ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

to kill Charles Tegart, the then Commissioner of Police, Calcutta which resulted in the unfortunate murder of an innocent European. Gopinath died like a martyr and now the press of Bengal and even the Serajgunj session of the provincial conference of Congress paid him openly the martyr's tribute. From now on, the people of Bengal no longer feared to acclaim the 'terrorists' publicly as they had done in the pre-non-cooperation days. (Mukhopadhyay, A K, 2009: xxviii)³⁹.

In July 1924, the revolutionaries distributed a pamphlet named '*Lal Bangla*' (*Red Bengal*). The pamphlet openly called for the killing of policemen, following which, during the period of four months from July to October at least five attempts were made on the life of policemen. (Mazumdar, 1979: 120)⁴⁰. The Govt reacted sharply and an ordinance was promulgated in October 1924. Everyone suspected of any revolutionary activity was sent into jail. Revolutionary activities did not stop immediately, but the repressive measures of the Govt proved effective for the time being. So, the years 1927 and 1928 were comparatively free from violent activities. The Govt did succeed in dislocating the activities of the revolutionaries for a few years. However, nearly all the prisoners detained in 1924 were released by 1928 and in the beginning of 1929.

A more significant part was played in the politics of India as a whole in the post non-cooperation period by a revolutionary organisation in UP. In 1924, due to the endeavour of Sachindranath Sanyal of Benares and Jogeschandra Chattopadhyay who hailed from Dhaka, a new revolutionary organisation was formed in Benares - *Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)*. Previously Sanyal founded *Anushilan Samiti* in Benares in 1908. (Habib, 2017: 12)⁴¹. However, the efforts of Sanyal were marginalised greatly after the failure of plan of insurrection in 1915 which had been undertaken with Rashbehari Bose. Sachindranath who was transported for life released in 1920. Jogeshchandra was also in jail from 1916 to 1920. In October 1924, at its session in Kanpur, the *HRA* acquired a distinct ideological character. It announced its goal of establishing an independent and undivided India through an armed revolution. Inspired by the November Revolution of Russia, later its leaders were to incorporate the ideology of socialism in their programme. Still later, many among them turned Marxists. The *HRA* central committee was formed of representatives from all the states of India, and its leaders got moving according to a well laid out plan.

On 09 August 1925, the *HRA* activists raided a train in Kakori, UP and looted around five thousand rupees for the purpose of purchasing arms & ammunitions needed for carrying out

³⁹ *Ibid*, Footnote 11, P- 3

⁴⁰ Mazumdar, Satyendra Narayan (1979). *In Search of a Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme- A Study in the Transition from National Revolutionary Terrorism to Communism*. New Delhi: PPH.

⁴¹ Habib, S. Irfan, 2017. *To Make the Deaf Hear- Ideology and Programmes of Bhagat Singh and His Comrades*. Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective.

revolutionary work. The police soon traced the incident to the HRA and arrested about forty of its members. Sanyal & Chatterjee, both under detention even before the Kakori incident, were also implicated in the case. Chandra Sekhar Azad, another prominent leader of HRA, who played important role in organising & spreading the revolutionary activities in UP could evade the police net along with Bhagat Singh. The UP was shaken up in 1927 by the supreme sacrifice of four of its Martyrs: Rajendra Nath Lahiri, Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfuquallah and Roshan Lal, the four Kakori 'dacoity' prisoners. Lahiri was hanged on 17 December 1927, Bismil & Ashfuquallah on 19 December 1927 and Roshan Lal on 20 December. (Ghosh, Sankar, 2013: 130-133)⁴². Their sacrifice ignited the minds of the younger generations of the Northern India from inertia and we could see some valiant fight of the North Indian revolutionaries in the next phase. The HRA was successful in affecting the climate of political opinion in Northern India after 1927.

The HRA were deeply influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and socialist experiments carried out there. There had been a definite socialist tendency in their ideas of independent India's social & economic structure. They also started contemplating the inevitable role of the peasants & workers in the process of transformation of India. At the same time, the HRA also held a vague idea regarding international character of national liberation movement. However, the petty-bourgeoisie romantic values of HRA revolutionaries blocked the path to accept those policies fully. But, HRA is the first national revolutionary organisation which started drifting towards socialism. (Laushey, 1975: 39⁴³; Habib, 2017: 28)⁴⁴

6. The Fourth Stage of National Revolutionism (1928 - 34):

The detention of most of the revolutionaries in 1924-25 resulted in a brief inactivity of violence in Bengal. From March 1927, the Bengal Government started releasing those who were arrested in 1924/25 and many of the revolutionaries were set free by the end of December 1927. After the release, the leaders of *Anushilan* and *Jugantar* effected an amalgamation of the two parties as was agreed upon by the respective leaders while in prison. But the amalgamation could not last for more than a year or so due to the weaknesses inherent in such national revolutionary organisations formed on the basis of petty-bourgeoisie revolutionism. The intra-group rivalries acted as a stumbling block in the unification move. (Mazumdar, 1979: 121)⁴⁵ A 'Revolt Group' comprising revolutionaries of younger generation including many middle cadres belonging to both *Anushilan* & *Jugantar* who had been organising themselves since 1923 decided upon a separate programme of actions. However, the plans of the *Revolt Group* could not be materialised due to leakage of information and premature arrests of some of the leaders of the

⁴² Ghosh, Sankar (2013). *Saheed Asfaquallah*. Kolkata: Prometheus.

⁴³ *Ibid*, Footnote 10, P- 3

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Footnote 41, P- 11

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

new amalgamated revolting party towards the end of 1929 in what came to be as the Mechuabazar Bomb Case.

After that two groups, the Chittagong group (*IRA*)⁴⁶ under the leadership of Surya Sen and the *Bengal Volunteers (BV)* group decided to act on their own without keeping connections with other groups for reasons of security. Their lines of action were, however, different. The *IRA* planned for a short term and time bound preparation of insurrection in a limited area. The *BV* group planned and succeeded in carrying out a series of sensational assassinations of British Officials.

In North India, from the ruins of the *HRA*, Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad built up the *Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA)*. They renewed their activities from September 1928. During the time, the Simon Commission came to India in 1928 and the Commission was formed for India without any Indian representative in it. This resulted in widespread agitation throughout the country. While leading one such protest rally, Lala Lajpat Rai was mercilessly assaulted by the police on the roads of Lahore and he, ultimately, succumbed to his injuries. In retaliation, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru of the *HSRA* killed John P Saunders, an assistant superintendent of police mistaking him for James Scott, the superintendent of police, in broad daylight on the streets of Lahore on 17 December 1928. However, they could evade arrest and pursued their revolutionary activities with vigour.

From the beginning of 1929, the revolutionaries started their activities in a well-planned out manner in different parts of India. The first exercise was carried out that year, when on April 08, Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutta throw bombs in the Central Assembly in protest against the Governor General's attempt to pass two bills which would be detrimental to the interests of the people of India. Both of them were arrested and later Bhagat Singh was ordered to be hanged – on the charge of assassination of Saunders. In pursuit of the case, the police arrested eighteen revolutionaries and all of them were implicated in what came to be known as the famous Lahore Conspiracy Case. In jail, they started a hunger - strike in order to claim due recognition as political prisoners. One of the revolutionaries, Jatin Das breathed his last after 63 days of fasting. The heroic activities of the *HSRA* came to apparent end with the death of its leader Chandrasekhar Azad, on 27 February 1931, in direct exchanges of fire with the police in Alfred Park, Allahabad. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru- the revolutionary trio were hanged to death on 23 March 1931.

The *IRA* revolutionaries on April 18, 1930 raided the local armoury which was captured by surprise. In daringness and discipline, as well as in planning and subsequent attempts – the fight at the Jalalabad Hill on April 22, 1930, at Kalarpol on May 06, at Chandannagar on June 28 – the

⁴⁶ Indian Republican Party (IRA), Chittagong was formed in 1929

Chittagong revolutionaries set an example which no one could ignore. The *IRA* succeeded in creating a completely new precedent in the history of the national-revolutionary movement in India. Alongside Chittagong, in Calcutta also revolutionary groups were targeting British officials. While the mass movement proceeded on the line of Civil Disobedience, the *Jugantar* revolutionaries planned side by side a full-fledged campaign of 'terrorism' and guerilla activity in Calcutta and the districts. The *Anushilan* leaders wanted to wait and prepare for a general rising, but were carried off soon by their cadres to plan elaborate actions. (Halder, 2002: 218-20) An unsuccessful attempt on the life of Tegart (August 25, 1930) at Dalhousie Square was made by the *BV* volunteers. It was the most vehement period of campaign so far seen, in which the *IRA*-Chittagong and the *BV* of Dhaka and Midnapore took the lead. It ended with the attempt at Lebong, Darjeeling on March 08, 1934 on the life of the then Governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson. In between, there has been a record of murders of district officials and attempts at murder of Europeans, of Indians who were considered hostile, attempts at raids for fund, raids on European clubs in Chittagong, fights directly with the police – etc. etc. which were unprecedented in intensity and extension. A host of great heroes of Indian freedom movement including Masterda Surya Sen, Benoy, Badal, Dinesh, Pritilata and the likes became martyrs. Hundreds who were equally daring and determined were sent to Port Blair in the Andaman; thousands imprisoned in detention camps and jails without trial. The country was facing ruthless imperialist repression.

Gopal Halder, an eminent national revolutionary, delineates some of the important features of this fourth phase from 1930 to 1934. (Halder, 2002: 220-221)⁴⁷. *First*, the times were significantly changed and the revolutionaries were changing with the times in their outlook. The national and international situations had become things of growing concern to the revolutionaries. The Irish parallel of the earlier phase increasingly gave place to the ideals of mass revolution. They found in the Marxist ideology an alternative. It offered them a wider field and opportunity of rallying the masses of peasants and industrial workers in a national struggle to meet their goal of putting an end to colonial rule. Not that all were advancing evenly; '*Inquilab Zindabad*' and not '*Bande Mataram*' was the slogan of the upper Indian revolutionaries, e.g., Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutta. But, in Bengal, revolutionaries went to gallows with the old cry of '*Bande Mataram*'. *Second*, the method of organisation had become more secular now, though the old moral standards were still valued remarkably high. The biggest innovation was, of course, the admission of women, particularly young girls, into the revolutionary ranks. *Third*, the revolutionaries increasingly started feeling that through the tactics of political assassination or area - wise armed insurrection the movement could not attain its ultimate goal freeing the country. It was realised by 1935 that the way to mass movement and upheaval could not be

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Footnote 12, P- 4

reached through such acts of isolated 'terrorism' and secret societies. *Fourth*, the revolutionaries observed that despite their valiant heroism and huge sacrifices, they failed in achieving goal. Communalism was on the rise; repression went on unabated. They became puzzled. To all these, the revolutionaries in their anxious search for a solution found no answer.

The British authorities detained about 2500 men and dozens of women in different jails and detention camps and about 400 prisoners from all over India were imprisoned at Andaman. This internment helped them in finding out an answer to solve their confusion. A distinct swing to socialism and Marxism was evident among these prisoners by 1935 in the Bengal jails or camps. So, when the revolutionaries were released from the Bengal jails in 1937 - 38 (in the case of Andaman prisoners it was 1946), there remained almost no one to revert to the old path of individual assassination or robbery. The larger number thought that the mass awakening was a fact and it called for new approaches and new methods. Many directly desired to take to the proletarian path. 'Terrorism' with all the groups was a thing of the past. The nation, they held, had accepted their ideal of complete independence as goal; and popular upheaval was in the offing and their sacrifices could provide the necessary sense of courage to their countrymen. (Adhikari, G, 1984: 4-5)⁴⁸.

7. Epilogue:

Politics and ideology of the national revolutionaries, in its initial phase, was primarily moulded or influenced by the ideas of the French revolution or the contemporary actions of the Irish struggle for independence and the progressive ideas of the Left-wing of the international working-class movement in Europe and America. It was only after the Russian Revolution of 1917, in the early twenties that the forward-looking leaders began to turn towards slowly to the ideas of scientific socialism and realised the need for organising workers and peasants as the decisive revolutionary force in the struggle for national independence. (Pramanik, N, 1984: 242)⁴⁹

It must be said that revolutionary nationalism had failed in some very vital aspects. *First*, it could not enlist active Muslim support. It failed to resolve the religio- social conflicts of the time. Observing Hindu rituals was must for the national revolutionaries of Bengal and this, in turn, kept the Muslim fraternity isolated from the national revolutionary movement. That of course, is the failure it shared with Indian nationalism as a whole; and it is a failure the roots of which lay deep in the then Indian society. However, one important exception was Ashfuqullah of HRA who was a devoted Muslim. He wrote that in spite of devotion for Muslim religious practices, 'for the

⁴⁸ Adhikari, G (1984). 'Development of Ideology the National Revolutionaries' in Ray, Nisith Ranjan *et al* (eds), *Challenge-a Saga of India's Struggle for Freedom*. New Delhi: PPH. Mazumdar, Satyendra Narayan (1979).

⁴⁹ Pramanik, Nimai (1984). *Gandhi and the Indian National Revolutionaries*. Calcutta: Sribhumi.

purpose of truth' he was ready to be labeled as a communist. (Habib, 2017: 28)⁵⁰ Secondly, in spite of their theoretical emphasis upon the armed insurrection, at least in the later phase, the national revolutionaries, in most cases, could not rise above the individual or group action. Besides, though they theoretically emphasised the organisation of the masses, in actual practice, they mostly avoided to work seriously in this direction. As a result, the influence of the revolutionaries was minimal among the workers and peasants. Thus, the revolutionary movement in India was, in fact, reduced to a movement of the select few. (Pramanik, N, 1984: 305)⁵¹. The HSRA, despite its belief in socialism, and the other revolutionary associations were deeply influenced by 'petty-bourgeoisie revolutionism'. Their belief in 'heroic violence' or 'propaganda by action' resulted in the death of huge number of revolutionaries and their organisational activities were greatly restricted (Habib, 2017: 130)⁵². They could not stand against the governmental repression or nationalist leaders' aversion towards them. Thirdly, the national revolutionaries tried to put forward an alternative leadership in opposition to the dominant Gandhian leadership. But, as the revolutionaries in most of the phases had to work secretly for the very nature of their organisation and pattern of work, the revolutionary leaders failed to emerge as public figure like their nationalist counterparts. And the absence of public figure in the revolutionary rank had made them crippled in the matter of moulding the public opinion in favour of their strategy and tactics. There was not a single leader who could equal Gandhi in the quality of leadership. Their mission of forging an alternative leadership remained unfulfilled and the leadership of the Indian national movement remained in the hands of the Gandhian leaders. (Chandra, Bipan, 1979: 247-48)⁵³.

At the same time, it is to be admitted that revolutionary nationalism was a movement that was subscribed by the best elements of the country, at least, for long thirty years. Although it failed in achieving its goals in substantial terms, the national revolutionary movement left an indelible mark on the history of the Indian anti-colonial movement – by shaping the long-term political strategy and tactics of the national leadership in a radical direction and as well as in uniting all shades of Indian public opinion behind the ideal of courage and self-sacrifice that they set. The national revolutionaries belonging to the middle class were the first to demand complete independence from British rule. They refused to compromise with the halfway house of dominion status and other concessions that the colonial rulers were handling out and which the then Congress leaders were willing to accept. Instead, they revived the tradition of armed resistance that marked the peasant rebellions of the 19th century and inaugurated a new wave of revolutionary offensive. It was to the credit of the national revolutionaries that they could

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Footnote 41, P- 11

⁵¹ *Ibid*, Footnote 48, P- 13

⁵² *Ibid*, Footnote 41, P- 11

⁵³ Chandra, Bipan (1979). *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

create the anti-imperialist consciousness among the people by their heroic deeds. Their acts of rebellion – as they hoped – indeed inspired a new generation of revolutionaries in the 1940s. In post-war India, widespread peasant uprisings, industrial strikes, the Mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy Cadets and the launching of the Indian National Army under the leadership of Netaji Subhash Bose, were in fact a continuation and extension of the legacy of the national revolutionaries. Revolutionary nationalism succeeded in what it intended to do – evoking by the maximum sacrifice of a chosen few the ‘spirit of minimum sacrifice on the part of the many’. There uncompromising fight against the colonial rulers and their lackeys has left a very rich and noble heritage which no one could deny. Bipan Chandra comments that the revolutionaries were very much successful ‘in arousing the country and in winning the love and respect of their countrymen, but for the cause of nationalism’. (Chandra, Bipan, 1999: 249)⁵⁴. This was not a mean success and be treated as the great contribution of the national revolutionaries. However, the fruits of their success were gathered by the traditional Congress leadership which they had hoped to replace. The fire of revolution which was kindled by the Chapekar brothers in Maharashtra in 1897 passing through ups and downs finally find its fruition in the heroic struggle of the INA and the Naval Uprising of 1946.

Finally, at the end, to what conclusions we may arrive at as to the broad features of national revolutionary movement of colonial Bengal?

- *First*, the revolutionaries did not belong to a single unified party, but were divided into a number of secret societies, generally working independently. In spite of sharing almost similar philosophical view on the methods for fighting the British colonialists, there remained disunity among the national revolutionaries. Though there had been some attempts on unity, those efforts did not last long. However, this could be explained by saying that the very nature of work of the national revolutionaries forced them to move in small groups for minimizing the risk of being arrested or disclosing of plans to the police-administration.
- *Secondly*, they did not subscribe to any common ideology but expressed the common nationalist aspiration for full freedom and a common faith in armed revolution.
- *Thirdly*, the prevalent tactics and methods of the revolutionary nationalists were not accepted equally by all the activists as a good number of them accepted these as temporary and unwelcome devices of defense and counter-attack.
- *Fourthly*, as opportunities presented themselves, in the national and international fields, the revolutionary nationalists tried to take advantage of them and changed their method and techniques in accordance with the requirements of the situation.
- *Fifthly*, most of the leaders of various revolutionary groups had probably an exaggerated notion about the role of the middle-class intelligentsia in the national democratic revolution.

⁵⁴ Chandra, Bipan (1999). *Essays on Colonialism*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

The democratic content was relatively weak in their political consciousness and, of course, it was alien to their methods of organisation which were intended to be military and secret. (Laushey, 1975: 86)⁵⁵.

- *Lastly*, as observed by R P Dutt, the national revolutionaries completely ignored the issue of mass organisation and mass involvement. Their ideas exhibited certain ideological lacuna. At that stage, they had no viable concept for social reconstruction after the overthrowing of the British rule. Neither had they offered a clear idea of the political structure after the British rule (Dutt, R P: 1979)⁵⁶.

By late thirties, a glorious chapter in the history of Indian national movement ends in the main. In 1938, the *Jugantar* and the *HSRA* were formally dissolved. The *Anushilan Samiti*, though not formally dissolved, also ceased to exist as a separate revolutionary party. Upon their release in the late 1930's or 40's the revolutionaries either joined the Communist Party of India or one of the other Socialist / Marxist Parties which had come into existence in the thirties or forties or formed their own parties on the basis of their particular interpretation of Marxist ideology. Laushey believes that probably fifty percent of the national revolutionaries converted to Marxism either in the jails or in the detention camps. (Laushey, 1975: 86) Those revolutionaries who did not convert to Marxism either joined Congress or dropped out of nationalist politics. In any case, the revolutionary parties did not function effectively after about 1934 and were formally or informally dissolved in the late thirties.

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⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Footnote 10, P- 3

⁵⁶ Dutt, R P (1979): *India Today*. Calcutta: Manisha.

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