

Unsung Heroes of the Freedom Movement from Maharashtra (Past and present)

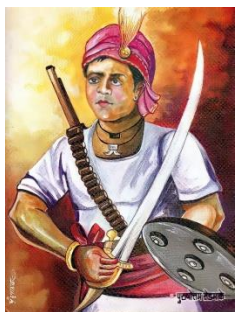


Anant Laxman Kanhere (1892 -1910) was an Indian independence fighter from Nashik. On 21 December 1909, he shot dead the Collector of Nashik in British India. The murder of Jackson was an important event in the history of Nashik and the Indian revolutionary movement in Maharashtra. He was prosecuted in Bombay court and hanged in the Thane Prison on 19 April 1910, aged just 18.



Babu Genu(1908 -1930) was an India freedom fighter and revolutionary. On 12 December 1930, a cloth merchant named George Frazier of Manchester was moving loads of foreign-made cloth from his shop in old Hanuman galli in the Fort region to Mumbai Port. He was given police protection as per his request. The activists begged not to move the truck, but the police forced the protesters aside and managed to get the truck moving. Near Bhaangwadi on Kalbadevi Road, Shahid Babu Genu stood in front of the truck, shouting praises for Mahatma Gandhi. The police officer ordered the driver to drive the truck over Shahid Babu Genu, but the driver was Indian, so refused, saying: "I am

Indian and he is also Indian, So, we both are the brothers of each other, then how can I murder my brother?". After that, the English police officer sat on the driver seat and drove the truck over Babu Genu and crushed him to death under the truck. This resulted in a huge wave of anger, strikes, and protests throughout Mumbai.



Babu Shedmake (1833–1858) was an Indian pro-independence rebel and a Gond chieftain from Central India. During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, he led the revolt in Chanda district. Born in a Gond zamindar family, he fought multiple battles against the British in a period of seven months in 1858. He was eventually captured and hanged for rebellion against the British government. Baburao Shedmake's life and his revolt against foreign rule are still celebrated by the Gond community. A sobriquet *veer*, i.e. brave, is added to his name as a mark of his bravery. His birth and death anniversaries are

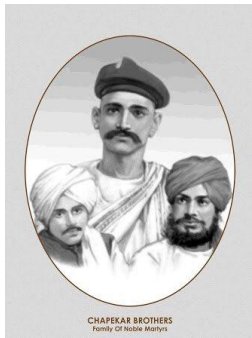
observed annually throughout Gondwana region.

(# Why important : *Being a prominent tribal chieftain of the Gond community. Maharashtra's Birsu Munda*)



Baiza Bai: (1784-1863) Baiza Bai was born in Kagal, Kolhapur, Maharashtra in 1784. In February 1798 in Poona, at the age of 14, she was married to Daulat Rao Scindia, the ruler of Gwalior. She was known as a superb horsewoman, and had been trained to fight with a sword and spear. She accompanied her husband during the Maratha wars with the British, and she fought against Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, at the Battle of Assaye. During the British campaign against the Pindaris, she had urged her husband to support the Peshwa Baji Rao II against them. When Daulat Rao submitted to British demands, she even left him briefly, accusing him of cowardice. She was also fiercely opposed to the Scindia surrender of Ajmer to the British. Baiza Bai died in Gwalior in 1863.

(#Why important : Being a warrior queen who fought against the army of Arthur Wellesley)



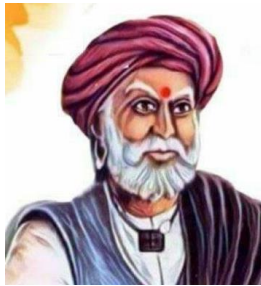
Chapekar brothers – Damodar, Balakrishna and Vasudev were involved in the murder of W. C. Rand, the British plague commissioner of Pune. A Special Plague Committee was formed, under the chairmanship of Walter Charles Rand, an Indian Civil Services officer. Troops were brought in to deal with the emergency. The measures employed included entry into private houses, stripping and examination of occupants (including women) by British officers in public, evacuation to hospitals and segregation camps and preventing movement from the city. These measures were considered oppressive by the populace of Pune and complaints were ignored by Rand. On 22 June 1897, the Diamond Jubilee of the coronation of Queen Victoria, Rand and his military escort Lt. Ayerst were shot while returning from the celebrations at Government House. All three brothers were found guilty and hanged in 1899 (Chapekar Brothers story is reasonably well known)



Godavari Parulekar (1907- 1996) was the first woman law graduate in Maharashtra. She was active in the student movement against British rule and was irresistibly drawn to the freedom struggle and plunged into individual satyagraha, for which she was convicted by the British regime in 1932. Godavari then came to Mumbai, where she took up social service in the Servants of India Society, founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1905, in the early 1930s. She became the first woman to be inducted as a life member of the Society. She was influenced by Marxist ideologies and led the armed struggle for the liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli from Portuguese rule and the Warli Adivasi Revolt in 1945.

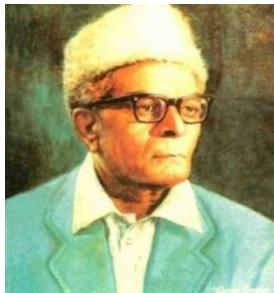


Krishnaji Gopal Karve (1887-1910) was a member of the Abhinav Bharat Society in Nashik. On 21 December 1909, he along with Anant Laxman Kanhere shot dead Arthur Jackson, the Collector of Nashik. He was sentenced to death in the Bombay high court and hanged in Thane Jail on 19 April 1910.



Lahuji Vastaad or Lahuji Raghoba Salve (1794-1881) was a Dalit activist, preacher and freedom fighter. He learnt wrestling from his father and he became an expert wrestler, which eventually conferred him the title of 'Vastaad' (or master). He owned a gymnasium at Ganj peth in Pune where he also taught martial arts to many renowned people and also acted as a mentor preaching the need for Indian freedom from British Raj and the upliftment of untouchables. Lahuji got acquainted with Jyotirao Phule's work for the liberation of depressed classes by educating them and joined his Satyashodhak Samaj.

(# Why important : Being one of the first Dalit independence activists)

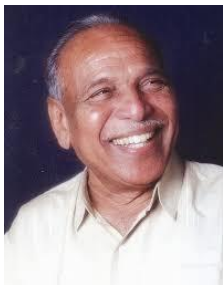


Madhavrao Bagal (1895-1986) was among the front runner leaders, who spearheaded the agitation for independence of India and especially merger of Kolhapur State into the Union of India. He was arrested with several of his compatriots like Ratnappa Kumbhar, Dinakar Desai, Nanasaheb Jagdale, R. D. Minche and others. He joined Indian National Congress in mid-1930s, disillusioned by pro-British politics played by older leaders of peasants movement like Bhaskarrao Jadhav, with whom Madhavrao had started agricultural co-operative societies in Kolhapur and adjoining regions.^[10] During 1940-47, he was closely working with leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru.†



#. **Madhav Shrihari Aney** (1880 –1968) popularly called Loknayak Bapuji Aney, was an ardent educationist, freedom fighter, statesman, a modern Sanskrit poet and a politician. He was one of the founder of the Congress Nationalist Party along with Madan Mohan Malaviya. He was first among the eminent disciples of Lokmanya Tilak and after Tilak's death accepted the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He disapproved Congress throwing itself in Khilafat Movement and warned against excessive wooing of Muslims at the cost of national interests. Mahatma Gandhi admiring his calm logic, confided in him and often sought his counsel. He was chosen to arbitrate the disputes between Subhash Chandra Bose and Jatindra Mohan Sengupta.

(#Why important : For being the confidant of Mahatma Gandhi and a voice of reason)

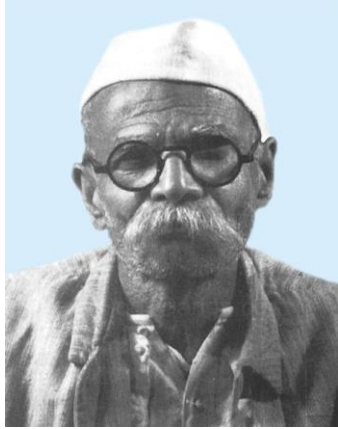


Nagnath Naikwadi (1922–2012), popularly known as **Krantiveer Nagnath anna**, was an Indian independence activist, social worker, politician and educationist, known for his revolutionary activism during the Indian independence struggle. During the early 1940s, Naikwadi and his colleagues resorted to armed conflict against the British colonial authorities. In order to raise funds for the movement, his group robbed a government treasury in Dhule and supported the insurgency against the Nizam of Hyderabad.^[3] During one of his skirmishes with the British police, he was caught after being injured by a bullet. While in custody at Satara jail, he staged a jailbreak with his fellow activists. The British colonial government announced a reward on his head but Naikwadi managed to stay underground for four years.^[2] In 1943, along with Nana Patil, Kisanrao Ahir and a few others, he declared a parallel government, *Prati Sarkar*, which operated in around 150 villages in the western Maharashtra region which included Satara and Sangli.^[3]



Nana Patil, popularly known as *Krantisinh* was an Indian independence activist. He was a founder member of the Hindustan Republican Association who went underground between 1929 and 1932. Patil was imprisoned eight or nine times during the struggle with the British Raj from 1932 to 1942. He was the leader of the 'Satara Parallel Government' in Maharashtra from August 1943 to May 1946 against British rule. It was an armed offshoot of the 1942 Quit India movement, like the parallel governments in Midnapore in Bengal, Bhagalpur in Bihar, Ballia in Uttar Pradesh and Basudevpur in Odisha. Later on he joined the Communist movement.

(#Why important : For leading the Satara Parallel Govt during British rule)



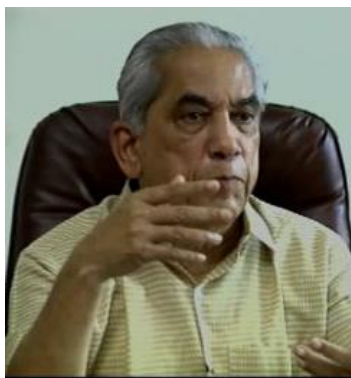
Pandurang Mahadev Bapat (1880-1967) A maverick freedom fighter who both supported and challenged Mahatma Gandhi, Bapat earned the moniker of 'Senapati' when he fought for the rights of farmers during the Mulshi satyagraha in 1921. During his stay in Britain, he was associated with India House, spending a majority of his time learning bomb-making skills instead of pursuing his official studies. He became associated at this time with the Savarkar brothers, Vinayak and Ganesh. While in hiding after the Alipore bombing of 1908, Bapat travelled the country and discovered that the majority of the Indian population did not realize that their country was under foreign rule. At this point, his focus shifted from

overthrowing the British government to educating the population. On 15 August 1947 — Indian Independence Day — Bapat was given the honour of raising the Indian national flag over the city of Poona for the first time.

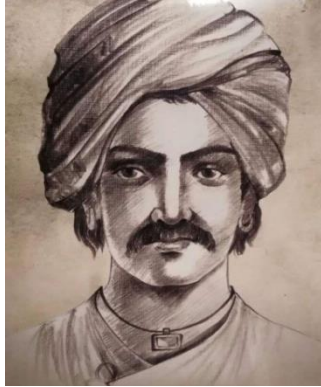
(#Why important : For being both a supporter and challenger of Mahatma Gandhi)



Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje (1884 -1967) was an Indian revolutionary, scholar, agricultural scientist and historian who was among the founding fathers of the Ghadar Party. Khankhoje's earliest nationalist work abroad dates back to the time around 1908 when he, along with Pandit Kanshi Ram founded the Indian Independence League in Portland, Oregon. His works also brought him close to other Indian nationalists in United States at the time, including Tarak Nath Das. In the years preceding World War I, Khankhoje was one of the founding members of the Pacific coast Hindustan association, and subsequently founded the Ghadar Party. He was at the time one of the most influential members of the party.



Prabhakar Kunte (1922-2012) joined the Indian National Congress and was active in Quit India movement in 1942, and was imprisoned by British regime. He was a leading trade union leader and was elected to the Bombay Municipal corporation. He actively participated in the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation (1955-1960) and the liberation of Goa (1961).



Raghoji Bhangre (1805-1848) was an Indian Revolutionary who challenged and defied the British power in Maharashtra. He was the son of Ramji Rao Bhangre a Koli who also resisted the British rule and was subsequently hanged in Cellular Jail. He had killed a British Officer and 10 constables in an ambush in 1844.



Rama Khandwala (born 1926) is India's oldest tour guide and the oldest living member of the Rani Jhansi Regiment formed by Subhas Chandra Bose during India's freedom movement. Films Division has made a documentary on Rama Khandwala in 2019.

(#Why important : for being the oldest living member of INA founded by Subhash Chandra Bose)



Capt. Rambhau Lad (1926 -) ' led the Toofan Sena which was the armed wing of the *Prati Sarkar* in Satara - an astonishing chapter in India's struggle for freedom. The *prati sarkar*, headed by the legendary Krantisingh Nana Patil, functioned as a parallel government in the villages it controlled. It organised the supply and distribution of foodgrain, set up a market structure and ran a judicial system. It also penalised moneylenders, pawnbrokers and landlord collaborators of the Raj, The Toofan Sena conducted daring strikes on imperial armouries, trains, treasuries and post offices.



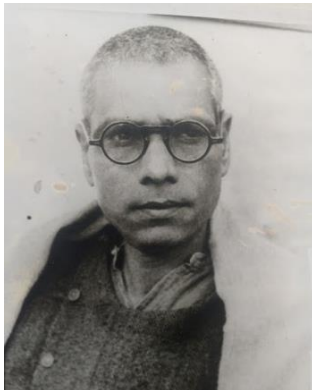
Shirishkumar Mehta (1926-1942) was an Indian freedom fighter and the youngest independence activist to be martyred at the age of 15. Mahatma Gandhi started the Quit India movement against the British in 1942. Shirishkumar was leading a procession protesting against the government in Nandurbar. The police had set up barricades at Mangal Bazar area. The police launched a Lathi charge on the protesters as soon as procession reached them. Shirishkumar had the Tiranga, the Indian national flag and the slogan was 'Vande Mataram'. The police opened fire when their lathi charge could not stop the procession. Shirishkumar was

killed on the spot.

(# Why important : For being the youngest martyr of Quit India Movement at age 15)



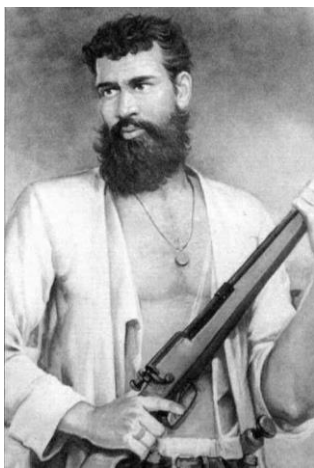
Shivram Bhiku Murkar was born in Dabhol village in taluka Dapoli, district Ratnagiri. He actively participated in the freedom struggle, the record of which is lost in time. as he worked in fisheries and had to deal with ports every day, he received secret messages that came via the sea route and passed on to his revolutionary comrades, including the ones underground. He was arrested by the British in Mumbai in 1930. He was arrested because he helped hiding the revolutionaries. He was sentenced to a prison life of around 2 – 3 years.



Swami Ramanand Tirtha (1903 –1972) was an Indian freedom fighter, educator and social activist who led the Hyderabad liberation struggle during the reign of Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam of Hyderabad State. Swami Ramanand Tirtha was the principal leader of the Hyderabad State Congress. Before taking Sanyasa, his family name was Vyenkatesh Bhagvanrao Khedgikar. The state university in Nanded is named after him. *(Reasonably well known. Nanded University is named after him)*



Umaji Naik (1791-1832) was an Indian revolutionary from Pune who was one of the earliest freedom fighters of India who challenged the British rule in India around 1826 to 1832. He fought against the East India Company and its rule. Soon after the fall of the Maratha Empire, Umaji raised a tiny army against the British. His anti-British manifesto asked the country-men to fight against the foreign rulers. To capture him, the British Government announced a bounty of 10,000 rupees. Betrayed by Nana Raghu Chavan, the British arrested him, declared him guilty, and hanged him to death on 3 Feb 1834.



Vasudev Balwant Phadke (1845 –1883) was an Indian independence activist and revolutionary who sought India's independence from the British Raj. With the help of the Koli, Bhil and Dhanger communities in the region, he formed a revolutionary group of the Ramoshi people. The group started an armed struggle to overthrow the British Raj, launching raids on rich English businessmen to obtain funds for the purpose. Phadke came to prominence when he got control of the city of Pune for a few days after catching British soldiers off-guard during one of his surprise attacks. Phadke was transported to jail at Aden, but escaped from the prison by taking the door off from its hinges on 13 February 1883. He was soon recaptured and then went on a hunger strike, dying on 17 February 1883.

(Reasonably well known)



Vishnu Ganesh Pingle (1888 –1915) was an Indian revolutionary and a member of the Ghadar Party. Pingle and a number of other Ghadarites including Kartar Singh Sarabha, Harnam Singh and Bhai Paramanand were tried in the Lahore Conspiracy trial in April 1915 by a special tribunal constituted under the Defence of India Act 1915, for their roles in the February plot. Pingle was executed by hanging at the Lahore Central Jail on 16 November 1915, along with Kartar Singh.

3 Places associated with freedom struggle

Satara : The Satara parallel government in Maharashtra from August 1943 to May 1946 against British rule was a legendary chapter in the glorious freedom struggle of India. It was an armed offshoot of the 1942 Quit India movement, like the parallel governments in Midnapore in Bengal, Bhagalpur in Bihar, Ballia in Uttar Pradesh and Basudevpur in Odisha. British rule was effectively overthrown in large parts of Satara district (now bifurcated into Satara and Sangli districts) of western Maharashtra during those three years. The parallel government (prati sarkar) movement was a guerrilla type of struggle, and it operated in over 250 villages with solid peasant support. There were raids on taluka treasuries and armouries. The prati sarkar took over many of the functions of the government. This parallel government established many public utilities like a market system, supply and distribution of food-grains and a judicial system to settle disputes and penalise dacoits and robbers, pawnbrokers and money lenders. Law and order was entirely in its hands. Under this government an army was formed named Toofan Sena

Wardha: Wardha and its adjacent city Sevagram were major centers for the Indian Independence Movement, especially as the location for an annual meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1934, and Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram.

Aronda : A village in Sindhudurg District (formerly Ratnagiri district) of Maharashtra on Terkhol river. This village is associated with the Goa Liberation Movement against the Portuguese rule. The Goa Liberation Movement had its first meeting in 1947 in Aronda, held by Dr. Ram Mohan Lohia at Ummal Maidan

Palghar Martyrs : Palghar was one of the important sites of 1942 Quit India Movement. On 14 August 1942, there was an uprising against the British in Palghar, in which Kashinath Hari Pagdhare, Govind Ganesh Thakur, Ramprasad Bhimashankar Tiwari, Ramchandra Mahadev Churi, and Govind Sukur More were killed. The main circle of Palghar is known as "Paachbatti" (which means 'five lights' in Marathi) in honour of these martyrs. 14 August has been declared "Martyrs Day" in Palghar, when people gather at Paachbatti Circle to honour the five who sacrificed their lives for Indian independence.