

But gradually the partition movement collapsed. The boycott movement failed to achieve the desired object. So the young nationalists took to the only remedial path of creating terror into the hearts of the government.

The birth of revolutionary nationalism in Midnapur had an earlier beginning. Long before the birth of Indian National Congress Rajnarain Bose, one veteran headmaster of the Midnapur Collegiate School, had been setting up a number of *sabhas* and *samities* for the promotion national feeling among the people of Midnapur. Bose was out and out militant nationalist. The bondage of his native land and the gradual anglicizing of the culture and civilization of the country eched his heart. This is evident from what he once said to Bipinchandra Pal, "I shall feel myself blessed enough if I could kill at least one of the enemies of my country before my death."⁴ His nephews Jnanendranath Bose and Satyendranath Bose and his two grandsons Arabinda Ghosh and Barindra Ghosh were highly inflamed and influenced by his patriotic and fiery revolutionary ideology.

Bose had a great love for Midnapur and till death he had close contacts with the people of the district town. It was likely that being inspired by this precedent of the *Sanjibani Sabha*, a secret society., Jnendranath Bose and Hemchandra Kanungo set up a secret society in the town in 1902. They urged the students in particular to join the *samiti* which was outwardly mainly a centre for physical exercise and sword fighting and so on. Inwardly the centre acquainted them with the tragic plight of the nation, and taught them their sacred duty to free mother India from the foreign domination. Meanwhile the Midnapur *samiti* came under the district supervision of the Calcutta *Anusilan samiti*. Within a year or two a good number of branches were set up in different parts of the district. All the branches were then commonly familiar as '*akhra*'s. It is known from the police reports that four *arkhas* of Midnapur viz. *Sakti Samiti*, *Swadeshi Samiti*, *Sanatan Samiti* and *Basanta Malati* were secret political centres, and these were tinged and tempered with religious nationalism.⁵

There are references to some *akhra*s like Mian Bazar *akhra*, and Katrabali *akhra* of Midnapur town, Bandemataram Ground *akhra* of Contai, and Balichak and Kantasal

akhras of Debra P.S. in the local weeklies. Those *akhras* had a high esteem among the local for their secret and open activities. In Mahishadal and Tamluk also there were *akhras* of great repute. One illustrious feature of the *akhras* is that they were given financial assistance and other helps in kind by local zamindars like Raja Narendralal Khan of Midnapur and Digambar Nanda of Mugberia (Contai). The sympathy and support of the zamindars for the *akhras* i.e. for the revolutionaries is a very prominent and peculiar feature in the revolutionary nationalism of Midnapur. These zamindars knew it well that they might be harassed by the government on any occasion.⁶

By 1907 the revolutionaries of Midnapur became fully conversant with the revolutionary ideology preached and propagated by the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti* revolutionaries particularly by Arabinda and Barindra, the two grandsons of Rajnarayan, who styled himself the grand father of nationalism.⁷ The periodical *Yugantar* was by the time openly preaching the tenets of armed rebellion. It was breathing revolution in its every line, pointing out how revolution was to be effected. *Raja Ke* (who is the ruler/king?), *Vartaman Rananiti* (Rules of Modern Warfare) and *Mukti Kon Pathe* (Which way lies Salvation?) and so also *Bhavani Mandir* (Temple of the Goddess Bhavani) initiated the young revolutionaries to proceed on and on thinking of nothing this and that to attain the sacred sanctuary free India. The *boycott-swadeshi* nationalists, thus got energized, participated in the Anti- partition Movement with all vigour. They started without a second thought punishing the shop-keeper selling foreign cloths and so on and chasing and assaulting the political personnels who were treating the *boycott-swadeshi* volunteers roughly.⁸ It was thus that Midnapur particularly the district town, became a stronghold of revolutionary activity. It was then - Hemchandra Kanungo returned from Paris having a thorough training in the manufacture bombs and other explosives. As a result, the *Anushilan Samiti* started bomb-manufacturing in a Muraripukur garden house in Maniktala , a suburb of Calcutta. This added a new lease of life to the gradually invigorating revolutionary nationalism of Bengal. Now the revolutionaries decided to put a stop to the brutal torturing of the nationalists by killing

Fuller and Andraw Frazer the Lieutenant- Governors of East Bengal and Bengal respectively. It is to be noted that in the bomb blast on the Special Train of Frazer at Narayangarh in Midnapur Barindra Kumar Ghosh , Ullaskar Datta, Prafulla Chaki and Kshudiram Basu took active part.⁹ The attempts proved abortive. But it made the government aware of the gradual spread of the revolutionary activities in Midnapur and Dacca. So repressive measures were let loose indiscriminately. As a reaction, Midnapur burst in revolutionism.

After Fuller and Frazer, the next target of the revolutionaries was the much coveted Chief Presidency Magistrate Kingsford under whose orders participants in the *boycott-swadeshi* movement and the suspected revolutionaries were flogged severely without any discrimination. On apprehending that the revolutionaries might make Kingsford their target for his atrocious repressive measures, the government transferred him to Muzaffarpur in Bihar. The *Anushilan Samiti* leaders this time entrusted Kshudiram and Prafulla with the task of doing away with this notorious judge. It was the good luck of Kingsford and the bad luck of Kshudiram and Prafulla that their bomb was thrown on a hackney carriage of one Kennedy which resembled the carriage of Kingsford on April 30, 1908. The bomb took away two innocent lives one of mother Kennedy and the other of daughter Kennedy, consequently Prafulla shot himself dead, and Kshudiram was tried and hanged.¹⁰

On May 2, 1908 the Muraripur garden house was searched. The police found therein a number bombs and cartridges. The principal revolutionaries like Arabinda, Barindra along with thirty two others were arrested, and they were charged with conspiracy. While the trial was going, the revolutionaries shot one public prosecutor and a Deputy Superintendent of Police dead in the High Court premises. Most of the accused including Barindra were transported for life, and the rest were sentenced to life long imprisonment.¹¹

From the Muraripukur Raid the police came to know fully well the whereabouts of the revolutionaries and that Midnapur had become so turbulent that it required a tough officer to control the situation. Accordingly Donald Weston was appointed District Collector of Midnapur. On coming Midnapur Donald studied the situation thoroughly and found that some zaminders like the Raja of Narajole and Digambar Nanda were involved in terrorist activities.¹² Weston stationed punitive police in places where the revolutionaries were active. Besides, he unleashed police repression so vigorously that Midnapur got panick-stricken. One newspaper *Bangalee* writes in this respect “. . . police rule has been substituted in place of the reign of law”.¹³ Be that as it may Donald's inhuman measures was in one sense a sort of blessing for revolutionary nationalism of Midnapur. It is may be noted that before the arrival of Donald the people of Midnapur were indifferent to the activities of the nationalists. Donald's measures now made them aware of the realities of the movement. As many persons of the upper strata of the society were directly or indirectly taking in the national movement, they viewed the activities of the revolutionaries with some sort of admiration. It was thus, revolutionary nationalism gained a solid ground among them, and they began to adore the martyrs with ballads and songs.

To the people of Midnapur their martyrs became very much like heroes and legends, and they were terrorists in no way and in no sense. It is because those heroes sacrificed themselves at the altar of their motherland for the good of the nation.

Revolutionary nationalism from 1908 onwards could not withstand the governmental attacks. After the Muzafforpur incident, the Muraripukur Raid and the transportation of the leaders, revolutionary activities became quiet. Yet it did not peter out, and this is evident in the history of national movement of India.

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