

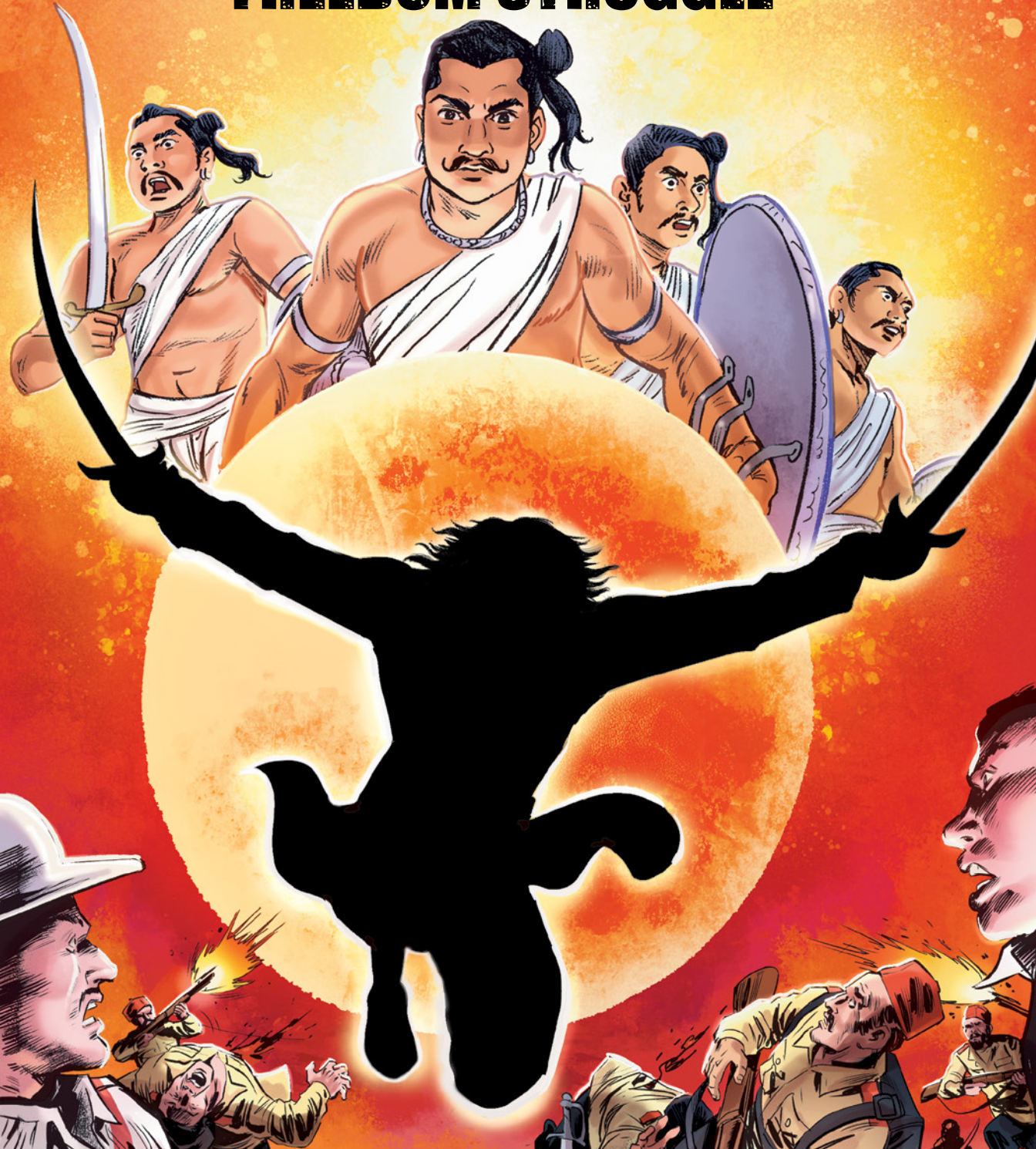


75
आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

TRIBAL LEADERS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE





TRIBAL LEADERS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Editor

Reena Ittyerah Puri

Published by

Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd.

Printed by

Indigo Press (I) Pvt. Ltd., Plot No. 1C/ 716, Off. Dadoji Konddeo Cross Road,
Between Sussex & Retiwala Ind. Est., Byculla (E), Mumbai - 400027.

D : 61959111, T : 61959191

Edition I

ISBN - 978-93-94610-24-8

© Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd., August 2022,

All rights reserved. This book is sold subject to the condition that the publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system (including but not limited to computers, disks, external drives, electronic or digital devices, e-readers, websites), or transmitted in any form or by any means (including but not limited to cyclostyling, photocopying, docutech or other reprographic reproductions, mechanical, recording, electronic, digital versions) without the prior written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.



TRIBAL LEADERS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE





The route to your roots
Founder Editor: Anant Pai

When they look back at their formative years, many Indians nostalgically recall the vital part Amar Chitra Katha comics have played in their lives. It was **Amar Chitra Katha** that first gave them a glimpse of their glorious heritage.

Since they were introduced in 1967, there are now over **500 Amar Chitra Katha** titles to choose from. **Over 100 million copies** have been sold worldwide.

Now, Amar Chitra Katha titles are even more widely available in **1000+ bookstores all across India**. If you do not have access to a bookstore near you, you can also buy all the titles through our online store, **www.amarchitrakatha.com**. We provide quick delivery anywhere in the world. To make it easy for you to locate the titles of your choice from our treasure trove of titles, the books are now arranged in six categories.

Epics and Mythology

Best known stories from the Epics and the Puranas

Indian Classics

Enchanting tales from Indian literature

Fables and Humour

Evergreen folktales, legends and tales of wisdom and humour

Bravehearts

Stirring tales of brave men and women of India

Visionaries

Inspiring tales of thinkers, social reformers and nation builders

Contemporary Classics

The best of modern Indian literature

Cover Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury, Durgesh Velhal

Cover Colour: Sanjhiya Mayekar

Layout: Ritoparna Hazra, Tithee Dixit, Harshal Narse,
Simran Sodhi, Mala Narwani

Editorial Team: Krithika Nair, Kayva Gokhale and Komal Narwani

Deputy Art Director: Ritoparna Hazra

Art Director: Savio Mascarenhas

Associate Editor: Sanjana Kapur

Executive Editor: Reena Ittyerah Puri

AMAR CHITRA KATHA PVT LTD

© Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd., August 2022,

Facebook: The Amar Chitra Katha Studio | Instagram: @amarchitrakatha | Twitter: @ACKComics | YouTube: Amar Chitra Katha

Get access to Amar Chitra Katha's digital library on the **ACK Comics App**. Visit digital.amarchitrakatha.com or scan the QR code.

You can now get ACK stories as part of your classroom with **ACK Learn**, a unique learning platform that brings these stories to your school with a range of workshops. Find out more at www.acklearn.com or write to us at acklearn@ack-media.com.





CONTENTS

1	TILKA MANJHI Script: Tripti Nainwal Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Anvita Tekriwal	5
2	THALAKKAL CHANTHU Script: Krithika Nair Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	13
3	BUDHU BHAGAT Script: Surekha S. Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	21
4	TIROT SING Script: Komal Narwani Art: Subir Dey Colour: Venkatesan Muniyan	28
5	RAGHOJIRAO BHANGRE Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Vineet Nair Colour: Akshay Khadilkar	34
6	SIDHU AND KANHU MURMU Script: Surekha S. Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Arul Kumar	40
7	RENDO MAJHI Script: Surekha S. Art: Harsho Mohan Chatteraj Colour: Prakash S.	46
8	CHAKRA BISOI Script: Reena Puri Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	52
9	NILAMBAR AND PITAMBAR Script: Surekha S. Art and Colour: Sanjhiya Mayekar	58

10	RAMJI GOND Script: Aparna Kapur Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Ritoparna Hazra	64
11	TELANGA KHARIA Script: Tripti Nainwal Art: Abhijeet Kini Colour: Tithee Dixit	70
12	TANTYA BHIL Script: Tripti Nainwal Art: Subir Dey Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	75
13	BIRSA MUNDA Script: Krithika Nair Art: Harsho Mohan Chatteraj Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	80
14	MATMUR JAMOH Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Subir Dey Colour: Sachin Adhare	86
15	TANA BHAGAT Script: Krithika Nair Art: Harsho Mohan Chatteraj Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	92
16	MALATI MEM Script: Aparna Kapur Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Sanjhiya Mayekar	97
17	LAXMAN NAIK Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Abhijeet Kini Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	103
18	HELEN LEPCHA Script: Komal Narwani Art: Abhijeet Kini Colour: Kavya Mittal	109
19	PUTALIMAYA DEVI PODDAR Script: Sanjana Kapur Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury Colour: Ritoparna Hazra	115

TILKA MANJHI

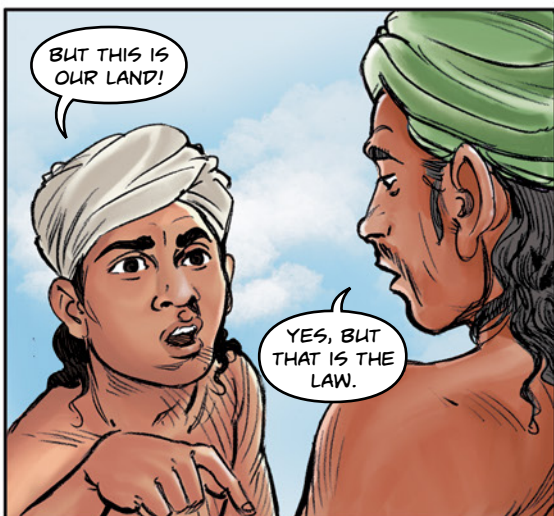
THE RAJMAHAL HILLS LIE ON THE EDGE OF THE CHOTA NAGPUR* PLATEAU. THESE HILLS ARE DENSELY FORESTED AREAS, RICH IN BIODIVERSITY AND MINERALS. FOR CENTURIES, THE PEOPLE OF THESE HILLS WERE UNTRoubLED, LIVING A TRANQUIL LIFE; THE FOREST AND NATURE PROVIDING THEM WITH EVERYTHING THEY NEEDED. INVADERS CAME TO INDIA, RULED, AND LEFT, BUT THE PAHADIA TRIBES OF THESE MOUNTAINS WERE NEVER DISTURBED.



THIS CHANGED WHEN THE EAST INDIA COMPANY WON THE BATTLE OF BUXAR IN 1764 AND BECAME THE VIRTUAL RULERS OF BENGAL, BIHAR, ODISHA AND JHARKHAND. THE COMPANY BEGAN LEVYING HEAVY TAXES ON THE ADIVASIS**, WHICH WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO PAY.

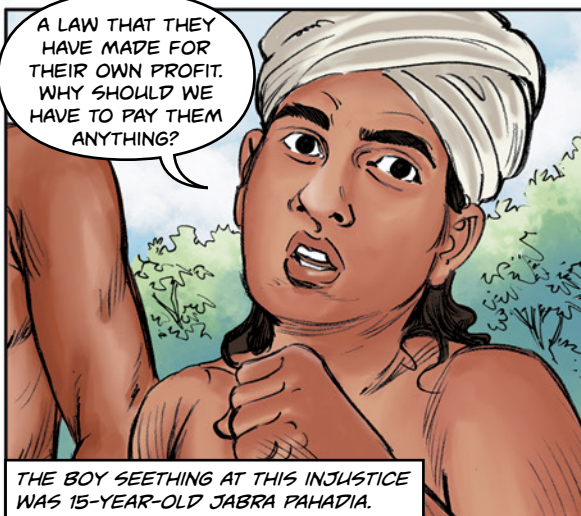
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? WHY ARE WE GIVING THEM MONEY?

THEY ARE THE ZAMINDARS** WORKING FOR THE BRITISH. THEY WILL TAKE AWAY OUR LAND IF WE DON'T PAY THE TAXES.



BUT THIS IS OUR LAND!

YES, BUT THAT IS THE LAW.



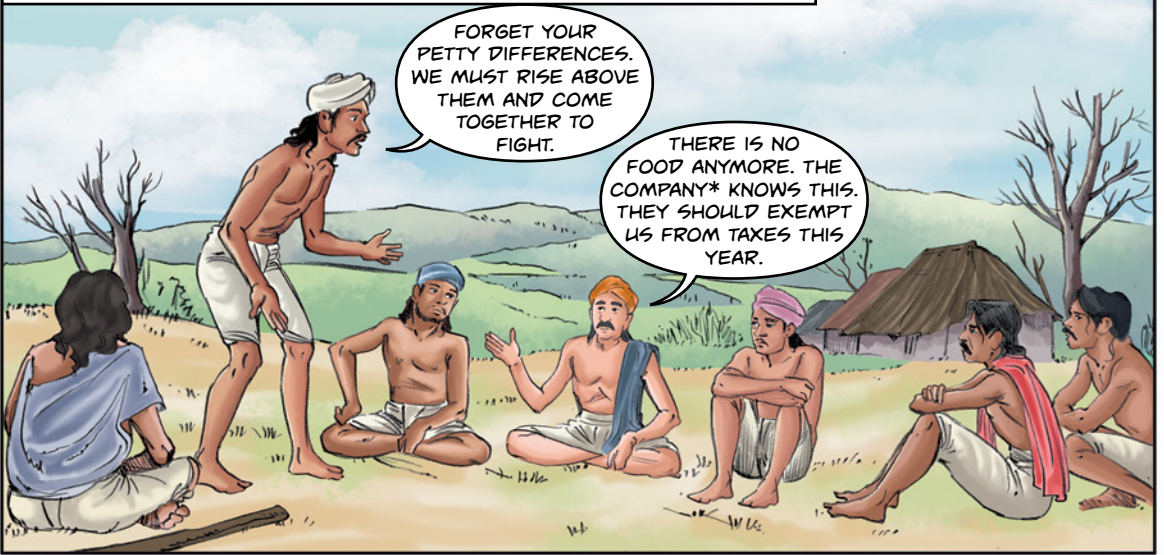
A LAW THAT THEY HAVE MADE FOR THEIR OWN PROFIT. WHY SHOULD WE HAVE TO PAY THEM ANYTHING?

THE BOY SEETHING AT THIS INJUSTICE WAS 15-YEAR-OLD JABRA PAHADIA.

*A PLATEAU THAT SPREADS OVER JHARKHAND, BIHAR, W. BENGAL, ODISHA AND CHHATTISGARH

*THE TERM ADIVASI TRANSLATES TO 'FIRST SETTLER'.
**LAND OWNERS

AS HE GREW UP, JABRA STARTED ADDRESSING SMALL GROUPS OF HIS TRIBE.



IT WAS THE YEAR 1770. BENGAL AND ALL THE SURROUNDING AREAS WERE IN THE MIDST OF A GREAT FAMINE. BUT —

THE COMPANY HAS INCREASED THE TAXES. WAKE UP, ALL OF YOU. THEY ARE GOING TO RUIN US!

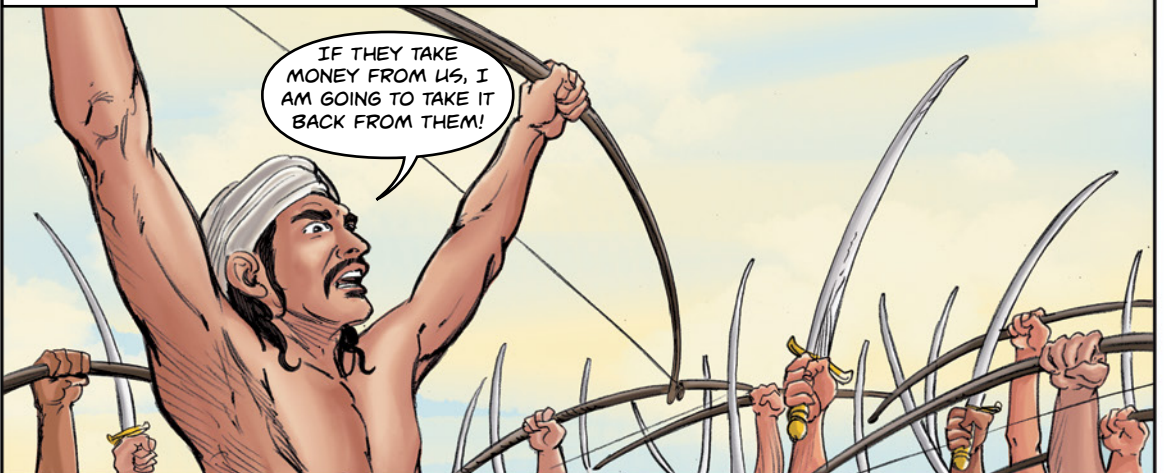


PEOPLE WERE STARVING TO DEATH AND YET WERE GETTING FLOGGED FOR NOT PAYING THEIR TAXES.

WHERE'S THE MONEY?

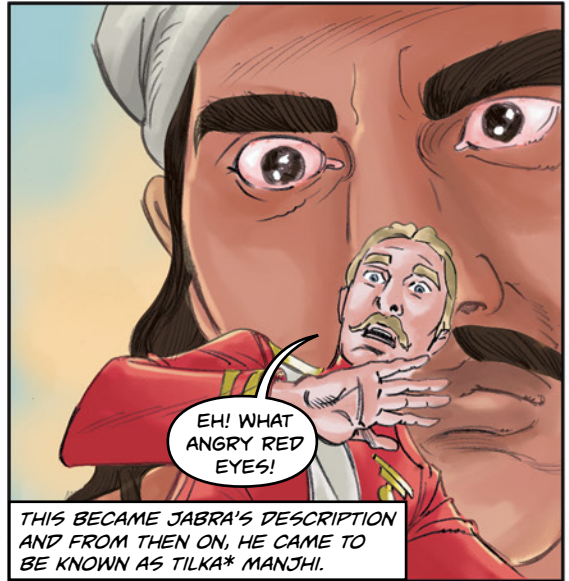
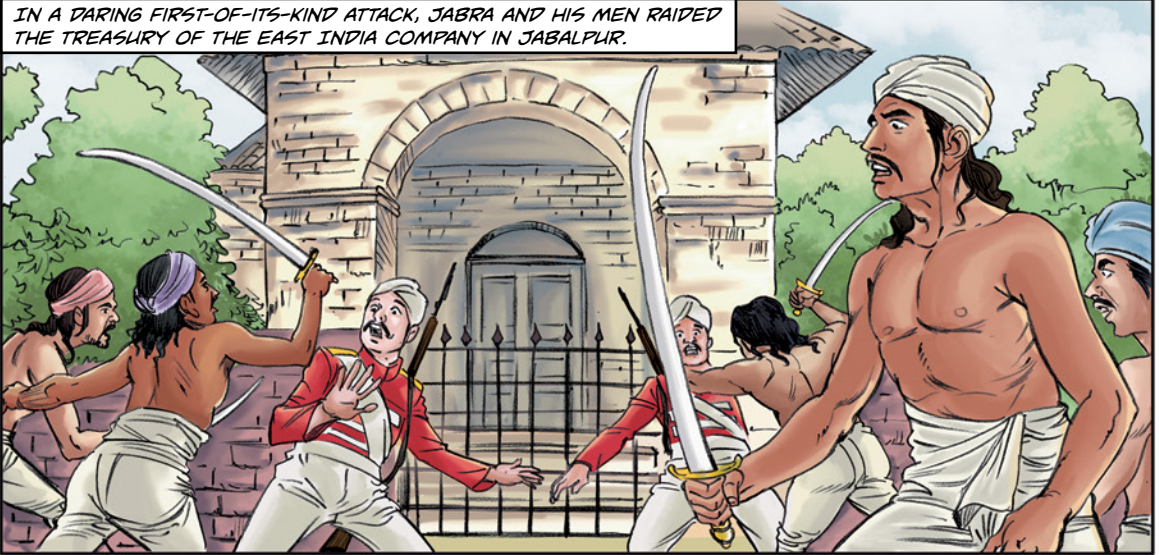


BY NOW, JABRA HAD BECOME THE LEADER OF HIS VILLAGE. HIS TITLE WAS 'MANJHI' OR 'HEADMAN'.



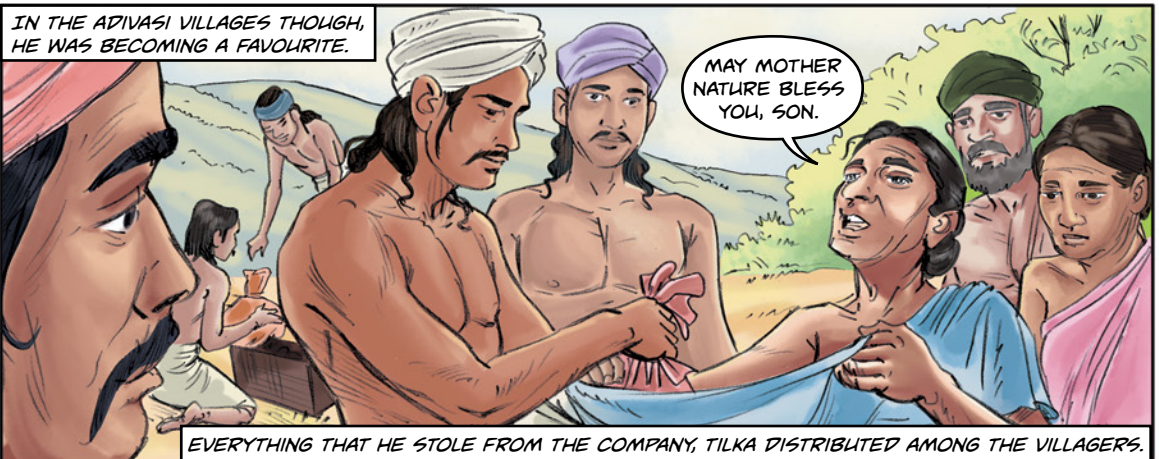
*EAST INDIA COMPANY

IN A DARING FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND ATTACK, JABRA AND HIS MEN RAIDED THE TREASURY OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN JABALPUR.



THIS BECAME JABRA'S DESCRIPTION AND FROM THEN ON, HE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS TILKA* MANJHI.

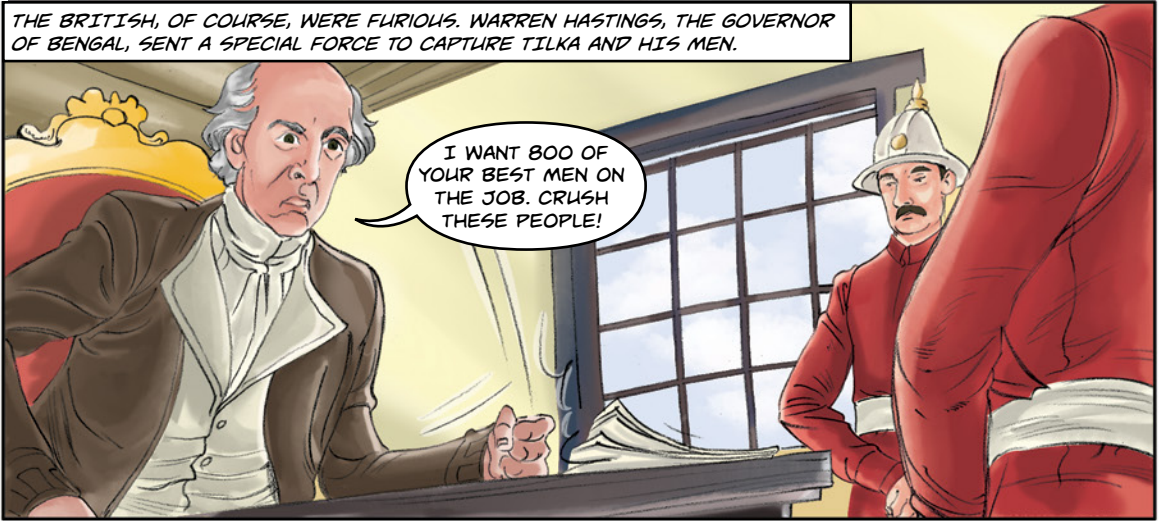
IN THE ADIVASI VILLAGES THOUGH, HE WAS BECOMING A FAVOURITE.



EVERYTHING THAT HE STOLE FROM THE COMPANY, TILKA DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE VILLAGERS.

*MEANING ANGRY RED EYES

THE BRITISH, OF COURSE, WERE FURIOUS. WARREN HASTINGS, THE GOVERNOR OF BENGAL, SENT A SPECIAL FORCE TO CAPTURE TILKA AND HIS MEN.



BUT EVEN 800 MEN WERE NO MATCH FOR THE TRIBALS IN THEIR OWN TERRAIN. THIS WAS GUERRILLA WARFARE* AT ITS BEST.



TILKA AND HIS MEN AVOIDED CAPTURE BUT THE ORDINARY TRIBALS WERE TORTURED.



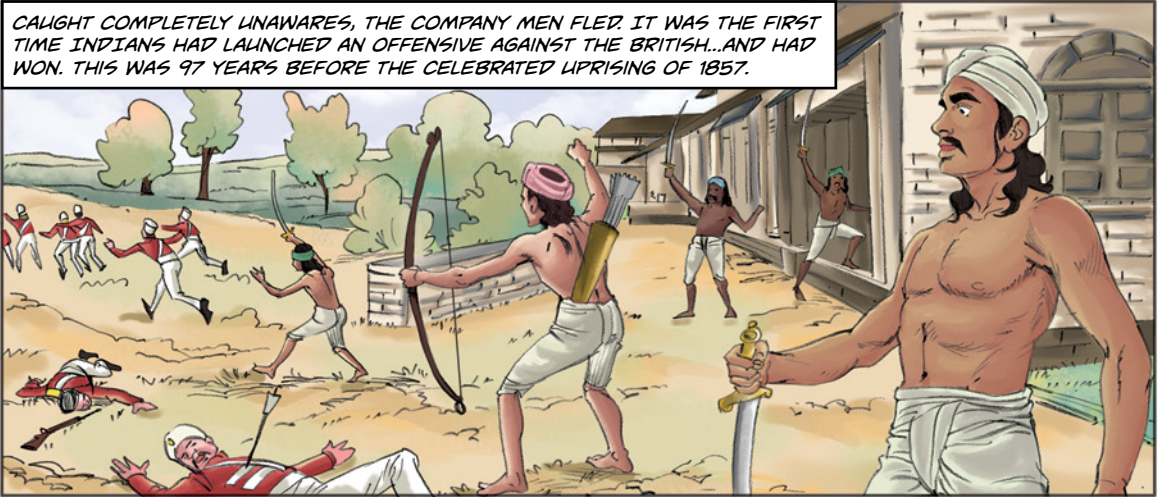
IT WAS 1778. IN A DARING MOVE, TILKA AND A FEW OF HIS MEN ATTACKED THE PUNJAB REGIMENT IN RAMGARH¹ CANTONMENT.



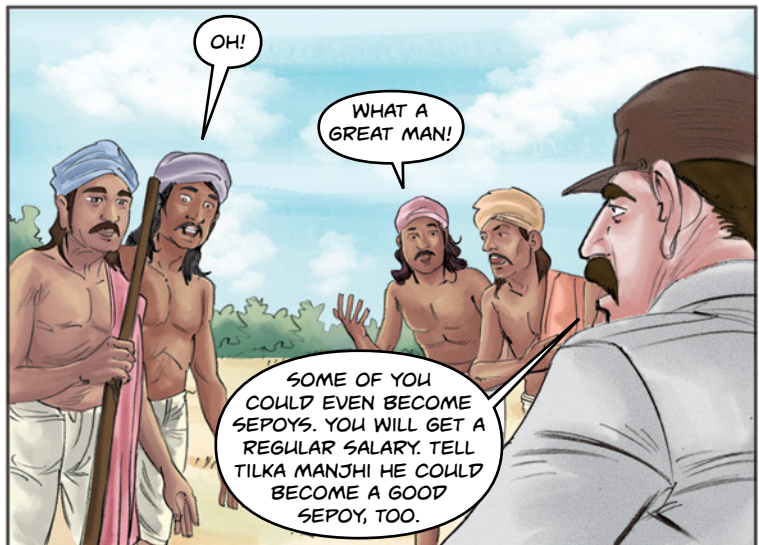
*WHEN SMALL GROUPS OF MILITANTS USE HIT-AND-RUN TACTICS AGAINST A LARGER FORCE

¹IN PRESENT-DAY JHARKHAND

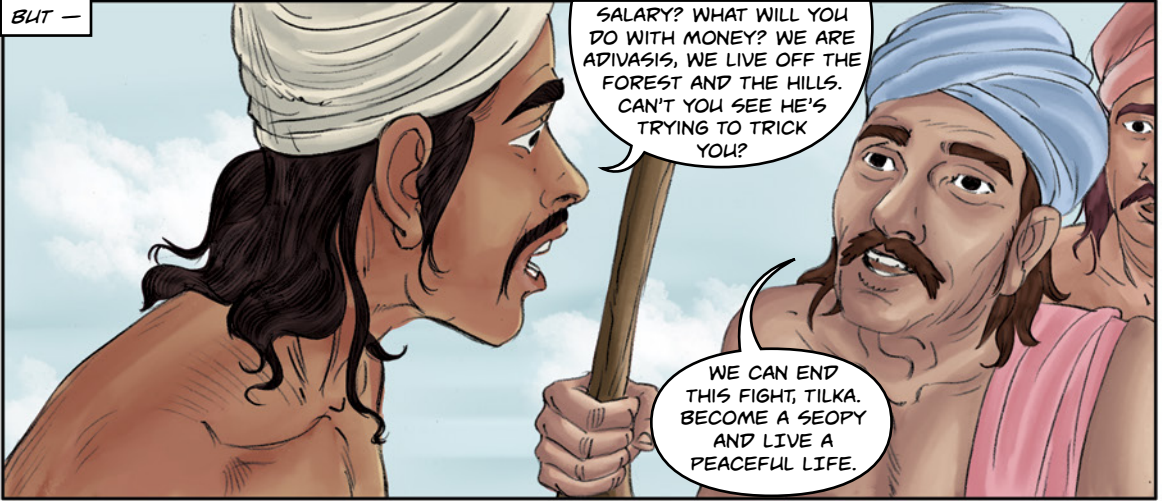
CAUGHT COMPLETELY UNAWARES, THE COMPANY MEN FLED. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME INDIANS HAD LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE BRITISH...AND HAD WON. THIS WAS 97 YEARS BEFORE THE CELEBRATED UPRISING OF 1857.



THEN THE BRITISH RESORTED TO THEIR FAVOURITE 'DIVIDE AND RULE' TACTICS. THEY SENT AUGUSTUS CLEVELAND, A YOUNG, CHARMING BUT WILY OFFICER AS COLLECTOR OF THE AREA.



BUT —



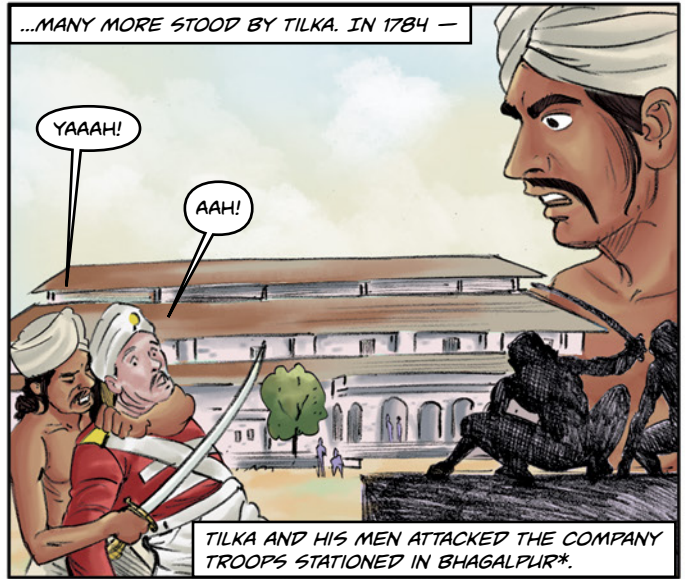
SALARY? WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH MONEY? WE ARE ADIVASIS, WE LIVE OFF THE FOREST AND THE HILLS. CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S TRYING TO TRICK YOU?

WE CAN END THIS FIGHT, TILKA. BECOME A SEOPY AND LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFE.



NO! THE BRITISH ARE TRYING TO DIVIDE US. WE WILL END UP AS THEIR SLAVES!

MANY TRIBESMEN WERE TEMPTED AND PLANNED TO JOIN CLEVELAND...



...MANY MORE STOOD BY TILKA. IN 1784 —

YAAAH!

AAH!

TILKA AND HIS MEN ATTACKED THE COMPANY TROOPS STATIONED IN BHAGALPUR*.



FIRE! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

*IN PRESENT-DAY BIHAR



WHERE IS
TILKA MANJHI? I
MUST CAPTURE
HIM FIRST!

BUT BEFORE HE COULD DO THAT —



woosh!

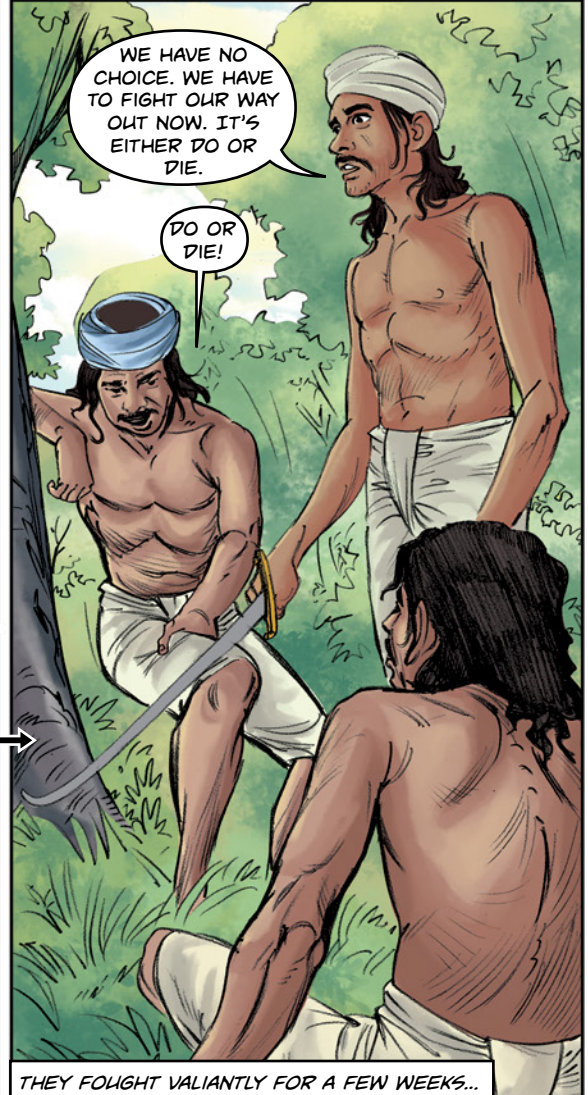
AAAH!

TILKA SHOT A POISONED ARROW THAT PIERCED CLEVELAND. HE DIED A FEW MONTHS LATER.

IN RETALIATION, THE BRITISH SENT A STRONG FORCE TO SQUASH THE REBELLION. THEY LAID SIEGE TO THE JUNGLE WHERE TILKA WAS HIDING. ALL SUPPLIES WERE CUT.



THE MEN RESISTED BUT WERE SOON STARVING AND WEAK.

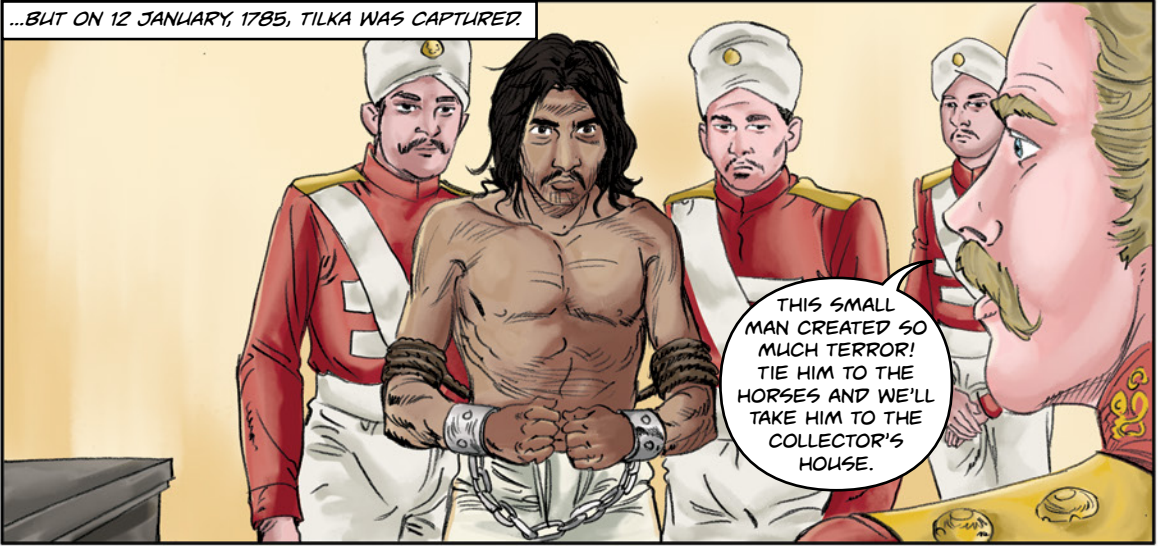


WE HAVE NO CHOICE. WE HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT NOW. IT'S EITHER DO OR DIE.

DO OR DIE!

THEY FOUGHT VALIANTLY FOR A FEW WEEKS...

...BUT ON 12 JANUARY, 1785, TILKA WAS CAPTURED.



TILKA WAS TIED TO FOUR HORSES AND DRAGGED ALL THE WAY TO BHAGALPUR.



SUCH WAS HIS PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE, THAT TILKA WAS STILL ALIVE AFTER THAT ORDEAL. HE WAS HANGED THE NEXT DAY.

FROM 1771 TO 1784, TILKA MOBILISED HIS PEOPLE AND FOUGHT FEARLESSLY. HISTORY MAY NOT HAVE GIVEN HIM HIS DUE BUT HE WAS THE FIRST TO REVOLT AGAINST THE BRITISH. IN 1991, BHAGALPUR UNIVERSITY WAS RENAMED AS TILKA MANJHI BHAGALPUR UNIVERSITY. HE REMAINS ALIVE IN THE WORKS OF MAHASWETA DEVI AND RAKESH SINGH, AND IN THE HEARTS OF HIS FELLOW ADIVASIS WHO HAVE DEVOTED NUMEROUS SONGS TO HIM.

'They rained whipcords on you
They dragged you by horse
Still you could not be killed
They, amidst the Bhagalpur public
Hanged you on the rope
Yet the landlords and the British were afraid
Of your angry eyes
You didn't die even after being killed
Tilka Manjhi
Not Mangal Pandey,
You were the first rebel of modern India.'



THALAKKAL CHANTHU

THE KURICHIYAR ARE A TRIBE FROM THE HILLY AREAS OF WAYANAD AND KANNUR IN KERALA. THEIR NAME IS DERIVED FROM THE PHRASE 'KURI-VECHAVAN', MEANING 'HE WHO TOOK AIM'.

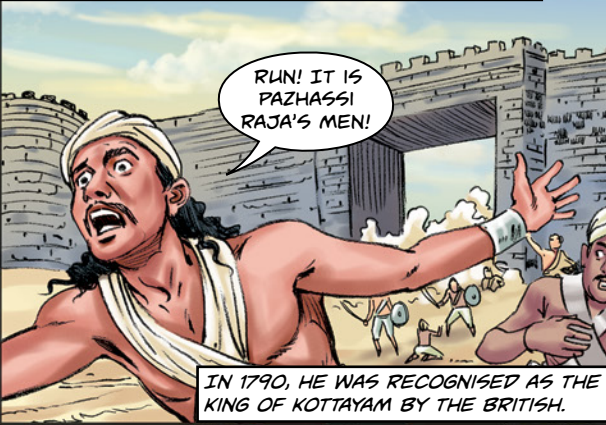


THEY WERE GIVEN THIS NAME BY THE KING OF KOTTAYAM, AS THEY WERE A COMMUNITY OF SKILLED ARCHERS.

IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, WHEN THE KINGDOM OF MYSORE TRIED TO EXPAND INTO KERALA, THE RULER OF KOTTAYAM FLED HIS KINGDOM. PAZHASSI RAJA, ONE OF THE HEIRS, STAYED BACK TO FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE.



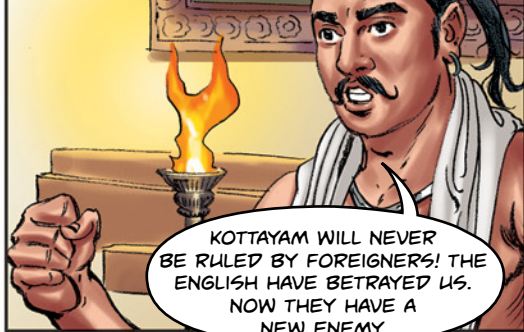
PAZHASSI RAJA JOINED HANDS WITH THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY TO DEFEND THE TERRITORY.



RUN! IT IS PAZHASSI RAJA'S MEN!

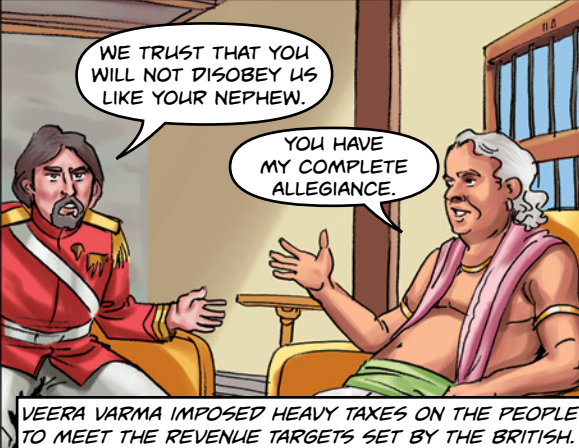
IN 1790, HE WAS RECOGNISED AS THE KING OF KOTTAYAM BY THE BRITISH.

HOWEVER, AFTER THEIR VICTORY IN THE THIRD ANGLA-MYSORE WAR*, THE BRITISH TOOK CONTROL OF KOTTAYAM. THIS ANGERED PAZHASSI RAJA.



KOTTAYAM WILL NEVER BE RULED BY FOREIGNERS! THE ENGLISH HAVE BETRAYED US. NOW THEY HAVE A NEW ENEMY.

PAZHASSI RAJA STOPPED PAYING TAXES. THE BRITISH THEN INSTALLED HIS UNCLE, VEERA VARMA, AS THE KING.

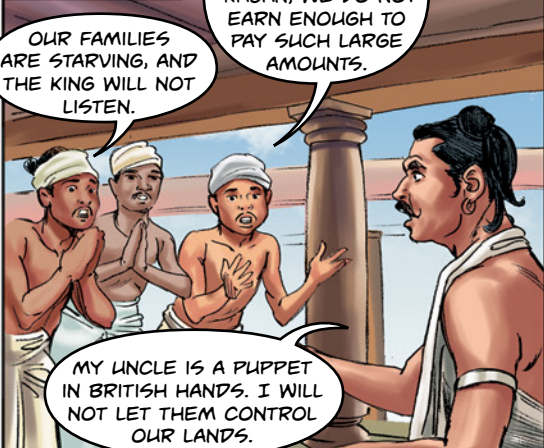


WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL NOT DISOBEY US LIKE YOUR NEPHEW.

YOU HAVE MY COMPLETE ALLEGIANCE.

VEERA VARMA IMPOSED HEAVY TAXES ON THE PEOPLE TO MEET THE REVENUE TARGETS SET BY THE BRITISH.

THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE APPROACHED PAZHASSI RAJA.



RAJAN, WE DO NOT EARN ENOUGH TO PAY SUCH LARGE AMOUNTS.

OUR FAMILIES ARE STARVING, AND THE KING WILL NOT LISTEN.

MY UNCLE IS A PUPPET IN BRITISH HANDS. I WILL NOT LET THEM CONTROL OUR LANDS.

PAZHASSI RAJA'S REBELLION WAS SUPPORTED BY EIGHTY BRAVE CHIEFTAINS AND MANY WARRIORS OF KERALA. ONE OF THESE WAS A KURICHIYA ARCHER NAMED THALAKKAL CHANTHU.



WHY ARE WE WORKING SO HARD? WE ARE LEFT WITH NOTHING FOR OURSELVES, AFTER PAYING THE TAXES.

YOU ARE RIGHT, CHANTHU, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?

ALTHOUGH THE KURICHIYAR WERE SKILLED ARCHERS, THEIR MAIN PROFESSION WAS AGRICULTURE.

SUDDENLY —

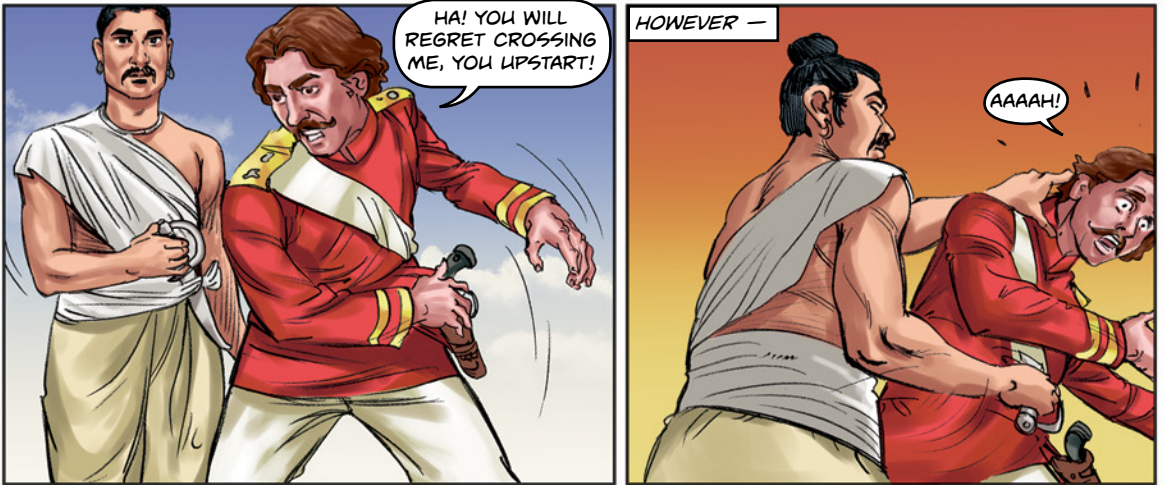
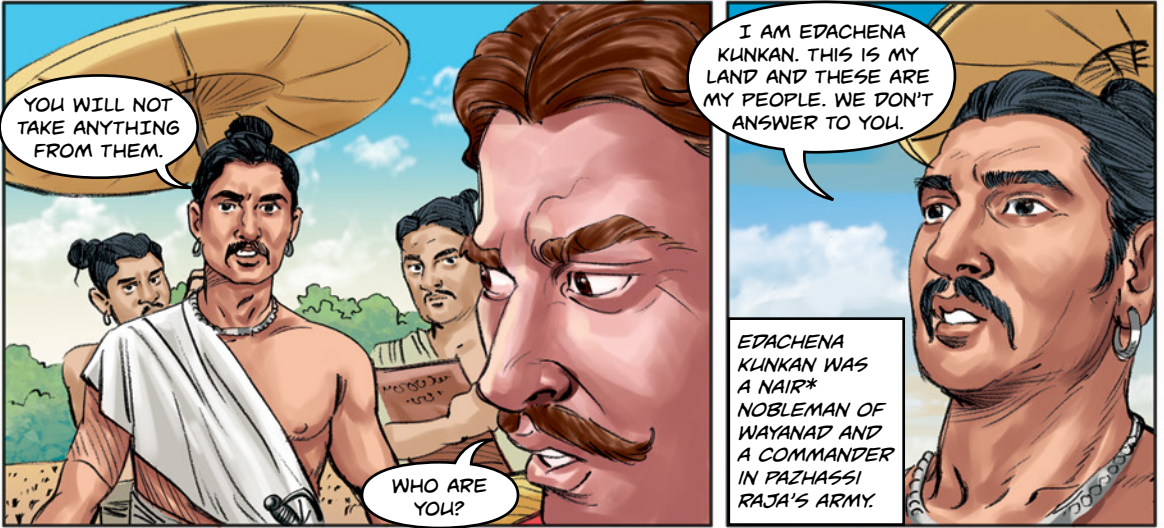


HEY, YOU! HAND OVER THAT PADDY TO ME.

WHAT? WHY?

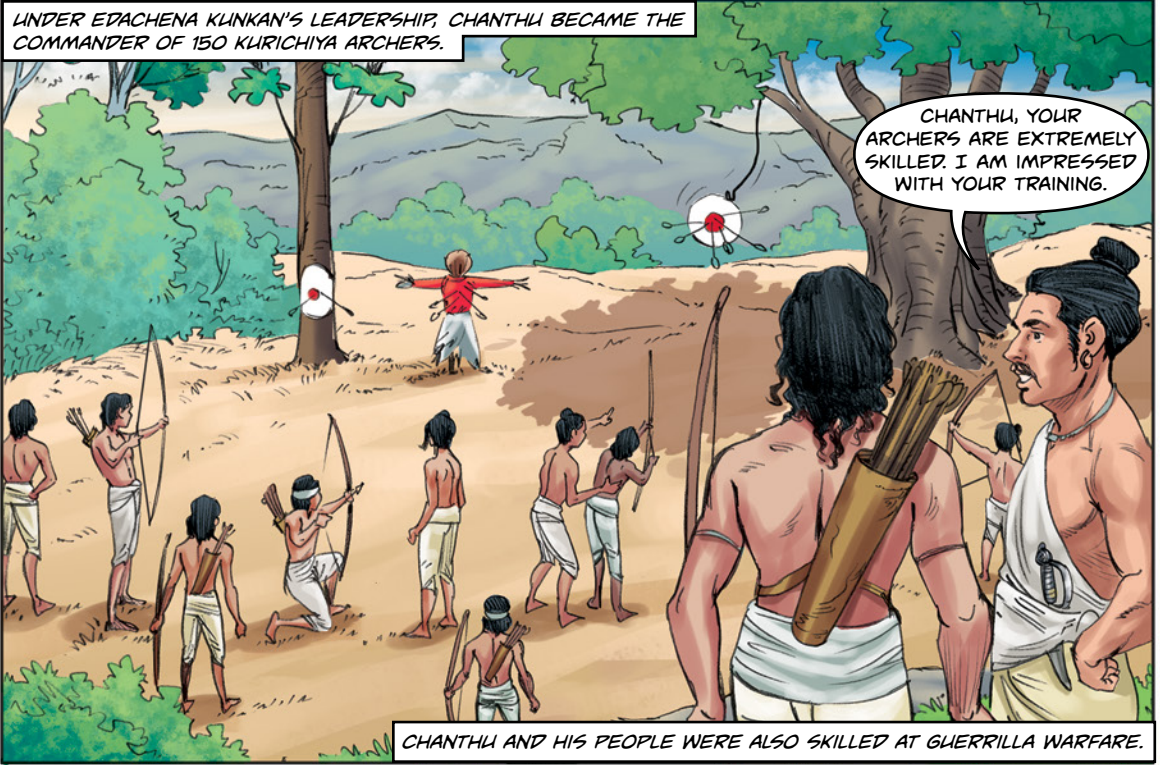
HOW DARE YOU QUESTION ME? JUST DO AS I SAY!

*WARS BETWEEN THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE RULERS OF MYSORE



*A COMMUNITY FROM KERALA WHO WERE TRADITIONALLY WARRIORS

UNDER EDACHENA KUNKAN'S LEADERSHIP, CHANTHU BECAME THE COMMANDER OF 150 KURICHIYA ARCHERS.



CHANTHU, YOUR ARCHERS ARE EXTREMELY SKILLED. I AM IMPRESSED WITH YOUR TRAINING.

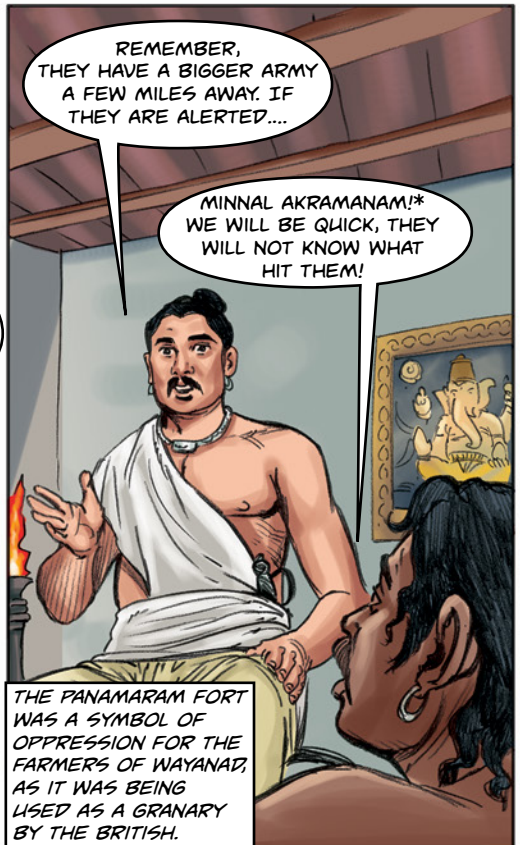
CHANTHU AND HIS PEOPLE WERE ALSO SKILLED AT GUERRILLA WARFARE.

TO CURB THE BRITISH POWER IN NORTH KERALA, THE TWO DEVISED AN ATTACK.



MERELY DEFENDING OURSELVES IS NOT ENOUGH, WE MUST ATTACK AND DRIVE THEM OUT.

WE SHOULD TARGET THE BRITISH FORT AT PANAMARAM. MY MEN TELL ME THE FORT IS GUARDED BY JUST 70 SOLDIERS.



REMEMBER, THEY HAVE A BIGGER ARMY A FEW MILES AWAY. IF THEY ARE ALERTED....

MINNAL AKRAMANAM!* WE WILL BE QUICK, THEY WILL NOT KNOW WHAT HIT THEM!

THE PANAMARAM FORT WAS A SYMBOL OF OPPRESSION FOR THE FARMERS OF WAYANAD, AS IT WAS BEING USED AS A GRANARY BY THE BRITISH.

*LIGHTNING ATTACK, A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE GUERRILLA WARFARE

ON 11 OCTOBER, 1802, CHANTHU AND KUNKAN LED THE ARMY OF KURICHIYA BOWMEN TO THE FORT.



MY BROTHERS,
TODAY WE WILL
TAKE BACK WHAT IS
RIGHTFULLY OURS.

REMEMBER, QUICK
AND MERCILESS! IF THEIR
REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE,
WE WILL BE NO MATCH
FOR THEIR NUMBERS AND
WEAPONS.

THE SOLDIERS OF THE 4TH BOMBAY INFANTRY
BATTALION, WHO WERE GUARDING THE FORT,
WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES.



WHAT WAS
THAT?

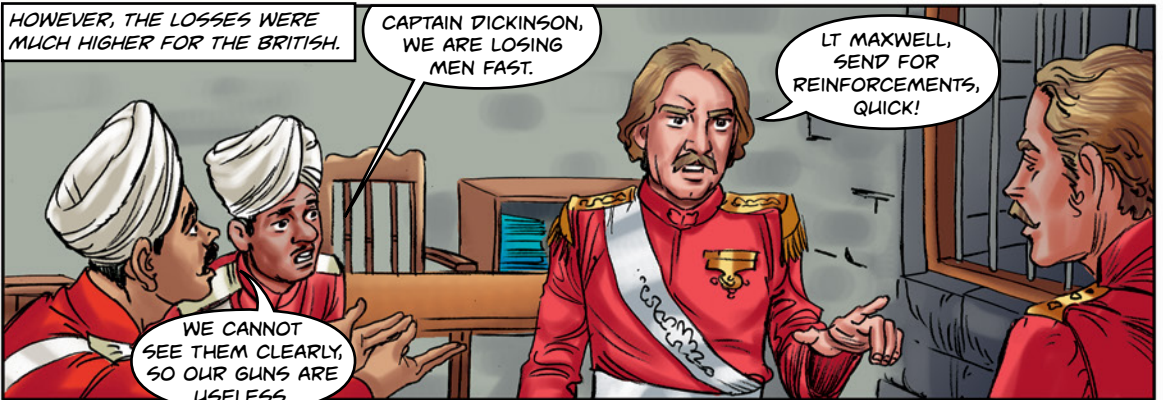


AAAAH!



WE ARE
BEING
ATTACKED!

THE BRITISH RUSHED OUT BUT THE KURICHIYAR HAD
HIDDEN THEMSELVES IN TREES AND ON THE CLIFF.



CHANTHU'S LEADERSHIP WAS NOTICED BY PAZHASSI RAJA AND SOON HE BECAME ONE OF THE RAJA'S MOST TRUSTED ALLIES.

EVEN IF ALL NAIRS WERE TO DESERT ME, I WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO FIGHT THE COMPANY IF I HAVE THIS KURICHIYA WITH ME!

AFTER HEARING OF THE KURICHIYAR'S SUCCESS, MORE THAN 3,000 PEOPLE JOINED THE RAJA'S ARMY TO REBEL AGAINST BRITISH OPPRESSION.

IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS, THE BRITISH MADE MANY FAILED ATTEMPTS AT RETALIATION BUT CHANTHU WAS A MASTER STRATEGIST.

THEY ARE MORE IN NUMBER BUT WE KNOW EVERY HILL AND VALLEY IN WAYANAD.

WE WILL COMBAT THEIR STRENGTH WITH OUR WITS.

WE MUST MOVE LIKE SHADOWS. WHERE WILL THEY POINT THEIR GUNS IF THEY CANNOT SEE US?

TIRED OF LOSING THEIR MEN TO CHANTHU'S GUERRILLA TACTICS, THE BRITISH DEVISED A NEW PLAN.

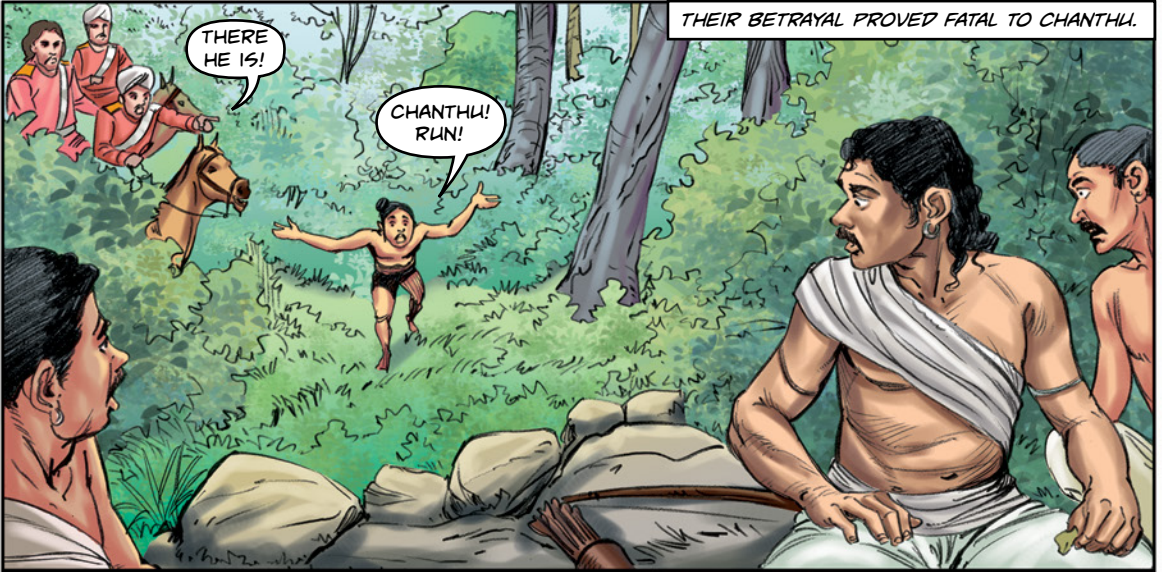
YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK ANOTHER DAY IF YOU TELL US WHERE CHANTHU IS.

THINK FOR YOURSELF. WILL YOU EVER GET SO MUCH LAND AND MONEY?

THEY ARE RIGHT. THIS WILL CHANGE MY LIFE.

SIR, THE REBELS NEVER STAY IN ONE PLACE, WHAT CAN WE TELL YOU?

TEMPTED BY THE OFFER, A FEW OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE DEFECTED AND INFORMED THE BRITISH ABOUT CHANTHU'S WHEREABOUTS.



THEIR BETRAYAL PROVED FATAL TO CHANTHU.

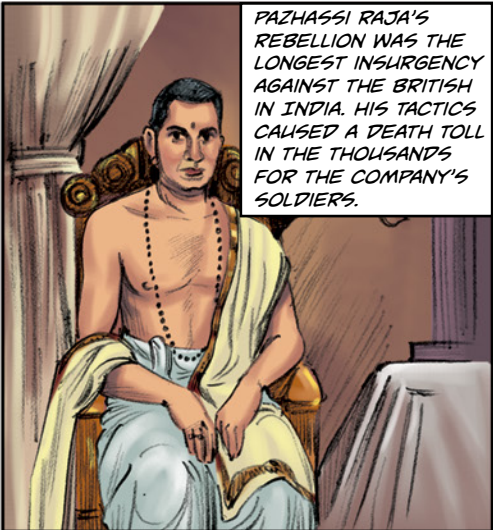
THERE HE IS!

CHANTHU! RUN!

ON 15 NOVEMBER, 1805, THALAKKAL CHANTHU WAS CAUGHT AND HANGED FROM A KOLY TREE AT PANAMARAM.



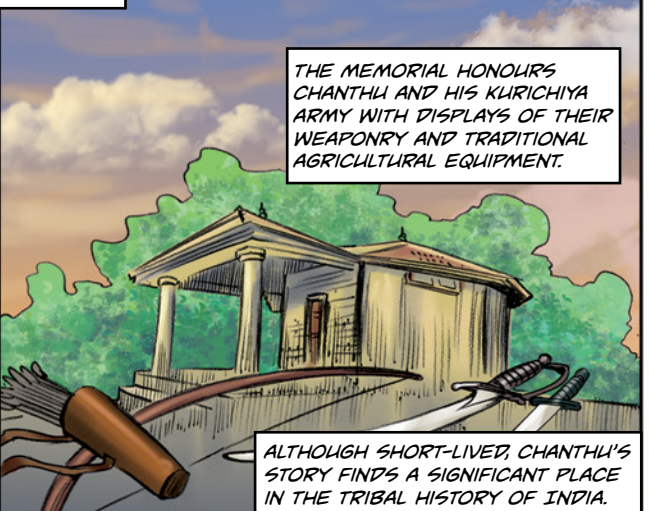
SHORTLY AFTER, WITH THE DEATH OF KUNKAN AND PAZHASSI RAJA TOO, THE REBELLION CAME TO AN END.



PAZHASSI RAJA'S REBELLION WAS THE LONGEST INSURGENCY AGAINST THE BRITISH IN INDIA. HIS TACTICS CAUSED A DEATH TOLL IN THE THOUSANDS FOR THE COMPANY'S SOLDIERS.

HIS CAUSE UNITED PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO FIGHT FOR THEIR HOMETLAND.

ON THE BANKS OF THE KABINI RIVER, NEAR THE RUINS OF THE PANAMARAM FORT, STANDS A MEMORIAL MUSEUM FOR CHANTHU.



THE MEMORIAL HONOURS CHANTHU AND HIS KURICHIYA ARMY WITH DISPLAYS OF THEIR WEAPONRY AND TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT.

ALTHOUGH SHORT-LIVED, CHANTHU'S STORY FINDS A SIGNIFICANT PLACE IN THE TRIBAL HISTORY OF INDIA.

BUDHU BHAGAT

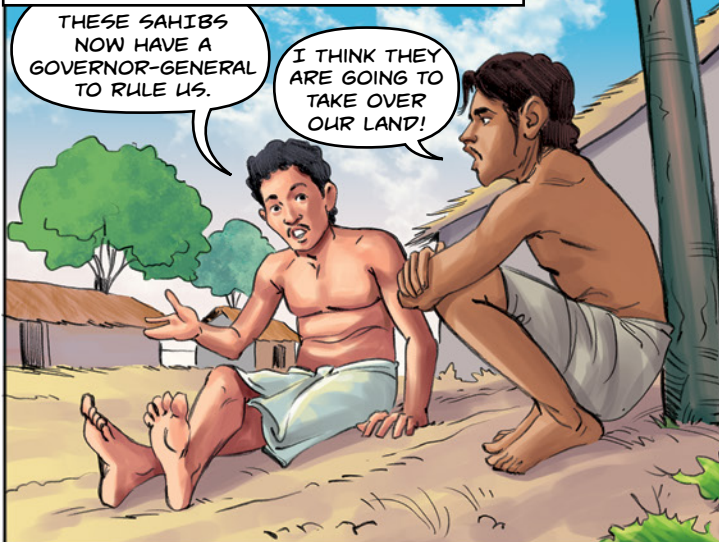
IN THE 1700S, THE IDYLIC CHOTA NAGPUR REGION WAS LARGELY OCCUPIED BY TRIBES KNOWN AS KOLS, ORAONS, HOS AND MUNDAS. THEY WERE PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE DEPENDENT ON FORESTS AND CULTIVATION.



IN 1765, THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY WAS GRANTED THE RIGHT TO COLLECT LAND REVENUE IN THE REGION. WITHIN A DECADE —

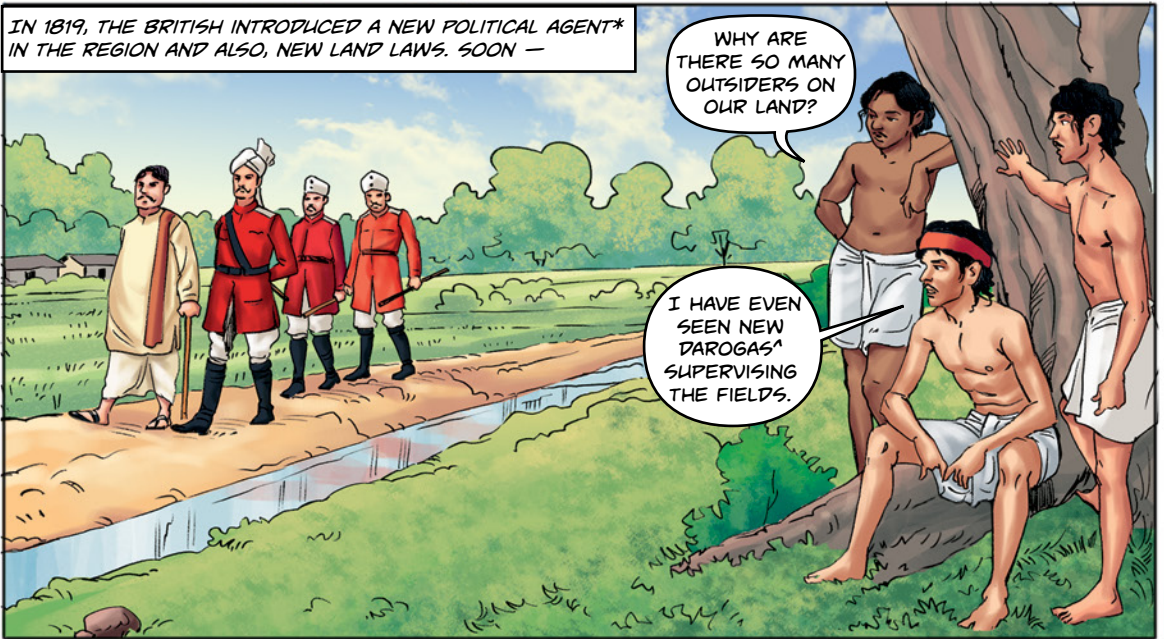
THESE SAHIBS NOW HAVE A GOVERNOR-GENERAL TO RULE US.

I THINK THEY ARE GOING TO TAKE OVER OUR LAND!





IN 1819, THE BRITISH INTRODUCED A NEW POLITICAL AGENT* IN THE REGION AND ALSO, NEW LAND LAWS. SOON —



WHY ARE THERE SO MANY OUTSIDERS ON OUR LAND?

I HAVE EVEN SEEN NEW DAROGAS¹ SUPERVISING THE FIELDS.

ONE DAY —



HEY! STOP YOUR WORK HERE! THIS LAND NO LONGER BELONGS TO YOU. IT BELONGS TO ANOTHER PERSON.



NO! THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS LAND!



BEAT HIM AND THROW HIM OUT.

TAKE AWAY ALL THEIR HARVEST. THEY CANNOT PAY US!

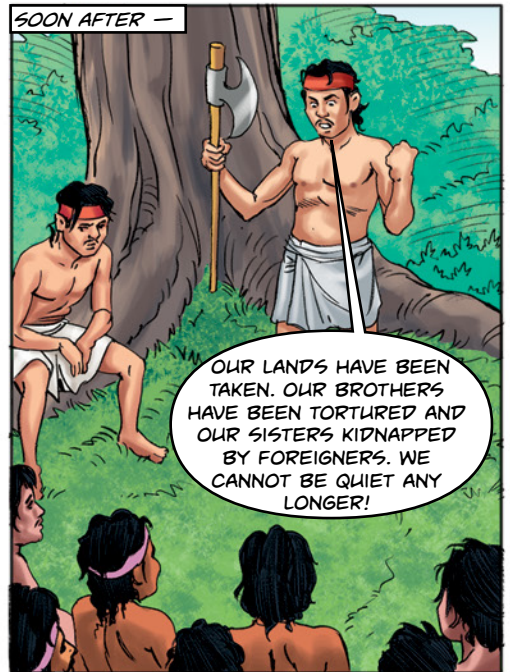


WITH THEIR LANDS SEIZED, THE TRIBALS TOOK LOANS FROM MONEYLENDERS WHICH THEY COULD NOT PAY BACK.

MANY TRIBALS BECAME BONDED LABOURERS TO PAY BACK THEIR DEBTS.

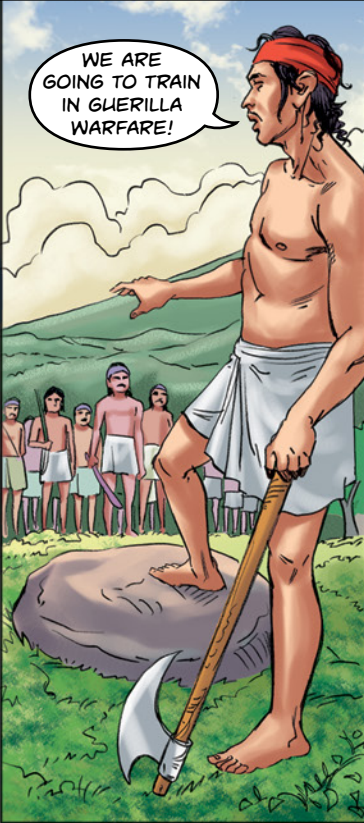
*AN OFFICIAL APPOINTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO ACT AS ADVISER TO THE RULER OF THE PROTECTED STATE

¹POLICE INSPECTOR'S



*THE SUPREME GOD OF THE ORAON

BUDHU TOOK THE TRIBALS TO THE DENSE FORESTS ATOP A HILL.



WE ARE GOING TO TRAIN IN GUERILLA WARFARE!



HIDE AND AIM! YOU SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AT ALL. ONLY YOUR ARROW SHOULD KILL.

FOR DAYS, THEY TRAINED IN THE THICK JUNGLES, TILL —



I THINK WE ARE NOW READY TO ATTACK!

THE TRIBALS, LED BY BUDHU, PILLAGED THE HOMES OF THE LANDLORDS AND THE BRITISH.



YOU TOOK AWAY OUR LIVELIHOOD! YOU DON'T DESERVE ANY LUXURIES!

THIS IS OUR LAND. GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM.

WHEN THE BRITISH SOLDIERS CAME TO ARREST THEM...



RETREAT TO THE FOREST!

...THE TRIBALS WOULD MOST OFTEN MANAGE TO ESCAPE.

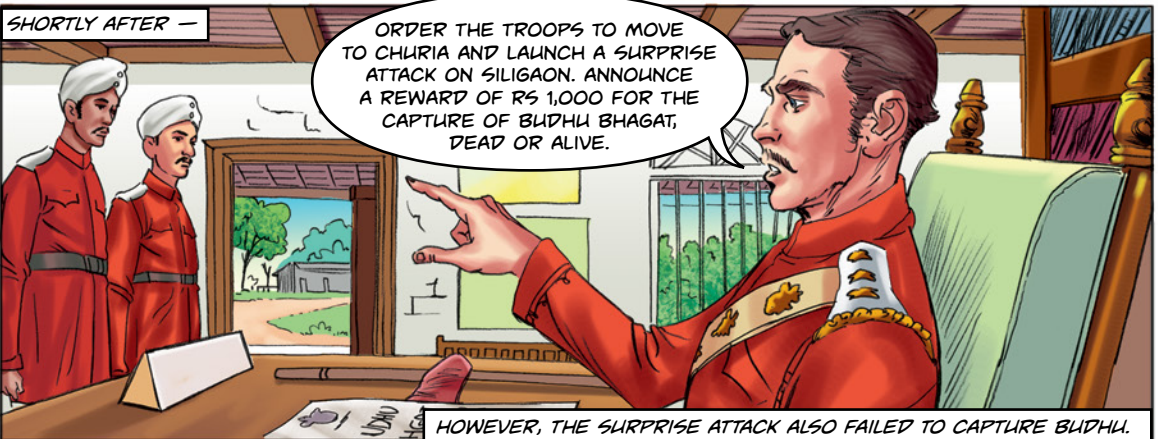
THE UPRISING, CALLED THE KOL REBELLION, WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY LED BY BUDHU BHAGAT, JOA BHAGAT, MADARA MAHATO AND A FEW OTHERS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF CHOTA NAGPUR AND SINGHBHUM.



I'VE HEARD THAT THE MOVEMENT HAS SPREAD FROM RANCHI TO SINGHBHUM, MANBHUM, HAZARIBAGH AND PALAMALI.

THAT'S GREAT NEWS. I HOPE WE DRIVE OUT THE BRITISH AND THEIR AGENTS FOR GOOD!

SHORTLY AFTER —



ORDER THE TROOPS TO MOVE TO CHURIA AND LAUNCH A SURPRISE ATTACK ON SILIGAON. ANNOUNCE A REWARD OF RS 1,000 FOR THE CAPTURE OF BUDHU BHAGAT, DEAD OR ALIVE.

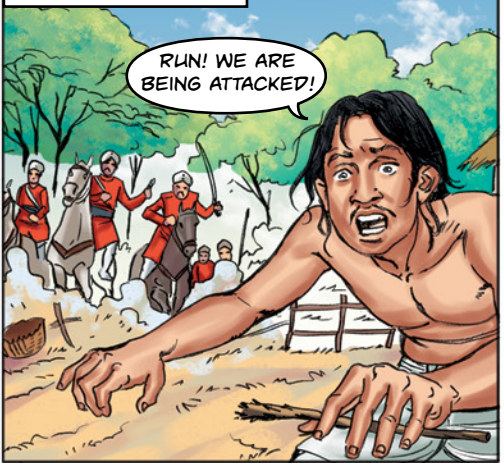
HOWEVER, THE SURPRISE ATTACK ALSO FAILED TO CAPTURE BUDHU.

CAPTAIN H.R. IMPEY OF THE 50TH REGIMENT NATIVE INFANTRY WAS CALLED IN AND GIVEN COMMAND OF FOUR COMPANIES AND 40 TROOPERS. ON 13 FEBRUARY, 1832 —

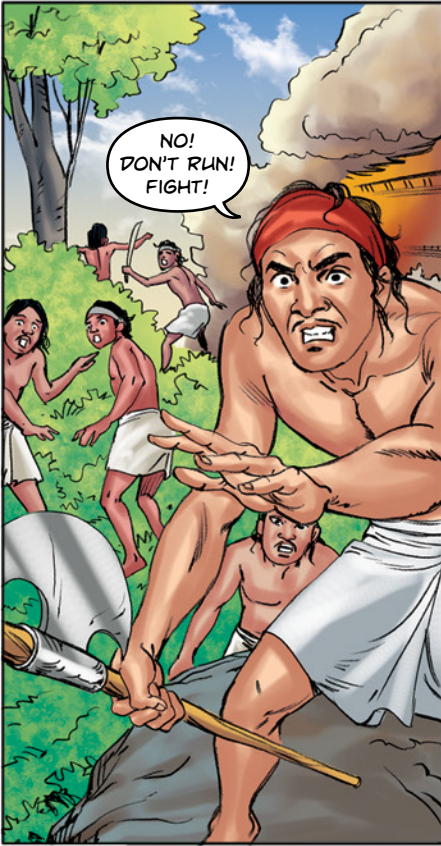


MOVE WITHOUT A SOUND. WE WILL REACH SILIGAON BY MORNING AND BUDHU BHAGAT WILL DIE!

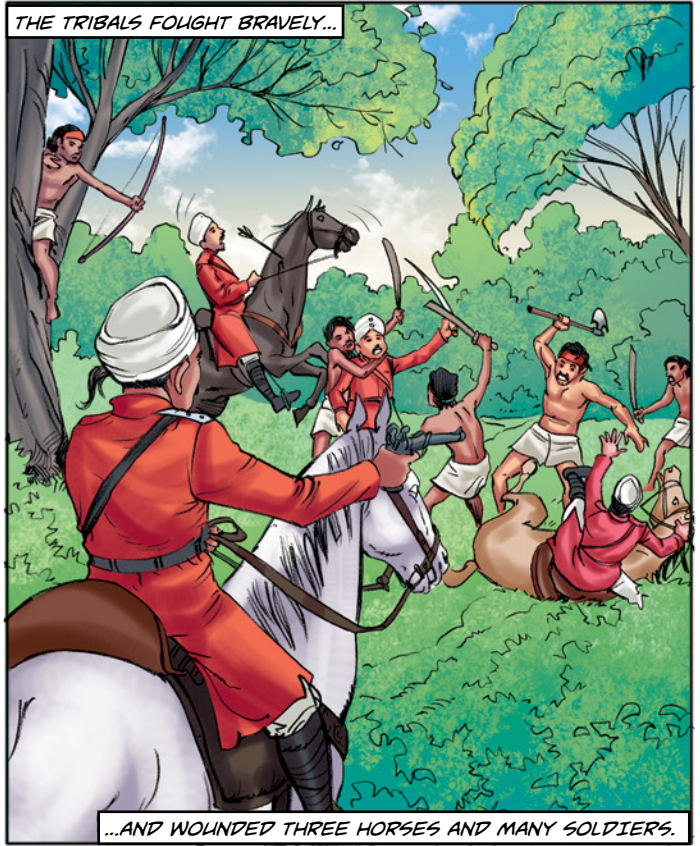
THE NEXT MORNING —



RUN! WE ARE BEING ATTACKED!



NO!
DON'T RUN!
FIGHT!



THE TRIBALS FOUGHT BRAVELY...

...AND WOUNDED THREE HORSES AND MANY SOLDIERS.



BUT THE BRITISH TROOPS HAD GUNS AND THEY MOWED THE
ORAOONS DOWN.

AH!

BUDHU BHAGAT, HIS BROTHER, HIS SEVEN SONS
AND 150 TRIBALS WERE KILLED IN THE BATTLE.



ONE OF THE FIRST FREEDOM FIGHTERS
OF INDIA, BUDHU BHAGAT INSPIRED MANY
OTHERS WITH HIS BRAVERY AND SACRIFICE.
AS THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL WROTE,
'FREEDOM SHRIEKED WHEN BUDHU
BHAGAT FELL'.

TIROT SING

IN 1826, THE ANGLO-BURMESE WAR CAME TO AN END WITH THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF YANDABO.

THE TREATY OF YANDABO HAS EASED OUR ENTRY INTO THE NORTH EAST. IT WILL HELP US GET A STRONG FOOTHOLD IN ASSAM AND OTHER REGIONS.

MAY THE GREEN OF THESE HILLS MAKE OUR POCKETS GREENER WITH MONEY, SIR SCOTT*.

FOR THAT I FIRST NEED TO BUILD STRONG CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE REGION TO HAVE EASY TRANSPORT AND BETTER CONTROL.

ACCORDINGLY, SCOTT LAID DOWN A PLAN TO BUILD A ROAD FROM GUWAHATI TO SYLHET**, WHICH WOULD PASS THROUGH MEGHALAYA. HOWEVER, THAT NEEDED APPROVAL FROM THE KHASI CHIEFS.

THE NONGKHLAW REGION OF KHASI HILLS WAS RULED BY A KIND AND WISE CHIEF, U** TIROT SING.

ARE THE NEW MARKET HOURS HELPFUL FOR OUR PEOPLE?

YES SYIEM**, TRADE IS BETTER BECAUSE OF THE NEW TIMINGS.

THE BRITISH ARRANGED A MEETING WITH TIROT SING.

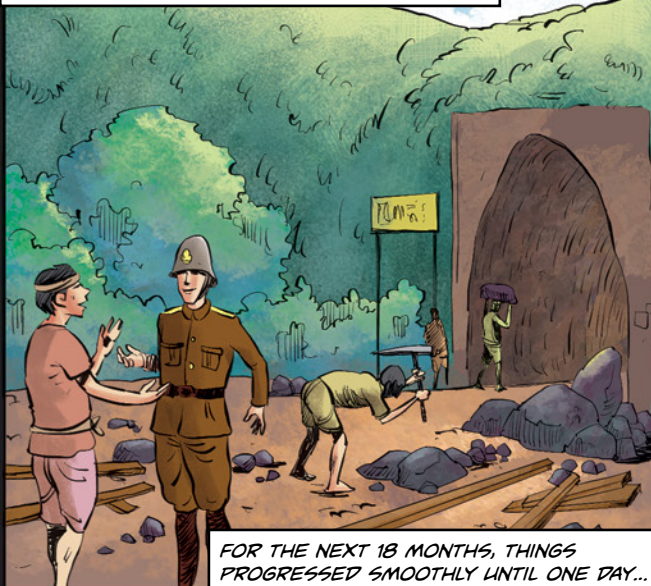
I UNDERSTAND YOUR VISION, OFFICER. BUT WHAT IS IN IT FOR MY PEOPLE?

YOUR TRIBE WILL GET FULL ACCESS TO THIS ROAD AND YOU WILL HAVE CONTROL OVER THE PASSES. TRADE WILL FLOURISH. THIS IS NOT A ROAD TO ASSAM, IT IS THE ROAD TO A BETTER LIFE FOR YOUR PEOPLE.

*DAVID SCOTT WAS THE AGENT TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE NORTH EAST FRONTIER AND COMMISSIONER OF ASSAM.
**IN PRESENT-DAY BANGLADESH

**U IS THE MASCULINE ARTICLE IN THE KHASI LANGUAGE.
**CHIEF

THE MEETING WENT ON FOR TWO DAYS. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE OTHER KHASI CHIEFS AND THE PEOPLE, TIROT SING ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL AND CONSTRUCTION WORK BEGAN.



FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS, THINGS PROGRESSED SMOOTHLY UNTIL ONE DAY...

...THEY GOT SOME TERRIFYING NEWS.



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

THE BRITISH OFFICERS PLAN TO IMPOSE HEAVY TAXES ON US AND ALSO CONQUER OUR REGION AS SOON AS THE ROAD IS MADE.

WE SHOULD REPORT IT TO OUR SYIEM IMMEDIATELY.

THAT WAS NOT ALL. TIROT SING HAD TO FACE ANOTHER THREAT FROM THE RIVAL CHIEF OF A NEIGHBOURING REGION CALLED RANEE.



I HAVE HAD ENOUGH, BALARAM SINGH RAJA. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT IN THIS REGION.

LISTEN HERE, TIROT, I'M HERE TO CLAIM MY RIGHT OVER THESE PASSES. YOU HAD BETTER NOT CROSS ME.

I WILL TALK TO THE BRITISH AND PUT AN END TO THIS NONSENSE.

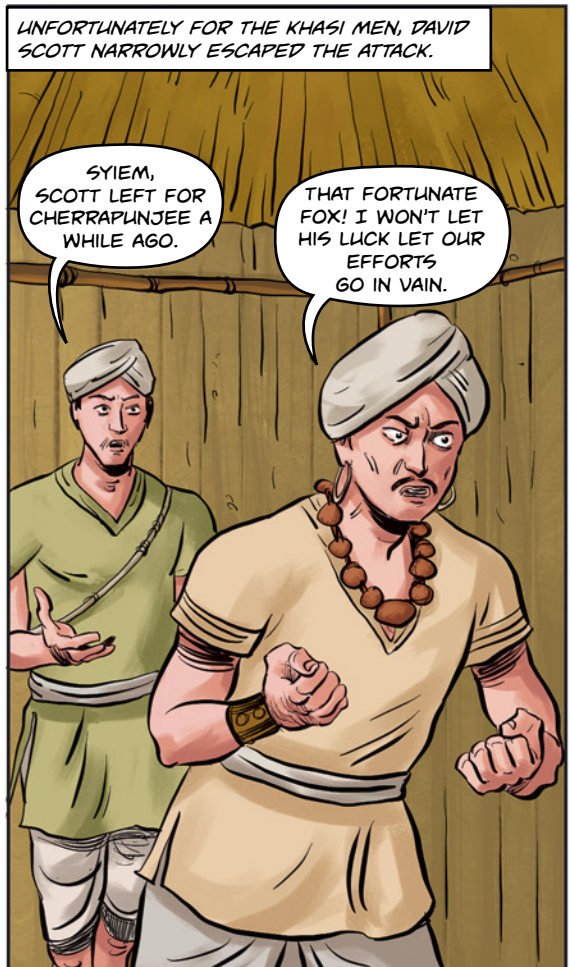
A DAY LATER, WHEN TIROT WENT TO SEEK HELP FROM SCOTT WITH A FEW OF HIS ARMED MEN —



STOP! YOU CANNOT ENTER.

I AM HERE TO MEET SIR SCOTT.

THESE ARE HIS ORDERS. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO MEET HIM.



THEY QUICKLY REVISED THEIR PLAN AND ATTACKED TWO OTHER BRITISH OFFICERS.

LT BEDINGFIELD WAS TRICKED INTO A MEETING AND KILLED.



LT BURLTON TRIED TO ESCAPE AND HEAD TO GUWAHATI BUT WAS OVERTAKEN AND ATTACKED BY THE KHASI.

THE BRITISH RETALIATED IMMEDIATELY.



THEY ALSO ATTACKED THE KHASI VILLAGES, MERCILESSLY.



IT WAS A FOUR-YEAR-LONG FIGHT. EACH TIME THE BRITISH ATTACKED, THE KHASI PUT UP A STRONG RESISTANCE AND RESORTED TO GUERRILLA WARFARE UNDER TIROT'S LEADERSHIP

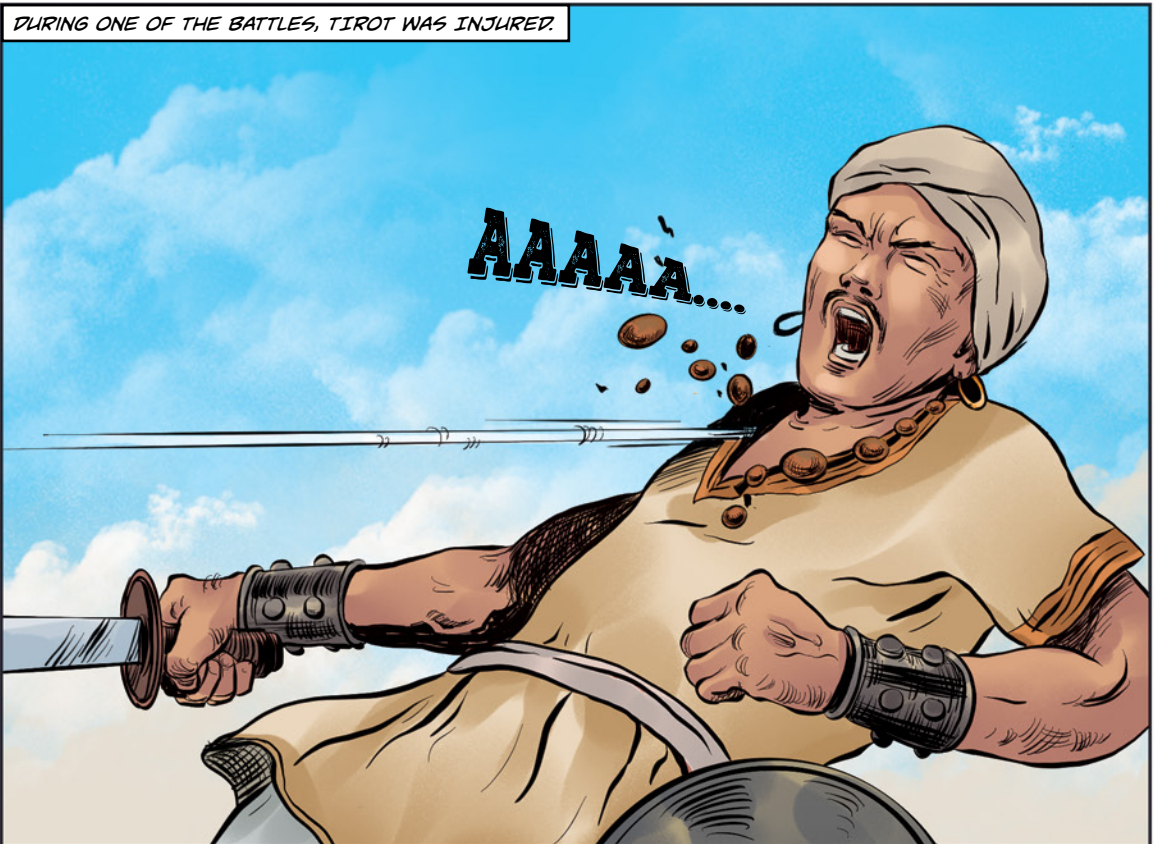


THOUGH FEARLESS, THE KHASI WERE OUTNUMBERED.

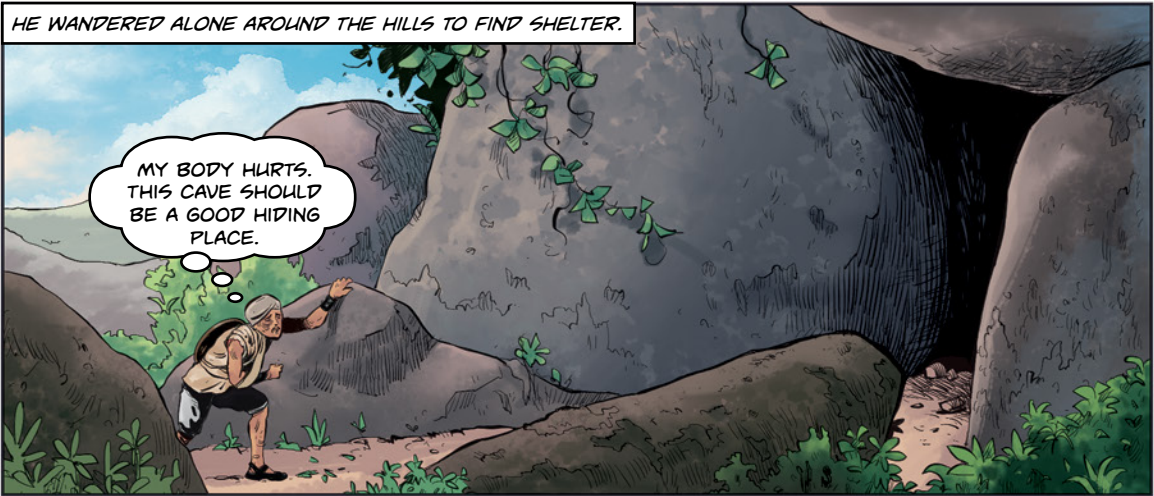


ONE AFTER THE OTHER, MANY KHASI CHIEFS SURRENDERED.

DURING ONE OF THE BATTLES, TIROT WAS INJURED.



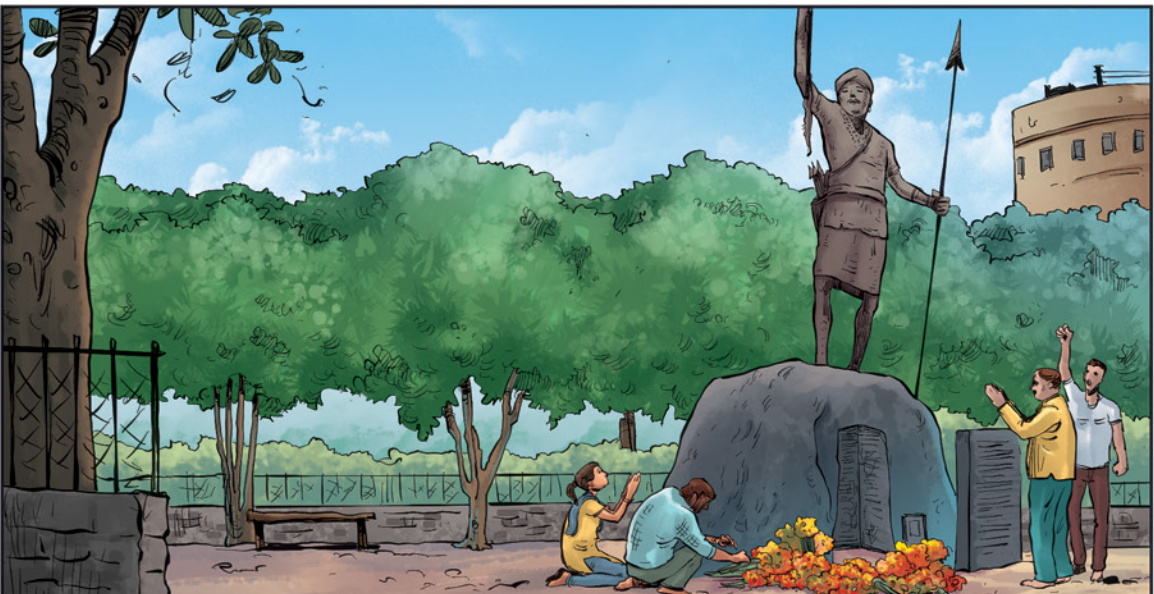
HE WANDERED ALONE AROUND THE HILLS TO FIND SHELTER.



UNFORTUNATELY, TIROT WAS BETRAYED BY A MAN FROM HIS TRIBE.



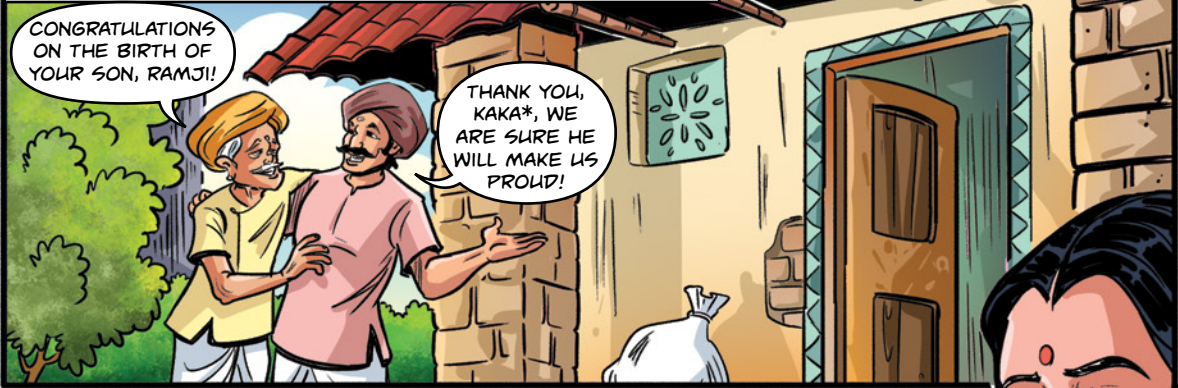
THE BRITISH ARRESTED TIROT AND SENT HIM TO DHAKA WHERE HE WAS HELD CAPTIVE.



TIROT SING BREATHED HIS LAST ON 17 JULY, 1835. IN MEMORY OF THEIR BELOVED WARRIOR CHIEF, THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA CELEBRATES THIS DAY AS TIROT SING DAY BY ENCOURAGING TALENT IN THE FIELD OF ART AND LITERATURE. THE 'TIROT SING AWARD FOR ARTS AND LITERATURE' IS A VERY PRESTIGIOUS STATE AWARD.

RAGHOJIRAO BHANGRE

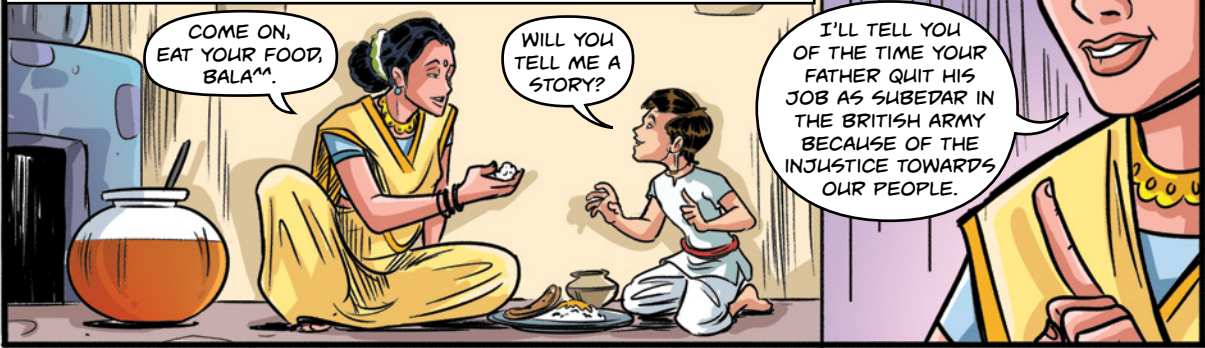
RAGHOJI BHANGRE WAS BORN ON 8 NOVEMBER, 1805, TO A FAMILY WHICH BELONGED TO THE MAHADEO KOLI TRIBE IN MAHARASHTRA.



CONGRATULATIONS ON THE BIRTH OF YOUR SON, RAMJI!

THANK YOU, KAKA*, WE ARE SURE HE WILL MAKE US PROUD!

RAGHOJI'S GRANDFATHER AND FATHER HAD OPPOSED OPPRESSIVE POWERS SUCH AS THE PESHWAS*, THE SAVKARS** AS WELL AS THE BRITISH.

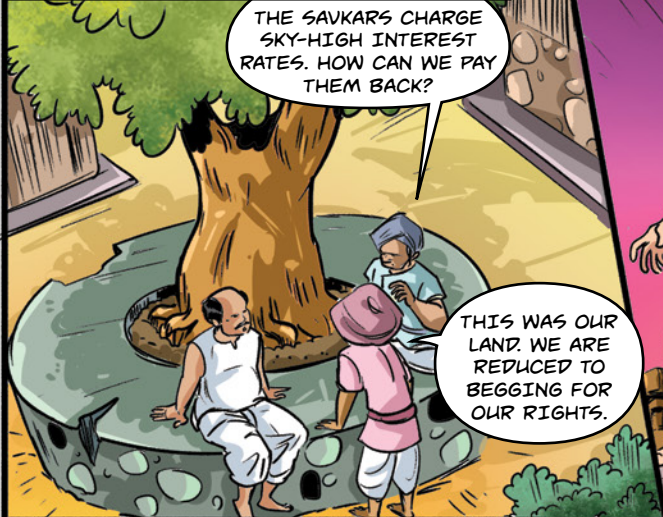


COME ON, EAT YOUR FOOD, BALA**.

WILL YOU TELL ME A STORY?

I'LL TELL YOU OF THE TIME YOUR FATHER QUIT HIS JOB AS SUBEDAR IN THE BRITISH ARMY BECAUSE OF THE INJUSTICE TOWARDS OUR PEOPLE.

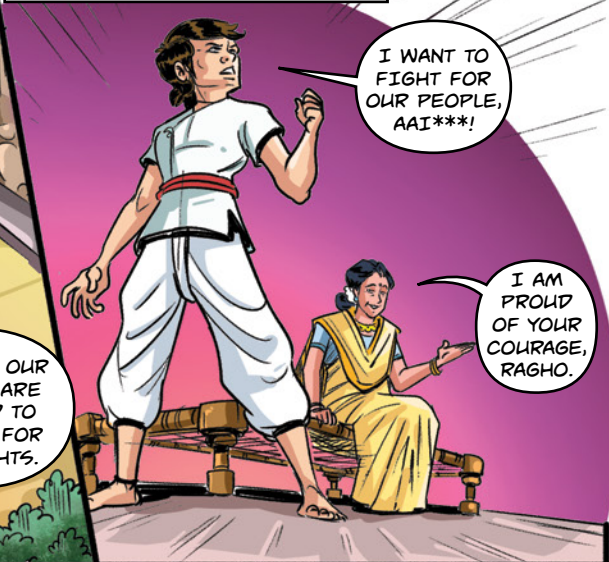
IN 1818, THE MARATHA EMPIRE WAS DEFEATED BY THE BRITISH IN THE BATTLE OF KOREGAON AND THE TRADITIONAL LAND RIGHTS OF THE MAHADEO KOLI TRIBE, TAKEN AWAY.



THE SAVKARS CHARGE SKY-HIGH INTEREST RATES. HOW CAN WE PAY THEM BACK?

THIS WAS OUR LAND. WE ARE REDUCED TO BEGGING FOR OUR RIGHTS.

RAGHOJI WAS AFFECTED BY THE INJUSTICE HE SAW AROUND HIM.



I WANT TO FIGHT FOR OUR PEOPLE, AAI***!

I AM PROUD OF YOUR COURAGE, RAGHO.

*UNCLE
*ADMINISTRATORS OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE
**MONEYLENDERS

**CHILD
***MOTHER



WHEN HE GREW UP RAGHOJI JOINED THE BRITISH ARMY BUT SOON QUIT.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU THE FIGHTING SKILLS I LEARNT DURING MY TIME IN THE ARMY. TOGETHER WE WILL FIGHT THE OPPRESSOR.

WE ARE WITH YOU, RAGHO!



BY 1828, RAGHOJI WAS LEADING REBEL GROUPS AGAINST THE SAVKARS AND THE BRITISH IN AHMEDNAGAR, PUNE, THANE AND NASHIK.

THE POLICE WILL BE HERE SOON. GET TO THE JUNGLE AND HIDE.

I CAN'T WAIT TO USE THE SAVKARS' ILL-GOTTEN GOLD TO BUY WEAPONS FOR OUR REVOLT.



THE GROUPS, HOWEVER, DID NOT RECEIVE MUCH SUPPORT FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

THE SAVKARS WILL STOP GIVING US LOANS IF RAGHOJI AND HIS MEN KEEP LOOTING THEM.

TRUE, WE NEED THE LOANS TO LOOK AFTER OUR FAMILIES. BESIDES, OUR YOUNG MEN ARE GETTING KILLED.



AS A RESULT, THE REBELS WERE BETRAYED AND THE POLICE ARRESTED MORE THAN 50 OF THEM.

SEEMS LIKE YOUR PEOPLE HAVE TURNED AGAINST YOU. IT'S NO USE RUNNING NOW!

THE OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, COMMISSIONER MACINTOSH, USED THIS DIVISION IN THE TRIBE TO THE FULLEST.

HAVE YOU GOT INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR HIDING PLACE?

NO, BUT WE KNOW THE SECRET CAVES AND TUNNELS THEY USE.

ONCE YOU ARREST THEM, YOU MUST SHOW THEM MERCY.

HOWEVER, THE BRITISH DID NOT KEEP THEIR WORD. MORE THAN A 100 KOLI MEN WERE ARRESTED AND MANY EXECUTED.

RAGHOJI AND HIS MEN WENT INTO HIDING. IN 1838, NEAR RATANGAD FORT* —

THE BRITISH NO LONGER SEARCH FOR US. IT IS TIME TO CARRY OUT A RAID.

YES, BHALU[†], WE NEED TO RESTART OUR REVOLUTION.

ON THE DAY OF THE PLAN —

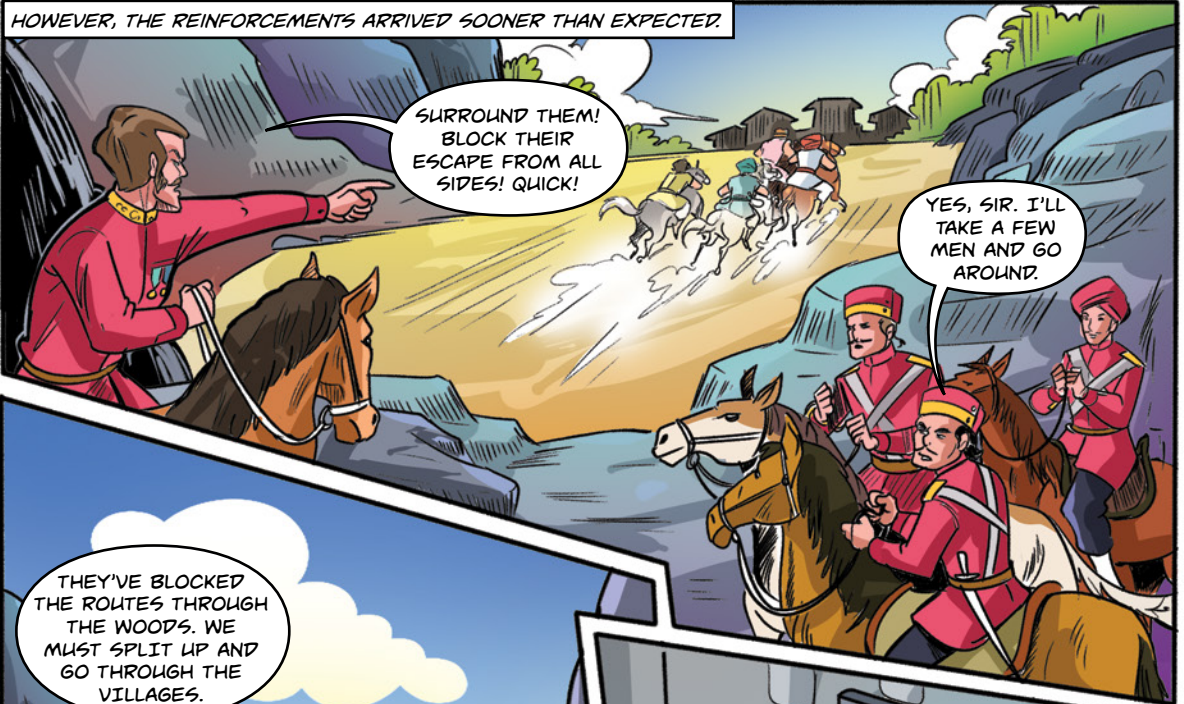
STAY RIGHT THERE! DON'T MOVE AND YOU WON'T GET HURT.

QUICK, LET'S LEAVE BY THE BACK BEFORE MORE GUARDS ARRIVE.



*A FORT NEAR PRESENT-DAY BHANDARDARA
[†]BROTHER

HOWEVER, THE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED SOONER THAN EXPECTED.



SURROUND THEM!
BLOCK THEIR
ESCAPE FROM ALL
SIDES! QUICK!

YES, SIR. I'LL
TAKE A FEW
MEN AND GO
AROUND.



THEY'VE BLOCKED
THE ROUTES THROUGH
THE WOODS. WE
MUST SPLIT UP AND
GO THROUGH THE
VILLAGES.

YES, WE'LL DO THAT,
BUT LET US TEACH THAT
MACINTOSH A LESSON
HE'LL NEVER FORGET!

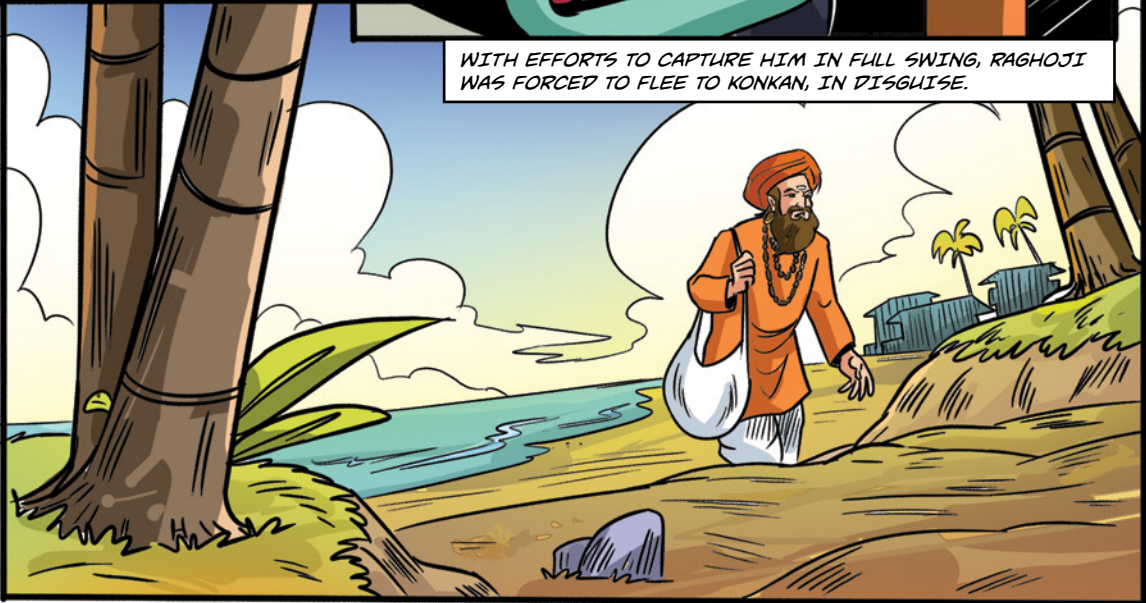
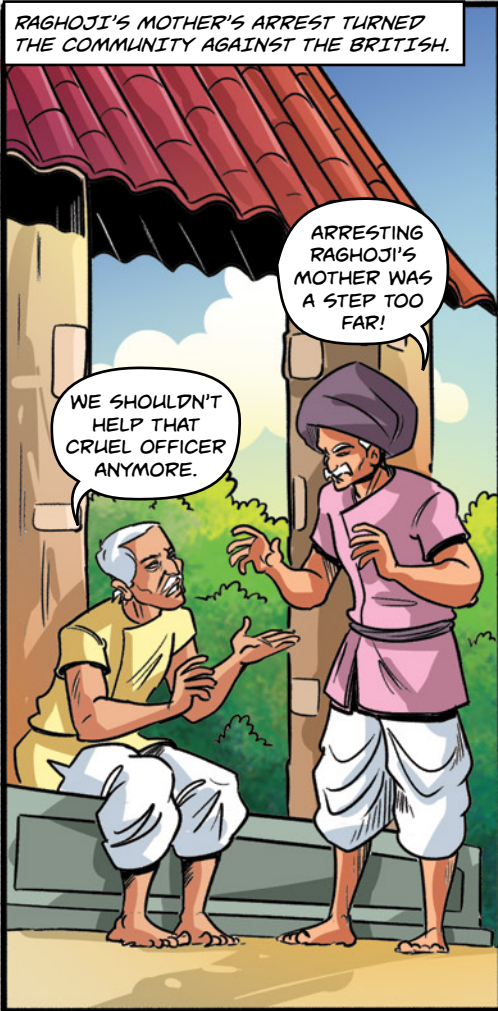
THE REBELS SPLIT UP AND ESCAPED THROUGH THREE VILLAGES, LOOTING THE SAVKARS IN ALL THREE.



THE BRITISH, IN RETALIATION,
ARRESTED INNOCENT KOLI PEOPLE,
INCLUDING RAGHOJI'S MOTHER.

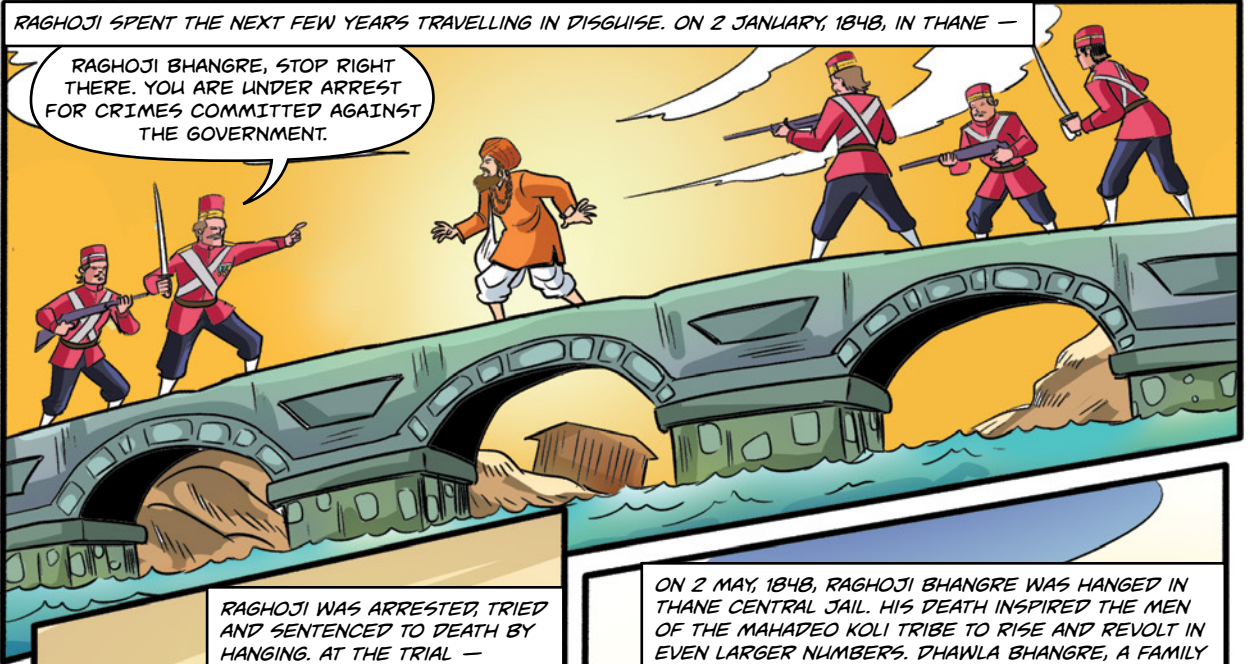
IF YOU WANT
TO GET OUT OF
THIS ROTTING
JAIL, TELL US
WHERE YOUR
SON IS!

NEVER! YOU WILL
ANSWER FOR YOUR
CRIMES AGAINST
THE INNOCENT.



RAGHOJI SPENT THE NEXT FEW YEARS TRAVELLING IN DISGUISE. ON 2 JANUARY, 1848, IN THANE —

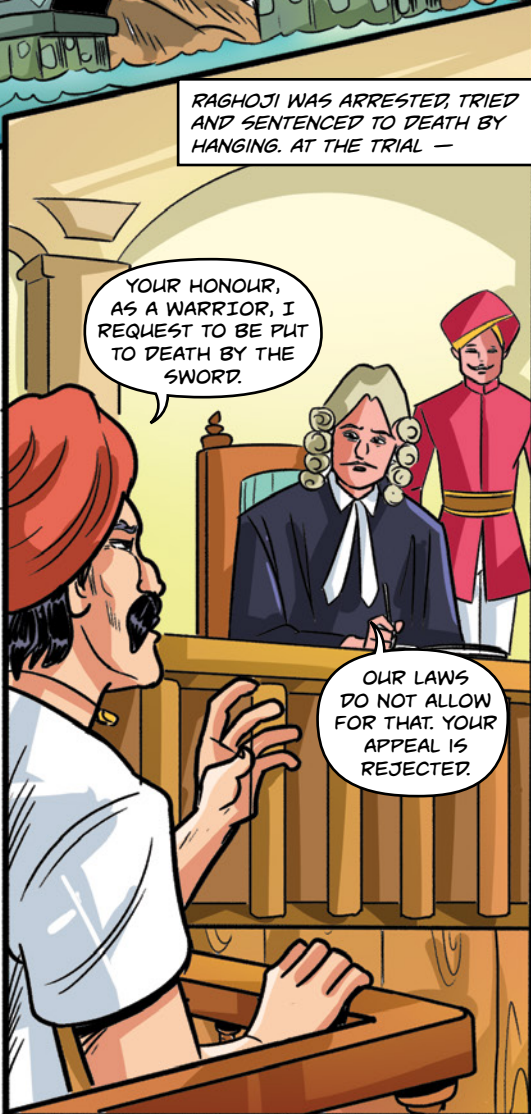
RAGHOJI BHANGRE, STOP RIGHT THERE. YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.



RAGHOJI WAS ARRESTED, TRIED AND SENTENCED TO DEATH BY HANGING. AT THE TRIAL —

YOUR HONOUR, AS A WARRIOR, I REQUEST TO BE PUT TO DEATH BY THE SWORD.

OUR LAWS DO NOT ALLOW FOR THAT. YOUR APPEAL IS REJECTED.

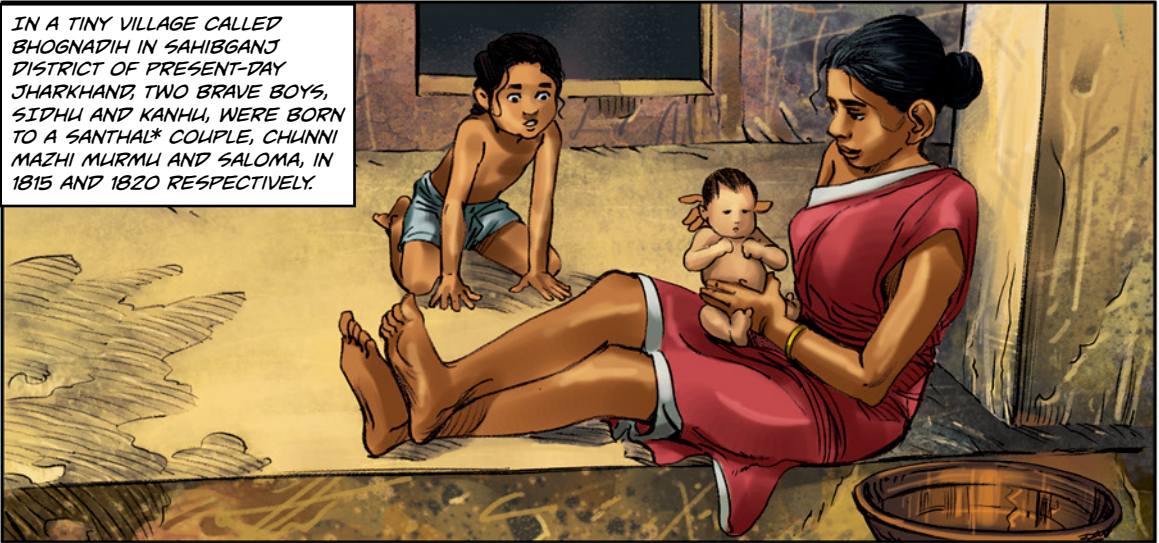


ON 2 MAY, 1848, RAGHOJI BHANGRE WAS HANGED IN THANE CENTRAL JAIL. HIS DEATH INSPIRED THE MEN OF THE MAHADEO KOLI TRIBE TO RISE AND REVOLT IN EVEN LARGER NUMBERS. DHAWLA BHANGRE, A FAMILY MEMBER, TOOK UP THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP AND CONTINUED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH.



SIDHU AND KANHU MURMU

IN A TINY VILLAGE CALLED BHOGNADIH IN SAHIBGANJ DISTRICT OF PRESENT-DAY JHARKHAND, TWO BRAVE BOYS, SIDHU AND KANHU, WERE BORN TO A SANTHAL* COUPLE, CHUNNI MAZHI MURMU AND SALOMA, IN 1815 AND 1820 RESPECTIVELY.



THE SANTHAL WERE A PEACE-LOVING, FARMING COMMUNITY WHO LIVED IN THE DAMINI-KOH REGION — A THICKLY-FORRESTED AREA SURROUNDED BY THE RAJMAHAL HILLS.

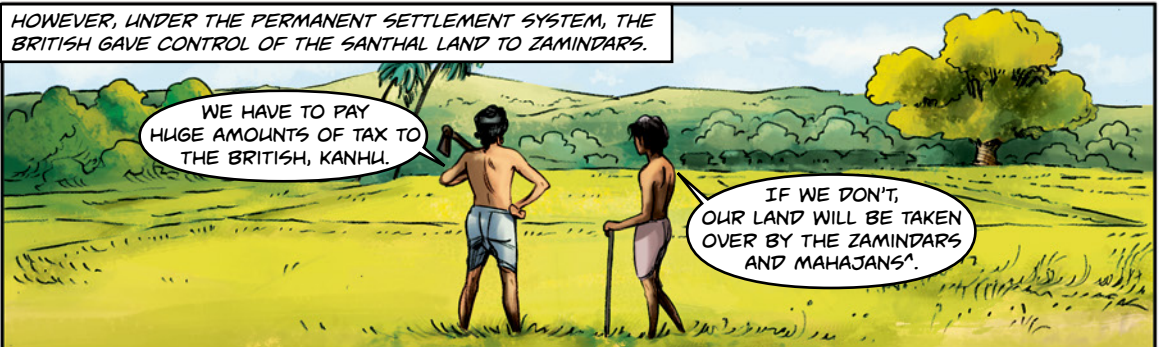


CHUNNI AND SALOMA HAD TWO MORE SONS AND TWO DAUGHTERS.

TIME PASSED.



HOWEVER, UNDER THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT SYSTEM, THE BRITISH GAVE CONTROL OF THE SANTHAL LAND TO ZAMINDARS.



*THE SANTHAL ARE ONE OF THE LARGEST TRIBES OF INDIA RESIDING IN THE EAST INDIAN STATES OF WEST BENGAL, BIHAR, ODISHA, JHARKHAND AND ASSAM.

*MONEY LENDERS

BEFORE LONG —



TAKE HALF THEIR HARVEST AND THEIR CATTLE. THEY HAVE NO MONEY TO PAY TAX.

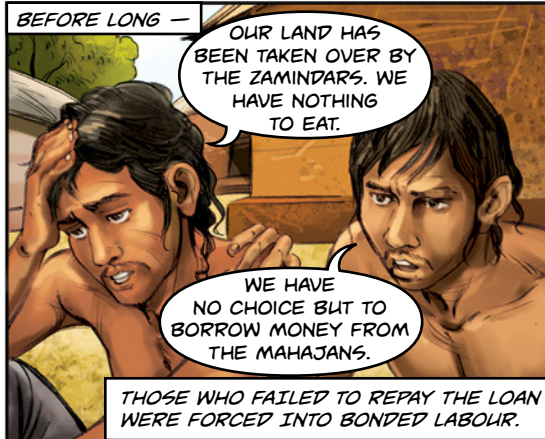
MAHAJAN, DON'T DO THAT. PLEASE!

WHEN SIDHU TRIED SELLING THE REMAINING HARVEST FOR SOME MONEY —



HERE, TAKE THESE TWO COINS FOR YOUR PADDY AND DON'T COME BACK AGAIN.

BEFORE LONG —



OUR LAND HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE ZAMINDARS. WE HAVE NOTHING TO EAT.

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BORROW MONEY FROM THE MAHAJANS.

THOSE WHO FAILED TO REPAY THE LOAN WERE FORCED INTO BONDED LABOUR.

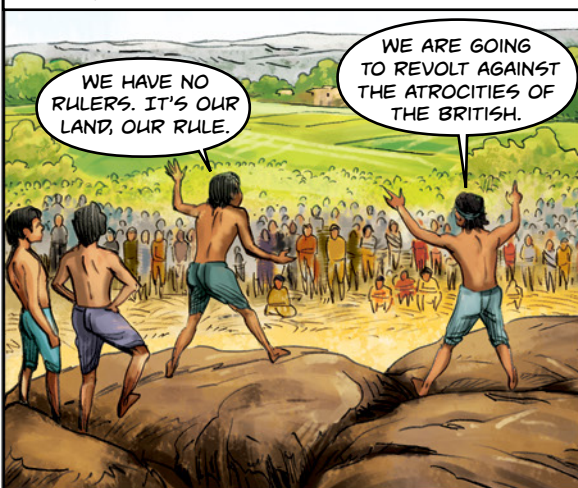
SIDHU AND THE OTHER SANTHAL WERE ALSO FORCED TO WORK AS LABOURERS. ONE DAY —



WE ARE BEING EXPLOITED. WE CAN'T BE QUIET ANY LONGER.

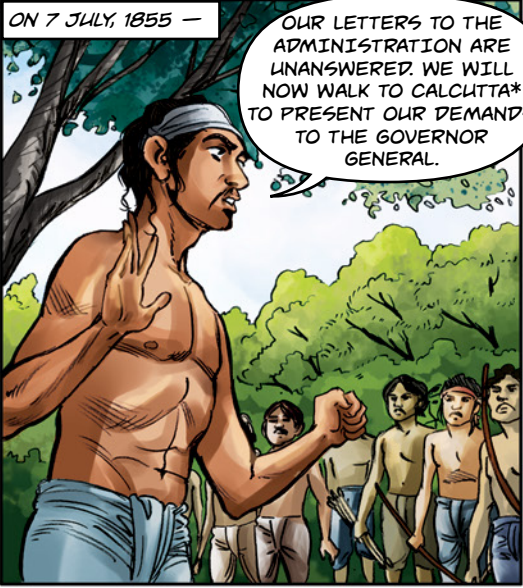
YES, LET'S CALL ALL OUR SANTHAL BROTHERS.

ON 30 JUNE, 1855, OVER 10,000 SANTHAL GATHERED IN A FIELD IN BHOGNADIH, LED BY SIDHU, KANHU AND THEIR TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS.

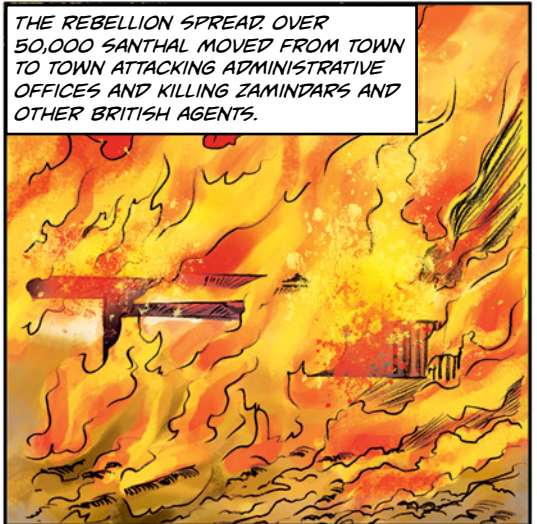


WE HAVE NO RULERS. IT'S OUR LAND, OUR RULE.

WE ARE GOING TO REVOLT AGAINST THE ATROCITIES OF THE BRITISH.



THE SANTHAL RETALIATED AND KILLED FIVE MAHAJANS AND THE POLICE INSPECTOR, MAHESH LAL DATTA.



ON 16 JULY, 1855, MAJOR F. W. BURROUGHS LED 400 TROOPS TO CRUSH THE REBELLION AT PEERPAITI.



*NOW KOLKATA

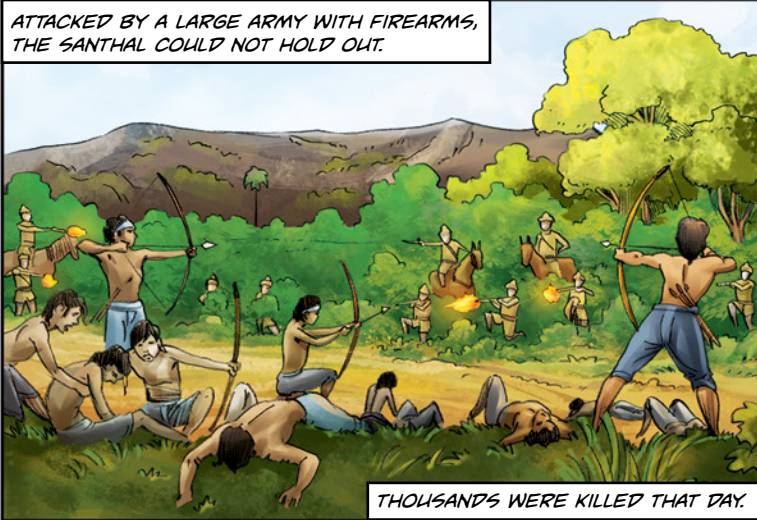
*A MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION IN THE SANTHALI LANGUAGE

NEXT, BRIGADIER GENERAL LLOYD WAS ASKED TO SUPPRESS THE REBELLION.

MOBILISE THE TROOPS. TRAMPLE THESE BARBARIANS INTO THE GROUND!



ATTACKED BY A LARGE ARMY WITH FIREARMS, THE SANTHAL COULD NOT HOLD OUT.



THOUSANDS WERE KILLED THAT DAY.

THOUGH SIDHU AND KANHU WERE INJURED IN THE ATTACKS, THEY DID NOT LOSE HEART.



WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE OUR FIGHT. REMEMBER, TILL OUR LAST BREATH.

TO FURTHER CRUSH THE SANTHAL, IN 1856, BRITISH OFFICER SIR MARTIN BUILT A 30-FOOT TOWER IN PAKUR VILLAGE, CALLED THE MORTELLA TOWER. WHEN THE SANTHAL WARRIORS REACHED PAKUR —



FIRE!

AAH!

WE ARE EASY TARGETS!

UHH!

IN THE MANY ATTACKS THAT FOLLOWED, OVER 15,000 SANTHAL WERE KILLED BUT SIDHU AND KANHU CONTINUED THEIR FIGHT. THEN, ONE DAY IN BARHAIIT —



SOON AFTER, IN UPARBANDA, WEST BENGAL —



BETRAYED BY ONE OF HIS OWN, KANHU TOO WAS CAPTURED.

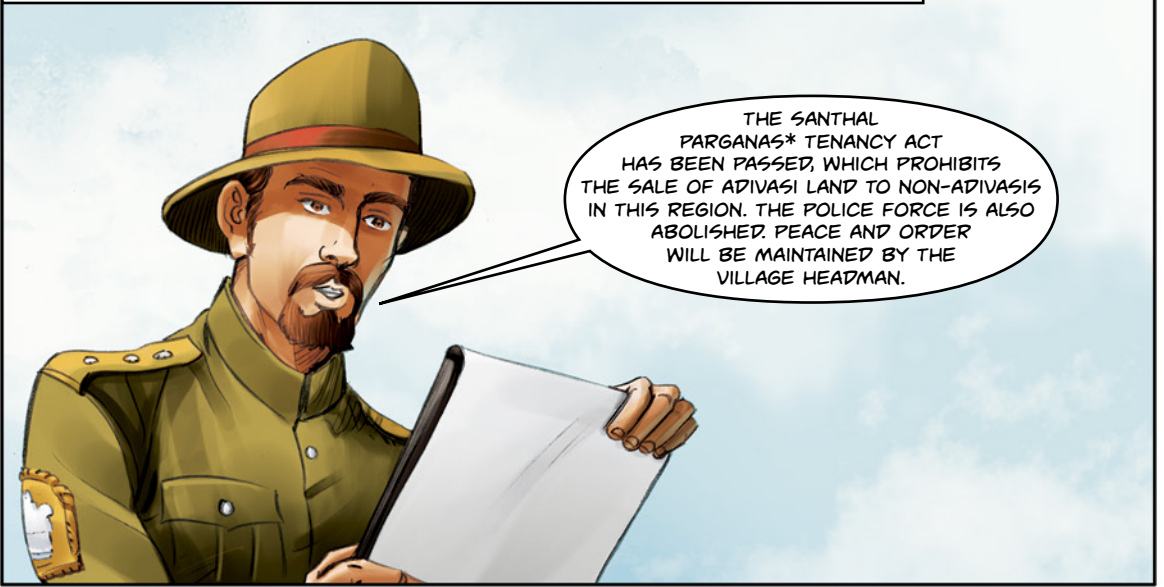


CONDEMNED TO DEATH, SIDHU MURMU WAS HANGED FROM A BANYAN TREE IN PANCHKHATIA...



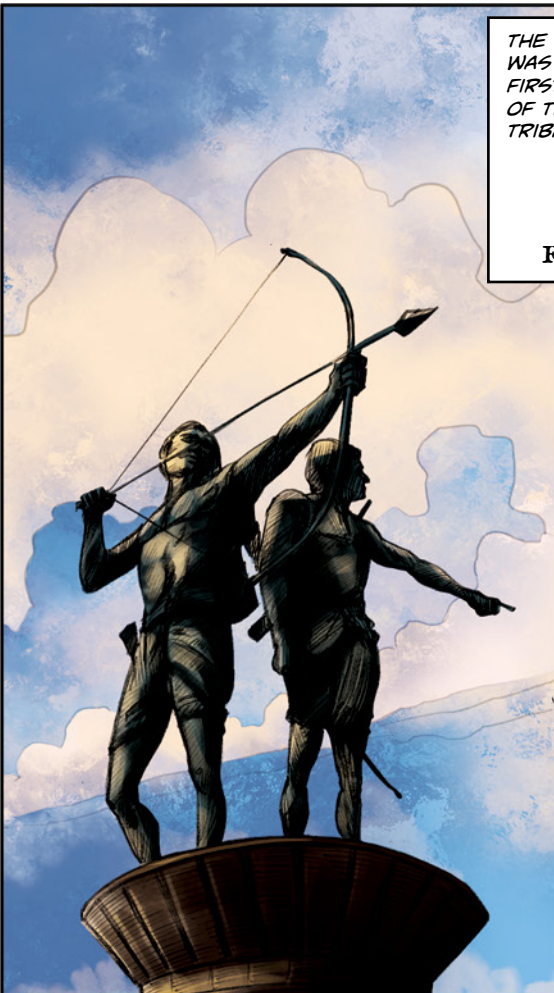
...AND KANHU WAS HANGED IN BHOGNADIH.

HOWEVER, THE SACRIFICE OF THE SANTHAL BROTHERS DID NOT GO IN VAIN. IN 1876 —



THE SANTHAL HUL OF 1855-56, AS IT CAME TO BE CALLED, WAS A MOMENTOUS EVENT AS IT MARKED ONE OF THE FIRST FREEDOM MOVEMENTS OF INDIA. THE SACRIFICE OF THE MURMU BROTHERS IS STILL REMEMBERED BY THE TRIBALS WHO HAVE IMMORTALISED IT IN A SONG:

Sido why are you bathed in blood?
Kanhu why do you cry Hul, Hul?
For our people we have bathed in blood,
For the trader thieves have robbed us of our land.



IN HONOUR OF SIDHU AND KANHU MURMU, THE SIDHU KANHU UNIVERSITY WAS FOUNDED ON 10 JANUARY, 1992. THE INDIAN POST ALSO ISSUED A RS 4 STAMP, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE MURMU BROTHERS, IN 2002.



*SANTHAL PARGANA WAS CREATED AS A SEPARATE DISTRICT IN 1855, AS A RESULT OF THE REBELLION, BY MERGING PORTIONS OF BHAGALPUR (PRESENTLY IN BIHAR) AND BIRBHUM (PRESENTLY IN WEST BENGAL) DISTRICTS.

RENDO MAJHI

DEEP IN THE HILLY FORESTS OF KALAHANDI*, LIVED A NATURE-LOVING TRIBE CALLED THE KHONDS.



IN THE HOME OF ONE SUCH KHOND COUPLE, DABISA MAJHI AND JAGERI, IN THE URLADANI VILLAGE OF KALAHANDI, A LITTLE BOY WAS BORN.



IN 1853, THE KALAHANDI REGION CAME UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY.



*IN PRESENT-DAY ODISHA



DON'T DISRESPECT OUR MOTHER EARTH!

BEFORE THE SITUATION GOT OUT OF CONTROL, THE ZAMINDAR TOOK THE BRITISH AGENT AWAY.



A FEW WEEKS LATER —

TAKE AWAY THEIR CROPS, CATTLE AND ALL THEIR BELONGINGS.

STOP! YOU CANNOT DO THIS!

BUT RENDO'S PROTESTS WENT UNHEARD.

IN LURLADANI, THE MERIAH FESTIVAL* WAS APPROACHING AND THE KHONDS GOT BUSY WITH PREPARATIONS. BUT —



STOP ALL THIS. DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THE COMPANY HAS BANNED YOUR FESTIVAL?

YOUR SUPERSTITIONS ARE ABSURD.

BUT THIS IS OUR TRADITION!

THE OFFICER WAS THE BRITISH AGENT, LT A.C. MACNEIL, SPECIALLY APPOINTED TO STOP THE MERIAH PRACTICE.

*THE MERIAH FESTIVAL WAS A BI-ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE KHONDS DEDICATED TO MOTHER EARTH TO ENSURE A GOOD HARVEST. IN THOSE TIMES, IT INVOLVED HUMAN SACRIFICE, A PRACTICE WHICH WAS LATER BANNED.

RENDO COULD TAKE IT NO LONGER. ONE LATE EVENING —



LET US KHONDS UNITE TO WIPE OUT THESE OUTSIDE FORCES. NO ONE CAN TELL US HOW TO LIVE.

YOU ARE OUR CHIEF. LEAD US IN THE REVOLT AND WE WILL SPARE NO ONE!

THE NEXT DAY —



CHARGE!

BEFORE THE SOLDIER'S COULD PICK UP THEIR GUNS —



ATTACK AND RETREAT TO THE FORESTS.

MOST OF RENDO'S MEN MANAGED TO ESCAPE UNSCATHED.

WHenever the British soldiers tried to enter the forest areas, they were attacked by the Khonds.



OUR NEXT ATTACK WILL BE ON THE BRITISH CAMP SET UP IN THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE.

THE REPEATED ATTACKS SEVERELY DAMAGED THE BRITISH FORCES.

SOON, THE DAY OF THE MERIAH FESTIVAL DAWNED BRIGHT AND CLEAR.



BEAT THE DRUMS. LET THE CELEBRATIONS BEGIN.

HAIL MOTHER EARTH!

DON'T YOU DARE INTERFERE IN OUR CUSTOMS.

BUT BEFORE THE RITUAL COULD BEGIN —



STOP THIS NONSENSE!



ARREST HIM!

RENDO AND HIS SON, PALASSO MAJHI, WERE ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO RUSSELKONDA JAIL.



ROT HERE TILL YOU DIE!

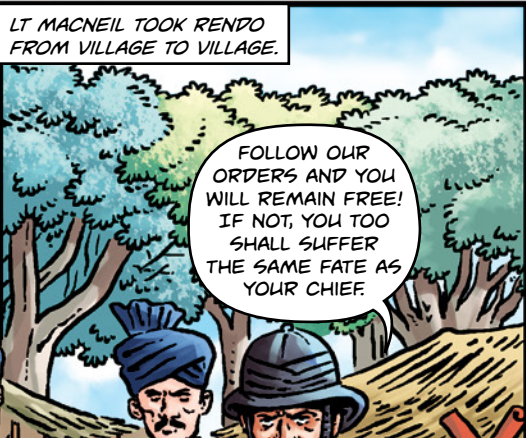
OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, ATTACKS BY OTHER KHOND LEADERS CONTINUED.



I HAVE AN IDEA ON HOW TO QUELL THE ATTACKS AND WOUND THEIR PRIDE!



TIE HIM IN CHAINS AND BRING HIM OUT!



LT MACNEIL TOOK RENDO FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE.

FOLLOW OUR ORDERS AND YOU WILL REMAIN FREE! IF NOT, YOU TOO SHALL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS YOUR CHIEF.



ALL THEY CAN DO IS KILL US! THEY CAN'T MAKE US SURRENDER.

BE QUIET, YOU FOOL!



BUT MACNEIL'S TACTIC MISFIRED. CHAKRA BISOI, ANOTHER KHOND LEADER, GATHERED THE TRIBES.

THIS HUMILIATION SHOULD NOT GO UNPUNISHED.

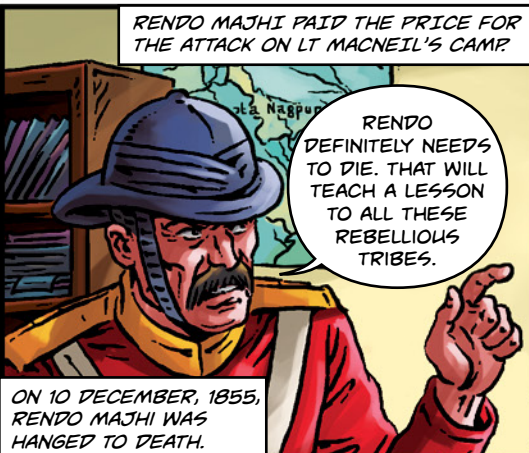


LET US, KUTIA KHONDS AND BORIKIYA KHONDS, FIGHT TOGETHER TO AVENGE THE INSULT TO OUR LEADER.

THE NEXT DAY —

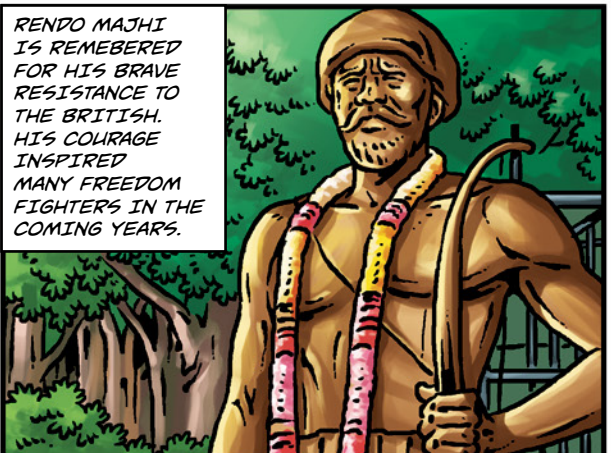


LT MACNEIL ESCAPED WITH THE HELP OF THE KHOND MAHAL TAHSILDAR*, DINABANDHU PATNAIK.



RENDO MAJHI PAID THE PRICE FOR THE ATTACK ON LT MACNEIL'S CAMP

ON 10 DECEMBER, 1855, RENDO MAJHI WAS HANGED TO DEATH.



RENDO MAJHI IS REMEMBERED FOR HIS BRAVE RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH. HIS COURAGE INSPIRED MANY FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN THE COMING YEARS.

*REVENUE OFFICER

CHAKRA BISOI

CHAKRA BISOI BECAME THE LEADER OF THE KHOND TRIBE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS UNCLE, DORA BISOI. DORA HAD BEEN PUT IN PRISON BY THE BRITISH AND HAD DIED THERE.

I WILL AVENGE MY UNCLE'S DEATH. I WILL CONTINUE HIS STRUGGLE AND NOT LET THE BRITISH REST IN PEACE.

THE KHONDS BELONG TO GHUMUSAR IN ODISHA.

DORA BISOI HAD BEEN IMPRISONED BECAUSE HE HAD LED A REBELLION AGAINST THE BRITISH.

THEY TAX US MERCILESSLY. THEY TRY TO STOP OUR RELIGIOUS CUSTOM OF MERIAH. THEY HAVE DESTROYED THE BHANJA RULERS OF GHUMUSAR.

DORA BISOI HAD BEEN A GOOD WRESTLER AND SWORDFIGHTER. THE RULER OF GHUMUSAR HAD MADE HIM COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF HIS ARMY.

RETREAT! THEY ARE ATTACKING FROM ALL SIDES.

RUN! DON'T DARE TO SHOW YOUR FACES HERE AGAIN.

AFTER MANY SUCH CONFLICTS, THE BRITISH, WHO HAD THE STRONGER FORCE, FINALLY RESORTED TO ANNOUNCING A CASH PRIZE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT DORA. AT THAT TIME, DORA HAD SOUGHT PROTECTION FROM RAJA SOMNATH SINGH OF ANGUL BUT —

YOUR MAJESTY, IF YOU GO AGAINST THE CROWN*, YOU WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.

I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. I WILL HAVE TO GIVE DORA UP.

DORA WAS IMPRISONED AND MANY OF HIS COMPANIONS WERE KILLED. HE DIED IN OOTY PRISON IN 1846.

*REFERS TO THE BRITISH MONARCH

DORA'S NEPHEW, CHAKRA BISOI, WAS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BRITISH. IN FEBRUARY 1846 —

THE MERIAH AGENT, MACPHERSON, HAS MADE A GREAT MISTAKE BY TAKING AWAY OUR MERIAH. HE HAS ALSO ARRESTED BIRA, OUR BROTHER NABAGHANA KHAMRO'S* SON. LET US GO AND GET BACK BOTH.

YES, LET US!

MERIAH WERE PEOPLE BOUGHT, OR KIDNAPPED, TO BE SACRIFICED. THE MERIAH AGENT HAD BEEN APPOINTED BY THE BRITISH TO RESCUE THEM.

CHAKRA BISOI AND HIS MEN ATTACKED S.C. MACPHERSON'S CAMP.

TELL YOUR MEN TO RELEASE BIRA KHAMRO AND THE MERIAH TO US OR YOU WILL ALL BE KILLED.

DO AS THEY SAY.

ENRAGED BY THE ACT, MACPHERSON WAITED FOR THE MONSOONS TO BE OVER AND THEN MARCHED TO THE KHOND AREAS, SETTING FIRE TO VILLAGES.

RUN!

AFTER THE ATTACK, MORE KHOND'S JOINED CHAKRA BISOI. THIS ALARMED THE BRITISH AND THEY SENT MAJOR GENERAL DYCE TO QUELL THE UPRISING.

*NABAGHANA KHAMRO WAS AN ALLY.



WE NEED MORE ARMS, ATUNG*. YOU MUST GO TO THE RAJA OF ANGLUL AND ASK FOR HELP.

THAT IS A GOOD MOVE, UNCLE.

ATUNG TOOK CHAKRA BISOI'S OFFER TO THE RAJA.

MY UNCLE PROMISES TO SUPPORT YOU IN ANY BATTLE WITH THE BRITISH, IF YOU GIVE US ARMS.

I WILL HELP YOU.

DESPITE THE KHONDS RECEIVING THE RAJA'S HELP, DYCE MANAGED TO SUPPRESS THEM. HE ALSO SENT A REPORT REGARDING MACPHERSON TO THE GOVERNMENT.

MacPherson's methods are violent. Burning villages and killing people will not persuade the Khonds to give up human sacrifice.

MACPHERSON WAS REPLACED IN APRIL 1847, BY COLONEL CAMPBELL AS THE NEW MERIAH AGENT.

TOUGH JOB. I WISH YOU THE VERY BEST.

I DO NOT WANT TO FIGHT THE KHONDS. I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO THEM AND CONVINCE THEM TO RELEASE THE MERIAH.

*CHAKRA BISOI'S NEPHEW

AS A RESULT OF THE TALKS, MANY OF THE KHONDS AGREED TO GIVE UP THE PRACTICE OF HUMAN SACRIFICE. NABAGHANA KHAMRO WAS PARDONED BUT CHAKRA BISOI REFUSED TO COMPROMISE AND CONTINUED TO RESIST.

I CANNOT BOW DOWN IN FRONT OF THE FOREIGNERS. I WILL FIGHT THEM.

THEN WE TAKE ANGLU AND REMOVE THAT SUPPORT.

I HAVE INFORMATION THAT RAJA SOMNATH SINGH OF ANGLU IS SUPPORTING CHAKRA BISOI.

THE BRITISH ARMY WAS SENT TO ANGLU. THE KING WAS DEPOSED AND ANGLU CAME DIRECTLY UNDER BRITISH RULE.

CHAKRA BISOI BECAME A FUGITIVE IN HIS OWN LAND...

THE BRITISH HUNT ME. I WILL BRING TROUBLE TO YOUR VILLAGE IF YOU HIDE ME.

WE WILL GIVE YOU SHELTER TILL WE CAN. THE KHONDS WILL NEVER BETRAY YOU.

...BUT HE STILL HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE.

LORD DALHOUSIE*, THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA, VOWED THAT CHAKRA WOULD BE APPREHENDED, BUT IT WAS LIKE CHASING A SHADOW.

THE QUEEN OF SONEPUR AND THE KING OF BALU ARE BOTH AIDING THAT REBEL. SEND THEM LETTERS WARNING THEM TO HAND HIM OVER OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.



IN SONEPUR —

PLEASE GIVE YOURSELF UP, CHAKRA. YOU WILL BE PARDONED AND YOU CAN LEAD A PEACEFUL LIFE.

HOW CAN I LIVE IN PEACE WHILE WE ARE RULED BY FOREIGNERS? NO, MY QUEEN, I WILL NOT SURRENDER.



CHAKRA BISOI'S LIFE THEREAFTER WAS SPENT ON THE RUN FROM THE BRITISH. THE FIRE OF REBELLION NEVER DIED IN HIS HEART EVEN THOUGH HE WAS FORCED TO CHANGE MULTIPLE LOCATIONS.



*LORD DALHOUSIE BANNED FEMALE INFANTICIDE IN THE WHOLE OF INDIA AND HUMAN SACRIFICE IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, ODISHA AND MAHARASHTRA.

AT ONE POINT, HE GAVE HIS SUPPORT TO A YOUNG BOY CALLED PITAMBAR BHANJ, WHO THE KHONDS BELIEVED TO BE THE RAJA OF GHUMUSAR. BUT —

PITAMBAR BHANJ HAS AGREED TO TAKE A PENSION FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. HE SAYS HE IS TIRED OF LIVING IN THE FOREST.

TRAITOR! THERE IS NO HOPE FOR GHUMUSAR NOW.

THE LAST ANYONE HEARD OF CHAKRA BISOI WAS WHEN HE CROSSED OVER TO PATNA STATE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT HOUNDED FROM THERE, HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE FORESTS OF CENTRAL INDIA AND DIED BEFORE THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1857.

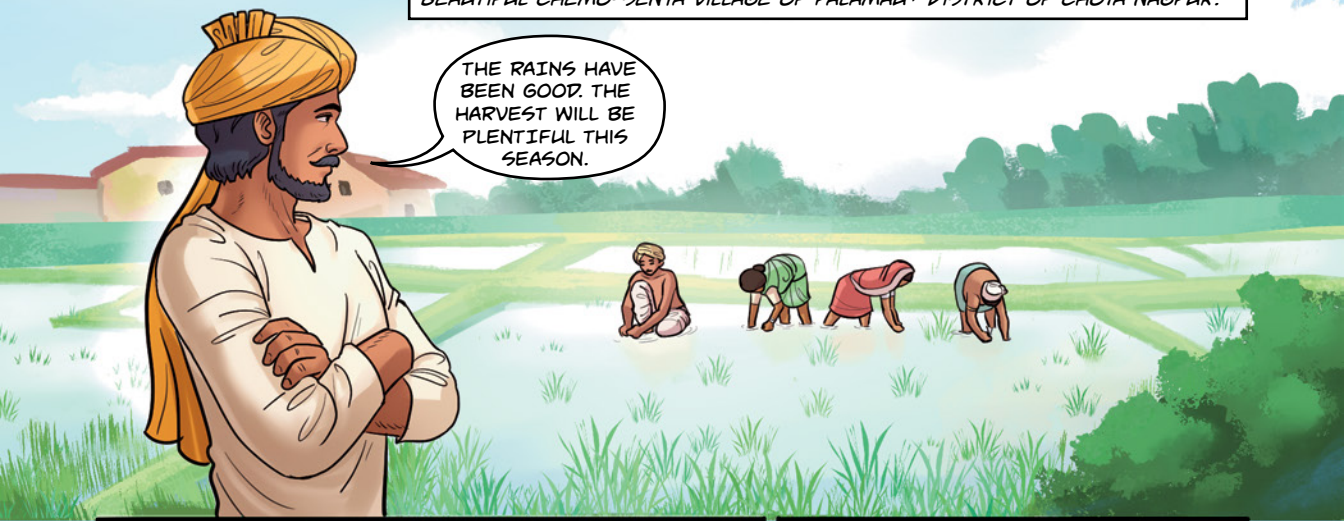


TO HONOUR HIS MEMORY, AND CELEBRATE AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV, THE INDIAN POSTAL SERVICES RELEASED A SPECIAL COVER IN 2021.



NILAMBAR AND PITAMBAR

IN THE 1820'S, THERE LIVED A MAN CALLED CHEMU SINGH, WHO BELONGED TO THE BHOGTA CLAN OF THE KHARWAR TRIBE. THE FARMING TRIBE LIVED IN THE BEAUTIFUL CHEMO-SENYA VILLAGE OF PALAMAU* DISTRICT OF CHOTA NAGPUR.



THE RAINS HAVE BEEN GOOD. THE HARVEST WILL BE PLENTIFUL THIS SEASON.

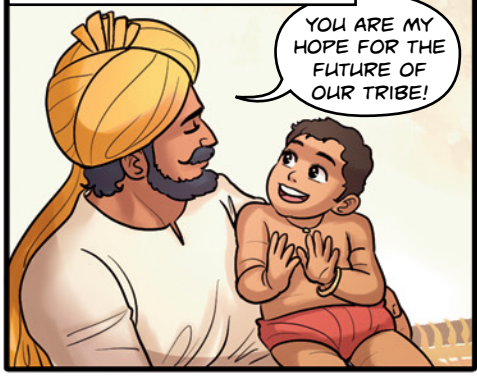
CHEMU WAS A JAGIRDAR**, WHO HAD TO REPORT TO OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY.



THE REVENUE COLLECTED IS NOT ENOUGH. YOU HAVE TO GET MORE.

THIS IS ALL THE FARMERS CAN AFFORD. I CAN'T FORCE THEM TO PART WITH MORE.

LIFE WENT ON. MEANWHILE, A BEAUTIFUL BOY, NILAMBAR, WAS BORN TO CHEMU AND HIS WIFE.



YOU ARE MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR TRIBE!

GROWING UP, NILAMBAR WAS A CONSTANT WITNESS TO BRITISH ATROCITIES.



YOU HAVE NO OPTION. GET THE MONEY OWED BY YOUR PEOPLE OR LOSE THE TWO JAGIRS** WE HAVE GRANTED YOU.

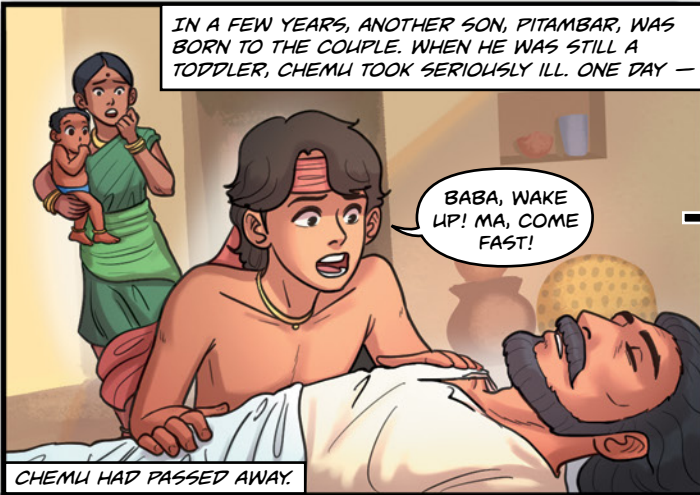


WHY ARE THOSE MEN SO MEAN? WHY CAN'T WE FIGHT BACK?

ONE DAY WE WILL!

*NOW PALAMU DISTRICT

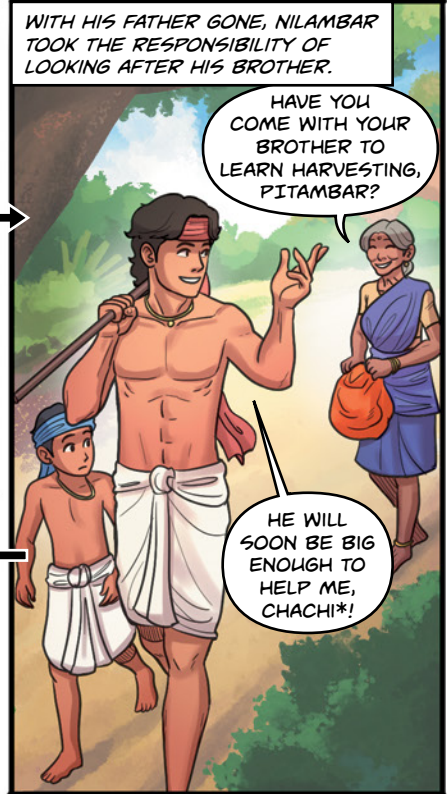
*A PERSON WHO OWNS LAND OR ESTATE
**AN ESTATE OR LAND



IN A FEW YEARS, ANOTHER SON, PITAMBAR, WAS BORN TO THE COUPLE. WHEN HE WAS STILL A TODDLER, CHEMU TOOK SERIOUSLY ILL. ONE DAY —

BABA, WAKE UP! MA, COME FAST!

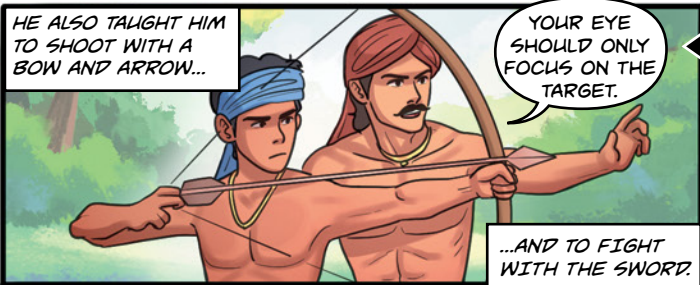
CHEMU HAD PASSED AWAY.



WITH HIS FATHER GONE, NILAMBAR TOOK THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOOKING AFTER HIS BROTHER.

HAVE YOU COME WITH YOUR BROTHER TO LEARN HARVESTING, PITAMBAR?

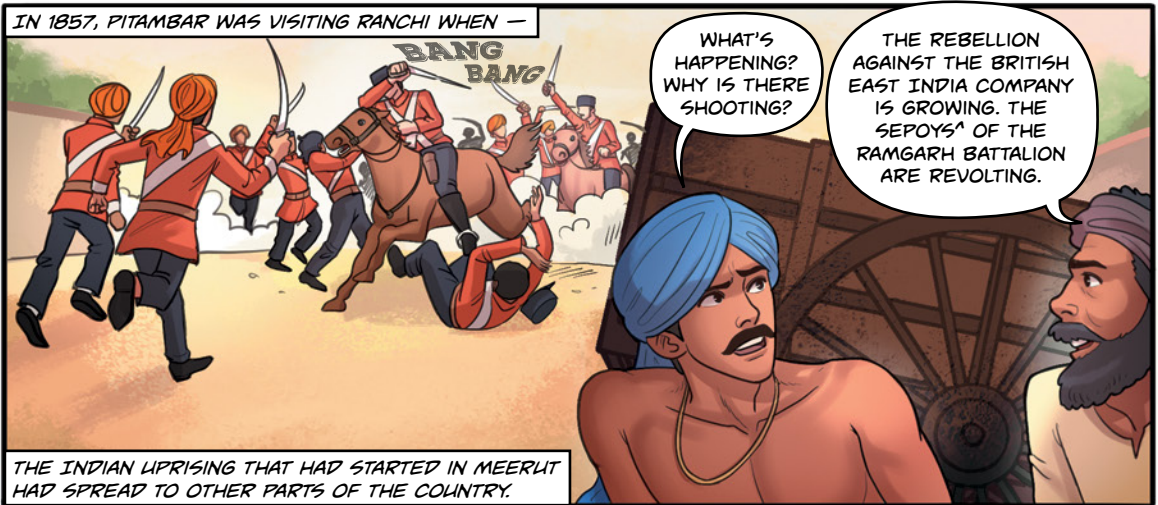
HE WILL SOON BE BIG ENOUGH TO HELP ME, CHACHI*!



HE ALSO TAUGHT HIM TO SHOOT WITH A BOW AND ARROW...

YOUR EYE SHOULD ONLY FOCUS ON THE TARGET.

...AND TO FIGHT WITH THE SWORD



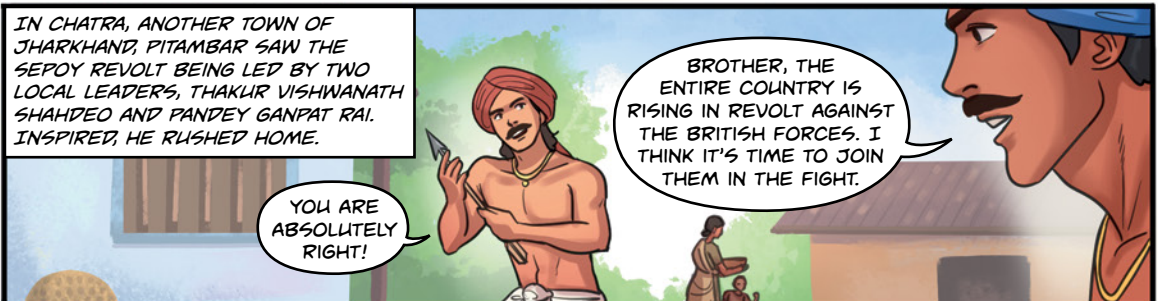
IN 1857, PITAMBAR WAS VISITING RANCHI WHEN —

BANG BANG

WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHY IS THERE SHOOTING?

THE REBELLION AGAINST THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY IS GROWING. THE SEPOYS* OF THE RAMGARH BATTALION ARE REVOLTING.

THE INDIAN UPRISING THAT HAD STARTED IN MEERUT HAD SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.



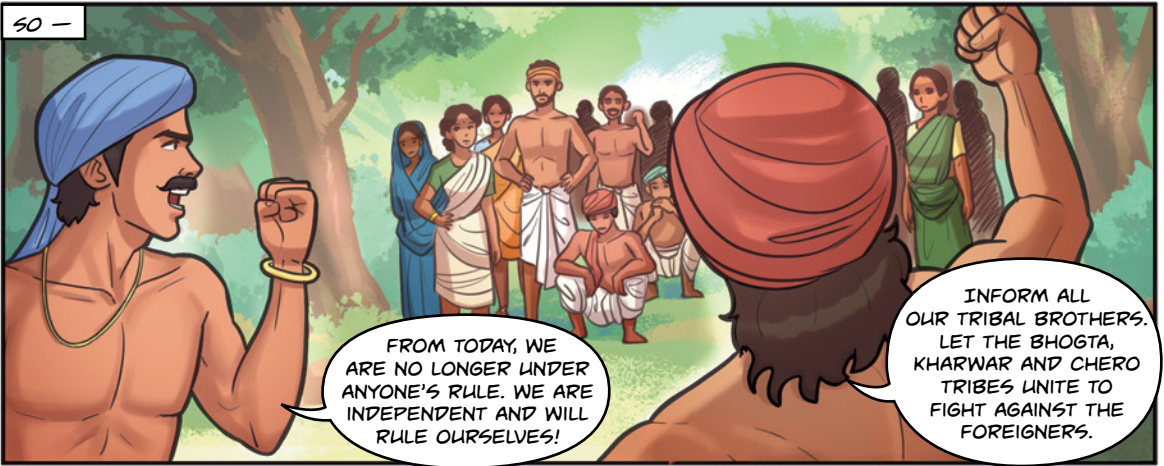
IN CHATRA, ANOTHER TOWN OF JHARKHAND, PITAMBAR SAW THE SEPOY REVOLT BEING LED BY TWO LOCAL LEADERS, THAKUR VISHWANATH SHAHDEO AND PANDEY GANPAT RAI. INSPIRED, HE RUSHED HOME.

YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!

BROTHER, THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS RISING IN REVOLT AGAINST THE BRITISH FORCES. I THINK IT'S TIME TO JOIN THEM IN THE FIGHT.

*ALINT
*INDIAN SOLDIERS SERVING UNDER THE BRITISH

50 —



FROM TODAY, WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER ANYONE'S RULE. WE ARE INDEPENDENT AND WILL RULE OURSELVES!

INFORM ALL OUR TRIBAL BROTHERS. LET THE BHOGTA, KHARWAR AND CHERO TRIBES UNITE TO FIGHT AGAINST THE FOREIGNERS.

ON 21 OCTOBER, 1857, NILAMBAR AND PITAMBAR LED 500 TRIBALS AND ATTACKED A LOCAL ZAMINDAR, RAGHUBAR DAYAL, IN CHAINPUR. HE WAS LOYAL TO THE BRITISH.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING? STOP IT!

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR SIDING WITH THE BRITISH!

THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO LESLIGANJ WHERE —



YOU DON'T BELONG HERE! GO AWAY!

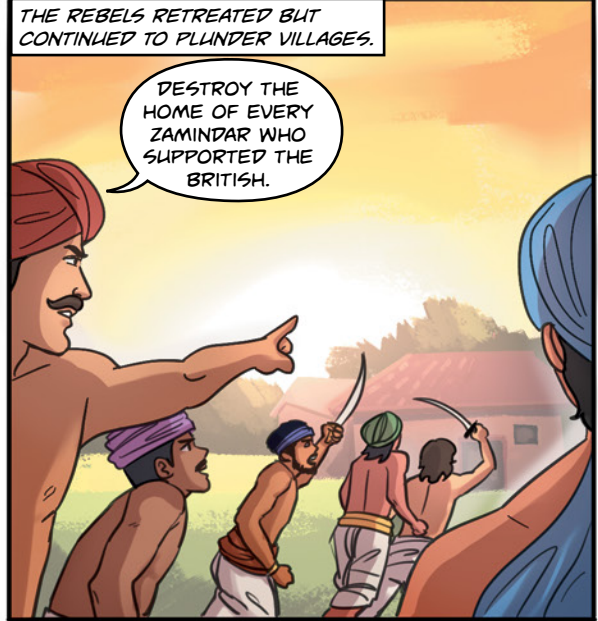
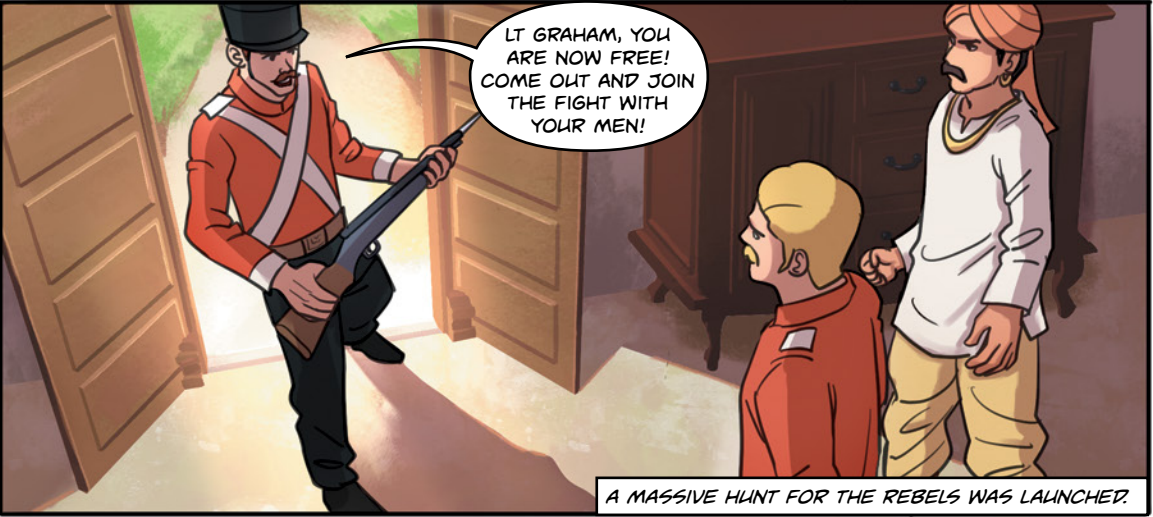
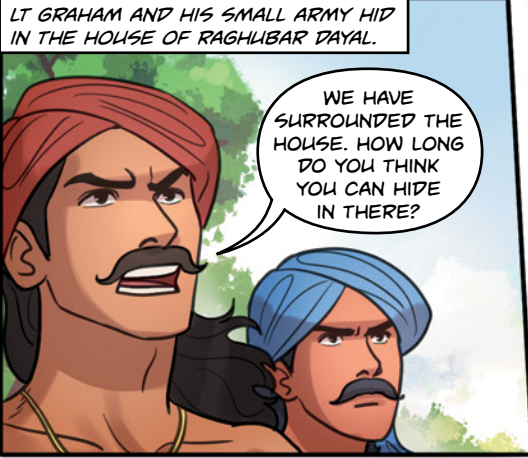
IN NOVEMBER —



THE BRITISH WERE SHAKEN BY THE ATTACKS. THE ACTING COMMISSIONER, LIEUTENANT GRAHAM, LED OVER 50 SOLDIERS TO CAPTURE THE TRIBALS BUT —



RUN, YOU COWARDS!



*DEVI BAKSH RAI WAS A REBEL LEADER WHO WAS FIGHTING ALONG WITH NILAMBAR AND PITAMBAR.

LT GRAHAM NOW GOT A FURTHER REINFORCEMENT OF 600 MEN AND BEGAN A SERIOUS MANHUNT FOR THE TWO BROTHERS BUT —



ON 16 JANUARY, 1858, CAPTAIN DALTON, THE COMMISSIONER OF CHOTA NAGPUR, HIMSELF LEFT FOR PALAMAU.



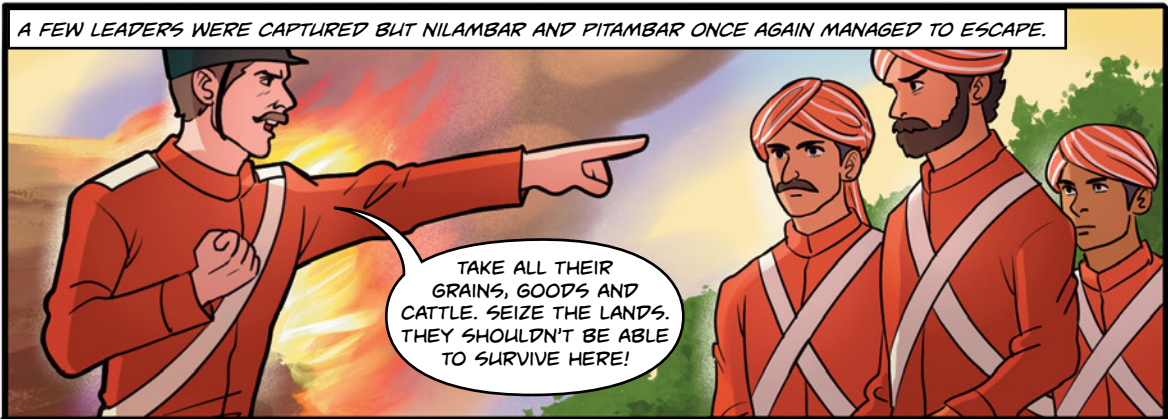
ON 21 JANUARY, CAPTAIN DALTON REACHED MANIKA VILLAGE NEAR PALAMAU FORT, AND WAS JOINED BY LT GRAHAM.



SO —



*A LOCAL CHIEF LOYAL TO THE GOVERNMENT



NILAMBAR AND PITAMBAR ARE REVERED NOT JUST IN JHARKHAND BUT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THE NILAMBAR-PITAMBAR UNIVERSITY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2009 IN PALAMU, JHARKHAND AS A TRIBUTE TO THESE BRAVE SONS OF INDIA.



RAMJI GOND

IN 1798, HYDERABAD WAS A TERRITORY THAT NOW OCCUPIES PARTS OF KARNATAKA, MAHARASHTRA AND TELANGANA. IT WAS RULED BY MIR NIZAM ALI KHAN, THE SECOND NIZAM OF HYDERABAD.



WE AGREE TO PAY YOU IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

AMONG THE OCCUPANTS OF THE STATE WERE THE MEMBERS OF THE GOND TRIBE.

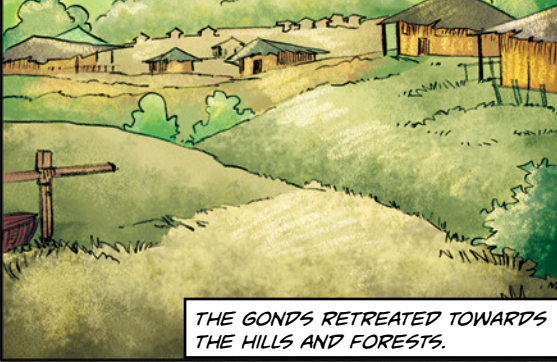


THE GOND TRIBE HAD SEVERAL KINGDOMS, RULED BY THE GOND RAJAS. ONE OF THEM, IN THE LATE 1800S, WAS RAMJI GOND.



OUR LIVES, IN SERVICE OF THIS LAND.

THE GOND TRIBE FIRST EXISTED AS SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENT KINGDOMS. DURING THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, THEY CAME UNDER MUGHAL DOMINANCE. IN THE 1740S, THE MARATHAS BEGAN TO ATTACK THE TRIBE WITH AN INTENT TO OCCUPY THE LAND.



THE GONDS RETREATED TOWARDS THE HILLS AND FORESTS.

THE GOND COMMUNITY CONTINUED TO FUNCTION IN AN INDEPENDENT AND SELF-SUSTAINING WAY. THIS MADE THE BRITISH MISTRUSTFUL.



WE KNOW WHERE WE STAND WITH THE STATE RULERS, BUT WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE FOREST-DWELLERS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE BRITISH WERE PLUNDERING INDIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ARMY. ONE OF THE MOST COVETED RESOURCES WAS —



TEAK! THERE IS AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF TEAK TREES IN THE FORESTS HERE.

THEY CORDONED OFF HUGE AREAS OF THE FORESTED LAND FOR THE USE OF THE EMPIRE. THIS LED TO THE FURTHER DISPLACEMENT OF FOREST-DWELLING COMMUNITIES.



THEY HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY FOR TOO LONG. THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE GOVERNMENT'S OWNERSHIP?

THESE CARELESS FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WERE FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY THE NARRATIVE THAT THE BRITISH WERE PROMOTING.



Living in these forests, is a wild and uncivilised population.

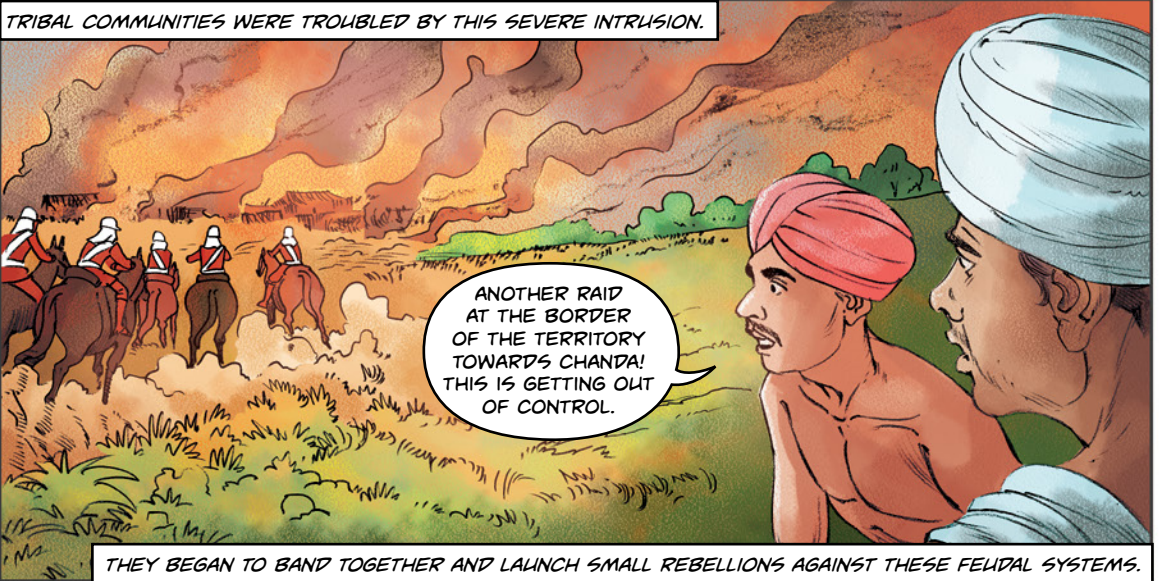
THE TRUE USE OF LAND IS CULTIVATION AND AGRICULTURE.

IN EXCHANGE FOR A TRIBUTE TO THE STATE, WE WILL ALLOW THESE PEOPLE TO CONTINUE LIVING IN THE FORESTS.

WEALTHY LANDOWNERS WERE CHOSEN AS COLLECTORS, OR TALUQDARS, FOR THIS PURPOSE.



TRIBAL COMMUNITIES WERE TROUBLED BY THIS SEVERE INTRUSION.



ANOTHER RAID AT THE BORDER OF THE TERRITORY TOWARDS CHANDA! THIS IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL.

THEY BEGAN TO BAND TOGETHER AND LAUNCH SMALL REBELLIONS AGAINST THESE FEUDAL SYSTEMS.

NIRMAL, A TOWN IN THE ADILABAD DISTRICT, WAS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT WAS AN ERSTWHILE PLACE OF POWER FOR THE GOND COMMUNITY.



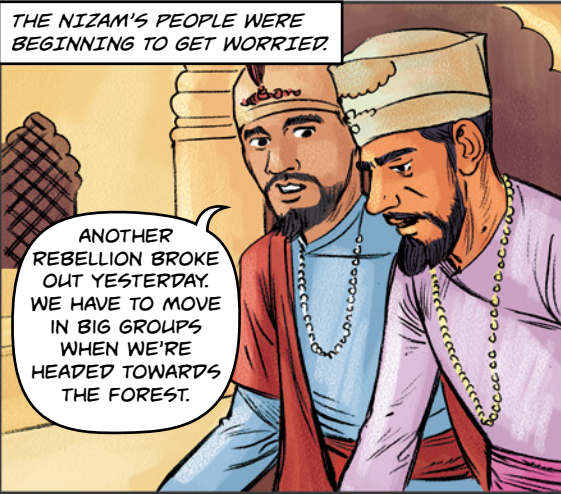
HERE, RAMJI GOND FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH OTHER TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

WITH A SMALL ARMY, 1,000 PEOPLE STRONG, HE CREATED HAVOC IN ADILABAD DISTRICT.



WE KNOW THIS LAND. THAT IS OUR ADVANTAGE. WE WILL ATTACK BY NIGHT.

THE NIZAM'S PEOPLE WERE BEGINNING TO GET WORRIED.



ANOTHER REBELLION BROKE OUT YESTERDAY. WE HAVE TO MOVE IN BIG GROUPS WHEN WE'RE HEADED TOWARDS THE FOREST.

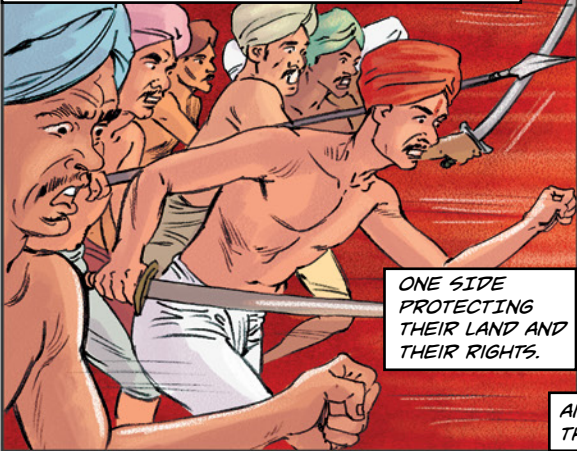


THERE IS NO REASONING WITH THEM.

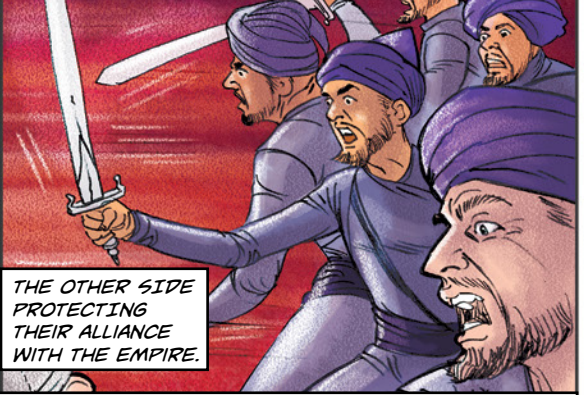
WE MUST RETALIATE. I WILL GET MY TROOPS READY.

THE NIZAM AT THE TIME WAS MIR FARQUUNDA ALI KHAN.

A BATTLE BROKE OUT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.



ONE SIDE
PROTECTING
THEIR LAND AND
THEIR RIGHTS.



THE OTHER SIDE
PROTECTING
THEIR ALLIANCE
WITH THE EMPIRE.

AND THE BRITISH LENDING TROOPS AND WEAPONS TO
THE STATE OF HYDERABAD, WITNESSING THE BLOODSHED.



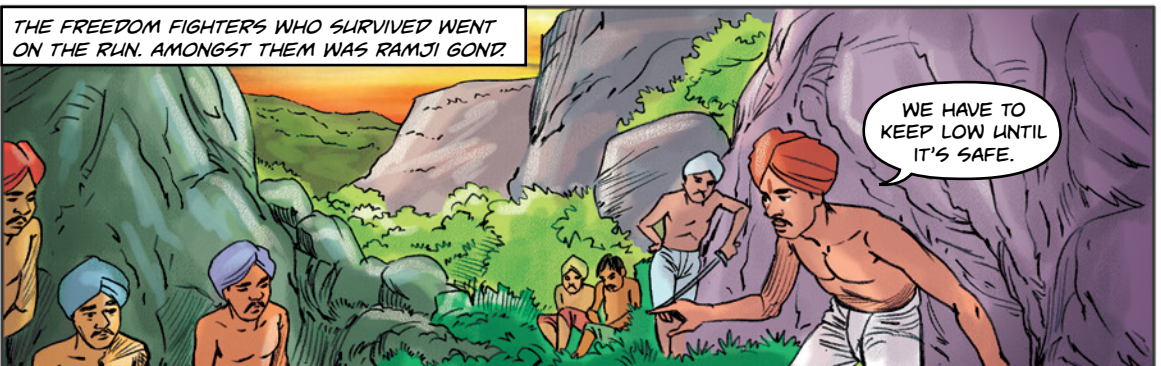
RAMJI GOND'S FORCE WAS FIERCE BUT —



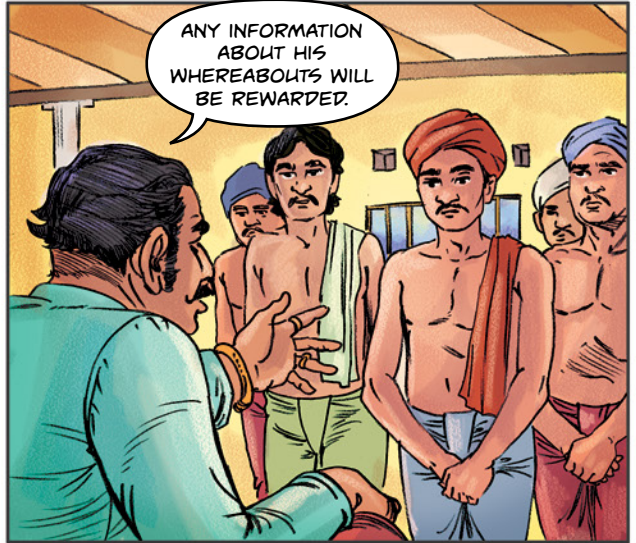
THEY HAVE
GUNS!

TAKE
COVER!

THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO SURVIVED WENT
ON THE RUN. AMONGST THEM WAS RAMJI GOND.



WE HAVE TO
KEEP LOW UNTIL
IT'S SAFE.

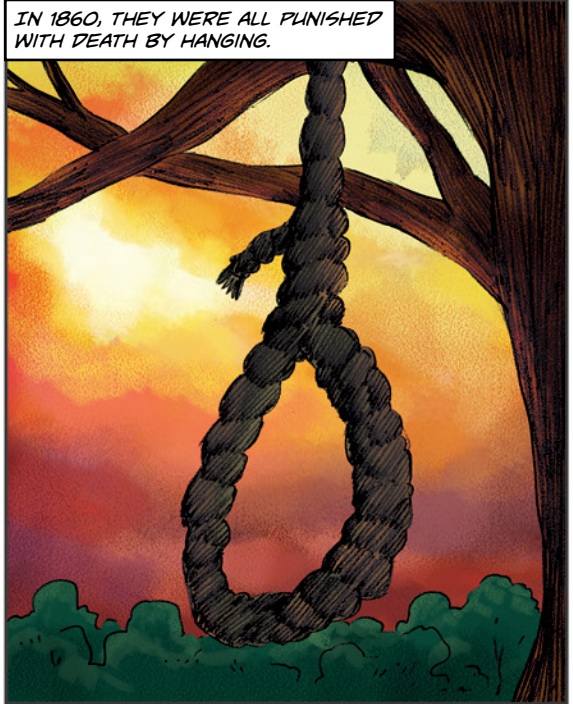


RAMJI GOND AND THE REMAINING FREEDOM FIGHTERS WERE FOUND AND ARRESTED.

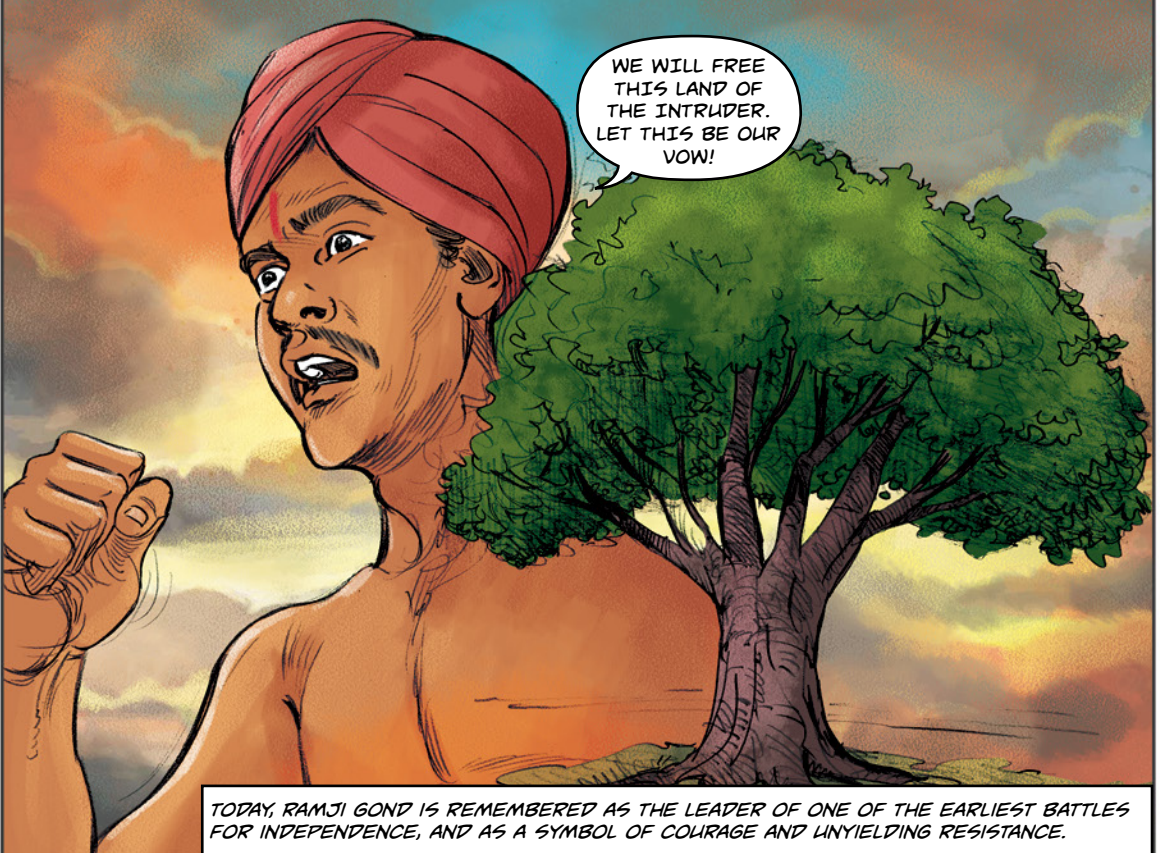


WE NEED TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF RAMJI AND HIS PEOPLE. PREPARE THE NOOSES.

IN 1860, THEY WERE ALL PUNISHED WITH DEATH BY HANGING.



THE ACTIONS OF THESE BRAVE PEOPLE STIRRED DEFIANCE INTO THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE COUNTRY.

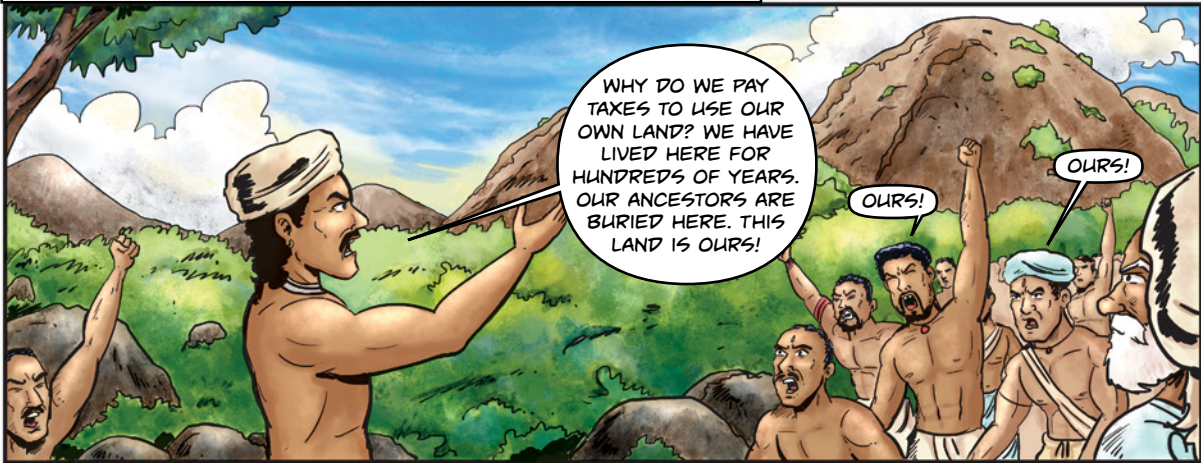


WE WILL FREE THIS LAND OF THE INTRUDER. LET THIS BE OUR VOW!

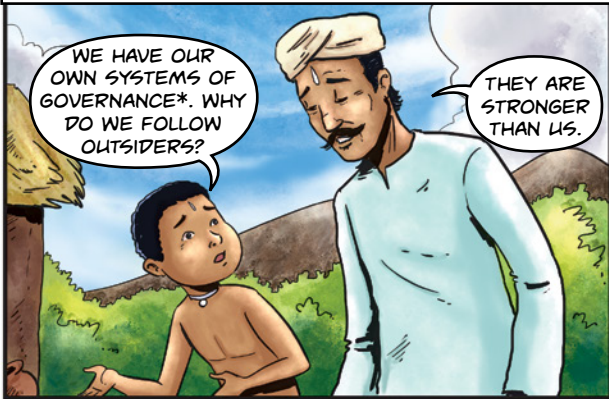
TODAY, RAMJI GOND IS REMEMBERED AS THE LEADER OF ONE OF THE EARLIEST BATTLES FOR INDEPENDENCE, AND AS A SYMBOL OF COURAGE AND UNYIELDING RESISTANCE.

TELANGA KHARIA

BY 1850, THE BRITISH HAD ESTABLISHED DOMINANCE OVER THE TRIBAL REGION OF CHOTA NAGPUR BUT NOT EVERYONE ACCEPTED THIS.



THE SPEAKER WAS TELANGA KHARIA OF THE KHARIA TRIBE. BORN ON THE 9 FEBRUARY, 1806, TELANGA HAD BEEN AWARE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE FROM A YOUNG AGE.



HOWEVER, AS SOON AS TELANGA WAS OLD ENOUGH...



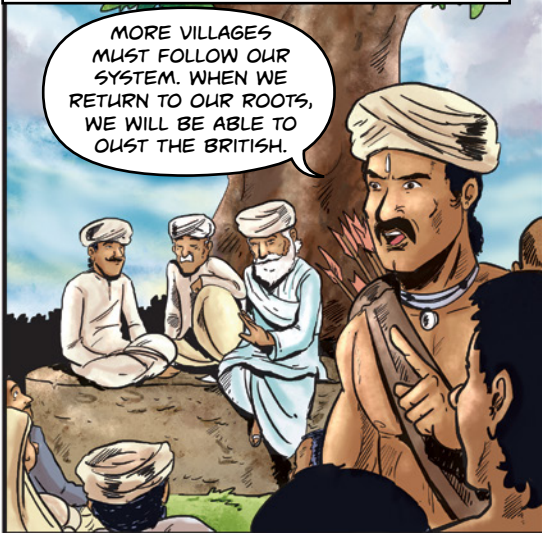
*THE PARHA SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNANCE

BY 1850, HE HAD QUITE A FEW FOLLOWERS.



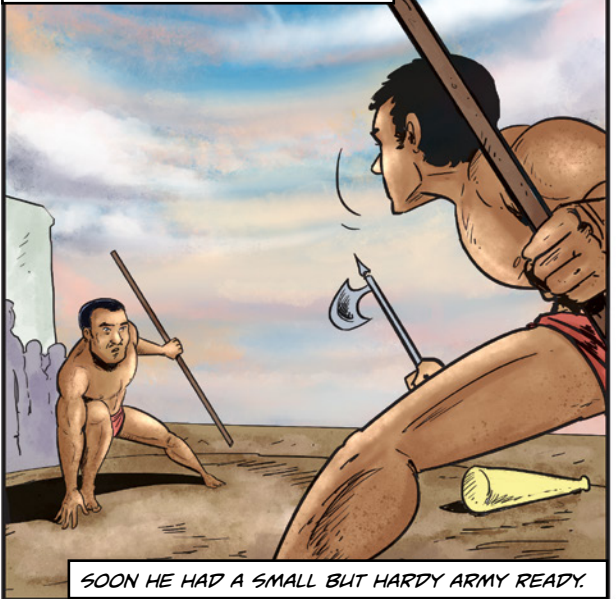
WE WILL NOT ACCEPT BRITISH RAJ. WE WILL ELECT OUR OWN PANCHAYAT!

SOON, 13 'JURY PANCHAYATS' HAD BEEN FORMED. THESE WERE ALTERNATE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT THAT FOLLOWED THE TRADITIONAL TRIBAL ADMINISTRATION. THEY REFUSED TO RECOGNISE THE BRITISH TAX SYSTEM.



MORE VILLAGES MUST FOLLOW OUR SYSTEM. WHEN WE RETURN TO OUR ROOTS, WE WILL BE ABLE TO OUST THE BRITISH.

HE ALSO ESTABLISHED AKHARAS* AND TRAINED TRIBALS TO USE ARMS.



SOON HE HAD A SMALL BUT HARDY ARMY READY.

THE ZAMINDARS, WHO WERE LOSING MONEY BECAUSE THE TRIBALS STOPPED PAYING TAXES, COMPLAINED TO THE BRITISH.



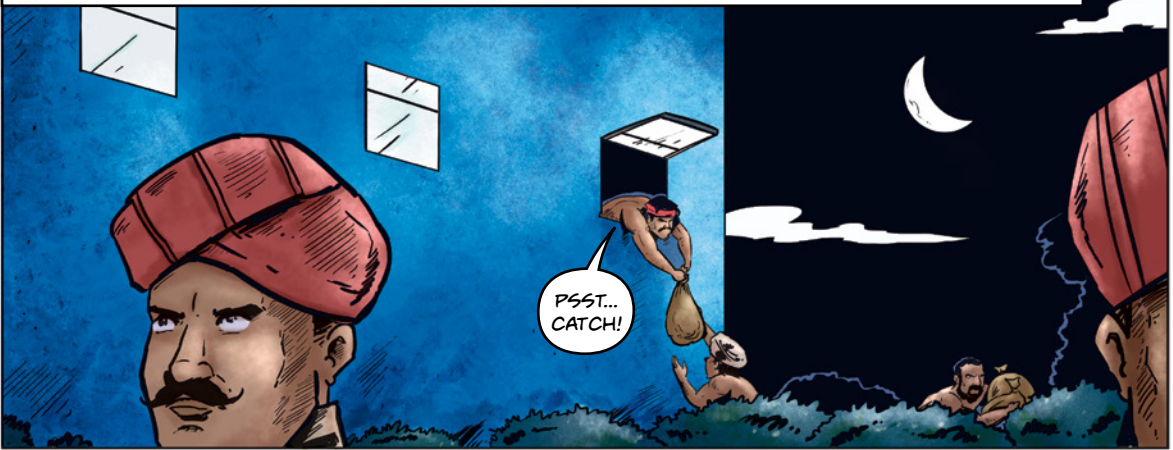
YOU MUST DO SOMETHING, SAHIB. THEY ARE GOING TO CAUSE TROUBLE.



HA! THEIR OWN PANCHAYATS? WHAT DO THOSE SAVAGES KNOW ABOUT ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATIONS?

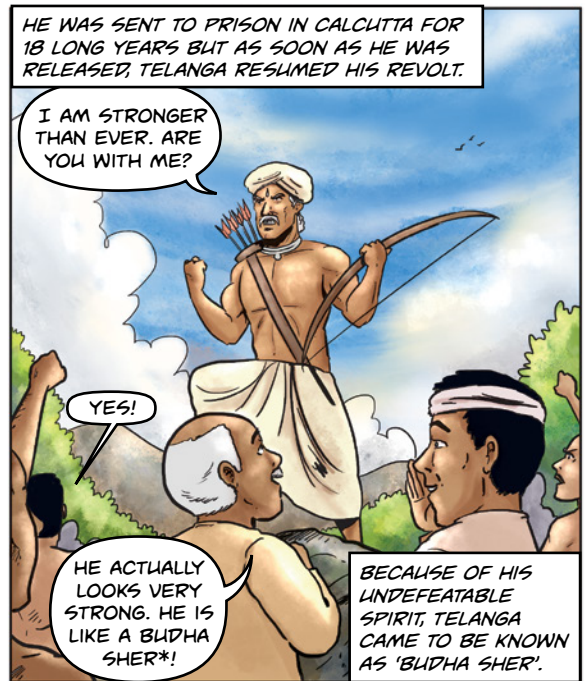
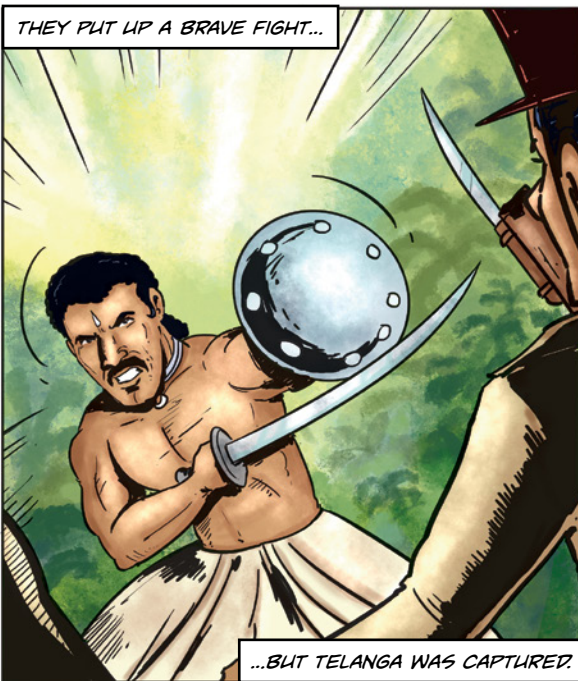
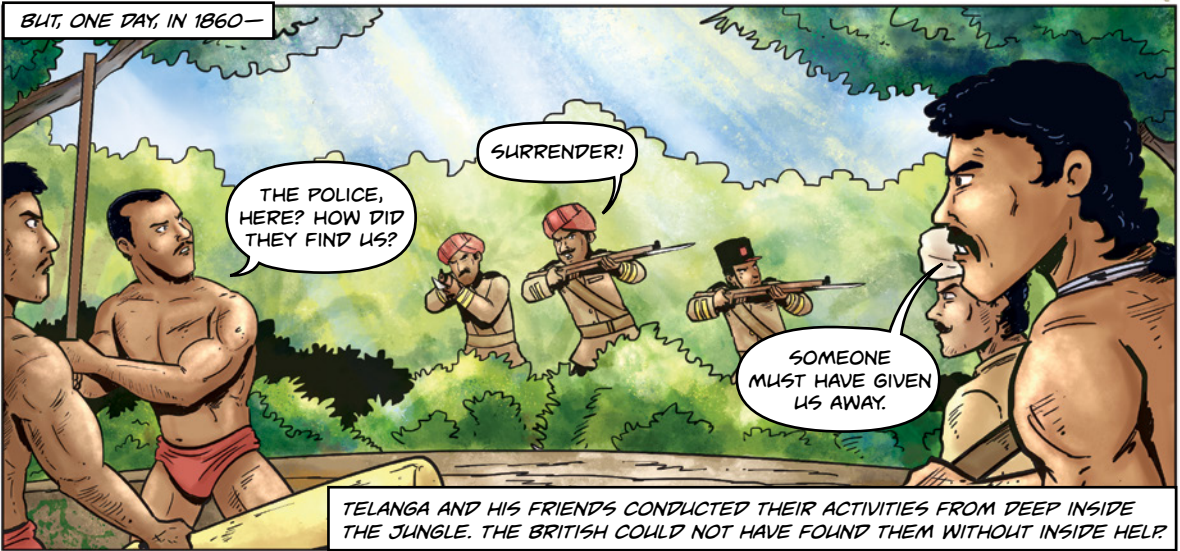
*WRESTLING GROUNDS

TELANGA'S ARMY WAS SOON SO WELL TRAINED THAT THEY STARTED LOOTING THE BRITISH TREASURIES.



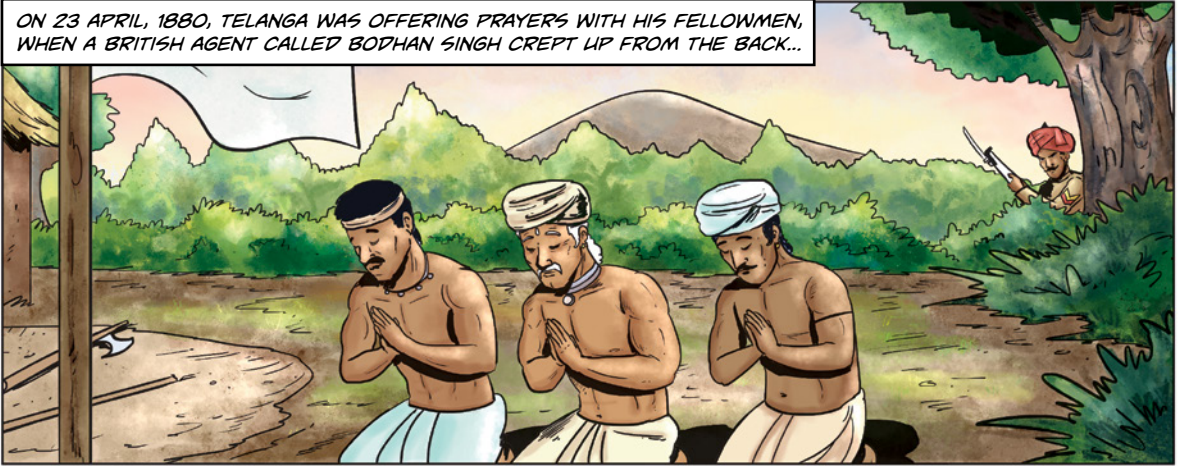
THAT PROVED DIFFICULT. TELANGA SUCCESSFULLY REVOLTED AGAINST THE BRITISH AND INSPIRED HIS PEOPLE TO DO THE SAME.





*OLD LION

ON 23 APRIL, 1880, TELANGA WAS OFFERING PRAYERS WITH HIS FELLOWMEN, WHEN A BRITISH AGENT CALLED BODHAN SINGH CREEPT UP FROM THE BACK...



THE SPOT WHERE HE WAS BURIED IS CALLED TELANGA TOPA TAND AND IS DEEPLY REVERED TO THIS DAY. A WEEK-LONG SHAHID TELANGA MELA IS CELEBRATED EVERY YEAR IN HIS MEMORY.

A STATUE HAS ALSO BEEN ERECTED TO HONOUR THIS BRAVE AND INTELLIGENT MAN, WHO NOT ONLY CHALLENGED THE PHYSICAL PROWESS OF THE BRITISH BUT ALSO DEFIANTLY ESTABLISHED AN ALTERNATE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM.

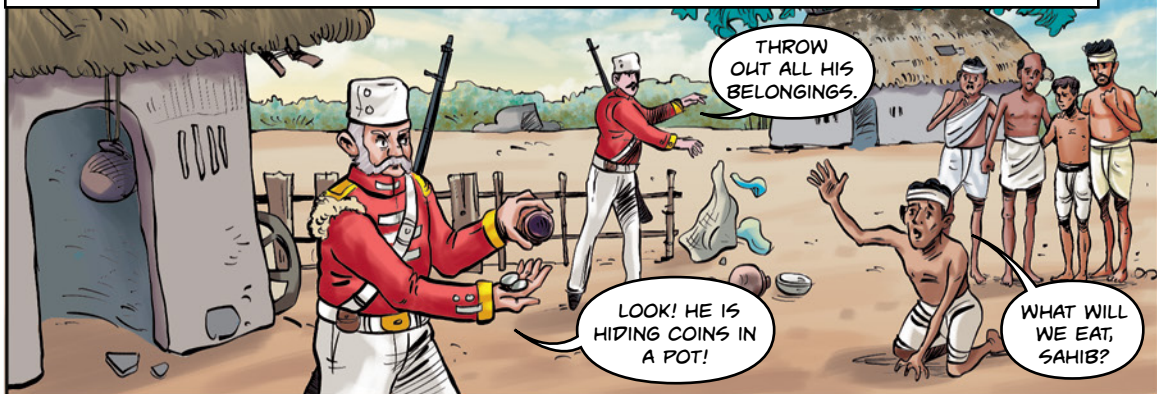


TANTYA BHIL

THE INDIAN UPRISING OF 1857, OR INDIA'S FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, SHOOK THE BRITISH TO THE CORE. IN RETALIATION, THEY CAME DOWN HEAVILY ON ORDINARY PEASANTS.



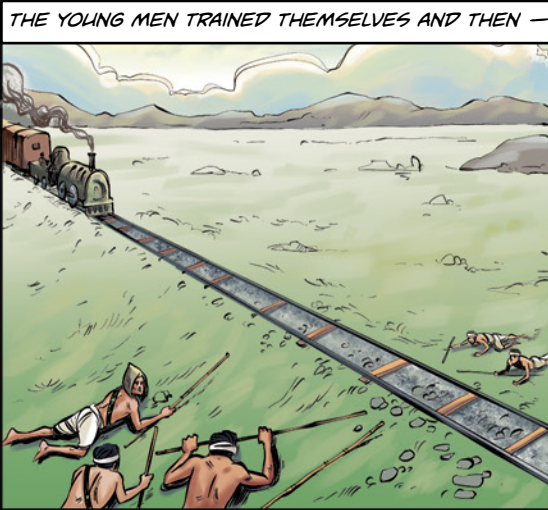
BORN IN 1842, TANTYA BHIL FROM THE NIMAR TRIBAL AREA OF MADHYA PRADESH, WAS ABOUT 15 YEARS OLD AT THAT TIME. HE WITNESSED FIRST-HAND THE ATROCITIES HEAPED UPON THE BHIL TRIBALS.

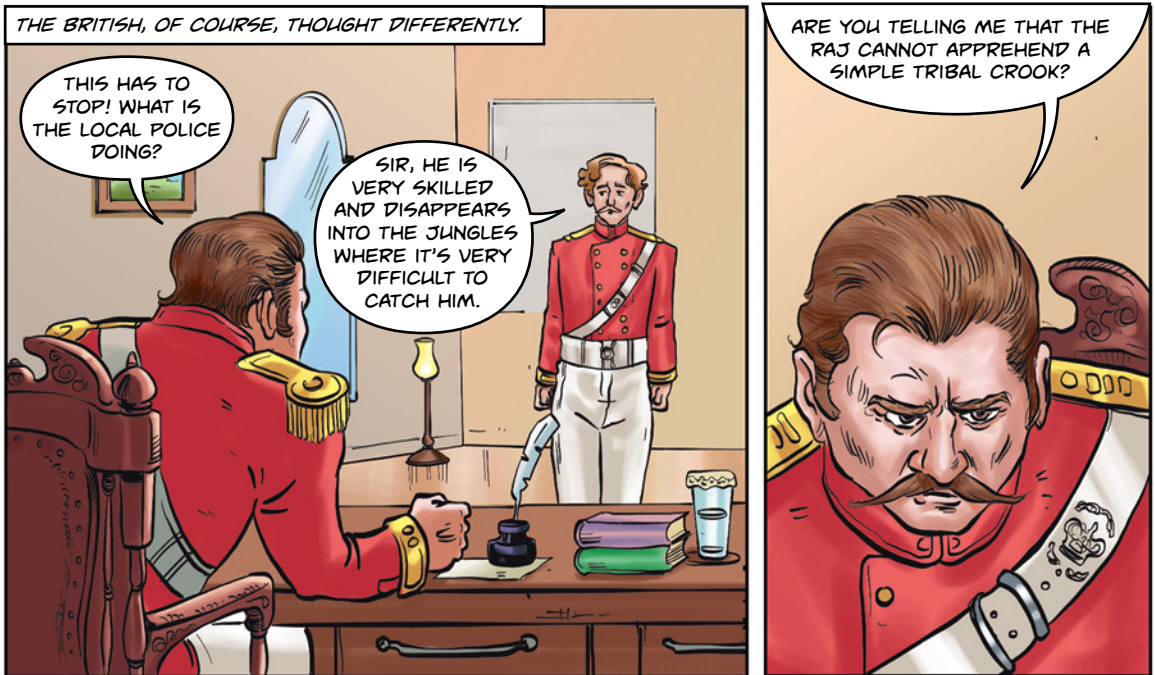
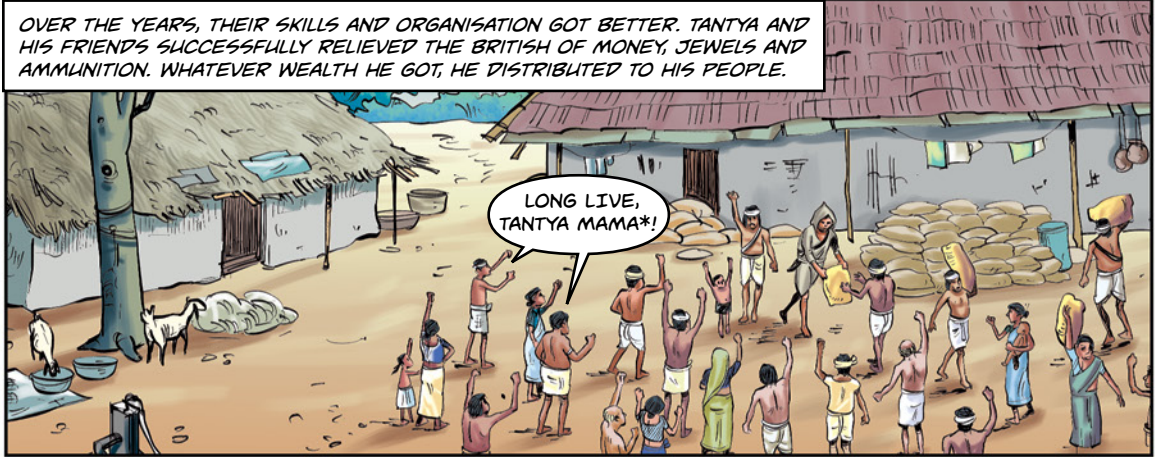


TANTYA KNEW HOW TO FIGHT WITH STICKS AND THE BOW AND ARROW. HE DECIDED THAT IT WAS TIME TO PUT HIS SKILLS TO THE TEST.



THE YOUNG MEN TRAINED THEMSELVES AND THEN —





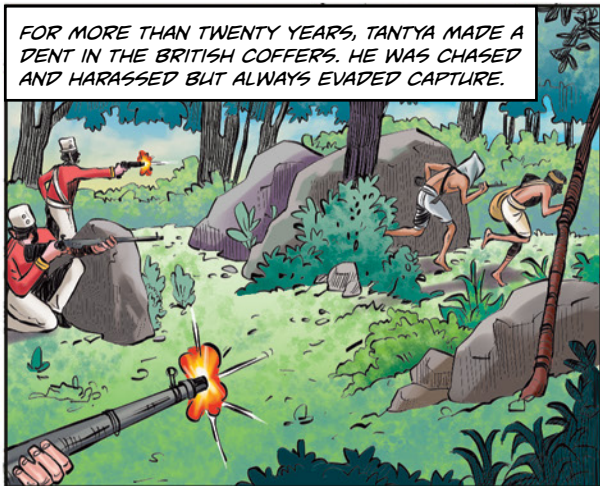
*UNCLE

THAT WAS INDEED A FACT. IN AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION, THEY CONFERRED THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO CATCH HIM BECAUSE —

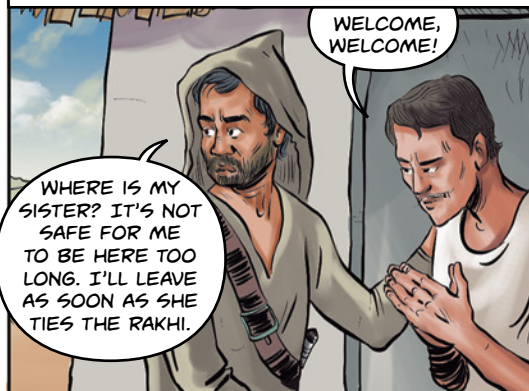
Firstly — the utter want of resource on the part of the police in the matter of detection and acquisition of information;

Secondly — The fact that large masses of people — Kurkus and Bhils — have a feeling for Tantya amounting to veneration, while persons of a better position are so paralysed by terror that they cannot move a finger to help us.

FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS, TANTYA MADE A DENT IN THE BRITISH COFFERS. HE WAS CHASED AND HARASSED BUT ALWAYS EVADED CAPTURE.



THINGS CHANGED ON 11 AUGUST, 1896. IT WAS THE FESTIVAL OF RAKSHA BANDHAN* AND TANTYA WENT TO HIS SISTER'S HOUSE FOR THE RITUAL.



BUT —

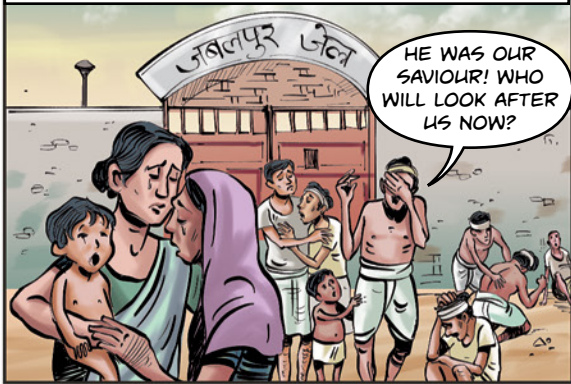


UNKNOWN TO THEM, HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW HAD BETRAYED TANTYA FOR A HUGE SUM OF MONEY.

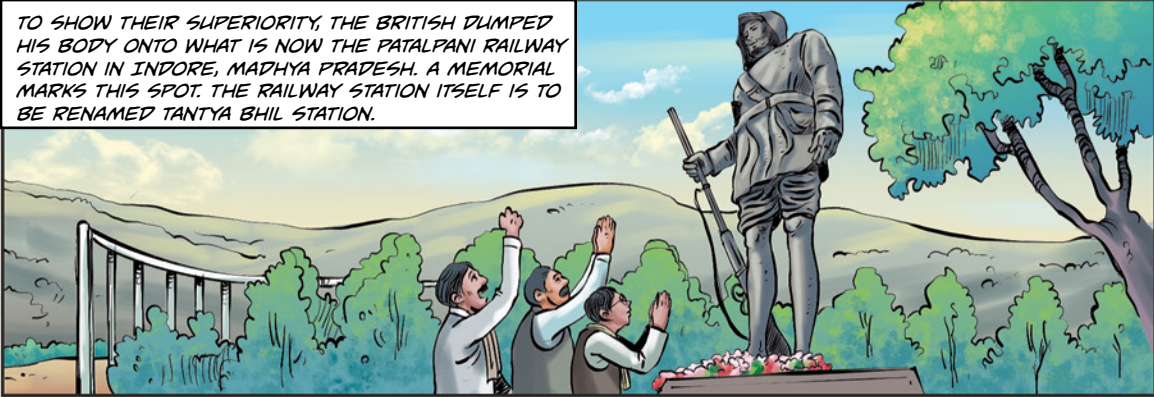
*A FESTIVAL ON WHICH A SISTER TIES A DECORATIVE THREAD (OR RAKHI) ON HER BROTHER'S WRIST AS A SYMBOL OF HIS PROTECTION OF HER AND HER LOVE FOR HIM.



TANTYA WAS ARRESTED AND TORTURED FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS. HE WAS HANGED TO DEATH ON 4 DECEMBER, 1889. THE BHILS WERE INCONSOLABLE.



TO SHOW THEIR SUPERIORITY, THE BRITISH DUMPED HIS BODY ONTO WHAT IS NOW THE PATALPANI RAILWAY STATION IN INDORE, MADHYA PRADESH. A MEMORIAL MARKS THIS SPOT. THE RAILWAY STATION ITSELF IS TO BE RENAMED TANTYA BHIL STATION.



TO THE BRITISH, TANTYA WAS A CRIMINAL TO BE VANQUISHED BUT TO INDIANS, HE WAS A HERO; AN ORDINARY MAN WHO REVOLTED AGAINST THE MIGHTY EMPIRE. SUCH WAS HIS INFLUENCE THAT WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED, EVEN THE NEW YORK TIMES WROTE ABOUT IT, CALLING HIM 'THE INDIAN ROBIN HOOD'.

The New York Times.

R.H. MACY & CO.

BLACK GULL

WHOLESTORY

[Faded, illegible text from the newspaper clipping]

[Faded, illegible text from the newspaper clipping]



New York Times,
November 10, 1889,

"Tantia Bheel, the bold Robin Hood of the Central Provinces in India, who was recently captured, has just made a full confession..."

BIRSA MUNDA

BIRSA MUNDA WAS BORN ON 15 NOVEMBER, 1875, TO SUGANA MUNDA AND KARMI HATU, OF THE MUNDA TRIBE, IN THE PRESENT-DAY KHUNTI DISTRICT OF JHARKHAND.



OUR SON HAS THE BRIGHTEST EYES.

BIRSA RECEIVED HIS EARLY EDUCATION AT SALGA UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF HIS TEACHER JAIPAL NAG.

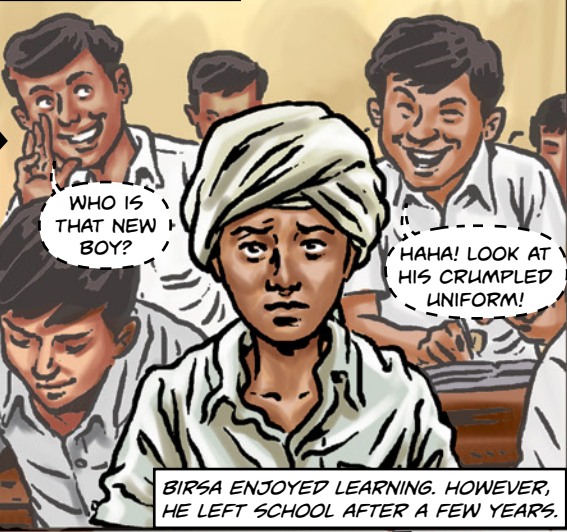


BIRSA, YOU ARE A BRIGHT STUDENT. YOU SHOULD JOIN THE GERMAN MISSION SCHOOL.

BUT DON'T THEY ONLY ADMIT CHRISTIAN STUDENTS?

YOU CAN CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY, THEY'LL ADMIT YOU RIGHT AWAY.

TAKING HIS TEACHER'S ADVICE, BIRSA CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY AND CHANGED HIS NAME TO BIRSA DAVID TO JOIN THE GERMAN LUTHERAN MISSION SCHOOL AT CHAIBASA.



WHO IS THAT NEW BOY?

HAHA! LOOK AT HIS CRUMPLED UNIFORM!

BIRSA ENJOYED LEARNING. HOWEVER, HE LEFT SCHOOL AFTER A FEW YEARS.

IT WAS AT THE GERMAN SCHOOL THAT BIRSA REALISED HOW THE BRITISH AND OTHER FOREIGNERS CONVERTED TRIBAL FOLK TO CHRISTIANITY.



THESE DIKUS* PROMISE US HELP, OFFER US EDUCATION, FOOD AND WORK, SO THAT WE CONVERT TO THEIR RELIGION, ONLY TO TREAT US LIKE THE SAVAGES THEY BELIEVE WE ARE!

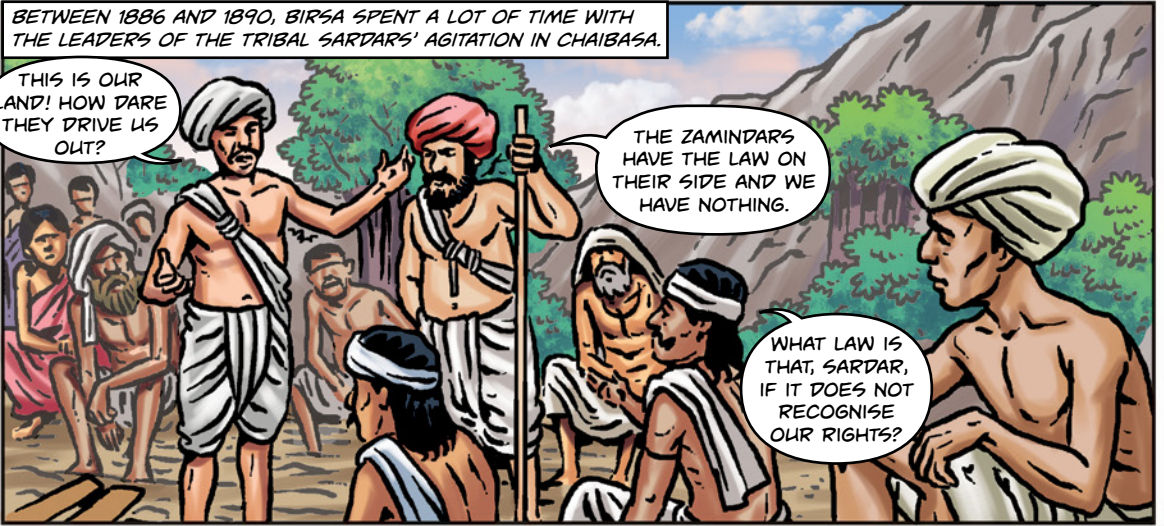
*FOREIGNERS OR OUTSIDERS

BETWEEN 1886 AND 1890, BIRSA SPENT A LOT OF TIME WITH THE LEADERS OF THE TRIBAL SARDARS' AGITATION IN CHAIBASA.

THIS IS OUR LAND! HOW DARE THEY DRIVE US OUT?

THE ZAMINDARS HAVE THE LAW ON THEIR SIDE AND WE HAVE NOTHING.

WHAT LAW IS THAT, SARDAR, IF IT DOES NOT RECOGNISE OUR RIGHTS?



YOU ARE RIGHT, THAT IS NO LAW TO US!

THIS HAS GONE ON FOR TOO LONG. WE MUST TAKE OUR LAND BACK!

SO MUCH HAS BEEN STOLEN FROM OUR PEOPLE! I MUST JOIN THEIR STRUGGLE.

YOUNG BIRSA WAS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE SARDARS AND THEIR CALL FOR REBELLION.

OUR PEOPLE MUST UNITE AND FIGHT. NOBODY ELSE IS GOING TO HELP US.



BY THE TIME BIRSA LEFT CHAIBASA IN 1890, HE WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE TRIBAL MOVEMENT AGAINST THE BRITISH.

YOU ALL HAVE TAUGHT ME A LOT. I MUST LEAVE BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE.

WE NEED MORE YOUNG BLOOD LIKE YOU, BIRSA. ONLY THEN CAN WE WIN.



IN SUPPORT OF THE SARDARS' REBELLION, BIRSA'S FAMILY GAVE UP THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE GERMAN MISSION.

BIRSA PUT HIS LEARNING TO GOOD USE TO EDUCATE PEOPLE OF THE OPPRESSION BY THE BRITISH.



WHAT HAD THE COMPANY COME TO INDIA FOR? TRADE. LOOK AT WHAT THEY ARE DOING NOW!

WHAT WILL WE DO IF THE DIKUS RULE OUR COUNTRY?

BIRSA IS RIGHT, WE MUST ALL FIGHT AGAINST THEM.

BIRSA SLOWLY BEGAN STEPPING INTO ACTIVE POLITICS. WHEN UNJUST LAWS WERE ENFORCED UPON THE MUNDAS IN THE PROTECTED FOREST OF THE PORHAT REGION, HE ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNED AGAINST THEM.



WAKE UP, BROTHERS AND SISTERS! THE FOREST IS OUR HOME, DO NOT LET THE BRITISH RULE US.

ALL HIS LIFE'S BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES LED HIM TO RENOUNCE CHRISTIANITY AND START HIS OWN RELIGION CALLED BIRSAIT.



I MUST BECOME A GOOD LEADER, NOT JUST IN THE FIGHT FOR MY PEOPLE'S RIGHTS BUT ALSO TO SHOW THEM A GOOD WAY OF LIFE.

AROUND 1895, AT A VILLAGE NAMED CHALKAD*, BIRSA ESTABLISHED HIS RELIGION AND CALLED FOR 12 DISCIPLES TO PROPAGATE BIRSAIT.

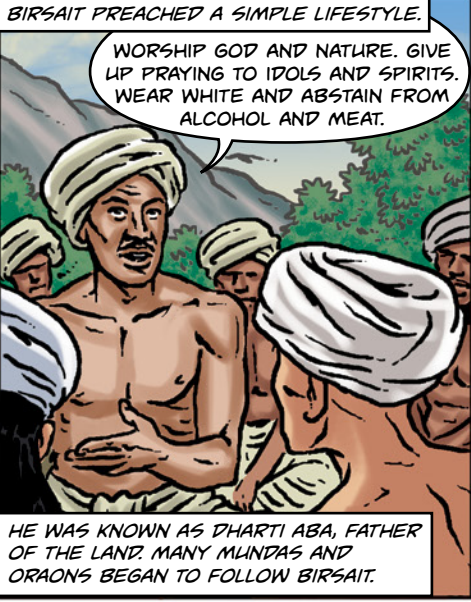


YOU, SOMA MUNDA, ARE MY CHIEF DISCIPLE. TAKE THIS BOOK OF DHARMA AND SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD'S WILL AMONG OUR PEOPLE.

*IN PRESENT-DAY JHARKHAND

BIRSAIT PREACHED A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE.

WORSHIP GOD AND NATURE. GIVE UP PRAYING TO IDOLS AND SPIRITS. WEAR WHITE AND ABSTAIN FROM ALCOHOL AND MEAT.



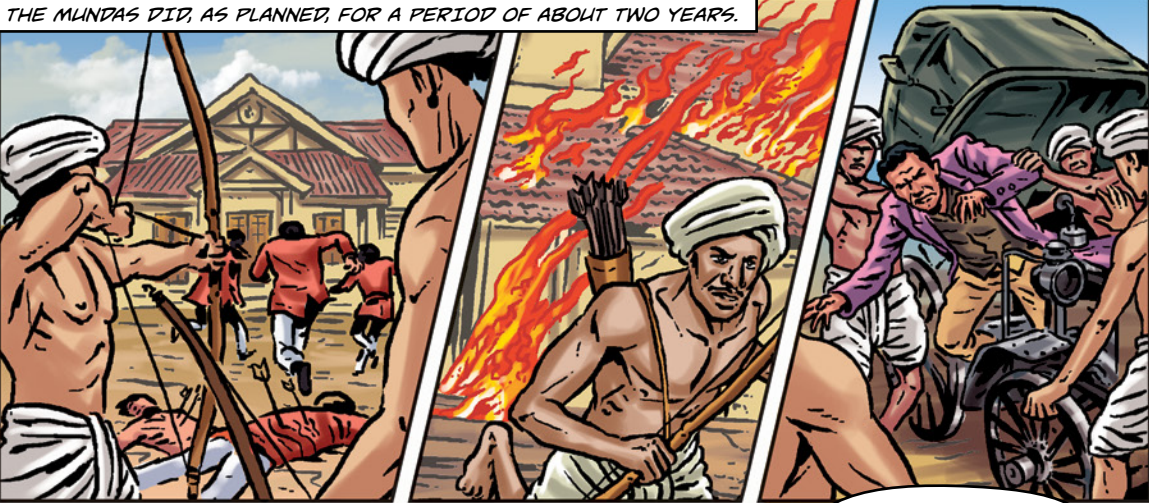
HE WAS KNOWN AS DHARTI ABA, FATHER OF THE LAND. MANY MUNDAS AND ORAONS BEGAN TO FOLLOW BIRSAIT.

AS HIS FOLLOWERS INCREASED, BIRSA BEGAN TO PLAN AND PREPARE FOR A DECISIVE WAR AGAINST THE BRITISH.

LET'S TARGET THE PLACES THEY CALL THEIRS — OFFICES, ARMY CAMPS, POLICE STATIONS, MARKETS. THEY SHOULD FEAR US!



THE MUNDAS DID, AS PLANNED, FOR A PERIOD OF ABOUT TWO YEARS.



THE BRITISH FELT THE HEAT OF THE MUNDA RAGE.

BIRSA MUNDA AND HIS PEOPLE MUST BE STOPPED, OFFICER.

WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR MORE SECURITY AROUND OUR SPACES. ONE WRONG MOVE AND HE WILL BE CAUGHT.



WISELY, BIRSA DECIDED TO LIE LOW FOR A WHILE.

MY FELLOW WARRIORS, LET US CONTINUE TO MEET AT SAIL RAKAB VILLAGE ON THE DUMBARI HILL. THE BRITISH CANNOT FOLLOW US THERE.

ARE WE RUNNING AWAY, BIRSA?

NO, JUST AVOIDING ARREST. WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL WE ACHIEVE ABUA DISUN*!

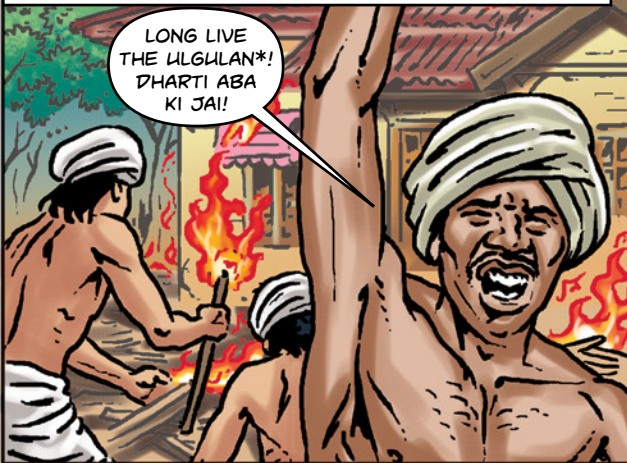


*SELF-RULE

USING STEALTHY GUERRILLA WARFARE TACTICS, BIRSA AND HIS WARRIORS UNLEASHED TERROR ON THE BRITISH IN THE RANCHI AND KHUNTI AREA.



IN THESE ATTACKS, NEARLY 100 BUILDINGS WERE SET ON FIRE AND SEVERAL PEOPLE, MOSTLY POLICEMEN, WERE KILLED. THIS WAS THE TIPPING POINT FOR THE BRITISH.



THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND HIS DEPUTY RUSHED TO KHUNTI.



WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN TWO COMPANIES OF THE ARMY TO CRUSH THE TRIBAL UPRISING. LET'S CATCH THEM!



THE SOLDIERS SOON DISCOVERED THE DUMBARI HILL HIDEOUT.



*REVOLT

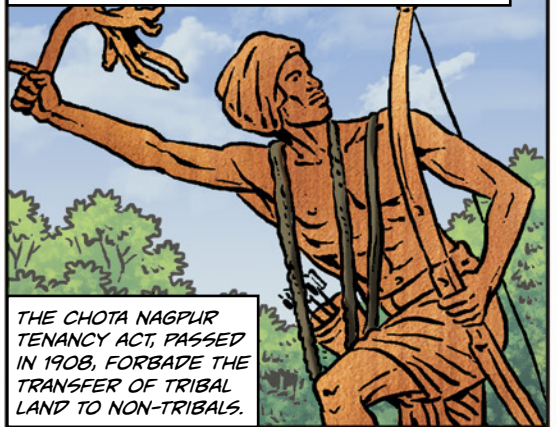
THE BRITISH CONTINUED THE SEARCH AND BIRSA WAS FINALLY ARRESTED IN JAMKOPAI FOREST IN CHAKRADHARPUR.



BIRSA MUNDA WAS IMPRISONED IN RANCHI JAIL WHERE HE PASSED AWAY ON 9 JUNE, 1900. HE WAS 25 YEARS OLD. THE BRITISH RECORDS STATE THAT HE DIED OF CHOLERA.

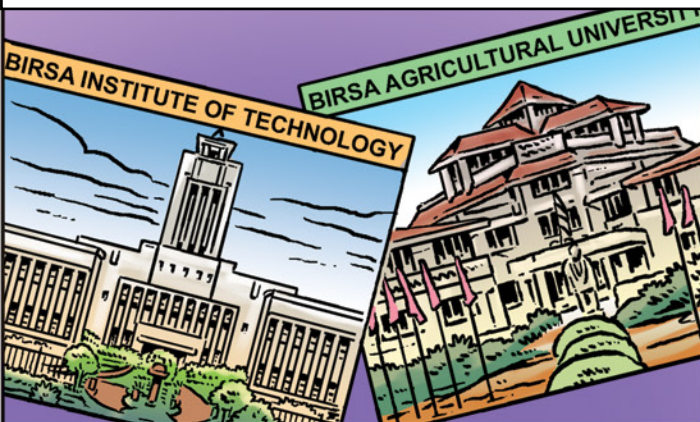


BIRSA'S ACHIEVEMENT WAS NO SMALL FEAT. HE UNITED TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR PROTESTS FORCED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE LAWS PROTECTING TRIBAL LAND.



THE CHOTA NAGPUR TENANCY ACT, PASSED IN 1908, FORBODE THE TRANSFER OF TRIBAL LAND TO NON-TRIBALS.

TO HONOUR HIS LIFE, MANY IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS BIRSA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, BIRSA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, BIRSA MUNDA ATHLETICS STADIUM AND BIRSA MUNDA AIRPORT HAVE BEEN NAMED AFTER HIM. THE STATE OF JHARKHAND WAS CREATED ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY IN 2000.



THE DAY IS ALSO CELEBRATED AS JANJATIYA GALRAV DIVAS TO HONOUR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRIBAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS.



BIRSA MUNDA IS THE ONLY TRIBAL FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO HAS A PORTRAIT IN THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT MUSEUM.

MATMUR JAMOH

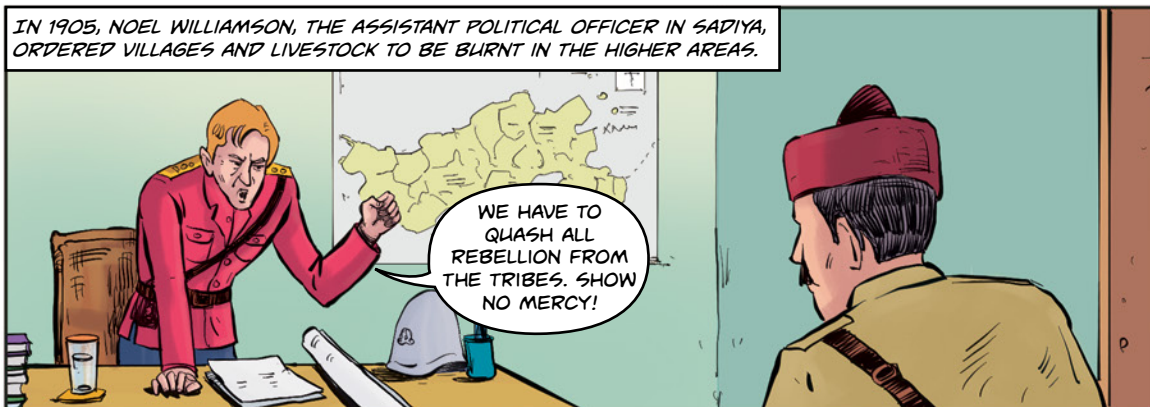
IN THE HILLS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, THERE LIVE THE PEOPLE OF THE ADI TRIBE. THE ADIS ARE PROUD AND PATRIOTIC, AND THE TRIBE HAS PRODUCED MANY WARRIORS WHO HAVE FOUGHT FOR THEIR LAND.



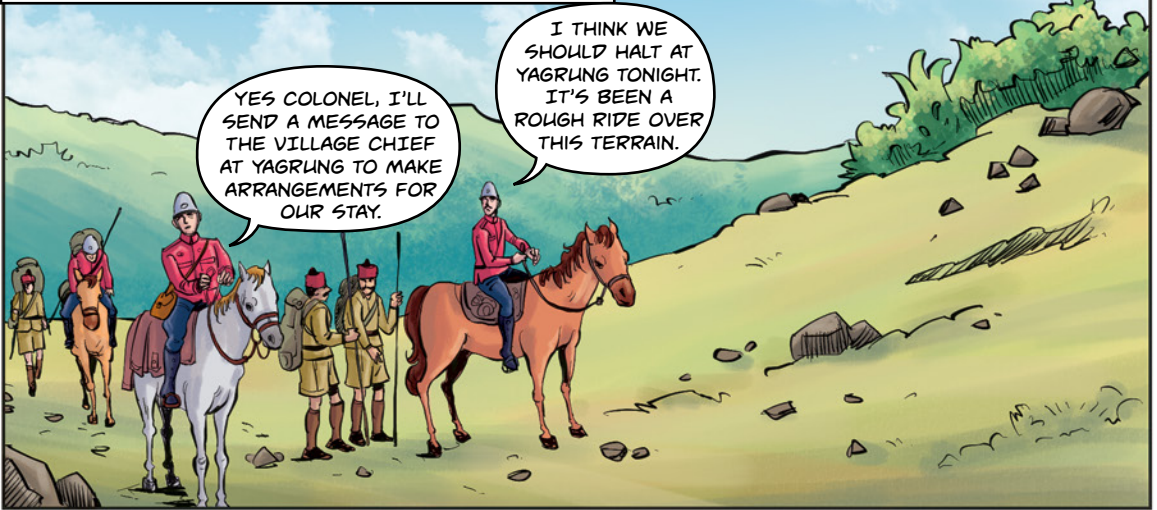
DURING THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE, THE TRIBE HAD MULTIPLE CONFLICTS WITH THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.



IN 1905, NOEL WILLIAMSON, THE ASSISTANT POLITICAL OFFICER IN SADIYA, ORDERED VILLAGES AND LIVESTOCK TO BE BURNT IN THE HIGHER AREAS.



IN 1909, WILLIAMSON VISITED KEBANG VILLAGE WITH A FEW OTHER OFFICERS. ON THEIR WAY BACK TO SADIYA —



YES COLONEL, I'LL SEND A MESSAGE TO THE VILLAGE CHIEF AT YAGRUNG TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR STAY.

I THINK WE SHOULD HALT AT YAGRUNG TONIGHT. IT'S BEEN A ROUGH RIDE OVER THIS TERRAIN.

AT THE TIME, MATMUR JAMOH, A YOUNG AND ABLE ADI WARRIOR, WAS THE CHIEF OF YAGRUNG VILLAGE. WHEN HE RECEIVED WILLIAMSON'S MESSAGE —



THE OFFICERS WILL ARRIVE THIS EVENING. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD.

WE ARE NOT HERE TO SERVE YOUR OFFICERS.

WHEN THE OFFICERS ARRIVED —

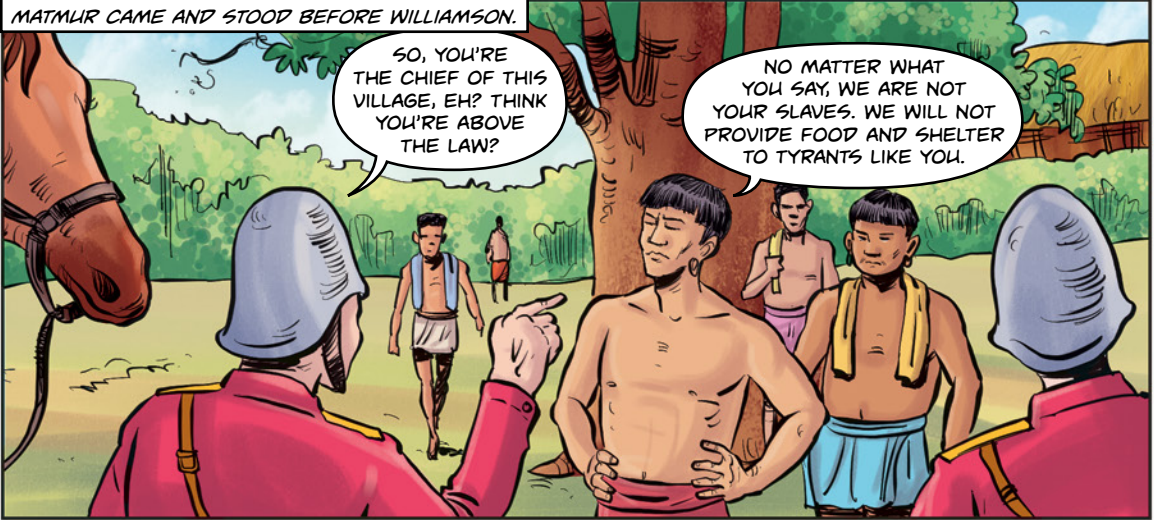


WHY IS THERE NO ONE TO WELCOME US?

LOOKS LIKE THESE VILLAGERS ARE GIVING US A MESSAGE.

OH THIS IS GOING TO COST THEM! WHERE IS THE CHIEF? I'LL TEACH HIM A LESSON RIGHT NOW.

MATMUR CAME AND STOOD BEFORE WILLIAMSON.



SO, YOU'RE THE CHIEF OF THIS VILLAGE, EH? THINK YOU'RE ABOVE THE LAW?

NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, WE ARE NOT YOUR SLAVES. WE WILL NOT PROVIDE FOOD AND SHELTER TO TYRANTS LIKE YOU.



HOW DARE YOU!

THWACK

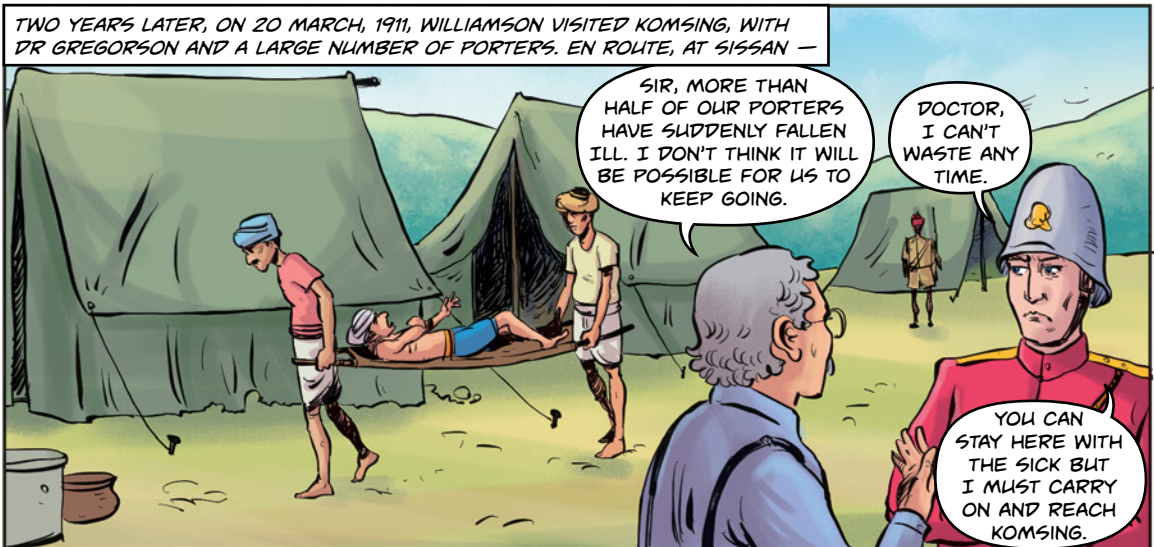
MATMUR'S PEOPLE WANTED TO RETALIATE BUT —



DON'T DO ANYTHING NOW OR THEY'LL BURN DOWN OUR VILLAGE.

WE WILL WAIT AND TAKE OUR REVENGE!

TWO YEARS LATER, ON 20 MARCH, 1911, WILLIAMSON VISITED KOMSING, WITH DR GREGORSON AND A LARGE NUMBER OF PORTERS. EN ROUTE, AT SISSAN —



SIR, MORE THAN HALF OF OUR PORTERS HAVE SUDDENLY FALLEN ILL. I DON'T THINK IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO KEEP GOING.

DOCTOR, I CAN'T WASTE ANY TIME.

YOU CAN STAY HERE WITH THE SICK BUT I MUST CARRY ON AND REACH KOMSING.



WHEN THE NEWS OF THE DEATHS OF WILLIAMSON AND HIS PARTY REACHED THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION —



SOON, ADI HABITATIONS ALL OVER THE AREA WERE TARGETED BY THE BRITISH IN A BID TO FIND MATMUR.



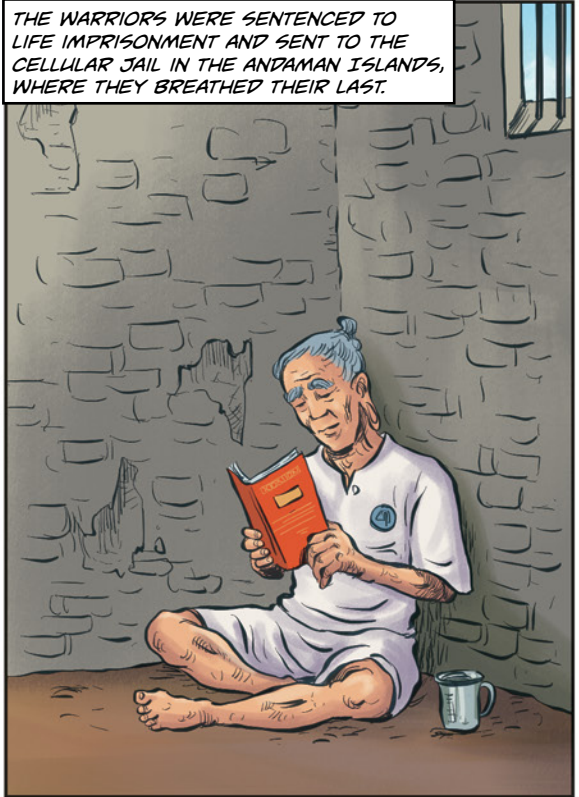
MEANWHILE, IN A HIDEOUT NEAR YAGRUNG —



MATMUR JAMOH AND SIX OTHER ADI WARRIORS SURRENDERED TO THE BRITISH.



THE WARRIORS WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND SENT TO THE CELLULAR JAIL IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS, WHERE THEY BREATHED THEIR LAST.



MATMUR JAMOH AND HIS MEN STAKED THEIR LIVES ON WHAT THEY BELIEVED IN. THE STORY OF THESE BRAVE ADI WARRIORS IS NOT WELL KNOWN. YET, IT SERVES AS AN INSPIRATION TO ALL THOSE WHO HEAR IT.



TANA BHAGAT

IN AUGUST 1914, WHEN WORLD WAR I HAD JUST BEGUN, THE ORAON TRIBALS OF THE CHOTA NAGPUR REGION WERE UNDER GREAT OPPRESSION BY THE LOCAL ZAMINDARS, THE POLICE AND THE BRITISH.



FASTER!
THIS NEEDS
TO REACH
THE MARKET
TODAY!

WE HAVE A
WAR TO FIGHT,
WE CANNOT
WASTE MONEY.

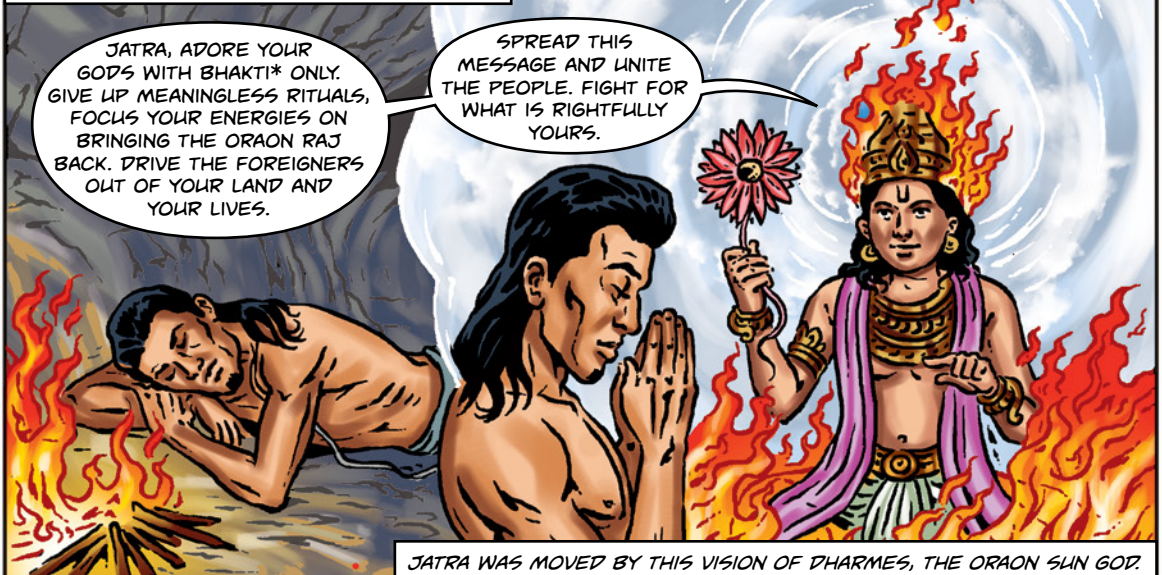
WE HAVE TO
EXPORT THIS GRAIN
AT A CHEAPER
RATE. CUT THE
WORKERS' PAY IF
YOU HAVE TO.



SAHIB, I
DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING!

QUIET,
YOU
THIEF!

DURING THESE TRYING TIMES, A YOUNG ORAON BY THE NAME JATRA BHAGAT, HAD A VISION.



JATRA, ADORE YOUR
GODS WITH BHAKTI* ONLY.
GIVE UP MEANINGLESS RITUALS,
FOCUS YOUR ENERGIES ON
BRINGING THE ORAON RAJ
BACK. DRIVE THE FOREIGNERS
OUT OF YOUR LAND AND
YOUR LIVES.

SPREAD THIS
MESSAGE AND UNITE
THE PEOPLE. FIGHT FOR
WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY
YOURS.

JATRA WAS MOVED BY THIS VISION OF DHARMES, THE ORAON SUN GOD.

*DEVOTION

JATRA TOOK HIS MISSION TO HEART AND BEGAN PREACHING TO HIS PEOPLE.

DHARMADEV ONLY WANTS OUR BHAKTI. LET US NOT PRACTICE MEANINGLESS RITUALS. LET US NOT SACRIFICE ANIMALS IN THE NAME OF GOD. GIVE UP THE VICES OF LIQUOR, TOBACCO AND MEAT.

DO NOT WORK FOR THE ALIEN LORDS, DO NOT GIVE THEM YOUR HARD-EARNED MONEY. WE MUST PAY HEED TO DHARMADEV'S WILL OR WE WILL PERISH!

HIS WORDS ARE SPELLBINDING!

HE IS TRULY TANA BHAGAT!

SUCH WAS THE POWER OF JATRA'S MESSAGE THAT HIS PEOPLE CALLED HIM TANA BHAGAT OR THE ONE WHO PULLS PEOPLE TOGETHER.

THE PEOPLE BEGAN ACTING ON HIS TEACHINGS.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WON'T WORK? COME BACK RIGHT NOW OR I WILL CALL THE POLICE!

DO WHAT YOU WANT.

WE WILL NOT WORK FOR A THANKLESS MASTER LIKE YOU.

WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE VISION FOR THE ORAON COMMUNITY, BEGAN TO DEVELOP POLITICAL UNDERTONES.

SAHIB, THE ORAONS ARE REFUSING TO WORK IN OUR FIELDS.

THEY ARE NOT EVEN PAYING RENT!

DO SOMETHING, SAHIB. OUR WORK HAS COME TO A STANDSTILL.

ALL BECAUSE OF THAT WRETCHED TANA BHAGAT!

TANA BHAGAT? WHO IS HE?

MAYBE SOMEONE SHOULD PAY THIS MAN A VISIT.

HE IS THEIR LEADER. HE HAS BEEN INSTRUCTING THEM TO REFUSE WORK AND TO CULTIVATE THEIR OWN CROPS.

ONE DAY —



JATRA BHAGAT, I AM FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. I NEED A FAVOUR FROM YOU.

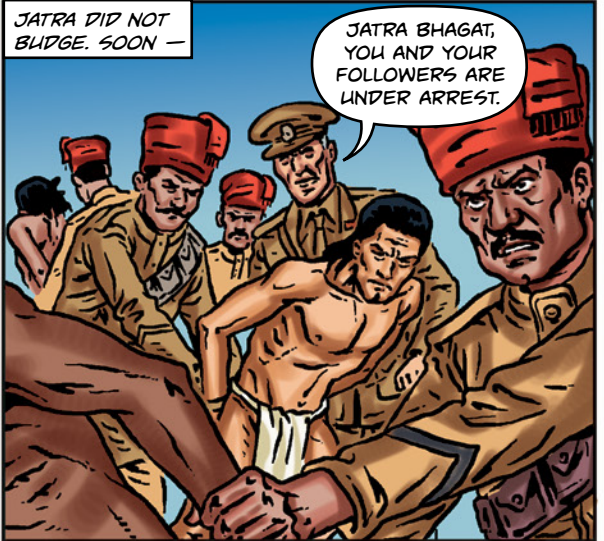
WHAT IS IT?



WE ARE BUILDING A SCHOOL IN DOKOTOLI VILLAGE. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO ALLOW YOUR FOLLOWERS TO WORK AS COOLIES. THEY WILL BE PAID HANDSOMELY.

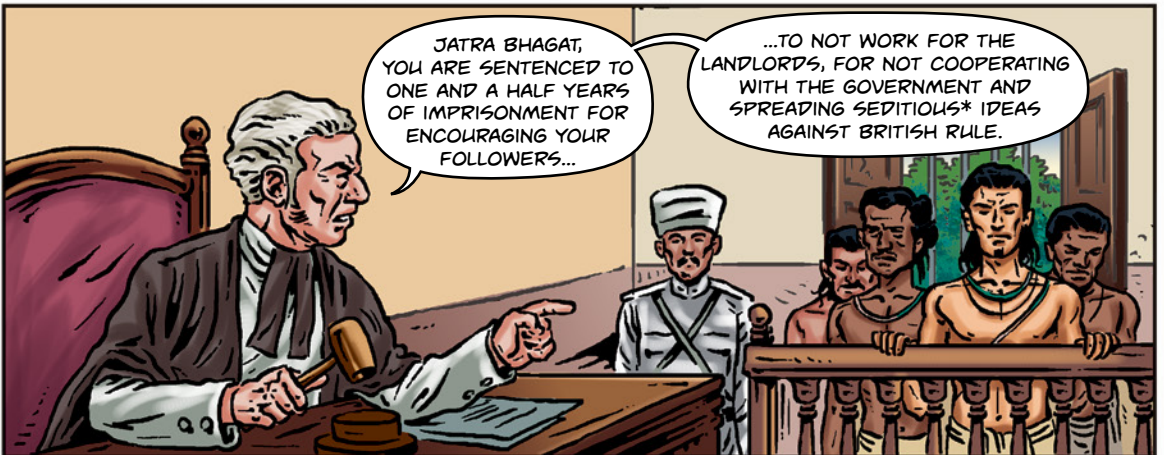
NO, NONE OF US WANT TO WORK FOR YOU OR YOUR GOVERNMENT.

JATRA, COOPERATE WITH THE SAHIB! OR ELSE....



JATRA DID NOT BUDGE. SOON —

JATRA BHAGAT, YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS ARE UNDER ARREST.



JATRA BHAGAT, YOU ARE SENTENCED TO ONE AND A HALF YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT FOR ENCOURAGING YOUR FOLLOWERS...

...TO NOT WORK FOR THE LANDLORDS, FOR NOT COOPERATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND SPREADING SEDITIOUS* IDEAS AGAINST BRITISH RULE.

*IDEAS THAT ENCOURAGE REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OR ITS AUTHORITY

THE ORAONS WERE CRESTFALLEN. THEY WENT TO MEET DEVAMANIA, JATRA'S WIFE.



DAI*, NOW THAT TANA IS GONE, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

WHO WILL GUIDE US NOW?

HE WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO LOSE HOPE. WE SHALL CONTINUE ON THE PATH HE HAS SHOWN US.

IN JATRA'S ABSENCE, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT PASSED INTO DEVAMANIA'S HANDS.

JATRA'S ABSENCE DID NOT DETER THE ORAONS. OVER TIME, HIS TEACHINGS HAD TRANSFORMED INTO A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT WHICH ADVOCATED A SIMPLE AND SELF-RELIANT LIFESTYLE TO THE ORAONS.

IN 1915, JATRA WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON BUT HE WAS A CHANGED MAN.

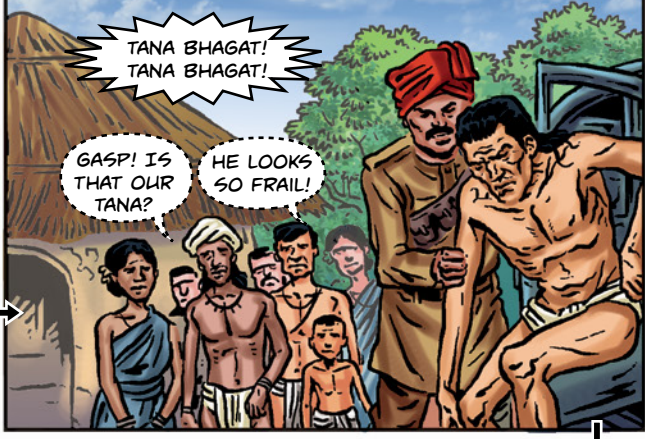


DO YOU ALSO WANT TO GO TO JAIL LIKE THAT LEADER OF YOURS? COME WORK IN MY FIELD AND EARN YOUR KEEP.

WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF YOU, NOR DO WE WANT YOUR MONEY.

WE CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES. YOU CAN FIND SOMEBODY ELSE.

THE MOVEMENT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE TANA BHAGAT MOVEMENT.

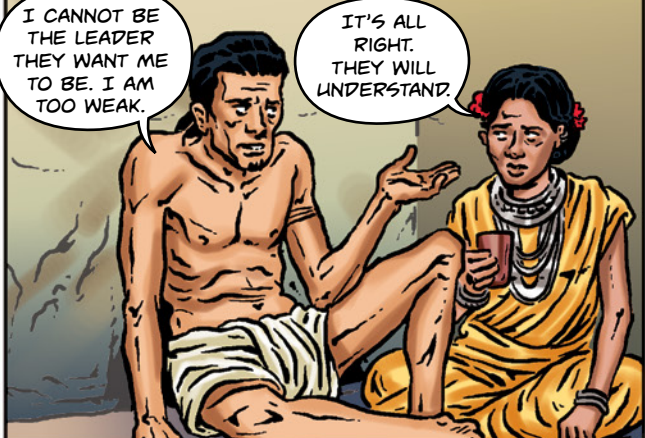


TANA BHAGAT! TANA BHAGAT!

GASP! IS THAT OUR TANA?

HE LOOKS SO FRAIL!

THE TORTURE IN JAIL HAD GREATLY AFFECTED JATRA'S HEALTH.

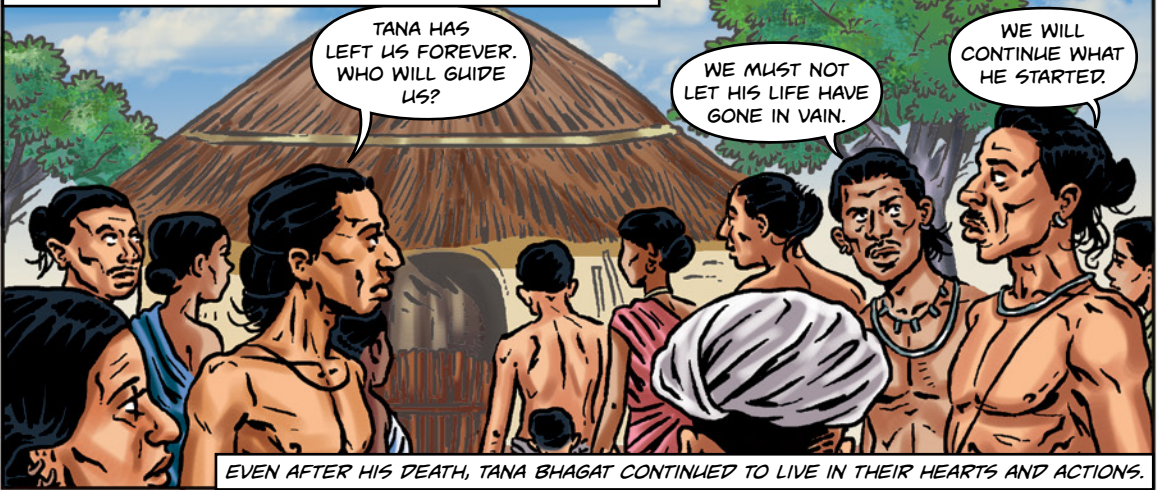


I CANNOT BE THE LEADER THEY WANT ME TO BE. I AM TOO WEAK.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.

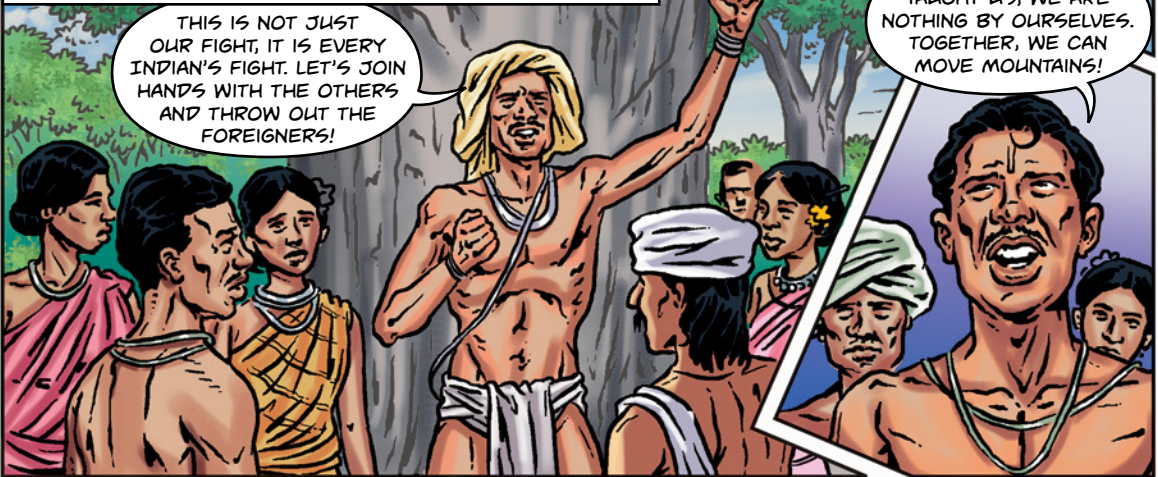
*SISTER

A YEAR LATER, IN 1916, JATRA PASSED AWAY DUE TO CHOLERA.

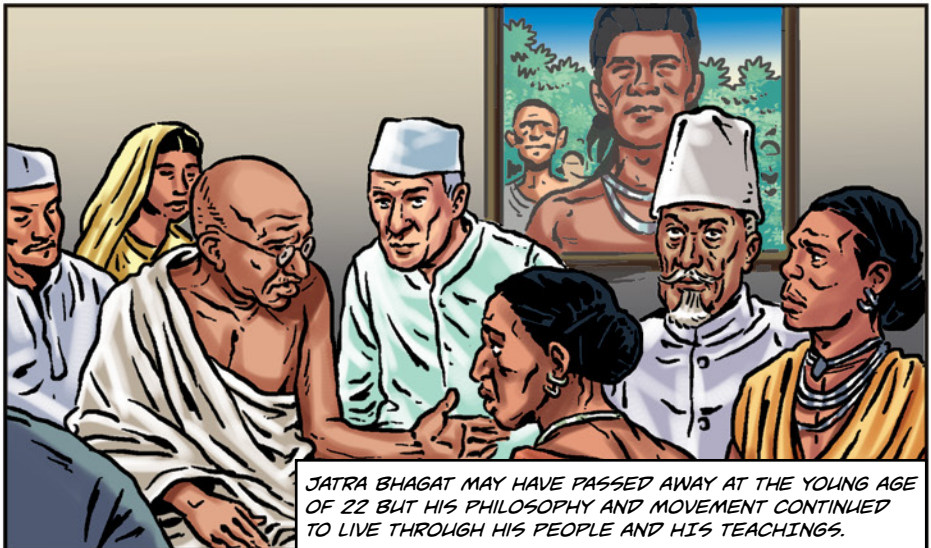


EVEN AFTER HIS DEATH, TANA BHAGAT CONTINUED TO LIVE IN THEIR HEARTS AND ACTIONS.

SOON, THE TANA BHAGAT MOVEMENT BECAME A PART OF THE LARGER NATIONAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE.



AROUND 1921, THE FOLLOWERS OF TANA BHAGAT TOOK PART IN THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT. THEY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE CONGRESS SESSIONS AND PERSUADED THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR TO PASS 'THE BHAGAT AGRICULTURAL LANDS RESTORATION ACT', WHICH AIMED TO RETURN THE LANDS THAT WERE LOST BY THE TRIBALS ON THEIR REFUSAL TO PAY RENT TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.



JATRA BHAGAT MAY HAVE PASSED AWAY AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 22 BUT HIS PHILOSOPHY AND MOVEMENT CONTINUED TO LIVE THROUGH HIS PEOPLE AND HIS TEACHINGS.

MALATI MEM

IN THE 1900S, AFTER A BRUTAL BATTLE WITH THE BURMESE, THE STATE OF ASSAM BECAME A PART OF BRITISH TERRITORY. THE AHOM KINGDOM WHICH, AMONG OTHER GROUPS, HAD EXISTED IN THE AREA FOR OVER 600 YEARS, CAME UNDER THE RULE OF THE BRITISH.



ASSAM WAS ALSO HOME TO THE TEA-TRIBE, OR THE TEA-GARDEN COMMUNITY. THIS GROUP CONSISTED OF PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT THERE YEARS EARLIER, TO WORK ON THE TEA PLANTATIONS.



REMAND ME TO FIX THAT BASKET LATER TONIGHT.



MANGRI ORANG, ALSO CALLED MALATI MEM, WORKED AT THE LALMATI TEA GARDEN OF TEZPUR.

IT'S NEARLY SUNSET.

THE MAIN OCCUPATION OF THE COMMUNITY CONTINUED TO BE FARMING. IN ADDITION TO TEA, THEY ALSO GREW POPPY.



WHAT A LONG DAY IT'S BEEN!

THE SUMMER HARVEST IS ALWAYS TOUGHER.

OPIUM*, WHICH WAS A PRODUCT OF THE POPPY PLANT, HAD BEEN ECONOMICALLY SIGNIFICANT TO ASSAMESE PEOPLE. AS A COMMUNITY CULTIVATING OPIUM, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE BEGAN TO CONSUME OPIUM HABITUALLY.



THE VALUE OF THE OPIUM TRADE WAS VERY HIGH AND THE BRITISH WANTED TO CONTROL IT COMPLETELY.



THEY ALSO SET UP OPIUM TRADING CENTRES.



MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE COUNTRY, A NEW FORM OF PROTEST WAS TAKING ROOT.



*THE DRIED LATEX FROM THE POPPY SEED POD. IT IS AN ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCE.

THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT WORKED ON THE PRINCIPALS OF NON-VIOLENCE AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE...



THE BRITISH TAKE OUR COTTON, SPIN IT INTO CLOTH IN THEIR MILLS IN ENGLAND AND THEN SELL THE CLOTH BACK TO US AT DOUBLE THE PRICE. WE WILL SPIN OUR OWN CLOTH.

...AND INVOLVED AN OULTRIGHT REJECTION OF FOREIGN GOODS AND PRODUCTS.



WE WILL SPIN OUR OWN CLOTH.

SOON, CONGRESS LEADERS CAME TO ASSAM, BRINGING THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT WITH THEM.



NO TO BRITISH COTTON!
NO TO BRITISH LIQUOR!
HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

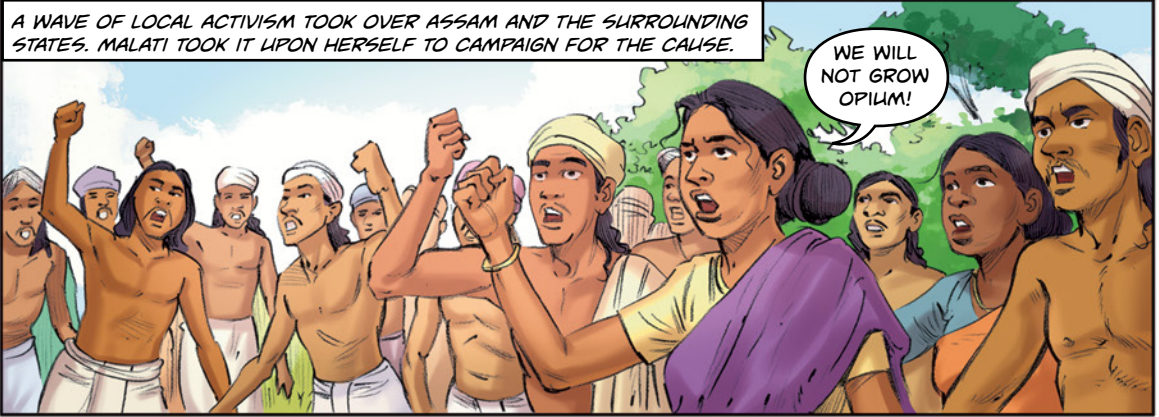


NO COTTON!
NO LIQUOR!

THE PEOPLE OF ASSAM WERE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SUPPORT THE CAUSE.

A WAVE OF LOCAL ACTIVISM TOOK OVER ASSAM AND THE SURROUNDING STATES. MALATI TOOK IT UPON HERSELF TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE CAUSE.

WE WILL NOT GROW OPIUM!



THERE WERE PROTESTS AND PICKETING.



WE HAVE TO STOP USING OPIUM. ONLY THEN CAN WE STOP GROWING IT.



MALATI SPOKE ABOUT THE BAD EFFECTS OF OPIUM IN MANY VILLAGES.

I KNOW IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE IT UP BUT THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY DEPENDS ON IT.



GIVING UP THE USE OF OPIUM WAS DIFFICULT BUT THEY SUPPORTED EACH OTHER.

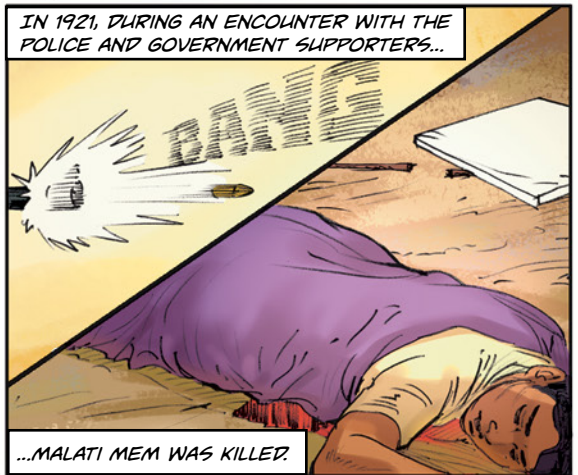
NERVOUS ABOUT THE INCREASED INTENSITY OF THE PROTESTS, THE BRITISHERS OUTLAWED PICKETING OUTSIDE THE OPIUM TRADING CENTRES.



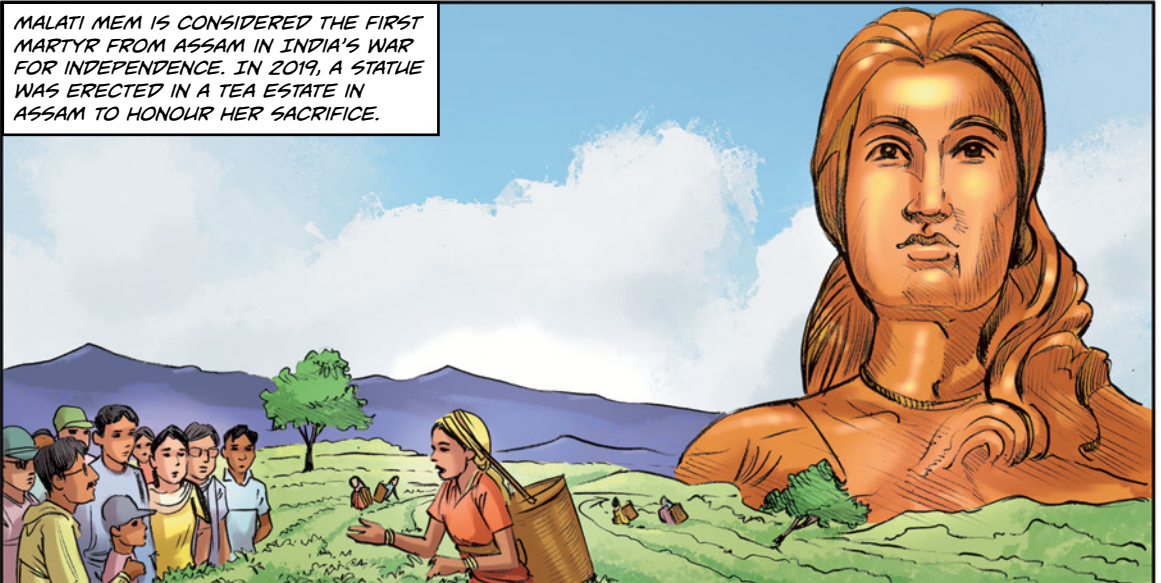
AS THE MEN IN THE VILLAGES GOT ARRESTED, MALATI AND THE REST OF THE WOMEN BEGAN TO LEAD THE MOVEMENT.



THE PROTESTS CONTINUED, MALATI'S DETERMINATION AND FERVOUR GROWING WITH EACH DAY.

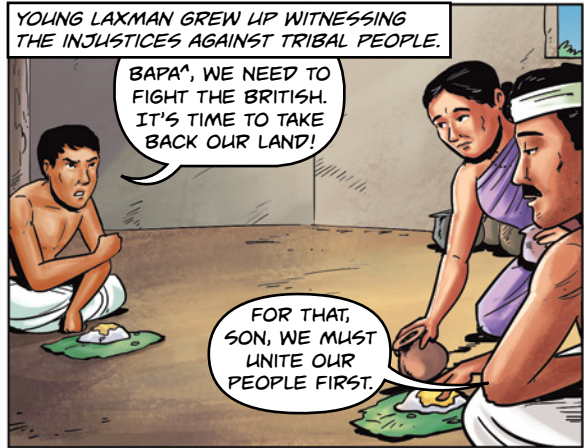
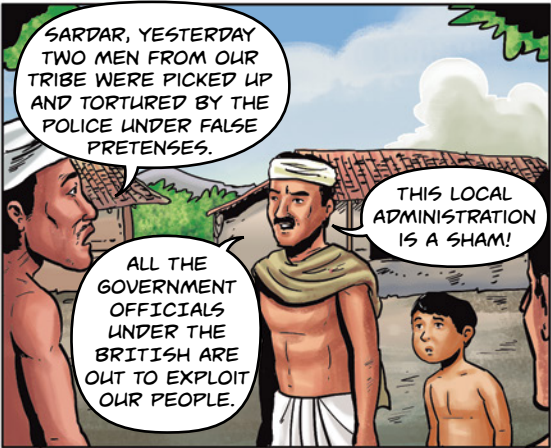
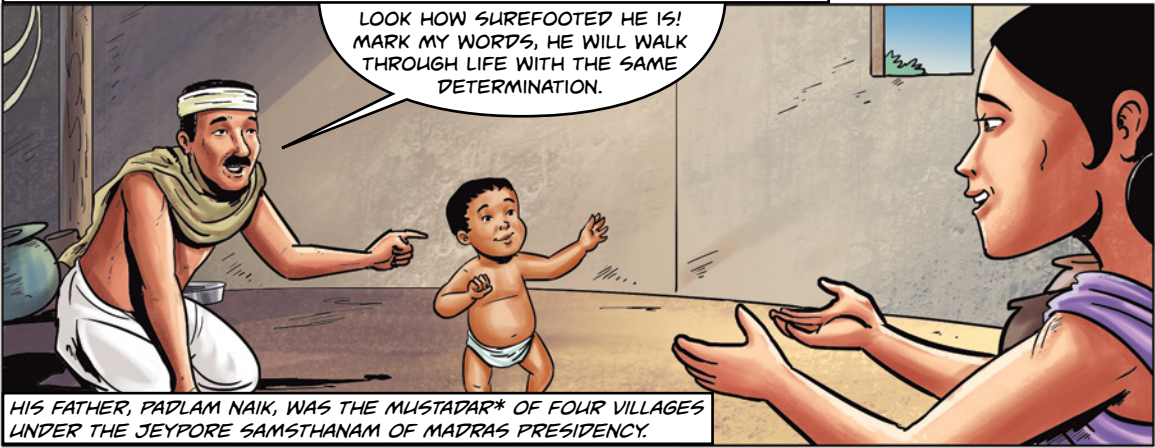


MALATI MEM IS CONSIDERED THE FIRST MARTYR FROM ASSAM IN INDIA'S WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE. IN 2019, A STATUE WAS ERECTED IN A TEA ESTATE IN ASSAM TO HONOUR HER SACRIFICE.

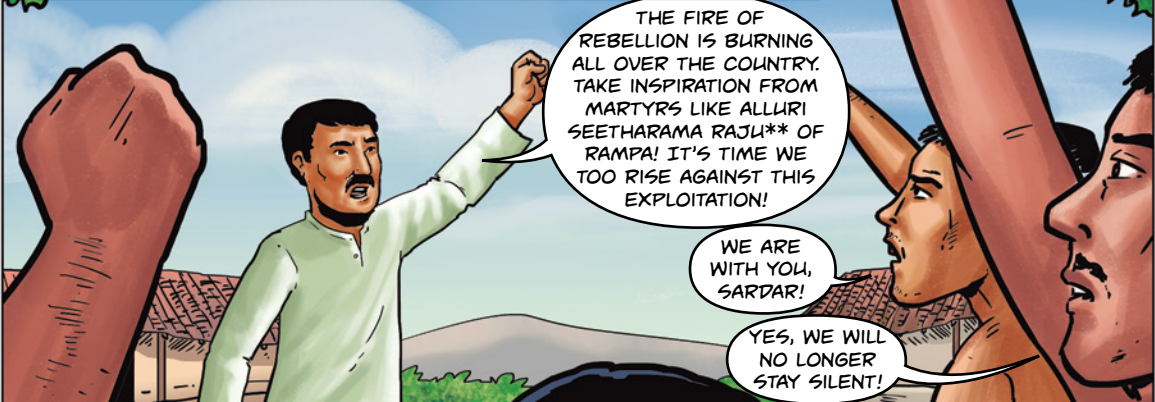


LAXMAN NAIK

BORN ON 22 NOVEMBER, 1899, TO A FAMILY BELONGING TO THE BHUYAN TRIBE, LAXMAN NAIK GREW UP IN TENTULIGUMMA, MALKANGIRI DISTRICT OF ODISHA.



AT THE AGE OF 31, LAXMAN SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER AS THE MUSTADAR AND SOON BECAME ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL TRIBAL LEADERS IN THE AREA.



*VILLAGE HEAD
*FATHER

**A TRIBAL LEADER WHO LED AN ARMED REVOLUTION

IN 1936, LAXMAN NAIK ATTENDED A MEETING ORGANISED BY THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN MALKANGIRI.

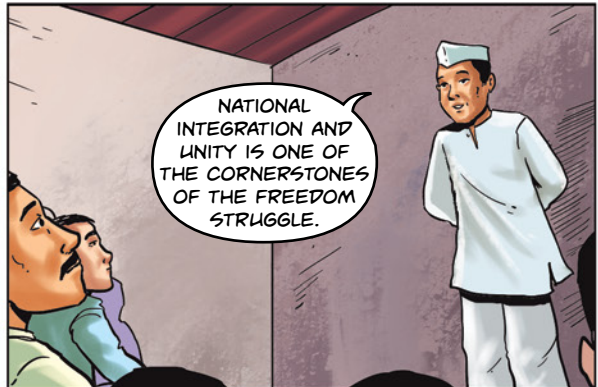


GANDHI JI'S PHILOSOPHY NEEDS TO REACH EVERY CORNER OF OUR COUNTRY. THE CONGRESS WANTS YOU TO BE A PART OF THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT.

I MUST JOIN AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR FREEDOM STRUGGLE. I CAN ALSO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF MY PEOPLE.

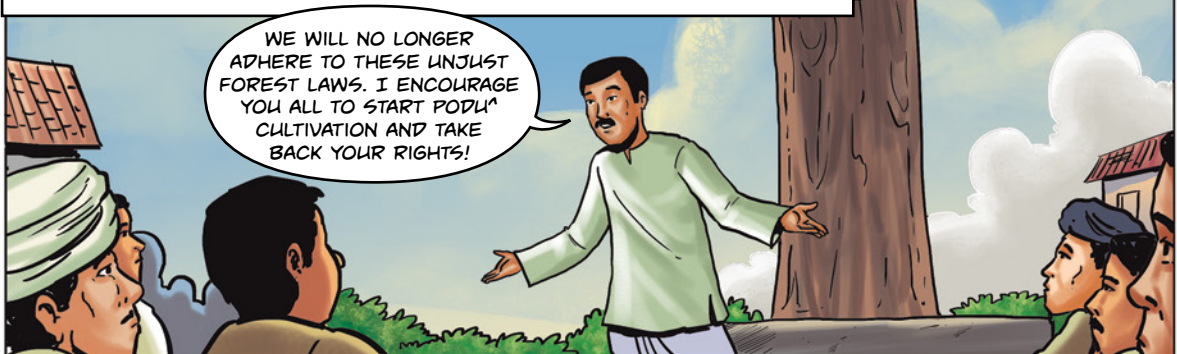


LAXMAN NAIK WAS A BELIEVER IN GANDHI'S IDEALS AND BECAME A CHAR-ANNA* MEMBER OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. THERE, HE RECEIVED TRAINING IN PHYSICAL HEALTH AND NATIONALISM.



NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND UNITY IS ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.

AS A MEMBER OF THE CONGRESS, LAXMAN NAIK CAMPAIGNED EXTENSIVELY TO GET MORE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED. HE SPREAD GANDHI'S IDEAS AND TACTICS OF RESISTANCE IN AREAS LIKE KORAPUT, MALKANGIRI AND TENTULIPADA.



WE WILL NO LONGER ADHERE TO THESE UNJUST FOREST LAWS. I ENCOURAGE YOU ALL TO START PODU[^] CULTIVATION AND TAKE BACK YOUR RIGHTS!

HE SPOKE AGAINST ILLEGAL TAX COLLECTION, THE DANGERS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND INHUMAN PRACTICES SUCH AS BONDED LABOUR. HE ALSO ENCOURAGED EDUCATION AND ADULT LITERACY IN THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

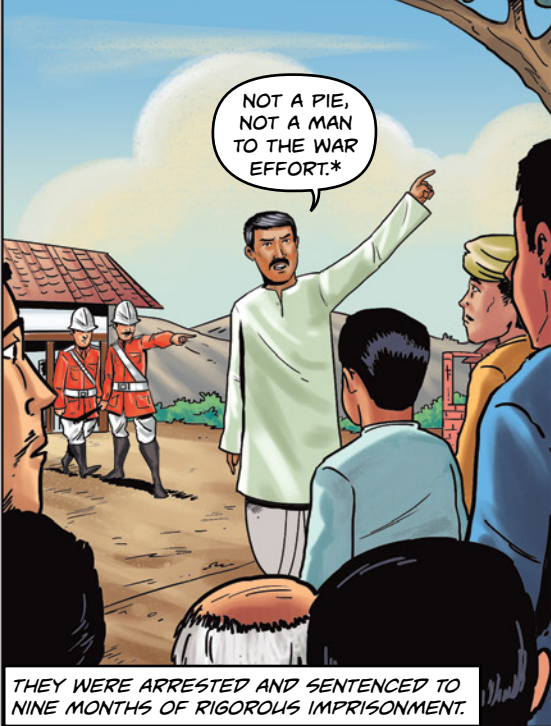


LITERACY IS THE GREATEST WEAPON AGAINST IMPERIALIST FORCES.

*MEMBERSHIP BY PAYING FOUR ANNAS (1/4TH RUPEE)

[^]TRADITIONAL TRIBAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE WHERE JUNGLE AREA IS BURNT TO OBTAIN LAND FOR CROPS.

IN 1940, GANDHI LAUNCHED THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA TO PROTEST INDIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR II. IN 1941, LAXMAN, ALONG WITH SEVEN OTHERS, UNDERTOOK THE SATYAGRAHA AT MATHILI POLICE STATION, KORAPUT.



NOT A PIE,
NOT A MAN
TO THE WAR
EFFORT.*

THEY WERE ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO NINE MONTHS OF RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT.

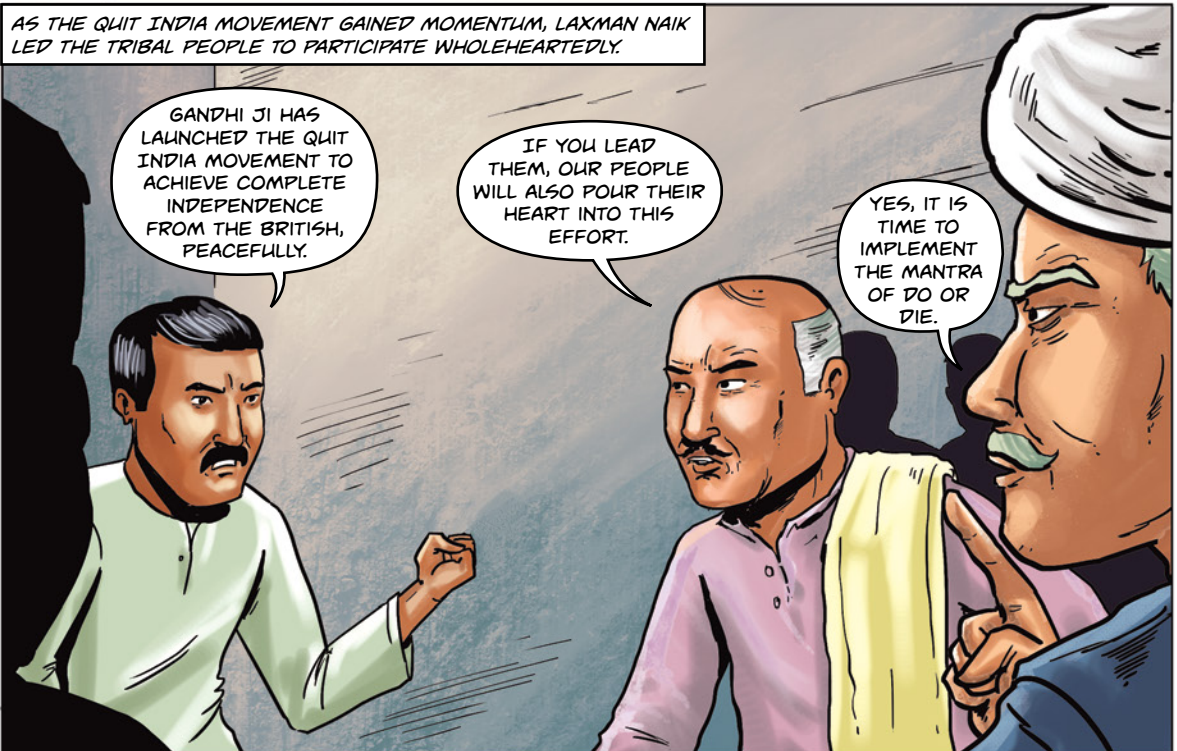
IN 1942, HE TOOK CHARGE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS PRIMARY COMMITTEE AT MATHILI. HE IMMEDIATELY STARTED IMPLEMENTING CHANGE.



THIS BRIDGE WILL
MAKE CROSSING THE
RIVER SO EASY FOR
THE PEOPLE.

SINCE HE BELIEVED IN NON-VIOLENCE AND WORKED FOR HIS COMMUNITY, HE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE 'GANDHI OF MALKANGIRI'.

AS THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT GAINED MOMENTUM, LAXMAN NAIK LED THE TRIBAL PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE WHOLEHEARTEDLY.



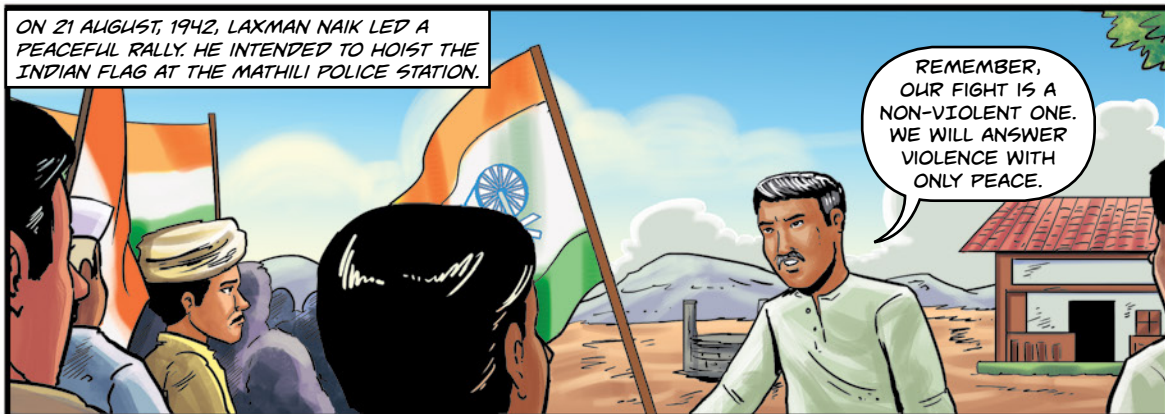
GANDHI JI HAS
LAUNCHED THE QUIT
INDIA MOVEMENT TO
ACHIEVE COMPLETE
INDEPENDENCE
FROM THE BRITISH,
PEACEFULLY.

IF YOU LEAD
THEM, OUR PEOPLE
WILL ALSO POUR THEIR
HEART INTO THIS
EFFORT.

YES, IT IS
TIME TO
IMPLEMENT
THE MANTRA
OF DO OR
DIE.

*SLOGAN OF THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT, PROTESTING INDIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR II

ON 21 AUGUST, 1942, LAXMAN NAIK LED A PEACEFUL RALLY. HE INTENDED TO HOIST THE INDIAN FLAG AT THE MATHILI POLICE STATION.



REMEMBER, OUR FIGHT IS A NON-VIOLENT ONE. WE WILL ANSWER VIOLENCE WITH ONLY PEACE.

AT THE MAITHILI POLICE STATION —



THESE PEOPLE DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY'LL BACK DOWN EASILY. WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR TROUBLE.

YES SIR, I'LL ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CONSTABLES IMMEDIATELY.



STOP RIGHT THERE. IF YOU COME CLOSER, WE WILL SHOOT.

WE HAVE COME IN PEACE. WE WILL HOIST OUR FLAG.

THE POLICE BEAT THE PROTESTORS WITH LATHIS AND FIRED AT THEM. FIVE PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES AND MANY MORE, INCLUDING LAXMAN NAIK, SUSTAINED INJURIES.



ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WAS KILLED WAS G. RAMMAYA, A FOREST GUARD.

THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO GET RID OF LAXMAN NAIK. WE MUST HOLD HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF RAMMAYA.

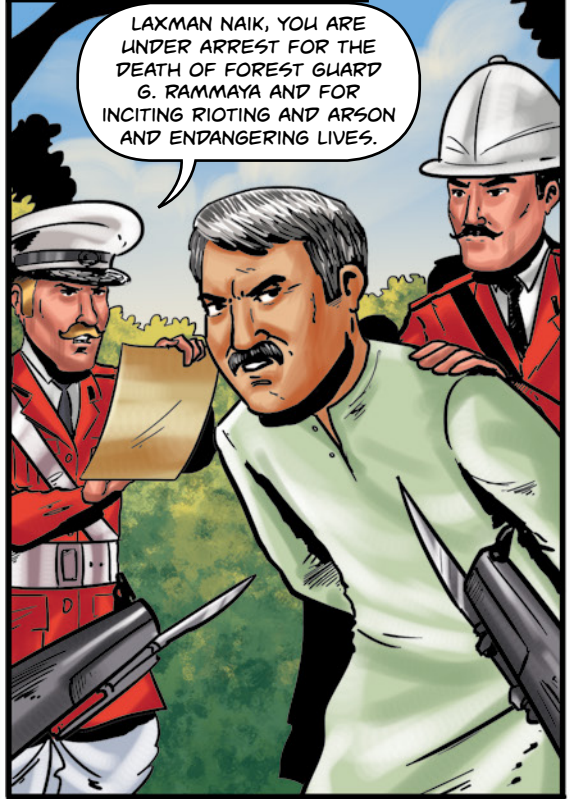
YES SIR, I WILL ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS FOR HIS ARREST AT ONCE!

THE BRITISH OFFICIALS PUBLICLY HELD LAXMAN NAIK RESPONSIBLE FOR RAMMAYA'S DEATH, AS HE WAS THE LEADER OF THE PROCESSION THAT HAD CAUSED THE DEATH.

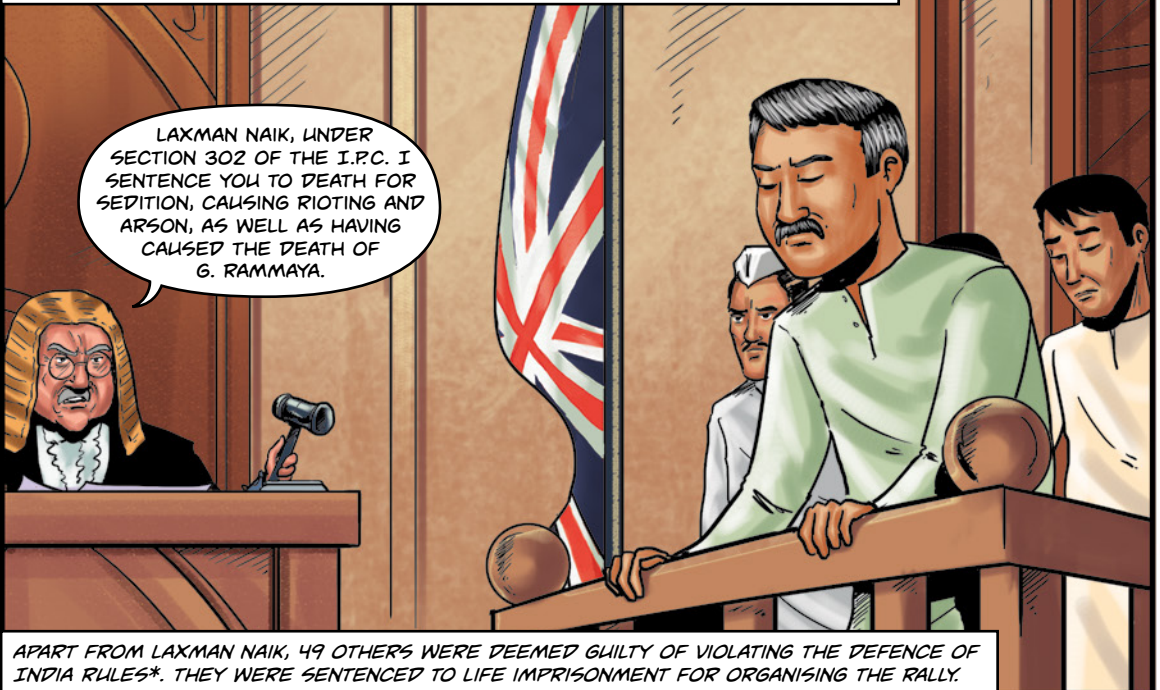
HEARING ABOUT THE INTENT TO ARREST HIM, LAXMAN NAIK DECIDED TO LEAVE MATHILI. HIS SON AND A FEW OTHER CONGRESS WORKERS ACCOMPANIED HIM.



THAT WAS NOT TO BE. AS THEY WERE CROSSING THE JUNGLE —



ON 18 SEPTEMBER, 1942, LAXMAN NAIK AND OTHERS ACCUSED IN THE SAME CASE WERE SENT TO KORAPUT JAIL. THERE, THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO A CRIMINAL TRIAL.



*AN ACT ENACTED TO CURTAIL NATIONALIST ACTIVITY

ALTHOUGH LAXMAN NAIK APPEALED AGAINST HIS SENTENCE, IT WAS REJECTED BY THE PATNA HIGH COURT AND HE WAS SENT TO BERHAMPUR JAIL TO BE HANGED.



FATHER, HOW WILL I GO ON WITHOUT YOU?

SON, THE COUNTRY NEEDS YOUTH LIKE YOU. SACRIFICING MY LIFE FOR THE COUNTRY IS AN HONOUR. MY ONLY REGRET IS NOT SEEING MY COUNTRY FREE.

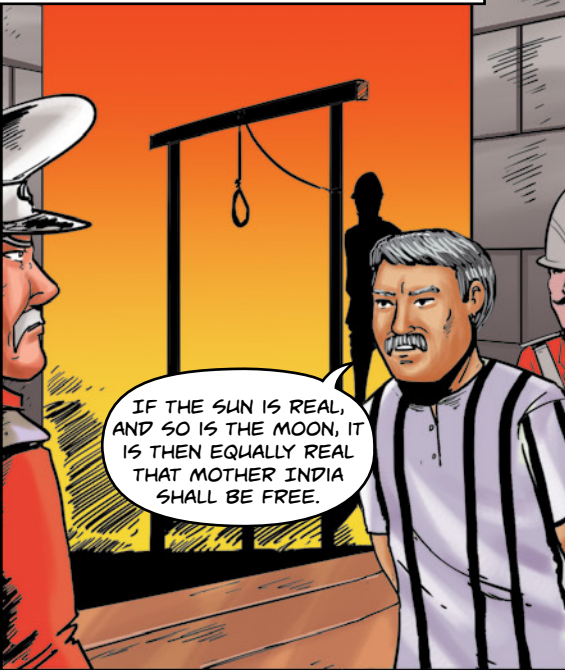
ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS EXECUTION, LAXMAN NAIK REQUESTED THAT HE BE ALLOWED TO HAVE HIS LAST MEAL WITH HIS COMPANIONS WHO WERE IN PRISON.



I AM SO GRATEFUL THAT MY LAST MEAL IS WITH MEN LIKE YOU. I CAN GO PEACEFULLY, KNOWING THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE WORKING FOR OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE.

WE WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN, SARDAR. WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL WE HAVE OUR FREEDOM!

ON 29 MARCH, 1943, AT 5:30 AM, LAXMAN NAIK WAS HANGED TO DEATH BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. HIS LAST WORDS WERE —



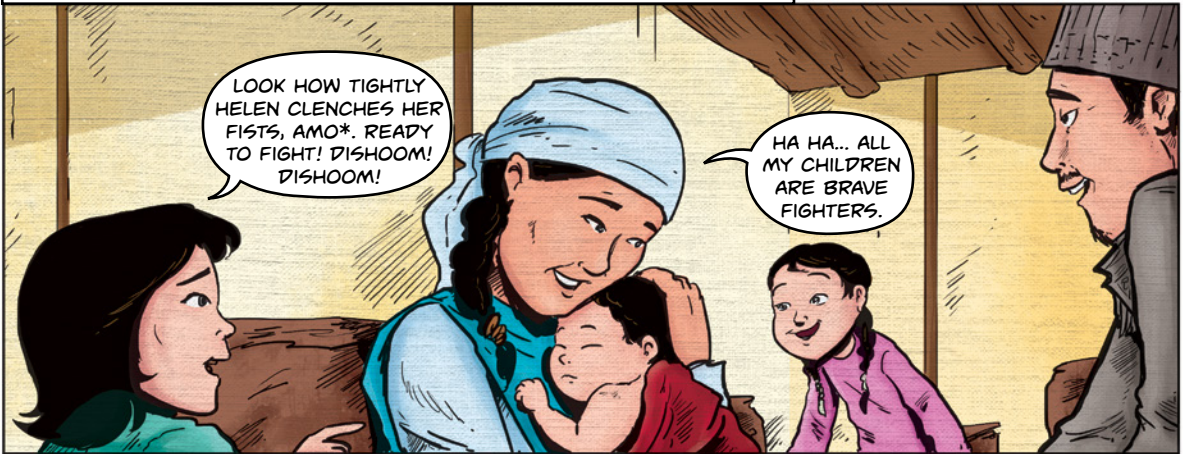
IF THE SUN IS REAL, AND SO IS THE MOON, IT IS THEN EQUALLY REAL THAT MOTHER INDIA SHALL BE FREE.

LAXMAN NAIK'S LEADERSHIP, COURAGE AND SACRIFICE LEFT A SIGNIFICANT MARK ON THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT OF ODISHA AND INSPIRED THOUSANDS MORE TO GET INVOLVED.

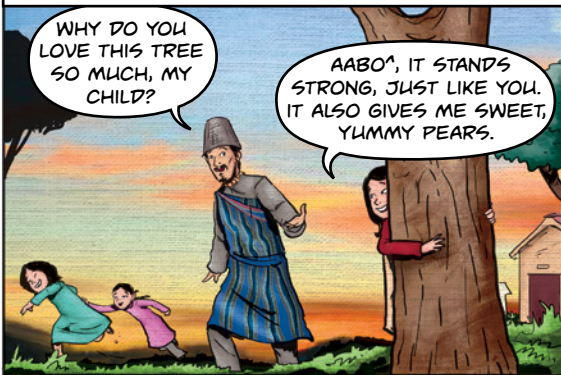


HELEN LEPCHA

IN THE SMALL VILLAGE OF SANGMU IN SOUTH SIKKIM, ON 14 JANUARY, 1902, ACHLUNG LEPCHA AND HIS WIFE WERE BLESSED WITH THEIR THIRD CHILD.



A FEW WEEKS LATER, HELEN'S FAMILY MOVED TO KURSEONG, WHICH WAS A MORE DEVELOPED TOWN. HELEN SPENT MOST OF HER CHILDHOOD HERE.



HELEN WAS ADMITTED TO THE SCOTT MISSION GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL IN KURSEONG.

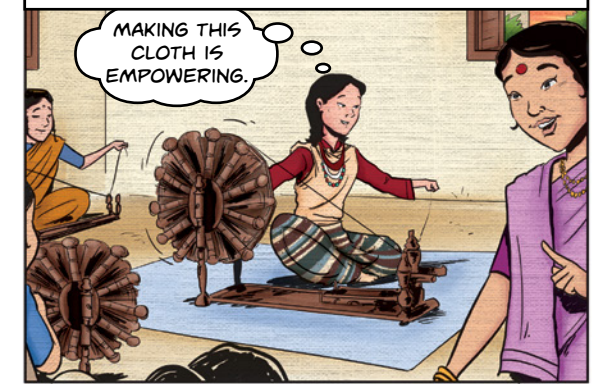


HOWEVER, SHE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL IN 1916.

IN 1917, MAHATMA GANDHI STARTED THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT. IN HELEN'S HOMETOWN —

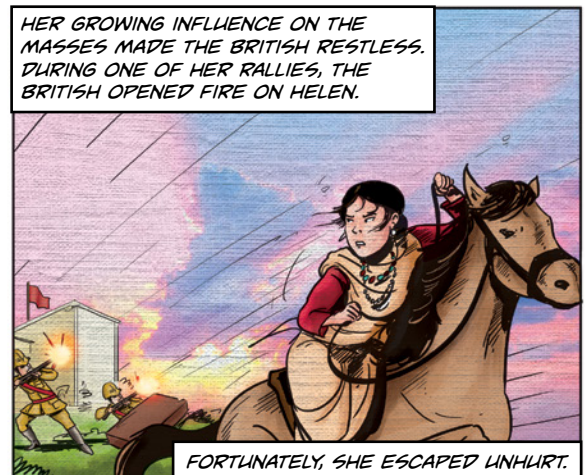
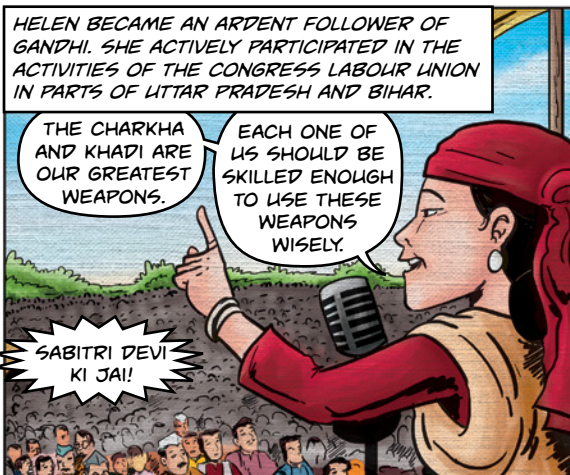
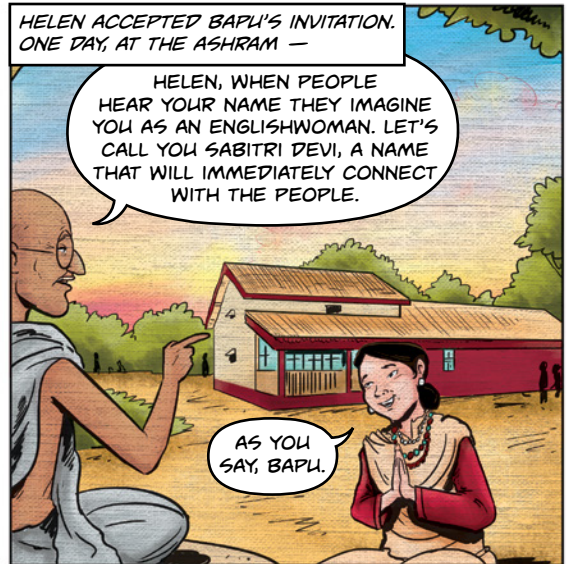
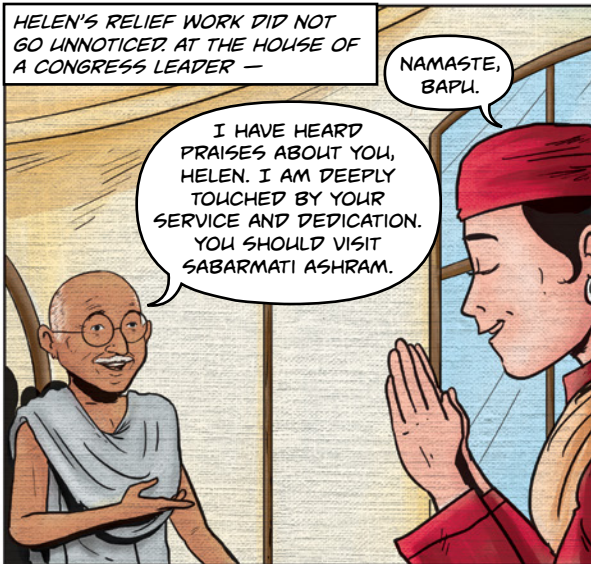


WHEN SHE WAS 16, HELEN MOVED TO HER ELDER SISTER'S HOUSE IN CALCUTTA. THERE, SHE JOINED A CHARKHA TRAINING CENTRE RUN BY ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR'S** GRANDDAUGHTER.

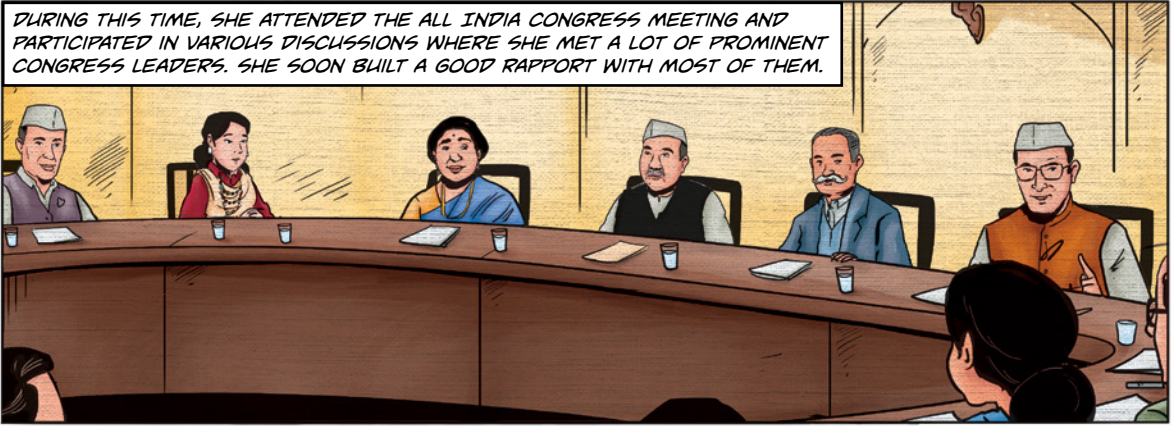


*MOTHER
^FATHER

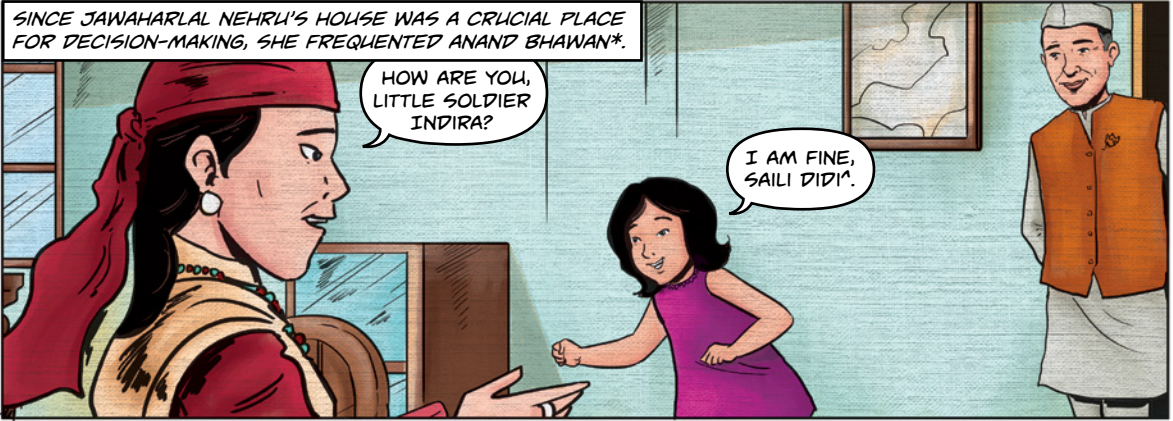
**AN EDUCATOR AND SOCIAL REFORMER



DURING THIS TIME, SHE ATTENDED THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS MEETING AND PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS WHERE SHE MET A LOT OF PROMINENT CONGRESS LEADERS. SHE SOON BUILT A GOOD RAPPORT WITH MOST OF THEM.



SINCE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S HOUSE WAS A CRUCIAL PLACE FOR DECISION-MAKING, SHE FREQUENTED ANAND BHAWAN*.



HOW ARE YOU, LITTLE SOLDIER INDIRA?

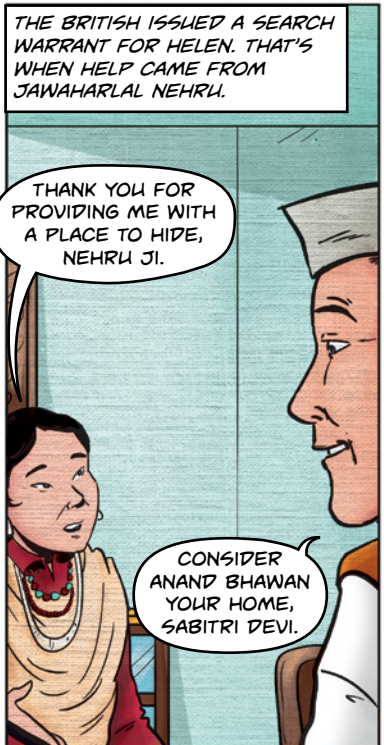
I AM FINE, SAILI DIDI¹.

IN 1921, NON-COOPERATION BECAME THE MOTTO OF EVERY INDIAN. AT MOHAMMAD ALI PARK, CALCUTTA, HELEN LED A MASSIVE PROCESSION OF OVER 10,000 MINeworkERS OF THE JHARIA COALFIELD, ALONG WITH EMINENT LEADERS.



*JAWHARLAL NEHRU'S HOUSE IN ALLAHABAD

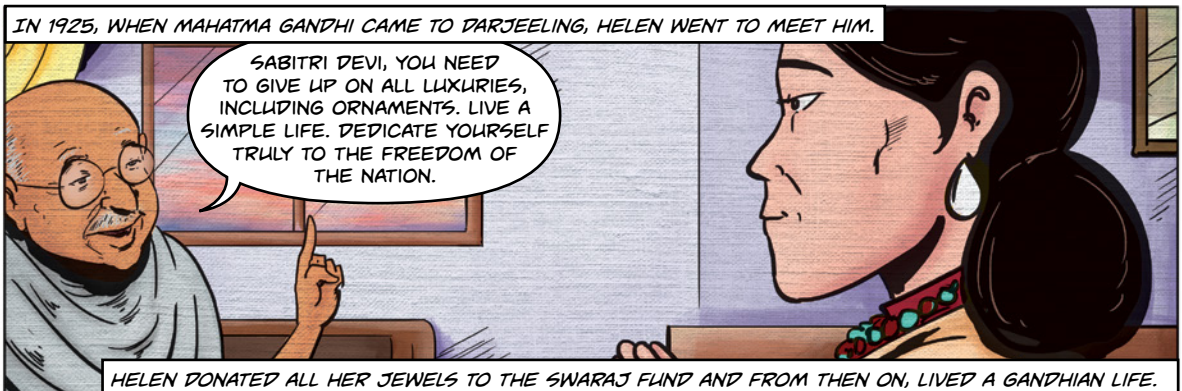
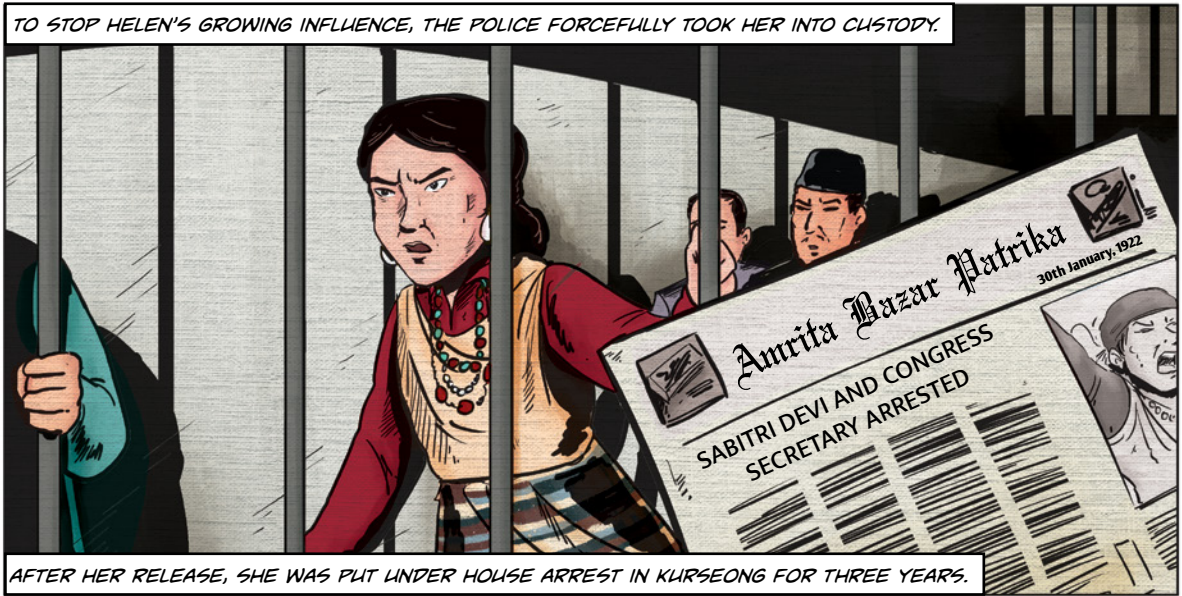
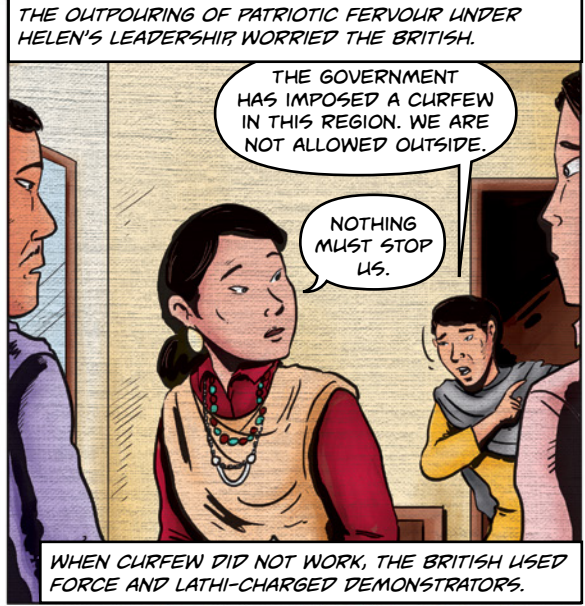
THE BRITISH ISSUED A SEARCH WARRANT FOR HELEN. THAT'S WHEN HELP CAME FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

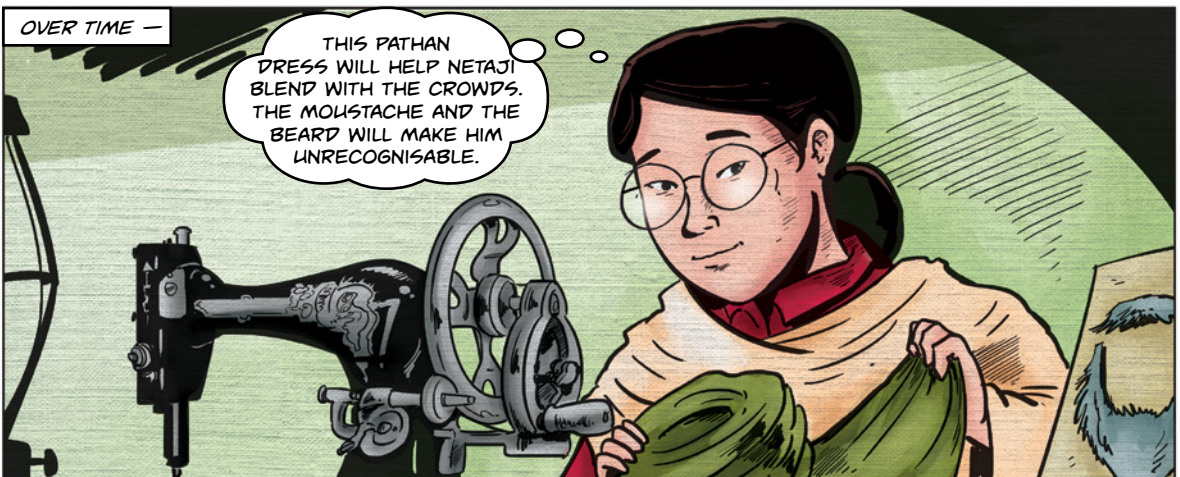
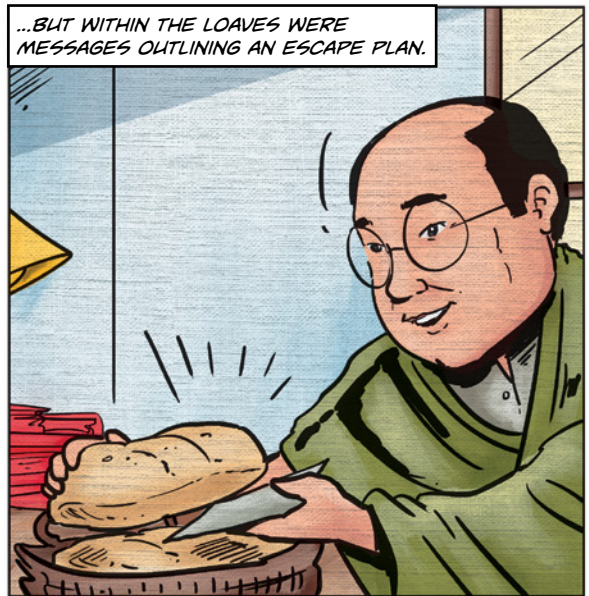
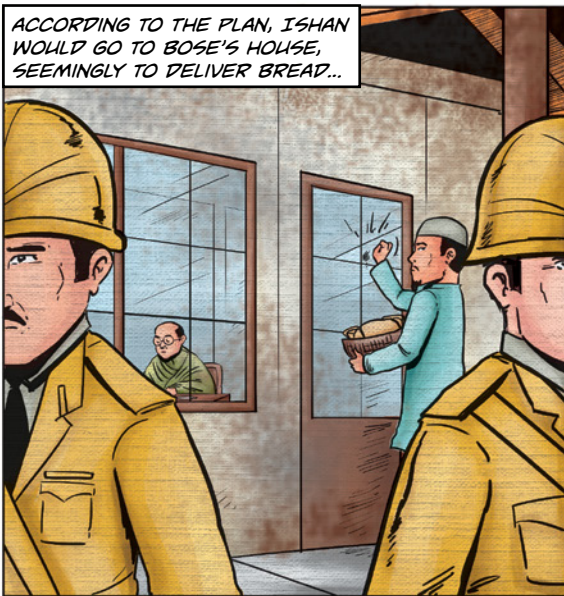
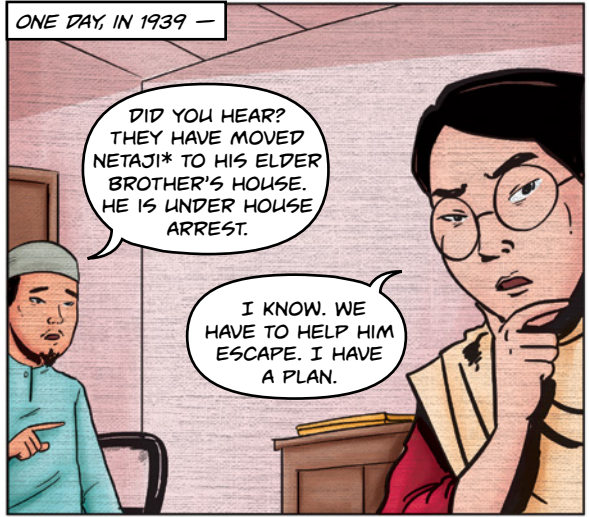
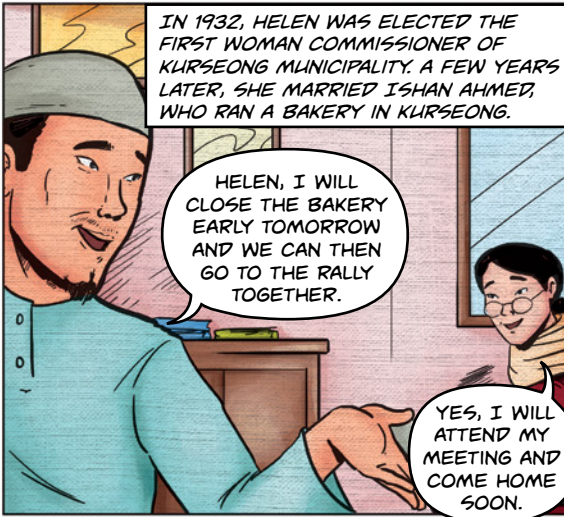


THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING ME WITH A PLACE TO HIDE, NEHRU JI.

CONSIDER ANAND BHAWAN YOUR HOME, SABITRI DEVI.

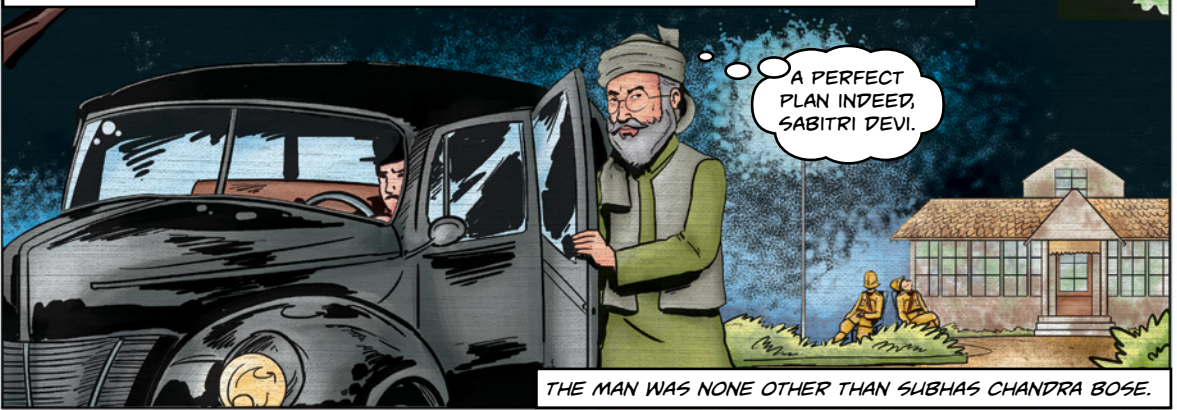
¹SAILI MEANS THE THIRD OF MANY SIBLINGS.





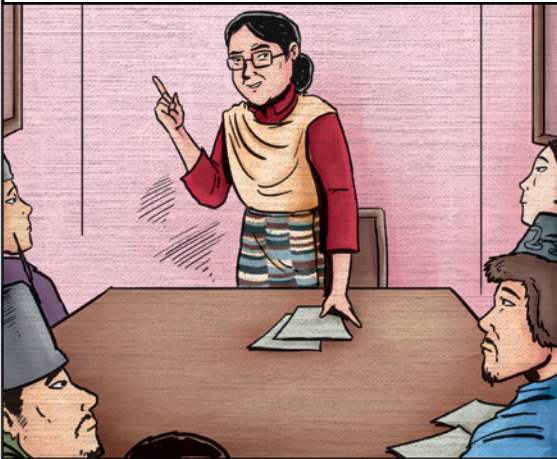
*SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

AT MIDNIGHT, ON 16 JANUARY, 1941, A BEARDED MAN HOPPED ON THE REAR SEAT OF A BLACK SEDAN AND TRAVELLED FROM KURSEONG TO CALCUTTA AND THEN TO GERMANY VIA KABUL.

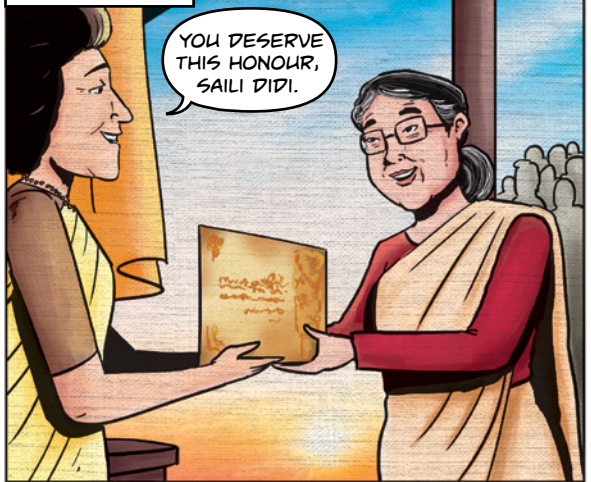


THE MAN WAS NONE OTHER THAN SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE.

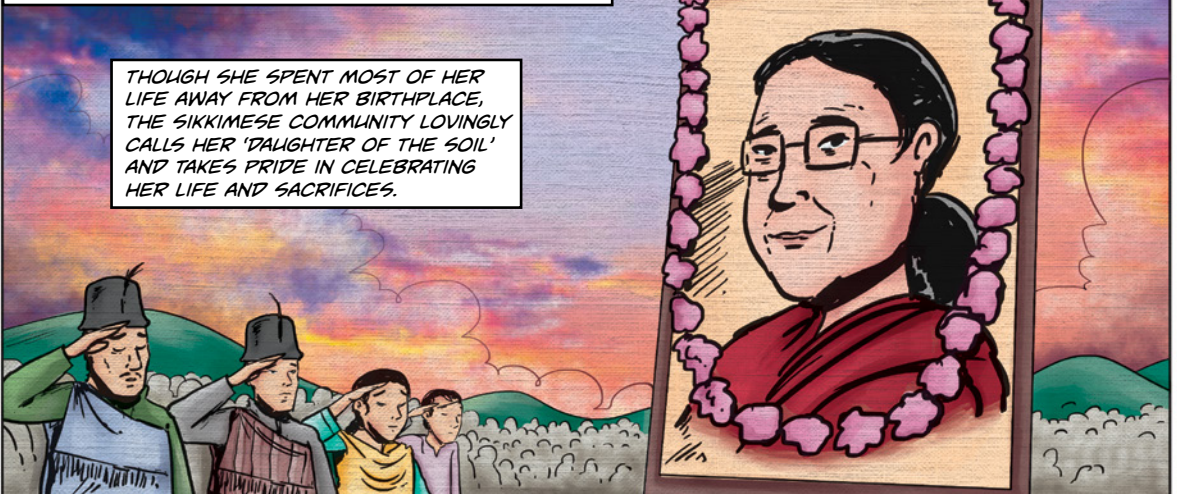
OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, HELEN CONTINUED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND ALSO IMMERSSED HERSELF IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. LATER, SHE BECAME THE CHAIRPERSON OF VARIOUS ASSOCIATIONS IN KURSEONG INCLUDING THE SHERPA ASSOCIATION AND THE LEPCHA ASSOCIATION.



ON 15 AUGUST, 1972, HELEN LEPCHA WAS CONFERRED WITH THE TAMRA PATRA* AND A PENSION FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS BY THE THEN PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI. IT WAS A MOMENT FILLED WITH NOSTALGIA.



HELEN LEPCHA BREATHED HER LAST ON 18 AUGUST, 1980.



*AN AWARD INSTITUTED IN 1972 TO HONOUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS

PUTALIMAYA DEVI PODDAR

PUTLIMAYA DEVI BELONGED TO THE TAMANG TRIBE OF WEST BENGAL. HER THIRST FOR INDEPENDENCE BEGAN IN KURSEONG, NEAR DARJEELING, WHEN SHE WAS ALL OF 14.



GANDHI JI SAYS THAT IF WE GIVE UP FOREIGN GOODS AND ADOPT SWADESHI GOODS; WE WILL CRIPPLE THE BRITISH. JOIN THE REVOLUTION TODAY!

SARAYU PRASAD* SPEAKS SO WELL. HE IS RIGHT. WE WILL GET FREEDOM IF EVERYONE TAKES UP THE CAUSE.

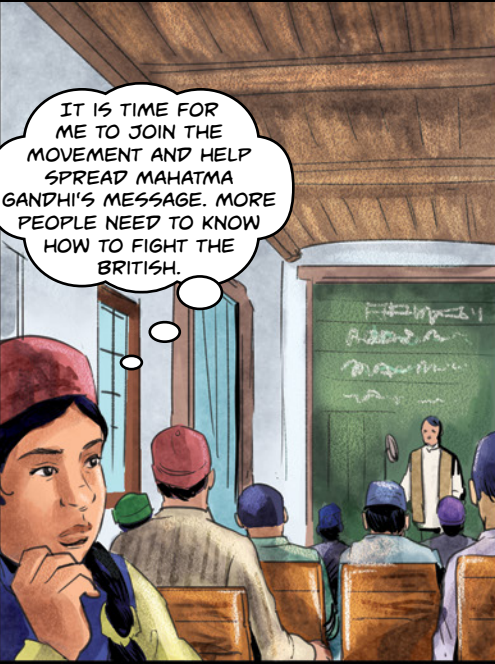
PUTALIMAYA WAS SO TAKEN IN BY SARAYU PRASAD'S WORDS THAT SHE EXPRESSED HER DESIRE TO JOIN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.



YOU ARE ONLY 14. IT IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE IN SCHOOL. STUDY HARD, AND THEN USE THAT KNOWLEDGE TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

*SARAYU PRASAD PODDAR WAS A CONGRESS FREEDOM FIGHTER.

WHILE IN SCHOOL, PUTALIMAYA KEPT IN TOUCH WITH FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND ATTENDED THE CONGRESS MEETINGS IN HER TOWN.



IT IS TIME FOR ME TO JOIN THE MOVEMENT AND HELP SPREAD MAHATMA GANDHI'S MESSAGE. MORE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO FIGHT THE BRITISH.

IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THAT THE CONGRESS BRANCH OFFICE IN KURSEONG WAS OPENED AGAIN, PUTALIMAYA EXPRESSED HER DESIRE TO JOIN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT, BUT —



YOU ARE AT THE AGE WHEN YOU SHOULD BE GETTING MARRIED. YOU CAN'T BE OUT ON THE STREET FIGHTING THE BRITISH.

BUT BABA, I KNOW I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHY DO YOU STOP ME?

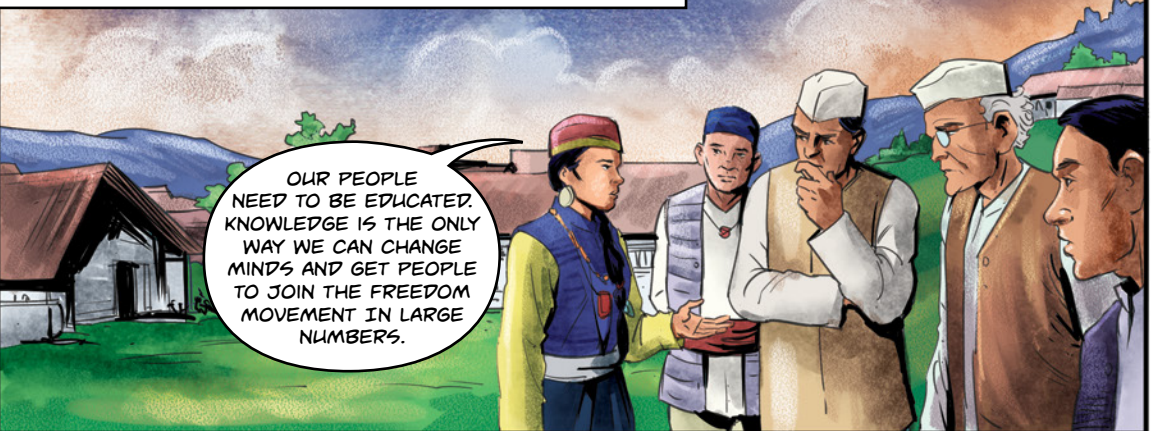


YOU ARE MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR ME TO KEEP MY JOB.

I AM BEING THREATENED EVERY DAY BECAUSE YOU ATTEND THE CONGRESS MEETINGS. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU JOIN THEM?

BABA, THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO.

DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM HER FAMILY, PUTALIMAYA KEPT GOING.



OUR PEOPLE NEED TO BE EDUCATED. KNOWLEDGE IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN CHANGE MINDS AND GET PEOPLE TO JOIN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN LARGE NUMBERS.

PUTALIMAYA SET UP THE HARIJAN SAMAJ IN KURSEONG WITH A SCHOOL TO EDUCATE HER PEOPLE.



WE NEED MORE WOMEN TO JOIN. THEY WILL, IN TURN, INSPIRE THEIR CHILDREN TO RISE UP AGAINST THE BRITISH.

PUTALIMAYA, ALONG WITH OTHER CONGRESS MEMBERS, SET UP A MAHILA SAMITI WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF GETTING MORE WOMEN INVOLVED.



KHADI IS THE KEY TO SHUNNING FOREIGN GOODS. WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN CLOTH WITH THE CHARKHA. IF ALL OF US JOIN IN, WE CAN CUT FOREIGN CLOTH OUT.

IN THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, IN 1942, THERE WAS A CALL FOR SWARAJ IN BOMBAY*. SEVERAL PROMINENT LEADERS WERE ARRESTED.



IN KURSEONG, THE CONGRESS LEADERS OF THE AREA JOINED HANDS TO MARCH IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ARRESTED IN BOMBAY. AT THE FOREFRONT WERE HARISH CHETTRI¹, PUTALIMAYA AND SARAYU PRASAD.



POORNA SWARAJ!

INQILAB ZINDABAD!

*NOW MUMBAI

¹CONGRESS WORKER AND FREEDOM FIGHTER WORKING IN THE AREA



THE BRITISH WERE SO AFRAID OF THE EFFECT THE LEADERS HAD ON THE MASSES THAT —

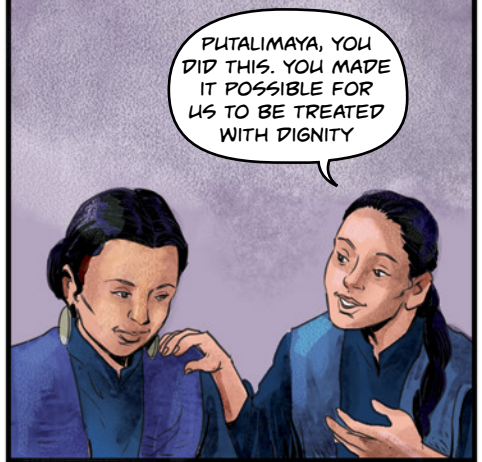


WHILE IN JAIL, PUTALIMAYA PROTESTED AGAINST THE WAY THE PRISONERS WERE BEING TREATED.



WE ARE POLITICAL PRISONERS. WE DEMAND BETTER FOOD AND BASIC AMENITIES. WE WILL NOT ABIDE BY YOUR RULES UNTIL WE GET WHAT WE WANT.

PUTALIMAYA WENT ON A HUNGER STRIKE UNTIL HER DEMANDS WERE MET. THE BRITISH WERE FORCED TO RELENT.



PUTALIMAYA, YOU DID THIS. YOU MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY

PUTALIMAYA SPENT HER TIME IN PRISON READING AND SPINNING THE CHARKHA.



THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE IS RAGING ON. I HOPE THAT SOMEDAY WE WILL ALL BE ABLE TO BREATHE THE AIR OF FREEDOM.

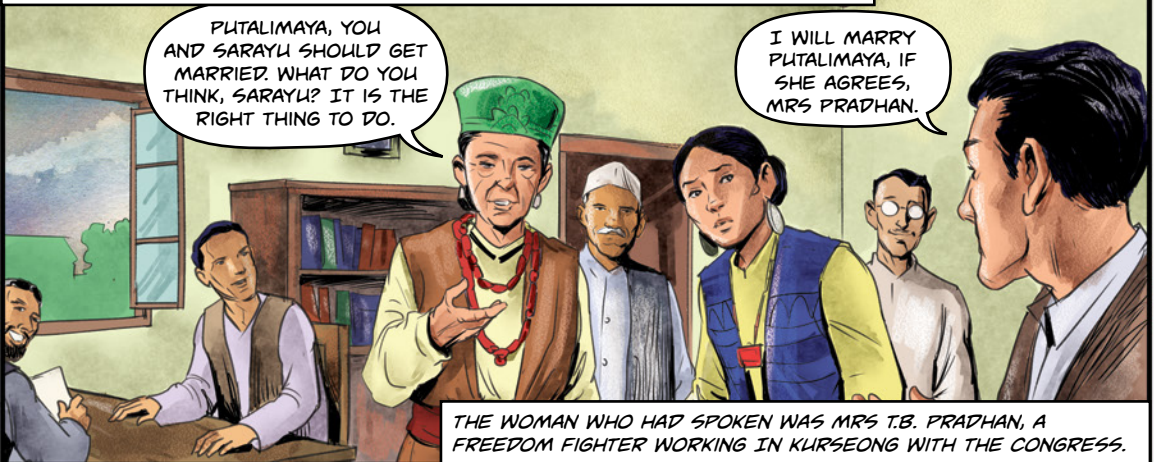
IN JANUARY 1944, PUTALIMAYA WAS RELEASED FROM JAIL. WHEN SHE WENT BACK TO KURSEONG —



YOU CANNOT ENTER THE HOUSE IF YOU KEEP FIGHTING THE BRITISH. THIS HAS TO STOP NOW.

THEN I WILL LEAVE. THE LOVE I HAVE FOR MY COUNTRY IS SOMETHING I AM PROUD OF. I WILL NOT LET IT GO.

WHEN THE MEMBERS OF THE KURSEONG CONGRESS HEARD ABOUT HER FAMILY —

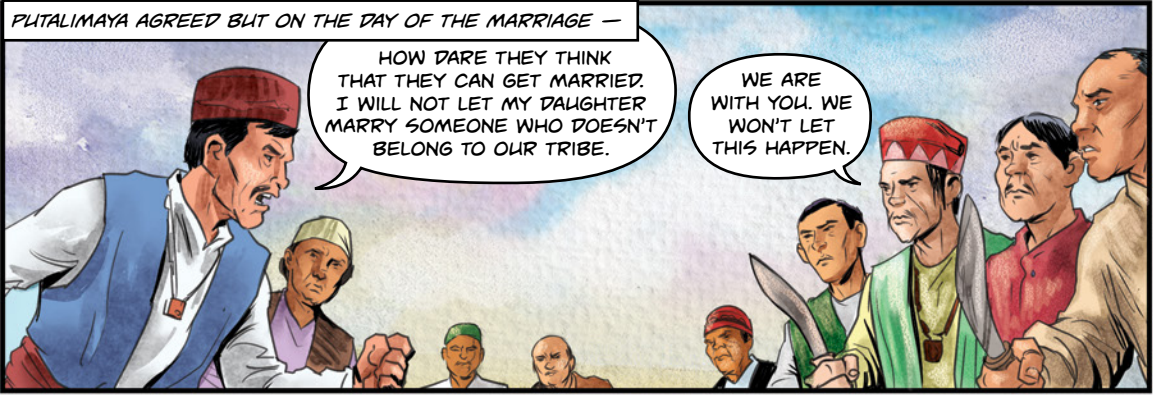


PUTALIMAYA, YOU AND SARAYU SHOULD GET MARRIED. WHAT DO YOU THINK, SARAYU? IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

I WILL MARRY PUTALIMAYA, IF SHE AGREES, MRS PRADHAN.

THE WOMAN WHO HAD SPOKEN WAS MRS T.B. PRADHAN, A FREEDOM FIGHTER WORKING IN KURSEONG WITH THE CONGRESS.

PUTALIMAYA AGREED BUT ON THE DAY OF THE MARRIAGE —



HOW DARE THEY THINK THAT THEY CAN GET MARRIED. I WILL NOT LET MY DAUGHTER MARRY SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T BELONG TO OUR TRIBE.

WE ARE WITH YOU. WE WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE PLACE WHERE THE MARRIAGE WAS TAKING PLACE —



YOU HAVE ALREADY SHUNNED HER. HOW DARE YOU STAND IN THE WAY OF HER HAPPINESS? I WILL NOT LET A SINGLE PERSON PASS. THIS MARRIAGE WILL TAKE PLACE!

THE MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE WITH THE SUPPORT OF OTHER CONGRESS MEMBERS.

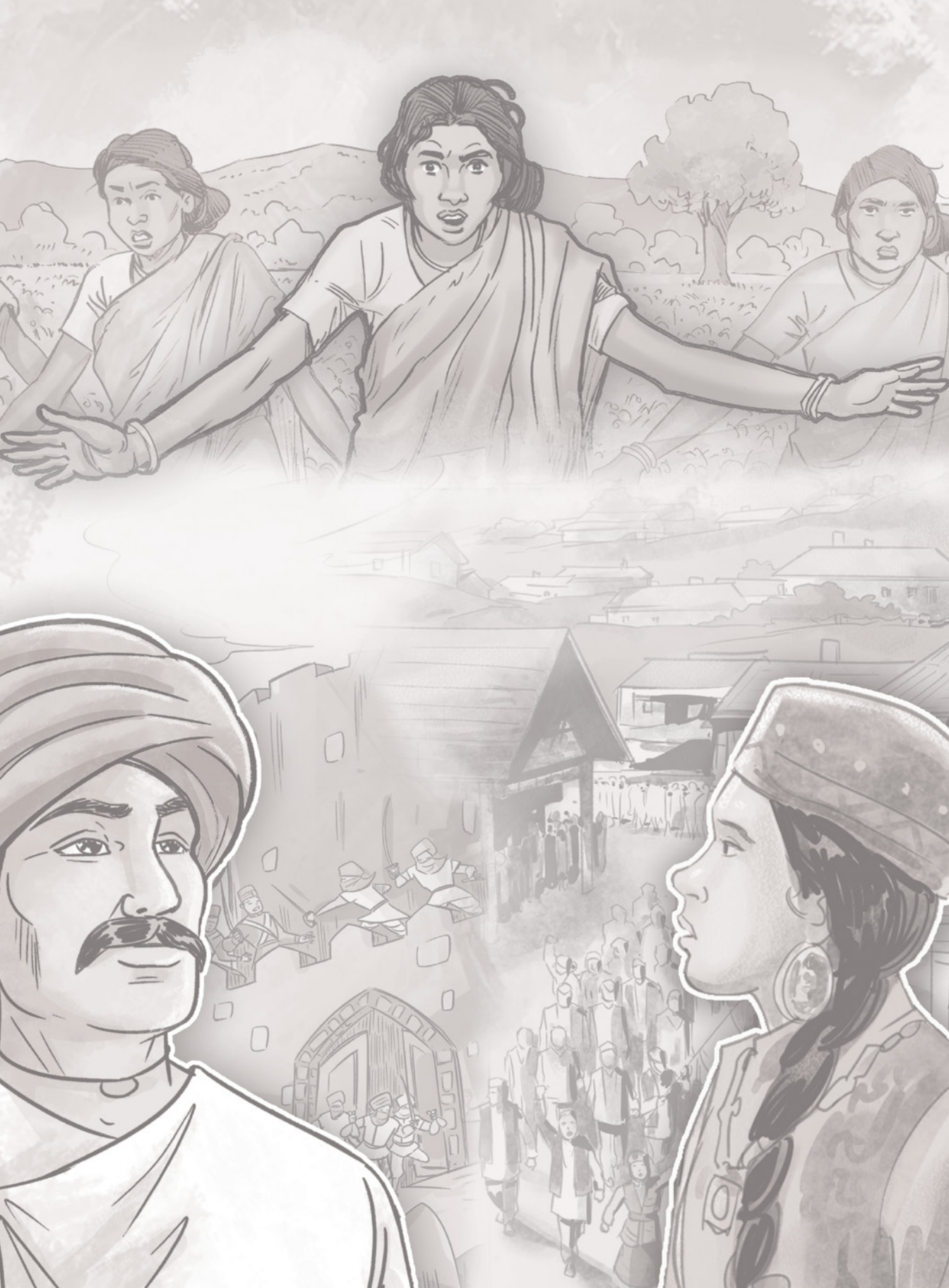


I WILL BE INDEBTED TO YOU FOREVER, MRS PRADHAN. YOU STOOD WITH US WHEN WE HAD NO ONE.

YOU MUST DO GOOD NOW. I BELIEVE THE PEOPLE NEED YOU. GO, BE A VOICE THAT IS HEARD.

PUTALIMAYA DID JUST THAT. SHE DEDICATED HER LIFE TO HER PEOPLE. SHE WORKED TIRELESSLY EVEN AFTER INDEPENDENCE. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AWARDED HER WITH THE NAME 'SWATANTRATA SENANINI'. PUTALIMAYA DEVI PODDAR'S LEGACY LIVES ON IN THE MINDS OF HER PEOPLE AND HER COUNTRY.



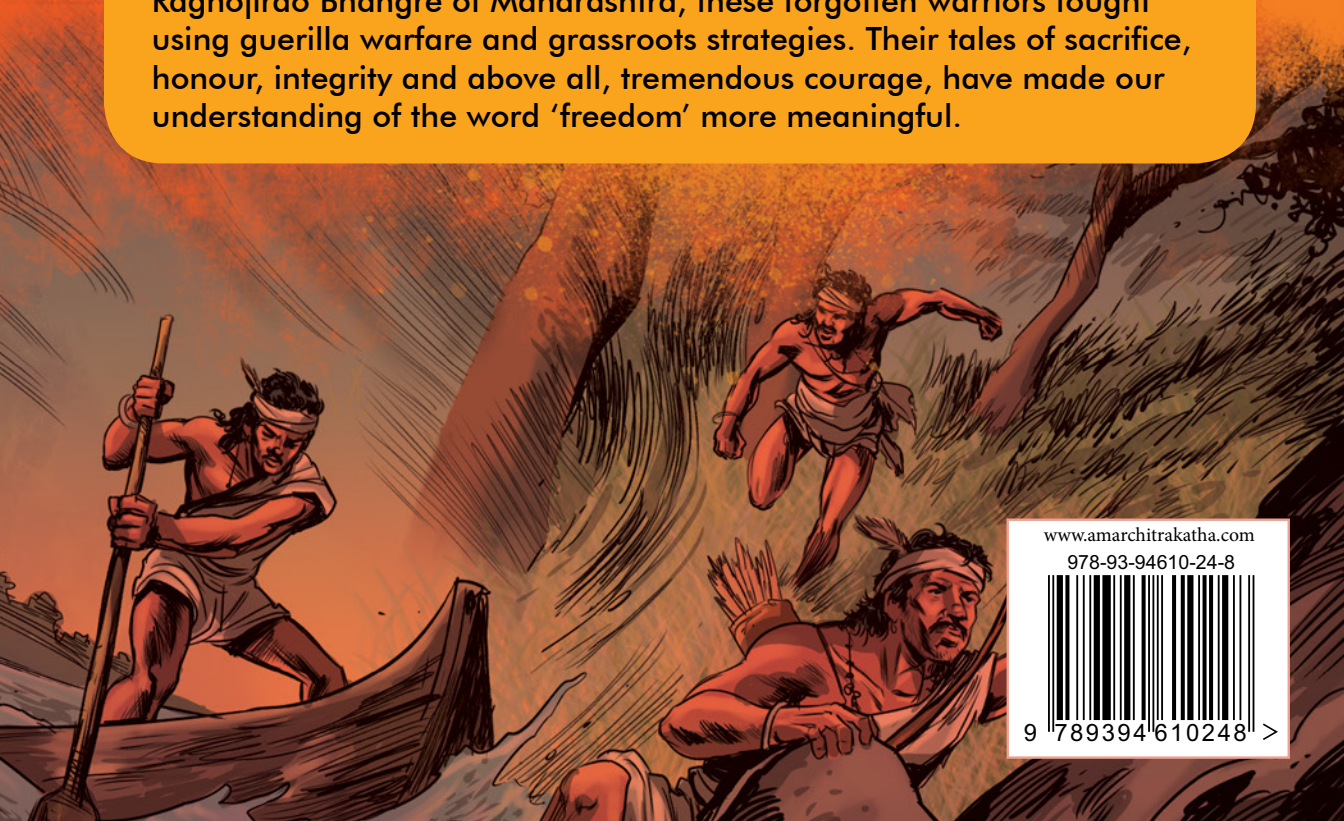




TRIBAL LEADERS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

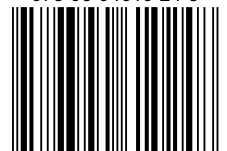
During India's freedom struggle, many brave men and women rose up in defence of their country and were immortalised in the hearts of their countrymen. There were also those who fought back against oppression for the sake of their beloved land, forests and nature – their very source of livelihood. These were the adivasis, or first settlers, who had a crucial role to play in freeing India from the British.

Amar Chitra Katha presents *Tribal Leaders of the Freedom Struggle*, a collection of untold stories of 20 brave tribal leaders. These were the freedom fighters who united their tribes to revolt against their oppressors and inspired millions to fight and do the same. From Helen Lepcha of Sikkim to Thalakkal Chanthu of Kerala, from Chakra Bisoi of Odisha to Raghojirao Bhangre of Maharashtra, these forgotten warriors fought using guerilla warfare and grassroots strategies. Their tales of sacrifice, honour, integrity and above all, tremendous courage, have made our understanding of the word 'freedom' more meaningful.



www.amarchitrakatha.com

978-93-94610-24-8



9 789394 610248 >