

The Struggle for Liberation in India: A Partial Timeline

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As the film *Red Ant Dream* shows, the people of India have been waging a determined struggle for their liberation for generations. This timeline presents some of the key events referenced in the film, as well as other events mentioned. The history of struggle, sacrifice, rebellion, and revolution should inspire our support and solidarity!

- 1757-1773: East India company gains control of much of Indian subcontinent, plundering huge amounts of wealth
- 1857: **First War of Indian Independence**, the first nation-wide effort to expel and overthrow the British, is launched and brutally suppressed by British troops
- 1858: **Government of India Act**, British government takes direct control of subcontinent
- 1910: **Bhumkal Rebellion** by Adivasis in Bastar
- 1913: **Founding of Ghadar (Revolt) Party** in the U.S. by Indian workers, dedicated to liberating the subcontinent
- 1919: **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**, British general Dyer massacres 500-1500 at peaceful meeting in Amritsar, Punjab
- 1925: Founding of Communist Party of India (CPI)
- 1931: Indian Revolutionary **Bhagat Singh** executed by the British at 23
- 1943: **Bengal Famine** caused by British wartime policies kills at least 2-3 million people
- 1947: Partition of British India into India and Pakistan, granting of nominal independence
- 1946-51: Telengana armed agrarian struggle liberates thousands of villages, eventually is betrayed by the leadership of CPI
- 1960s onward: start of **“Green Revolution”** in India, entrance of multinational agribusinesses, mechanized farming, high input costs, chemical fertilizer, etc. Results in environmental destruction, farmer suicides, rural insolvency, displacement to urban centers, etc
- 1964: **Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M)** formed as split from CPI over betrayal of Telengana armed struggle (among other issues)
- 1966: **Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution** launched by the left in China to struggle over the direction of socialist society: towards Communism, greater equality between people, and the overcoming of oppression or back towards capitalism? Masses mobilized to criticize, speak out, oppose reactionaries.
- 1967: Rebellion breaks out in West Bengal village of **Naxalbari**, peasants rise up against feudal oppression and redistribute land, struggle against police and landlord’s goons. Revolutionaries across India are inspired both by this movement and take up the struggle across the country.
- 1967: CPI-M elected to lead “left” government in West Bengal, betrays Naxalbari movement and sends police to attack the people.



Flag of the Ghadar party



Jallianwala Bagh massacre



Bhagat Singh



Children dying in Bengal famine



Peasant revolutionaries during the Telengana armed struggle



Revolutionaries in China during the GPCR

- **1969:** Founding of **Communist Party of India – Marxist-Leninist**. Many founding members were formerly in CPI-M and disgusted by that party’s betrayal of the people and by its revisionism

- **1967-70’s:** Naxalbari movement of rural armed struggle spreads across the country, CPI-ML splits into several groups

- **1975-1977:** Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister) declares **fascist state of emergency**, suspending elections and democratic rights, imprisonment and killing of many revolutionaries

- **1984:** Indira Gandhi carries out **“Operation Blue Star,”** ordering troops into the Golden Temple in Amritsar, desecrating the holiest site in Sikhism, on the pretext of opposing separatism. Five months later she is assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, triggering genocidal pogroms against Sikhs across India.

- **1991:** **Indian economy is “liberalised,”** undergoing “structural adjustment” dictated by the IMF and World Bank, facilitating the imperialist plunder of the country

- **2002:** Anti-Muslim pogroms take place over the course of several days in Gujarat, with the current PM Narendra Modi overseeing them (he was then the Chief Minister of the state). Thousands killed.

- **2004:** **Founding of Communist Party of India (Maoist)** through merger of groups tracing back to CPI-ML

- **2005-2011:** Fascist militia **“Salwa Judum”** is sponsored by the government to attack revolutionary movement.

- **2009-ongoing:** Counter-revolutionary attacks launched by the Indian government. First **“Operation Green Hunt”**, later SAMADHAN. Movement has to defend itself against fascist state terror, summary executions (“encounter killings”), etc.

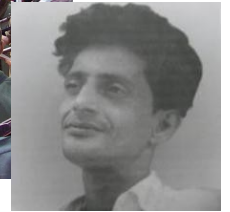
- **2013:** Arrest of sharp critic **G.N. Saibaba**, disabled professor of English at Delhi University, for supposedly “waging war against the government.” He is eventually convicted based purely on the testimony of police officers.

- **2014-present:** Bharatiya Janata Party (**BJP**) gains majority in Parliament, appointing Narendra Modi PM. BJP electoral wing of Hindu-fascist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), carries out fascist suppression of dissent, arrests prominent human rights activists (Bhima Koregaon case), deepens attack on revolutionary movement. Broad attacks on the people (CAA/NRC, demonetization, Covid lockdowns).

- **2021-2022:** Massive protests of farmers against neoliberal “three farm laws” block transport in/out of Delhi, force withdrawal of laws.



The founding of CPI(Maoist) in 2004



Charu Mazumdar, founder of CPI-ML



CPI(Maoist)-led celebration of 50th anniversary of Naxalbari struggle



G.N. Saibaba



Farmer suicides in India are a common occurrence today



Modi (right) oversaw the Gujarat riots, in which as many as 2000 died



Resources to learn more:

- Jangalnama: Travels in a Maoist Guerilla Zone by Satnam
- Days and Nights in the Heartland of Rebellion by Gautam Navlakha
- In the Wake of Naxalbari by Sumanta Bannerjee
- ‘India’ page on Banned Thought: <https://www.bannedthought.net/India/>