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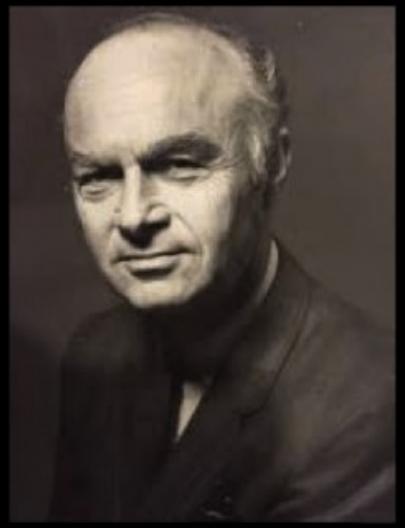
Class-XII

English

Flamingo

Chapter-5

# Indigo



Louis Fischer

Part - 1

Neha Rajvanshi

urge : प्रेरित करना
departure : रवानगी
annual : वार्षिक
convention : सम्मेलन

When I first visited Gandhi in 1942 at his ashram in Sevagram, in central India, he said, "I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1917."

He had gone to the December 1916 annual convention of the Indian National Congress party in Lucknow.

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delegates : प्रतिनिधि
proceedings: कार्यक्रम
recounted: वर्णन करना
peasant : किसान
emaciated: बहुत दुबला पतला

There were 2,301 delegates and many visitors. During the proceedings, Gandhi recounted, "a peasant came up to me looking like any other peasant in India, poor and emaciated, and said, 'I am Rajkumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district'!" Gandhi had never heard of the place.

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ancient : पुराना
illiterate : अशिक्षित
resolute: दृढ़निश्चयी
injustice : अन्याय



It was in the foothills of the towering Himalayas, near the kingdom of Nepal.

Under an ancient arrangement, the Champaran peasants were sharecroppers. Rajkumar Shukla was one of them. He was illiterate but resolute. He had come to the Congress session to complain about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar, and somebody had probably said, "Speak to Gandhi."

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accompanied : साथ में जाना

Gandhi told Shukla he had an appointment in Cawnpore and was also committed to go to other parts of India. Shukla accompanied him everywhere. Then Gandhi returned to his ashram near Ahmedabad. Shukla followed him to the ashram. For weeks he never left Gandhi's side. "Fix a date," he begged.

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tenacity : दृढ़ता



Impressed by the sharecropper's tenacity and story Gandhi said, "I have to be in Calcutta on such-and-such a date. Come and meet me and take me from there."

Months passed. Shukla was sitting on his haunches at the appointed spot in Calcutta when Gandhi arrived; he waited till Gandhi was free.

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pestered : परेशान करना

Then the two of them boarded a train for the city of Patna in Bihar. There Shukla led him to the house of a lawyer named Rajendra Prasad who later became President of the Congress party and of India. Rajendra Prasad was out of town, but the servants knew Shukla as a poor yeoman who pestered their master to help the indigo sharecroppers.

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untouchable : अछूत

So they let him stay on the grounds with his companion, Gandhi, whom they took to be another peasant. But Gandhi was not permitted to draw water from the well lest some drops from his bucket pollute the entire source; how did they know that he was not an untouchable? Gandhi decided to go first to Muzzafarpur,

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which was en route to Champaran, to obtain more complete information about conditions than Shukla was capable of imparting. He accordingly sent a telegram to Professor J.B. Kripalani, of the Arts College in Muzzafarpur, whom he had seen at Tagore's Shantiniketan school. The train arrived at midnight, 15 April 1917.

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harbour : शरण देना

Kripalani was waiting at the station with a large body of students. Gandhi stayed there for two days in the home of Professor Malkani, a teacher in a government school.

"It was an extraordinary thing 'in those days," Gandhi commented, "for a government professor to harbour a man like me". In smaller localities, the Indians were afraid to show sympathy for advocates of home-rule.

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advent : आगमन
conveyance : वाहन
brief : सूचना देना

The news of Gandhi's advent and of the nature of his mission spread quickly through Muzzafarpur and to Champaran. Sharecroppers from Champaran began arriving on foot and by conveyance to see their champion. Muzzafarpur lawyers called on Gandhi to brief him; they frequently represented peasant groups in court; they told him about their cases and reported the size of their fee.

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chided : आलोचना करना
conclusion : निष्कर्ष
crushed : कुचले हुए / दबे हुए

Gandhi chided the lawyers for collecting big fee from the sharecroppers. He said, "I have come to the conclusion that we should stop going to law courts. Taking such cases to the courts does litte good. Where the peasants are so crushed and fear-stricken, law courts are useless. The real relief for them is to be free from fear."