Rebellion in the Raj

The Women Who Fought for Freedom



Chapter 5:

Madam Bhikaji Cama

Swipe

Embracing duty over comfort

What would you do if you had everything, but chose to give it up for your country?

Born into a wealthy Parsi family in Bombay, Madam Bhikaji Cama could have lived a life of comfort. Instead, when the bubonic plague struck in the 1890s, she risked her life to nurse the sick. After contracting it herself, she travelled to Europe to recover.

It was there that she discovered her life's mission: becoming one of the strongest voices for India's independence.



Taking India's Fight to the World

Bhikaji Cama soon joined forces with revolutionaries across Europe. Working alongside **Dadabhai Naoroji** in London and **Shyamji Krishna Varma** in Paris, she addressed international meetings, wrote articles, and exposed the harsh realities of British colonial rule to foreign nations.

She wanted every nation to know that India was not a willing colony; it was a country fighting for its freedom.

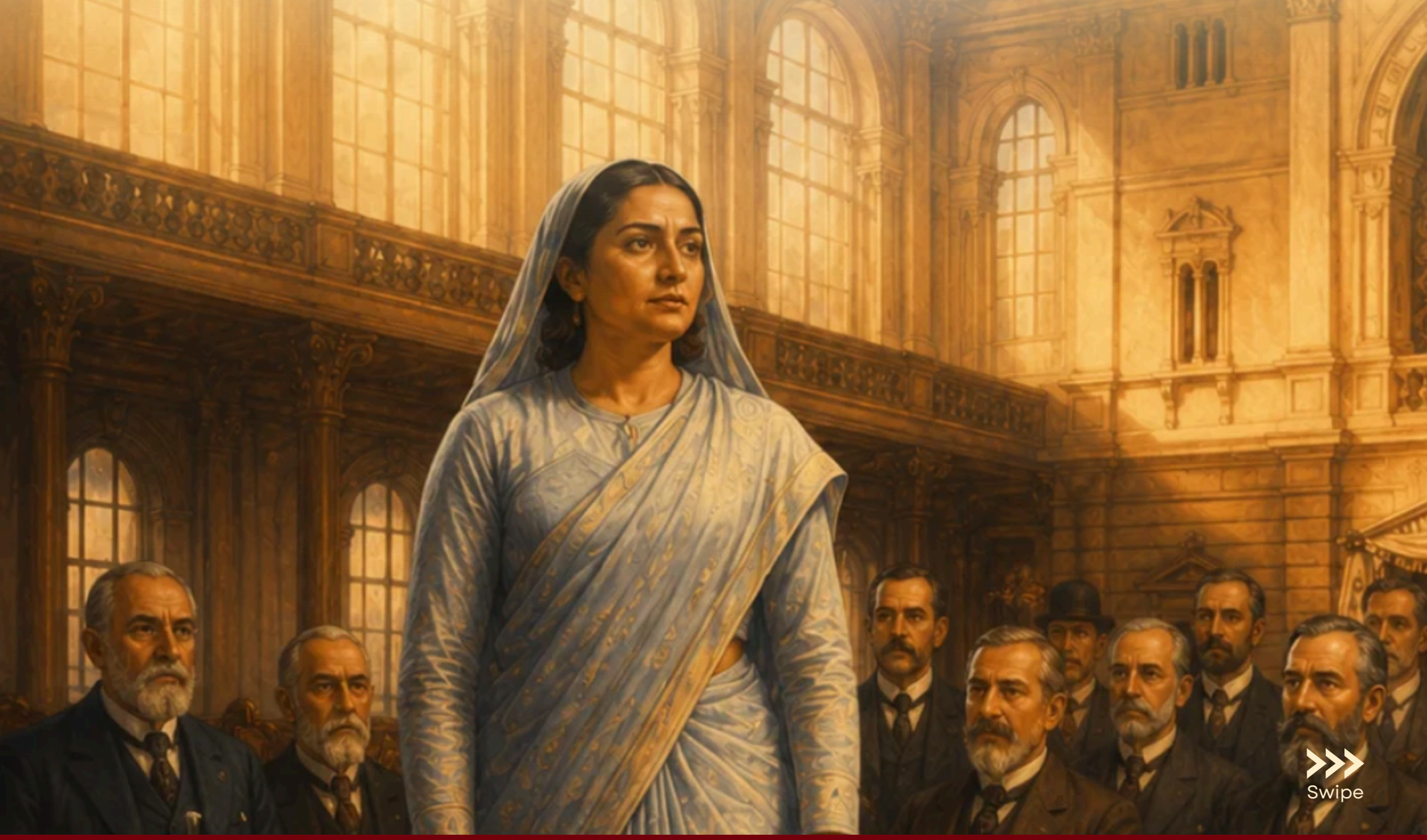


India's Voice Beyond Its Borders

Then came the moment that made history.

On 22 August 1907, at the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, Germany, the British flag was presented to represent India.

Bhikaji Cama refused to accept it.



The Flag That Shocked the World

Stepping onto the global stage, she unfurled a tricolour flag she had helped design and held it high before delegates from around the world, declaring it the flag of an independent India.

It was the first time an Indian flag had flown on foreign soil.

"This is the flag of independent India," she declared, urging people everywhere to support India's struggle for freedom.



Swipe

Fighting an Empire from Exile

The British government banned her from returning home unless she abandoned her political work.

She refused.

From Paris, she published forbidden newspapers like *Bande Mataram*, supported Indian revolutionaries in exile, and smuggled nationalist literature into India.



Home at Last

Though she spent over three decades in exile and only returned to India shortly before her death, she ensured that the world heard India's cry for freedom long before independence was won.

Madam Cama did not fight because victory was easy. She fought because freedom, dignity, and justice were worth every sacrifice.

Today, every time the Indian tricolour flies proudly, it reminds us of pioneers like Bhikaji Cama, who dared to imagine a free India long before it became a reality.

