

**COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM
IN MODERN INDIA**

STUDY MATERIAL

II M A HISTORY

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COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM

Historical Background

For centuries India remained under the influence of Mohammedans and Britishers. Though India has a rich past and at the height of its glory she was one of the most advanced nations of the world yet with the passage of time her glory faded. Not only this but due to internal disunity the invaders could rule over India for centuries together. History is a witness that even at the darkest period of her history Indians continued their struggle for independence in one way or the other and did not agree to accept the fate to which they had been so unfortunately placed. Modern Indian political thought practically began with Gokhale who can be called the pioneer of our national movement and subsequently India produced very many political thinkers who continued their struggle against British Imperialism both under the flag of Indian National Congress and even outside that.

These thinkers were moderates as well as extremists but both had one common end to achieve, namely that of seeing India developing, prospering and getting her due honourable and respectable place in the family of nations. Thus these thinkers tried to mould public opinion to mould that to their ideology. They also tried to lead the nation in a particular manner for speedily achieving the goal they had fixed for themselves. In this brief survey an attempt will be made to discuss the political philosophies of some of the prominent Indian political thinkers of modern India with special reference to Nationalist movement which dominated Indian political scene for at least two centuries.

Definition of Nationalism

Nationalism is a very vague and in fact it is very difficult to define it precisely and accurately. According to Gooch "Nationalism is an Organism, a Spiritual entity and all attempts to penetrate its Secrets by the light of Mechanical interpretations break down before the test of experience." Barker has defined it by saying that, "A nation is a body of men inhabiting a definite territory who normally are drawn from different races but possess a common stock of thoughts and feelings acquired and transmitted during the course of a common History, but on the whole are the men though more in the past than in the present, include in that common stock a common religious belief who generally and as a rule use a common language, as the vehicle of the thoughts and feelings and who besides common thoughts and feelings all so cherish a common will and accordingly form or did not form a separate state for the expression of that will."

In India Aurobindo Ghosh gave a new interpretation to nationalism when he said, “Nationalism is a religion that has come from god. Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live. It is an attitude of heart, of the soul. What the intellect, could not do this mighty force of passionate conviction born out of the very faiths of national consciousness, will be able to accomplish.” Thus it will be safe to say that, on the whole, Nationalism is a political sentiment whereas for the people of India it was both a religion and a creed. Both the masses as well as leaders of modern India aroused these national feelings for seeing Mother India from foreign yokes and once again India’s Occupying the pride place of being called the leader and teacher of the whole world.

Origin of Nationalism in India

Most of our Indian historians have spared no pains to establish that our struggle for freedom continued even during the darkest period of our slavery. There are many historical evidences to show that Indian moderates and revolutionaries struggled hard to tell their rulers that they had not been in a position to reconcile themselves to their rule. The death of Harsha Brought disintegration in Indian Empire and Muslim traditions dominated the Hindu Civilization, but the basic concepts of Hindu civilization namely those of joint family system, Panchayat Raj or Village autonomy and even caste system continued to be the basis of our civilization. It is usually believed that in India Nationalism was a deep-rooted institution and it always inspired the Indian masses.

He has also tried to establish that the Indian National struggle of 1857 was not a National Struggle and was also not fought with a sense of relieving India from British supremacy. He has said “Thus in the ultimate analysis the so called Indian or National war of Independence was neither Indian, or National and not even a war to achieve independence of particular region.” According to him, there for, up to 1857 nationalism in India did not exist to gather. Though it may be very much under estimating our national sentiments but fact remains that for long, ours was not a struggle at national level. The most unfortunate aspect was that where as who had national leaders who could inspire the confidence of the masses, our universities failed to produce and political philosopher of the caliber of either Laski, Dante, Hobbes who could expounded a new national philosophy. Philosophers and this was very unfortunate for consolidating nationalism in our country.

Growth of Nationalism in India. We have already said that Indian political thought developed in the background of Indian National struggle or in other words our struggle for nationalism was against British colonialism. It is therefore, most imperative to study the nature of our struggle for national freedom. Briefly speaking Indian struggle for freedom started even before Hume founded Indian National Congress. We find that as early as in nineties of 18th century Raja Ram Mohan Roy came to fore-front but even before him persons like Surendra Nath Banarje and others had set the ball rolling though not with great momentum. It was, however, in 1885 that Hume founded Indian National Congress which subsequently became one of the most leading organizations of our national struggle. Outside the Indian National Congress even there were other individuals and organizations which were struggling for arousing nationalism. There was also Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism and if we agree with Majumdar, Wahabi Movement was the first Muslim war of independence. But real

and earnest national struggle started as the people began to come under the fold of Indian National Congress and gradually this organisation began to assume the role of a popular organization.

Prior to the revolt of 1857, the British treated India as one nation and one state because it suited them. They were attempting to conquer India and, therefore, they pleaded that the conquest of the entire sub-continent would alone provide administrative and political unity to this country, state and nation. Thus, the conquest of India was justified on the ground of benefitting the people of this country. But, after the revolt of 1857, they reversed their stand. They left the policy of annexation because the existence of the native state was found useful for them. Thus, the concept of the Indian nation was against their interest. After the revolt, the policy of dividing the Indians was pursued and, therefore, it became necessary to discard the concept of one Indian nation. The British historians and scholars then upheld that India was never a nation. It was a land of different languages, dresses, social customs, religions, races, ideas etc. Politically too, it was never united. Rather, the attempts to unite it politically always failed miserably. The Indians developed the concept of nationalism only during the British rule. Thus, the British scholars have maintained that Indian nationalism is the heritage of the British.

Causes of the Rise of Nationalism in India

The causes which contributed towards the rise and growth of nationalism were primarily as follows:

(i) **Political unity** - India was united politically and administratively again under the British rule and remained so for a long period than it had ever been before. One rule, one set of laws, administrative officers which were transferred from one place to another all over India etc. provided concept of one citizenship and one nation among the Indians.

(ii) **Economic exploitation by the British** - The one particular feature of the British rule in India was the economic exploitation of the Indian people of all classes. Many foreigners looted the wealth of India even prior to the British but the Indians were able to make up the loss. But the British drained the resources of India in a most systematic and unjust way. They came as traders and always remained traders in India whose primary motive was always financial gain. India, therefore, lost its economic resources not only in the form of revenue, salary and other emoluments to the British officers, *Investments* etc. but mostly because of unfavourable balance of trade which was primarily a creation of the British. The Industrial Revolution in England necessitated import of raw materials from foreign countries and an extensive market for its manufactures outside. India provided it both. It resulted in the destruction of Indian handicrafts and cottage industries, heavy pressure on agriculture and ever growing impoverishment of the people. The revenue policy of the British destroyed even Indian agriculture. The trade policy particularly that of free trade created most unfavourable balance of trade. The industries could not grow on modern lines because of the antipathy of the foreign rulers. The educated Indians failed to get useful employment because the door of all higher services were closed to them. Thus, except certain classes with vested interests like the native rulers, landlords, *Taluqdars*, village usurers etc. all Indian people suffered financially. The nation, as a whole, was reduced to mere subsistence level and with no hope of any relief in future. It was bound to react and was

one of the most important causes of Indian nationalism seek in Independence.

(iii) **English language and western ideas** The English language was made the medium of instruction of education in 1835. It became the language of the educated people of India irrespective of the differences in religion and region. It provided the best means of understanding and developing close contact with each other among them. The educated Indians came in contact with the western ideas and culture through the medium of English language. The ideas of liberty, equality, democracy, socialism etc. could infiltrate among them only because the English language became their best medium. Many Indians went abroad and came in direct contact with the western world. It is these English educated Indians who led the national movement, developed Indian nationalism and organised it.

(iv) **Social and religious movements of the nineteenth century** The social and religious reform movements of the nineteenth century contributed most to Indian nationalism though indirectly. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand, and Mrs. Annie Besant were all patriots. They revived the glory of ancient India, created faith among the people in their religion and culture and, thus, gave the message of love to their motherland and to the people of India. Swami Dayanand was the first who used the word *Swaraj*, and declared Hindi as the national language of India. Many Arya Samajist leaders were in the fore-front of the national movement and were primarily responsible for the rise of Extremism in the Congress.

(v) **Development of the means of communication and transport** Railways, telegraph, wireless, postal services, construction of roads and canals facilitated communication among the people. All these brought them nearer to each other and provided the facility to organize the national movement on all-India basis.

(vi) **Contact with foreign countries** Indians came in contact not only with Britain but with other foreign countries as well. The movements in other countries, their economic developments, their problems and conflicts and the first World War affected Indians. The defeat of Russia by Japan revived the faith of the Asians in their strength. The Russian Revolution of 1917 inspired the national movements of every country on economic grounds. The first World war provided the facility of Industrial development in India. The fourteen points of the American President Mr Wilson, created hope for the establishment of democratic principles in every part of the world. Thus, the contact with foreign countries inspired Indian nationalism in several ways.

(vii) **Press and newspapers** The establishment of printing press helped in wide circulation of ideas. A large number of newspapers were published in different regional languages of India. In 1875 there numbered four hundred ninety eight. All these newspapers were mostly anti-British and gave publicity of racial arrogance, economic exploitation, personal misbehaviour etc. of the British towards Indians. These created anti-British feelings among common people of India and united them against a common oppressor.

(viii) **Administration of Lord Lytton** The Afghan war during the period of Lord Lytton adversely affected the economic resources of India. He arranged the Delhi *darbar* to declare Queen Victoria as the Empress of India at a time when a larger part of India was in the grip of famine and epidemic. He passed the Vernacular Press Act which curbed the liberty of the Indian Press. His Arms Act was a means to prevent the Indians from keeping arms. All these measures created widespread discontentment among the Indians.

(ix) **The Ilbert Bill controversy** The Ilbert Bill was presented in the Central legislature during the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon. It was proposed in it that the Indian judges would have the right to try Europeans as well. It was opposed by the British residents in India. They collected fund for this purpose, organized a systematic movement against the Bill both in England and India and ultimately, succeeded in getting the Bill amended so that it lost its very spirit. The opposition to the Bill antagonized the Indian public opinion. It made them clear the policy of racial discrimination of the British. I It also gave them a good lesson in organizing a movement. They forgot none. They utilized them for strengthening nationalism.

(x) **Administration of Lord Curzon** The personal arrogance of Lord Curzon, his haughty language and some administrative measures like Calcutta University Act and Local Self-Government Act seriously injured the feelings of the Indians. But above all, the partition of Bengal created a widespread stir among the Indians to oppose it. The use of *Swadeshi* (India made) goods and boycott of foreign goods were adopted as measures to exhibit their resentment by the Indians for the first time. Surendra Nath Banerjee toured nil over India to gain support of the Indians in other provinces against this partition. Thus, it helped in strengthening Indian nationalism

(xi) **The abusive behaviour of the British against the Indians** The revolt of 1857 left permanent bitterness between the British and the Indians. The policy to rule India by sword was upheld by all Britishers. Therefore, the British asserted themselves not only administratively but their personal behaviour also became arrogant towards the Indians. Disrespect to Indians, beating of Indian servants and cultivators, disrespect to their women etc. became common events. These happenings were given wide publicity by the Indian newspapers. That inflamed the feelings of the Indians against the British which helped in the growth of national consciousness.

(xii) **The founding of the All India Congress in 1885** National consciousness had awakened among the Indians and several associations were formed even prior to the founding of All-India Congress to give vent to it. Yet, there was no all-India organization by that time. The All India Congress was established in 1885 and it prepared the platform for an organized national movement. Thus, its establishment channelized the national spirit in proper direction and made it effective and fruitful.

The Foundation of the Congress and Its Early Aims

Some political associations were formed even prior to the establishment of the Congress. Most prominent among them were the Bengal Indian Association formed in 1883 and the Bengal Presidency Association formed in 1884. Yet, there was the necessity of an All India organization because there existed none like it so far. In 1884, a retired English officer Mr A O. Hume formed an association called the 'Indian National Union' for this purpose in 1884. This Union decided to call a convention of the representatives of the Indian people at Poona in 1885 and the responsibility of organising it was given to Mr A.O. Hume. But as cholera spread over Poona that year, it was decided to hold the convention at Bombay. *The* Convention met at Bombay in December 1885 and there the All India Congress took its birth. Its first president was Mr. Womesh Chandra Banerjee. Thus, in 1885, the All India Congress was under during the viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin. Lala Lajpat Rai popularised the view that it was Lord Dufferin who gave the idea of founding an All India political party to Mr. Hume with a view to

channelize the activities of the Indians in a constitutional way. Many British officials in India, including Lord Dufferin and Mr Hume, lived that such an organisation would divert the Indians from king recourse to violent means. Mr Hume also said: "A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by our own action was urgently needed." The result was the All India congress. But the view contains only partial truth. It is not certain it Lord Dufferin gave this idea to Mr Hume though he did not take the efforts of Mr Hume. Besides, Mr Hume's aim was certainly not limited to create a 'safety valve' for the Empire. He was definitely guided by other higher motives than that. He loved India and was sympathetic towards its people. Therefore, he desired to establish organised political party which could put up the grievances of the people before the government for the improvement of their lot. Many patriotic Indians desired the same. Thus, above all, the Indian National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious pans to set up a national organisation to work for their betterment. A.O Hume and many others worked for it and the All India congress was found which led the struggle for Indian independence, The Congress, however, made a humble beginning. Its early aims were as follows:

- a) To seek the co-operation of all Indians in its efforts.
- b) The eradication of race, creed and provincial prejudices and consolidation of national unity.
- c) To discuss and take decisions concerning social problems of the country.
- d) To request the government to associate Indians in the working of administration.
- e) To fix up the program of the next year.

Thus, the early aims of the Congress were limited only to create national consciousness and seek wider chances of employment in the services. But as it went on strengthening itself, its objectives also for went changes till its final objective became complete independence for the country. Virtually, the history of the Indian national movement is the history of the All India Congress because it led the lenient and brought it to success. Of course, other parties, groups to pie, ideas, influences and circumstance also participated in it and strengthened the national movement in many ways and from time to time. Yet, the Congress represented all those mixed interests and influences. The banner mostly remained the same and, therefore, the credit for Indian independence was taken primarily by the All India Congress.

For the sake of convenience, the Indian national movement is divided into following phases:

1. The First Phase, 1885-1905.
2. The Second Phase, 1905-1919: The Rise and Growth of Extremism.
3. The Third Phase, 1919-1929
4. The Fourth Phase, 1929-1939.
5. The Fifth and the Final Phase, 1939-1947.

Nature of Popular Representation

The National Movement, 1885 - 1947

1. The First Phase, 1885-1905

This period has been regarded as the period of liberal national movement. The Indian leaders had complete faith in the British sense of justice and fair play. They believed that if they would

place their grievances before the government reasonably and politely, it would certainly try to remove them. Among the liberal leaders, the most prominent were Firoz Shah Mehta,, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Womesh Chandra Banerji, Surendra Nath Banerji, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Rasbehari Bose, Badruddin Tyabji etc.

The Congress believed and pursued perfect constitutional methods during this period. it deliberated problems in its annual session passed resolutions concerning them, petitioned the Government to implement them and propagated its views among the people. It never protested against the government. Its aims were also limited and therefore, it demanded very little from the Government. S.N Banerji explained that the object of the Congress was not the supersession of British rule in India, but the broadening of its basis, the liberalising of its spirit, the ennobling of its character and placing it on the unchangeable foundation of a nation's affections. The Congress primarily requested for the following measures to the Government:

- a) Representative bodies should be established in India.
- b) The India Council should be abolished.
- c) Individual liberty should be granted to the people.
- d) Import duties on foreign goods should be enhanced.
- e) The Indians living in India should be treated well.
- f) The Indians should have unrestricted entry even in the highest Service.
- g) The administrative and military expenditure should-be reduced.
- h) Judiciary should be separated from the executive etc.

The Second Phase: The Rise of Extremism and Terrorism, 1905-1919

The Petitions of the Congress brought no change in the policies and administration of the British in India. It created reaction and Thinking grew among younger Indians that no good would be served without struggle. The young Indians gradually lost faith in the constitutional process and therefore, proceeded ahead towards the Path of conflict. It resulted in the rise of Extremism within the Congress and that of Terrorism outside it. The Indian nationalism grew militant during this period. The primary causes of this militant nationalism were as follows:

- (a) **No change in the attitudes and administration of the British** The British continued to look towards Indians with apathy and behaved with them with racial arrogance and superiority. They refused to change their administrative policies. They ignored the petitions of the Congress. The Indian Council's Act, 1892 failed to satisfy even the Moderates within the Congress and the Indian public opinion. This created reaction both within and outside the Congress.
- (b) **Economic impoverishment of the people** The impoverishment of the Indians of all sections gradually went on increasing with increasing years of the British rule. The cultivators suffered because of the revenue policy of the British; the traders and the manufacturer suffered because the government served the interests of the British traders and manufacturers; the industries could not grow in India because of the deliberate policy of the British; and, the educated Indians felt frustrated because they could not get useful employment. Thus, every section of the Indians felt aggrieved because of the economic policies of the British and they all united among themselves

against the British. That is one reason why the Indian capitalist also patronized the Congress because Indian independence meant enhanced financial profits for them.

- (c) **Social and religious awakening** The various social and religious movements which had revived the faith of Indians in their country and culture were increasing national awakening. The Indians gradually realised that the primary reason of their decline was the foreign rule. Therefore, their desire to gain independence was intensified. Thus, religious and social awakening helped in intensifying nationalism.
- (d) **The famine and the plague** The Indians seriously suffered from the famine in 1896-97 and from the plague in 1899-1901. The measures of the government to give relief to the people proved inadequate and sometimes disrespectful. Particularly the entry of the soldiers in the homes of the citizens to search out the people suffering from the plague was very much resented by the people. Bid Gangadhar Tilak protested against it in his newspaper *Kesri*. Some terrorist activities were also done by the Indians at that time.
- (e) **The administration of Carzon** Lord Curzon and some of his administrative measures certainly aggravated the situation, particularly, his partition of Bengal inflamed the national feeling leading to the boycott of foreign goods and *Swadeshi* movement.
- (f) **Impact of events in foreign countries** Certain events outside India also affected the course of Indian national movement. The people fought against despotic rule in Russia, Turkey, Egypt and Iran. Of course, most of these movements failed at that time but the people all over the world felt their impact. The Indians too got inspiration from them. And, more than anything else, the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1904 strengthened the morale of Indians because it broke up the idea of the invincibility of the Europeans.

All these factors led to the rise of militant nationalism in India. The militant nationalists were, however, divided into two parts the terrorists and the extremists.

- i. **The Terrorists** - The reactionary policy of the British developed deep hatred towards them among a section of the younger generation of India. Many of them, therefore, chose the path of violence to gain independence for India. They were called the revolutionaries for the terrorists. The center of these terrorists were Panjab and Bengal. The terrorists believed that India could achieve independence only by an organized violent movement. They were prepared to receive even foreign support for this purpose. Prominent among these revolutionaries were Bhupendra Nath Datt, Ganesh Savarkar, Sardar Ajit Singh, Lala Hardayal and his Gadar Party, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, Sukh Deo, Chandra Bhekar Azad etc. These revolutionaries organized secret societies, murdered many British officers, disrupted railway traffic, engaged in organized robberies and, thus, terrorised the British in several ways, 'he efforts of Subash Chandra Bose and the I.N.A. (Indian National Army) were also of revolutionary or terrorist nature which certainly contributed towards Indian Independence. But the terrorist movement could never get public support in India. The people respected the terrorist leaders but showed no faith in the methods. Therefore, their contribution towards Indian independence was secondary. Yet, their importance in the national movement cannot be neglected. Practically all

leaders of importance lost their lives in the cause of their country. Their sacrifice provided incentive to the people. They were regarded martyrs and became the symbol of national unity and aspirations. The role of these revolutionaries has not been realised completely even now because the Indians have exaggerated the non-violent means to attain their independence. Otherwise, the efforts of the terrorists for Indian independence were certainly creditable.

- ii. **The Extremists** - The Extremists group grew within the All India Congress. Their leaders were Aurobindo Ghosh, Lala Lajpat Raj, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. The Extremists were determined to fight for Indian independence. But in no case, their method was that of violence. They, instead of making petitions to the government, believed in organising mass protests, criticizing government policies, boycotting foreign goods and use of *Swadeshi* (home-made) goods etc. They did not depend on the mercy of the government for Independence. On the contrary, they believed that it was their right. Bal Gangadhar Tilak declared: "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it." The Extremists also rejected the aim of self-government for India under the suzerainty of Britain. They declared that their aim was complete Independence. Tilak propagated these ideas through his newspaper *Kesri* and Bipin Chandra Pal did the same with the help of *New India*. Thus, the Extremists desired to change not only the aim of the Congress but also the means to attain it. This was militant nationalism but without violence. It led to the division of the Congress at its Surat session in 1907. When the Extremists were turned out of the Congress, the Moderates remained in control of the Congress till 1916 when the two groups were again united. Then gradually, the Extremists strengthened themselves and the leadership of the Congress, ultimately, passed into their hands.
- iii. **The Surat Split.** The differences between the Moderates and the Extremists went on increasing. The Extremists advocated boycott of foreign goods, use of *Swadeshi* goods and proposed a National Scheme of Education with the view to boycott the educational institutions of the government. They also desired that the Congress should declare *Swaraj* as its goal. The Moderates were not prepared to take such aggressive steps which would have brought them in direct conflict with the government. The two contending groups might have come into conflict with each other even in the Congress of 1906. It was, however, avoided because Dada Bhai Nawroji, an old leader respected by both the groups, was elected as the President. But the conflict could not be avoided in 1907 when the Congress held its session at Poona. The Moderates put up Ras Behari Bose as a candidate for the Presidentship of the Congress while the Extremists desired to choose Bal Gangadhar Tilak as the President. The conflict started on certain procedural methods. The Moderates by clever maneuverings elected Ras Behari Bose as the President and Tilak was not allowed even to address the gathering. This led to physical fighting between the two groups. The Extremists were then turned out of the Congress. Tilak, however, continued to deliver his message of struggle to the people and remained a popular leaflet among the masses. He was sentenced to imprisonment for six years and deported to Mandalay on charge of publishing material leading to violence. The Moderates continued their hold over the Congress. The Minto-Morley reforms were declared in

1909. The Congress gave its approval to them and agreed to cooperate with the government in implementing them.

- iv. **The First World War** - The First World War started in 1914. Britain included India in the war on its behalf. It declared that the war was fought for the defence of liberty and democracy in the world. The Congress fully cooperated with the Indian government in its war efforts with the expectation that India would be granted self-government after the war.

But, before the close of the war, several important events took place in the politics of India. Mrs Annie Besant organized her Home Rule League at Madras in 1916. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released from imprisonment and he also organised a separate Home Rule League at Poona. The two Leagues, however, were joined together and both the leaders demanded self-government (Home Rule) for India. Mrs Annie Besant also attempted to unite the Moderates and the Extremists under the banner of the Congress. She succeeded in her efforts and was chosen the President of the Congress in 1916. The Extremists then gradually got control over the Congress. The Moderates could not remain in the Congress for long. They detached themselves from it and found another organization called the 'Indian Liberal Federation'. The Federation, however, remained ineffective in the Indian politics. The Congress under the leadership of Extremists fixed *Swaraj* as its goal.

In 1916, the Congress and the Muslim League also came to an Understanding with each other and signed the Lucknow Pact. The Congress accepted the major demands of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the President of the League. The Muslims were to be given weightage in the legislative assemblies, viz. the number of Muslim Representatives in the assemblies would be more than what the proportion of their population permitted. The Congress agreed to the Communal Representative System in the elections which it had been discarding so far. It also accepted the Communal Veto, viz. no bill concerning any community would be passed by any legislative assembly till the majority of the members of that community agreed for that bill. The Pact was regarded useful for bringing unity between the Hindus and Muslims at that time. But it proved a political blunder of the Congress. It provided further incentive to Muslim communalism.

Montague's declaration was another important event of this period. The position of Britain and its allies had become critical in the war in 1917 while, in India, the government failed to suppress the terrorist movement. Therefore, the British felt the necessity of finding out some way to satisfy the Indian public opinion. For that purpose, the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montague made a declaration in the House of Commons, the lower house of the British Parliament concerning the objective of the British government in India. He announced: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

The Third Phase, 1919-1929

The declaration of Mr. Montague aroused the hopes of the Indians. The Congress which had fully cooperated with the government in its war efforts expected dominion status viz. right

of self-government within the Empire for India after the close of the war. But the attitude of the British government changed after the successful completion of the war. Of course, it desired to bring some progressive constitutional reforms in India but self government to India was far away from its objective. Besides, it desired to suppress the terrorist movement in India ruthlessly. Therefore, on the one hand, it considered proposals for constitutional reforms, on the other hand, it appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Rowlatt to suggest measures for suppressing the activities of the revolutionaries or terrorists. It resulted in the passing of the Act of 1919 and the Rowlatt Act simultaneously. The Act of 1919 fell short of the expectations of the Indians and the Rowlatt Act led to widespread protest and unrest among the Indians. The Act authorised the government to imprison any person without trial and conviction in a court of law.

The Khilafat Movement

The Muslims started the Khilafat movement in 1919. After the first World War the British government abolished the title of *Khalifa* of the Sultan of Turkey who was defeated in the war. This injured the feelings of the Indian Muslims who regarded *Khalifa* as the religious head of the Muslim world. Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali started the Khilafat' movement. Their primary "demand was that the British should, in no way, interfere in the affairs of the Muslims and the title of the *Khalifa* be restored to the Sultan of Turkey. August 31, 1919 was celebrated as the 'Khilafat Day' in India. The Congress also decided to support the Muslims in this movement with a view to gain their sympathy in the national cause. But the government remained adamant. It refused to annul the Rowlatt Act, to express regret at the happenings of Jallianwala Bagh or to restore the title of *khalifa* to the Sultan

The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22).

Mahatma Gandhi, by that time, was convinced that no useful purpose would be served by supporting the government. Therefore, he planned to non-cooperate with it and sought the permission of the Congress to start such a movement- The Congress agreed to his proposal and passed resolutions for the same at its Calcutta session in 1919 and also at its Nagpur session in 1920. Gandhi, then put up the following demands before the Government:

- (a) The government should express regret over the happenings in Amritsar.
- (b) It should exhibit liberal attitude towards Turkey.
- (c) It should put up a new scheme of reforms for the satisfaction of the Indians.

He threatened to start the non-cooperation movement in case the government failed to accept his demand. The government paid no heed to it. Gandhi, therefore, started his non-cooperation movement August, 1920. He chalked out the following programme for this movement and advised the people to:

1. Surrender titles and resign from honorary offices;
2. Boycott all official and semi-official functions;

Withdraw children from government and government aided schools and establish national schools

3. Boycott government courts and get disputes settled by national *Panchayats*
4. Refuse to go to Mesopotamia by the military, clerical and labouring classes

5. Boycott of the elections to all representative bodies ;

6. Boycott foreign goods and use of *Swadeshi* goods.

The movement was to be carried on non-violently. The movement spread all over India with great speed. The Government adopted repressive measures to crush the movement. The people were *lathi*- charged, beaten in public places, fired upon and nearly thirty thousand were sent to *jails* (prisons). When the Prince of Wales visited India to inaugurate the Reforms of 1919, he found all the cities observing *hartal* and even foreign hotels closed. The Government, at that time, proposed an agreement but Gandhi refused it. He wrote a letter to Viceroy, Lord Reading, on February 9, 1922 in which he informed him that if the government would not accept his demands within a week then he would begin the civil disobedience movement from Bardoli. But at the same time, there occurred a violent incident at Chauri Chaura, a village in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh. A procession of the people was fired upon by the police. This infuriated the mob. It attacked the police station and burnt it which caused the death of twenty two policemen. Gandhi felt sorry for this violent incident and immediately suspended the noncooperation movement. The movement thus, finished in February 1922, Gandhi was charged with fomenting disaffection among the people against the government and sentenced to imprisonment for six years but was released after two years because of his illness.

The non-cooperation movement failed to achieve success. Many leaders of the Congress disliked its suspension by Gandhi. Yet, it succeeded in making the Congress movement a mass-movement for the first time. It shifted the Congress from the constitutional path and brought it on the path of the struggle. It organised the people in a nation-wide movement Gandhi, probably, suspended it because he felt that it would be diverted from its non-violent path and therefore, would be crushed by the Government easily. It was sufficiently good success that the movement enjoyed India-wide popularity and the people gained tremendous self-confidence and self-esteem by it.

The Swaraj Party

After the suspension of the non-cooperation movement, the question arose before the Congress whether it should participate in the working of the Reforms of 1919 or not. The majority of the Congress leaders were against the entry of the Congressmen into the legislative councils. But Pt. Moti Lai Nehru and Deshbandhu Chitranjan Das were opposed to their view. They argued that the Congress should get entry into the Councils not to cooperate with the Government but to non-cooperate with it. It would mean taking non-cooperation to the Councils. It would also help them in proving the futility of the new scheme of reforms. When the Congress did not accept their view, they formed a new party called the Swaraj Party.

The Swaraj Party took part in the ensuing elections of the provincial legislatures and gained good success. Afterwards, Gandhi and the Congress also realised the utility of their opinion and allowed Congressmen to cooperate with the Swarajists. Thus, Swaraj Party became an integral part of the congress. The Swaraj Party did useful work in the Councils constituted under the system of Dyarchy in the provinces by the Act of 1919. The death of C.R. Das in 1925 definitely weakened its strength. Yet, it succeeded in discovering the weaknesses of the system of Dyarchy which was its primary aim while entering into the Councils.

The Simon Commission.

In 1927, the British government appointed a Commission to look into the working of the reforms of 1919 and suggest further measures for reforms. Its Chairman was Mr Simon. The Commission had no Indian member in it. The Indians boycotted this all-White commission and protested against it when it visited India. Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant received injuries from lathi-blows while leading the protest processions. During this very period, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel started the peasants *Satyagraha* in Bardoli, an all India party convention was held at Delhi and a committee headed by Moti Lai Nehru was formed to form a constitution for India.

Nehru Committee and the Declaration of Swaraj

The Nehru Committee which was deputed by All Party Convention at Delhi to form a constitution for India recommended that it was useless to ask anything less than complete *Swaraj* (Independence) from the government. It also framed a constitution for India. The Congress accepted its recommendations. It asked the India government to accept that constitution by December 31,1929 failing which it threatened to start a movement for *Swaraj*. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, only assured to release the political prisoners and have a Round Table Conference. The Congress did not feel satisfied. It declared complete *Swaraj* as its goal in its annual session at Lahore on December 31, 1929. It was also decided that January” 26 would be celebrated as the independence day every year.

The Fourth Phase, 1929-39

The political atmosphere of India grew more tense after the declaration of *Swaraj* by the Congress in 1929. Gandhi now placed eleven demands before the Viceroy. He declared that if these demands were not accepted then he would start the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The Civil Disobedience Movement

Gandhi in one of his letters to the Viceroy placed the following demands before the Government:

- a. Prohibition of all intoxicants,
- b. Change of ratio between the pound and the rupee,
- c. Reduction in the revenue rates,
- d. Abolition of salt-tax,
- e. Reduction in military expenditure,
- f. Reduction in civil administrative expenditure,
- g. Imposition of custom duty on foreign cloth,
- h. Acceptance of Postal Reservation Bill,
- i. Release of all political prisoners,
- j. The abolition of Criminal Investigation Department or its control by the people’s representatives,
- k. Issue of arms licences to the citizens for self-defence.

The Viceroy paid no attention towards the demands of Gandhi. The Congress Working Committee, therefore, authorized Gandhi to start the Civil Disobedience Movement. On March 12, 1930, Gandhi left Sabarmati Ashram on foot with his seventy eight followers and

reached the sea at Dandi on April 5, after completing the march of two hundred miles in twenty four days. He prepared salt with his followers and thus defied the law of the Government. The people followed their leaders, defied laws of the Government, prepared salt at various places, boycotted foreign goods and attempted closure of wine-shops. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his partymen *Khudai Khidmatgars* (servants of God) remained in the forefront of this movement. The Government again took recourse to repressive measures and imprisoned nearly one lakh people. Mr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. Jayakar tried for a compromise between the Government and the Congress but their attempts failed because the Government insisted on the withdrawal of the movement first. All prominent leaders of the Congress were kept in imprisonment during this period.

The Government called the First Round Table Conference in London on December 12, 1930 but the Congress did not participate in it. The Civil Disobedience Movement, on the one hand, and the repressive policy of the Government, on the other hand, continued unabated. But suddenly in the beginning of 1931, the government started releasing the political prisoners. Mr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Jayakar and the Nawab of Bhopal again attempted for a compromise between the Government and the Congress. Their efforts succeeded this time and, in 1931, Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on the following conditions:

The Government, on its part, agreed to:

- a. Release all political prisoners except those who were involved in violent activities,
- b. Return the confiscated property of the concerned individuals,
- c. Allow preparation of salt within a limited territory near the sea-coast,
- d. Allow peaceful demonstrations before the shops selling foreign goods and intoxicants of any type.

The Congress, on its part, agreed to:

1. Suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement,
2. Leave its demand of inquiry in cases of police atrocities,
3. Participate in the Round Table Conference.

The Civil Disobedience Movement remained suspended for a year on the basis of this Pact though the spirit of the Pact was marred by the execution of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru on the charge of throwing a bomb in the legislative assembly of Panjab. Chandra Shekhar Azad was also shot dead in the Alfred Park at Allahabad on February 27, 1931. Gandhi went to London in 1931 and participated in the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. But no settlement could be arrived at in the Conference and Gandhi returned to India as a frustrated person. In the meantime, Lord Irwin was replaced by Lord Wellington as Viceroy in India. He reversed the policy of his predecessor and adopted repressive measures against the Congress. The Congress also revived the Civil Disobedience movement. It was declared illegal by the Government and severe oppressive measures were adopted by the government against its members. In 1932, the Third Round Table Conference took place at London. The Congress, however, did not participate in it.

The Communal Award

At that very time, the British prime minister, Macdonell declared the 'Communal

Award'. It was declared that the Untouchables would be regarded as a distinct community and would be given separate representation in legislatures. Gandhi protested against it and went on a fast unto death. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables as well as other national leaders feared the loss of life of Gandhi and, therefore, intervened. Because of their efforts an agreement was reached between the high- caste Hindus and the Untouchables by which the seats for the Untouchables were kept reserved in legislatures but among the Hindus. The government accepted this agreement and withdrew the 'Communal Award'. Gandhi gave up his fast after it. Yet, he kept another fast for twenty one days with a view to purify his soul. The Civil Disobedience movement was also suspended for six months and Gandhi was released from the prison. The movement was again revived after some time but finally withdrawn in 1934-

The Act of 1935 and the Entry of the Congressmen in the Legislative Councils. The Act of 1935 established provincial autonomy. Being assured by the government that the governors would not interfere in the day-today working of the Indian ministers, the Congress participated in the elections. It succeeded in establishing its ministries in six provinces. The ministries did useful work in many fields. In 1939 the Second World war started and India was made a party to it without consulting the popular ministries. The Congress sought clarification of the war-aims of the Government. The viceroy, Lord Linlithgow refused to give any clarification. He only declared that after the close of the war, the Government would consult all political parties and the native rulers to bring changes in the Act of 1935. The Congress ministries, therefore, resigned in protest in late 1939.

The Last Phase, 1939-47

The Congress promised all support to the government provided it established an interim popular government during the course of the war and assured that India would be granted independence after the close of the war. The Government refused its demand. The Prime Minister of Britain, Mr Winston Churchill declared that he had not become the prime minister of Britain for disintegrating the Empire. However, on August 8, 1940 the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, declared the 'August Offer'. It included the following:

- a. The minorities were assured that the British government would not leave the administration of India in the hands of any such organisation which would be opposed by determined group or groups of people.
- b. The right of the Indians to frame the constitution for their country was accepted by the government.
- c. It was assured that a Constituent Assembly would be formed after the close of the war.
- d. A war-advisory committee including the Indians would be constituted.
- e. The Indians were asked to co-operate with the Government on the basis of above assurances.

The Congress rejected the 'August' offer. It stated 'Individual Satyagraha'. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the first individual to offer *Satyagraha*. He was imprisoned. But the *Satyagraha* was offered by the individuals numbering thousands. Nearly twenty thousand people were imprisoned in Uttar Pradesh alone.

In 1940, the Muslim League put up its demand of Pakistan. The league was established in 1906 by Nawab Salimullah. It was encouraged in its communalism by the British and the

pacifist attitude of the Congress gave it courage to insist on its demands which went on increasing and finally emerged in the demand of a separate homeland for the Muslims, viz. Pakistan.

In December 1941, Japan entered in the war against Britain and its allies. It speedily conquered South East Asian countries and attacked Burma. It endangered the security of India. The British government started releasing the political prisoners and the Congress also suspended the Satyagraha Movement. The British Government, then, deputed Cripps' Mission to India to find out a workable solution with a view to gain the support of the Indians in the war.

The Cripps' Mission, 1942 -

The Mission reached India in 1942, talked to Indian leaders of all prominent political parties and then proposed the following in return of the cooperation of the Indians:

(a) Full Dominion status would be granted to India after the close of the war. It would have the right to cede itself from the British Commonwealth of Nations.

(b) A Constituent Assembly would be formed after the close of the war. Its members would be elected by the members of the legislative assemblies (lower houses) of the provinces by proportional representative system of election.

The Constitution framed by that Assembly would be accepted by the British government on the condition that the provinces which would not like the new constitution would keep their status as before. The Constituent Assembly would make a treaty with Britain for the protection of the rights of the minorities and, till the Constituent Assembly was not formed, the British government would continue to look after the defence of India.

Some scholars described the Cripps' proposals a step ahead of the 'August Offer'. But some others described it as 'a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank'. The proposals accepted the demand of Pakistan by Muslim League though indirectly. Its defence proposals were also not acceptable to the Congress. It, therefore, rejected the proposals. The League also rejected them because its demand of Pakistan was not accepted directly by the Government.

The Quit India Movement, 1942,

While the Cripps' Mission failed in India, Japan moved swiftly towards Burma and occupied it by May, 1942. It seriously endangered the security of India. The Indians felt that if the British would not leave India, Japan was sure to attack it. On May 10, 1942 Gandhi wrote in the *Horijan*: "The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes that bait." The failure of Cripps' Mission convinced the Indians that the British would not permit them to defend their country.

The Congress, therefore, decided to start a mass movement again. Gandhi was convinced, of the necessity of the withdrawal of British from India. The Congress Working Committee passed the 'Quit India' resolution of August 8, 1942. But before it could take any step in that direction, the Government took preventive measures. All prominent Congress leaders were captured and imprisoned on the morning of August 9. It created widespread resentment in India. The people protested by observing *hartals*, taking out processions, public meetings etc. This time, the movement grew violent.

The students remained in the forefront of this movement. Railway traffic was disrupted, telephone and telegraph wires were cut down and government officials were attacked. According to the official report two hundred fifty railway stations and five hundred post-offices were

burnt. The Government completely lost hold over many places like Ballia, Basti, Surat etc. where the people established people's councils to run the administration. Gandhi disowned the responsibility of these violent incidents and undertook fast for twenty one days in order to justify the commitment of the Congress to non-violence means. This movement continued for three weeks without leadership. Then it subsided because of the severe oppressive measures of the government.

The Rajagopalachari Formula and the Desai-Liaquat Pact.

The League observed the 'Pakistan Day' on March 23, 1943. It declared that Pakistan was the final goal of the Muslims in India. It became clear that some sort of compromise was necessary between the Congress and Muslim League. In March, 1944 Mr C. Rajagopalachari evolved a formula with concurrence of Gandhi. The scheme suggested that:

- a. The League should cooperate with the Congress in its demand of complete Independence.
- b. After the close of the war, a plebiscite would be held in the Muslim majority provinces to decide whether or not they should form a separate state.
- c. In the event of separation, the two states would make an agreement concerning Defence, Communication and other matters of common concern.
- d. The scheme would be put into practice only when India was given complete Independence. The formula, however, was rejected by the League.

Another attempt for compromise between the two parties was made by Mr Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress in the Central Legislative Assembly. He met Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, deputy leader of the League in the Assembly and proposed that an Interim government should be formed at the Centre consisting of equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the Central Legislature, representatives of minorities and the Commander-in-Chief. The Muslim League rejected this scheme as well.

The Simla Conference and the Wavell Plan, 1945

In 1943, Lord Wavell had come to India as the Viceroy. The condition of the British on the Eastern frontier had deteriorated further. Subhash Chandra Bose who had fled away from India, had formed the Indian National Army from among the Indian war-prisoners of the Japanese and the Indian citizens living in Burma and South East Asia. He had the support of the Japanese. The Indian National Army (INA) reached Kohima. Lord Wavell, therefore, again, attempted to find out some solution to the Indian problem. He called an all-party conference at Simla and proposed his Plan in 1945. It was proposed that an Interim Government should be formed which would have equal number of members of the Congress and the League. The Congress nominated Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as one of its representatives in the proposed Interim Government. Mr Jinnah refused to accept it because he claimed that the Muslim League alone represented the Indian Muslims. The Congress also remained adamant on its nomination. Therefore, the Wavell Plan failed.

After the Simla Conference, elections to Legislative Assemblies were held all over India. The Congress captured all non-Muslim seats and the Muslim League captured all Muslim seats. Only in the North West Frontier Province, the Congress captured Muslim seats as well. The Congress and the League formed ministries in their respective majority gained provinces. Lord

Wavell declared that a Constituent Assembly would also be formed soon and the Central Executive would be reconstituted. Nearly the same time, the British government declared that a Cabinet Mission would be soon deputed to India.

The Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India in 1946. The second World War was over and Britain and its allies had won it. The Conservative government of Mr Churchill was replaced by the government of the Labour Party headed by Mr Attlee- But Britain ranked as the third great power in the world after the war. In India, the atmosphere had become tense because of the trial of I.N A. officers The Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force no more remained reliable in the eyes of the Indian government. The American government was also sympathetic towards Indian independence. India, no more, was an economic asset to Britain. These changed circumstances after the war seriously affected the attitude of the British government. The Cabinet Mission was deputed to India to find a mutually agreed solution of the Indian problem. The Mission held talks with the leaders of all prominent political parties in India and then proposed the following:

- (a) A Federal Government should be established at the Centre which would include the native states as well. It should look after the defence, foreign affairs and communication.
- (b) Communal problems should be decided by the concerned communities.
- (c) Residuary powers should be left to the provinces.
- (d) The provinces could organize themselves into groups.
- (e) An Interim Government should be formed which should include representatives of all prominent political parties.
- (f) The Constituent Assembly would make a treaty with Britain.

Besides the plan determined the number of the members of the Constituent Assembly and the method of election of its members, It divided it into three parts as well.

The plan was criticised by all political parties in the beginning but, afterwards, all gave their consent to it. The election to the Constituent Assembly, then, took place. The Congress captured one hundred ninety nine seats in it and the Muslim League seventy three.

MOUNTBATTEN PLAN, THE PARTITION OF INDIA AND THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT, 1947

Differences soon arose between the Congress and the Muslim League concerning the powers of the Constituent Assembly. The Congress regarded it as the sovereign body to frame a constitution for India. The Muslim League refused to accept it as such. The League, therefore, rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan in the middle of 1946. In September 1946, the Congress formed the government at the center. The League refused to be a party to it. It, instead, fixed August 16, 1946 as the 'Direct Action Day' to attain Pakistan. It was asking for open violence by the Muslims against the Hindus. It resulted in widespread communal riots in different parts of India, Punjab, East Bengal, Bihar, Tripura were the main centers of these riots which brought unimaginable atrocities to the innocent people of both communities. In October 1946, five members of the League were also included in the Interim Government. But attitude of the League was not cooperative and it did not participate in the framing of the Constitution. The

communal riots continued to disturb the life of the Indians. In such circumstances, Mr Attlee announced on February 20, 1947 that the British would leave India before June, 1948 in every case. Gandhi asked for immediate withdrawal of the British Lord Mountbatten was sent as the Viceroy to India at that time. He put up his plan in June 1947 which included partition of India. Gandhi did not accept the proposal of the partition of India, But the Congress leaders decided otherwise- They agreed for partition. The British government then passed the Indian Independence Act, 1947. It created two independent states in the Indian subcontinent, viz. Indian Union and Pakistan. Both of them were given independence by the British government on August 15, 1947.

2. SOUTH INDIAN REBELLION AND VELLORE MUNITY

The South Indian Rebellion of 1800-1801 in larger dimension in wider area was the outburst of accumulated hatred and anger against the English East India Company rule. The letters of the rebels indicated the causes. The correspondence of company officials indicated an organised move. The long standing economic and social causes combined in and the immediate political causes triggered off, the rebellion of 1800-1801 in Tamilnadu and South India.

The Causes

1. The men of English East India Company came purely for trade. The native rulers in folly imploded the traders in local politics. The local rulers were totally ignorant of the motivated imperialistic designs behind the trader's policy of aid and alliance, Wellesley's policy of intervention and Edward Clive's eagerness in the annexation of the principalities at the closing period of the 18th century exposed the intensions of the company. The rulers were trapped by this time. The hereditary rulers, according to the patriots were reduced to the status of widows. They were helpless The ball of action therefore was in the court of the Palayakkars.
2. The princes and palayakkars had a long tradition of deft dignity, respectable status and received habitual respect and regard from the people. The company made great inroads into the affair of the principalities and palayams. The officers of the company and their servants summoned and will treated the Palayakkars and people like 'dogs' in the words of the patriots.
3. The company officials, claiming superiority and long democratic tradition intervened in the affairs of Thanjavur, Arcots Ramanadu and Sivaganga and several palayams and carried vulgar politics, unworthy of democratic tradition of Great Britain and accepted norms of morality of civilized humanity.
4. Through the policy of 'aid and alliance' the compan carried on what was called 'Dual government'. They followed oppressive policy in administration and rude means in collection of taxation. Bribery of officials like Amuldars [and their subordinates virtually harassed the people.
5. The superiority complex of the whites, European as well as Asiatics increased administrative arrogance and hardened behaviour. The Europeans employed bands of peons for collecting tax and protecting money chest. They acted as bull-dogs, pounced the peasants and helped the process of torture in the course of collection. When collection season came the peasants became panicky stricken as they became miserable victims ' of punishment and torture.
6. The English trader administrators of revenue followed a mercantile policy of gain. After the Mysore wars company took possession of Coimbatore, Dindigul and Gudaloor for direct administration. They increased the taxes on Dindugal by 25% Coimbatore by

118% and Gudaloor by 96%. Taxes for houses, house gardens and waste lands were imposed.

7. In times of famine and off seasons the assignees misused monopolistic position. Created scarcity situations and increased prices for their gain to the helpless disadvantage of people.
8. The company was concerned with the welfare of its servants and well being of its mother country. In 1798 and 1799 there was failure of monsoon and famine. There was exodus of people towards Kaveri Delta in search of food and grains, kept in godowns and fed its people while the natives struggled for existence. The company showed intolerable irresponsibility to the sufferings of the natives.
9. The company officials made deep inroads into the rights of people and palayakkars and flouted human rights through mock democratic process. They sported ruthless wars against the Palayams to create an artificial terror not for crimes but for mistakes of corrective nature. Defaults in payment of rent had caused wars overriding the guarantees of promise. It was ignored that excessive taxation and vagaries of nature incapacitated the palayakkars and people from prompt payment. In certain cases the Palayakkars were caught and executed. Kombiah Nayak of Capator, Poosari Nayak of Deodanapatty were example of atrocity before the patriots and people. In 1798 Kattabomman was humiliated. 1799 his Palayam was invaded for arrears of rent. He was defeated, captured and hanged on wayside for public warning after a mock enquiry. The relatives of the fallen Palayakkars and their associates were subjected to severe punishments, imprisonments and torture. When the eighteenth century drew near the tyranny of the company ran high.
10. But who was to bell the cat was a problem for some years, Every movement needs leadership, organisation, planning and careful execution. Tamilnadu at the terminating period of the eighteenth century had leaders and secret organisations in the form of leagues,

Marudu Pandiyan and the Southern League

Marudu Pandiyan one of the heroes of South Indian Rebellion was born in obscurity. He served as a beetle-barer to Raja Udayu Thevar of Sivagangai. In 1772 the Carnatic Nawab and the English company invaded and killed Raja Udaya Thevar. At this moment Marudu Pandiyan showed his genius, organised a popular move ousted the intruders and installed Velu Nachiyar, the daughter of the fallen king. Marudu Pandiyan who became minister was fired by patriotism, guided by devotion and acted with determination He became popular and accessible to all. With his acute insight understood the real situation around him and around his country.

He realised that the follies of the princes and the indifference of the people had given opportunities for the English to rise in India. He felt that the English has broken the trust, reduced the States to servitude and driven the people to poverty and starvation. He realised that only in the unity of Indians, transcending religious communal and regional barriers lay their strength, capable of driving out their common foe, the English from Navalan Theevu (Bharat). His Sri Ranganam proclamation demonstrated later in the course of the rebellion on 16.6.1801 on the Mainguard Gate Tiruchi and the walls of Sri Ranganam was a clarion call to all his fellow men or a nations redemption,

He believed in the united warfare against the English. He organised a league of Palayakkars for rebellion of great magnitude. The woods became the places of secret meetings. His activities extended from Nangunaseri in the South to Sholapur in the North- He was in touch with the leaders of other regions and helped the creation of a peninsular confederacy. Marudu commanded operations in the Madurai Mandalam.

Gopala Nayak and Dindugal League

Gopalanayak was the Palayakkar of Virupakshi. Virupakshi came under English control in 1792 along with Kongu regions and Dindugal. Gopalanayak was a diplomat and hero of several battles. He showed to the company outward loyalty and kept secret his patriotic move. Official tyranny and compulsory feudal contribution whipped him to action.

In 1797 he formed the league of patriots to resist the company's misrule. He enlisted the co-operation of Yadul Nayak of Dillikkottai. Many other palayakkars joined the league. In 1799 he sent his emissaries to Srirangapattanam to enlist the help of Tippu Sultan. A wing of Tippu's forces came under Ghazikhan and the confederates under the leadership of Gopalanayak plundered the camps of the company. This new move spread in Dindugal and Madurai. Taking advantage of the outbreak of the fourth Mysore war in Mysore war in March 1799 the confederates of Dindugal attempted to free the regions directly held by the company. (Dindugal and Coimbatore). When the company administration attempted to enlist the co-operation of the palayakkars Gopalanayak and his leaguers revolted. The victory of the English over Mysore in a short period gave strength to the company. The leaguers received threats of dire consequences like the one met by Kattabomman. The blood of patriots ran strong in their veins. He was in touch with other leaders like Thoondaji Krishnappa Nayakka and Keralavarman of Malabar.

The other leaders

There were other leaguers. They were led by regional leaders. The leaguers spread through out South India. Moodur Qrinoanand Khanija'Khaa were the leaders of Kongumandalam. Kerala Varraan and ElambalamKunjan were the leaders of Malabar. Krishnappanayakka had his league at Mysore. Shimoga Dhoondaji Waug had his leaguers spread in Maharashtra.

The leaguers of various regions were in constant touch. They formed a confederacy against the English East India Company administration for an armed rebellion.

Virnpakshi plan.

The leaders and their deputies had a secret meeting at Virnpakshi as organised by Gopalanayak. They met on 29-4-1800. They planned to carry a rebellion simultaneously through out South India to paralyse company administration and to capture their respective territories. Madurai and Ramanadu were left under Marudu Pandiyao. Dindugal and Tiruchi came under the charge of Gopalanayak. Coimbatore and Salem came under the leadership of Khanija Khan. Keralavarman took-charge of Malabar. The charge of Mysore went to Krishnappa Nayakka- Region north of Mysore came under the responsibility and leadership of Dhoondaji Waug.

They decided to make Coimbatore their link area and headquarters. They planned to capture it through surprise attack. Third June 1800, the day of Muharram festival was fixed as an opportune time. Gopalanayak of Dindugal region was given the charge of action. Thoondaji

wang had to supply cavalry. Khanija Khan had to bring four thousand horsemen on the appointed day.

Abortive attempt at Coimbatore

On 31-4-1800 five columns of men numbering 1800 moved to Coimbatore. Other patriotic fighters advanced to Satyamangalam ranges. Preparation for a surprise attack on the Muharam Day of June (3.6.1800) was getting ready.

The patriots who reached Coimbatore moved out in mufti. The governmental intelligence watched with suspicion the strange movements. Before the appointed day secret information reached the company and combing operation began. Suspects were arrested. Secret papers were taken possession of. Appaji Gourand fortyone others were tried and executed at Coimbatore, Satya- mangalam and other places. The other patriots and fighters, retreated to the hills. In Kannada and Maharastra also the company enforced strict vigilance. The advance of Dhoondaji Waug's cavalry was intercepted by Arther Wellesly.

The local leaders of Coimbatore were detected and punished. The expected horsemen failed to reach Coimbatore on the appointed day. The initial plan to capture Coimbatore became an abortive attempt.

Continuation of the struggle

The regional leaders confined their struggle in their respective regions. Dhoondaji was chased in Kannada Maharastriyan region. He was defeated and killed. Keralavaraman had very hard struggle in Malabar. The failure of Coimbatore plan did not discourage Gopalanayak. In company with Yadul Nayak he continued his work. He carried the struggle through attacks on Kutcherry in Dindugal and Tiruchiregion. Seeing the momentum of revolt in the north the company administration withdrew its forces from Tirunelveli. The company administration saw the clouding smoke in different regions. The company met the divided confederates in their regions and tried to crush them. After suppressing the revolts of the patriots of Mysore and Malabar they turned to Virupakshi. The Company forces with the support of local palayakkars attacked Virupakshifrom three sides. Giving a heroic resistance Gopalanayak withdrew to the hilly regions. Finally Gopalanayak and his leaguers were captured.

Revolt in Thirunelveli

Gopalanayak's revolt in Dindugal drew the company's attention to the north. Company withdrew its army from Tirunelveli- Taking advantage of this changed situation the two brothers of Kattabomman along with thirteen others made a dramatic escape from the prison at Palayamkottai. They were given a rousing welcome. Seeing the patriotic upsurge of the various sections of the population Kattabomman's brothers decided to fight from the South. They rebuilt the fort of Panchalankurichi and made it their base. Seventhiah took the leadership and appealed to all sections of the people, and to the palayakkars and kings who were in the English camp. His appealing letters to Sarfoji of Thanjavur and and Thondaiman of Pudukkottai though highly appealing had no effect on them. But his appeal to the people and Palayakkars had magnetic effect. All the Palayakkars except the palayakkars of Oothamalai and Ettayapuram filed up behind Seventhiah. Seventhiah received assistance of men and materials from Sivaganga and Dindugal. He strengthened his position and attacked Thoothukudi. The fort of Thoothudi fell. The vanguished English men were given a decent treatment.

Second battle of Panchalankurichi.

Seeing the success of the patriots in the South, Collin Mecauley decided to destroy Panchalankurichi. He mobilised his forces, collected the forces of the native rulers and reached Kayattaru on the 8th day of February 1801. In support of the English Company, the forces of Travancore came under Velu* thambi. The first attempt of Mecauley at Panchalankurichi was successfully repulsed on 31st March on 1801. Mecauley with reinforced vigour attacked the fort again. The fort was breached and the bodies of fallen soldiers rose up. Yet the feeble force of the English was forced to submit before the patriotic defence. On 1st April 1801 Collin Mecauley failed in his second attempt and retreated to places of safety but did not give up his attempt. The Court of Directors of the Company received the news of the humiliating defeat of the English men.

The third battle of Panchalankurichi.

Edward Clive the English company's Governor at Madras determined to recover the damaged prestige of the company at Panchalankurichi. He collected the forces from Madras, Arcot, Thanjavur, Tiruchi, Dindugal, Malabar and despatched them to Panchalankurichi. Ignoring the patriotic appeal of Seventhiah the native rulers too sent their forces without any least hesitation. In calculated vigour and in change of command under Agnieu the company forces stormed the fort under cover of night. This thunderstorm while natural thunderstorm was shocking fell as thunderbolt. This time Oomaidurai and his heroic defenders were outwitted and the enemy entered the fort. The defenders who survived the carnage made a dramatic evacuation.

Panchalankurichi fell. One thousand and fifty defenders lost their life. The captives of war were taken to scaffold given a send off to the next world. Leaders and the villagers received repression or torturous treatment.

The patriots recovered the wounded body of Oomaidurai the next day. Oomaidurai reached Kamudi with six wounds. Marudupandiyar gave him a hero's welcome.

The success of Marudu Pandiyar and the rebellion,

As seen earlier Marudu Pandiyar emerged as the Tamil country's leader of the penninsular confederacy. He had in touch with other leaders of the Tamil country. His patriotic followers mending the existing weapons added more with those captured from the company stores. Arms and ammunitions were hidden in Kalayarkoil forests and converted that region a virtual armoury. The whole operation was manned by Vellamarudu Muthukaruppan of Ramanadu and Gnanamuthu of Thanjavur became his trusted lieutenants. In that era of famine they got supplies of food through the port of Tondi. Extending help to the patriots of Tirunelveli, Marudu Pandiyar captured most parts of Ramanadu. Collin Mecauley's efforts to arrest the advance of Marudu Pandiyar failed.

The fall of Dindugal and Tirunelveli did not dishearten, Marudu Pandiyar. Soldiers of north and south joined his army, and increased his strength. Oomaidurai who made his escape after the last battle of Panchalankurichi fought front the side of Marudu Pandiyar. The remaining soldiers of Tirunelveli league were collected and led by Melappan in Ramanadu. The victorious patriots captured the southern regions of Ramanadu. The company forces were

overpowered and shut in the fort of Ramanadu. Marudu Pandiyan defeated the combined forces of the company and enfeebled the Nawabforces at Tiruppathoor and Natham. The patriots advanced towards Tiruchi. On 16—6—1801 he made public his Srirangam proclamation copy of it was pasted on the gates of Tiruchi fort. It was a clarion call of a patriot to the fellow men of India. The other wing of the soldiers under the soldiers advanced through Thanjavur in company with Gnanamuthu. They captured Aranthangi, Mangudiand_Nagoore. Ariyaloor, Udayarpatayam and Sirkali too fell. The whole of the southern Carnatic coast fell in the hands of the patriots. They restored the old system of administration in the captured regions.

Turn of events and the failure of the struggle

Shocked and desolated by the victory of the patriots, Edward Clive the company's Governor at Madras asked for reliable soldiers from the mother country and the emperor's soldiers entered Carnatic through Tranqubar. He mobilised and brought reinforcements from other provinces and even from Ceylon. Agnieu took up the command for the final trial of strength.

The patriots were attacked from different quarters. In the north the company soldiers succeeded in its mission with the aid of Thondaiman of Pudukkottai and the Maratta Rajah of Thanjavur. In Ramnad they had stiff resistance. The attack on Kalayarkoil failed. Agnieu turned desperate and the Thondaiman was frightened. On the suggestion of Thondaiman they brought forth a rival claimant to the throne, divided the house of Sivaganga- They also arrested the supplies received by the patriots through sea. A second attack of Kalayarkoil was made from the east- The victorious company soldiers from Thanjavur region reached for help. The soldiers of Pudukkottai and Ettayapuram reached for their aid. Kalayarkoil suffered an attack from all sides. The followers of Marudu Pandiyan were thrown out of gear at this unexpected turn of events and ran pellmell. Marudu's attempts to mobilise his soldiers had no effect at that confused situation. Hence he disappeared to the forests of Singampunari.

The final route

Oomaidurai evading the vigilance of Thondaiman reached Virupakshi followed by six hundred men. In no time four thousand soldiers filed up behind Oomaidurai at Virupakshi. It was the last and desperate attempt of the patriots. They were defeated at Dindugal and Oomaidurai was captured at Vathalagundu. Marudupandiyan made his last attempt to renew the struggle. He was defeated at Chlapuram. Younger Marudu was hunted and captured, the captured leaders were hanged en masse at Thiruppathoor, Panchalankurichi and other places- without giving no respect to local leadership. The suspects suffered inhuman torture. The first organised attempt to defeat the English company and win freedom was defeated and crushed by the superior arms of the company with the help and co-operation of the native Rajahs and obedient palayakkars who later became Zamindars. The patriotic leaders lost their lives and the country lost its freedom.

Vellore Mutiny of 1806

The immigration of more than three thousand adherents of Tippu Sultan and the confinement of his relatives in Vellore after the fall of Srirangapattanam converted Vellore a Srirangapattanam in the making.

In 1806 the East India Company rule in the Tamil country was in its infancy. The condition of the sepoys under company administration was not happy. They were held in an inferior position in comparison to their white counterparts.

The introduction of uniform dress, application of uniform rules, coercion to change head-dress, shave moustach, removal of caste marks, talisman, ear rings etc. roused suspicion. During this time there was brisk missionary work at Vellore.

The introduction of rules for uniforms and dress etc., was therefore misunderstood as an indirect means of christianisation. The reforms of the Madras Governor, William Bentinck added under such a foul atmosphere the new head-dress reached Vellore on 6th May of 1806. A wing of the sepoys refused to wear the new head-dress, even though severe threat of punishment stood before them. The disobedients were court martialled. Refusal to obey the new rules increased and hence the nature of punishments also increased, by adopting varied methods. The next month the sepoys of Wallahjabad revolted. Under orders from William Bentinck and the Governor of Madras, the military officers stood for severe action. The sepoys were temporarily kept under control. Their deep rooted hatred did not sink. Rather disaffection and hatred rose high.

The relatives of Tippu Sultan planned to exploit this mounting hatred to capture Vellore, as a first step to recover their lost possession. Mohideen and Musuddin the ablest of the sons of Tippu led the move and the allegiance of the sepoys loyal to them was won over. They planned to capture the fort of Vellore on 10th July 1806. There were four hundred Europeans in the fort at that time. Things went on as usual till the midnight of 9th July 1806. On receipt of signal, at 2.A.M, the next day the sepoys came out of their camp, shot dead the sentry and opened fire on the European camp and residence and shot dead irrespective of men, women and children. The peaceful early night of 9-7-1806 turned terrific morning on 10th July. Sounds of bullets, yelling and cries of women and children broke the silence of the serene night. Most of the Europeans fell dead or wounded. Some of them managed to creep in safer corners with the help of Indian servants. The fort fell in the hands of the sepoys. At this point of time Musuddin the son of Tippu took charge of the fort, hoisted Tippu's flag and announced an immediate increase of the pay of the sepoys by double the amounts. It was a dramatic victory. In no time intoxication of victory reached its peak and avarice set in motion. The sepoys lost their morale and missed their goal. They turned to the European quarters for plunder* In that irresponsible loot they left even the main gate unguarded. Next morning news reached Arcot and the English horsemen under Gillespie rushed and reached Vellore at 9'AM. He leaped over and entered the fort. Gillespie and his followers recovered the machine guns from the sepoys and turned them against the sepoys. The helpless sepoys desperately fought and felt they paid for their irresponsibility and selfishness. At 10 A M on 10-7-1806 they found the fort completely captured and held by the Englishmen. In the episode of a single eight hours the English saw the fall and recovery of the fort. Vellore Mutiny is also termed as head dress mutiny by writers on history.

3. REVOLT OF 1857

CAUSES OR CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE FIRST INDIAN ARMED STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

The first major armed attempt to overthrow the alien rule in India in 1857 might have been styled as a mutiny or a sepoy rebellion by the British historians but we have no hesitation in calling it India's first glorious struggle for independence. There was the force of militant patriotism and studied planning behind the bloody upsurge of people's wrath against the British rule. It was a national and holy war waged with the object of securing freedom from English bondage. It was not just a sudden outburst as some English historians tell us. The incident of greased cartridges was but the chance spark which set the mine ablaze. Give it any name and attribute any reason for its outbreak, the significance of the great upsurge of 1857 cannot be undermined. Let us first discuss the causes responsible for this revolt.

Political Causes

Doctrine of Lapse – This doctrine was based on the presumption that the East India Company was the Supreme power in India and that all native States were subordinate to it. The Doctrine of Lapse made it obligatory on the issueless rulers of native States to get the sanction of the Company before adopting sons to inherit the rulership of their respective States. The Court of Directors stated it clearly that such sanction was to be granted only as a special favour and not as a rule. They asserted their right to withhold the sanction if they liked. This principle was implemented by no other Governor-General so rigidly as by Lord Dalhousie. He employed it to extend the bounds of British Empire by annexing the native States and Principalities. He availed himself of every opportunity to decline the sanction and deprive the rulers of their palace, power and prestige. In 1853 when Raghoji, the Raja of Nagpur, died without a legitimate heir. Lord Dalhousie annexed the State in the ensuing year. On the same plea the States of Jhansi, Baghat, Jaitpur and Sambhalpur and Satara were merged with British India. The ceremony of adoption was a time-honoured practice, and also permitted by the Hindu Law. The Doctrine of Lapse, as such, hurt the religious sentiments of the people. Besides it, the other rulers of Indian States feared that sooner or later their territories would be confiscated by the British Government.

Annexation of Oudh-Nawab Wazid Ali Shah was the ruler of Oudh with Lucknow as its capital. The Nawabs of Oudh from 1765 onwards had been very loyal and faithful to the British rule. The State which was quite rich in resources and fertility of soil had always served as a wet nurse to feed the Government with money. But this State could not escape the greedy and imperialistic designs of the Company. When no other valid reason could be discovered for its absorption, Lord Dalhousie alleged that the administration of Oudh was weak and inefficient. On this lame plea, he abrogated the treaty of 1801 and by a proclamation dated 13th February 1856, annexed the State of Oudh. A large number of soldiers in the army of Bengal belonged to Oudh. They were shocked to hear the news. The treacherous role of the British Government also antagonised other Indian rulers and they ceased to trust its promises. *Mr. Malleon*

observed, "The annexation of Oudh alienated the territorial aristocracy who were stripped of their estates by the action of the newly introduced system, the Mohammedan aristocracy, the military classes, the British sepoy and the peasantry which converted into a hotbed of discontent." Commenting on the annexation of Indian States, Ludlow writes "Surely the natives of India must be less than men if their feelings could not be moved under such circumstances in favour of the victims of annexation and against the annexer. Surely there was not a woman whom annexation did not tend to make our enemy, not a child whom they did not tend to train upon hatred to the Feringhee rule."

Ill-treatment meted out to Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II

The Company in the beginning received many favours from the Mughal Emperors. Even the coins of the Company bore the name of the Mughal King. Later on the English became ungrateful and stopped offering peris to Bahadur Shah. They even removed his name from their currency. They resolved to extinguish the myth of Mughal Government. The Company became a rival of the Emperor. The disregard of the Mughal Emperor profoundly shocked the people who were still loyal to the throne. Lord Dalhousie went a step further and refused to accept Bahadur Shah's eldest son, Jawan-Bakht, as Crown-prince because of his anti-British feelings. He installed the younger son of Bahadur Shah as their to the Mughal throne on the condition that he would vacate the Red Fort of Delhi and secondly that he would be contented with only Rs. 15,000 instead of one lakh per month. When the prince accepted the conditions, Lord Dalhousie ordered Bahadur Shah to shift from Red Fort to Qutab. The Emperor was rudely shocked and he became the sworn enemy of the British Government.

Injustice with Nana Saheb - The fourth cause of the upheaval of 1857 was the injustice done to Nana Saheb. He was the adopted son of Baji Rao II, the ex-Peshwa. After the Maratha wars, Baji Rao was granted annual pension of Rs. 8 lakhs and the estate of Bithur near Kanpur. After Baji Rao's death, Lord Dalhousie refused to accept Nana Saheb as heir to Baji Rao. This was not all. Nana Saheb was directed to vacate his estate of Bithur as and when asked by the Governor-General. This embittered Nana so strongly that he, too, became an arch enemy of the British Government.

Effects of Crimean Afghan wars - The reverses suffered by the English in Afghanistan in the year 1841-42 shattered the state of discipline in Company's forces. The Indian soldiers were convinced that Britishers were not indomitable. Azimullah Khan, the leader of the rebellion, drew the inference from the British reverses in Crimea that it was not at all difficult to rout the English forces.

Most inhuman means employed for the conquest of India.

William Howitt writes "The mode by which the East India Company has possessed itself of Hindustan, is the most revolting and unchristian that can possibly be conceived if there was one system more Machiavellian, more appropriative of the show of justice where the basest injustice was attempted, more cold, cruel, haughty and unrelenting than another, it is the system by which the government of the different states of India had been wrested from the hands of their respective princes and collected into the grasp of the British power.

Whenever we talk of other nations of British faith and integrity, they may well point to India in derisive scorn. The system which for more than a century was steadily at work to strip the native princes of the dominions, and that too, under the most sacred pleas of right and

expediency, is a system of torture more exquisite than regal or Spiritual tyranny ever before discovered, such as the world has nothing similar to show.”

Fervent desire of the Indians to liberate themselves

Love of freedom is deeply rooted in every heart. Indians are no exception to this rule. Indians living in whatever part of the country even before 1857 had unity of outlook both in social and religious fields. All of them were imbued alike with the desire to secure freedom from English bondage. This common desire for freedom was given a spur and strength by the reckless attitude of the Government. Soldiers and civilians alike fretted with rage and hatred against the rulers. They were taken aback to see how a trading company which began its career as the agent of the Mughal Empire rounded off its adventures by robbing the Mughal Emperor of all its powers. The Company displeased not one but everyone. There was another factor, equally responsible for the outbreak of mass uprising in 1857. There was a current belief that the Company's rule was destined to end exactly hundred years after the battle of Plassey, 1757. So the common man made common cause with the rebelled soldiers and blew the bugle of a rebellion all over the country.

Karl Marx on the Colonial plunder by the East India Company

Karl Marx writes, “There cannot, however, remain any doubt but that the misery inflicted by the British on Hindustan is of an essentially different and infinitely more intensive kind than all Hindustan had to suffer before. I do not allude to European despotism, planted upon Asiatic despotism, by the British East India Company, forming a more monstrous combination than any of the divine monsters startling us in the Temple of Salsette. There is no distinctive feature of British colonial rule, but only an' imitation of Dutch, and so much so that in order to characterize the working of the British East India Company, it is sufficient to literally repeat what Sir Stamford Raffles, the English Governor of Java, said of the old Dutch East India Company.

Besides this there were the following causes

Social and Religions Causes

- 1.The English committed a serious blunder by disrupting the social and religious systems of the Hindus. They stopped “Sati System” by law. This measure which appears to us so just and reasonable today, was then considered by Hindus as outrageous and insulting to their sacred religion.
- 2.The Company antagonised the people introducing changes in their laws of inheritance and succession. By a law, the Government entitled a Hindu even after embracing Christianity to claim his share in his ancestral property. This was greatly resented by the people.
- 3.The English played havoc with educational system prevailing in those days. It was their sustained effort to keep the people backward and illiterate, because education, they knew, fosters independent thinking.
4. The snobbish British officers who ruled with arrogance had no sympathies with the coloured people of India. They looked upon *Indians as pariahs*. Mr. Malcolm Lewin in his book ‘*Indian Revolt*’ writes “*We (the English and Indians) are ignorant of each other, as members of society, the bond of union has been that of Spartan and Helot. Grasping everything that could render life desirable, we have denied to the people of the country all that could elevate them as men; we have insulted their caste; we have abrogated their laics of inheritance; we have changed*

their marriage institutions; we have ignored the most sacred rites of their religion; we have delivered up their temple property to confiscation-, we have branded them in official records as heathens; we have seized the possessions of their native princes and confiscated the estates of their nobles; we have unsettled the country by our exactions and collected the revenue by means of torture; we have sought to uproot the most ancient aristocracy of the world and to degrade it to the condition of pariahs.”

Karl Marx writes, “All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive actions in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down entire framework of Indian Society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindus, and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history.”

5. *Efforts to convert Indians into Christianity* Another reason that served as fuel to the resentment of the people against the British rule was the activities of the missionaries to convert die natives into Christianity. The British authorities encouraged the missionaries widi-a-sinister political design. They thought that Christianization of India would stabilise and perpetuate dieir political domination over the country. Their design of religious expansion was the same as had been adopted by the Spanish colonialists in the South America. *Mr. Mangles, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East India Company, said in the House of Commons on one occasion, “Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the Other. Everyone must exert all his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing in the country this grand work of making all India Christian.”*

Economic Causes

1. The English rule proved more baneful for India than the Mughalrule. The latter who settled down in India permanently had no intentions to export India’s wealth to any foreign country. They never designed to shatter the economic structure and life of the people. But during the British rule Indian wealth began to flow' out of the country. Secondly, the industrial revolution gave a historic turn to the economic policy of England. The British merchants began to hunger for Asian markets to consume the British-made goods. British policy in India was so adjusted as to meet the needs of industrialised England. The native industries were given a calculated death blow. India was turned into a British colony which exported raw materials and imported finished goods. It led to tire impoverishment of the country. The British Government compelled Indian weavers to work in English factories. The British economic policy thus created unrest in the whole country. The situation was further worsened by a famine that broke out in Purnea district of Bengal in 1770. The famine reduced the population of that district by one-third. The Company in order to make up the loss of land revenue increased rent in land holdings and resorted to the practice of auctioning the land if a farmer failed to pay enhanced rents. From 1850 to 1875 nearly five million people in Bengal alone died of starvation. In Bombay the Company forfeited nearly 21,000 zamindari in 1852. Oudh had the same story to tell. The profound discontent in Oudh ultimately found an outlet in armed revolt in 1857.

2. *Views of Karl Marx on the Economic Exploitation of India by the British East India Company (Decline of Agriculture)* - Karl Marx writes, "There; have been in Asia, generally from immemorial times, but three departments of Government: that of Finance, or the plunder of the interior; that of War, or the plunder of the exterior; and finally the department of Public Works. Now the British in East India accepted from their predecessors the department of finance and of war, but they have neglected entirely that of public works. Hence the deterioration of an agriculture which is not capable of being conducted on the British principle of free competition of *laissez faire and laissez.*"

3. *Marx on the decline of Indian Industries* - Karl Marx further observes about the decline of industries in this country. "It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel. England began with driving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindustan and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons. From 1818 to 1836, the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 100,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. The decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindustan, the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry.

Military Causes

The arrogant English dug their grave by displeasing the Indian soldiers enlisted in the British army. Indian soldiers were denied equality of status with the English soldiers. Their loyalties grew weak. British reverses in the Afghan wars also strengthened their belief that their white masters were not the chosen sons of God. The soldiers of the Bengal troops, who hailed mostly from Oudh, were already annoyed with the British over the annexation of their home-province. The other measures of Lord Canning roused further discontentment. He issued a general order which made it compulsory for the new recruits to serve overseas. Such an order was distasteful to the soldiers whose religion forbade them to go across the seas. When the discontent was already mounting, the greased cartridges served as a match to hay stock. The new cartridges were greased with beef and cow fat and required biting before they could be used. That the cartridges contained fat is beyond doubt. *The English historian Sir Kaye writes; 'There is no question that beef fat was in the composition of this tallow.'* A factory for manufacturing the cartridges was set up near Dum Dum (Calcutta). Company's records tell us that a contractor undertook to supply cow's fat at the rate of annas four a seer. *Lord Roberts who was in India in 1875 wrote "The recent researches of Mr. Forest in the records of the Government of India prove that the lubricating mixture used in preparing the cartridges was actually composed of objectionable ingredients—cow's fat and lard; and that incredible disregard of the soldiers' religious prejudices was displayed in the manufacture of these cartridges*

Events

31st May, 1857, was the date, originally fixed, for the outbreak of revolt on a countrywide scale. Unfortunately it flared up earlier because of the mistake of a

Brahmin sepoy Mangal Pandey, in Barrackpore. He received a big shock when he learnt that he would have to bite greased cartridges containing cow's fat. He reported the news to his fellow soldiers. The news spread like wild fire. The English officers vainly tried to prove that the news was unfounded. 'Revenge' became the watchword of the soldiers. Mangal Pandey had to lose his life for supplying the news to other soldiers. The heroic sacrifice of the first martyr of Indian struggle for Independence had its desired effect. The whole country took up arms to uproot the British power.

Beginning of armed struggle for freedom in Meerut- On 6th May, 1857, the new cartridges were issued to 90 Indian soldiers in Meerut, 85 of them refused to bite it with their teeth. They were court-martialed and sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment. They were disarmed and handcuffed and brought on a parade. In the presence of the entire Indian garrison they were stripped of their uniforms and taken to the prison. The effect of such a dramatic scene was just the reverse of what was intended. It was done on the morning of 9th May, 1857. The same afternoon when the Indian troops were strolling in the streets of Meerut, they were hooted and jeered at by the ladies of the town for their cowardice. Their remarks were penetrating. It became difficult for the soldiers to wait till 31st May. The spark was struck and the revolution was on its way. The troops and the civilians raided the jails and set the fellow convicts free. The sky was rent with the deafening shouts of "Maro Firranglii ko". On the 10th night, the Indian troops joined by thousands of able-bodied men of the town marched on to Delhi.

Entry into Delhi

The hastiness of Indian troops in Meerut in fact saved the British Raj from its impending ruin, as planned by Nana Saheb and his associates. Maleson, White and Wilson the three noted historians agree to the fact that such a premature uprising proved fortunate for the British and fatal for the planners. Had it started simultaneously throughout the country on the fixed day, the results would have been different from what they were. Not a single Englishman would have escaped alive.

The Indian cavalry comprising two thousand soldiers entered Delhi on 11th May, 1857. The English Colonel Ripley tried to thwart the advancing rebels with the support of Indian troops under his command but the attempt proved abortive. His soldiers walked over to the side of the rebels and put Col. Ripley to death. Within a couple of days Delhi was freed from English hands. The rebels declared Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of India and rallied under the Mughal banner to cross swords with the British authority in India.

Spread of the Movement

The news of the fall of Delhi into the hands of rebels spread like wild fire all over the Northern India. By the 21st May, 1857, the neighbouring districts of Delhi including Aligarh, Etawali and Mainpuri declared themselves free. The fire spread to Rohilkhand where Khan Bahadur Khan also joined the revolutionaries. The Englishmen were massacred and their houses

burnt. It was a unique instance of Hindu-Muslim unity and co-operation in the common cause of driving Britishers out of their land. The stimulating news of the revolt soon spread to Kanpur, Lucknow, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The reaction was immediate.

Siege of Delhi by Britishers - Lord Canning, the then Governor- General of India, showed presence of mind at this critical hour. He ordered all the Indian troops to be disarmed speedily. He also employed diplomatic tactics to break the union of Hindus and Muslims. He frightened the Muslims by telling them about the designs of the Hindus to establish Maratha rule. He told the Hindus to beware of the Muslims who were planning to establish Muslim Raj again. Lord Canning succeeded in procuring help from the States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Hyderabad, Gwalior and Rajputana. Nepal and Punjab provided excellent recruits to the British ranks. The British circulated in the Punjab a false *Firman* in the name of the Mughal Emperor which said that after the success of the revolt every Sikh would be put to death. Bahadur Shah tried his best to remove the misunderstanding but did not get much success. The Sikhs joined the British ranks in large number and became instrumental in suppressing the revolt. Had the Punjab sided with the revolutionaries events might have taken a different turn.

Lord Canning instructed Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, then at Simla, to proceed towards Delhi and General Neill to march with his well- equipped forces to recapture Benares, Allahabad and other districts. The English Commander-in-Chief and Brigadier Wilson laid the siege of Delhi. They along with their forces stuck to the outer walls of Delhi notwithstanding the attacks by Bahadur Shah's forces. The siege continued for several months. Circumstances both in the capital and other parts of country turned in favour of the British. The British troops blocked all the supply lines and caused scarcity of food and war material in the capital. Moreover, Indian troops in Delhi did not have a strong leader to inspire them to a joint action. Emperor Bahadur Shah was too old to lead his army. Above all espionage and bribery also helped the cause of the English. They got the military secrets from Mirza Ilahi Bakhsha, a close relative of the Emperor. Lord Canning reinforced the British troops round Delhi. More troops from Kashmir and the Sikh States of Punjab swelled their sides. On 14th September, 1857, the British forces, divided into five divisions, started their onward march. Fierce battles raged on all sides. The stars of the British being in the ascendant, they broke through the outer walls and captured the city completely on 24th September. Because of the treachery of Ilahi Bakhsha, Bahadur Shah fell into the British hands. General Hudson ordered the two sons of Bahadur Shah to be stripped of their clothes and be shot dead. Not satisfied with his cruelty, he severed their heads from their bodies and sent them to Bahadur Shah. The Emperor was deported to Rangoon where he died in 1863. The fall of Delhi was followed by massacre and loot of the people by the British troops. Every house was ransacked and every conceivable method of torture was employed to get information about the underground wealth. Within a couple of days thousands of people were killed or mangled. The imperial city became the favourite haunt of vultures and jackals. *Lord Elphinston writes: "After the siege was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply heart-rending. A wholesale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend and foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadir Shah."* *General Chaplain also admitted: "A general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi, a large number of whom were known to wish our success, was openly proclaimed."*

Punjab - The Punjab was the only Province in Northern India which remained quiet. Emperor Bahadur Shah did make efforts to get the support of Sikh leaders and Sikh States but all his attempts were foiled by the machinations of Sir John Lawrence. Whenever the Indian troops in the British ranks showed signs of unrest, they were speedily disarmed. In spite of all the precautions taken by Sir Lawrence, the native troops at Peshawar, Ferozepore, Lahore and Jullundur turned their guns against the white Generals but soon they were suppressed. Those who fled for life were pursued, arrested and shot dead.

Haryana - It is highly regrettable to note that the historians have taken no pains to know and relate what happened in Haryana during the stormy days of 1857. In those days nearly an area of 100 miles round Delhi used to be called Haryana Pradesh. On the 1st February, 1981, this state comprised the districts of Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rohtak, Karnal, Panipat, Hissar, Ambala, Sonapat, Bhiwani, Kurukshetra, Sirsa and MahendraGarh. This region was then divided into petty States and principalities which had accepted the subordination of the British in 1803. The long seething volcano of the discontent erupted in 1857. Several villages, towns and cities of this region, e.g., Bilaspur, Murthal, Kundali, Alipur, Hamidpur, Sarai, Jharsa, Gurgaon, Rewari, Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Ballabgharh, Farrukh nagar and Mewat turned into scenes of great activity. Most notable among the leaders of the upsurge in Haryana were Rao Tularam and his cousin Rao Krishna Gopal of Rewari, Abdul Rehman, the Nawab of Jhajjar, Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabghrah, Nawab Fauzdar Khan of Farrukhnagar, Sardar Ali Hasan Khan of Mewat and his father-in-law Samad Khan. Rao Tularam fought bravely against British forces but lost in the battle of Nasipur, near Mahendragarh. After his defeat he joined Tatya Tope who sent him to Afghanistan where he died. Rao Gopal Krishna and Samad Khan died in action against the British. The ruler of Thajjar and Ballabgharh were arrested and hanged for their anti-British campaigns. Besides these, the Jagirdar of Jharsa, Chowdhry Bakhtawar Singh and Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgharh were also executed for raising banner of revolt in the neighbouring areas of Delhi.

Jhansi, Oudh and Bihar - The revolt in Cawnpore was led by Tatya Tope and Nana Sahib who received enthusiastic support from every civilian and soldier. Bareilly and the whole of Rohilkhand were also astir with brisk activities. The fire of revolt in Oudh was enkindled by Begum Hazrat Mahal and Wazir Ali Naki Khan. Rani Laxmi Bai became the spearhead of revolt in Jhansi. In Bihar Raja Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh joined the forces of revolt. But the stray attempts by Indian rulers failed to get much success for want of one leadership and concerted action. Laxmi Bai, the Joan of Arc of the Revolt, mounted her horse and moved up and down her forces, encouraging and inspiring her soldiers. She died on 18th June, 1858, near Gwalior. Tatya Tope was betrayed by one of his friends Man Singh and was hanged on 18th April, 1859. Maulvi Ahmed Shah was also murdered by the brother of Raja Jagannath Singh of Pawan. Nana Saheb, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Amar Singh of Jagdishpur fled towards Nepal and nobody knows what happened to them there. Thus the great struggle which began in 1857 boiled down completely by April, 1859.

Causes of the failure of the Armed Struggle for Freedom - There were three main causes of the failure of India's first armed struggle of great magnitude. These were lack of simultaneous action, lack of resources, and lack of common ideal after the arrest of Bahadur Shah. One great handicap of the rebel forces was that they were very poorly equipped: Some of

the rebel armies had only the swords to fight with against the British guns. Secondly, the rebels were short of men and money. They had no such territories as the Punjab and Nepal wherefrom to recruit soldiers. Moreover, the British forces far outnumbered the rebel armies. The worst of all was that the native States by their prolific help to the British ensured and hastened the doom of the revolt. Disunity amongst the Indians themselves and the limited character of the uprising which did not spread in the Punjab and beyond Narmada, proved fatal to the cause. *"Yet it must be admitted," writes Sir W. Russell in 'My Diary in India,' 'that with all their courage, they (the English) would have been quite exterminated, if the natives had been, all and altogether hostile to them . . . Our siege of Delhi would have been quite impossible if the Rajahs of Patiala and Jind had not been our friends and if the Sikhs had not got recruited in our battalions and remained quiet in the Punjab. The Sikhs at Lucknow did good service and in all cases our garrisons were helped, fed and served by the natives, as our armies were attended and strengthened by them in the field.'*"

Another cause that marred the chances of success of armed struggle was the lack of experienced generals. The British forces were commanded by the most trained and experienced persons while amongst the rebels there were no outstanding leaders except Tatyā Tope and Laxmi Bai and a few others. The rebel forces suffered from want of quick means of communications and transportations. The British forces had all the facilities of Post, Telegraph and Railways at their disposal. Lastly, the premature patriotic outburst of Mangal Pandey was also partly responsible for the failure of the grand designs of Naha Saheb and others. Since the outbreak, was not simultaneous in different parts, the government got the warning and time to consolidate its forces.

Consequences of the Movement of 1857—The Revolt of 1857 is so to say the most significant event of Indian history. It marked the end of an epoch of Indian history—the epoch of British intrigues and diplomatic tactics for the expansion of British Empire. The events of 1857 brought the Company rule to an end. As remarked by Bright, “the conscience of the nation had been touched upon the question and it came by leap—and it were by an irrepressible instinct—to the conclusion that the East India Company must be abolished.”

Secondly, it roused and increased racial ill-will between the British and the natives. The snobbish Englishmen withdrew themselves to their shell of vanity and stopped having much association with the coloured natives. The relations between the two races became that of the master and the slave.

Thirdly, the Englishmen lost their faith in the Indian subjects. Their trust in the loyalty of Indian troops was also shaken. They were so greatly frightened that they decided not to offer key posts in the administration to Indians. They practised this policy for a pretty long time.

Fourthly, the bitter experiences of the events of 1857 made the British Government realise that the rule of the sword simply would not be sufficient. For the stability of the British rule, the hearts of the subject race should also be changed. In pursuance of this aim strong efforts were made to popularise the learning of English language so that the Indians may start appreciating the British laws and system of justice. In short, the end of ‘Mutiny’ marked the beginning of systematised attempts to anglicise the people.

Fifthly, the British Government set about the reorganisation of Indian troops. The number of British officers was increased and the battalions and regiments were reconstituted on

the basis of religion, Province and caste. The motive behind it was to foster narrowmindedness and discord between one caste and the other. Besides it, the charge of heavy guns and cannons was given exclusively to European officers.

Sixthly, the Government realised the mistake of antagonising the rulers of Indian States. It decided thenceforth to befriend them. The Queen in her Proclamation assured the native princes that all the treaties made with them by the Company shall be honoured and no attempt will be made to deprive them of their States or titles. The Queen also promised to the princes to protect their States from any sort of aggression or encroachment. This Proclamation was received by the princes quite warmly. They became the allies of the British Government in crushing the national forces and stemming the rise of patriotic sentiments in the masses.

4. CIVIL REBELLIONS AND TRIBAL UPRISINGS

The Revolt of 1857 was the most dramatic instance of traditional India's struggle against foreign rule. But it was no sudden occurrence. It was the culmination of a century long tradition of fierce popular resistance to British domination.

The establishment of British power in India was a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and consolidation and the colonialization of the economy and society. This process produced discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage. This popular resistance took three broad forms: civil rebellions, tribal uprisings and peasant movements. We will discuss the first two in this chapter.

The series of civil rebellions, which run like a thread through the first 100 years of British rule, were often led by deposed rajas and nawabs or their descendants, uprooted and impoverished zamindars, landlords and poligars (landed military magnates in South India), and ex-retainers and officials of the conquered Indian states. The backbone of the rebellions, their mass base and striking power came from the rack-rented peasants, ruined artisans and demobilized soldiers.

These sudden, localized revolts often took place because of local grievances although for short periods they acquired a broad sweep, involving armed bands of a few hundreds to several thousands. The major cause of all these civil rebellions taken as a whole was the rapid changes the British introduced in the economy, administration and land revenue system. These changes led to the disruption of the agrarian society, causing prolonged and widespread suffering among its constituents. Above all, the colonial policy of intensifying demands for land revenue and extracting as large an amount as possible produced a veritable upheaval in Indian villages. In Bengal, for example, in less than thirty years land revenue collection was raised to nearly double the amount collected under the Mughals. The pattern was repeated in other parts of the country as British rule spread. And aggravating the unhappiness of the farmers was the fact that not even a part of the enhanced revenue was spent on the development of agriculture or the welfare of the cultivator.

Thousands of zamindars and poligars lost control over their land and its revenues either due to the extinction of their rights by the colonial state or by the forced sale of their rights over land because of their inability to meet the exorbitant land revenue demanded. The proud zamindars and poligars resented this loss even more when they were displaced by rank outsiders government officials and the new men of money – merchants and moneylenders. Thus they, as also the old chiefs, who had lost their principalities, had personal scores to settle with the new rulers.

Peasants and artisans, as we have seen earlier, had their own reasons to rise up in arms and side with the traditional elite. Increasing demands for land revenue were forcing large numbers of peasants into growing indebtedness or into selling their lands. The new landlords, bereft of any traditional paternalism towards their tenants, pushed up rents to ruinous heights and evicted them in the case of non-payment. The economic decline of the peasantry was reflected in twelve major and numerous minor famines from 1770 to 1857.

The new courts and legal system gave a further fillip to the dispossessors of land and encouraged the rich to oppress the poor. Flogging, torture and jailing of the cultivators for arrears of rent or land revenue or interest on debt were quite common. The ordinary people were also hard hit by the prevalence of corruption at the lower levels of the police, judiciary and general administration. The petty officials enriched themselves freely at the cost of the poor. The police looted, oppressed and tortured the common people at will. William Edwards, a British official, wrote in 1859 that the police were 'a scourge to the people' and that 'their oppression and exactions form one of the chief grounds of dissatisfaction with our government.'

The ruin of Indian handicraft industries, as a result of the imposition of free trade in India and levy of discriminatory tariffs against Indian goods in Britain, pauperized millions of artisans. The misery of the artisans was further compounded by the disappearance of their traditional patrons and buyers, the princes, chieftains, and zamindars.

The scholarly and priestly classes were also active in inciting hatred and rebellion against foreign rule. The traditional rulers and ruling elite had financially supported scholars, religious preachers, priests, pandits and maulvis and men of arts and literature. With the coming of the British and the ruin of the traditional landed and bureaucratic elite, this patronage came to an end, and all those who had depended on it were impoverished.

Another major cause of the rebellions was the very foreign character of British rule. Like any other people, the Indian people too felt humiliated at being under a foreigner's heel. This feeling of hurt pride inspired efforts to expel the foreigner from their lands.

The civil rebellions began as British rule was established in Bengal and Bihar, and they occurred in area after area as it was incorporated into colonial rule. There was hardly a year without armed opposition or a decade without a major armed rebellion in one part of the country or the other. From 1763 to 1856, there were more than forty major rebellions apart from hundreds of minor ones.

Displaced peasants and demobilized soldiers of Bengal led by religious monks and dispossessed zamindars were the first to rise up in the Sanyasi rebellion, made famous by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novel *Anand Math*, that lasted from 1763 to 1800. It was followed by the Chuar uprising which covered five districts of Bengal and Bihar from 1766 to 1772 and then, again, from 1795 to 1816. Other major rebellions in Eastern India were those of Rangpur and Dinajpur, 1783; Bishnupur and Birbhum, 1799; Orissa zamindars, 1804-17; and Sambalpur, 1827-40.

In South India, the Raja of Vizianagram revolted in 1794, the poligars of Tamil Nadu during the 1790's, of Malabar and coastal Andhra during the first decade of the 19th century, of Parlekamedi during 1813-14. Dewan Velu Thampi of Travancore organized a heroic revolt in 1805. The Mysore peasants too revolted in 1830-31. There were major uprisings in Visakhapatnam from 1830-34, Ganjam in 1835 and Kurnool in 1846-47.

In Western India, the chiefs of Saurashtra rebelled repeatedly from 1816 to 1832. The Kolis of Gujarat did the same during 1824-28, 1839 and 1849. Maharashtra was in a perpetual state of revolt after the final defeat of the Peshwa. Prominent were the Bhil uprisings, 1818-31; the Kittur uprising, led by Chinnava, 1824; the Satara uprising, 1841; and the revolt of the Gadkaris. 1844.

Northern India was no less turbulent. The present states of Western U.P. and Haryana rose up in arms in 1824. Other major rebellions were those of Bilaspur, 1805; the *talukdars* of Aligarh, 1814-17; the Bundelas of Jabalpur, 1842; and Khandesh, 1852. The second Punjab War in 1848-49 was also in the nature of a popular revolt by the people and the army.

These almost continuous rebellions were massive in their totality, but were wholly local in their spread and isolated from each other. They were the result of local causes and grievances, and were also localized in their effects. They often bore the same character not because they represented national or common efforts but because they represented common conditions though separated in time and space.

Socially, economically and politically, the semi-feudal leaders of these rebellions were backward looking and traditional in outlook. They still lived in the old world, blissfully unaware and oblivious of the modern world which had knocked down the defences of their society. Their resistance represented no societal alternative. It was centuries-old in form and ideological and cultural content. Its basic objective was to restore earlier forms of rule and social relations. Such backward looking and scattered, sporadic and disunited uprisings were incapable of fending off or overthrowing foreign rule. The British succeeded in pacifying the rebel areas one by one. They also gave concessions to the less fiery rebel chiefs and *zamindars* in the form of reinstatement, the restoration of their estates and reduction in revenue assessments so long as they agreed to live peacefully under alien authority. The more recalcitrant ones were physically wiped out. Velu Thampi was, for example, publicly hanged even after he was dead.

The suppression of the civil rebellions was a major reason why the Revolt of 1857 did not spread to South India and most of Eastern and Western India. The historical significance of these civil uprisings lies in that they established strong and valuable local traditions of resistance to British rule. The Indian people were to draw inspiration from these traditions in the later nationalist struggle for freedom.

The tribal people, spread over a large part of India, organized hundreds of militant outbreaks and insurrections during the 19th century. These uprisings were marked by immense courage and sacrifice on their part and brutal suppression and veritable butchery on the part of the rulers. The tribals had cause to be upset for a variety of reasons. The colonial administration ended their relative isolation and brought them fully within the ambit of colonialism. It recognized the tribal chiefs as *zamindars* and introduced a new system of land revenue and taxation of tribal products. It encouraged the influx of Christian missionaries into the tribal areas. Above all, it introduced a large number of moneylenders, traders and revenue farmers as middlemen among the tribal. These middlemen were the chief instruments for bringing the tribal people within the vortex of the colonial economy and exploitation. The middlemen were outsiders who increasingly took possession of tribal lands and ensnared the tribal in a web of debt. In time, the tribal people increasingly lost their lands and were reduced to the position of agricultural labourers, share-croppers and rack rented tenants on the land they had earlier brought under cultivation and held on a communal basis.

Colonialism also transformed their relationship with the forest. They had depended on the forest for food, fuel and cattle feed. They practiced shifting cultivation (*jhum, podu*, etc.), taking recourse to fresh forest lands when their existing lands showed signs of exhaustion. The

colonial government changed all this. It usurped the forest lands and placed restrictions on access to forest products, forest lands and village common lands. It refused to let cultivation shift to new areas.

All this differed in intensity from region to region, but the complete disruption of the old agrarian order of the tribal communities provided the common factor for all the tribal uprisings. These uprisings were broad-based, involving thousands of tribals, often the entire population of a region.

The colonial intrusion and the triumvirate of trader, moneylender and revenue farmer in sum disrupted the tribal identity to a lesser or greater degree. In fact, ethnic ties were a basic feature of the tribal rebellions. The rebels saw themselves not as a discreet class but as having a tribal identity.

At this level the solidarity shown was of a very high order. Fellow tribals were never attacked unless they had collaborated with the enemy.

At the same time, not all outsiders were attacked as enemies. Often there was no violence against the non-tribal poor, who worked in tribal villages in supportive economic roles, or who had social relations with the tribals such as *telis*, *gwalas*, *lohars*, carpenters, potters, weavers, washermen, barbers, drummers, and bonded labourers and domestic servants of the outsiders. They were not only spared, but were seen as allies. In many cases, the rural poor formed a part of the rebellious tribal bands.

The rebellions normally began at the point where the tribals felt so oppressed that they felt they had no alternative but to fight. This often took the form of spontaneous attacks on outsiders, looting their property and expelling them from their villages. This led to clashes with the colonial authorities. When this happened, the tribals began to move towards armed resistance and elementary organization.

Often, religious and charismatic leaders messiahs emerged at this stage and promised divine intervention and an end to their suffering at the hands of the outsiders, and asked their fellow tribals to rise and rebel against foreign authority. Most of these leaders claimed to derive their authority from God. They also often claimed that they possessed magical powers, for example, the power to make the enemies' bullets ineffective. Filled with hope and confidence, the tribal masses tended to follow these leaders to the very end.

The warfare between the tribal rebels and the British armed forces was totally unequal. On one side were drilled regiments armed with the latest weapons and on the other were men and women fighting in roving bands armed with primitive weapons such as stones, axes, spears and bows and arrows, believing in the magical powers of their commanders. The tribals died in lakhs in this unequal warfare.

Among the numerous tribal revolts, the Santhal *hool* or uprising was the most massive. The Santhals, who live in the area between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, known as Daman-i-koh, rose in revolt; made a determined attempt to expel the outsiders the *dikus* and proclaimed the complete 'annihilation' of the alien regime. The social conditions which drove them

to insurrection were described by a contemporary in the *Calcutta Review* as follows: 'Zamindars, the police, the revenue and court alas have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property, abuse and personal violence and a variety of petty tyrannies upon the timid and yielding Santhals. Usurious interest on loans

of money ranging from 50 to 500 per cent; false measures at the *haul* and the market; wilful and uncharitable trespass by the rich by means of their untethered cattle, *tattoos*, ponies and even elephants, on the growing crops of the poorer race; and, such like illegalities have been prevalent.'

The Santhals considered the *dikus* and government servants morally corrupt being given to beggary, stealing, lying and drunkenness.

By 1854, the tribal heads, the *majhis* and *parganites*, had begun to meet and discuss the possibility of revolting. Stray cases of the robbing of *zamindars* and moneylenders began to occur. The tribal leaders called an assembly of nearly 6000 Santhals, representing 400 villages, at Bhaganidihi on 30 June 1855. It was decided to raise the banner of revolt, get rid of the outsiders and their colonial masters once and for all, the usher in *Salyug*, 'The Reign of Truth,' and 'True Justice.'

The Santhals believed that their actions had the blessings of God. Sido and Kanhu, the principal rebel leaders, claimed that Thakur (God) had communicated with them and told them to take up arms and fight for independence. Sido told the authorities in a proclamation: 'The Thacoor has ordered me saying that the country is not *Sahibs*. The Thacoor himself will fight. Therefore, you *Sahibs* and Soldiers (will) fight the Thacoor himself.'

The leaders mobilized the Santhal men and women by organizing huge processions through the villages accompanied by drummers and other musicians. The leaders rode at the "d on horses and elephants and in *palkis*. Soon nearly 60,000 Santhals had been mobilized. Forming bands of 1,500 to 2,000, but rallying in many thousands at the call of drums on particular occasions, they attacked the *mahajans* and *zamindars* and their houses, police stations, railway construction sites, the *dak* (post) carriers in fact all the symbols of *dila*4 exploitation and colonial power.

The Santhal insurrection was helped by a large number of non-tribal and poor *dikus*. *Gwalas* (milkmen) and others helped the rebels with provisions and services; *lohars* (blacksmiths) accompanied the rebel bands, keeping their weapons in good shape.

Once the Government realized the scale of the rebellion, it organized a major military campaign against the rebels. It mobilized tens of regiments under the command of a major general, declared Martial Law in the affected areas and offered rewards of upto Rs. 10,000 for the capture of various leaders.

The rebellion was crushed ruthlessly. More than 15,000 Santhals were killed while tens of villages were destroyed. Sido was betrayed and captured and killed in August 1855 while Kanhu was arrested by accident at the tail-end of the rebellion in February 1866. And 'the Rajmahal Hills were drenched with the blood of the fighting Santhal peasantry.' One typical instance of the heroism of Santhal rebels has been narrated by L.S.S. O'Malley: 'They showed the most reckless courage never knowing when they were beaten and refusing to surrender. On one occasion, forty- five Santhals took refuge in a mud hut which they held against the Sepoy's.

The rebellion (*ulgulan*) of the Munda tribesmen, led by Birsa Munda, occurred during 1899-19. For over thirty years the Munda *sardars* had been struggling against the destruction of their system of common land holdings by the intrusion of *jagirdar*, *thikadar* (revenue farmers) and merchant moneylenders.

Birsa, born in a poor share-cropper household in 1874, had a vision of God in 1895. He declared himself to be a divine messenger, possessing miraculous healing powers. Thousands gathered around him seeing in him a Messiah with a new religious message. Under the influence of the religious movement soon acquired an agrarian and political Birsa began to move from village to village, organizing rallies and mobilizing his followers on religious and political grounds. On Christmas Eve, 1899, Birsa proclaimed a rebellion to establish Munda rule in the land and encouraged 'the killing of *thikadars* and *jagirdars* and Rajas and *Hakims* (rulers) and Christians.' *Saiyug* would be established in place of the present-day *Kalyug*. He declared that 'there was going to be a fight with the *dikus*, the ground would be as red as the red flag with their blood.' The non-tribal poor were not to be attacked.

To bring about liberation, Birsa gathered a force of 6,000 Mundas armed with swords, spears, battle-axes, and bows and arrows. He was, however, captured in the beginning of February 1900 and he died in jail in June. The rebellion had failed. But Birsa entered the realms of legend.

5. PEASANT MOVEMENTS AND UPRISINGS AFTER 1857

It is worth taking a look at the effects of colonial exploitation of the Indian peasants. Colonial economic policies, the new land revenue system, the colonial administrative and judicial systems, and the ruin of handicraft leading to the over-crowding of land, transformed the agrarian structure and impoverished the peasantry. In the vast zamindari areas, the peasants were left to the tender mercies of the zamindars who rack-rented them and compelled them to pay the illegal dues and perform beggar. In Ryotwari areas, the Government itself levied heavy land revenue. This forced the peasants to borrow money from the moneylenders. Gradually, over large areas, the actual cultivators were reduced to the status of tenants-at-will, share-croppers and landless labourers, while their lands, crops and cattle passed into the hands of landlords, trader-moneylenders and rich peasants.

When the peasants could take it no longer, they resisted against the oppression and exploitation; and, they found whether their target was the indigenous exploiter or the colonial administration, that their real enemy, after the barriers were down, was the colonial state.

One form of elemental protest, especially when individuals and small groups found that collective action was not possible though their social condition was becoming intolerable, was to take to crime. Many dispossessed peasants took to robbery, dacoity and what has been called social banditry, preferring these to starvation and social degradation.

The most militant and widespread of the peasant movements was the Indigo Revolt of 1859-60. The indigo planters, nearly all Europeans, compelled the tenants to grow indigo which they processed in factories set up in rural (mofussil) areas. From the beginning, indigo was grown under an extremely oppressive system which involved great loss to the cultivators. The planters forced the peasants to take a meager amount as advance and enter into fraudulent contracts. The price paid for the indigo plants was far below the market price. The comment of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, J.B. Grant, was that 'the root of the whole question is the struggle to make the raiyats grow indigo plant, without paying them the price of it.' The peasant was forced to grow indigo on the best land he had whether or not he wanted to devote his land and labour to more paying crops like rice. At the time of delivery, he was cheated even of the due low price. He also had to pay regular bribes to the planter's officials. He was forced to accept an advance. often he was not in a position to repay it, but even if he could he was not allowed to do so. The advance was used by the planters to compel him to go on cultivating indigo.

Since the enforcement of forced and fraudulent contracts through the courts was a difficult and prolonged process, the planters resorted to a reign of terror to coerce the peasants. Kidnapping, illegal confinement in factory godowns, flogging, attacks on women and children, carrying off cattle, looting, burning and demolition of houses and destruction of crops and fruit trees were some of the methods used by the planters. They hired or maintained bands of lathiyals (armed retainers) for the purpose.

In practice, the planters were also above the law. With a few exceptions, the magistrates, mostly European, favoured the planters with whom they dined and hunted regularly. Those few who tried to be fair were soon transferred. Twenty-nine planters and a solitary Indian zamindar

were appointed as Honorary Magistrates in 1857, which gave birth to the popular saying 'je rakhak se bhakak' (Our protector is also our devourer).

The discontent of indigo growers in Bengal boiled over in the autumn of 1859 when their case seemed to get Government support. Misreading an official letter and exceeding his authority, Hem Chandra Kar, Deputy Magistrate of Kalaroa, published on 17 August a proclamation to policemen that 'in case of disputes relating to Indigo Ryots, they (ryots) shall retain possession of their own lands, and shall sow on them what crops they please, and the Police will be careful that no Indigo Planter nor anyone else be able to interface in the matter.

The news of Kar's proclamation spread all over Bengal, and peasant felt that the time for overthrowing the hated system had come. Initially, the peasants made an attempt to get redressal through peaceful means. They sent numerous petitions to the authorities and organized peaceful demonstrations. Their anger exploded in September 1859 when they asserted their right not to grow indigo under duress and resisted the physical pressure of the planters and their lathiyals backed by the police and the courts. The beginning was made by the ryots of Govindpur village in Nadia district when, under the leadership of Digambar Biswas and Bishnu Biswas, ex-employees of a planter, they gave up indigo cultivation. And when, on 13 September, the planter sent a band of 100 lathiyals to attack their village, they organized a counter force armed with lathis and spears and fought back.

The peasant disturbances and indigo strikes spread rapidly to other areas. The peasants refused to take advances and enter into contracts, pledged not to sow indigo, and defended themselves from the planters' attacks with whatever weapons came to hand — spears, slings, lathis, bows and arrows, bricks, bhel-fruit, and earthen-pots (thrown by women).

The indigo strikes and disturbances flared up again in the spring of 1860 and encompassed all the indigo districts of Bengal. Factory after factory was attacked by hundreds of peasants and village after village bravely defended itself. In many cases, the efforts of the police to intervene and arrest peasant leaders were met with an attack on policemen and police posts.

The planters then attacked with another weapon, their zamindari powers. They threatened the rebellious ryots with eviction or enhancement of rent. The ryots replied by going on a rent strike. They refused to pay the enhanced rents; and they physically resisted attempts to evict them. They also gradually learnt to use the legal machinery to enforce their rights. They joined together and raised funds to fight court cases filed against them, and they initiated legal action on their own against the planters. They also used the weapon of social boycott to force a planter's servants to leave him.

Ultimately, the planters could not withstand the united resistance of the ryots, and they gradually began to close their factories. The cultivation of indigo was virtually wiped out from the districts of Bengal by the end of 1860.

A major reason for the success of the Indigo Revolt was the tremendous initiative, cooperation, organization and discipline of the ryots. Another was the complete unity among Hindu and Muslim peasants. Leadership for the movement was provided by the more well-off ryots and in some cases by petty zamindars, moneylenders and ex-employees of the planters.

A significant feature of the Indigo Revolt was the role of the intelligentsia of Bengal which organized a powerful campaign in support of the rebellious peasantry. It carried on

newspaper campaigns, organized mass meetings, prepared memoranda on peasants' grievances and supported them in their legal battles. Outstanding in this respect was the role of Harish Chandra Mukherji, editor of the Hindoo Patriot. He published regular reports from his correspondents in the rural areas on planters' oppression, officials' partisanship and peasant resistance. He himself wrote with passion, anger and deep knowledge of the problem which, he raised to a high political plane. Revealing an insight into the historical and political significance of the Indigo Revolt, he wrote in May 1860: Bengal might well be proud of its peasantry. . Wanting power, wealth, political knowledge and even leadership, the peasantry of Bengal have brought about a revolution inferior in magnitude and importance to none that has happened in the social history of any other country With the Government against them, the law against them, the tribunals against them, the Press against them, they have achieved a success of which the benefits will reach all orders and the most distant generations of our countrymen.'

Din Bandhu Mitra's play, Neel Darpan, was to gain great fame for vividly portraying the oppression by the planters.

The intelligentsia's role in the Indigo Revolt was to have an abiding impact on the emerging nationalist intellectuals. In their very political childhood they had given support to a popular peasant movement against the foreign planters. This was to establish a tradition with long run implications for the national movement.

Missionaries were another group which extended active support to the indigo ryots in their struggle.

The Government's response to the Revolt was rather restrained and not as harsh as in the case of civil rebellions and tribal uprisings. It had just undergone the harrowing experience of the Santhal uprising and the Revolt of 1857. It was also able to see, in time, the changed temper of the peasantry and was influenced by the support extended to the Revolt by the intelligentsia and the missionaries. It appointed a commission to inquire into the problem of indigo cultivation. Evidence brought before the Indigo Commission and its final report exposed the coercion and corruptio0 underlying the entire system of indigo cultivation. The result was the mitigation of the worst abuses of the system. The Government issued a notification in November 1860 that ryots could not be compelled to sow indigo and that it would ensure that all disputes were settled by legal means. But the planters were already closing down the factories they felt that they could not make their enterprises pay without the use of force and fraud.

Large parts of East Bengal were engulfed by agrarian unrest during the 1870s and early 1880s. The unrest was caused by the efforts of the zamindars to enhance rent beyond legal limits and to prevent the tenants from acquiring occupancy rights under Act X of 1859. This they tried to achieve through illegal coercive methods such as forced eviction and seizure of crops and cattle as well as by dragging the tenants into costly litigation in the courts.

The peasants were no longer in a mood to tolerate such oppression. In May 1873, an agrarian league or combination was formed in Yusufshahi Parganah in Pabna district to resist the demands of the zamindars. The league organized mass meetings of peasants. Large crowds of peasants would gather and march through villages frightening the zamindars and appealing to other peasants to join them. The league organized a rent- strike the ryots were to refuse to pay the enhanced rents and challenged the zamindars in the courts. Funds were raised from the ryots

to meet the costs. The struggle gradually spread throughout Pabna and then to the other districts of East Bengal. Everywhere agrarian leagues were organized, rents were withheld and zamindars fought in the courts. The main form of struggle was that of legal resistance. There was very little violence it only occurred when the zamindars tried to compel the ryots to submit to their terms by force. There were only a few cases of looting of the houses of the zamindars. A few attacks on police stations took place and the peasants also resisted attempts to execute court decrees. But such cases were rather rare. Hardly any zamindar or zamindar's agent was killed or seriously injured. In the course of the movement, the ryots developed a strong awareness of the law and their legal rights and the ability to combine and form associations for peaceful agitation.

Though peasant discontent smouldered till 1885, many of the disputes were settled partially under official pressure and persuasion and partially out of the zamindar's fear that the united peasantry would drag them into prolonged and costly litigation. Many peasants were able to acquire occupancy rights and resist enhanced rents.

The Government rose to the defence of the zamindars wherever violence took place. Peasants were then arrested on a large scale. But it assumed a position of neutrality as far as legal battles or peaceful agitations were concerned. The Government also promised to undertake legislation to protect the tenants from the worst aspects of zamindari oppression, a promise it fulfilled however imperfectly in 1885 when the Bengal Tenancy Act was passed.

What persuaded the zamindars and the colonial regime to reconcile themselves to the movement was the fact that its aims were limited to the redressal of the immediate grievances of the peasants and the enforcement of the existing legal rights and norms. It was not aimed at the zamindari system. It also did not have at any stage an anti-colonial political edge. The agrarian leagues kept within the bounds of law, used the legal machinery to fight the zamindars, and raised no anti-British demands. The leaders often argued that they were against zamindars and not the British. In fact, the leaders raised the slogan that the peasants want 'to be the ryots of Her Majesty the Queen and of Her only.' For this reason, official action was based on the enforcement of the Indian Penal Code and it did not take the form of armed repression as in the case of the Santhal and Munda uprisings.

Once again the Bengal peasants showed complete Hindu Muslim solidarity, even though the majority of the ryots were Muslim and the majority of zamindars Hindu. There was also no effort to create peasant solidarity on the grounds of religion or caste. In this case, too, a number of young Indian intellectuals supported the peasants' cause. These included Bankim Chandra Chatterjea and R.C. Dutt. Later, in the early 1880s, during the discussion of the Bengal Tenancy Bill, the Indian Association, led by Surendranath Banerjee, Anand Mohan Bose and Dwarkanath Ganguli, campaigned for the rights of tenants, helped form ryot' unions, and organized huge meetings of upto 20,000 peasants in the districts in support of the Rent Bill. The Indian Association and many of the nationalist newspapers went further than the Bill. They asked for permanent fixation of the tenant's rent. They warned that since the Bill would confer occupancy rights even on non-cultivators, it would lead to the growth of middlemen — the jotedars who would be as oppressive as the zamindars so far as the actual cultivators were concerned. They, therefore, demanded that the right of occupancy should go with actual cultivation of the soil, that is, in most cases to the under ryots and the tenants-at-will.

A major agrarian outbreak occurred in the Poona and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra in 1875. Here, as part of the Ryotwari system, land revenue was settled directly with the peasant who was also recognized as the owner of his land. Like the peasants in other Ryotwari areas, the Deccan peasant also found it difficult to pay land revenue without getting into the clutches of the moneylender and increasingly losing his land. This led to growing tension between the peasants and the moneylenders most of whom were outsiders Marwaris or Gujaratis.

Three other developments occurred at this time. During the early 1860s, the American Civil War had led to a rise in cotton exports which had pushed up prices. The end of the Civil War in 1864 brought about an acute depression in cotton exports and a crash in prices. The ground slipped from under the peasants' feet. Simultaneously, in 1867, 'the Government raised land revenue by nearly 50 per cent. The situation was worsened by a succession of bad harvests.

To pay the land revenue under these conditions, the peasants had to go to the moneylender who took the opportunity to further tighten his grip on the peasant and his land. The peasant began to turn against the perceived cause of his misery, the moneylender. Only a spark was needed to kindle the fire.

A spontaneous protest movement began in December 1874 in Kardab village in Sirurtaluq. When the peasants of the village failed to convince the local moneylender, Kalooram, that he should not act on a court decree and pull down a peasant's house, they organized a complete social boycott of the 'outsider' moneylenders to compel them to accept their demands a peaceful manner. They refused to buy from their shops. No peasant would cultivate their fields. The bulletedars (village servants) barbers, washermen, carpenters, ironsmiths, shoemakers and others would not serve them. No domestic servant would work in their houses and when the socially isolated moneylenders decided to run away to the taluq headquarters, nobody would agree to drive their carts. The peasants also imposed social sanctions against those peasants and bulletedars who would not join the boycott of moneylenders. This social boycott spread rapidly to the villages of Poona, Ahmednagar, Sholapur and Satara districts.

The social boycott was soon transformed into agrarian riots when it did not prove very effective. On 12 May, peasants gathered in Supa, in Bhimtharitaluq, on the bazar day and 30 | India's Struggle for Independence began a systematic attack on the moneylenders' houses and shops. They seized and publicly burnt debt bonds and deeds signed under pressure, in ignorance, or through fraud - decrees, and other documents dealing with their debts. Within days the disturbances spread to other villages of the Poona and Ahmednagar districts.

There was very little violence in this settling of accounts. Once the moneylenders' instruments of oppression - debt bonds - were surrendered, no need for further violence was felt. In most places, the 'riots' were demonstrations of popular feeling and of the peasants' newly acquired unity and strength. Though moneylenders' houses and shops were looted and burnt in Supa, this did not occur in other places.

The Government acted with speed and soon succeeded in repressing the movement. The active phase of the movement lasted about three weeks, though stray incidents occurred for another month or two. As in the case of the Pabna Revolt, the Deccan disturbances had very limited objectives. There was once again an absence of anti-colonial consciousness. It was,

therefore, possible for the colonial regime to extend them a certain protection against the moneylenders through the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879.

Once again, the modern nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra supported the peasants' cause. Already, in 1873-74, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, led by Justice Ranade, had organized a successful campaign among the peasants, as well as at Poona and Bombay against the land revenue settlement of 1867. Under its impact, a large number of peasants had refused to pay the enhanced revenue. This agitation had generated a mentality of resistance among the peasants which contributed to the rise of peasant protest in 1875. The Sabha as well as many of the nationalist newspapers also supported the D.A.R. Bill.

Peasant resistance also developed in other parts of the country. Mappila outbreaks were endemic in Malabar. Vasudev Balwant Phadke, an educated clerk, raised a Ramosi peasant force of about 50 in Maharashtra during 1879, and organized social banditry on a significant scale. The Kuka Revolt in Punjab was led by Baba Ram Singh and had elements of a messianic movement. It was crushed when 49 of the rebels were blown up by a cannon in 1872. High land revenue assessment led to a series of peasant riots in the plains of Assam during 1893-94. Scores were killed in brutal firings and bayonet charges.

There was a certain shift in the nature of peasant movements after 1857. Princes, chiefs and landlords having been crushed or co-opted, peasants emerged as the main force in agrarian movements. They now fought directly for their own demands, centered almost wholly on economic issues, and against their immediate enemies, foreign planters and indigenous zamindaris and moneylenders. Their struggles were directed towards specific and limited objectives and redressal of particular grievances. They did not make colonialism their target. Nor was their objective the ending of the system of their subordination and exploitation. They did not aim at turning the world upside down.'

The territorial reach of these movements was also limited. They were confined to particular localities with no mutual communication or linkages. They also lacked continuity of struggle or long-term organization. Once the specific objectives of a movement were achieved, its organization, as also peasant solidarity built around it, dissolved and disappeared. Thus, the Indigo strike, the Pabna agrarian leagues and the social-boycott movement of the Deccan ryots left behind no successors. Consequently, at no stage did these movements threaten British supremacy or even undermine it. Peasant protest after 1857 often represented an instinctive and spontaneous response of the peasantry to its social condition. It was the result of excessive and unbearable oppression, undue and unusual deprivation and exploitation, and a threat to the peasant's existing, established position. The peasant often rebelled only when he felt that it was not possible to carry on in the existing manner.

He was also moved by strong notions of legitimacy, of what was justifiable and what was not. That is why he did not fight for land ownership or against landlordism but against eviction and undue enhancement of rent. He did not object to paying interest on the sums he had borrowed; he hit back against fraud and chicanery by the moneylender and when the latter went against tradition in depriving him of his land. He did not deny the state's right to collect a tax on land but objected when the level of taxation overstepped all traditional bounds. He did not object to the foreign planter becoming his zamindar but resisted the planter when he took away his freedom to decide what crops to grow and refused to pay him a proper price for his crop.

The peasant also developed a strong awareness of his legal rights and asserted them in and outside the courts. And if an effort was made to deprive him of his legal rights by extra-legal means or by manipulation of the law and law courts, he countered with extra-legal means of his own. Quite often, he believed that the legally-constituted authority approved his actions or at least supported his claims and cause. In all the three movements discussed here, he acted in the name of this authority, the sarkar.

In these movements, the Indian peasants showed great courage and a spirit of sacrifice, remarkable organizational abilities, and a solidarity that cut across religious and caste lines. They were also able to wring considerable concessions from the colonial state. The latter, too, not being directly challenged, was willing to compromise and mitigate the harshness of the agrarian system though within the broad limits of the colonial economic and political structure. In this respect, the colonial regime's treatment of the post-1857 peasant rebels was qualitatively different from its treatment of the participants in the civil rebellions, the Revolt of 1857 and the tribal uprisings which directly challenged colonial political power.

A major weakness of the 19th century peasant movements was the lack of an adequate understanding of colonialism - of colonial economic structure and the colonial state — and of the social framework of the movements themselves. Nor did the 19th century peasants possess a new ideology and a new social, economic and political programme based on an analysis of the newly constituted colonial society. Their struggles, however militant, occurred within the framework of the old societal order. They lacked a positive conception of an alternative society conception which would unite the people in a common struggle on a wide regional and all-India plane and help develop long-term political movements.

An all-India leadership capable of evolving a strategy of struggle that would unify and mobilize peasants and other sections of society for nation-wide political activity could be formed only on the basis of such a new conception, such a fresh vision of society. In the absence of such a new ideology, programme, leadership and strategy of struggle, it was not difficult for the colonial state, on the one hand, to reach a Conciliation and calm down the rebellious peasants by the grant of some concessions and on the other hand, to suppress them with the full use of its force. This weakness was, of course, not a blemish on the character of the peasantry which was perhaps incapable of grasping on its own the new and complex phenomenon of colonialism.

That needed the efforts of a modern intelligentsia which was itself just coming into existence. Most of these weaknesses were overcome in the 20th century when peasant discontent was merged with the general anti-imperialist discontent and their political activity became a part of the wider anti-imperialist movement. And, of course, the peasants' participation in the larger national movement not only strengthened the fight against the foreigner it also, simultaneously, enabled them to organize powerful struggles around their class demands and to create modern peasant organization.

6. BIRTH OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The National Movement of India assumed an institutionalised form in the Indian National Congress set up in 1885. The circumstances which led to the founding of the Indian National Congress are shrouded in mystery and different views have been expressed. According to the most popular view the Indian National Congress was set up by A.O. Hume, a retired Indian Civil Servant under direction from Lord Dufferin, the then Governor General of India. The main purpose for the creation of this organisation was to provide a 'safety-valve' to the anticipated or actual discontent of the Indian intelligentsia and to form a quasi-constitutional party on the pattern of Her Majesty's Opposition in England. Prof. Sundar Ram, who was one of the seventy-two participants in the first session of the Indian National Congress gives a slight different version. He says that Hume wanted to form an Organisation in England to rouse the conscience of the English people through persistent agitation. But Lord Dufferin prevailed upon him to confine his activities to India for the time being and help the Indian public men all over the country to form a national organisation, and provide sympathetic and courageous leadership to the organisation.

According to yet another theory Hume took initiative to form the Indian National Congress because he came to know through secret reports about the plans of the impending rebellion of the peasants, and he took this step to avoid the impending calamity.

Womesh Chandra Bannerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress, says that Hume wanted to create a national forum where the leading Indian politicians could be brought together to discuss the social problems facing the country. He did not want this organisation to take up political issues because a number of political bodies already existed in different parts of India.

However, certain scholars have challenged the theory that the Indian National Congress was formed as a result of agreement between Lord Dufferin and A.O. Hume. On the basis of a survey of correspondence of Lord Dufferin they do not find any proof to show that Lord Dufferin took any initiative in suggesting to A.O. Hume about the formation of Indian National Congress and that Hume acted as the spokesman of Lord Dufferin. On the contrary they assert that the documents show that Dufferin was a severe critic of the Indian National Congress. Further he was quite unhappy with Hume and criticised him for arousing the suspicions of the people of India about Lord Dufferin's policies. He is said to have sent a complaint about the conduct of Hume to Lord Northbrook, the Secretary of State for India. In view of this it is difficult to see how they could have acted together.

The theory that Lord Dufferin persuaded Hume to set up Indian National Congress is further disproved by the following views expressed by Lord Dufferin in his minutes which he wrote before leaving India. "The fact is that the Congress is the product of that infinitesimal section of Indian community to whom I have already referred as having been tinctured either directly or indirectly with an infusion of European education....They neither represent the aristocratic sympathy with great masses of the population, they do not understand their wants or necessities, if indeed they are indifferent or even opposed to them-as evidenced by the strenuous

resistance of the important Native Associations to our recent Land Legislation-and they are very imperfectly fitted to grasp any of the larger questions which affect the stability or safety of the Empire as a whole”.

According to yet another theory the idea of bringing men from different parts of India at a common platform was mooted by the Theosophical Society of India at a meeting held at the residence of Raghunath Rao at Madras in December 1884 and Hume stole the thunder by taking a public initiative. But this theory does not seem to be plausible on two counts. First, the idea of holding annual conferences of representatives from different parts of the country was current even before the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1879. Further, the organisation of the Indian National Congress was quite different from the one agreed upon by the Theosophical Society at its meeting at Madras.

Another theory attributes the birth of the Indian National Congress to the spontaneous reaction against measures like Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the reduction of the age limit for entrance to the Indian Civil Service and the Ilbert Bill controversy. Initially this reaction appeared in the shape of separate political associations in different parts of the country but subsequently they joined hand to create this all India organisation. Prof. Majumdar says the emergence of the Indian National Congress was not sudden and “the National Conference held in Calcutta in 1884 forestalled it in all essential aspects.” Even before the creation of the Indian National Congress a number of organisations and public bodies had been formed in different parts of the country. The prominent amongst these organisations were the British Indian Association (founded in Bengal in 1843); India League (founded in 1875); Indian Association (founded in 1876), Bombay Association (founded in early fifties of nineteenth century) Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (founded in 1867); the National Conference (founded in 1883). Almost all these organisations were formed with a view to stimulate sense of patriotism and nationalism among the people of India, although they operated within limited area. Out of these organisations only one body viz. National Conference could claim to be a national organisation while all others were regional and sectional organisations.

The lead in setting up the Indian National Congress was taken by A.O. Hume on 1 March 1885 when he addressed an open letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University and appealed to them to form an association for the moral, social and political regeneration of the Indians. He said “Constituting as you do a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should in the natural order of things, constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social and political progress in India. Whether in the individual or in the nation, all vital progress must spring from within and it is to you, her most cultured, enlightened minds, her most favoured sons that your country must look for initiative. In vain, many aliens like myself love India and her children, as well as the most loving of these in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought, in vain may they struggle and sacrifice; they may assist with advice and suggestions; they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers, but they lack the essential of nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves.” He further said “As I said before, you are the salt of the land. And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heart-felt patriotism to take the initiative, and if need be, devote

the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain more humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers for they would be free, themselves must strike the blow. And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns, that they dare not or will not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends are wrong.' The letter ended with the assertion whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."

The appeal of A.O. Hume evoked a very favourable response from the educated Indians. Hume after establishing a contact with leaders of public opinion in the country decided to hold a meeting of the representatives from all the parts of India in December, 1885. However, in the intervening period Hume paid a visit to Britain and obtained support from liberal politicians like Lord Ripon, John Bright etc.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay which was Presided over by W.C. Bannerjee, while A.O. Hume acted as its Secretary. In all about 100 persons attended the meeting of the Indian National Congress, the largest contingent of thirty-eight persons being from the Presidency of Bombay. Twenty-one representatives came from the Madras Presidency. Bengal sent only three representatives. Similarly three representatives came from Punjab. Thus the first meeting of the Indian National Congress was attended by people representing all the parts of India. They represented the cross sections of the Indian society and included Barristers, solicitors, pleaders, merchants, land-holders, bankers, medical men, journalists and proprietors, principals and professors of independent colleges, headmasters of schools, reformers etc. There were Hindus, Muslims, Christians as well as Europeans.

Objects of Indian National Congress.

The objects of the Indian National Congress were spelt out by W.C. Bannerjee during the course of his presidential address. He listed the following as the objectives of the Indian National Congress.

1. The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship among all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in various parts of the Empire.
2. The eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of the country and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that took their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.
3. The authoritative record of the mature opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.
4. The determination of the methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in public interest. However, these objects of Congress underwent changes according to exigencies of time. Whereas initially the Congress demanded only piecemeal reforms but subsequently it broadened its object to include self-

government. Ultimately it revised its goal as complete independence. Likewise the methods for the attainment of these objects were also not static and were modified according to the demand of the situation. In the initial years the Congress believed in petitions, resolutions and deputations but subsequently it resorted to direct methods like non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

The formation of the Indian National Congress was lauded by the Press and was described as an important chapter in the history of British rule in India. *Indu Prakash* wrote "It (session of the Congress) marks the beginning of a new life and whatever traducers may say, it will greatly help in creating a national feeling and binding together distant people by common sympathies and common ends...."

Character of the Congress.

The character of the Indian National Congress has also been a subject of debate among scholars. Broadly speaking two views have been expressed. According to one view the Indian National Congress was merely a sectional body which represented a small section of the Indian society viz., those who had acquired western education, and did not in any way represent the aspirations of the general people. Further even the landed classes, ruling chiefs and the Muslims were not associated with this body.

The second view holds that the Congress from its very inception was a national body and contained representatives of all the classes and communities. While its founder was a Christian, two of its most prominent supporters-Dadabhai Naoroji and Pherozeshah Mehta were Parsis. Enlightened Muslim like Badrud-din Tyabji were also associated with it.

7. MODERATE AND EXTREMIST PROGRAMME OF CONGRESS

CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT OR MOVEMENT OF MODERATES (1885-1907)

The History of the Constitutional Movements for regaining freedom commences from 1885, the year of the birth of Indian National Congress. For three years after its beginning, it remained in the good books of British Government so much so that the delegates to Congress Sessions were extended garden parties at the Government House. The meeting of the Congress in 1885 was proposed to be held at Poona but the venue was soon changed to Bombay. Speaking from the Presidential Chair, Mr. W.C. Bannerjee laid down the following objects of the Congress:

- “The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country’s cause in the various parts of the Empire.”
- “The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of the country and fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that took their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon’s ever memorable reign.”
- “The authoritative record of the matured opinion of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.”
- “The determination of the methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in public interest.”

The Congress was, from the very start, a National Organisation. It represented all sections and classes of the society. Its object was to secure more political reforms and more representative element in the enlarged Legislative Councils. It also demanded more powers for the legislatures.

Dadabhai Naoroji in his Presidential Address in 1886 said, “It is true that we have some of our own people in Council. But we have no right to demand any explanations, even from them; they are not our representatives. If our own representatives make a mistake and get a law passed, which we do not want, the Government at any rate will escape the greater portion of the consequent unpopularity.”

For the period of two decades the leadership of the Congress was held by the Moderates who had a firm faith in the British sense of justice and righteousness. They were mighty sure that the Government would sooner or later accept all their reasonable demands. They had leaning towards the West and faith in the fact that the British Rule was in the interest of the people. In order to mobilise the opinion of the British Press and public in favour of India’s national urge for reforms, the Congress sent a deputation to England. The deputation included Mr. Hume, Ferozeshah Mehta, Man Mohan Ghosh and S.N. Bannerjee. The leaders tried to plead the case of India before the British public through their stirring speeches. One outcome of their mission to England was the setting up of a Parliamentary Committee to look into their demands. Till 1905 the political goal of the Congress was not independence but only greater share in the administration of the country and expansion of Representative Institutions. Unfurling the tricolour flag at the third annual session of the Congress, Surendra Nath Bannerjee repeated that ‘Representative Institutions’ was the goal of the Congress. When the

Reforms Act of 1892 was passed, it was discovered that the Act did not give the right of election to members of Councils but allowed the Viceroy to make rules subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. Gopal Krishna Gokhale said, "I will not say that they have been deliberately so framed as to defeat the object of the Act of 1892, but I will say this that if the officer who drafted them had been asked to sit down with the deliberate purpose of framing a scheme to defeat that object, he could not have done better."

Programme of Indian National Congress from 1885 to 1905. From 1885 to 1905 the Congress held its Annual Sessions at various places in India and passed resolutions demanding: (1) That the Viceroy's and Governor's Executive Council should be enlarged and made to have more Indians and representative element in them; (2) that the defence budget should be reduced and English officers be replaced by Indian officers; (3) that the Secretary of State for India and his India Council be done away with; (4) that the local bodies may be given more powers and a degree of autonomy in local affairs; (5) reduction of salt-tax; (6) that Indian textile industry may be revived and new industries may be set up so as to create more jobs for unemployed Indian youth; (7) that the judiciary may be freed from the pressure of the executive; (8) that the interests of the Indian living abroad may also be safeguarded; (9) that the competitive examination for recruitment to Civil Services may also be held in India; (10) that the peasant's may be protected from exploitation by the landlords; (11) that the burden of tax and rent on land be reduced; (12) that the Press may be guaranteed freedom of expression; (13) that rural banks may be set up to offer loans to the agriculturists at a low rate of interest; (14) that Indians may not be excluded from higher ranks of services; (15) that the economic condition of the people be improved; (16) that facilities may be provided for more technical and industrial education in India; and (17) that more colleges for military training be set up in the country.

Resolution of Dominion Status in 1906. The British Government gave a cold reception to Congress demands. When the Congress Leaders had no more patience left, they proposed a change in their programme. Dadabhai Naoroji in his Presidential Address at the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1906 declared that *Dominion Status or Swaraj for India was the goal of Congress activities*. The following resolutions were adopted by the Congress in 1906 :

- **Boycott Movement** - "Resolved that having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in the administration and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, the Congress is of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the partition of the Province, was, and is, legitimate."
- **Self-Government(or Dominion Status)** - Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing British Colonies should be extended to India and that, as steps leading to it urge that the following reforms should be immediately carried out:-
- All examinations held in England only should be simultaneously held in India and in England and that all higher appointments which are made in India should be competitive examinations only.
- The adequate representation of Indians in the Councils of the Governor of Madras and Bombay.

- The expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing a larger and truly effective representation of the peoples and a large control over the financial and executive administration of the country.
- The powers of local and municipal bodies should be extended and official control over them should not be more than what is exercised by the Local Government Board in England over similar bodies.
- *Swadeshi* - Resolved that this Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi Movement and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities, even at some sacrifice.
- *National Education* - Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls and organise a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country on National lines and under National control.

The Congress, henceforth, began to demand better status for Indians in foreign lands, more political rights to the people, assurance of production to native industries, reduction in land tax and more irrigational facilities.

PRINCIPLES OF MODERATES

The Congress remained completely in the hands of the Moderates from 1885 to 1906. At that time its important leaders were Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Feroze Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendra Nath Bannerjee. They believed in the following principles:

British rule is a blessing. Before the advent of the British Rule Anarchy prevailed in India due to a number of reasons. Gokhale was of the opinion that one might criticise and abuse the British but there could not be two opinions on the subject that the British Rulers had at least restored law and order. He held the view that in our country it was not at all difficult to spread disorder. That had been the bane of this country for centuries. As the British had established law and order and without law and order, there could not be any progress of the civilization and culture, so it would be difficult to find an alternative to the British Rule.

Gokhale considered the British Rule as a divine gift because in his opinion it was preparing the Indians for self-government. He held the conviction that the main aim of the British Rule in India should be the moral and material progress of the people.

Swadeshi. Speaking of the Swadeshi Movement Gokhale in his Presidential Address on 27th December, 1905 at Varanasi (Banaras) said: "The devotion to Motherland, which is enshrined in the highest *swadeshi*, is an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought, thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself. India needs to-day above everything else that the gospel of this devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and to peasant, in town and in hamlet, till the service of Motherland becomes with us overmastering a passion as it is in Japan."

Attitude towards Partition of Bengal. Welcoming the Prince of Wales and New Viceroy Lord Minto, Gokhale made a survey of the regime of Lord Curzon. He compared the rule of Lord Curzon to the rule of Aurangzeb at Banaras. Both regimes were excessively

centralised and intensely personal. Lord Curson made tremendous efforts to strengthen British Rule in India and treated Indians as dumb-driven cattle. Gokhale said that if people were to be humiliated and were to be rendered helpless, then all he could say was, "Good-bye to all hope of co-operating in any way with the bureaucracy in the interests of the people."

Belief in Dominion Status. The Moderates believed in self-government and not complete independence. They considered it as the only practical ideal under the then prevailing circumstances. After 1906 the Moderates began to believe in *Dominion Status* because Dada Bhai Naoroji, Grand Old Man of India (then 82), had fixed that goal of the Congress.

The Moderates believed in Constitutional Means. Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others believed in the constitutional methods and not agitational methods. They believed in petitions and prayers which the extremists called the policy of mendicancy. Gokhale believed in the policy of constructive criticism. He also believed in peaceful processions and was ready to co-operate with the British to maintain peace. He tried his best to convince the higher authorities (Viceroy and Secretary of State for India) about the excesses and atrocities of British Bureaucracy.

Piritualisation of Politics. Gokhale also believed in the spiritualisation of politics. He did not believe in immoral means and was never ready to align himself against his foes to achieve his ends. He always believed that there should be good means to achieve good end. He did not believe in spreading hatred against the foreign rule. He always advised the Members of the Servants of India Society to follow always the Policy of Truth and Non-violence in Politics which was later on followed strictly by his disciple Mahatma Gandhi.

The Moderates had abiding faith in Western Education.

The Moderates had firm faith in Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Moderates had unflinching faith in the service of their country. Therefore, Gokhale had founded the "*Servants of India Society* " in 1905 and shunned the knighthood and membership of the Council of the Secretary of State for India which was offered to him by the British because that would have proved an obstacle in the path of service of the nation.

Gokhale believed in the freedom of speech and press. Therefore, he fully opposed the repressive British Laws.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MODERATES

Following are the achievements of the Moderates:

They followed a realist policy in Politics - The Congress had not become strong enough to oppose the British Government up to 1905. The British had crushed armed resistance in 1857 and before it. If the Congress had followed a policy of fighting the British Government upto 1905, it would have been crushed because the Congress had not become a mass organisation and its membership was limited only to English-speaking people. Therefore, they followed a policy of demanding more rights for the Indians in every sphere of administration.

Exploitation by the British rule fully exposed - Dadabhai Naoroji was the first to expose the exploitation of the British Rule. In his famous book, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, he expounded his well-known Drain Theory. He wrote that 'England was eating India's resources at the rate of some £ 30,000,000 to £ 40,000,000 a year.' He further wrote, "It is at

India's cost and blood that this British Empire has been formed and maintained upto this day. It is in consequence of the tremendous cost of these wars and because of the millions and millions you draw from us year by year that India is so completely exhaust and bled. It is no wonder that the time has come when India is bleeding to death. You have brought India to this condition by the constant drain upon the wealth of that country."

Similarly, Gokhale in his various budget speeches has fully highlighted the utmost exploitation of the British Government. This proves that the Moderates were not less patriots but they did not adopt the programme of the extremists because that did not suit their policy.

Political Education of the People. Congress was joined first of all by the English-educated people. After being influenced by Western Literature, History, culture and democratic institutions, they also demanded local self-government, reforms in the revenue-system and the conferment of higher ranks in the army. The newspapers published the speeches and resolutions passed in the Congress Sessions and public functions. Besides that they took special note of the illuminating speeches delivered by the Congress Leaders in the Imperial Legislative Council on the occasion of the presentation of budget (because at no other time they could do so). That imparted great political education to the people.

Dr. Ishwari Prasad also observes : "The Congress resolutions and the speeches there-on printed in the press, were circulated throughout the country, moulding public opinion and drawing larger numbers within its fold. True enough, by and by, its moderation and constitutionalism made it the subject of ridicule among the younger generation, but none can withhold the deed of praise from its early leaders-men of high intellectual attainments, character and patriotism for doing pioneer work in the way of India's regeneration and championing the cause of the people against powerful alien bureaucracy strongly entrenched in its own citadel of obstinacy and prejudice."

The Early Congress Programme helped the awakening of the masses. The British had thoroughly crushed the First Indian War of Independence (1857). After that they continued to frame the repressive laws. Lord Curzon had ventured to partition Bengal in spite of loud protests of the people. Under these circumstances, it was boldness on the part of the Congress Leaders to demand more and more rights in every sphere, representative institutions and even the Dominion Status. Therefore, Prof. Gurmukh Nihal Singh truly observes: "*With all its professions of loyalty, studied moderation and appealing, nay begging tone, the early Congress did in these days a great amount of spadework in national awakening, political education and uniting Indians and in creating in them the consciousness of common nationality.*"

Prepared the basis for the freedom struggle. There is no denying the fact that the early Congress leaders prepared a strong base for the future freedom struggles. The Speeches of Gokhale delivered in the Imperial Legislative Council and other leaders on various occasions especially the annual sessions, were printed in the newspapers and they aroused the literate persons, at least, from political slumber. It should be noted that the Partition of Bengal had generated feeling of oneness amongst the Indians.

Boycott of foreign cloth. The Congress under the Presidentship of Gokhale passed the following resolution at Banaras Session in 1905. "That the Congress records its earnest and emphatic protest against the repressive measures which have been adopted by the authorities in

Bengal after the people there had been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign foods as a last resort and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public to the action of the Government of India in persisting in their determination to partition Bengal, in utter disregard of the universal prayers and protests of the people.”

According to **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, boycott was a political weapon which should be reserved for extreme occasions. It was useful in drawing the attention of the ruling class to the grievances of the ruled. He admitted that it was a legitimate weapon. Before using it there ought to be a recognition of common danger all round, and all personal differences must be sunk.

The Acts of 1892 and 1909. Due to strenuous efforts of the Moderates, the Act of 1892 was framed which was far ahead of the Act of 1861 but the Congress was not satisfied by that. Due to the herculean efforts of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, however, the Act of 1909 was framed which was, though far ahead of the Act of 1892, yet failed to meet the aspirations of the people due to a number of reasons. However, that was the greatest achievement of the Moderates.

“Every year the Congress by means of resolutions and occasional deputations to England focussed the attention of the people on the grievances under which they were labouring, impressed upon them the efficiency of the united action and called upon them to sacrifice personal or sectarian interests for the good of the country. Its resolutions and the speeches thereon, printed in the press were circulated throughout the country, moulding public opinion and drawing larger numbers within its fold. True enough, by and by, its moderation and constitutionalism made it the subject of ridicule among the younger generation, but none can withhold the need of praise from its early leaders-men of high intellectual attainments, character and patriotism for doing pioneer work in the way of India’s regeneration and championing the cause of the people against a powerful alien bureaucracy strongly entrenched in its wont citadel of obstinacy and prejudice.”

So it will not be proper to treat the attempts of the Moderates for achieving more rights for the Indians in every branch of administration as useless. They emphasised more and more the bureaucratic character of the administration and demanded first of all representative institutions and later on Dominion Status like all other dominions. Though they were not able to get all that they wanted but they were able to get something at least (Achievement of the Act of 1909).

BIRTH OF EXTREMIST MOVEMENT

The Congress from 1885 to 1906 submitted petitions and led deputations without getting much success. The Government showed no inclination to relent. Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai lost their patience with the Moderates and their method of work. Bal Gangadhar Tilak suggested a militant course to obtain self-government. His aggressive nationalism found favour with the masses and he became a national hero. The trio, Lai, Bal, and Pal provided dynamic leadership to the people and stirred them to life. But the liberals like Gokhale, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ras Behari Bose, Dada Bhai Naoroji, S.N. Bannerjee and Ramesh Chandra Dutt had still a hold on the Congress. Consequently, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his associates could not come to power.

Principles of the Extremists. They believed in the following principles:

- (1) The Extremists or Militant Nationalists, as they were also known were in favour of not piecemeal but **complete independence**. Tilak, the leading man of this movement, gave the country the slogan of 'Excelsior', the **Mantra** that freedom was their birthright and they must have it. He simply laughed at the Moderates' request for constitutional reforms and addition of elected representatives to the Legislative Councils. (2) He was against the policy of political begging. The alternative method that he suggested was to **boycott foreign goods**. The Extremists were frank and unsparing in denouncing the economic exploitation of India and the official attempt to impose social reforms on Hindu society. (3) Tilak had unflinching faith in the superiority of Vedic culture, literature, language and civilisation. He stood for driving out the rulers rather than entreating them for favour. The method that he suggested to accomplish this end was, however, not terrorism but constitutional struggle. He wanted the struggle to be waged with courage and fearlessness, no matter if British were displaced. Aurobindo Ghosh was also a leader of the Extremist camp. He declared, "**Independence in all our movements is the goal of life and Hinduism can fulfil this aspiration of ours.**"

CAUSES OF THE BIRTH OF EXTREMIST MOVEMENT

Following were the causes of the birth of extremist movement: **Misrule of the Tory Government.** The rise of Extremism in India can directly be traced to the misrule of Tory (Conservative) Party Government. From 1888 to 1902, Lord Salisbury headed the British Government except during the brief intervals when Liberals were in power. Mr. R.C. Dutt observes, "although not an imperialist himself, Salisbury had the capacity to yield and to drift with the tide when he could not oppose it."¹ Lord Hamilton who presided over the India Office from 1895 to 1903, was very unsympathetic, to India. He wrote to Curzon on September 20, 1899:

"I think that the real danger to our rule in India, not now but 50 years hence, is the gradual adoption and extension of Western ideas of agitation and organisation and if we could break the educated Hindu Party into two sections holding widely different views, we should by such a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our present system of Government."

During the time when Hamilton was in the office, unparalleled calamities of war, famine and pestilences visited India but he remained indifferent to the distress of the Indians. This aroused great indignation against the British rule in India.

Discontent over the Reforms of 1892. Several factors were responsible for the birth of militant nationalism in India. One of the reasons was dissatisfaction with the working of the Act of 1892. The rights conferred by the Act were quite inadequate and disappointing. The Council were still ridden with official nominees with the result that the Government faced with no opposition in making laws. Even the elected members did not represent the voice of the people. They were elected in an indirect manner by the universities, municipalities and chamber of commerce. Besides it, they were ineffective in preventing the Government from doing what it had set mind on. Much against the wish of the people, the Government of India imposed excise duty on cotton goods produced in India to help the British trade interests. The Government paid

no heed to Congress demands of the Indianisation of services, reduction of military expenditure or Jowring of taxes on the people. Disillusionment was so great that the people began to question the utility of the method of passive resistance. A few Congress Leaders began to feel that a more revolutionary method would yield quicker and greater results. Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh suggested the methods of constitutional agitation and boycott of foreign goods as a means to achieve their goal of freedom for India.

Revivalism of Hinduism. The Moderate group in the Congress (led by Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Surendra Nath Bannerjee) had abiding faith in the British sense of justice and fairplay. They wanted to acquire self-government within the fold of British Commonwealth. They felt grateful to the British rule for the numerous benefits it had conferred on India and hence they were against any cut and dried demand for complete independence. A few of them were so great devotees of European culture and civilisation that they considered the British rule as a boon to India. According to **Sri Surendra Nath Bannerjee**: "England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty." In the words of **Sri PattabhiSitaramayya**: "*His (Bannerjee's) ideal was to work with unwavering loyalty to the British connections, for the object was not the suppression of the British rule in India but the broadening of its basis, the liberalising of its spirit, the ennobling of its character and placing it on the unchangeable foundations of a nation's affections.*" The Extremists, namely, Lal-Bal-Pal used to laugh at the absurdity of Sri Surendra Nath Bannerjee's philosophy. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swamy Dayanand Saraswati, Swamy Vivekanand and Mrs. Annie Besant reminded the people of their glorious past and the superiority of Vedic culture. They also suggested the methods how that could be revived. Their teachings nflrsed the spirit of virile nationalism in the country. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh declared that "*nationalism is a religion that comes from God*". He also stated, "Independence in all our movements is the goal of life and Hinduism alone can fulfill this aspirations of ours." In Bengal, the worship of Kali and Durga was revived so as to inspire the people to take to arms against the usurpers of India's birthright of freedom. The Extremist leaders also revived the memories of Maharana Pratap and Shivaji, of Laxmibai and the leaders of 1857. Bankim Chandra's novel *Anandamath* gave the people the inspiring song of *VandeMatram*.

Economic exploitation of India. The economic exploitation of India by the European traders and growing poverty of the people also helped the rise of extremism in Indian politics. Unemployment became so acute and disastrous that people lost their faith in moderate and constitutional methods for redressing their grievances. The leaders like DadabhaiNaoroji, Ramesh Chandra Dutta and others through books and speeches came out with their criticism of the cruel economic policy of the Government.

Famine. A great famine broke out in India in **1896-97**. It affected about **20** million people and seventy thousand square miles in different regions. The Government did nothing to provide relief to the starving millions. The gross indifference of the Government piqued the people so severely that they began to rebuke and curse the rulers openly.

Plague. The wounds of famine were still fresh when bubonic plague broke out in Poona. The officials mishandled the situation. Mr. Rand was the Plague Commissioner of Poona. He was criticised strongly by the people, particularly by Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the *Kesari* edited by him. The popular resentment became so strong that Damodar Hari Chapekar shot dead

Mr. Rand and his associate. The youngman was hanged and many suspects were brutally punished. Tilak was also arrested and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. The doings of the Bombay Government hurt the people of other parts of India also. Not content with it, Government took recourse to more severe methods of taking revenge. Special police was stationed at Poona to punish the innocent people. Mr Surendra Nath Bannerjeecondemned the imprisonment of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and said, "*We regard the quartering of the Punitive Police of Poona as a mistake. We regard the imprisonment of Tilak and the Poona editors as a still greater mistake. A nation is in tears. We are resolved by every constitutional means that may be available to us to assert under the Providence of God, our rights as British subjects, not the least important of which is the inestimable right of personal liberty.*"

Repressive Policy of Lord Curzon and other Viceroy. During the regime of Lord Lansdowne (1888-94) and Elgin (1894-98) several unpopular measures were enacted to harass the people. While Lord Elgin was the Viceroy of India, a great famine broke out. Instead of helping the people, the treasury was emptied in expanding the forces and on holding a splendid Durbar in Delhi. Mr. Lai Mohan Ghosh while delivering the Presidential Address of Indian National congress at Madras in 1903 said, "It cannot be denied that if even half of the vast sum spent in connectionwith the Delhi Durbar had been made over for the purposes of famine relief, it might have been the means of saving millions of men, women and children from death by starvation. Do you think that any administration in England or France or the United States would have ventured to waste vast sums of money on an empty pageant when famine and pestilence were stalking over the land and Angel of Death was flapping his wings almost within hearing of the light-hearted revelers?"

The events which occurred during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon added insult to injury. He was the arch-priest of British imperialism. According to him, "The highest ranks of civil employment must, as a rule, be held by Englishmen." In pursuance of his policy, he passed the famous Calcutta Corporation Act, the Official Secrets Act and the Indian Universities Act. By his misdoings he inflamed the public opinion against the British rule. His Frontier Policy and mission to Lhasa also embittered the people. According to him it was God's wish that Englishmen should rule over India, hence he did not care a fig for the sentiments and reactions of the people. In February 1905, Lord Curzon while delivering the Convocation Address of Calcutta University remarked, "*The higher ideal of truth, to a large extent, is a Western conception and that truth took a higher place in the moral codes of the West, before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic vile have been held in high esteem.*" Such an unwarranted remark infuriated the people. When an Indian delegation waited upon the Viceroy to give him a correct picture of Indian character, the latter refused to meet it. The Congress sent a delegation to England to plead the case of India before the British public and statesmen, but to no purpose.

Partition of Bengal and Swadeshi Movement. Lord Curzon committed the greatest mistake of his life when he partitioned the Province of Bengal on July 20, 1905. Bengal was a big Province including the whole of Bihar, Orissa and Chhota Nagpur. For the convenience of administration, Partition was quite urgent and useful too. But when Lord Curzon set about partitioning Bengal, he had the sinister motive of creating a Muslim-majority Province and thereby creating a rift between the Hindus and the Muslims.

This is abundantly clear from the speech of Lord Curzon at Dacca on 18th February, 1904, from which the following extract is quoted: "Will any one here pretend that Dacca is anything but a shadow of its former self? The proposed scheme of partition would make Dacca the Centre and possibly the capital of a new and self-sufficing province which must give to the people of these districts by reason of their numerical strength and their superior culture the prepondering voice in the province so created, which would invest the Mohammadans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musalman Viceroy and Kings and which would go far to revive the traditions which the historical students assure us once attached to the Kingdom of Eastern Bengal."

There was also the motive of placating the Muhammadans and creating a solid Muhammadan bloc against the Hindus in respect of political view. This is proved by the following extract of a letter from Herbert Risely, dated 13th September, 1904.

"The boundary suggested would bring within the Eastern Province the bulk of the characteristic Muhammadans of Bengal who form 78 per cent of the population in Rajshahi, 50 per cent in Dinajpur, and 48 per cent in Malda. Not only would it give Dacca a central position in relation to the rest of the new Province, but it would tend, in course of time, to confer on that city the special character of provincial capital where Muhammadan interests would be strongly represented it not predominant."

Strongest possible reaction against Partition. The people of Bengal considered partition as an "attack on the growing solidarity of Bengali nationalism" and felt that they had been "humiliated, insulted and tricked." More than two thousand public meetings attended by both Hindus and Muslims, varying in number from 500 to 5,000 and occasionally even 50,000 were held in different parts of Bengal, protesting against the partition. The Indian Press, both in Bengal, and other Provinces, were unanimous in their condemnation of the measure, and even a large section of Anglo-Indian Press, some of which were recognised as semi-official organs, joined in the protest. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive of a more unanimous and persistent opposition to a government measure, there is certainly no precedent in the previous history of British rule in India.¹ The partition was also strongly condemned by some British newspapers.² The movement soon spread to other parts of India and was joined by Tilak and other national leaders.

On 16th October, 1905, when the partition was given effect to, Bengal plunged into grief. "*The partition announcement fell like a bombshell,* " writes Sir Surendra Nath Bannerjee. "*We felt that we had been insulted, humiliated and tricked. We felt that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengali-speaking population.* "

Ambika Charan Majumdar very justly observed in the Congress in 1908: "If the partition is a settled fact, the unrest in India is also a settled fact, and it is for Lord Morley and the Government of India to decide which should be unsettled to settle the question."

Importance of the Partition of Bengal. It awakened into activity the dormant political consciousness of the people at large and gave a new and definite shape to the spirit of nationalism which had been gathering strength for some time past, but had not yet assumed any clearly recognised form and engaged as a force to reckon with in Indian politics. A great national impulse suddenly brought to the fore what was hitherto hidden and latent, and gave cohesion and vitality to vague and scattered forces. The giant was asleep, and nothing but a rude

and violent shake could awaken him. The partition gave that shock to Bengal and whole political life of Bengal was revolutionised, almost over night.

Foreign events. Several events that occurred in Europe in later part of the 19th century also inspired the youths of India to work for emancipation of India. The defeat of Italy at the hands of the Abyssinian forces in 1896 and of Russia by the Japanese forces in 1905 also gave a stimulus to Indian nationalism. The victory of the Afro-Asian forces over the Western Powers proved for certain that Britain was not invincible. The new consciousness helped the rise of extremism in India.

Split in Surat Congress. The factors mentioned above gave birth to the left wing in the Congress party. There appeared a marked change in the outlook of the moderate group also. Gokhale in his Presidential Address at Benares Session in 1905 condemned the Partition of Bengal and supported Swadeshi movement. Next year the extremist group in the Congress proposed the name of Tilak for Presidentship. The Moderates opposed the move strongly. Ultimately Dadabhai Naoroji was elected to the chair. Under his President, the Extremists succeeded in passing resolution on Swadeshi, boycott of foreign-made goods and promotion of education having a national bias. Calcutta session marked the victory of the Extremist group. Dadabhai Naoroji stated clearly that the objective of the Congress, henceforth, was to acquire Dominion Status on the lines granted to other British Dominions like Canada and New Zealand. Although the Congress had ratified the extremist proposals at Calcutta session, the Moderates were still not prepared to execute them. Since the talks with the British Government regarding further constitutional reforms were in progress, the Moderates were opposed to any movement whatsoever. When the next Congress met at Surat in 1907, both groups vied with each other to capture the Congress. Tilak made all possible attempts to avoid open conflict by evolving some compromise but he failed. The new constitution of the Congress drafted by Gokhale showed a clear change in the objective of the Congress from what it had accepted the previous year. Tilak was opposed to any sliding back of the Congress.

He also agreed to a joint committee to settle the dispute but the moderates adopted uncompromising attitude. When the Congress met on 27th December, 1907, the Moderates proposed the name of Ras Behari Ghosh for the presidentship while the extremists proposed the name of Lala Lajpat Rai. Lalaji had lately been released from jail. By electing him the President of the Congress, Tilak wanted to demonstrate to the Government the confidence and esteem of the nation enjoyed by Lalaji. Lalaji, however, withdrew his name. The Extremists then pressed for open election but to no effect. The next day Ras Behari Bose occupied the chair. When he got up to deliver his Address, Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak ascended the platform and demanded that he should be allowed to speak. The request was rejected but Bal Gangadhar Tilak refused to submit to the ruling of the chair. It led to clashes between the two groups and the meeting was adjourned. Pandemonium prevailed on the next day also. The delegates came to blows. The police interfered and the session had to be suspended.

Thus the Surat session ended in a complete rupture between the two wings of the Congress. The Moderates held a separate convention and drafted a new constitution. The Nationalists who were not prepared to go back from the position taken at the Calcutta Congress, were left out completely. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was abused and called a traitor. The Moderate Press wrote: "Tilak had been feeding the flames which have burnt the Congress to ashes. He is

not a patriot but a traitor to the country, and has blackened himself. May God save us from such patriots.” The Surat fiasco thus divided Congress into two camps-one led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the other by Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The new constitution drafted by the Moderates stated that the objective of the Congress was to attain Dominion Status for India in stages by peaceful and constitutional means.

The Government was less afraid of the Moderates than the Extremists. Hence with a vengeance it began to crush the extremist movement. It rendered indirect help to the Moderates by arresting most of the Extremist leaders. *Earlier in 1907 the Government had already arrested Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh and deported them to Mandalay jail.* In 1908 it passed the Newspapers’ Incitement to Offences Act. The new enactment gagged the press. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was sentenced to six years’ rigorous imprisonment on the charge of writing inflammatory articles against the Government in his paper *Kesari*. Several leaders and paper-editors of Bengal were also clapped in jail without trial. The Seditious Meetings Act of 1907 gave arbitrary powers to the police to prevent the holding of public meetings. In view of the above-mentioned consequences, Mrs. Annie Besant wrote that Surat split was the most unfortunate in the history of the Congress. One direct outcome of the repressive measures of the Government was the increase in terrorist activities. The exasperated Indian youth turned to violent methods, feeling that ‘an ounce of lead can work more wonders than a ton of argument and moral persuasion.’ Secret organisations were formed and bomb factories started.

The arrest of Tilak and the trial which followed (July 13-22, 1908) led to mass demonstration and protest meetings throughout the Bombay province. Tilak’s supporters started preparing for protest strike in the Bombay factories.

Tilak turned his 21 hours’ magnificent speech for his defence into a fiery condemnation of British imperialist policy in India. Tilak’s speech had wide-scale repercussion within India and his fame spread beyond the country’s borders.

Strong reaction against the imprisonment of Tilak-Growth of the mass struggle, political strike in Bombay. After the sentence against Tilak had been announced, the extremists appealed to the people of Bombay to organise a six-day general strike in protest-one day for each of the years of hard labour to which Tilak had been sentenced. On July 23, 1908 a general political strike began. Workers from all Bombay’s factories went on strike, all shops were closed and educational establishments shut their doors. Patriotic slogans were raised and portraits of Tilak sprang everywhere.

Lenin condemns Imprisonment Sentence against Tilak. In his assessment of the historic significance of these events in Bombay, Lenin wrote:

“The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak, he was sentenced to a long term of exile, the question in the British House of Commons the other day revealing that the Indian jurors had declared for acquittal and *that the verdict had been passed by the vote of the British Jurors* this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money-bags, evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay. In India too, the proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle-and that being the case, the Russian-style British regime in India is doomed.” The Bombay strike marked the climax of the revolutionary upsurge in the years 1905-1908.

IMPORTANCE OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

As Swadeshi Movement and boycott of foreign goods had been the main plank of the extremist leaders and later on this programme was also adopted by Mahatma Gandhi and they created mass awakening and prepared the people for future struggle, so it is being given in detail here.;

Birth of the Swadeshi Movement - The twin ideas of *Swadeshi* and Boycott, the first spontaneous fruits of the great upsurge of outraged popular feelings in 1905-were largely supplementary, as one could not succeed without the other. The boycott of foreign goods required that their supply should be met by those produced in the country. The *Swadeshi* or promotion of indigenous industry could not succeed when Indian industry was at its nascent stage, unless people deliberately eschewed foreign and purchased native goods even at pecuniary loss and sacrifice of comfort.

Transformation of the Swadeshi into a great national movement: “*The silent* transformation of the Swadeshi movement into a great national movement, which later merged itself into the successful struggle for freedom constituted the first great landmark in the history of India’s fight for freedom in the first half of the twentieth century.”

“The Swadeshi movement gave a great impetus to nationalism through the nationalist cum patriotic literature which it brought into being. The literacy talents of Arbinda Ghosh blazed forth day after day in the articles in the *VandeMatram*. He not only expounded the religious and philosophical basis of nationalism but also present it as a sublime sentiment in human life. “Love has a place in politics”, said he, “but it is the love of one’s country.”

“If Arbinda was the highest priest, Ravidranath Tagore was the great poet of the Swadeshi Movement. What Arbinda achieved in the real of thought by his fearless writings, Ravindranath conveyed to the masses by his songs, incomparable in diction and imitable in the melody of its time.”

The idea which inspired Bankim Chandra to write the *Vande Matram* hymn, was expressed through charming poems and songs by Rabindranath Tagore. He sang the glories of ancient India and its culture and held vividly before the people, the portrait of Shivaji and Guru Govind Singh as nation builders, and of Band a as a symbol of the stoic heroism and spirit of sacrifice displayed by the Sikhs. Many of his ballads touch upon the patriotism, chivalry and heroism of the Rajputs and struggle of the Marathas and Sikhs for freedom. How profoundly they stirred the blood of the young Bengalis in the hectic days of the Swadeshi and prepared them for the great struggle that lay ahead-no words can adequately convey. But Arbinda and Rabindranath proved that the pen is mightier than the sword. To them is mainly due the credit for the fact that the mighty British power failed to subdue the national spirit of the Bengalis.

8. THE ROLL OF PRESS

Almost from the beginning of the 19th century, politically conscious Indians had been attracted to modern civil rights, especially the freedom of the Press. As early as 1824, Raja Rammohan Roy had protested against a regulation restricting the freedom of the Press. In a memorandum to the Supreme Court, he had said that every good ruler 'will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestricted liberty of publication is the only effectual means that can be employed.'

In the period from 1870 to 1918, the national movement had not yet resorted to mass agitation through thousands of small and large maidan meetings, nor did political work consist of the active mobilization of people in mass struggles. The main political task still was that of politicization, political propaganda and education and formation and propagation of nationalist ideology. The Press was the chief instrument for carrying out this task, that is, for arousing, training, mobilizing and consolidating nationalist public opinion.

Even the work of the National Congress was accomplished during these years largely through the Press. The Congress had no organization of its own for carrying on political work. Its resolutions and proceedings had to be propagated through newspapers. Interestingly, nearly one-third of the founding fathers of the Congress in 1885 were journalists.

Powerful newspapers emerged during these years under distinguished and *fearless* journalists. These were the *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* under the editorship of G. Subramaniya Iyer, *Kesari* and *Mahratta* under B.G. Tilak, *Bengalee* under Surendranath Banerjea, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* under Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh, *Sudharak* under G.K. Gokhale, *Indian Mirror* under N.N. Sen, *Voice of India* under Dadabhai Naoroji, *Hindustani* and *Advocate* under G.P. Varma and *Tribune* and *Akhbar-i-Am* in Punjab, *Indu Prakash*, *Dnyan Prakash*, *Kal* and *Gujarati* in Bombay, and *Som Prakash*, *Banganivasi*, and *Sadharani* in Bengal. In fact, there hardly existed a major political leader in India who did not possess a newspaper or was not writing for one in some capacity or the other.

The influence of the Press extended far beyond its literate subscribers. Nor was it confined to cities and large towns. A newspaper would reach remote villages and would then be read by a reader to tens of others. Gradually library movements sprung up all over the country. A local 'library' would be organized around a single newspaper. A table, a bench or two or a *charpoy* would constitute the capital equipment. Every piece of news or editorial comment would be read or heard and thoroughly discussed. The newspaper not only became the political educator; reading or discussing it became a form of political participation.

Newspapers were not in those days business enterprises, nor were the editors and journalists professionals. Newspapers were published as a national or public service. They were often financed as objects of philanthropy. To be a journalist was often to be a political worker and an agitator at considerable self sacrifice. It was, of course, not very expensive to start a newspaper, though the editor had usually to live at a semi starvation level or earn his livelihood through a supplementary source. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was started in 1868 with printing equipment purchased for Rs. 32. Similarly, Surendranath Banerjea purchased the goodwill of the *Bengalee* in 1879 for Rs. 10 and the press for another Rs. 1600.

Nearly all the major political controversies of the day were conducted through the Press. It also played the institutional role of opposition to the Government. Almost every act and every policy of the Government was subjected to sharp criticism, in many cases with great care and vast learning backing it up. 'Oppose, oppose, oppose' was the motto of the Indian Press. Regarding the role of the nationalist Press, Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, wrote as early as March 1886: 'Day after day, hundreds of Sharp-witted *babus* pour forth their indignation against their English Oppressors in very pungent and effective diatribe.' And again in May: 'In this way there can be no doubt there is generated in the minds of those who read these papers. a sincere conviction that we are all enemies of mankind in general and of India in particular.'

To arouse political consciousness, to inculcate nationalism, to expose colonial rule, to 'preach disloyalty' was no easy task, for there had existed since 1870 Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code according to Which 'whoever attempts to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in British India' was to be punished with transportation for life or for any term or with imprisonment up to three years. This clause was, moreover, later supplemented with even more strident measures.

Indian journalists adopted several clever stratagems and evolved a distinctive style of writing to remain outside the reach of the law. Since Section 124A excluded writings of persons whose loyalty to the Government was undoubted, they invariably prefaced their vitriolic writing with effusive sentiments of loyalty to the Government and the Queen. Another stratagem was to publish anti-imperialist extracts from London-based socialist and Irish newspapers or letters from radical British citizens knowing that the Indian Government could not discriminate against Indians by taking action against them without touching the offending Britishers. Sometimes the extract from the British newspaper would be taken without quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source, thus teasing the British-Indian bureaucracy into contemplating or taking action which would have to be given up once the real source of the comment became known. For example, a sympathetic treatment of the Russian terrorist activities against Tsarism would be published in such a way that the reader would immediately draw a parallel between the Indian Government and the Revolutionary Terrorists of Bengal and Maharashtra. The officials would later discover that it was an extract from the *Times*, London, or some such other British newspaper.

Often the radical expose would take the form of advice and warning to the Government as if from a well-wisher, as if the writer's main purpose was to save the authorities from their own follies! B.G. Tilak and Motilal Ghosh were experts at this form of writing. Some of the more daring writers took recourse to irony, sarcasm, banter, mock-seriousness and burlesque.

In all cases, nationalist journalists, especially of Indian language newspapers, had a difficult task to perform, for they had to combine simplicity with subtlety — simplicity was needed to educate a semi-literate public, subtlety to convey the true meaning without falling foul of the law. They performed the task brilliantly, often creatively developing the languages in which they were willing, including, surprisingly enough, the English language.

The national movement from the beginning zealously defended the freedom of the Press whenever the Government attacked it or tried to curtail it. In fact, the struggle for the freedom of the Press became an integral part of the struggle for freedom.

Indian newspapers began to find their feet in the 1870s. They became highly critical of Lord Lytton's administration, especially regarding its inhuman approach towards the victims of the famine of 1876-77. As a result the Government decided to make a sudden strike at the Indian language newspapers, since they reached beyond the middle class readership. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878, directed only against Indian language newspapers, was conceived in great secrecy and passed at a single sitting of the Imperial Legislative Council. The Act provided for the confiscation of the printing press, paper and other materials of a newspaper if the Government believed that it was publishing seditious materials and had flouted an official warning.

Indian nationalist opinion firmly opposed the Act. The first great demonstration on an issue of public importance was organized in Calcutta on this question when a large meeting was held in the Town Hall. Various public bodies and the Press also campaigned against the Act. Consequently, it was repealed in 1881 by Lord Ripon.

The manner in which the Indian newspapers cleverly fought such measures was brought out by a very amusing and dramatic incident. The Act was in particular aimed at the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which came out at the time in both Bengali and English. The objective was to take summary action against it. But when the officials woke up the morning after the Act was passed, they discovered to their dismay that the *Patrika* had foxed them; overnight, the editors had converted it into an English newspaper!

9. Rise and Growth of Communalism

“Muslims are not in a minority and they are a nation by any definition. It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. The Hindus and Mohammedans belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither intermarry, nor interdine and indeed they belong to different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. They have different epics, their heroes are different and possess different episodes. Very often the hero of one is the foe of another and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. The only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into autonomous national states.” - Jinnah

Communalism in Indian Politics has been a great and formidable obstacle in our constitutional advance. The hatred between Hindus and Muslims was engendered by the British as a political device to perpetuate their rule. ‘Divide and rule’ has always been the corner-stone of the British Administration in India. Not only did the British statesmen prevent the welding of them into a single nation, but they also tried to foment ill-will between them so as to use their mutual difference as an excuse for withholding the transfer of power to Indian hands. During the first few decades of the present century both communities worked in a spirit of comradeship for the expulsion of the British. The British Statesmen realised the situation at a very early date and scented the danger in case they pooled their efforts to overthrow the foreign rule. The rulers knew that the numbered British officers in India would be no match to the overwhelming strength of the natives. Hence, they employed the practice of giving preferential treatment to one and indifference towards the others so as to sow discord amongst them. For a few decades after the Mutiny of 1857, the British Government nursed a grudge against the Muslims who, it knew, were largely responsible for the outbreak. The Muslims were crushed and debarred from occupying key posts both in the Civil Administration and in the Military. In 1871, out of a total of 2,141 persons employed by the Bengal Government, there were 711 Hindus, 1,338 Europeans and only 92 Muslims. The Muslims, too having been deprived of all their titles, privileges and position had bitter resentment against the British. This state of affairs continued till the advent of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan on the political scene.

The rise of strong nationalism amongst the Hindus for a number of years found favour with the Muslims who too were anti-British. The sentiments of unity stuck like a thorn in the sides of British Government. It decided to create a division into two communities to make its own rule more lasting. This polity was given effect to in two ways. The first was the reorganisation of the Army which hitherto used to have all the communities mixed up in its ranks. In order to encourage separatist tendencies, regiments and battalions were created on the caste and religious distinctions. Secondly, the Government began to patronise the Muslims in order that they may cease to join hands with the Congress. The British tacticians terrified the Muslims by telling them that they would be worse under the domination of the Hindus. They also encouraged the Muslims to demand separate electorate, even a separate Muslim Majority State. Partition of Bengal was the first step in that direction. And when it was annulled by Lord Hardinge, the bogey of Pakistan was raised to smash outterritorial and national integrity. Thus, the communal problem in India was not merely religious in character as styled by the rulers, it

was propped up for political gains. And it is an admitted fact that it was a deliberate creation of British imperialism for stabilising their rule over India.

WAHABI MOVEMENT

Wahabi Movement which started in Arabia towards the end of the 18th century for the revitalisation of Islam also fanned the flame of communalism in India. The religious movement was sponsored in India by Syed Ahmed Brelvi. The object of this movement was the glorification of Islam. Mr. Syed Ahmed Brelvi after his return from Mecca in 1820, preached for the eradication of all the evils and impurities that had crept into Islam. The followers of Mr. Syed Ahmed Brelvi became very fanatic and intolerant. They went to the extent of declaring a Holy War or crusade against the Sikhs and non Wahabis. The Government, however, dealt with them with an iron hand and suppressed it before the movement could take a dangerous form.

ALIGARH MOVEMENT OF SIR SYED AHMED KHAN (1817-1898)

The British Government for quite a long period looked upon the Muslims as untrustworthy and disloyal. It interpreted the Mutiny of 1857 as an attempt by the Muslims to revive the Mughal rule in India and hence, it continued to nurse a prejudice against them. The Muslims were deliberately kept out of Government jobs. According to Mr. Norman, "The British people had decided that for the expansion of the new power and its continuance, the only course was to crush the Mussalmans and had deliberately adopted policies which had for their aim the economic ruin of Muslims and their intellectual stagnation and general degeneration." Another factor which accounted for the backwardness of the Muslims was their religious hatred for English education. The Hindus who received Western Education stole a clear march over the Muslims and occupied many important posts in the administration. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) encouraged the Muslims to grow out of their prejudices and welcome Western Education as the gateway to material prosperity. In pursuance of his aim, he founded a Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh which in course of time became the Muslim University, Aligarh. This university later on became a nursery of fanatic Muslims and a nucleus of all the anti-national activities.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was of the nationalist views in the beginning. On one occasion he had remarked: "*In the word 'Nation', I include both Hindus and Mohammedans because it is the only meaning attached to it. With me it is not worth considering what is their religious faith, because we do not see anything of it. What we see is that we inhabit the same land, are subject to the rule of the same Governors, the fountains of benefit for all are the same, and the pangs of famine also we suffer equally. These are the different grounds upon which I call both these races which inhabit India by one word, i. e., Hindus, meaning to say that they are inhabitants of Hindustan.*" But such tolerant views of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan soon changed into communal hatred. He became an arch-enemy of the Congress and the Nationalism. As a loyal friend of the British, he became the champion of Anglo-Muslim alliance. The change in his attitude is said to have been brought about by Mr. Beck, the Principal of M. A. O. College, Aligarh. Mr. Beck impressed upon him the need of cooperation with Britishers in the interest of his community. Mr. Syed Ahmed Khan thus, became a pawn in the British game of creating communal divisions in India. In an address presented to Lord Lytton in 1877 he said that, "*The chief object of founding the M. A. O. College was to reconcile Oriental learning with Western literature and*

science to make the Muslims of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown, to inspire in them that loyalty which springs not from servile submission to foreign rule but from a genuine appreciation of the blessings of good government."

In order to wash out from the face of the Muslims the blot of having been Mutineers, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan started a paper *Loyal Mohammedans of India*. He, through his articles and speeches, tried to convince the rulers that Indian Muslims had reconciled to the foreign rule and become loyal to them. He advised Muslims to shed their religious ill-will towards Christianity. In one of his books he tended to prove that Islam permitted its followers to share meals with a Christian or a Jew. "These writings of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan," remarks **Justice Shah Din**, "brought conviction home to many an official sceptic, and the ominous cloud that hung for a time over Muslim loyalty soon rolled away."

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan strove hard to bring about a rapprochement between Muslims and the Government. For this reason he directed all his energies towards keeping his community free from the influence of the Congress which was a nationalist and anti-Government organisation. He laid the foundation of the *Annual Muslim Educational Conference* in 1886 which by holding its sessions simultaneously with the Congress Session in the same town, tried to withhold the Muslims from attending the Congress session. The Congress which in its early years enjoyed the blessings of the Government fell out of its favour. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan went ahead with the set purpose of promoting among the Muslims loyalty to the British Government and hatred for the Congress. In 1888 he founded in league with Raja Shiva Prasad of Benares, the *Patriotic Association* to act as the rival of the Congress. It was a reactionary body and began to oppose the progressive views of the Congress in all possible ways. *In his memoirs Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerji writes, that soon after a few years the Congress began to be dubbed as a Hindu body, while we were straining every nerve to secure the co-operation of our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen in this great national work. We sometimes paid the fares of the Mohammedan delegates and offered them other facilities* Sir Syed Ahmed Khan at the instigation of the Government, also founded Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association in 1893. The object of this body was to persuade the Muslims to give up their religious prejudices against Christianity and to strengthen the hands of government for protecting their political interests.

FUNDAMENTALIST MUSLIMS, DEMAND FOR COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

The Partition of Bengal caused much heart burning and resentment among the Bengali-speaking people of that Province. The Government proceeded diplomatically and sowed discord between the Hindus and Muslims. It demarcated East Bengal as predominantly Muslim area and provoked and poisoned the minds of the Muslims against the Hindus who were in minority in that area. Despite this manoeuvring, when the fervour of nationalism did not subside, Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State, advised Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, to appease the people by introducing constitutional reforms. Lord Minto was, however, in favour of widening the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims in order to strike a nail into nationalism of Bengal. Consequently, Mr. Smith, Private Secretary of the Viceroy, wrote to Mr. Archbold, the Principal of the Aligarh College, that the Viceroy would be glad to meet a deputation of the Muslims and try to meet the demands of the Muslim community. Mr. Archbold made no delay

in passing on to Mohsin-ul- Mulk, the Secretary of the College, the contents of the letter he had received. He also advised the Secretary of the College to demand nomination or representation on communal basis. Mr. Archbold agreed to draft the address. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of Aligarh College, soon organised a representative body of the Muslims headed by Sir Agha Khan to wait on the viceroy. The deputation on 1st October, 1906, put the following demands before the Viceroy:

(i) Separate electoral constituency for the Mohammedans; (ii) representation of the Muslim; in the newly constituted legislative assemblies and other elected bodies not on the numerical strength of the community but on its political importance; (iii) reservation of seats in the State services for the Muslims; (iv) more state aid for the setting up new Muslim universities; and (v) preference to be given to Muslims in regard to nominations in the Governor-General's Council.

Lord Minto who was over-anxious to please the Muslims said, “ *The pith of your Address, that I understand it, is a claim that in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipal District Board or a Legislature in which it is proposed to introduce or to increase the electoral organisation, the Mohammedan Community should be represented as a body. You justly claimed that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service that it has rendered to the Empire.* ” One can easily smell from Lord Minto's statement that he himself was more inclined to introduce communal electorate than the Muslim themselves. Lord Morley personally was not in accord with Minto's policy but in the interest of the British Empire, he had to submit to the Viceroy's views. A paper like *Statesman* which had always been known for its pro-Government views also did not fail to criticise the principle of separate electorate. One sinister effect of this official policy on Indian politics was that the Muslims were driven farther from the Congress and the Hindus: and in order to acquire more political gains, they became thick with the British. The system of communal representation intensified hatred and religious animosity between the two communities which climaxed in the partition of the country in 1947.

COMMUNAL MOVEMENT OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

Birth of Muslim League. The success of the Muslim deputation that waited upon the Viceroy at Simla enthused the Muslims to start a separate political organisation of their own. The British officialdom was also interested in it so as to counterbalance the Congress. Consequently on 31st December, 1906 the Muslim League was formed at Dacca with a view to “support, whatever possible, all measures emanating from the Government, and to protect the cause and advance the interest of our co-religionists throughout the country, to controvert the growing influence of the so-called Indian National Congress....and to enable our young men of education to join this organisation who for want of such an organisation have joined the Congress....” The object of the League was defined as follows:

(a) “To promote among the Mussalmans of India feeling of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the government with regard to any of its measures.

(b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.

(c) To prevent the rise among the Mussalmans of India of any feelings of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to other aforementioned objects of the League.”

Thus the Muslim League provided a political and nonetheless communal platform to the Muslim community. It was from the day of its birth an unpatriotic and anti-national organism with an avowed aim of promoting loyalty towards the British Government. The first conference of the All India Muslim was held at Amritsar under the Presidentship of Sir Syed Ali Imam. The League leaders at the conference demanded more weightage to the Muslims in the Legislative Councils and in the Civil Services. In Governor-General's Executive Council it demanded equality of representation with the majority community. These very demands were voiced again in the succeeding conferences held in 1909 and 1910.

Changes in the Policy of Muslim League. It is worth noting that the Muslim League then failed to enlist the support of the entire Muslim intelligentsia. Its communal character proved distasteful to the Nationalist Mohammedans. Even Mr. Jinnah for many years had been an opponent of the League and in the Allahabad Session of the Congress in 1910, he moved a resolution condemning the system of communal representation. His resolution was seconded by Maulana Mazhar-ul-Haq who advocated for greater friendship and understanding between the Hindus and Muslims. Since all the Muslims were extremely happy over the undue representation in the elected bodies given to them according to the Act of 1909, it was certainly an act of great courage for the Muslim leaders to decry the system of Separate Electorate and to make an appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity. Nawab Syed Muhammed Ali and Maulana Azad not only refused to have any dealing with the League but also attacked the communalism and loyalty of the League. Maulana Muhammad Ali started an English paper *Comrade* and an Urdu paper *Hamdard* to propagate his anti-League views. Maulana Azad also brought out a paper *Al Hilal* from Calcutta to serve as the mouthpiece of his nationalist views. Besides these, there were other progressive Muslim leaders like Syed Wazir Hussain, Hassan Iman and Hakim Ajmal Khan who also did not see eye to eye with the League.

Under the pressure of eminent Muslim leaders mentioned above the League was compelled to modify its constitution and effect certain changes in its aims and objects. Besides it, Maulana Muhammad-ul-Hassan founded Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, League's rival in the political field. The national organisation vigorously opposed the communalism of League and did yeoman's service to bring the Muslims to the Congress fold. With the popularity of nationalist Muslim leaders growing, the influence of the League began to decline. Eventually the Muslim League gave up its dogmatism and drifted closer to the Congress creed. It amended its constitution and included the promotion of goodwill between the two major communities and the attainment of 'Swarajya' under the patronage of the British Crown in the Charter of its aims and objects. Several factors in the international field compelled the League to change its attitude from loyalty to the British to one of patriotism. There was a campaign going on in the south-east European countries to throw off the yoke of Turkey. Russia extended its support to the countries struggling against Turkey for their independence. And since Britain was friendly with Russia, the Indian Mussalmans began to distrust Britishers. Another reason responsible for the drift of League towards the Congress was that Turkey had joined hands with Germany and fought against the British during the First Great War. Indian Muslims who accepted the Emperor of Turkey as their Khalifa (Religious Guru) began to look upon the British as their enemies. Thus began a new chapter in the history of the League. Both the Congress and the League held their annual sessions at Lucknow. The League and the Congress leaders met in a

cordial atmosphere and formulated a scheme for post-war reforms. The cloud of distrust and hostility melted so thoroughly that Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu and Pt. Malaviya even attended the League Sessions in 1916 and 1917 and delivered speeches from its platform.

Muslim Leagues attitude towards Khilafat Movement. The First Great War ended in 1918. England and Turkey concluded a treaty. The British dethroned the Sultan of Turkey for his complicity with Germany during the war. Turkish Empire was also disintegrated and a large part of it was annexed to the British Empire. Indian Muslims expressed their resentment against the high handedness of the British Government and resolved to start an anti-British agitation. With this end in view they formed Khilafat Committee. There was heartburning and frustration in the Congress camp also because the British Government after the termination of hostilities in Europe not only refused to transfer power to Indians but also massacred the unarmed agitators in cold blood at Jallianwallah Bagh, Amritsar. Gandhiji, as such, launched the great Non-Co-operation Movement in 1920 to register nation's protest against the British brutalities in the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs. The League, although did not decline to associate itself with the Congress, participated in the movement only half-heartedly. The active support came from the nationalist Muslims; hence the League became greatly unpopular.

Revival of Muslim League. The truce between the League and the Congress proved quite temporary. The communal accord which had begun with Lucknow Pact ended in 1922 with the calling off of the Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movement by Gandhiji. For the next ten years the country passed through the fire of communal madness and riots. The communal disturbances were partly the creation of the British Government. The British bureaucracy in India not to speak of remaining indifferent to orgy of murders in the name of religion, rather shamelessly encouraged the Muslims to attack their Hindu neighbours. Arya Samaj then appeared as the saviour of Hinduism from the onslaughts of Islam. Hindu Mahasabha also intensified its activities to safeguard the Hindus. Mopla Muslims in Malabar subjected the Hindus of that area to loot and arson. The woeful tales of Malabar Hindus were so horrifying that leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pt. Malaviya also could not remain passively indifferent to it. When the atmosphere was so highly charged with communal tension, the Muslim League exploited the situation for consolidating its hold on the community. Mr. M.A. Jinnah, who had already left the Congress a few years ago, assumed the leadership of the League. Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali also withdrew from the Congress and began to strengthen the Muslim League. Thus the Hindus-Muslim unity, which had appeared to be a probable proposition during the Khilafat agitation, went to winds.

Muslim League and Simon Commission. When the All-English Simon Commission came to India there appeared a rift in the League leadership. The Congress decided to boycott it vigorously. The Muslim League found itself in a fix. Its members were divided on the question of what attitude they should adopt towards the Commission. The League ranks were split into two sections. One section led by Mr. Jinnah stood for boycott; while the other section led by Sir Muhammad Shaft was in favour of co-operating with it. Both the sections held their sessions separately at Calcutta and Lahore to chalk out their future course of action.

Muslim League and Nehru Report. Pt. Motilal Nehru in his Report proposed joint electorate with reservation of seats for the Muslims. After the publication of Nehru Report, the Muslim League was divided into two groups. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah' was opposed to the

scheme from the very beginning. His famous Fourteen Points which are given in chapter XVI, were presented by the Muslim League, as an alternative to the Nehru Report. The ginger group led by Mohammad Shafi called a Muslim All Parties Conference to discuss the solution of Communal Problem chalked out in the Nehru Report. The Report was held to ridicule and criticism by Shafi group. They demanded separate electorate. The result was that the house of the League became divided into itself. Nationalist Muslims like Dr. Ansari., Hakim Ajmal Khan, Sir Wazir Hussain, Dr. Syed Muhammed, Asaf Ali, Dr. Kitchlew and Abdul Kalam Azad dissociated themselves from the League. Shafi group wielded greater influence than the nationalists on the Muslim middle class because it enjoyed the patronage of the Government. The British officialdom remained more kind and accommodating towards the League demand in order to win its support in crushing the wave of nationalism. The League members who were highly placed in the administration of the country succeeded better in benefiting the Muslim Community. Naturally League drew the Muslim intelligentsia towards itself day by day. Mention should also be made of another Muslim organisation called Ahrar Party in the Punjab and KrishakPraja Party in Bengal. The leader of Ahrar Party was Mr. Ataulah Shah Bukhari. It was a moderate group which although did not agree with the economic programmes of the Congress but was more akin to it than to the Muslim League in its political creed. It had large following amongst the Muslim peasants. After 1944, however, the Ahrar Party suffered an eclipse, paving the way clear for the Muslim League to lord over the Muslim masses of India.

League's Struggle for Pakistan. In due course Jinnah reconciled to communal politics of Muslim League. He negotiated with the Shafi group and struck out a Fourteen-Point Programme. It was a sort of irrevocable charter of Muslim demands for any compromise with the Congress. It contained such fantastic demands as the Congress with all its liberal outlook could not accept it. During the two Round Table Conferences in London, the Muslim Leagues stuck fast to its Fourteen-Point Programme and foiled all the attempts made by the Congress to solve the communal problem. The British Government utilised the communal tangle in beating down the Congress demand. Gandhiji returned to India from the Second Round Table Conference much disappointed and empty-handed. Mr. Ramsay McDonald issued the Communal Award conceding the Muslims all they had asked for. A phase of Congress-League co-operation occurred again while the reforms of 1935 were in the making. Mr. Jinnah showed eagerness to collaborate with the Congress in opposing the Federal scheme as proposed in the Act of 1935. He sincerely believed than the proposed reforms were only a trick to put off the country's demands for self-government for an indefinite period. The Congress workers went to the extent of supporting the League candidates against non-League Muslim candidates in the elections to the Provincial legislatures in 1937. But this superficial unity was broken again and the two premier organisations drifted further apart never to reconcile again.

The idea of Pakistan which came from the League platform in 1940 at Lahore session had actually been conceived ten years ago by Muhammad Iqbal in 1930. At League's annual conference at Allahabad Mr. Iqbal had expressed his dream of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State'. People then had laughed it away as 'loud thinking' or a fantastic dream. It then came from Mr. Rahmat Ali, a Cambridge student, in a more precise and forceful way. Neither Mr. Jinnah nor Mr. Zafrullah Khan then considered it practicable. However, on March 23, 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution at its Lahore session. The text of the resolution

ran as under: *“Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the Ali India Muslim League that no constitutional scheme would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the area in which the Muslims are numerically in majority should be grouped to constitute independent states”*The League resolved that the British government before leaving India must effect the partition of the country into Indian Union and Pakistan. Pakistan was in fact the demand of a separate Muslim state, comprising the Muslim-majority Provinces of Bengal, Assam and Hyderabad. The basis of League's demand was its mischievous “Two-Nation theory” which first came from Sir Wazir Hussain in his presidential address at Bombay session of League in 1936. He said, *“The Hindus and Mussalmans inhabiting this vast continent are not two communities but should be considered two nations in many respects.”*

In 1942, when the Congress started ‘Quit India’ Movement, the Muslim League instead of supporting it, co-operated with the government to crush the national uprising. During the two years from 1942 to 1944 while all the top class leaders of the Congress were behind the bars, Jinnah got the field free for his nasty propaganda against the Congress, which he dubbed as a purely Hindu body wedded to the goal of establishing ‘Hindu Raj’ in India. The crooked designs of Jinnah had the desired effect. The idea of Pakistan went deep into the minds and hearts of the Mussalmans.

In the General Elections which took place in India in 1946, the League captured majority of Muslim seats. The phenomenal success of the League stunned every leader and student of political development in India. Only a few years ago in the elections for the provincial Assemblies in 1937, the League had fared poorly even in predominantly Muslim provinces like Sind and N.W.F.P., the Punjab and Bengal. It had suffered crushing defeats by Red Shirts Party of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in N.W.F.P., by Azad Muslim Party of Allah Bux in Sind, by the Unionist Party of Sikander Hyat Khan in the Punjab and by the KrishakPraja Party of Fazlul Huq in Bengal. The League had been able to claim some notable success only in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces. The gap of nine years made a world of difference in the strength and popularity of the League. At the polls in 1946 the tables were turned in favour of the League. It drove the other Muslim organisations out of the field and claimed nearly all the Muslim seats in every Province. The Congress could pocket Hindu seats only. The election results of 1946 established the fact on for ever that Congress and League-the two premier organisations of India-represented essentially the Hindus and the Muslims respectively.

Encouraged by its staggering at the polls, the Muslim League launched its campaign for the formation of Pakistan with redoubled energy. The demand pricked the balloon of the Congress claim that it was a national organisation having under its umbrella both the the Hindus and Mus lims. It still dubbed the idea of Pakistan (in the words of Zafrullah Khan) as ‘chimerical and impracticable’. The Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, Ahrars, the KhudaiKhidmatgars and All-India Shia Con ference denounced League’s dream of Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission also hinted at the hollo of such an idea and stated that without wholesale transfer of minority population from India to Pakistan and vice versa, the communal conflict would not subside.

Partition, the Cabinet Mission said, was an inadequate solution of the communal problem. The Muslim League under Mr. Jinnah then decided to employ bullying and coercive methods to secure submission from the Congress. It launched 'Direct Action' in Muslim Majority Provinces. Once more the communal riots flared up in the country on a vast scale. The British officials who were interested in creating chaos in the country, let the Muslim goondas take law into their hands. Hosts of hired goondas attacked Hindu homes, plundered the rich, and killed the people. The incalculable loss of life and property suffered by the Hindus in the Muslim majority Provinces shook the Congress leaders out of their complacent dream. Cracks appeared in their resolution of 'Undivided India'. In spite of the theoretical, economical, geographical unsoundness and absurdity of the idea of Pakistan, it became a hard painful reality. 14th August, 1947, was an inauspicious day when Pakistan came into existence. No doubt it was not exactly Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's dreams, it was certainly a triumph of communal over national solidarity, of sword over constitutionalism and of 'Two Nations' Theory over the historical fact of *Akhand Bharat*. The geographical oneness of our country was split up not in two but three units. The Muslims got the eastern parts while the heterogeneous group of the three hundred million souls got the truncated India. Thank God that the original plan of Pakistan was greatly pruned. Assam, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Parts of Bengal and Punjab were excluded from it.

East and West Pakistan could not live in unity any longer and East Pakistan separated itself after Indo-Pak War in Dec. 1971. East Pakistan named herself Bangladesh and became a reality on December 16, 1971.

10. The Impact of First World War and Home Rule Movement

First World War broke out in Europe on 4th August, 1914. Its causes lay deeper and more remote than the immediate cause, the assassination of heir-apparent to the Austrian throne. This war had important bearing on the events in India and its constitutional development. The British Government declared that it was fighting against Germany and her allies to make the world safe for democracy, Mr. Wilson, the President of the U.S.A., also echoed the same thing later on. Many Moderate Leaders of the Indian National Congress thought that when Britain was fighting for saving democracy then naturally she could not deny the same to India which was her due. Lord Hardinge was the Governor-General when the war broke out. He had won the sympathy of the Indian people by his tactful handling of the situation. Therefore, Princes of Indian States and the people of this country extended all help to the British Government. The President of the Indian National Congress Session of 1914 declared that India and Britain were fighting a devastating war side by side for honour, liberty and justice. Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, attended the open session of the Congress when the resolution of unswerving allegiance to Britain was passed. Supporting the resolution Surendra Nath Bannerjee emphasized that the Congress would not trade in its loyalty to England. Mohan Das Karam chand Gandhi who had done much for alleviating the sufferings of the Indians in South Africa was in London when the war broke out. He extended his full sympathy and support to British Government in that crisis. He rejected the opposite argument that it was the duty of the slave seeking to be free to make the master's need his opportunity! He remarked, "If we could improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was also our duty to win their help by standing them in their hour of need."¹ Gandhiji and Surendra Nath Bannerjee went from one place to another to urge their countrymen to extend all help to the British in their hour of need and give maximum recruitment for the army.

Revolutionaries and the First World War

Whereas the Moderates were extending all help to the British Government and the Extremists were ready to give help to the British on the condition of conferring self-government or Home rule upon the Indians, the Revolutionaries foresaw in the war a golden opportunity to free the country completely from the bondage. Therefore, Rash Behari Bose, who had thrown bomb upon Lord Hardinge in 1911, organised a great Revolutionary Movement in collusion with the Gadar Party which had been founded by Lala Hardayal in the U.S.A. While the British Government was preoccupied and vexed with the German aggression in Europe, the revolutionaries decided to capitalize the occasion in their own interest. They believed in this principle that England's difficulty was their best opportunity. A few hundred Indian Revolutionaries, who were ready to face death for the liberation of their country, came to India to help Rash Behari Bose. Rash Behari Bose, BagiKartar Singh (Kartar Singh Saraba), Sachindra Sanyal and Ganesh Pingale prepared a master plan to stage a countrywide revolution on February 21, 1915, but the Punjab police detected the scheme through one traitor, namely Kripal Singh. His treachery brought to naught the entire scheme of the Revolution. The police at several places arrested many revolutionaries, famous amongst whom were BagiKartar Singh, Vishnu Ganesh Pingale, Jagat Singh, Bhai Parmanand, Man Singh and Udhamsingh. However,

Rash Behari Bose escaped. Twenty-four persons including Kartar Singh, Bhai Parmanand, Man Singh and Udham Singh were awarded death sentence, while many others were transported for life. This case was termed by the Government as Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1915 because the trial of the revolutionaries, who were caught, took place at Lahore. The death sentence of Bhai Parmanand later on was commuted to life sentence. The Chief Justice was also inclined to commute the death sentence of BagiKartar Singh to life imprisonment who was handsome youth and very learned one but he declined the offer. BagiKartar Singh (Saraba) said, "I prefer gallows to life sentences." *"I wish I were born again to unfetter my Motherland. I shall be glad to be hanged every time I am reborn till my country achieves independence."*

HOME RULE MOVEMENT

Home Rule Movement under the inspiring leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant gained momentum during the war because many Indians saw in it the best opportunity to snatch some concessions from Britishers. Mrs. Besant was an Irish lady by birth but an Indian by domicile and religious outlook. She had great regard for Indian culture and Vedic philosophy. She had a feeling heart for the ill-fated people of this country. She knew that the roots of their misery lay in political subjection, hence she advocated the case of India and demanded Home Rule or Dominion Status. She argued that a free India was likely to be a more dependable friend of Great Britain than a dependent one. Explaining her mission to her audience, she said, *"I am an Indian Tomtom, waking up all the sleeping sleepers so that they may wake and work for their motherland... This is my task."* Mrs. Besant was neither an arrogant imperialist nor an arch-enemy of the British Empire. She wanted compromise and enduring co-operation between the two countries. *Zacharias holds that 'her plan was to disentangle the nationalist extremists from their compromising alliance with the revolutionaries, to reconcile them to a position within the Empire and to bring them with the moderate into line in a united Congress.'*

During her visits to England between 1908 and 1913 as President of Theosophical Society, Mrs. Annie Besant was much impressed by Redmond's Home Rule Movement in favour of Ireland. She decided to start a similar movement in India. After working for twenty years for the revival of Hinduism, she joined the Congress in 1914. For propagating her views she started in English weekly 'Common Weal' and then an English daily 'New India'. She defined the goal in the first issue of 'Common Weal' in the following words: *"in political reforms we aim at the building up of complete self-government from Village Councils, through District and Municipal Boards and Provincial Legislative Assemblies, to a National Parliament, equal in its powers to the Legislative bodies of the self-governing colonies, by whatever name they may be called, also at the direct representation of India in the Imperial Parliament when that body shall contain representatives of the self-governing States of the Empire."*

After joining the Congress in 1914, Mrs. Annie Besant put India's case of self-government in a way that was both forceful and compatible with the nation's dignity. She said, *"There had been talk of a reward due to India's loyalty; but India does not chaffer (bargain) with the blood of her sons and the proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much liberty, so much right. India claims the right as a Nation, to justice among the peoples of the Empire. India asked for this before this war, but not as a reward but as a right does she ask for it. On this there must not be any mistake."* In a short time Mrs. Annie Besant came to the forefront in

political field also. She impressed the people by her eloquence and passionate love for India's good. At Madras session of the Congress in 1914 she said. *"India was not prepared to be any longer a child in the nursery of the Empire, and that it v.as necessary to confer self-government on her."*

The beginning of war in Europe nearly coincided with the release of Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Mandalay Jail at the end of his six years' term. He was accorded a hero's reception by the nationalist elements. His presence gave a stimulus to patriotic fervour. Tilak and his Extremist group agreed to the policies and programmes of Mrs. Besant. But the Moderates were reluctant in their approval of Home Rule. So, Mrs. Besant for some time did not get much success in reuniting the Moderates and the Extremists under the banner of the Congress but with the death of Sri Gopal Krishna Gokhale in February, 1915, and of Sir Ferozeshah Mehta in November of the same year, the Moderate group became leaderless. Mrs. Besant utilised the opportunity for prevailing upon both the groups to work together again.

Mrs. Besant and Tilak gave inspiring lead to Home Rule Movement. Besant started the Home Rule League at Gokhale Hall, Madras, in September, 1916, and Tilak started the same Home Rule at Poona. The Home Rule League raised the slogan of Swadeshi, National Education and Home Rule for India. The movement gathered momentum with lightning speed. The Government had no patience with the agitators, particularly when it was involved in war on the fields of Euorpe. The Bombay Government imposed restrictions on the movement and activities of Tilak. Action was also taken by the Madras Government against Mrs. Besant. She was arrested along with two coworkers, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Wadia. The highhandedness of the authorities raised a storm of protests all over the country. Public fury compelled the Government to release Mrs. Besant. The Congress in recognition of her valuable services elected her as President in 1917.

Montague's visit to India.

In order to enlist the firm support of the Indians in cause of war, Montague, Secretary of State for India, arrived in Bombay on 10th November, 1917. Tilak joined the large body to welcome him and garlanded him on behalf of the Home Rule League. After his arrival at Delhi, Montague received a series of deputations. A joint delegation representing the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League waited upon him on 26 November. Montague was fully conscious of the political importance of the delegation as would appear from the following entry in his diary: "We were face to face with the real giants of the Indian political world." Then followed the Home Rule Delegation, Montague writes, "And then Mrs. Besant and the great Tilak came with their Home Rule League and read us a more extreme and a bitter address but one which was undoubtedly interesting and good." Montague also interviewed Tilak separately and wrote the very next day, "Then after lunch, we saw Tilak, the politician, who probably has the greatest influence of any person in India and who is very extreme. His procession to Delhi to see me was a veritable triumphant one. He was really the author of the Congress-League scheme and although he did not impress me very much in argument, he is a scientific man of great erudition and training. It was quite obvious that he was not going to be satisfied with anything but what the Congress asks for. "We shall take whatever the Government gives us", he said, *"But it will not satisfy us unless it is at least what the Congress asks for"*. He also received

other delegations. His main purpose was to formulate the scheme of reforms in consultation with the Government of India and various

political leaders and at the same time to divert the attention of the Indian politicians from war and think of nothing else but the mission of the Secretary of State. In his mission he admirably succeeded.

Congress session of 1917 demands Home Rule for India.

The Congress session was held in Calcutta in 1917 with Mrs. Annie Besant as President. The Moderates in spite of their best efforts could not prevent the election of Mrs. Besant who was a nominee of Lokmanya Tilak. She said the following words in her Presidential address:

“Early in the war, I ventured to say that the war would not end until England recognised that autocracy and bureaucracy must perish in India as well as in Europe. The good Bishop of Calcutta with a courage worthy of his free race, lately declared that it would be hypocritical to pray for victory over autocracy in Europe and to maintain it in India.”

I once said in England: *“The condition of India’s loyalty is India’s freedom.”* I now add, “The condition of India’s usefulness to the Empire is India’s freedom.” India demands Home Rule for two reasons: one essential and vital, the less important but weighty. First because freedom is the birth right of every nation; secondly, because her most important interests are now made subservient to the interests of the British Empire without her consent and her resources are not utilised for her greatest needs. It is enough only to mention money spent on her army, not for local defence but for Imperial purposes, as compared with that spent on primary education.”

Thank god that India’s eye are opening; that myriads of her people realise that they are men, with a man’s right to manage his own affairs. India is no longer on her knees for boons; she is on her feet for Rights. It is because I have taught this that the English in India misunderstand me and call me seditious. It is because I have taught this that I am the President of this Congress to-day.

The presidential address of Mrs. Besant offers a striking contrast to those delivered by Bhupendra Nath Basu in 1914 and by S.P. Sinha in 1916 when the Congress was being dominated by the Moderates. The Congress under the Presidentship of Mrs. Besant heard first of all such a critical address. Such critical sentiments were voiced only by the extremists during the Swadeshi movement. The resolution passed by the Indian National Congress in 1917 demanded immediate legislation for granting self-government to India within a prescribed period.

Moving appeal to the President of U.S.A. about Home Rule.

The appeal of the Home Rule movement was not confined within the frontiers of India. Sir Subramanian Aiyer, K.C.I.E. retd, judge and Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court was the President of the Indian Home Rule League, Madras and in this capacity wrote a letter to President Wilson of the U.S.A. on 24th June, 1917. He described the intolerable condition of India under alien rule and made a moving appeal to the President to apply his war message of democracy and self-determination of nations to India. “At present, he said; we are a subject nation held in chains,” but he added, “an immediate promise of Home Rule-an autonomy-for India would result in an offer from India of at least 5,000,000 men in three months for service at the front and of 5,000,000 more in another three months. The publication of this letter created a furore in the House of

Lords and the House of Commons. Montagu described the letter as disgraceful and Aiyar, as a protest renounced his titles, K.C.I.E. and Diwan Bahadur.

Strong reaction in U.S.A.

There was a strong reaction of the letter in U.S.A. A printed copy of the letter was placed on the desk of the senators and members of the House of Representative. There was a great sensation and 1500 newspapers with 20,000,000 readers flashed the offer of ten million men. England was strongly criticised. The military men were strongly impressed. American labour at once demanded Home Rule for India as in Canada and Australia. An Indian Home Rule League was also established in New York. It started a newspaper known as *Young India* which supplied correct news to the American readers instead of false news which were supplied at the instance of Great Britain.

The main Home Rule League in London. A Home Rule League for India was also established in Lon-: Mrs. Besant sent a stirring message to the British labourers concluding with the following words:

‘Help us to become a free commonwealth under the British Crown and we will bring our power to secure world peace. Our people have died in your war for freedom. Will you consent that the children of our dead shall remain a subject race?’

Tilak also sent Lala Lajpat Rai with Shri N.S. Hardikar and K.D. Shastri to U.S.A. whose democratic ideas were greatly appreciated in India. A branch of the Home Rule League was established in California. The activities of London and California Home Rule Leagues bore fruit. Eminent American and Englishmen wrote and spoke for self-government in India. A committee of members of Parliament was formed in London for the purpose of pressing the claims of India to self-government. The Labour Party Conference at Nottingham early in 1918 unanimously passed a resolution in favour of Home Rule for India.

Tilak demands Home Rule from Paris Peace Conference.

Tilak wrote to Mr. Clemenceau, President of the Paris Peace conference requesting him to solve the Indian problem so that India might “be a leading power in Asia” and “a powerful steward of the League of Nations in the East for maintaining the peace of the world,”¹ but Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister obstructed it. Consequently, India was not given the Home Rule in 1919. That situation continued till 1929 when the Congress had to pass the resolution of completely Independence.

Importance of the Home Rule Movement.

The Home Rule Movement marked the beginning of a new phase in India’s struggle for freedom. It placed before the country a concrete scheme of Self-Government, bereft of the verbiage with which the Congress led the Moderates, surrounded this political goal. It also emphasised the point that if the Congress really wanted to achieve the goal, it must cease to be a club of arm-chair politicians taking to public work only to the extent to which their leisure permitted them; instead it should be guided by leaders who were prepared to place their whole time and energy at the service of their country. This new ideal of a political leader soon commended itself to the whole country and developed a new standard of public life.

The Home Rule Movement of Lokmanya Tilak shines brilliantly during his noble political career. This great movement shows him at his best—a *sincere, fearless, unbending patriot*, who fought for his beloved country with a religious zeal without caring for the favour or frowns,

either of the opposite people or of the Government. An intellectual aristocrat, he brought himself to the level of the common people, and initiated that mass movement in the political field which worked such a miracle in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi.

LUCKNOW PACT AND THE CONGRESS-MUSLIM LEAGUE SCHEME, 1916

As soon as war broke out in Europe, the Indian Mussalmans became highly critical of the British Government. The authorities invoked the 'Seditious Meetings Act' and arrested the prominent Muslims for their outspoken nationalism. Their arrests brought the League closer to the Congress. As a step towards strengthening the ties of comradeship, both the parties held their sessions simultaneously at Bombay in 1915. Prominent Congress Leaders, namely: Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Malviya and Sarojini Naidu, also spoke from the League platform. Agha Khan, the stooge of the British Government resigned the presidentship of Muslim League and turned to the more enjoyable hobby of horse race. The League appointed a committee to prepare a scheme for India in consultation with the Congress. The report of the committee was the basis of the Lucknow Pact ratified by

1. That the existing structure of the Government needed radical changes in order to win the approval of the people. "India must cease to be a dependency and be raised to the status of a self-governing state as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities as an independent unit of the Empire."
2. The Pact laid down that the number of elected members in the Provincial Legislatures should be raised to four-fifths of the total strength. The membership of the Legislatures in big Provinces should be raised to 125 and in the smaller ones between 50 and 75. As far as possible all the members of the Legislatures should be elected on the basis of as broad a franchise as possible.
3. The minorities should be given adequate separate representation in the elected bodies. The Muslims may be entitled to a share in the seats to the extent of 50 per cent in the Punjab, 30 per cent in U.P., 40 per cent in Bengal, 25 per cent in Bihar, 15 per cent in C.P., 15 per cent in Madras and one-third in Bombay. The Muslims would be debarred from contesting the elective seats in excess of the number allotted to them.
4. That no Bill would be introduced by a non-official member, if it affected the interests of any other community, and such a Bill would not be passed if three-fourths of the members of that community opposed it.
5. The scheme suggested that every Bill passed by the Provincial Legislature should be given effect to unless vetoed by the Governor-in-council. And if the same was passed again by the Legislature within a year, it should be obligatory on the Government to enforce it.
6. Extensive powers of control over the money matters should be given to the Legislature. The members should be empowered to move any non-money Bill without seeking the permission of the Governor.
7. The scheme accepted the right of the Governor and the Governor-General to veto a bill or refuse to give assent.
8. It was demanded that at least half the members of the Executive Council of the Governor-General were to be Indians returned by only the elected members of the

Central Legislature. The same procedure was to be adopted in the case of Provincial Executive Councils.

9. The Provinces should be given a large measure of autonomy in their sphere. The Central Government should confine itself to acts of general supervision over them.
10. The membership of the Central Legislature should be raised to 150, one-third of whose elected element was to be from Muslim community, elected only by Muslim electorate. In all other respects, in its constitution, proportion of elected and nominated members, powers of the House and the individual members, it was to resemble the Provincial Legislatures.
11. The scheme laid down that the Government of India should be independent of the control of the Secretary of State for India in legislative and administrative matters. The India Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished and replaced by two permanent Under-Secretaries out of which one should be an Indian. The salary of the Secretary should be paid out of the British revenues and not charged on Indian revenues.
12. Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and right of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty, the King Emperor throughout the Empire.
13. India should be given adequate and equal representation in any body that might be formed to decide any affair relating to the British Empire.
14. Indians should be declared eligible for all the military and naval services. Adequate provision be made for their selection and training in India.
15. Judicial powers should be taken away from the Executive officers. Lower courts in every Province should be made subordinate to the High Court.

11. Non Co-operation Movement and Swaraj Party

NEW ERA AND GANDHIJI'S ENTRY

In the year 1920, Gandhiji took up the leadership of the Indian National Movement and remained the chief architect of the Indian Politics till independence. Hence, the period from 1920 to 1947 is generally called the 'Gandhian Era'.

During the period (1920-1935), Gandhiji dominated the scene of Indian politics and awoke the Indian masses against the British Government. During his life time Indian National Congress was a fighting machine and a revolutionary organisation. Though it was non-violent in character but had tremendous inner strength. His call for the 'Satyagrah' galvanised the millions of people against the British imperialism. Due to this effort alone. India attained her Independence in the year 1947.

The emergence of Gandhiji in the Indian politics was very opportune. Till the 1920, Indian National Movement was dominated by leaders like Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai. When Gandhiji took up the leadership of Congress, Indian National Movement was devoid of imaginative thought of leadership, Gopai Krishna Gokhale had died in 1915 and Bal Gangadhar Tilak also left this world in July 1920. Lala Lajpat Rai was essentially a Moderate and believer of the constitutional reforms. So, there was a need for a man who could change the course of National Movement. Gandhiji came back from South Africa in 1915 at the height of his power and brought with him a clear cut philosophy of life and political technique which had proved its efficacy.

MAHATMA GANDHI AS A CO-OPERATOR

We have already stated that Gandhiji was greatly influenced by Gokhale's political philosophy. Hence in his political views he became as Moderate as his Guru. He agreed to Gopai Krishna Gokhale's policy of co-operating with the Government in working out the constitutional reforms. He proceeded with full faith in British intentions which he declared were not against the interests of Indian people. He also helped the Government in its recruitment drive and also by serving those wounded in the war. In recognition of his services he was awarded a medal. But despite his all-out co-operation, when the British Government refused to transfer power to Indians, nearly all the national leaders were so much disappointed that they lost the faith in British goodness. Gandhiji alone refused to change his views. He still remained as ardent a co-operator as before. While Deshbandhu, C.R. Das, B.C. Pal and others rejected the reforms proposed by the Act of 1919 on the grounds that they were inadequate and unsatisfactory, Gandhiji still favoured the idea of working the Montford Reforms. His views can be easily ascertained from what he wrote in *Young India*: "The Reforms Act coupled with the proclamation is an earnest expression of the intention of the British people to do justice to India and it ought to remove suspicion on that score. Our duty is not to subject the Reforms to bitter criticism but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success."

But the phase of Gandhiji's role as a co-operator proved a shortlived one. There were certain reasons which shook his faith in British fairness and justice. The events which changed Gandhiji from a co-operator into a staunch non-co-operator were as follows:

ROWLATT ACT AND JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

In the beginning of the 20th century, there was a spurt of revolutionary and terrorist activities in India. The factor chiefly responsible for the increase in violent activities was the arrogance and highhandedness of the British officers. The partition of Bengal, *the unpalatable land laws in the Punjab, and the famine and plague* that occurred in Maharashtra increased the discontent of the people. *The Revolutionary Organisations* began to work more vigorously during the First World War and assumed an alarming character. The Government by passing Defence of India Act armed itself with extensive powers to suppress this subversive activities. The Act was to expire at the end of war but the Government decided to keep it in force for a little longer. The First World War was over but new problems assailed the Government of India. Afghanistan turned into a trouble-spot. Besides the growing disorder in the country, the Government of India apprehended an attack by Tzarist Russia via Afghanistan. So it appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Justice Rowlatt to study the problem of revolutionary activities and submit its report.

The Government of India moved two Bills in the Central Legislature in February, 1919, to give effect to the recommendations of Rowlatt Committee. They came to be known as Rowlatt Bills or Black Bills. Under these Acts the Government of India armed itself with unrestricted powers to control the Press, to try the political offenders without the help of juries and to arrest and detain a person suspected of subversive activities for any length of time without holding a trial. Violent protests were directed at the "Black Rowlatt Bills". Since the war was over and there was hardly any revolutionary activity going on in the country, the continuance of Defence of India Rules was looked upon by the nationalists with grave suspicion. They feared that the Rowlatt Act would be employed to suppress even peaceful and legitimate agitations. Row latt Act was no doubt a measure to strangle the elementary rights of the people, hence, the whole country was stirred to action. Gandhiji came to the forefront with a solemn ultimatum to the Government that he would be called upon to lead an agitation if any attempt was made to rob the people of their personal freedom. The warning fell on deaf ears. In spite of strong opposition both within the Central Legislature and without, the Government passed an Act known as Anarchical and Revolutionary Crime Act, 1919.

On 6th April, 1919, Gandhiji started a countrywide campaign against Rowlatt Act. He called upon the people to observe total *hartal* and the country responded to his call admirably. Processions were taken out to express public resentment against the repressive legislation. *SwarniShradhananda* led one such procession in Delhi. Police force blocked the way and ordered the processionists to disperse. A few British soldiers threatened to shoot Swamiji who thereupon, uncovered his breast to receive the bullet. Overawed by his dauntlessness, the soldiers could not execute their threat. The clash between the people and the police occurred near the Delhi Railway Station. The police opened fire which resulted in the loss of eight lives. Such incidents occurred in Lahore and Calcutta also. Gandhiji left Bombay for Delhi on 8th April. On the way he was served with a notice banning his entry into Delhi and Punjab. On his refusal to abide by the notice, he was arrested at Palwal near Delhi and was sent back to Bombay.

The news of Gandhiji's arrest spread with amazing rapidity all over the country. It led to disturbances at various places particularly in Ahmedabad, Viramgaum and Nadiad. Such

happenings took place in the Punjab districts of Gurjanwala, Lahore and Kassur. The Government arrested the two prominent leaders of the Punjab—Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew. The citizens of Amritsar were so much provoked by the arrest of their favourite leaders, that they formed a procession and marched towards the residence of the District Magistrate. The military contingent barred their way and opened fire on the mob, killing two and injuring many others. The people lifted the dead bodies on their shoulders and paraded along the main streets of Amritsar. On the way they set fire to National Bank and killed the Bank Manager. In all five Europeans lost their lives and several buildings were burnt on that day. On the 10th April, 1919, martial law was imposed on the city.

On 13th April, 1919, the Baisakhi day, a public meeting was held in the *Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar*. The place was enclosed on all sides by the back walls of the houses. It had only one entrance gate, that too so narrow that no carriage could pass through it. The martial law administrator Dyer allowed the people to assemble at the Bagh and when it was packed to capacity, he along with a contingent of 100 Indian and 50 British soldiers reached the venue of the meeting. The only passage leading into the Bagh was so narrow that the machine-gun could not be taken in. The peaceful gathering was being addressed by one Mr. Hansraj. The speakers one by one, demanded the release of the Punjab leaders as well as Gandhiji. Protests were being made against the Rowlatt Act when General Dyer, without even giving a warning to the crowd to disperse, opened fire. It is said that 1,650 rounds of 303 were fired. The firing stopped only when the ammunition was exhausted. Dyer later admitted himself that no doubt he asked the people to clear off but within three minutes of his orders, he opened fire. Commonsense says that 20,000 people could not disperse in three minutes. According to the official report nearly 400 people were killed and more than a thousand wounded as a result of firing. Actually the casualties must have been much more than the official figure. All precautions were taken not to let the news of firing trickle out of the Province. Dyer massacred the people with a spirit of revenge is above dispute. It was further confirmed from what Dyer himself stated before the Hunter Committee which had been set up to enquire into the unfortunate incident. In answer to a question by Justice Rankin, a member of the Hunter Committee who asked, "*Excuse me putting in this way. General, but was it not a form of frightfulness?*" Dyer answered, "*No, it was not. It was horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful thing; I thought that I should shoot well and shoot strong so that I or anybody else should not have to shoot again. I think it is quite possible that I could have dispersed the crowd without firing but they would have come back again and laughed and I should have made what I consider to be a fool of myself*". In approval of his action, Dyer got a telegram from the Punjab Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer: "Your action correct, Lieutenant-Governor approves."

Hunter Report. Since the news from the Punjab was strictly censored, the people in other parts of the country came to know about the atrocities of General Dyer pretty late. The Indian National Congress reacted sharply and speedily. It demanded a high level enquiry into incidents of firing in the Punjab. For having first-hand information it formed a committee of its own, consisting of Pt. Motilal Nehru, Gandhiji, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaiya and others. Rabindra Nath Tagore also was so acutely pained that he surrendered his knighthood. Sir Shankaran Nair resigned his membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Government of India was ultimately compelled to set up a committee to investigate into and report on the sad happenings in

the Punjab. *The Hunter Committee which was constituted in October, 1919, submitted its report in March, 1920.* In the meantime, the Government of India by passing Indemnity Act absolved all the officials of any trial or punishment in connection with the Punjab firing incident. The Hunter Committee in its report also tried to whitewash the conduct of the British officers. It gave a clean hit to all others except notorious Dyer for whom it suggested compulsory retirement. The only charge that the Committee made out against Dyer was that he exceeded the reasonable requirements of the case due to grave error of judgement." Worse still, the British Press and Parliament showered praise upon Dyer and hailed him as the savior of British rule. The British Government in recognition of his services presented him with a Sword of Honour and a purse of £ 2000. The news shocked Gandhiji as well as the whole country. The investigation committee appointed by the Congress reported that the number of the dead in Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was considerably large than the official figures. It condemned vehemently the reign of terror and anarchy that was imposed upon Punjab after the occurrence of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Sir Valentine Chirol and Sivaswamy have given us graphic details of the martial law administration in the Punjab. Chirol writes, "*Sir Michael O'Dwyer protested, it is true, against Dyer's monstrous crawling order and it was promptly disallowed. But what of many other 'orders' which were not disallowed! What of the promiscuous flogging and whippings, the indiscriminate arrests and confiscations, the so-called fancy punishments designed not so much to punish individual rebels as to terrorise and humiliate? What of the whole judicial or quasi-judicial administration of martial law?*" The Congress demanded adequate punishment to be awarded to the persons responsible for firing and also monetary compensation to be given to the dependants of the victims of firing. The Government gave a cold shoulder to these demands. The cruel indifference of the Government to public good was one of the reasons which made Gandhiji cross the floor to the side of non-co-operators. He lost all faith in British fairness and justice.

KHILAFAT QUESTION

The second reason which embittered Gandhiji was the Khilafat issue. The Sultan of Turkey was accepted by the Indian Mussalmans as their spiritual head. Turkey during the First World War joined hands with *Axis Powers* and fought against England. The Indian Muslims found themselves in a dilemma whether to support England or Turkey. They feared, and their fear was not unfounded too, that in the event of losing the battle, Turkey would be completely dismembered, *i.e.*, would be dispossessed of many parts of her big empire. In order to win the support of Indian Muslims the British Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, declared: "Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are preponderantly Turkish in race." Misled by the assurance the Muslims extended whole-hearted support to England in her war operations. But after the signing of armistice, the British Government refused to honour its promise. Thrace was presented to Greece and the Asiatic portions of Turkish Empire were divided between England and France. Naturally the Muslims felt as if they had been cheated and befooled. Hence they adopted hostile attitude towards the British.

Mahatma Gandhi saw his chance of utilising the rupture between the British and the Muslims. He knew well that without Hindu-Muslim unity and a strong opposition, the English could not be driven out. So he set about wooing the Muslims and enlisting their support for a

common front against the Government. He sympathised with the grievances of the Muslim community and convened a Khilafat Conference on November 14, 1919. He also occupied the presidential chair. He suggested a Muslim deputation to wait upon the Viceroy and see if he could do anything to redeem the British promise. The deputation, however, returned disappointed. A deputation led by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali also met the British Prime Minister in March, 1920, and requested the latter to mete out better treatment to the Sultan of Turkey but to no avail. The Turkish Empire was disintegrated and distributed between the Allied Powers. A high Commission was appointed by the Allied Powers to rule over the country, with Sultan as nothing better than a prisoner. Indignation amongst the Muslims touched the peak point, Gandhiji put before them his non-co-operation programme and they accepted the scheme.

GANDHI AS A NON-CO-OPERATOR

Factors responsible. Thus the two main factors which led to a change in Gandhiji's attitude towards the British Government were failure of the Government to heal up the wounds of Punjab firings and secondly, non-fulfilment of the promise made by the British Prime Minister in regard to Khilafat issue. In a letter to Viceroy written in August, 1920, he wrote thus: "*Events that have happened during the past month have confirmed me in the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government. Your Excellency's light-hearted treatment of official crime, your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Mr. Montagu's Despatch and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and the callous disregard of the feelings of Indians betrayed by the House of Lords, have filled me with the gravest misgivings as regards the future of the Empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government and have disabled me from rendering, as I have hitherto whole-heartedly rendered, my total co-operation.*" Mahatma Gandhi further said: "I consider that I would be less than truthful if I did not describe as Satanic a Government which has been guilty of fraud, murder and wanton cruelty and which still remains unrepentant and resorts to untruth to cover its guilts."

NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

When Gandhiji lost all hopes of getting any fair and equitable treatment at the hands of the British Government, he planned to wreck the administration of the country by withdrawing country's co-operation from the Government. In this project, he hoped to get the support of the Muslims who had become anti-British on Turkey-issue. He made a fervent appeal to the Hindus to support the cause of the Muslims. A committee which had been appointed to draw up the details suggested, to begin with, the boycott of schools, colleges and courts. Gandhiji and Ali Brothers toured the country and explained the meaning and significance of the movement. A special session of the Congress was convened at Calcutta in September, 1920, to approve the scheme. It was presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. The delegates passed several resolutions, condemning the British Government for breaking its promise in connection with the Khilafat and the failure to protect innocent people of the Punjab from the atrocious behaviour of the

officials. In one of the resolutions the Congress declared, "That there can be no contentment in India without redress of two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya." The resolution further said that "there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established."

The resolution on Non-co-operation evoked a heated controversy. Pt. Motilal Nehru and Ali Brothers supported the resolution but Shri C.R. Das, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mrs. Annie Besant opposed it strongly. Even Lala Lajpat Rai, the President of the Calcutta Congress session, also did not react favourably towards the resolution. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak had already died in August, 1920, who might have supported the movement if he had lived. 1,886 delegates voted for and 844 voted against the scheme of Non-Co-operation.

The resolution on Non-Co-operation was again repeated at the Nagpur Congress in December, 1920. This time it received greater support than it had received at Calcutta. The Congress changed its creed and defined its object as "The attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means." Certain changes were made also on the organisational side of the Congress. Congress circles were reorganised on a linguistic basis. A working committee was formed to look after its day-to-day work. Formerly the two factions in the Congress—the Moderates and the Extremists—had no programme agreeable to both. The Moderates aimed at attaining self-government within the British Empire, while Extremists claimed complete independence without any relationship with the British Government. The Nagpur Session was momentous in the respect that it changed the constitution of the Congress in a way which satisfied both the sections. The word 'Swaraj' was defined by each section in its own way. What Gandhiji meant by Swaraj was the attainment of self-government within British Empire with full liberty to secede at any time. The nature and scope of Congress activities to achieve its goals was also widened—from the constitutional means to all peaceful and legitimate means. Peaceful means included not only sending petitions but also the more effective and direct measure of refusal to pay taxes. Nagpur, thus, marked a new era in the history of freedom struggle. Mr. Jinnah, Mrs. Besant and B.C. Pal, who did not approve such a radical change in the technique of freedom struggle, left the Congress.

Non-Co-operation launched by Mahatma Gandhi

As we have already pointed out that after acceptance of Khilafat Committee, the non-co-operation programme became the main goal of the Congress. A special session of Congress under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai was convened in September 1920 at Calcutta and a resolution for launching non-co-operation movement was accepted. A large number of Muslims were also present at the session. The resolution was moved by Mahatma Gandhi and supported by Pandit Motilal Nehru and Ali Brothers. Non-Co-operation became Congress policy though many senior Congressmen like C.R. Das, Mrs. Besant, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya and B.C. Pal; opposed it. In the Congress session of December 1920, at Nagpur those who were against the non-co-operation movement were also non-over and the resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority of votes. Mr. Michael Brother has rightly remarked: "So persuasive was Gandhiji even among the older men that C.R. Das, who had gone to Nagpur with the avowed

intention of undoing the Calcutta resolution, with hundreds of delegates at his own expense, succumbed after an all night discussion with the Mahatma.”

Programme of the Non-Co-operation Movement. The policy and programme which the Congress adopted at Calcutta Session and reiterated at Nagpur Session was as follows:—

boycott of foreign goods and use of swadeshi. (The Congress workers were also asked to spin yam and thousands of weavers were encouraged to weave cloth).

Surrender of *titles and honorary offices* and resignation of members occupying nominated seats in Local Bodies.

Refusal to attend official Durbars.

Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants.

Boycott of Government and State-aided schools.

Boycott of elections to the new Councils and refusal by the voters to vote at the elections.

Refusal by soldiers, clerks and working people to serve in Mesopotamia. In short the Non-co-operation scheme aimed at the boycott of colleges, courts, councils and government jobs. In short the Non-Co-operation scheme aimed at the boycott of colleges, courts, councils and Government jobs.

Besides the boycott measures, the Congress also adopted a constructive programme. It included the opening of national educational institutions, the setting up of Panchayats as a substitute of British courts, the popularisation of *Charkha* plying and yamspinning, promotion of communal harmony and the removal of untouchability.

Progress of the Non-Co-operation Movement. The response to the Congress Programme of Non-co-operation was quite enthusiastic. Gandhiji and his stalwarts went round the country and mobilised public opinion in favour of the new movement. They persuaded the students to stay away from State institutions and seek admission to national schools. Thousands of students left their schools. For their benefit several national educational institutions came into existence—notable among them being Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Bihar Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Aligarh University, Jamia Milia, National College, Lahore, and others. Even lawyers of great standing and lucrative practice also gave up their profession and dedicated themselves to political work. C.R. Das, Pt. Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vithal Bhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad became whole time workers of the Congress. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj set apart a sum of Rs. one lakh to support those lawyers who had given up practice in favour of political work. Prominent Muslim leaders like Dr. Ansari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali also toured the country and called upon the Muslims to support the movement. Hindu and Muslim workers rubbed shoulders with each other without any malice or communal feeling.

Of all the boycotts enunciated in the Non-co-operation scheme, the most successful was the boycott of elections to the Reformed Councils. Thousands of voters stayed away from the polling booths and no Congress candidates contested the elections. The Congress being out of field, the Liberals, the opportunists and the loyalists fought the elections and entered the Legislative Councils. The Duke of Connaught who came to India to inaugurate the new reforms was also greeted with black flags and *hartals*. People organised bonfire of foreign cloth and garments. In order to make Non-co-operation a mass agitation, the Congress resolved to collect

Rs. 1 crore for the Swarajya Fund, to enrol one crore members and to introduce 20 lakh *charkhas* in the country. Soon the fund was over subscribed by Rs. 15 lakhs. Hundreds of people willingly renounced their titles.

The Congress then decided to show country's temper to Prince of Wales. It issued an appeal to observe complete *hartal* on the day of the Prince's landing. The Government adopted a stern attitude towards the organisers and agitators. All the renowned leaders except Gandhiji were put behind the bars. The Congress was declared an unlawful organisation. Khilafat leaders set up their parallel government at various places. The movement could not remain a peaceful one. Acts of violence became frequent. On August 20, 1921, Moplahs in Malabar took law in their hands and killed not only Europeans but also thousands of Hindus. The Prince landed in Bombay on 17th November,

A few loyalists who turned up to receive the Prince came in clash with the boycotters which resulted in brick-battings and outbreak of violence. Gandhiji looked upon violence with distaste, so he criticised the defaulters strongly.

The venue of the next session of the Congress was Ahmedabad. It was held in December, 1921. The party resolved to intensify and speed up the movement and invested Gandhiji with full authority to carry on Congress activities in the manner he thought fit. Gandhiji was also empowered to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement if he felt the need. On 1st February, 1922, Gandhiji gave an ultimatum to Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, to withdraw all repressive laws and give proof of his changed attitude within seven days or face the consequences of another Satyagrah in the form of non-payment of taxes.

Suspension of the Movement. But before the expiry of seven days' notice, an unforeseen incident took place at Chauri Chaura in U.P. An excited mob attacked a police outpost on February 5, 1922, and killed a few constables. Gandhiji, apprehending similar troubles in other parts of the country, announced the suspension of the campaign relating to non-payment of taxes. The reaction to the withdrawal of movement by the unilateral action of Gandhiji was adverse. The policy of retreat was not liked by many leaders, *viz.*, C. Rajgopalachari, Nehru family, Ali Brothers and Lala Lajpat Rai. Gandhiji's popularity suffered a setback because of his arbitrary action. The Government availed itself of the opportunity and arrested Gandhiji. The "Great Trial" began on 18th March, in the court of Sessions Judge, Mr. Bloomfield. In his statement of historic importance, Gandhiji indicted the Government of doing 'satanic acts' which could convert a person from a loyal subject to a seditionist. The court sentenced him to six years' simple imprisonment. In this way the Non-co- operation Movement fizzled out but the flame of nationalism continued to burn brighter. Only the front was shifted from public places to well inside the Legislative Councils.

Defects of the Movement. That the Congress programme of the boycott of courts, colleges and councils or that of the surrender of titles would not get sweeping success, was a foregone conclusion. The chief reason was that the country was not prepared for such a mass agitation to go in a disciplined way. The Congress decision to keep away from the elections to new Councils only opened the field for the traitors to become legislators. Secondly, the sudden suspension of the movement. was a blunder on the part of Gandhiji. Other Congress leaders resented Gandhiji's action. They felt further distressed when Gandhiji took upon himself the sole responsibility for the riots at Bombay, Madras and Chauri Chaura. It was true, they argued,

that the movement took a violent turn because the people were not adequately trained to receive blows and bullets quietly but the Government itself was partly responsible for it. It provoked the mob to become violent by raining *lathis* on it. No flesh and blood can stand atrocities without registering a reaction. If the movement had continued for a little longer, the Government would certainly have agreed to negotiate with the Congress. Gandhiji's mistake, however, spoiled the chances of success. Since Gandhiji could neither redress the grievances of the Punjab nor fulfil his promise of securing Swaraj within a year of the launching of movement, the people were filled with a bitter sense of frustration. The several shock was received by those who had made great sacrifices at the call of Gandhiji. The faith of the people in the Congress programme and particularly Gandhiji was rudely shaken. Even the findings of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee appointed by the congress also confirmed the general feeling that boycott programme was erroneous and the Congressmen should have been allowed to contest the elections to the Legislative Councils and to the Local Bodies.

Lastly, Gandhiji approach to Khilafat was quite unrealistic. He tried to be too idealistic in political matters. He espoused the Khilafat with a view to forging Hindu-Muslim unity but the results obtained were disappointing. The discord between the two communities became wider than it was ever before, resulting in communal riots at various places. The suspension of the movement gave an occasion to the Muslim League to discredit the Congress. The League launched a vicious propaganda that Congress had used the Muslims as tools during the Non-Co-operation Movement to achieve its selfish ends and that it had deceived the Muslims by calling off the movement abruptly. Another point that Gandhiji overlooked at the time of joining hands with the League over the Khilafat issue was that Khilafat was a religious issue in which not to speak of all non-Muslims, even the Mussalmans of Turkey, had no interest. As soon as Kemal Pasha came to power in Turkey, he called off the Khilafat movement and even turned the Khalifa out of Turkey. By confusing a religious issue with national struggle, Gandhiji earned nothing but dissatisfaction and criticism. His effort to promote Hindu-Muslim unity by appeasing the Muslims also bore bitter fruits in the years that followed.

SWARAJ PARTY

Causes of the formation of Swaraj Party. The suspension of the Non-Co-operation Movement on the decision of Mahatma Gandhi was greatly criticised by his colleagues. Many of his colleagues were hurt and some were very angry. The leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Motilal Nehru wrote letters to Mahatma Gandhi from jail in the North India and N.C. Kelker in Deccan expressed resentment and dissatisfaction against Mahatma Gandhi. The removal of Gandhiji from the political scene left a gap in leadership of the Congress. There was no other person who commanded universal respect in the rank and file of the party. The failure of the Non-co-operation scheme left behind a bitter taste in every mouth. There was confusion and gloominess. The nation demanded a concrete programme and political guidance which were finally supplied by a set of leaders who had opposed Gandhi's boycott of Councils. The Congress was split into two sections, each pulling at different ends. There was a group of no-changers who disliked any change from lines laid down by Gandhiji before going to jail. The other group consisted of pro-changers who favoured Council entry programme as a means to wreck the Councils from within. The All India Congress Committee appointed a committee

consisting of Pt. Motilal Nehru, Dr. Ansari, Rajagopalachari, Jammalal Bajaj and others to tour the country and assess public opinion on civil disobedience question. In its findings the committee recommended that Non-co-operators should be allowed to enter the Local Bodies and Councils. But the recommendations of the committee became a subject of heated controversy between the forces loyal and opposed to Gandhi's way of thinking. The wrangle was solved by a message which Gandhiji sent from prison. He wrote to Congress President: "My views are well known, I expressed them before I went to jail and there has been no change in them since. I may assure you that if you choose to differ from me, it will not affect by one bit the sweetness of relations between you and me." The activities of the Congress were thus compartmentalised into constructive ones outside the Councils and the destructive ones inside the Councils.

The Formation of the Swaraj Party. After their release from jail Sri. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru put a new programme before the Congress. They were convinced that it was silly dissociate from the Legislative Councils and hence, they began to preach openly the gospel of capturing the Councils in order to end them or mend them. They argued that the Councils would provide them a platform to publicise their views and restore the waning trust of the people in the Congress ideology. Secondly, if the Congressmen contested the elections, the opportunists, the liberals and the hirelings of the Government would be prevented from entering the Councils and doing mischief. Thirdly, the non-co-operators by entering the Councils would practise non-co-operation with the legislature and thus be able to put a check on the autocracy of the Government. Fourthly, the criticism of the Government would keep up the enthusiasm of the people in political affairs. Fifthly, they would if returned in majority, be able to compel the Government to revise the Constitution by obstructing the working of Dyarchy in the Provinces. And lastly, they would be able to do useful legislation for the country besides keeping alive the country's demand for complete independence.

At Gaya Congress held under the Presidentship of Sri. C.R. Das in December 1922, Motilal Nehru and his followers tried hard to get their Council-entry programme approved but they failed in their attempt because of the opposition by Rajgopalachari, Dr. Ansari, Ranga and others. C.R. Das resigned the Presidentship of the Congress so as to organise the Swaraj Party and capture the organisation before the general elections due in 1923. He formed the Swaraj Party at Allahabad in March, 1923. The orthodox followers of Gandhiji headed by Rajgopalachari came to be known as 'no-changers'. The All India Congress Committee, however, did not accept the resignation of C.R. Das and persuaded both the 'no-changers' and the Swarajists to call a truce and stop carrying on any propaganda for their respective views. A special session of the Congress was convened in Delhi in September, 1923, to bring about a compromise. It was in this session that the Congress lifted the ban on Council entry and permitted the Congressmen to contest the elections as independents. It was a triumph of the Swarajists. Mr. C.R. Das made it very clear that he was not at all opposed to constructive programme of the Congress He only wanted that capturing of Councils and Local Bodies may also be included in the programme of the Congress. When Gandhiji was released from jail on grounds of illness, Pt. Nehru and C.R. Das met him and placed their views before him. The talks were fruitful and Gandhiji gave his consent to the Swarajists to function not as an autonomous wing but as a part of the parent organisation.

Principles and Programmes of Swaraj Party. So far as the ultimate political aim was concerned, there was no controversy at all. Both Gandhiji and the Swarajists aimed at securing Swaraj or Dominion Status within the British Empire. The difference, however, arose on the methods to be adopted. Whereas the Gandhists put emphasis on the constructive programme of the Congress, the Swarajists preferred to make use of the Councils for displaying the popularity and strength of the organisation. They considered elections as an effective means to enthuse the people, their second motive was to eliminate the liberals and undesirable persons who after being elected helped the Government in suppressing national movement. The foremost consideration with them was either to secure necessary changes in the Act of 1919 or to make them completely unworkable. The Swarajists actually intended to fight their war of independence both by popularising constructive work and by discrediting the Government at the Council level. They had no hesitation in joining the Civil Disobedience Movement also if called upon to do so.

Success and Work of the Swarajists The results of the elections held in 1923 proved very encouraging and favourable for the Swarajist candidates. They were returned in large numbers. They secured clear majority in Central Assembly and the Legislative Council of Bengal and Central Province. In several other Provinces, although they failed to command a clear majority, they formed strong opposition groups. Under the leadership of astute parliamentarian Pt. Motilal Nehru, the Swarajist group consisted of 45 strong including a few Nationalists and Independents. In Bengal Assembly the group was led by Sri. C.R. Das. The Swarajists gained some notable success at the Centre. Their prime achievement was the passing of a resolution on 8th February, 1924, which demanded: "That steps should be taken to have the Act of 1919 revised with a view to establish full responsible Government in India, and for that purpose to summon, at an early date, a representative Round Table Conference to recommend with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, a scheme for the constitution of India and after dissolving the Central Legislature to place it before the Newly Indian Legislature for its approval and to submit to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute."

In January, 1924, Labour Party came to power in England with the help of Liberal Party and a Ministry was formed under Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. The Labour Party was well known for its sympathetic attitude towards Indian aspirations. So the hopes sprang high in India that the resolution passed by the Swaraj Party would be accepted by the British Parliament but they were disappointed. The British Government appreciated the feelings of the Swarajists but uttered not a word against the British bureaucracy. When the Swarajists were disillusioned, they stiffened their attitude towards the British Government. Acting on this principle they rejected several demands for grants and Financial Bills between 1924 and 1927. The Governor-General had to exercise his special powers to restore those grants. Notwithstanding strong opposition from the side of the Government, the Swarajist Party by a resolution succeeded in condemning the repressive Acts of 1818. Some of the highlights of their victories in the Central Assembly were a demand for responsible self-government and a demand for the immediate release of political prisoners. The Swarajists abstained from attending official ceremonies and functions. The tactics of the Swarajists included attempts to throw out the budget, staging walk-outs and criticising the Government vehemently. In Bengal, Sri C.R. Das was invited by the Governor to

form the ministry but he turned down the invitation and formed a formidable opposition with the co-operation of the Nationalists. Because of their obstructionist tactics the dyarchy had to be suspended in two Provinces-Bengal and Central Provinces (C.P., part of present M.P.).

Report of Muddiman Committee. The resolution passed by the Swarajists in Central Assembly in 1924 for immediate reforms yielded one good result. The Government appointed an enquiry committee under the Chairmanship of Home Member, Mr. Alexander Muddiman, to report on the working of Dyarchy. Pt. Motilal Nehru declined the membership of this committee. In the committee's opinion supported by the majority there was no fundamental flaw in the Dyarchial system. When the report came before the Central Assembly, Pt. Motilal Nehru raised a dissenting voice and dubbed Dyarchy as absurd and impracticable. He also moved against the committee's report a resolution which was passed by the House.

With the death of Sri Das in 1925, the Swarajist Party lost a pillar of strength. In Provinces where the party was not very strong, the policy of obstruction proved a fruitless exercise. The Party could not inflict many defeats on the Government. Even in Central Province and Bengal where the Swarajists acted as a strong group, they made it impossible for the Ministers to function but had no effect on the Governor's rule. In those Provinces the people were more harmed than benefited. In Central Assembly the Swarajists succeeded, no doubt, in inflicting defeats on the Government but, in view of the Governor-General's powers of certification and veto, they failed to create any deadlock. In short the results obtained were not very encouraging or substantial. This gave rise to disappointment and doubts in the ranks of the Party itself regarding the usefulness of their lines of work. Lala Lajpat Rai and Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, the leaders of the Nationalist group in the Central Assembly, did not see any wisdom in harming the interests of the Hindu Community by their policy of offering 'uniform, continuous and consistent opposition' to the Government. They began to advocate for responsive cooperation. Thus, there appeared a split in the ranks of the Swarajists; Mahatma Gandhi and his band of followers had already no faith in the Swarajists' programme. Sri C. R. Das also a little before his death had begun to incline towards co-operation with the Government in working Dyarchy. The Government too was eager to secure the co-operation of the Swarajists. Hence, there was no course open for the Swarajists except to modify their methods. Mr. V. G. Patel, who was formerly a staunch Swarajist, took the first concrete step towards co-operation by accepting the office of the presiding officer of the Central Assembly. Pt. Motilal Nehru also accepted the membership of Ruskin Committee which had been appointed to report on the organisation of defence forces. The unfavourable results of the elections held in 1926 gave another jolt to the Swarajists. Since then the Party's attitude changed from one of consistent obstruction to that of responsible co-operation.

12. PEASANT MOVEMENTS AND NATIONALISM IN THE 1920S

Peasant discontent against established authority was a familiar feature of the nineteenth century. But in the twentieth century, the movements that emerged out of this discontent were marked by a new feature: they were deeply influenced by and in their turn had a marked impact on the ongoing struggle for national freedom. To illustrate the complex nature of this relationship, we will recount the story of three important peasant struggles that emerged in the second and third decade of the country: The *Kisan Sabha* and Eka movements in Avadh in U.P., the Mappila rebellion in Malabar and the Bardoli *Satyagraha* in Gujarat.

Following the annexation of Avadh in 1856, the second half of the nineteenth century had seen the strengthening of the hold of the *taluqdars* or big landlords over the agrarian society of the province. This had led to a situation in which exorbitant rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or *nazrana*, and arbitrary ejections or *bedakhli* had made life miserable for the majority of the cultivators. The high price of food and other necessities that accompanied and followed World War I made the oppression all the more difficult to bear, and the tenants of Avadh were ripe for a message of resistance.

It was the more active members of the Home Rule League in U.P. who initiated the process of the organization of the peasants of the province on modern lines into *kisan sabhas*. The U.P. *Kisan Sabha* was set up in February 1918 through the efforts of Gauri Shankar Misra and Indra Narain Dwivedi, and with the support of Madan Mohan Malaviya. The U.P. *Kisan Sabha* demonstrated considerable activity, and by June 1919 had established at least 450 branches in 173 tehsils of the province.

A consequence of this activity was that a large number of *kisan* delegates from U.P. attended the Delhi and Amritsar sessions of the Indian National Congress in December 1918 and 1919.

Towards the end of 1919, the first signs of grass-roots peasant activity were evident in the reports of a *nai-dhobi* band (a form of social boycott) on an estate in Pratapgarh district. By the summer of 1920, in the villages of *taluqdari* Avadh, *kisan* meetings called by village panchayats became frequent. The names of Thinguri Singh and Durgapal Singh were associated with this development. But soon another leader, who became famous by the name of Baba Ramchandra, emerged as the rallying point. Baba Ramchandra, a Brahmin from Maharashtra, was a wanderer who had left home at the age of thirteen, done astint as an indentured labourer in Fiji and finally turned up in Faizabad in U.P. in 1909. Till 1920, he had wandered around as a *sadhu*, carrying a copy of Tulsidas' *Ramayan* on his back, from which he would often recite verses to rural audiences. In the middle of 1920, however, he emerged as a leader of the peasants of Avadh, and soon demonstrated considerable leadership and organizational capacities.

In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra led a few hundred tenants from the Jaunpur and Pratapgarh districts to Allahabad. There he met Gauri Shankar Misra and Jawaharlal Nehru and asked them to visit the villages to see for themselves the living conditions of the tenants. The result was that, between June and August, Jawaharlal Nehru made several visits to the rural areas and developed close contacts with the *Kisan Sabha* movement.

Meanwhile, the kisans found sympathy in Mehta, the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, who promised to investigate complaints forwarded to him. The *Kisan Sabha* at village Roor in Pratapgarh district became the centre of *activity* and about one lakh tenants were reported to have registered their complaints with this Sabha on the payment of one anna each. Gauri Shankar Mia was also very active in Pratapgarh during this period, and was in the process of working out an agreement with Mehta over some of the crucial tenant complaints such as *bedakhli* and *nazrana*.

But, in August 1920, Mehta went on leave and the *taluqdars* used the opportunity to strike at the growing *kisan* movement. They succeeded in getting Ramchandra and thirty-two kisans arrested on a trumped-up charge of theft on 28 August 1920. Incensed at this, 4,000 to 5,000 kisans collected at Pratapgarh to see their leaders in jail and were dispersed after a great deal of persuasion.

Ten days later, a rumour that Gandhiji was coming to secure the release of Baba Ramchandra brought ten to twenty thousand kisans to Pratapgarh, and this time they returned to their homes only after Baba Ramchandra gave them *darshan* from atop a tree in a sugar-cane field. By now, their numbers had swelled to sixty thousand. Mehta was called back from leave to deal with the situation and he quickly withdrew the case of theft and attempted to bring pressure on the landlords to change their ways. This easy victory, however, gave a new confidence to the movement and it burgeoned forth.

Meanwhile, the Congress at Calcutta had chosen the path of non cooperation and many nationalists of U.P. had committed themselves to the new political path. But there were others, including Madan Mohan Malaviya, who preferred to stick to constitutional agitation. These differences were reflected in the U.P. *Kisan Sabha* as well, and soon the Non-cooperators set up an alternative Oudh *Kisan Sabha* at Pratapgarh on 17 October 1920. This new body succeeded in integrating under its banner all the grassroots *kisan sabhas* that had emerged in the districts of Avadh in the past few months; through the efforts of Misra, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mata Badal Pande, Baba Ramchandra, Deo Narayan Pande and Kedar Nath, the new organization brought under its wing, by the end of October, over 330 *kisan sabhas*. The Oudh *Kisan Sabha* asked the kisans to refuse to till *bedakhli* land, not to offer *hari* and *begar* (forms of unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through panchayats. The first big show of strength of the Sabha was the rally held at Ayodhya, near Faizabad town, on 20 and 21 December which was attended by roughly 100,000 peasants. At this rally, Baba Ramchandra turned up bound in ropes to symbolize the oppression of the kisans. A marked feature of the *Kisan Sabha* movement was that kisans belonging to the high as well as the low castes were to be found in its ranks.

In January 1921, however, the nature of the peasant activity underwent a marked change. The centres of activity were primarily the districts of Rae Bareilly, Faizabad and, to a lesser extent, Sultanpur. The pattern of activity was the looting of bazaars, houses, granaries, and clashes with the police. A series of incidents, small and big, but similar in character. Some, such as the ones at Munshiganj and Karhaiya Bazaar in Rae Bareilly, were sparked off by the arrests or rumours of arrest of leaders. The lead was often taken not by recognized *Kisan Sabha* activists, but by local figures-- *sadhus*, holy men, and disinherited expropriators.

The Government, however, had little difficulty in suppressing these outbreaks of violence. Crowds were fired upon and dispersed, leaders and activists arrested, cases launched and, except for a couple of incidents in February and March, the movement was over by the end of January itself. In March, the Seditious Meetings Act was brought in to cover the affected districts and all political activity came to a standstill. Nationalists continued to defend the cases of the tenants in the courts, but could do little else. The Government, meanwhile, pushed through the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act, and though it brought little relief to the tenants, it helped to rouse hopes and in its own way assisted in the decline of the movement.

Towards the end of the year, peasant discontent surfaced again in Avadh, but this time the centres were the districts of Hardoi, Bahraich, and Sitapur in the northern part of the province. The initial thrust here was provided by Congress and Khilafat leaders and the movement grew under the name of the Eka or unity movement. The main grievances here related to the extraction of a rent that was generally fifty per cent higher than the recorded rent, the oppression of the *kedars* to whom the work of rent-collection was farmed out and the practice of share-rents.

The Eka meetings were marked by a religious ritual in which a hole that represented the river Ganges was dug in the ground and filled with water, a priest was brought in to preside and the assembled peasants 'owed that they would pay only the recorded rent but pay it on time, would not leave when ejected, would refuse to do forced labour, would give no help to criminals and abide by the panchayat decisions.

The Eka Movement, however, soon developed its own grassroots leadership in the form of Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders who were not particularly inclined to accept the discipline of non-violence that the Congress and Khilafat leaders urged. As a result, the movement's contact with the nationalists diminished and it went its own way. However, unlike the earlier *Kisan Sabha* movement that was based almost solely on tenants, the Eka Movement included in its ranks many small zamindars who found themselves disenchanted with the Government because of its heavy land revenue demand. By March 1922, however, severe repression on the part of the authorities succeeded in bringing the Eka Movement to its end.

In August 1921, peasant discontent erupted in the Malabar district of Kerala. Here Mappila (Muslim) tenants rebelled. Their grievances related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents, and other oppressive landlord exactions. In the nineteenth century as well, there had been cases of Mappila resistance to landlord oppression but what erupted in 1921 was on a different scale together. The impetus for resistance had first come from the Malabar District Congress Conference held at Manjeri in April 1920. This conference supported the tenants' cause and demanded legislation to regulate landlord-tenant relations. The change was significant because earlier the landlords had successfully prevented the Congress from committing itself to the tenants' cause. The Manjeri conference was followed by the formation of a tenants' association at Kozhikode, and soon tenants' associations were set up in other parts of the district.

Simultaneously, the Khilafat Movement was also extending its sweep. In fact, there was hardly any way one could distinguish between Khilafat and tenants' meetings, the leaders and the audience were the same, and the two movements were inextricably merged into one. The social base of the movement was primarily among the Mappila tenants, and Hindus were quite

conspicuous by their absence, though the movement could count on a number of Hindu leaders.

Disturbed by the growing popularity of the Khilafat-cumtenant agitation, which had received considerable impetus from the visits of Gandhiji, Shaukat Au, and Maulana Azad, the Government issued prohibitory notices on all Khilafat meetings on 5 February 1921. On 18 February, all the prominent Khilafat and Congress leaders, Yakub Hasan, U. Gopala Menon, P. Moideen Koya and K. Madhavan Nair, were arrested. This resulted in the leadership passing into the hands of the local Mappila leaders.

Angered by repression and encouraged by rumours that the British, weakened as a result of the World War, were no longer in a position to take strong military action, the Mappilas began to exhibit increasing signs of turbulence and defiance of authority. But the final break came only when the District Magistrate of Eranad *taluk*. E.F. Thomas, on 20 August 1921, accompanied by a contingent of police and troops, raided the mosque at Tirurangadi to arrest Ali Musaliar, a Khilafat leader and a highly respected priest. They found only three fairly insignificant Khilafat volunteers and arrested them. However the news that spread was that the famous Mambrath mosque, of which Au Musaliar was the priest, had been raided and destroyed by the British army. Soon Mappilas from Kottakkal, Tanur and Parappanagadi converged at Tirurangadi and their leaders met the British officers to secure the release of the arrested volunteers. The people were quiet and peaceful, but the police opened fire on the unarmed crowd and many were killed. A clash ensued, and Government offices were destroyed, records burnt and the treasury looted. The rebellion soon spread into the Eranad, Walluvanad and Ponnani *taluks*, all Mappila strongholds.

In the first stage of the rebellion, the targets of attack were the unpopular jennies (landlords), mostly Hindu, the symbols of Government authority's such as *kutcheris* (courts), police stations, treasuries and offices, and British planters. Lenient landlords and poor Hindus were rarely touched. Rebels would travel many miles through territory populated by Hindus and attack only the landlords and burn their records. Some of the rebel leaders, like Kunhammed Haji, took special care to see that Hindus were not molested or looted and even punished those among the rebels who attacked the Hindus. Kunhammed Haji also did not discriminate in favour of Muslims: he ordered the execution and punishment of a number of pro-government Mappilas as well.

But once the British declared martial law and repression began in earnest, the character of the rebellion underwent a definite change. Many Hindus were either pressurized into helping the authorities or voluntarily gave assistance and this helped to strengthen the already existing anti-Hindu sentiment among the poor illiterate Mappilas who in any case were motivated by a strong religious ideology. Forced conversions, attacks on and murders of Hindus increased as the sense of desperation mounted. What had been largely an anti-government and anti-landlord affair acquired strong communal overtones.

The Mappilas' recourse to violence had in any case driven a wedge between them and the Non-Cooperation Movement which was based on the principle of non-violence. The communalization of the rebellion completed the isolation of the Mappilas. British repression did the rest and by December 1921 all resistance had come to a stop. The toll was heavy indeed: 2,337 Mappilas had lost their lives. Unofficial estimates placed the number at above 10,000. A total of 45,404 rebels were captured or had surrendered. But the toll was in fact even heavier,

though in a very different way. From then onwards, the militant Mappilas were so completely crushed and demoralized that till independence their participation in any form of politics was almost nil. They neither joined the national movement nor the peasant movement that was to grow in Kerala in later years. under the Left leadership.

The peasant movements in U.P. and Malabar were thus closely linked with the politics at the national level. In UP., the impetus had come from the Home Rule Leagues and, later, from the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement. In Avadh, in the early months of 1921 when peasant activity was at its peak, it was difficult to distinguish between a Non cooperation meeting and a peasant rally. A similar situation arose in Malabar, where Khilafat and tenants' meetings merged into one. But in both places, the recourse to violence by the peasants created a distance between them and the national movement and led to appeals by the nationalist leaders to the peasants that they should not indulge in violence. Often, the national leaders, especially Gandhiji, also asked the peasants to desist from taking extreme action like stopping the payment of rent to landlords.

This divergence between the actions and perceptions of peasants and local leaders and the understanding of the national leaders had often been interpreted as a sign of the fear of the middle class or bourgeois leadership that the movement would go out of its own 'safe' hands into that of supposedly more radical and militant leaders of the people. The call for restraint, both in the demands as well as in the methods used, is seen as proof of concern for the landlords and propertied classes of Indian society. It is possible, however, that the advice of the national leadership was prompted by the desire to protect the peasants from the consequences of violent revolt, consequences which did not remain hidden for long as both in U.P. and Malabar the Government launched heavy repression in order to crush the movements. Their advice that peasants should not push things too far with the landlords by refusing to pay rent could also stem from other considerations. The peasants themselves were not demanding abolition of rent or landlordism, they only wanted an end to ejectments, illegal levies, and exorbitant rents — demands which the national leadership supported. The recourse to extreme measures like refusal to pay rent was likely to push even the small landlords further into the lap of the government and destroy any chances of their maintaining a neutrality towards the on-going conflict between the government and the national movement.

The no-tax movement that was launched in Bardoli *taluk* of Surat district in Gujarat in 1928 was also in many ways a child of the Non-cooperation days.' Bardoli *taluk* had been selected in 1922 as the place from where Gandhiji would launch the civil disobedience campaign, but events in Chauri Chaura had changed all that and the campaign never took off. However, a marked change had taken place in the area because of the various preparations for the civil disobedience movement and the end result was that Bardoli had undergone a process of intense politicization and awareness of the political scene. The local leaders such as the brothers Kalyanji and Kunverji Mehta, and Dayalji Desai, had worked hard to spread the message of the Non-Cooperation Movement. These leaders, who had been working in the district as social reformers and political activists for at least a decade prior to Non-cooperation, had set up many national schools, persuaded students to leave government schools, carried out the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and had captured the Surat municipality. After the withdrawal of the

Non-Cooperation Movement, the Bardoli Congressmen had settled down to intense constructive work.

Stung by Gandhiji's rebuke in 1922 that they had done nothing for the upliftment of the low-caste untouchable and tribal inhabitants — who were known by the name of *Kaliparaj* (dark people) to distinguish them from the high caste or *Ujaliparaj* (fair people) and who formed sixty per cent of the population of the *taluk* — these men, who belonged to high castes started work among the *Kaliparaj* through a network of six ashrams that were spread out over the *taluk*. These ashrams, many of which survive to this day as living institutions working for the education of the tribals, did much to lift the *taluk* out of the demoralization that had followed the withdrawal of 1922. Kunverji Mehta and Keshavji Ganeshji learnt the tribal dialect, and developed a '*Kaliparaj* literature' with the assistance of the educated members of the *Kaliparaj* community, which contained poems and prose that aroused the *Kaliparaj* against the *Hali* system under which they laboured as hereditary labourers for upper-caste landowners, and exhorted them to abjure intoxicating drinks and high marriage expenses which led to financial ruin. *Bhajan mandalis* consisting of *Kaliparaj* and *Ujaliparaj* members were used to spread the message. Night schools were started to educate the *Kaliparaj* and in 1927 a school for the education of *Kaliparaj* children was set up in Bardoli town. Ashram workers had to often tce the hostility of upper-caste landowners who feared that all this would 'spoil' their labour. Annual *Kallparaj* conferences were held in 1922 and, in 1927, Gandhiji, who presided over the annual conference, initiated an enquiry into the conditions of the *Kaliparaj*, who he also now renamed as *Raniparaf* or the inhabitants of the forest in preference to the derogatory term *Kaliparaj* or dark people. Many leading figures of Gujarat including Narhari Parikh and Jugatram Dave conducted the inquiry which turned into a severe indictment of the *Hall* system, exploitation by money lenders and sexual exploitation of women by upper-castes. As a result of this, the Congress had built up a considerable' base among the *Kaliparaj*, and could count on their support in the future.

Simultaneously, of course, the Ashram workers had continued to work among the landowning peasants as well, and had to an extent regained their influence among them. Therefore, when in January 1926 it became known that Jayakar, the officer charged with the duty of reassessment of the land revenue demand of the *taluk*, had recommended a thirty percent increase over the existing assessment, the Congress leaders were quick to protest against the increase and set up the Bardoli Inquiry Committee to go into the issue. Its report, published in July 1926, came to the conclusion that the increase was unjustified. This was followed by a campaign in the Press, the lead being taken by *Young India* and *Navjivan* edited by Gandhiji. The constitutionalist leaders of the area, including the members of the Legislative Council, also took up the issue. In July 1927, the Government reduced the enhancement to 21.97 per cent.

But the concessions were too meagre and came too late to satisfy anybody. The constitutionalist leaders now began to advise the peasants to resist by paying only the current amount and withholding the enhanced amount. The 'Ashram' group, on the other hand, argued that the entire amount must be withheld if it was to have any effect on the Government. However, at this stage, the peasants seemed more inclined to heed the advice of the moderate leaders.

Gradually, however, as the limitations of the constitutional leadership became more apparent, and their unwillingness to lead even a movement based on the refusal of the enhanced amount was clear, the peasants began to move towards the 'Ashram' group of Congress leaders. The latter, on their part had in the mean while contacted Vallabhbhai Patel and were persuading him to take on the leadership of the movement. A meeting of representatives of sixty villages at Bamni in Kadod division formally invited Vallabhbhai to lead the campaign. The local leaders also met Gandhiji and after having assured him that the peasants were fully aware of the implications of such a campaign, secured his approval.

Patel reached Bardoli on 4 February and immediately had a series of meetings with the representatives of the peasants and the constitutionalist leaders. At one such meeting, the moderate leaders frankly told the audience that their methods had failed and they should now try Vallabhbhai's methods. Vallabhbhai explained to the peasants the consequences of their proposed plan of action and advised them to give the matter a week's thought. He then returned to Ahmedabad and wrote a letter to the Governor of Bombay explaining the miscalculations in the settlement report and requesting him to appoint an independent enquiry; else, he wrote, he would have to advise the peasants to refuse to pay the Land revenue and suffer the consequences.

On 12 February, Patel returned to Bardoli and explained the situation, including the Government's curt reply, to the peasants' representatives, following this, a meeting of the occupants of Bardoli *taluk* passed a resolution advising all occupants of land to refuse payment of the revised assessment until the Government appointed an independent tribunal or accepted the current amount as full payment. Peasants were asked to take oaths in the name of *Prabhu* (the Hindu name for god) and *Khuda* (the Muslim name for god) that they would not pay the land revenue. The resolution was followed by the recitation of sacred texts from the Gita and the *Koran* and songs from Kabir, who symbolized Hindu-Muslim unity. The *Satyagraha* had begun.

Vallabhbhai Patel was ideally suited for leading the campaign. A veteran of the Kheda *Satyagraha*, the Nagpur Flag *Satyagraha*, and the Borsad Punitive Tax *Satyagraha*, he had emerged as a leader of Gujarat who was second only to Gandhiji. His capacities as an organizer, speaker, indefatigable campaigner, inspirer of ordinary men and women were already known, but it was the women of Bardoli who gave him the title of *Sardar*. The residents of Bardoli to this day recall the stirring effect of the Sardar's speeches which he delivered in an idiom and style that was close to the peasant's heart.

The Sardar divided the *taluk* into thirteen workers' camps or *Chhavanis* each under the charge of an experienced leader. One hundred political workers drawn from all over the province, assisted by 1,500 volunteers, many of whom were students, formed the army of the movement. A publications bureau that brought out the daily Bardoli *Satyagraha Patrika* was set up. This *Patrika* contained reports about the movement, speeches of the leaders, pictures of the *jabti* or confiscation proceedings and other news. An army of volunteers distributed this to the farthest corners of the *taluk*. The movement also had its own intelligence wing, whose job was to find out who the indecisive peasants were. The members of the intelligence wing would shadow them night and day to see that they did not pay their dues, secure information about

Government moves, especially of the likelihood of *jabti* (confiscation) and then warn the villagers to lock up their houses or flee to neighbouring Baroda.

The main mobilization was done through extensive propaganda via meetings, speeches, pamphlets, and door to door persuasion. Special emphasis was placed on the mobilization of women and many women activists like Mithuben Petit, a Parsi lady from Bombay, Bhaktiba, the wife of Darbar Gopaldas, Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, Shardaben Shah and Sharda Mehta were recruited for the purpose. As a result, women often outnumbered men at the meetings and stood firm in their resolve not to submit to Government threats. Students were another special target and they were asked to persuade their families to remain thin.

Those who showed signs of weakness were brought into line by means of social pressure and threats of social boycott. Caste and village panchayats were used effectively for this purpose and those who opposed the movement had to face the prospect of being refused essential services from sweepers, barbers, washermen, agricultural labourers, and of being socially boycotted by their kinsmen and neighbours. These threats were usually sufficient to prevent any weakening. Government officials faced the worst of this form of pressure. They were refused supplies, services, transport and found it almost impossible to carry out their official duties. The work that the Congress leaders had done among the *Kaliparaj* people also paid dividends during this movement and the Government was totally unsuccessful in its attempts to use them against the upper caste peasants.

Sardar Patel and his colleagues also made constant efforts to see that they carried the constitutionalist and moderate leadership, as well as public opinion, with them on all important issues. The result of this was that very soon the Government found even its supporters and sympathizers, as well as impartial men, deserting its side. Many members of the Bombay Legislative Council like K.M. Munshi and Laiji Naranji, the representatives of the Indian Merchants Chamber, who were not hot-headed extremists, resigned their seats. By July 1928, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, himself began to doubt the correctness of the Bombay Government's stand and put pressure on Governor Wilson to find a way out. Uncomfortable questions had started appearing in the British Parliament as well.

Public opinion in the country was getting more and more restive and anti-Government. Peasants in many parts of Bombay Presidency were threatening to agitate for revision of the revenue assessments in their areas. Workers in Bombay textile mills were on strike and there was a threat that Patel and the Bombay Communists would combine in bringing about a railway strike that would make movement of troops and supplies to Bardoli impossible. The Bombay Youth League and other organizations had mobilized the people of Bombay for huge public meetings and demonstrations. Punjab was offering to send *jathas* on foot to Bardoli. Gandhiji had shifted to Bardoli on 2 August, 1928, in order to take over the reins of the movement if Patel was arrested. All told, a retreat, if it could be covered up by a face saving device, seemed the best way out for the Government.

The face-saving device was provided by the Legislative Council members from Surat who wrote a letter to the Governor assuring him that his pre-condition for an enquiry would be satisfied. The letter contained no reference to what the precondition was (though everyone knew that it was full payment of the enhanced rent) because an understanding had already been reached that the full enhanced rent would not be paid. Nobody took the Governor seriously

when he declared that he had secured an ‘unconditional surrender.’” It was the Bardoli peasants who had won.

The enquiry, conducted by a judicial officer, Broomfield, and a revenue officer, Maxwell, came to the conclusion that the increase had been unjustified, and reduced the enhancement to 6.03 per cent. *The New statesman* of London summed up the whole affair on 5 May 1929: ‘The report of the Committee constitutes the worst rebuff which any local government in India has received for many years and may have far-reaching results... It would be difficult to find an incident quite comparable with this in the long and controversial annals of Indian Land Revenue. ‘

The relationship of Bardoli and other peasant struggles with the struggle for freedom can best be described in Gandhiji’s pithy words: ‘Whatever the Bardoli struggle may be, it clearly is not a struggle for the direct attainment of *Swaraj*. That every such awakening, every such effort as that of Bardoli will bring *Swaraj* nearer and may bring it nearer even than any direct effort is undoubtedly true.’

13. Civil Disobedience Movement

The Non-co-operation Movement, which had been started in 1920, was suspended abruptly by Gandhiji in 1922. The waning popularity of Mahatma Gandhi emboldened the Government to arrest and detain him for a little over two years. Gandhiji, after his release from jail in February, 1924, engaged himself solely in constructive work, while the Swarajists took charge of the political front of the Congress. Thus, since the withdrawal of the Khilafat and Non-Co-operation Movement in 1922 till 1927 there was a period of lull. Only the Swarajists engaged themselves in some activity in the legislature. Another phase of movement begins after the appointment of Simon Commission but before we deal with the Commission, it is worthwhile to study the communal problem in India.

COMMUNAL PROBLEM

Communal Riots. The withdrawal of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movement came as a great shock to Indian Muslims. The semblance of communal harmony which appeared during the years 1920-22 disappeared for ever. The Muslim League revived its ignominious activities. Ali Brothers who at one time used to be called the two arms of Gandhiji began to preach the gospel of communalism. The wave of communal madness did maximum of damage in Malabar where Mopla Muslims raided Hindus homes and massacred Hindus in cold blood in 1922. In Kohat (North West Frontier Province.) there was a serious riot also. For five years from 1922 to 1927 the country passed through the horrible phase of Hindu-Muslim riots. The Muslims had no dearth of excuses for playing with the lives and property of the Hindus. Muharram and Holi were the usual occasions for communal bloodbaths. The Muslim League expressed its fear that the Congress aimed at establishing Hindu Raj. It played into the hands of the British and thus foiled all the sincere attempts made by the Congress to form a united front against the British Rulers. The Government encouraged riots so as to disrupt national unity.

Foundation of Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The growing menace of Muslim disturbing elements necessitated a strong Hindu organisation to protect the life and property of the Hindus. Congress was incapable of shielding the true nationals of India. Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhanand, Dr. Moonje and others supported the cause of Hinduism. The Hindu Mahasabha came into existence with a view to protecting the Hindu race from the attacks of Muslim fanatics. Swami Shraddhanand started **Shuddhi** movement to counteract the **Tablig** movement launched by Mohammed Ali. It was a concerted campaign to take back the Hindus who had accepted Islam. Swami Shraddhanand fell a martyr to his mission of **Shuddhi** when he was stabbed to death by a Muslim fanatic. On Dussehra, 1925 Dr. K. B. Hedgewar founded another organisation known as **Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh** to unite Hindus for the regeneration of Bharat. However, it should be particularly noted that the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh is not anti-Muslim or anti-Christian in any way. It only wants to remove the defects of Hindu society in order to rejuvenate it.

Gandhiji's Fast and Unity Conference. The saintly heart of Gandhiji was deeply pained to see Hindus and Muslims shedding each other's blood foolishly. He observed 21 days, fast in 1924 to protest against the communal fury raging in all parts of the country. The leaders who

were fanning the flames of communalism realised their mistake and formed a committee for reconciliation. The peace committee which was headed by Gandhiji had Hakim Ajmal Khan, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr. S. K. Dutta, Master Sunder Singh and G. K. Narriman as its members. As a result of their efforts the tension subsided for a year only to restart with increased violence later on.

SIMON COMMISSION

Appointment of Simon Commission: According to the Government of India Act 1919 a statutory commission was to be appointed ten years after the introduction of the reforms to review the political situation in India. So the Commission was due in 1929. But Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, announced the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1927. It was to be headed by Sir John Simon, a member of the British Liberal Party. The other members of the commission were-Lord Burnham, Lord Strachey, Mr. Gidagan, Colonel Lane Fox, Mr. Attlee. Several reasons were advanced for the setting up of the Commission a couple of years earlier. The British Parliament stated that the early appointment of the Commission was in response to Indians' demand of an early revision of the Constitution. But the Indians explained it in a different way. Their analysis was that the Conservative Party—the party in power in Great Britain—was afraid of being ousted by the Labour Party in the general elections to be held in 1929.

Aim of Simon Commission. The task assigned to the Commission was to inquire into the working of the then Constitution and to find out how successfully or otherwise the Dyarchy was working in the Provinces. It was also to report on the functioning of representative institution and whether it was desirable or not to make further progress towards a fully responsible Government. But few critics were of the opinion that the British Government was forced to appoint the Commission due to the agitations in India. However this reason does not appear to be very sound. Another reason for the appointment of commission might be to disintegrate the Swarajist Party.

Boycott of Simon Commission. Simon Commission consisted of British elements only. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, had already been sounded that a Commission consisting of only British members was likely to invite trouble but he paid no heed to this warning. His argument was that the Indians could not be included in the Commission which was to deal with a vital problem of suggesting constitutional reforms. He also tried to justify exclusion of Indians on the ground that it was difficult to give representation to all the political sections in India because in that case the size of the Commission would become unwieldy. And if one party alone was represented, it would be represented by other groups. But at the bottom of these flimsy excuses was the distrust of Indian.

The exclusion of Indians from the Commission, which was to discuss Indian problems, was considered by the Indians as outrageous. Nearly all groups and sections of people in India's political life boycotted the Commission. On coming in Bombay on February 7, 1928, it was greeted with black flags in a wild demonstration. The same was repeated at every place the commission visited during the course of its stay in India.

When the Commission reached Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai led a huge Procession of demonstrators. A white police officer, Mr. Saunders, rained blows on Lajpat Rai and inflicted grievous injuries resulting in the death of the great patriot. It was taken as a great insult to

Indian nationhood. The revolutionary group of Bhagat Singh and his friends avenged the wrong by murdering Mr. Saunders. At Lucknow the demonstrations against the Commission were organised and led by leaders like GovindBallabh Pant and Pt. Motilal Nehru. They were also treated to stick-charge and firing. In view of disturbances all over the country, the Government made an announcement to the effect that committees elected by central as well as Provincial Legislature would also be associated with the Commission. But this assurance did not evoke any enthusiasm among the organised parties in the country. Only the loyalists came forward to form committees to assist the Commission in acquiring essential information.

Report of Simon Commission. After two years of consistent work, the Commission prepared and published its report in May, 1930. Its recommendations were as follows:

Abolition of Dyarchy and Introduction of Provincial Autonomy. On a detailed and careful study of the Indian problem the Commission concluded that Dyarchy, the experiment in self-government, was unworkable because of certain inherent weaknesses in the scheme. It, therefore, recommended the introduction of Provincial Autonomy, in other words, the transference to and control of all the provincial subjects by popular Ministers.

Special Powers of the Governors and the Governor-General: The Commission suggested that the Governor-General and the Governors should remain 'in possession of full and simple powers to ensure a thoroughly efficient administrative system and to safeguard the interests of the minorities.' The Governor should also be allowed to include one or more non-elected experienced officials in his Council but such an official Minister should be responsible to the Legislative Council and not the Governor or the Governor-General.

Extension of Franchise: In the general election held in 1925 less than 3 percent of the total population enjoyed the right of vote. The Commission proposed the right of vote to be given to at least 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the people. It also suggested the retention of the communal electorate and special representation of minority communities and classes.

11. Irresponsible Government at the Centre: The Commission left the Centre untouched. It considered the introduction of Dyarchy at the Centre undesirable. It said that the Central Executive should be absolutely free from domination by the legislature. A strong Centre was of utmost importance for a few years. The Commission looked forward to the possibility of a federation including the States after which the issue of a responsible government at the Centre was to be reconsidered.

India's Defence: The Commission recognised the justness of the demand of Indianisation of the Army but recommended the retention of British forces till the country was adequately equipped to defend itself. It said that the responsibility of defending the country from external attack should remain with the British Government while India should raise forces sufficient enough to maintain law and order in the country.

Reconstitution of Central Legislature: The Commission suggested the desirability of the reconstitution of the Central Legislature on federal principle, having representatives from all the Provinces and those States only which consented to join the proposed federation. The method of election for both the Houses, the Commission said, should be indirect.

The Commission also recommended the separation of Burma from India and Sind from Bombay. It did not consider North West Frontier Province as suitable for internal autonomy.

Enlargement of Provincial Legislature: The Commission recommended the enlargement of Provincial Legislatures. The more important Provinces should have not less than 200 and not more than 250 members. There should be no official bloc. Even the nominated non-officials should not exceed ten per cent of the total membership. The Muslims in Provinces where they were in minority should be given special and adequate representation.

Home Government: In regard to the Home Government, the Commission recommended the retention of India Council to advise Secretary of State but with reduced powers. It proposed no change in the rate of Indianisation of the services fixed on the basis of Lee Commission Report.

New Constitution: The Commission also proposed that the provision of appointing a Commission to review the constitutional progress after every ten years should be done away with. In its place the new constitution should be made flexible enough to admit changes whenever necessary.

Evaluation of Simon Report: The report published by the Commission did not evoke much enthusiasm because its recommendations fell far short of the national expectations. Not to speak of Dominion Status, it did not recommend even partial responsibility at the Centre. Defence of the country was kept under the charge of British Government. The army was made loyal to His Majesty's Government although its cost was to be borne by Indian tax-payers. Although the Commission had recommended Provincial Autonomy, the powers of the Ministers were greatly restricted by the special powers of the Governors and the Governor-General. There are two different views of critics about the Report. Some critics have strongly condemned it and some have praised it. But Every national leader condemned the meagre reforms suggested by the Commission. According to Mr. Andrews, "its (Simon report) great demerit was that it failed to take note of the radical changes that had been brought about by the non-violent, Non-co-operation Movement, and of the aspirations generated by it. It dealt more with that old india which was nearly thirty years ago before the national movement had started; it showed little understanding of the young national movement which was rising on the tide of national upheaval" —

Sir SivaswamiAyyar has remarked that the report should be placed on a scrap heap." A dispassionate appraisal of the report would reveal that it has no worsed than the provisions of **1935 Act**. In the the words of **P. E. Roberts**, "It will always stand out as one of the greatest Indian state Papers."

According to **Richard B. Gregg**, "There are some distortion of emphasis amounting almost to omission of pertinent fact, but these were probably "international." **Professor Keith** has remarked, "It was probably foolish of Indian opinion to repudiate the report out and out if it had been accepted; the British Government would hardly have failed to work on it and responsible government in the provinces would have been achieved much earlier than it could be under any later scheme ".

NEHRU REPORT

The All Parties Conference:

The Simmon Commission, though abused by the Indians had the good effect on Indian politics. It awoke the Indian leaders to formulate a scheme of Indian Constitution acceptable to all parties. Lord Bikenhead justified in an insolent mood the exclusion of Indians from the

Simon Commission and challenged the Indian leaders that they were unable to produce an agreed constitution for submission to the British Parliament. The Indian National Congress accepted the challenge and in February, 1928, All Parties Conference was held at Delhi. The Congress in a resolution said: "Having regard to the general desire of all political parties in the country to unite together in setting *Swaraj* Constitution, and having considered the various drafts submitted to it and the various suggestions received in reply to the working committee's circular this congress authorises the working committee which shall have power to co-opt, to confer with similar committees to be appointed by other organisations—political, Labour, Commercial and Communal in the country and draft a Swaraj Constitution on the basis of declaration of Rights and to place the same for consideration and approval before a special convention at Delhi." The conference appointed a Committee of Pt. Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Sardar Mangal Singh, Shuaib Qureshi, M. S. Aney, G. K. Pradhan, S. C. Bose and J. L. Nehru. Pt. Motilal Nehru was the chairman of the committee and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru acting as the Secretary. The committee worked hard to produce a memorable report, which in the words of Dr. Z. A. Charies was "a masterly and statesmen-like Report." This report was subsequently known as Nehru Report.

The following were the Recommendations of the Nehru Report:

1. *Dominion Status and Full Responsible Government*—The majority opinion of the committee favoured Dominion Status. A minority section stood for complete independence. Hence, a compromise formula was evolved. Dominion Status was accepted not as the ultimate but the immediate goal. All the parties which present for complete independence were given liberty of action to pursue their goal. The Report also demanded a full responsible Government on the lines of self-governing Dominions.
2. *Provincial Autonomy and Residuary Powers*.— The committee envisaged a future federation in India. It emphasised the need of giving as much autonomy to the Provinces as was safely possible. The subjects should be divided into the Central and Provincial lists, the residuary powers to be exercised by the Centre. The Provinces were to have only one House each for making laws.
3. *Rejection of Communal Electorate*.—The Report admitted that there was communal problem in India and expressed its faith that free India would be able to solve the problem satisfactorily. It held the British element in India as partly responsible for creating communal tension. The report further said that India was to be a secular State where there would be no State religion. It suggested cultural autonomy, safeguards and guarantees to be promised to minority communities but it rejected the system of communal electorate. In its place it offered the system of joint electorate with reservation of seats.
4. *Creating of New Provinces*.— The sub-committee in its Report conceded the demand of the Muslims to create a separate Province of Sind and to give North West Frontier Province, a footing of equality with other Provinces although the motive behind such a demand was to have four Muslim-majority Provinces in India, *viz.*, Bengal, Punjab, Sind and North West Frontier Province.
5. *Fundamental Rights*—The Report said that sovereignty belonged to the people and it was to be exercised through their representatives in accordance with the Constitution. To

ensure freedom to the individual, the Report mentioned nineteen Fundamental Rights to be included in the Constitution, notable amongst them were equality of men and women in regard to rights, and freedom of faith of every individual.

6. **Parliament**— According to the Report, India's Parliament should consist of the Crown, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate should have 200 members elected by the members of the Provincial legislatures. Each Province was to be represented in the Senate in proportion to its population. The House of Representatives should have 500 members directly elected on the basis of adult franchise. The life of Lower House should be five years. In foreign matters the Indian Parliament was to have the same rights as exercised by the Parliaments of other Dominions.
7. **Indian States**—In regard to Indian States the Report said that the Indian Parliament should have the same rights and discharge the same obligations towards the Indian State as the then existing Government of India did. In case of a conflict between the State and Parliament, the Governor-General should have the power to refer the issue to the Supreme Court for arbitration.
8. **Central Executive**—The Report accepted the principle that the Crown was to remain the highest executive exercising his powers through his representative, *i.e.*, the Governor General of India. But the report said that the Governor-General should act perfectly in accordance with the Constitution and parliamentary laws. His executive should consist of one Prime Minister and six Ministers, collectively responsible to the Dominion Parliament of India.
9. **Supreme Court.**— The Report suggested the setting up of a Supreme Court in India charged with the duty of interpreting the constitution and deciding points of conflict between one Province and the other. It recommended that no appeal should therefrom lie to the Privy Council.
10. **Defence.**— The Report suggested that a defence committee should be formed comprising the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, Commander-in-Chief, Chiefs of the Naval and Air Forces, Chief of the General Staff and two military experts; that the defence budget should be put to the House for approval; and that in emergency the Central Executive should have the right to sanction any sum it liked.
11. **Civil Services.**— All the civil Services should become offices of the commonwealth and a Public Service Commission should be appointed by the Governor-General.
12. **Provinces Respected**—The report recommended the preservations of the rights and the privileges of Rulers of the various States. They should also be warned that Indian Rulers would have to adopt the Membership of Federation, if it was constituted in the near future.
13. **North- West Provinces.**— The Report suggested that North West Frontiers Provinces should be brought to the level of Constitutional status as other Provinces had.
14. **Reaction to the Report:** There was All party conference to discuss the report.— According to Zacharias, Nehru Report was “a masterly and statesmanlike report. For the first time in India's history, all the political parties laid their heads together to discuss constitutional problems and their mutually agreeable solutions. No greater tribute can be paid to it than that it supplied the blueprint of the present Indian Constitution.”

The Report was accepted unanimously by the All-Parties Conference at Lucknow but difficulties arose when it came up for scrutiny separately before all the parties which were represented at Lucknow Conference. They began to examine the report with a communal bias. Muslim League was divided on the issue. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and other Nationalist Muslims were in favour of accepting the report in its original form. Mr. Mohammed Shafi stood for rejecting it. The third section was led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah who was prepared to accept it but only after certain vital changes, proposed by him.

In the National Convention at Calcutta he put forward his three suggestions : (a) The Muslim must have 1/3 representation in the Central Legislature, (b) There should be Muslim Representation in the Punjab and Bengal Legislatures on the population basis for ten years, (c) Residuary powers should not be vested in the centre but in the provinces.

The amendments were rejected in the convention and there were heated debates in the open session of the convention in December 1928. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah left the convention and joined a more reactionary section of the Muslim led by Mr. Agha Khan. He also called a meeting of All India Muslim League at Delhi on December 1928, where he put forward his fourteen points formula as the pre-requisite to any political agreement. Not only Muslims, but forward his a large section of Sikhs, non-Brahmins and backward and Depressed Communities also did not like the Nehru Constitution. Christians of the country were also of the opinion that the Report did not safeguard the interest of minorities.

Congress Ultimatu, Calcutta, December, 1928.— The House of the Congress itself was divided in its support to the Report. The younger section led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose stood for nothing less than complete independence. The older group led by Pt. Motilal Nehru was in favour of accepting the Report as it was. Pt. Motilal Nehru it seemed doubtful, would be able to carry his resolution through the Calcutta Congress. Hence Gandhiji came to the rescue of Motilal Nehru and contended : “I am for complete independence—as complete as it can be—but I am not against full Dominion Status—as full as any dominion possesses it today, provided I get it before it loses all attraction”. No doubt, the Report was criticised by a large section of the country but it did not reflect that the report was not worthwhile. The Report was comprehensive document embodying the aspirations of partrotic Indians of that time. Even the present constitutions of Indians resembles with the Report to a large extent. ***Dr. Zacharies*** has rightly remarked : “The Nehru Report deserves to be read and studied in all its details as it sheds light on every subject it touches and displays a practical common sense which never losses itself in doctrinaire but which equally spurs to shelter itself behind the enunciation of mere platitudes.”

MOHAMMED ALI JINN AH'S FOURTEEN POINTS TO COUNTER-ACT NEHRU REPORT

Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah who did not agree to Nehru Report put forward his Fourteen Points as the minimum demands of the muslims for any political settlement. These points were presented before and ratified by the Muslim League. The substance of the Fourteen-Point formula was as follows:—

1. The form of any constitution to be drawn for free India should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the Provincial government.

2. Every province should enjoy a uniform measure of autonomy.
3. The Minorities should be adequately represented in all the Legislative Assemblies and Local Bodies. No attempt should be made to reduce their majority in any Province to a minority or even equality.
4. One-third of the total seats in the Central Assembly should be reserved for the Muslims.
5. Representation of all the communities should be on the basis of separate electorate. It should, however, be open to any group to abandon the system of separate electorate in favour of joint electorate.
6. Any territorial redistribution should not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and North-West Frontier Province.
7. Full religious liberty should be guaranteed to every individual.
8. No legislature or an elected body should adopt a Bill or resolution which was opposed by three-fourths of the members of that community in that body on the ground that it was injurious to the interest of that community.
9. Sind to be separated from Bombay Presidency.
10. North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan should not be discriminated against in respect of reforms.
11. Adequate share for Mussalmans should be provided in the constitution of all services, subject to requirements of efficiency.
12. Adequate safeguards and State help should be given for the protection and promotion of Muslim culture, religion, language, education, laws and religious institutions.
13. At least one-third of total number of ministers in the Central and Provincial cabinets should be drawn from Muslim community.
14. No change in the Constitution should be made by Central Assembly except with the Concurrence of the units constituting the Indian federation.

LABOUR GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND; LORD IRWIN'S PROCLAMATION, 31ST OCTOBER, 1929

The General Elections in England were completed in May, 1929. The Labour Government came into office with Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as the Prime Minister. The Labour Government has failed to obtain absolute majority in the House of Commons. With the help of the Liberals it, however, formed the Government. Soon after the polls, Mr. Macdonald declared at a conference of Commonwealth Labour Parties; "I hope that within a period of months rather than years, there will be another Dominion added to the Commonwealth of Nations, a Dominion of another race, a Dominion which will find respect as an equal within the Commonwealth. I refer to India." This declaration by the British Prime Minister revived hopes in Indian hearts. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald then invited Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy of India, to England for consultation.

Lord Irwin on his return to India on October 31, 1929, said : "I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgement it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as then contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status".

Delhi Manifesto.— Lord Irwin's Proclamation was quite vague and disappointing because it did not mention the deadline for the grant of Dominion Status. Within 24 hours of the announcement the Congress leaders met in Delhi. They expressed hope that the object of the Round Table Conference probably was not only to fix the date on which Dominion Status was to be conferred but also to frame the Dominion-Constitution. This hope was expressed in a manifesto issued over the signatures of the leading politicians of India. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, however, did not share the exultation of the old guards in the Congress. To them the Proclamation was a mere bluff. They doubted the intentions of the British Government. And hence they, resigned from the Congress Working Committee.

Gandhi-Irwin Meeting. With a view to clearing the fog of doubts and ascertaining the intentions of the British Government regarding the future of India, Gandhiji called on the Viceroy on 23rd December, 1929. On the same day the Viceroy had narrow escape from a bomb-explosion on the rail track near Delhi. Gandhiji after congratulating the Viceroy enquired of him the purpose of holding the Round Table Conference. Pt. Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah were also present in this meeting.

The Viceroy clearly expressed his inability to assure a new constitution to India. He was also not certain whether the conference to be held in England would consider the issue of conferring responsible Government. All the leaders left the Viceroy's residence empty-handed and much disillusioned.

Complete Independence Resolution at Lahore Congress. The next Congress Session was held at Lahore against this dismal background. There was frustration in every heart. All the leaders were now convinced that the British Imperialism would submit not to beggary but force only. There was no other alternative but to demand complete independence. It was a historic day (31st December, 1929) when at midnight the resolution was voted upon and adopted by a majority vote. The text of the resolution ran as follows:

“This Congress endorses the action of the Working Committee in connection with manifesto signed by party leaders, including Congressmen, on the Viceregal pronouncement of the 31st October, relating to Dominion Status and appreciates the efforts of the Viceroy towards a settlement of the National Movement for Swaraj. The Congress, however, having considered all that has since happened and the result of the meeting among Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Motilal Nehru and other leaders and the Viceroy, is of the opinion that nothing is to be gained by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference. This Congress, therefore, in pursuance of the resolution passed at its session at Calcutta last year, declares that the word, Swaraj, in Article I of the Congress Constitution shall mean Complete Independence and further declares the entire scheme of the Nehru Committee's Report to have lapsed and hopes that all Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention in the attainment of Complete Independence for India. As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence and in order to make the Congress only as consistent as possible with the change of the creed, the Congress calls upon Congressmen and others taking part in the National Movement to abstain from participation directly or indirectly in future elections and directs the present Congress members of the legislatures and committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the Nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress and authorise the All

India Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit, to launch a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary.”

The Congress also issued a call to the country to celebrate 26th January as a **“Purna Swaraj Day”**. A resolution drafted for adoption on that day was also issued. A pledge was drawn up to be taken by every Congressman. It said, “It is the inalienable right of the people of India to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have necessities of life, so that they might have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives the people of their rights and oppresses them, the people have further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and ruined India. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

“We recognise that the most effective way of gaining freedom is not through violence.”

This pledge was to be repeated year after year. It roused and inflamed the passion of the people for independence. In order to perpetuate the memory of 26th January, our New Constitution was also enforced on this day. The 26th January is still celebrated every year as the Republic Day.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-31)

Circumstances Leading to Civil Disobedience. The patience of the Indian masses reached a breaking point. The intelligentsia of the country was convinced that the method of persuasion could not work effectively. They felt inclined to use the strong language of agitation to compel the British Government to listen to their demands. The adamant British Government had already rejected Nehru Report. Moreover, there was acute economic depression in the country which had telling effect on all the classes, especially the lower classes. Repression was going on as usual. Gandhiji before taking any extreme step, made another offer to the Government. It was an eleven-point demand. But once again there was no response. The Congress, therefore, was left with no alternative but to start a Civil Disobedience Movement. The peasants of Bardoli in 1928 had already offered satyagraha under the dynamic leadership of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. Their no-tax campaign was a partial success. The Congress decided to use the same nonviolent weapon of satyagraha against the Government on a large scale.

The Communist workers in this hour of economic crisis assumed the leadership of the hardest-hit class of peasants and workers. The Government rounded up the leaders and tried them for seditious activities. The case called Meerut Conspiracy Case ran for four years.

The Communist leaders were kept as undertrial prisoners -for four years against all canons of justice. Later on they were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. The incident caused much pain and resentment to every person. Gandhiji came to conclusion that the country was heading towards a violent revolution. He was unhappy with this trend. The ambition of his political career was to lead the country along the path of non-violence. With this end in view he wrote a letter to Lord Irwin on 2nd March, 1930. But his attempt to negotiate was responded with coldness on the part of Viceroy. He was thus compelled by the circumstances to launch a movement by breaking Salt Laws.

The Historic Dandi March. One striking quality of Gandhiji's method of work was that all his moves and actions were very well planned. After the Lahore Congress he selected a good number of his Ashram-mates to receive training in the technique of Satyagraha. The opportunity to make an experiment came soon when the Government enhanced the taxes on salt. Accompanied by a band of 79 trained and disciplined workers, Gandhiji marched on foot from Sabarmati Ashram to the seashore on 12th March, 1930. The distance of 200 miles was travelled in 24 days. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel set out a few days earlier to do the spadework. Thousands of admirers cheered the Mahatma Gandhi on the way. Gandhiji's tour generated a good deal of fervour and patriotic sentiment. On the 6th April, 1930, after the morning prayer the Mahatma Gandhi and his Satyagrahis started the Civil Disobedience Movement by picking salt lying on sea-shore.

Programme of the Civil Disobedience. The technical violation of the Salt Law was signal to the country to start mass movement. Gandhiji orders were faithfully obeyed. Salt Law was broken at hundreds of places all over the country. The programme of the movement included (1) the violation of Salt Law, (2) abstention from attending the educational institutions by the students and the offices by the public servants, (3) picketing of shops dealing in liquor, opium and foreign goods, (4) bonfire of cloth, and (5) non-payment of taxes.

Campaign in full Swing. The movement gathered momentum very soon. Thousands of ladies even from orthodox and aristocratic families fled out of their houses to picket the liquor shops. All of them were arrested and imprisoned. Boycott of foreign textiles was also started on an extensive scale. At Dharasana 2,500 Satyagrahis raided a salt depot. The police as usual resorted to merciless repression. Many people were badly wounded, some of them died also as a result of lathi-blows by the police.

The boycott of foreign cloth proved successful beyond all calculations. In 1930, the import of foreign cloth was reduced to one-fourth of the figures of the previous year. Sixteen English owned textile mills at Bombay had to be closed. It proved a blessing in disguise to Indian mills. The peasants also carried out no-tax campaign with great zeal.

The Attitude of the Muslims. In fact very few Muslims took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The followers of Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah did not associate with the movement at all. The argument of Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was : "We refuse to join Mahatama Gandhi because his movement is not a movement for the Complete Independence of India but for making the seventy million of Indian Muslims dependents of the Hindu Mahasabha." Bulk of the Muslim leaders who had co-operated with Mahatama Gandhi on the Khilafat issue refused to have anything to do with this movement. Only the Pathans of North West Frontier Province under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan carried out the Congress programme and braved the lathi-blows and bullets like other Congress workers.

Repression by the Government. The movement gained strength and volume quite steadily. It reached its peak point in June, 1930. The administrative machinery was paralysed at many places. The Government could not accept it lying down. The police force went into action and the public places turned red with thick and warm blood of the patriots. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, was arrested on 14th April. His arrest was followed by the arrest of other leaders also. Nearly 60,000 people went to jail. It was the first time that such a large number of people courted arrest. Whosoever wore Gandhi cap and *khaddar* was either arrested

or beaten up. indiscriminate lathi-charge became the order of the day. An excited mob at Sholapur set fire to five police stations. The result was firing and deaths. The police were particularly hard upon the Red Shirts in Peshawar.

FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The Simon Commission Report was published during the time when the civil disobedience was gaining momentum. In the words of Dr. Racharias, the Report, “betrayed a monstrous lack of understanding only equal by similar lack of sympathy.” No political party appreciated the Report and nobody gave any importance to the recommendations of the Commission. Even the liberals were of the view that the Report should not be the basis of the discussion of the Round Table Conference.

Congress boycotted the conference— Here in India an energetic journalist George Solcombe interviewed Gandhiji and other National Leaders in the jail. He tried to abridge the gulf between the Government and Congress leaders and tried to prepare the leaders of the Congress to participate in the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji clearly told him that he was not prepared to call off the movement till he was not assured about independence. He also put four points for the suspension of the movement. Mr. Solcombe met Pt. Moti Lai Nehru and Jawahar Lai Nehru and drafted a statement, which in his opinion could be the basis of mutual negotiation between the Government and the Congress. In August, 1930 Dr. Jaykar and Sir Tej Bahadur also find out the way for the negotiations but they also failed. At last, the Round Table Conference was held at London at St. James Palace, on November 12, 1930 without the representatives of the Indian National Congress.

Nationalist Muslim excluded— The conference was inaugurated by His Majesty, the King and Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister of England Presided the Conference. 89 delegates of India and 16 delegates of Indian States attended the conference, 86 members from all the parties of British Parliament were also called to participate in the conference. The representatives from British India were nominated by Viceroy and representatives from states who were also the yes men of the British Government were selected by the Viceroy. In this connection *Brailsford* has written: “In St. James Palace there did assemble, Princes and Untouchables, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians, Spokesmen of Landowners, Trade Unions and Chambers of Commerce but Mother India was not there.” Statement of Policy made by Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister of United Kingdom., at the conclusion of First Indian Round Table Conference January 19, 1931 was as follows

Responsibility placed upon legislature— The view of His Majesty’s Government is that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures. Central and Provincial with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by Minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

Meeting the traditional needs— In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the need of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty’s Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own Government.

Further negotiations— His Majesty's Government, whilst making this declaration, is aware that some of the conditions which are essential to the working of such a constitution as is contemplated, have not been finally settled, but it believes that as the result of the work done here, they have been brought to a point which encourages the hope that further negotiations, after this declaration will be successful.

Federal Government— His Majesty's Government has taken note of the fact that the deliberation of the conference have proceeded on the basis, accepted by all parties, that the Central Government should be a federation of all India, embracing both the Indian States and British India a bicameral Legislature. The precise form and structure of the new Federal Government must be determined after further discussion with the Princes and representatives of British India. The range of subjects to be committed to it will also require further discussion, because the Federal Government will have authority only in such matters concerning the states as will be ceded by their Rulers in agreements made by them on entering into federation. The connection of the States with the federation will remain subject to the basic principle that in regard to all matters not ceded by them to the Federation their relations will be with the Crown acting through the agency of the Viceroy. With a legislature constituted on a Federal basis. His Majesty's Government will be prepared to recognize the principle of the executive to the legislature.

Defence and external affairs— Under existing condition the subjects of Defence and External Affairs will be reserved to the Governor-General, and arrangement will be made to place in his hands the powers necessary for the administration of those subjects. Moreover, as the Governor-General must, as a last resort be able in an emergency to maintain the tranquility of the State, and must similarly be responsible for the observance of the constitutional rights of minorities, he must be granted the necessary powers for these purposes.

Financial responsibility— As regards Finance, the transfer of financial responsibility must necessarily be subject to such conditions as will ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India. The Report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee indicates some ways of dealing with this subject including a Reserve Bank, the Service of Loans, and Exchange Policy, which, in the view of His Majesty's Government, will have to be provided for somehow in the new constitution. It is of vital interest to all parties in India to accept these provisions, to maintain financial confidence. Subject to these provisions Indian Government would have full financial responsibility for the methods of raising revenue and for the control of expenditure on non Reserved Services. This will mean that under existing conditions the Central Legislature and Executive will have some features of dualism which will have to be fitted into the constitutional structure.

Reserved powers—The provision of reserved powers is necessary in the circumstances and some such reservation has indeed been incidental to the development of most free constitutions. But every care must be taken to prevent conditions arising which will necessitate their use. It is, for instance, undesirable that Ministers should trust to the special powers of the Governor-General as a means of avoiding responsibilities which are properly their own, thus defeating the development responsible Government by bringing into use powers meant to lie in reserve and in the background. Let there be no mistake about that.

Provincial subject—The Governor's provinces will be constituted on a basis of full responsibility. Their Ministries will be taken from the Legislature and will be jointly responsible to it. The range of provincial subjects will be so defined as to give them the greatest possible measures of self-government. The authority of the Federal Government will be limited to provisions required to secure its administration of Federal subject, and so discharge its responsibility for subjects defined in the constitution as of all India concern.

These will be reserved to the Governor only that minimum of special powers which is required in order to secure, in exceptional circumstances, the preservation of tranquillity, and to guarantee the maintenance of rights provided by status for the public services and minorities.

Responsible Government—Finally, His Majesty's Government considers that the institution in the provinces of responsible Government requires both that the Legislatures should be enlarged, and that they should be based on a more liberal franchise.

Framing the Constitution—In framing the constitution His Majesty's Government considers that it will be its duty to insert provisions guaranteeing to the various minorities, in addition to political representation, that differences of religion, race, sect or caste, shall not themselves constitute civic disabilities.

Duty of the Community—In the opinion of His Majesty's Government it is the duty of the communities to come to an agreement amongst themselves on the points raised by the minorities sub-committee but not settled there. During the continuing negotiations such an agreement ought to be reached and the Government will continue to render what good offices it can help to secure that end, as it is anxious not only that no delay should take place in putting the new constitution into operation, but that it should start with the goodwill and confidence of all the communities concerned.

Sub-Committees—The various sub-committee which have been studying the more important principles of a constitution which would meet Indian conditions have surveyed a considerable part of the structure in detail and the still unsettled points have been advanced a good way to an agreement. His Majesty's Government, however, in view of the character of the conference and of the limited time at its disposal in London, has deemed it advisable to suspend its work at this point, so that Indian opinion may be consulted upon the work done, and expedients considered for overcoming the difficulties which have been raised. His Majesty's Government will consider, without delay a plan by which our co-operation may be continued so that the results of our completed work may be seen in a new Indian constitution. If, in the meantime, there is a response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged at present in civil disobedience, and others wish to co-operate on the general lines of this declaration, steps will be taken to enlist their services.

Three principles—Prime Minister Macdonald suggested three principles as the basis of discussions. Firstly, a federation was proposed for India, secondly provinces were to be given full responsibility with necessary safeguards. Thirdly introduction of partial responsibility at the Centre with few limitations.

The federal principles were accepted without much discussion. Regarding the grant of provincial autonomy to the provinces, there was no difference regarding safeguards there was some discussion. All the representatives welcomed the idea of introducing partial responsibility of the

Centre. Dr. Jaykar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru placed for the Dominion Status in India. **Dr. Jaykar** told, "If you give India Dominion Status today, the cry of independence will die out." There were heated debates regarding the communal issues. Muslims representatives pleaded for the separate electorates. Mr. Mohammad Jinnah strongly supported his 4 Points Formula. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar also insisted on the provision of separate electorates. Hindu delegates advocated for the Joint Electorates and thus the vital issue remained unsolved and the conference adjourned '*Sine die*' in January 1931. In fact nothing substantial came out the conference. The Nationalists like **Subhash Chandra Bose** has remarked that the Conference offered India, "two bitter pills Safeguards and Federation. To make the pills eatable, they were sugar-coated with responsibility." The Congress kept itself aloof from the first Round Table Conference.

THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT AND SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The British Government knew it well that Congress was the premier political party of India and its co-operation was essential for solving the constitutional problem of the country. The Government realised the need of arriving at a settlement with the Congress. In pursuance of this policy and in order to create congenial atmosphere for negotiations, the Government lifted the ban on the Congress and released all the leaders including Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally on 17th February, 1931. It was followed by protracted correspondence between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin.

After few days of the release of Mahatma Gandhi, the India's delegation, to the First Round Table Conference, come factor. Dr. Jaykar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru played the role of intermediaries as peace makers and liberal leaders between Mahatma Gandhi and Viceroy. They along with Sri Niwas Shastri met the Congress leaders and asked them to attend the second session of Second Round Table Conference. They also emphasised the need of Gandhi Irwin meeting. On 4th February, 1931. Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Lord Irwin seeking an interview and the Viceroy agreed to it. Mahatma Gandhi and Irwin met six times and after the prolonged deliberations a Pact was signed on March 5, 1931 between the two.

Text of The Gandhi-Irwin Pact—The following is the text of Gandhi-Irwin Agreement on March 5, 1931—

1. Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued, and that with the approval of His Majesty's Government of Indian and Local Governments.
2. As regards constitutional questions the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is essential Part, so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit for India, and the discharge of obligations.

3. In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of 19th Jan. 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussion that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.
4. The settlement relates to activities directly connected with the civil disobedience movement.
5. Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by government. The effective discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued and, in particular, the following:—
6. The organised defiance of the provision of any law;
7. The movement for non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues;
8. The publication of news-sheets in support of disobedience movement;
9. Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

10. As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved, firstly, the character of

boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of the government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material conditions of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this objection in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. It is therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that in consequence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement, the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In present circumstances government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charge and counter charges, and so mitigate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations. Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

In return Gandhiji agreed to stop Civil Disobedience Movement and to participate in the next Round Table Conference. He, however, made concession on the basic constitutional issue; he agreed that in the future scheme of Indian Government, “federation is an essential part; so also are responsibility and reservation of safeguard in the interest of India, for such matters as far as instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India, the discharge of obligation.”

THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (SEPTEMBER 7, 1931)

Change in political situation—Before the Second Round Table Conference, a significant change took place in the political scene of Britain. The Labour Government tumbled down. Macdonald remained the Prime Minister but he was the Head of the National Government, which was a coalition of Liberal and Conservative parties. Sir Samuel Hoare a

firm Tory, became the Secretary of State and Viceroy Lord Irwin was replaced by Lord Willington as the Viceroy of India. This was a great shock to Indian leaders. Gandhiji sent his refusal to attend the Round Table Conference. Ultimately an interview was arranged between Viceroy and Gandhiji at Simla, which resulted in the agreement of Gandhiji to attend the conference. He sailed on 29th August, 1931 and reached London on 12th September.

Mahatma Gandhi in London. Gandhiji attended the Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. Other members of the delegation were Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, nominated by the Viceroy in their individual capacity. In fact Gandhiji wanted that the Viceroy should also nominate Dr. Ansari to join the Conference as Congress delegate. The Viceroy, however, refused to nominate a Muslim as Congress delegate simply because the Muslims were not agreeable to it. Gandhiji in England was a picturesque figure. With *chappals*, *chaddar* and loin cloth, he attracted a big crowd around him.

Gandhiji's Stand—Gandhiji's opening speech created a great impression upon the delegates of the conference. He said, "If we are intent upon complete independence it is not from any sense of arrogance; it is not because we want to parade before the universe that we have now severed all connection with the British people. Nothing of kind....I still aspire to be a citizen, not to be a citizen, not in the Empire, but in a commonwealth; in a partnership if possible government immediately. The delegates of minorities pleaded for the separate electorates but Gandhiji openly said that the question at framing a constitution should have precedence over the communal problem. The minorities claimed that it was the precondition of every thing else. This communal issue finally adjourned the conference and the Prime Minister closed the session of December 11, 1931.

Complicated Communal Problem—Gandhiji at the plenary session pressed his demand for complete independence in very clear words. He as the spokesman of the Congress and the Indian masses demanded full responsible Government at the Centre. He also demanded the undivided control of the Indians on the defence. The British Government, however, agreed to meet halfway by offering a partly responsible Government at the centre. The discussion was then stuck up on the communal problem. The delegates representing the minorities put forth their exaggerated demands for concessions and privileges. In fact the very composition of the delegation was such as made any agreement on communal problem nearly impossible. The British Government played off the Muslim League against the Congress. The unholy alliance between the Muslims and the ruling class served the designs of the Government to the bitter extreme. The natural result was that Gandhiji failed to evolve any point of agreement among the delegates. He returned to India empty-handed and much disappointed. The Conference closed on 1st December, 1931.

Repressive Policy of Lord Willington—The political scene in India was in no way less acute and agitated than the failure of London talks. In the absence of Gandhiji, the Viceroy resorted to repression as a matter of policy. He believed not in settlement with but suppression of the Congress. He violated the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Conservative Party which was in office in England also favoured a stern attitude towards Indians and particularly the Congress. The Government held the Congress guilty of instigating the peasants of U. P. to refuse to pay land revenue and also inciting the Red Shirts to start Civil Disobedience Movement under the

leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. To this, the Congress replied with a countercharge. It said that the Government was violating the agreement concluded with Gandhiji.

Repression all over the country went in full swing. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for starting no-rent campaign in U.P. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother Khan Sahib were also arrested in North West Frontier Province. Bengal, U.P. and North West Frontier Province were brought under the heels of Ordinances. In Bengal the people were almost subjected to state of martial law. Gandhiji sought an interview with the Viceroy to apprise him of the public resentment against his 'rule by force' but the latter curtly refused to meet him.

Civil Disobedience Campaign and Repression. When the Government showed no readiness to change its attitude, the Congress Working Committee decided to restart the movement. On 3rd January, 1932, Gandhiji called upon the Nation to be ready for another trial. He communicated his decision to the Viceroy also. The Government on the very next day issued four ordinances and assumed very wide powers to deal with the agitation. It was followed by the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the President of the Congress. The Congress itself was declared unlawful. The police was authorised to arrest any person even on suspicion. All the Congress workers were put behind the bars. Even the sympathisers were not spared. Government confiscated the property of the Congressmen. The police also organised raids on Congress offices and seized all papers and documents. In short the Viceroy started on the mad and futile course of wiping out the Congress within six weeks. The Congress this time was actually less prepared than on the former occasions. It was in a way compelled to start the movement because of regular pin-pricking and provocations by the Government. Moreover, mass arrest of the leaders and workers left agitators without any guide. In spite of all the handicaps, the people gave a tough fight and foiled the attempt of the Viceroy to nip the Congress for ever. With waning intensity, the movement continued for six months. More than 1,20,000 persons went to jail.

On May 8, 1933, Gandhiji commenced his 21-day fast to atone for the sins of caste-Hindus against the untouchables. It was also a fight against the official attempt to dismember the Hindu community by treating the Harijans as a separate community. His fast had the desired effect. It succeeded in revolutionising the outlook of the people. A mass movement was started to win over the hearts of the Harijans. What induced Gandhiji to undertake the fast unto death was the 'Award' of Ramsay Macdonald whereby the untouchables were offered not-only separate electorate but also additional votes. This was a subtle mischief to widen the gulf between the caste Hindus and the untouchables.

Suspension of Movement—On 14th July, 1933, Mahatma Gandhi called off mass satyagraha but allowed the people to court arrest individually. The enthusiasm of the people was already waning and violence was on the increase. On wise considerations, Gandhiji withdrew the movement completely on 7th April 1934. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and B. G. Patel, however, did not approve this uncalled-for and arbitrary decision of Gandhiji.

COMMUNAL AWARD OF RAMSAY MCDONALD AND POONA PACT, (16TH AUGUST, 1932)

Mr. McDonald in his closing speech at the Conference had clearly stated that the British Government would be compelled to impose its own decision if the various communities failed to chalk out a formula, agreeable to all of them. Since the delegates at the London Conference

could not offer a solution, Mr. McDonald announced his decision known as Communal Award on 16th August, 1932. Alongwith it he also declared that he would be glad to accept any other solution of the communal problem provided it satisfied all the communities.

Principal features of the Communal Award were the following:—

The scope of the Award was confined to allocating seats to various communities in the Provincial Legislatures only. It said nothing about the seats in the Central Legislature.

The Award accepted the demand of the Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and women for separate electorate.

Labour, commerce, industry, landlords and universities were given separate constituencies and fixed seats, it also suggested the formation of general constituencies in which all persons other than Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians or Europeans were entitled to vote.

- Harijans were recognised as a minority, Separate seats were allotted to them. They exercised two votes each, one in the general constituency and the other in special constituencies as mentioned above. This was deliberately done to alienate Harijans from the Hindus.
- Hindus in Muslim-majority Provinces were not given the same concessions as were enjoyed by the Muslims in Hindu-Provinces. In Bengal and the Punjab, for instance, the Hindus were in minority. They were given rather fewer seats than their population warranted whereas Muslims in all the Provinces were given weighty representation.
- Sikhs in the Punjab and Europeans in Bengal were also given disproportionate representation in the legislature. This favour was shown to them at the expense of the Hindus.

Criticism fo Communal Award—The Communal Award evoked a good deal of flutter and resentment in the country. It was criticised for the following reasons:—

- The Award was a mischievous attempt to divide and weaken the Hindus by separating the Harijans.
- The Award was unjust to the Hindus and partial to the Muslims.
- The underlying motive of the Award was to split the Indian people into small and mutually hostile sections. It was a direct hit on national solidarity. It not only retained communal electorate but also extended it. The Award made further divisions on the basis of religion, occupation and loyalty to the Government.
- Europeans who were only 0.1 per cent of the total population were given 10 per cent of the total seats.
- The award provided for separate representation even in the case of Indian Christians and women who had not made any demand of that nature.
- The Award was opposed to the spirit of democracy. It encouraged separation and religious ill-will. It gave birth to the idea of Pakistan, the natural and painful result of which was the partition of the country.
- The Communal Award was an anachronism. It had no historical basis. In no country was the principle of separate electorate and representation ever accepted on the basis of religion, sex or caste.

Gandhiji's Fast and Poona Pact, September, 1932—The Award of Mr. Macdonald came as a great shock to Gandhiji. His heart bled and revolted at the sight of Harijans gradually drifting

away from the Hindu community. He communicated to Macdonald that he would begin his fast to death if the decision was not reversed. The Government slept over the ultimatum. Hence, on 20th September, 1932, Gandhiji began his fast. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar called it Mahatma Gandhi's political stunt. Others criticised Gandhiji for coercing the Government to come round to his viewpoint. The fast, however, had a salutary effect on the Hindu leaders who realised the necessity of earning the goodwill of untouchables. Secondly, it set the whole country in a flutter. Leaders both in India and England became active to prevent Gandhiji from continuing that fateful fast. Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Birla and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu initiated talks with MC. Raja and Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the leaders of the Depressed Classes. On the fifth day of the fast the leaders agreed on a formula. This settlement was called the Poona Pact and was signed by both parties on 26th September. The same day Gandhiji broke his fast. The fact was later on ratified by Hindu Mahasabha and also accepted by the British Government.

Terms of Poona Pact (1) Under the Poona Pact it was agreed upon by Gandhiji and Bhim Rao Ambedkar to retain joint electorate but the number of reserved seats for the scheduled classes as fixed by the Award in the Provincial Legislatures was doubled. As many as 148 seats were reserved for them against 71 allotted by the Award.

- All the members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll in a constituency formed an electoral college. This small body was to elect a panel of four candidates for each of the reserved seats by the method of single transferable vote. One of these candidates was to be elected for the reserved seats by the joint electorate.
- Nearly 20 per cent of seats were reserved for the Harijans in the Central Legislature.
- Adequate representation was given to Harijans in Local Bodies and Public Services.
- Financial aid was promised to promote literacy among the Harijans.

THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (17TH NOVEMBER TO 24TH DECEMBER, 1932)

Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, was a perfect snob. He had deep-rooted contempt for Indians. The very idea of sitting along with Indian delegates for deliberation was revolting to him. His intention was to invite only a few Indians to put their case before a Committee of Parliament which was to draw the future constitution of India. With much reluctance, however, he agreed to call the Third R.T.C. which met from 17th November to 24th December, 1932. Only 46 delegates were invited this time as against 88 on the first occasion. The choice of Indian delegates was limited only to those persons who were loyal to the Government. Congress participation in the Conference was out of question. The Civil Disobedience Movement had been revived and the Government was busy in putting it down with an iron hand. Even the Hindu Mahasabha was not represented at the Conference. The British Labour Party also withdrew because its nominees were not acceptable to the British Government. Thus the Third R. T. C. was a body of only sycophants or 'yesmen' of the Government.

The Reports of various sub-committees appointed during the Second R. T. C. formed the basis of discussion. These problems received attention at the Conference. These were safeguards, the terms under which the States were to join the Federation and the distribution of

residuary powers. Most of the recommendations, made by the Conference, were given place to in the Government of India Act, 1935. The Indian delegation at one stage suggested that the new Constitution might also include a Bill of Rights. But this suggestion was turned down by the British authorities.

White Paper, March, 1933—In March 1933, the British Government published a White Paper which indicated the lines on which the new Act of 1935 was to be made. This Paper was prepared on the basis of the discussions and decisions taken during the three Round Table Conferences. This Paper was so reactionary in character that the Congress and other progressive elements in India rejected in outright. It was most disappointing because it did not propose any curtailment in the powers of the Governor-General or the British Parliament over Indian affairs. In view of general discontentment, the Government submitted the proposals to a joint select committee of the Parliament to discuss it thoroughly. The committee met under Lord Linlithgow. It sat for eighteen months at the end of which it published its report on 11th November, 1934.

The Committee which had a clear majority of Conservative members of the Parliament made the White Paper still worse. Instead of being more lenient to and sympathetic with the Indian people, it withdrew what few concessions had been proposed in white Paper. Federal Assembly, for instance, as suggested in the White Paper was to have direct election. The joint committee rejected this democratic method and proposed the method of indirect election. Thus, the Report did more harm than good from Indian point of view, the net result of three Round Table Conference, White Paper and Joint Committee's report was the Government of India Act, 1935, which we shall discuss in the 18th chapter.

14. THE CRISIS AT TRIPURI TO THE CRIPPS MISSION

The Congress victory in the 1937 election and the consequent formation of popular ministries changed the balance of power within the country vis-a-vis the colonial authorities. The growth of left-wing parties and ideas led to a growing militancy within the nationalist ranks. The stage seemed to be set for another resurgence of the nationalist movement. Just at this time, the Congress had to undergo a crisis at the top—an occurrence which plagued the Congress every few years.

Subhas Bose had been a unanimous choice as the President of the Congress in 1938. In 1939, he decided to stand again this time as the spokesperson of militant politics and radical groups. Putting forward his candidature on 21 January 1939, Bose said that he represented the 'new ideas, ideologies, problems and programmes' that had emerged with 'the progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India.' The presidential elections, he said, should be fought among different candidates 'on the basis of definite problems and programmes.' On 24 January, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani and four other members of the Congress Working Committee issued a counter statement, declaring that the talk of ideologies, programmes and policies was irrelevant in the elections of a Congress president since these were evolved by the various Congress bodies such as the AICC and the Working Committee, and that the position of the Congress President was like that of a constitutional head who represented and symbolized the unity and solidarity of the nation. With the blessings of Gandhiji, these and other leaders put up Pattabhi Sitaramayya as a candidate for the post. Subhas Bose was elected on 29 January by 1580 votes against 1377. Gandhiji declared that Sitaramayya's defeat was 'more mine than his.'

But the election of Bose resolved nothing, it only brought the brewing crisis to a head at the Tripuri session of the Congress. There were two major reasons for the crisis. One was the line of propaganda adopted by Bose against Sardar Patel and the majority of the top Congress leadership whom he branded as rightists. He openly accused them of working for a compromise with the Government on the question of federation, of having even drawn up a list of prospective central ministers and therefore of not wanting a leftist as the president of the Congress 'who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise and may put obstacles in the path of negotiations.' He had, therefore, appealed to Congressmen to vote for a leftist and 'a genuine antifederationist.'³ In the second part of his autobiography, Subhas put forward his thinking of the period even more crudely: 'As Congress President, the writer did his best to stiffen the opposition of the Congress Party to any compromise with Britain and this caused annoyance in Gandhian circles who were then looking forward to an understanding with the British Government.' 'The Gandhists', he wrote, 'did not want to be disturbed in their ministerial and parliamentary work' and 'were at that time opposed to any national struggle.'

The Congress leaders, labelled as compromisers, resented such charges and branded them as a slander. They pointed out in a statement: 'Subhas Babu has mentioned his opposition to the federation. This is shared by all the members of the Working Committee. It is the Congress policy.' After Subhas's election, they felt that they could not work with a president who had publicly cast aspersions on their nationalist bonafides. Earlier, Gandhiji had issued a statement on 31 January saying: 'I rejoice in this defeat' because 'Subhas Babu, instead of

being President on the sufferance of those whom he calls rightists, is now President elected in a contested election. This enables him to choose a homogeneous cabinet and enforce his programme without let or hindrance.'

Jawaharlal Nehru did not resign along with the twelve other Working Committee members. He did not like the idea of confronting Bose publicly. But he did not agree with Bose either. Before the elections, he had said that in the election no principles or programmes were at stake. He had been unhappy with Bose's aspersions on his colleagues. Nor did he agree that the fight was between the Left and the Right. His letter to Subhas on 4 February 1939 would bear a long quotation: 'I do not know who you consider a leftist and who a rightist. The way these words were used by you in your statements during the presidential contest seemed to imply that Gandhiji and those who are considered as his group in the Working Committee are the rightist leaders. Their opponents, whoever they might be, are the leftists. That seems to me an entirely wrong description. It seems to me that many of the so-called leftists are more right than the so called rightists. Strong language and a capacity to criticize and attack the old Congress leadership is not a test of leftism in politics... I think the use of the words left and right has been generally wholly wrong and confusing. If, instead of these words we talked about policies it would be far better. What policies do you stand for? Anti-federation, well and good. I think that the great majority of the members of the Working Committee stand for that and it is not fair to hint at their weakness in this respect.'

However, more importantly, basic differences of policy and tactics were involved in the underlying Bose-Gandhian debate. They were partially based on differing perceptions of the political reality, and differing assessments of the strength and weakness of the Congress and the preparedness of the masses for struggle. Differing styles regarding how to build up a mass movement were also involved.

Subhas Bose believed that the Congress was strong enough to bunch an immediate struggle and that the masses were ready for such struggle. He was convinced, as he wrote later, 'that the country was internally more ripe for a revolution than ever before and that the coming international crisis would give India an opportunity for achieving her emancipation, which is rare in human history.' He, therefore, argued in his presidential address at Tripuri for a programme of immediately giving the British Government a six-months ultimatum to grant the national demand for independence and of launching a mass civil disobedience movement if it failed to do so.'

Gandhiji's perceptions were very different. He, too, believed that another round for mass struggle was necessary to win freedom, for Indians were facing 'an impossible situation.' Already, in the middle of July 1938, he had written: 'The darkness that seems to have enveloped me will disappear, and that, whether with another battle more brilliant than the Dandi March or without, India will come to her own.' But, he believed, the time was not yet ripe for an ultimatum because neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready for struggle. Indians should first 'put our own house in order.' Making his position clear in an interview on 5 May 1939, Gandhiji declared: 'He (Subhas Bose) holds that we possess enough resources for a fight. I am totally opposed to his views. Today we possess no resources for a fight. . . There is no limit to communal strife. . . We do not have the same hold among the peasants of Bihar as we

used to... If today I am asked to start the "Dandi March," I have not the courage to do so. How can we do anything without the workers and peasants? The country belongs only to them. I am not equipped to issue an ultimatum to the Government. The country would only be exposed to ridicule."

Gandhiji's views were above all based on his assessment of the Congress organization. He was convinced that corruption and indiscipline had vitiated its capacity to fight. As we have seen earlier, during 1938 and early 1939, he repeatedly and publicly raised the issues of mutual rivalries and bickerings among Congressmen, bogus membership and impersonation at party elections, efforts to capture Congress Committees, and the general decline of authority in the Congress.

The internal strife reached its climax at the Tripuri session of the Congress, held from 8 to 12 March 1939. Bose had completely misjudged his support and the meaning of his majority in the presidential election. Congressmen had voted for him for diverse reasons, and above all because he stood for militant politics, and not because they wanted to have him as the supreme leader of the national movement. They were not willing to reject Gandhiji's leadership or that of other older leaders who decided to bring this home to Subhas. Govind Ballabh Pant moved a resolution at Tripuri expressing full confidence in the old Working Committee, reiterating full faith in Gandhiji's leadership of the movement and the Congress policies of the previous twenty years, and asking Subhas to nominate his Working Committee 'in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji.' The resolution was passed by a big majority, but Gandhiji did not approve of the resolution and refused to impose a Working Committee on Subhas. He asked him to nominate a Committee of his own choice.

Subhas Bose refused to take up the challenge. He had placed himself in an impossible situation. He knew that he could not lead the organization on his own, but he was also not willing to accept the leadership of the majority. To place the best construction on his policy, he wanted Gandhiji to be the leader of the coming struggle but he wanted Gandhiji to follow the strategy and tactics laid down by him and the left-wing parties and groups. Gandhiji, on the other hand, would either lead the Congress on the basis of his own strategy and style of politics or surrender the position of the leader. As he wrote to Bose: 'if your prognosis is right, I am a back number and played out as the generalissimo of *Satyagraha*.' In other words, as Rajendra Prasad later wrote in his *Autobiography*, Gandhiji and the older leaders would not accept a situation where the strategy and tactics were not theirs but the responsibility for implementing them would be theirs.'

Bose could see no other way out but to resign from the presidentship. Nehru tried to mediate between the two sides and persuade Bose not to resign, while asking Gandhiji and the older leaders to be more accommodative. But Bose would not resign from his position. On the one hand, he insisted that the Working Committee should be representative of the new radical trends and groups which had elected him, on the other, he would not nominate his own Working Committee. He preferred to press his resignation. This led to the election of Rajendra Prasad in his place. The Congress had weathered another storm.

Bose could also not get the support of the Congress Socialists and the Communists at Tripuri or after for they were not willing to divide the national movement and felt that its unity

must be preserved at all costs. Explaining its position, the CPI declared after Tripuri that the interests of the anti-imperialist struggle demanded not the exclusive leadership of one wing but a united leadership under the guidance of Gandhiji.” P.C. Joshi, General Secretary of the CPI, wrote in April 1939 that the greatest class struggle today is our national struggle,’ that the Congress was the main organ of this struggle, and that the preservation of its unity was a primary task.’

Subsequently, in May, Subhas Bose and his followers formed the Forward Bloc as a new party within the Congress. And when he gave a call for an All-India protest on 9 July against an AICC resolution, the Working Committee took disciplinary action against him, removing him from the presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and debarring him from holding any Congress office for three years.

World War II broke Out On 1 September 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Earlier Germany had occupied Austria in March 1938 and Czechoslovakia in 1939. Britain and France, which had been following a policy of appeasement towards Hitler, were now forced to go to Poland’s aid and declare war on Germany. This they did on 3 September 1939. The Government of India immediately declared India to be at war with Germany without consulting the Congress or the elected members of the central legislature.

The Congress, as we have seen earlier, was in full sympathy with the victims of fascist aggression, and its immediate reaction was to go to the aid of the anti-fascist forces. Gandhiji’s reaction was highly emotional. He told the Viceroy that the very thought of the possible destruction of the House of Parliament and Westminster Abbey produced a strong emotional reaction in him and that, fully sympathizing with the Allied Cause, he was for full and unquestioning cooperation with Britain. But a question most of the Congress leaders asked was how was it possible for an enslaved nation to aid others in their fight for freedom? The official Congress stand was adopted at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee held at Wardha from 10 to 14 September to which, in keeping with the nationalist tradition of accommodating diversity of opinion, Subhas Bose, Acharya Narendra Dev, and Jayaprakash Narayan were also invited. Sharp differences emerged in this meeting. Gandhiji was for taking a sympathetic view of the Allies. He believed that there was a clear difference between the democratic states of Western Europe and the totalitarian Nazi state headed by Hitler. The Socialists and Subhas Bose argued that the War was an imperialist one since both sides were fighting for gaining or defending colonial territories. Therefore, the question of supporting either of the two sides did not arise. Instead the Congress should take advantage of the situation to wrest freedom by immediately starting a civil disobedience movement.

Jawaharlal Nehru had a stand of his own. He had been for several years warning the world against the dangers of Nazi aggression, and he made a sharp distinction between democracy and Fascism. He believed that justice was on the side of Britain, France and Poland. But he was also convinced that Britain and France were imperialist countries and that the War was the result of the inner contradictions of capitalism’ maturing since the end of World War I. He, therefore, argued that India should neither join the War till she herself gained freedom nor take advantage of Britain’s difficulties by starting an immediate struggle. Gandhiji found that his position was not supported by even his close followers such as Sardar Patel and Rajendra

Prasad. Consequently, he decided to support Nehru's position which was then adopted by the Working Committee. Its resolution, while unequivocally condemning the Nazi attack on Poland as well as Nazism and Fascism, declared that India could not be party to a war which was ostensibly being fought for democratic freedom while that freedom was being denied to her. If Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, she should prove this in India. In particular, she should declare how her war aims would be implemented in India at the end of the War, Indians would then gladly join other democratic nations in the war effort to starting a mass struggle, but it warned that the decision could not be delayed for long. As Nehru put it, the Congress leadership wanted 'to give every chance to the Viceroy and the British Government.'

The British Government's response was entirely negative. Linlithgow, the Viceroy, in his well considered statement of 17 October 1939 harped on the differences among Indians, tried to use the Muslim League and the Princes against the Congress, and refused to define Britain's war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression. As an immediate measure, he offered to set up a consultative committee whose advice might be sought by the Government whether it felt it necessary to do so. For the future, the promise was that at the end of the War the British Government would enter into consultations with representatives of several communities, parties, and interests in India and with the Indian princes' as to how the Act of 1935 might be modified. In a private communication to Zetland, the Secretary of State, Linlithgow was to remark a few months later: 'I am not too keen to start talking about a period after which British rule will have ceased in India. I suspect that that day is very remote and I feel the least we say about it in all probability the better.' On 18 October, Zetland spoke in the House of Lords and stressed differences among Indians, especially among Hindus and Muslims. He branded the Congress as a purely Hindu organization.' It, thus, became clear that the British Government had no intention of loosening their hold on India during or after the War and that it was willing, if necessary, to treat the Congress as an enemy.

The reaction of the Indian people and the national leadership was sharp. The angriest reaction came from Gandhiji who had been advocating more or less unconditional support to Britain. Pointing out that the British Government was continuing to pursue 'the old policy of divide and rule,' he said: 'The Indian declaration (of the Viceroy) shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it.. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone.' Referring to the question of minorities and special interests such as those of the princes, foreign capitalists, *zamindars*, etc., Gandhiji remarked: 'The Congress will safeguard the rights of every minority so long as they do not advance claims inconsistent with India's independence.' But, he added, 'independent India will not tolerate any interests in conflict with the true interests of the masses.'

The Working Committee, meeting on 23 October, rejected the Viceregal statement as a reiteration of the old imperialist policy, decided not to support the War, and called upon the Congress ministries to resign as a protest. This they did as disciplined soldiers of the national movement. But the Congress leadership still stayed its hand and was reluctant to give a call for an immediate and a massive anti-imperialist struggle. In fact, the Working Committee resolution of 23 October warned Congressmen against any hasty action.

While there was agreement among Congressmen on the question of attitude to the War and the resignation of the ministries, sharp differences developed over the question of the

immediate starting of a mass *satyagraha*. Gandhiji and the dominant leadership advanced three broad reasons for not initiating an immediate movement. First, they felt that since the cause of the Allies — Britain and France — was just, they should not be embarrassed in the prosecution of the War. Second, the lack of Hindu- Muslim unity was a big barrier to a struggle. In the existing atmosphere any civil disobedience movement could easily degenerate into communal rioting or even civil war. Above all, they felt that there did not exist in the country an atmosphere for an immediate struggle. Neither the masses were ready nor was the Congress organizationally in a position to launch a struggle. The Congress organization was weak and had been corrupted during 1938-39. There was indiscipline and lack of cohesion within the Congress ranks. Under these circumstances, a mass movement would not be able to withstand severe repressive measures by the Government. It was, therefore, necessary to carry on intense political work among the people, to prepare them for struggle, to tone up the Congress organization and purge it of weaknesses, to negotiate with authorities till all the possibilities of a negotiated settlement were exhausted and the Government was clearly seen by all to be in the wrong. The time for launching a struggle would come when the people were strong and ready for struggle, the Congress organization had been put on a sound footing, and the Government took such aggressive action that the people felt the absolute necessity of going into mass action. This view was summed up in the resolution placed by the Working Committee before the Ramgarh Session of the Congress in March 1940. The resolution, after reiterating the Congress position on the War and asserting that ‘nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people,’ declared that the Congress would resort to civil disobedience ‘as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis.’”

An alternative to the position of the dominant leadership came from a coalition of various left-wing groups: Subhas Bose and his Forward Bloc, the Congress Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Royists, etc. The Left characterized the War as an imperialist war and asserted that the war-crisis provided the opportunity to achieve freedom through an all-out struggle against British imperialism. It was convinced that the masses were fully ready for action and were only waiting for a call from the leadership. They accepted that hurdles like the communal problem and weaknesses in the Congress organization existed; but they were convinced that these would be easily and automatically swept away once a mass struggle was begun. Organizational strength, they said, was not to be built up prior to a struggle but in the course of the struggle. Making a sharp critique of the Congress leadership’s policy of ‘wait and see,’ the Left accused the leadership of being afraid of the masses, of having lost zest for struggle, and consequently of trying to bargain and compromise with imperialism for securing petty concessions. They urged the Congress leadership to adopt immediate measures to launch a mass struggle. While agreeing on the need for an immediate struggle, the Left was internally divided both in its understanding of political forces and on the Course of political action in case the dominant leadership of the Congress did not accept the line of immediate struggle. Subhas Bose wanted the Left to split the Congress if it did not launch a struggle, to organize a parallel Congress and to start a struggle on its own. He was convinced that the masses and the overwhelming majority of Congress would support the Left-led parallel Congress and join the movement it would launch. The CSP and CPI differed from this view. They were convinced

that Bose was grossly overestimating the influence of the Left and no struggle could be launched without the leadership of Gandhiji and the Congress. There fore an attempt should be made not to split the Congress and thus disrupt the national united fronts but persuade and pressurize its leadership to launch a struggle.

Jawaharlal Nehru's was an ambivalent position. On the one hand, he could clearly see the imperialistic character of the Allied countries, on the other, he would do nothing that might lead to the triumph of Hitler and the Nazis in Europe. His entire personality and political thinking led to the line of an early commencement of civil disobedience, but he would do nothing that would imperil the anti-Nazi struggle in Europe and the Chinese people's struggle against Japanese aggression. In the end, however, the dilemma was resolved by Nehru going along with Gandhiji and the majority of the Congress leadership.

But politics could not go on this placid note for too long. The patience of both the Congress leadership and the masses was getting exhausted. The Government refused to budge and took up the position that no constitutional advance could be made till the Congress came to an agreement with the Muslim communalists. It kept issuing ordinance after ordinance taking away the freedom of speech and the Press and the right to organize associations. Nationalist workers, especially those belonging to the left-wing, were harassed, arrested and imprisoned all over the country. The Government was getting ready to crush the Congress if it took any steps towards a mass struggle.

In this situation, the Indians felt that the time had come to show the British that their patience was not the result of weakness, As Nehru put it in an article entitled 'The Parting of the Ways,' the British rulers believed that 'in this world of force, of bombing aeroplanes, tanks, and armed men how weak we are! Why trouble about us? But perhaps, even in this world of armed conflict, there is such a thing as the spirit of man, and the spirit of a nation, which is neither ignoble nor weak, and which may not be ignored, save at peril.' Near the end of 1940, the Congress once again asked Gandhiji to take command. Gandhiji now began to take steps which would lead to a mass struggle within his broad strategic perspective. He decided to initiate a limited *Satyagraha* on an individual basis by a few selected individuals in every locality. The demand of a *Satyagrahi* would be for the freedom of speech to preach against participation in the War. The *Satyagrahi* would publicly declare: 'It is wrong to help the British war-effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance.' The *Satyagrahi* would beforehand inform the district magistrate of the time and place where he or she was going to make the anti-war speech. The carefully chosen *Satyagrahis* — Vinoba Bhave was to be the first *Satyagrahi* on 17 October 1940 and Jawaharlal Nehru the second — were surrounded by huge crowds when they appeared on the platform, and the authorities could often arrest them only after they had made their speeches. And if the Government did not arrest a *Satyagrahi*, he or she would not only repeat the performance but move into the villages and start a trek towards Delhi, thus participating in a movement that came to be known as the '*Delhi Chalo*' (onwards to Delhi) movement.

The aims of the Individual *Satyagraha* conducted as S.Gopal has put it, 'at a low temperature and in very small doses' were explained as follows by Gandhiji in a letter to the Viceroy: 'The Congress is as much opposed to victory for Nazism as any Britisher can be. But their objective cannot be carried to the extent of their participation in the war. And since you

and the Secretary of State for India have declared that the whole of India is voluntarily helping the war effort, it becomes necessary to make clear that the vast majority of the people of India are not interested in it. They make no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that rules India.'

Thus, the Individual *Satyagraha* had a dual purpose — while giving expression to the Indian people's strong political feeling, it gave the British Government further opportunity to peacefully accept the Indian demands. Gandhiji and the Congress were, because of their anti-Nazi feelings, still reluctant to take advantage of the British predicament and embarrass her war effort by a mass upheaval in India. More importantly, Gandhiji was beginning to prepare the people for the coming struggle. The Congress organization was being put back in shape; opportunism elements were being discovered and pushed out of the organization; and above all the people were being politically aroused, educated and mobilized.

By 15 May 1941, more than 25,000 *Satyagrahis* had been convicted for offering individual civil disobedience. Many more — lower level political workers — had been left free by the Government.

Two major changes in British politics occurred during 1941. Nazi Germany had already occupied Poland, Belgium, Holland, Norway and France as well as most of Eastern Europe. It attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. In the East, Japa launched a surprise attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbour on 7 December. It quickly overran the Philippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma. It occupied Rangoon in March 1942. War was brought to India's doorstep. Winston Churchill, now the British Prime Minister, told the King that Burma, Ceylon, Calcutta and Madras might fall into enemy hands.

The Indian leaders, released from prisons in early December, were worried about the safety and defence of India. They also had immense concern for the Soviet Union and China. Many felt that Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union had changed the character of the War. Gandhiji had earlier denounced the Japanese slogan of 'Asia for Asiatics' and asked the people of India to boycott Japanese products. Anxious to defend Indian territory and to go to the aid of the Allies, the Congress Working Committee overrode the objections of Gandhiji and Nehru and passed a resolution at the end of December offering to fully cooperate in the defence of India and the Allies if Britain agreed to give full independence after the War and the substance of power immediately. It was at this time that Gandhiji designated Jawaharlal as his chosen successor. Speaking before the AICC on 15 January 1941, he said: 'Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. It will require much more than differences of opinion to estrange us. We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji (C. Rajagopalachari) but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to union of hearts. And I know that when I am gone he will speak my language.'

As the war situation worsened, President Roosevelt of the USA and President Chiang Kai-Shek of China as also the Labour Party leaders of Britain put pressure on Churchill to seek the active cooperation of Indians in the War. To secure this cooperation the British Government sent to India in March 1942 a mission headed by a Cabinet minister Stafford Cripps, a leftwing

Labourite who had earlier actively supported the Indian national movement. Even though Cripps announced that the aim of British policy in India was 'the earliest possible realization of self- government in India,' the Draft Declaration he brought with him was disappointing. The Declaration promised India Dominion Status and a constitution-making body after the War whose members would be elected by the provincial assemblies and nominated by the rulers in case of the princely states. The Pakistan demand was accommodated by the provision that any province which was not prepared to accept the new constitution would have the right to sign a separate agreement with Britain regarding its future status. For the present the British would continue to exercise sole control over the defence of the country. Amery, the Secretary of State, described the Declaration as in essence a conservative, reactionary and limited offer. Nehru, a friend of Cripps, was to write later: When I read those proposals for the first time I was profoundly depressed.'

Negotiations between Cripps and the Congress leaders broke down. The Congress objected to the provision for Dominion Status rather than full independence, the representation of the princely states in the constituent assembly not by the people of the states but by the nominees of the rulers, and above all by the provision for the partition of India. The British Government also refused to accept the demand for the immediate transfer of effective power to the Indians and for a real share in the responsibility for the defence of India. An important reason for the failure of the negotiations was the incapacity of Cripps to bargain and negotiate. He had been told not to go beyond the Draft Declaration. Moreover, Churchill, the Secretary of State, Amery, the Viceroy, Linlithgow, and the Commander-in-Chief, Wavell, did not want Cripps to succeed and constantly opposed and sabotaged his efforts to accommodate Indian opinion. Stafford Cripps returned home in the middle of April leaving behind a frustrated and embittered Indian people. Though they still sympathized with the anti-fascist, especially the people of China and the Soviet people, they felt that the existing situation in the country had become intolerable. The time had come, they felt, for a final assault on imperialism.

15. Quit India Movement and Dawn of Independence

WORLD WAR II AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCK

On 1st September, 1939, Germany triumphantly marched into Poland. Britain, foreseeing the danger to the free world, declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939. The Second World War broke out in Europe on September 3, 1939. Britain could not remain aloof from the war. The reason advanced by the British Government was that it wanted to make world safe for democracy. On the same day Lord Linlithgow, the Governor-General of India, also declared that India was at war with Germany. It was a unilateral decision taken by the Viceroy, without seeking or ascertaining the views of Indian leaders. Soon he set about getting into touch with political leaders of India. His object was to explore the ways how best to secure their co-operation in war efforts. The Leaders of the Congress greatly criticised the action of the Viceroy. *Maulana AbulKalam Azad* has written : “We are asked to fight not because we choose to fight but because England wants her to fight. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom, when the very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possessed taken away from her.”

Congress Reaction. The Congress Working Committee met on 10th October, 1939. It passed a lengthy resolution expressing its sympathy with the free world and condemning Germany’s aggression. But it declared that it could not associate herself in war unless the British Government publicly stated that India would be granted political independence at the end of war. The Congress also demanded immediate transfer of maximum of control over country’s administration to Indians. The Congress was not making war a bargaining-counter but it earnestly felt that without immediate transfer of power, willing help from the public might not be forthcoming. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru openly declared that “in a conflict between democracy and freedom on the one side and fascism and aggression on the other, our sympathies must inevitably lie on the side of democracy.”

Viceroy’s Declaration of October 17, 1939. The Viceroy in reply to Congress demand for responsible Government at the Centre, invited 50 representatives of different political groups and after discussing with them issued a statement on October 17, 1939. He said that Britain had plunged into war not in order to secure any personal gain but to guarantee lasting peace and better political institutions to the free nations of the world. He also gave an undertaking to India that at the end of war the government would be prepared to modify the Act of 1935 in the light of Indian wishes.

The Viceroy’s reply to the demands of Congress did not convince the leaders of the Congress, to help Britain in such a crucial phase. They demanded that India must be declared an Independent Nation and then only they would help Britain in the war. The Viceroy again sent a reply to the Congress on October 17, 1939 in which he wrote that the Congress’s immediate demand for substantial powers impracticable, and after the war, the Government could think over the entire constitutional scheme. This reply was strongly criticised by the Indian Leaders.

Resignation of the Congress Ministries. The Working Committee of the Congress condemned the statement as a repetition of the same old imperialistic policy. Mahatma Gandhi said that “the old policy of divide and rule is to continue. The Congress has asked for bread and it got stone.” The Congress resolution said: “The Viceroy’s statement is in every way unfortunate.” The High Command issued instruction to Congress Ministeries to resign immediately. In eight provinces the Congress Ministries resigned forthwith. In all these Provinces the Viceroy declared the breakdown of the Constitution and authorised the Governors to assume all powers hitherto vested in and exercised by the Ministers and the Legislature. Thus, whatever semblance of responsible Government had been given to Provinces by the Act of 1935, was finished and the chapter of autocratic rule of the Governors began once again.

Attitude of the Muslim League Or Communal Role of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

In the preceding paragraphs we have already discussed the attitude of Congress to British war efforts. Now we will try to analyse the stand of the Muslim League. A candid no from the Congress regarding war help made the Viceroy lean more and more on the support of Muslim League. By a resolution passed on September 18, 1939, the League had already showed its sympathy with the British Government and promised to associate actively with war efforts provided the interest of the Muslims were safeguarded in Congress-dominated Provinces and secondly, that no constitution would be enacted by His Majesty’s Government without consulting the League. Thus, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah adopted the policy of sitting on the fence. He neither accepted Viceroy’s statement of October 17, 1939 nor rejected it openly. On 5th November, 1939 Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah addressed a letter to Lord, Linlithgow asking for assurances on four points. The reply that he received was also conciliatory.

The resignations of Congress Ministries came as a boon to Muslim League. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah decided to capitalise the opportunity. He called on Muslims throughout India to mark and observe 22nd December, 1939 as a day of deliverance from the ‘tyranny, oppression and injustice’ of the Congress regime in the Provinces. Mahatma Gandhi’s advice to Mohammad Ali Jinnah against celebrating the Day of Deliverance fell on deaf ears. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru expressed his annoyance to Mahadev Desai in the following words: “You must have seen Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s new statement. There is a limit to political falsehood and indecency but all limits have passed away. I do not see how I can even meet Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah now.” After this the Muslim League passed a resolution of Pakistan on 23rd March, 1940 (Its details have been given in Chapter X.).

Congress offers Constitutional Co-operation to the Government. The war situation in Europe was changing fast. It became grave by the middle of 1940. Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France—all had gone down before Germany by this time. England too stood in great and immediate danger. It was going to nuts with the recurring air raids by German bombers. Hitler’s sphere of influence was expanding day by day. The Nazism of Hitler posed a serious threat to the very existence of democracy. In view of all these Mahatma Gandhi revised and toned down his stand and declared that India would not seek her independence out of Britain’s ruin. He felt that a change in Congress attitude was imperative. The Working Committee of the Congress met at Poona and by a resolution offered help to the British Government on two conditions—the first was that the British Government should

recognise India's right to complete independence after war; and secondly, that it should agree to set up a National Government composed of all the parties immediately.

Churchill Comes to Power. In the meantime significant political changes took place in England. Mr. Churchill a rank conservative succeeded Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister and Amery took over from Zetland the office of the Secretary of State for India on 10th May, 1940, as Hitler was advancing triumphantly in Europe. The Conservatives who came to power in England were not at all sympathetic to Indian wishes. But the deteriorating war situation in Europe compelled the Conservatives to pacify Indians by conceding some of their demands. The Viceroy invited the leaders of public opinion and after consultations issued on August 8, 1940.

OFFER OF AUGUST 8, 1940

A statement consisting of new proposals was issued on August 8, 1940 and hence it has been called 'The August offer' of the Viceroy.

The few significant features of the offer were as follows:

It was the definite objective of the British Government to *grant Dominion Status* to India.

The British Government was in sympathy with the strong insistence by the Indians that they should be allowed to make a constitution for themselves. After the war a body representative of all the principal elements in India's national life would be set up to work out the Constitution.

The Governor-General's Council would be expanded to include a certain number of representatives of all political parties.

The Governor-General would also establish a War Advisory Council consisting of the representatives of all political parties and all other interest in the national life of India.

That the Government would not transfer its responsibilities for peace and welfare of India to any party whose authority was not acceptable to any major group in India's national life.

The full weight would be given to the views of minorities in the constitution.

A new constitutional scheme would be built within the British Commonwealth of Nations'

An Appraisal — August offer registered an advance of the first rate importance in the method of handling the Constitutional Problem. It was the first time that Indians were made primarily responsible for making the new constitution for India. It was also declared that the goal of British Government was to establish the Dominion status in India.

To quote Mr. Amery: "The Status of Dominion or of this country for that matter for our status in the Commonwealth although not perhaps our status in the same as theirs — is one not inferior to that of nations that perforce stand alone, but superior ... there is no higher status in the world."

Congress Rejects the Offer. The Congress rejected the offer for the following reasons : The Congress had demanded the setting up of a Provincial National Government immediately with full control over the Defence. The Viceroy's offer was non-committal in this respect. It simply promised to include Indians in the Executive Council without assuring that Defence would also be transferred to some Indian Members of the Council.

The second sinister element in the offer was its promise to the League that no change in the existing set-up would be made without its consent which meant that the League would have a veto over the future constitutional progress of India. This assurance to the League breathed the foulness of usual British game of 'divide and rule'. The Hindus were left at the mercy of the

Muslims. Such a step was anti-national and highly provocative. It was this assurance that encouraged the League to press for Pakistan.

Muslim League Rejects August Offer. The Working Committee of the Muslim League met in New Delhi on 28th September, 1940 and by a resolution declared that it was unable to accept the offer. It demanded that the League and the Congress should be given nothing less than equal representation in the Executive Council. Secondly, the League Representatives should be appointed as non-official advisers to the Governors in the Provinces administered by them Section 93.

Criticism : Some critics of the August Offer have said that the British Government missed the last chance of bringing the Congress into the war. The Congress Working Committee showed its willingness to help Britishers in the war but the attitude of the Britishers was not favourable to them. Mahatma Gandhi was in their favour but the President of the Congress Maulana Abul Kalam Azad rejected the August Offer, Mahatma Gandhi himself was of the opinion that 'August Offer' widened the gulf between the Congress and England. The Muslim League welcomed the August Offer. According to them; the offer met the League's demand for a clear assurance to the effect that no further constitution interim or final should be adopted by the British Government without their approval and consent. The League declared that the partition of India was the only solution of the most difficult problem of Indian's future constitution but it was very surprising that the Muslim League neither accepted nor rejected the offer.

The August offer failed to achieve its object. It was a direct encouragement and incitement to civil discord and strife. It could neither satisfy the people nor did it succeed in gaining the Indian's cooperation for war. It further widened the gulf not only in Congress and Britishers but in Congress and Muslim League also.

INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA, OCTOBER, 1940

The rejection of the Congress demands by the British Government once again disappointed the Congress as well as Mahatma Gandhi. On 13th October, 1940 the Congress Working Committee met in Wardha where Mahatma Gandhi unfolded his plan of Individual Civil Disobedience. England was facing the most critical hour of her life. For a person like Subhas Chandra Bose this was the most opportune time to strike the last and the hardest blow to the tottering skeleton of British Authority. But Mahatma Gandhi even while he was in a mood to fight, could not come out of his shell of gentlemanliness. By starting a mass movement, he did not like to embarrass the Government. So he decided to offer individual Satyagraha simply with a view to register his mild protest against the uncompromising attitude of the Government. Mahatma Gandhi selected his disciple Vinoba Bhave to inaugurate the movement. He started delivering anti-war speeches and was arrested after four days. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested next. The satyagrahis in their speeches appealed to the people not to extend war help to the Government. By May, 1941, nearly 14,000 satyagrahis courted arrest.

Expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Regardless of the Congress satyagraha and its demands, the Viceroy decided that he could no longer follow the policy of wait and see. He issued a communique on 21st July, 1941, to enlarge the Executive Council. He raised the strength of the Executive from 7 to 12. The number of Indian members in it was also increased from 3 to 8, all of them to be chosen from outside the Congress and the League fold. The

Indians thus became in majority in the Executive. The Viceroy threw up and played upon this fact to prove that the Indians were being given major share in the administration of India. It was a mere make-believe. *The vital departments like Defence, Home and Finance remained in the charge of British members.* It was a clear proof of British distrust of Indians. Moreover, since the new additions made to the Executive were not made from the ranks of the Congress or the League, people had no confidence in them. All the new members were so to say the 'yesman' of the Viceroy and most faithful servants of the Crown. Under the cover of democratic expansion of the Executive, *the Viceroy continued to be* the real head of the State, possessing dictatorial powers. The broad basing or the expansion of the Executive made, as such, no radical change in its character.

Suspension of Individual Satyagraha. As a concession to public opinion, the Viceroy on 3rd December, 1941 announced the release of all the satyagrahis. He did so perhaps to celebrate the occasion of the appointment of new members in his Executive or may be to restore public's confidence in them. Mahatma Gandhi did not feel much happy with this step of the Viceroy. He, in a press interview, said that the releases 'cannot evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord in me'. He wished the civil disobedience to continue. But he advised the released Congressmen not to offer Satyagraha again until they received clear instructions from the Congress Working Committee.

Hitler had violated the Non-Aggression Pact concluded with Russia on 23rd August, 1939 and attacked it on 22nd June, 1941. In the meantime war situation in Europe became more critical. Hitler's armies were marching triumphantly through Russia. On 7th December, 1941 Japan struck at Pearl Harbour and started war in the Pacific. Next day Japan overran Shanghai and Siam without much resistance. Singapore, Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia fell to the Japanese forces which kept on advancing towards Burma. The deteriorating war situation demanded reappraisal of Congress programme. The leaders were convinced that Britain was a lesser evil than Nazi Germany or Japan. The Congress, therefore, called off the movement for the time being. At his own request Mahatma Gandhi was relieved of the responsibility to lead the Congress. It was also felt that National Defence Corps should be organised to meet the emergency of war which approaching the threshold of India.

THE CRIPP'S MISSION

Cripp's Proposals (March 1942) to end the Deadlock

In 1942, the British Government realised that it was difficult to remain indifferent towards the Indian problem any longer. The war situation became worst. Calcutta was threatened by Japanese invasion but still the attitude of Indian National Congress did not change. The Congress was not prepared to help Britishers against anybody. This caused Mr. Winston Churchill to announce on March 11, 1942 that war cabinet had come to unanimous decision of Indian Policy and that in order to explain it and "to satisfy himself upon the spot by personal consultation that the conclusions upon which we all agreed and which we believe represent a just and final solution, will achieve their purpose. Sir Stafford Cripps, the Leader of the House of Commons would as the Emissary of British Government proceed as soon as possible to India." He also declared that "the crisis in the affairs of India arising out of the Japanese advance has made Britain wish to rallying all the forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the invader."

Japan's spectacular success in conquering one country after another disturbed the complacency of the British statesmen. Both England and the U.S.A. began to feel the necessity of revising and softening of their attitude towards India. On 22nd March, 1942, the British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate with Indian political parties and secure their co-operation in the prosecution of war. The choice of Cripps was a significant one. He was a member of the British War Cabinet and leader in the House of Commons. Above all he was said to be a personal friend of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. He had lately returned from Russia after completing his mission successfully. Hence there could be no better person than he to come to India as a negotiator.

Causes Leading to the Cripps Mission in India. In Churchill's own words, 'the decision to send Cripps out to India was taken because the crisis in the affairs of India arising out of the Japanese advance has made us wish to rally all the forces of Indian life guard their land from the menace of the invader.' The causes for the Cripps Mission were the following : The Congress although it condemned Fascism, Nazism and Japanese militarism, refused to give active co-operation to the Government and insisted on the fulfilment of her demands. The Individual Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi also had disturbing effect on war efforts. The British public began to realise that Indians must be given some definite and substantial assurance as a price for winning their help against advancing Japanese forces.

Pressure of Chiang Kai-shek. The visit to India by Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and his wife in February, 1942, also underlined the need of semi-agreement between British Government and the Indian Leaders. Mr. Chiang Kai-shek during his stay conferred with the Government of India and several prominent leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In his farewell speech he made an appeal to the Indians for help in war. He also expressed hope that Britain would as early as possible concede real political power to the Indian People.

Pressure of Roosevelt. President Roosevelt of America also had a soft corner for the national aspirations of India. He also felt that British imperialistic interests were the main hurdle in arriving at a mutually honourable settlement between England and India. He did not like Winston Churchill's announcement in September, 1941, that Atlantic Charter would not be applicable in the case of India. The gist of the Charter was that every country would have the right of self-determination at the end of war. Roosevelt knew well that the Indian support in war efforts was not forthcoming only because Britain was disagreeable to promise Dominion Status to India even after the war was over. He took up India's case with Winston Churchill and the latter announced that provisions of Atlantic Charter would be applicable to all the countries without any exception.

Pressure on Winston Churchill to negotiate with the Indian politicians came from Australia also. Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Evatt, expressed his wish in the Australian Parliament that India should be given self-government so as to enable her to extend war help effectively.

Immediate Danger of Japan. Japan's successes in Singapore (Malaya), Indonesia and Andamans alarmed the Allies. Japanese Men-of-War had started patrolling the Bay of Bengal. On March 8, 1942, Rangoon also fell. The fall of Burma frightened the British Government. Mr. Winston Churchill later on in his autobiography admitted that he and all his friends felt that

if India was to be defended against the invader, the political deadlock in India had to be resolved speedily by all possible means. Only three days after the fall of Rangoon, Mr. Winston Churchill declared that the British War Cabinet had decided to send Cripps to India with a new plan.

Sir Cripps arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1942, with the draft declaration on the basis of which he was to conduct negotiations with the leaders of Indian Political Parties.

The Terms of Cripps' Proposal

The following were the terms of Cripps' Proposal:

Establishment of Dominion. The British Government in view of the political unrest and doubts in Indian minds about the fulfilment of any promise made on behalf of the Crown, stated in very clear words that their object was the creation of Indian Union which would constitute a Dominion, equal in every respect to other Dominions and in no way subordinate to any foreign power in its domestic and external affairs.

Establishment of a Constitutional Assembly. The British Government would see to it that an elected body was set up soon after the end of war to frame a new constitution for India. Provision would be made for the participation of Indian States in the constitutionmaking body.

Right of the Provinces to Make Separate Constitutions. The Provinces would have the option to accept the new constitution or retain their existing constitutional position. Doors would be open for them to join the Indian Union at any stage later on. The willing Provinces would have the right to frame a constitution of their own and enjoy the same status as the Indian Union.

Treaty. A treaty would be negotiated between and signed by the British Government and the Constitution-making body of India. Such a treaty would cover all the *matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility* from British to Indian hands. The Constituent Assembly would be bound to honour the assurance given to the *racial and religious minorities* regarding protection of their interests. The treaty would, however, not impose any restriction on the power of Indian Union to revise its relations with other states.

Whether or not an Indian State agreed to accept the new Constitution, it would be binding on it to get its former treaty revised in accordance with the New Constitution.

Composition of the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly would be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion agreed upon some other form before the end of war.

Immediately upon the end of hostilities, Provinces would go to polls. The entire membership of the Lower House of Provincial Legislature would form a single electoral college and proceed to elect the Constituent Assembly on the basis of proportional representation. The new body would, in number, be *about one - tenth of the electoral college*.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as members of British Provinces.

Cripps' Proposals Relating to Interim Settlement

The draft further said — “During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for, and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their

world war effort; but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the people of India. His Majesty's Government desire, and invite, the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of the country of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help to the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."

Rejection of Cripps' Proposals by the Congress

Indians could not be satisfied by the Cripps' Proposals. There was a lot of frustration in the country against the proposal Mr. Cripps were rejected by every section of the Indian Community. The Congress also rejected the proposals brought by Cripps for the following reasons :

The People of the States were not given the right to send their representatives.

The Congress in principle could not accept that the States in the Constituent Assembly may be represented by the nominees of the rulers and not by the elected representatives of the people. The Congress feared that the State nominees would form a reactionary bloc and in league with other groups would obstruct all progressive legislation.

Right of the Indian States and the Provinces to keep out of the Indian Union.

The Congress stood for undivided India. It was deadly opposed to the creation of Pakistan. The provision in the Cripps' scheme regarding the right of the Provinces to keep out of the Indian Union was a clear hint and encouragement to the Muslims to stick to their demand for Pakistan. The Congress resented the subtle attempt made by the British Government to break up the country into several independent States. The same sort of mischief was being played with regard to States. The Indian States were also given the choice to accept or reject the new Constitution. According to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar, "*The creation of more than one Union, howsoever consistent in theory with the principle of self-determination, will be disastrous to the lasting interests of the country and its integrity and security.*" Jawaharlal commenting on it said : "The states as well as the Provinces would all join in the Constitution-making, would influence the Constitution, and then would walk out of it

Reactionary elements differing from each other in many ways would unite to frustrate the evolution of a strong, progressive, unified national state." The Congress deplored the incentive which the proposals gave to separatism. Although the Congress was resolved not to compel any Province or State to remain in the Indian Union, still it intended to preserve the territorial integrity of the country unimpaired. Had the Congress accepted Cripps' proposals, the communal problem would have become more complicated and tense than ever before. Besides it, the country would have also been split into several sovereign States.

Indians were not given control over Defence.

The British Government flatly rejected the Congress demand for Indian control over the Defence department. The proposals said that during the critical war-period and until the new Constitution was framed, the Defence was to remain in the hands of an Englishman. The Congress in a resolution passed on 2nd April, 1942 said: " British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete and there appears to be no vital change in the present structure. At any time Defence is a vital subject... to take away Defence from the sphere of responsibility

at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and nullity.” Congress demanded full freedom as a condition precedent to Indian co-operation in War effort. It stated clearly that a slave country cannot have inspiration to shoulder any responsibility in the prosecution of war.

Refused of Cripps to make Viceroy as the Constitutional head and establish National Government.

The Congress in view of the grave war position, insisted on setting up of a national Government and making Viceroy a titular head. The Congress was worried not about the ‘post-dated cheque’ so much as about the interim arrangement. It wanted the Executive Council of the Governor-General to work as a cabinet. It believed in the principle of having one bird in hand rather than two in the bush. It worked on the criterion laid down in its resolution that ‘the real test of any declaration is its application to the present.’ It is wrong to say that Gandhiji was responsible for the rejection of Cripps’ Proposals. In fact he alone was favouring it while other members of the Congress Working Committee were unanimous in their denunciation of the scheme. Gandhiji described the proposal as a ‘post-dated cheque’; someone added ‘on a failing bank.’

Rejection of Cripps’ Proposals by Muslim League

The Muslim League also rejected the proposals brought by Cripps’. The Muslim League in a resolution passed on 11th April, 1942, stated the following reasons for rejecting the proposals:

The proposals had not clearly accepted the League’s demand for Pakistan. Notwithstanding the giving of right to the Provinces to retain their independence, the proposals appeared to lay stress on the formation of a single Union of India.

The proposals *did not provide for another Constituent Assembly* comprising only *Muslim members*.

The proposals had failed to *provide for separate electorate* system for the Constituent Assembly. It was likely to have Hindu majority in it.

The proposals were regarding the protection of the interests of racial and religious minorities. It also did not make clear what the wording and contents of the treaty would be and who would be the enforcing authority to secure its compliance.

The proposals had not made it compulsory for the States to join the Constituent Assembly, which the League considered unjust.

No date for the proposed interim arrangement had been fixed in Cripps’ scheme.

The representation of the Muslims in Provincial Assembly was inadequate.

CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF CRIPPS’ MISSION

Sir Cripps who came to India in a sanguine mood failed miserably in his mission in spite of the fact that he was an eminent diplomat as well as a personal friend of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Causes of his failure were as follows :

Inadequacy of the Proposals.

The principal reason of the failure of Cripps’ mission was that the proposals were quite inadequate in substance to pacify the Indian leaders. They fell far short of the demands of the Congress and the League. According to Dr. A.K. Ghosal, the method of forming the

Constitution-making body was defective based to sectionalism and communalism. The Provinces were considered as units to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

Nominated Members of the States.

Another serious defect in the composition of the Constituent Assembly was the presence of the nominated members of the States. It was feared that the State nominees, in conjunction with other reactionary forces, would form a powerful group to oppose the Congress. Another shocking suggestion in Cripps' scheme was right of a Province to form an independent government and to frame a separate constitution. This provision was calculated to give the hardest and most fatal blow to the unity of the country. In that case there would have been not two but half a dozen Pakistans in India. The Congress was concerned more with the immediate gain than a deferred one. Its minimum demand was the setting up of a responsible government at the Centre with Indian control over the Defence Department. Since the British Government did not agree to it, the Congress could not but reject the scheme.

Selfish and Uncompromising attitude of British Authority.

It was an admitted fact that the British Government was unwilling to confer independence on India. The British statesmen were planning to tide over the war crisis with Indian help secured by befooling them. They were not sincere and firm even in regard to post-dated promises that they made. If the British were going to part with total power at the end of war, observes Michael Brecher, "a limited transfer could take place during the conflict, including the creation of a substantive Indian-controlled Defence Ministry, one of the technical bones of contention."

Laski remarked, "It seems that His Majesty's Government presided over by Mr. Churchill did not send Sir Stafford Cripps to India with an honest and earnest desire to solve the deadlock, the real thought was less the achievement of Indian freedom than of a *coup de main* in the propaqandist art among our allies who contrasted American relations with the Philippines against British relations with India." A Calcutta paper the *Statesman* wrote: "So long as the India Office and the Government of India drafted the proposals, no emissary can succeed and no effort will be made to cope with hourly increasing danger to this country. The blame lies with India Office and the official section of the Government of India."

Lord Halifax's Speech, April 7, 1942.

Another reason which accounted for the sudden breakdown of the negotiations between Cripps and the Congress was the speech of the British ambassador in the U.S.A., Lord Halifax. While the atmosphere in India was alight with a fair degree of optimism, Lord Halifax criticised the Congress and predicted the failure of negotiations in India. He said, "If our best efforts fail, the British Government would find itself obliged to do its own duty without the assistance or co-operation of the larger organised Indian parties. We have had no cooperation from the Indian National Congress, the largest and best organised political party in India." He also added that the claim of the Congress to speak for the whole of India was also not true or tenable. His speech had an unhealthy effect on the attitude of Cripps. Only three days after Halifax's speech, Cripps wrote a sharp letter to the Congress President accusing the Congress of trying to lord over the minorities. Such a baseless accusation pained the leaders of the Congress which thereafter adopted a more stiff and uncompromising attitude than it was before.

Lack of Confidence in the Motives of the British.

There was acute distrust of the British intentions in Indian minds. The bitter memories of the British attitude after the First Great War were still fresh. Indians being once burnt felt twice shy to attach any credence to British promises. Their misgivings were further confirmed by Churchill's statement in 1941 that he had assumed the office of British Prime Minister not with the purpose of disintegrating the British Empire. He had also stated that the principle of self-determination as mentioned in the Atlantic Charter would not apply in the case of India and Burma. Hence the Congress and all other major parties were resolved to secure something substantial and immediate before agreeing to extend war help to the British Government.

Wrong Notions of Cripps and His Tactless Handling of the Situation.

Cripps, in fact, was a boor under many wrong notions. He had too inflated a notion about his diplomatic skill. He believed that his scheme was the best for solving the deadlock in Indian politics. Secondly, he proceeded with the wrong presumption that Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru could always carry the Congress with him. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru himself explained his position in a letter to one of his friends "Cripps could not understand that there were limits beyond which I could not carry the Congress and there are limits beyond which the Congress could not carry the people."

Cripps himself was partly responsible for the breakdown of negotiations. He tackled the situation clumsily. At first he agreed to set up a national and responsible government at the Centre but after on under the pressure of British Prime Minister and Indian Viceroy he changed his mind. By doing so he lost the trust reposed in him by Indian leaders. He committed another mistake by writing a strongly worded letter to the Congress President. For these two reasons the Congress refused to take his proposals seriously.

Firm Principles of the Congress.

The Congress firmly adhered to its demand for complete independence. Nothing less than that was acceptable to it. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes in his book '*India Wins Freedom*' that he told Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru : *If we accept Cripps' offer, we might have cause to rue it in future. In case the British went back on their word, we should not even have the justification for launching a fresh struggle. War had given India an opportunity for achieving her freedom. We must not lose it by depending upon a mere promise.*" Still the doors were open for an honourable settlement on the principle of 'give and take'. The atmosphere was quite congenial. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru is said to have declared after Cripps' departure : "We are not going to surrender to Japanese invaders. In spite of all that had happened we are not going to embarrass British war effort in India." The Congress was earnest in its desire for a solution. The British authorities alone were responsible for undoing the work of Cripps and prolonging the constitutional crisis in India.

Question of Defence and the Veto of Viceroy.

The Congress demanded cash, not a deferred payment for its war help. It cared more for immediate gain. At a time when the Japanese forces were at the threshold of India, the Congress was not going to be pacified by the inclusion of a few Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council. It demanded a national government at the Centre with Viceroy acting as a nominal head. Neither Sir Cripps nor the British Government agreed to immediate transference of power. The second point which sealed the fate of Cripps' offer was disagreement over the

control of Defence Department. The Congress claimed full control of the Defence in Indian hands while Cripps agreed to give only partial control. He consented to the appointment of a Defence Minister who might look after trivial matter of defence while all the important decisions were to be taken by the Commander-in-Chief. Talks failed because the Congress was disinclined to have a lukewarm control over the vital department of defence.

ANALYSIS OF THE CRIPPS' PROPOSALS

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's critical analysis of these proposals is worth quoting. He remarks, "The more one thought of these proposals, the more fantastic they grew. India became a checker-board containing scores of nominally independent or semi-independent States, many of them relaying on Britain for military protection of autocratic rule. There was to be neither political nor economic unity and Britain might will continue to exercise dominating power both physically and economically, through the many petty states she controlled."

Mahatma Gandhi thought these proposals as inadequate and treated them as post-dated cheque. He opposed these proposals from the very beginning. He is stated to have told to Cripps frankly: "*Why did you come if this is what you have to offer! If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home.*" Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya observed, "Cripps' proposals embodied different items palatable to different tastes. To the Congress there was the Preamble which spoke of Dominion Status... and above all the Constituent Assembly and its right of secession even at the outset. To the Muslim League there was highly comforting provision of any Province having the right to secede from the Indian Union. The Princes were not only left free to join or not to join but were given the sole right to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly... There was no intention to part with power in them."

Withdrawal of Cripps' Proposals. Owing to the unwillingness of all the political parties to accept the proposals, Sir Cripps withdrew his offer. On 12 April, 1942, he left for England.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT OF 1942 (LAST GREAT STRUGGLE OF THE CONGRESS TO OUST THE IMPERIALISTS)

Circumstances leading to Quit India Movement

On April 11, 1942, suddenly the Cripps proposals were withdrawn and the whole drama of Cripps Mission to India Proved to be only a propaganda without any intention of acceding to the demands of the Indians. Before the outside world, Britishers painted a dark picture of India as a divided house unfit for the immediate freedom, but in India there was utter frustration and disgust. The Congress efforts to re-organise India for an effective fight against the Japanese menace received a severe jolt and the general masses in India were bitterly against the Britishers. *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* writes : " There was great bitterness against the British which at that time was so intense that they did not think of the consequences of the Japanese conquest of India." In the meanwhile, Japanese danger to India greatly increased and their attack on Bengal seemed imminent. However Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that if the British immediately left India there would be no reason left for Japan to attack this country. It was, therefore, proposed that 'Quit India' resolution should immediately be passed. The demand was for an immediate transfer of power to Indian failing which the Congress would, launch a non-violent movement against the British, Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps of the opinion that at

the time when Japan was knocking at the very doors of India, the British Government in India would not take drastic steps against the movement and try to come to terms with the Congress. Cripps negotiations broke down because of the British obstinacy regarding term arrangement. Cripps offered a long-term plan whereas the Congress stuck to its demand of a Cabinet Government at the Centre immediately. All the parties rejected the offer for one or the other reason. Cripps in his frustration threw the entire responsibility for the failure of his mission on the Congress. In his speeches in London he raised an accusing finger at the Congress. This led to worsening of political situation in the country. Moreover, the abrupt announcement regarding the breakdown of negotiations and his swift departure from India convinced Indians that Cripps had deceived them in the interests of British propaganda in America. Some said that Cripps had no mission to fulfil except that of showing to the free world that the British were earnest in transferring power in Indian hands but Indians were a fool to decline the offer. Then there was vile propaganda going on in British Press that the Congress did not represent all sections of Indian people and that the British did not know whom to hand over the reins of the Indian administration. Such silly talks by the British statesmen caused much pain and despair in Indian hearts. People in exasperation began to feel that freedom could not be won by peaceful methods.

The threat of Japanese invasion of India was becoming a grave reality. The long line of Indian refugees from Burma was pouring into India with their tales of woe and misery. Mr. Aney, who as a member of Viceroy's Executive Council and incharge of welfare of Overseas Indians, flew to Burma to see for himself the plight of Indians. He was accompanied by Pt. Hridaya Nath Kunzru and Mr. Dam. On return they issued a statement which said that Indian refugees were being treated in a manner as though they were 'pariahs' or untouchables. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* on May 10, 1942, "The admitted inequality of treatment of Indian and European evacuees and the manifestly over-bearing behaviour of troops are adding to the distrust of British intentions and declarations."

Another factor which drove the people to the end of their tether was the reign of terror in East Bengal. The Government had acquired a vast land for military purposes. Thousands of farmers were thrown out of their ancestral fields. It created a good deal of unrest and agitation in every heart. It was not all The Government added to the miseries of the people by destroying thousands of country-made boats which were the principal means of livelihood for lakhs of people. The prices of essential commodities also went up. Indians lost faith in paper currency.

The national leaders were convinced that the English were too weak to defend India. This belief was strengthened by British reverses in Singapore, Malaya and Burma. They also felt that the Japanese had a grudge only with the British and if they left India immediately, the Japanese might give up the idea of invading India. Inspired by this belief, Mahatma Gandhi told the British to quit India lock, stock and barrel. On 5th July, 1942, he wrote in *Harijan* : "Don't leave India to Japan but leave India to Indians in an orderly manner." The menace of Japan had become so imminent that the Government had plans to evacuate Eastern India. This was the most opportune time, thought the Congress, for the orderly and timely withdrawal of the British from India.

‘Quit India’ Resolution, August 8, 1942.

The country as one man was feeling desperate with the slow pace of events at the higher level. Japanese were advancing at terrific speed while the Government was not making any headway towards resolving the deadlock. Mahatma Gandhi felt that some quick and strong action was needed to meet the challenge of Japan. And that step could not be taken unless the Indians were made masters of their destiny. He wrote a number of articles in *Harijan* exhorting the people to be active. It was intolerable for him to see people accepting things lying down. He favoured the plan of some direct action even if it meant hampering the war efforts. In order to give shape to Mahatma Gandhi's views, the Congress Working Committee met on July 14, 1942, at Wardha and adopted the famous 'Quit India' Resolution. This resolution was accepted with some modification by All India Congress Committee when it met in Bombay on 7th and 8th August, 1942. The resolution ran on the following lines :

“That the immediate ending of the British rule in India is an urgent necessity both for the sake of India and for the success of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom...(If India became free) a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations... It will be a composite Government representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary function must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as non-violent forces at its command.”

The resolution said:

“The Committee, therefore, resolves to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle... They (the people) must remember that non-violence is the basis of the movement...”

Repression of the Quit India Movement by the Government.

The Congress Resolution of 8th August, 1942 was not in the nature of an immediate ultimatum or challenge to the British Government. It was a sort of policy-statement. Mahatma Gandhi did not mean to take any hasty step. He had written a letter to the Viceroy and was awaiting the reply. In his letters to President Roosevelt and Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, he had expressed hope that they would mediate and persuade the British Government to see reason and to grant independence to India. The Government, however, adopted its usual course.

On the 9th August, 1942 morning, following the adoption of Quit India Resolution, Mahatma Gandhi along with all other members of the Congress Working Committee was arrested under Section 26 of D.I.R. They were lodged in Agha Khan Palace in Poona and Ahmednagar Fort. The whereabouts of the leaders were kept a secret from the public for a long time. The Congress Organisation was banned and party funds were forfeited. The police raided its offices and used severest measures to suppress the movement.

Character of the Movement.

The news of sudden arrest of all Congress leaders took the people by surprise. The leaderless masses did not know what course to follow. No clear instructions had been issued by the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi had stated simply this much: “It will be a movement which will

be felt by the whole world. It may not interfere with the movement of British troops, but it is sure to engage British attention. He had called upon the people to 'do or die'; and further said, "We shall either free India or die in the attempt." But at the same he had categorically stated that he was opposed to 'open rebellion.' It was to be mass movement of a 'strictly non-violent character.'

In this hour of confusion the remaining leaders of the Congress issued a booklet on behalf of the Party. This booklet contained 12-point programme as to how the movement was to be carried on. It included such items as peaceful *hartals* (strikes) throughout the country, manufacture of salt, Non payment of land revenue, etc. Later on the point of strike by the workers and Government servants was also included in the booklet of instructions. There was specific instruction that the means of communications were not to be dislocated at all. The people were asked to put police stations, *tehsils* and district headquarters out of action through non-violence. The term nonviolence being vague, Shri K.C. Mashruwala clarified the scope of Ahimsa on August 23,1942. He wrote: "In my opinion looting or burning of offices, banks, granaries, etc. is not permissible. Dislocation of traffic communications is permissible in a non-violent manner without endangering life." But after the arrest of leaders, the leadership of the movement passed into the hands of such men as did not care to take ample precaution to safeguard life. Hence the movement took a violent turn.

Phase of the 'Quit India' Movement.

Roughly speaking, the movement passed through four phases. The first phase began from the day of Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, *i.e.*, 9th August, 1942. It lasted for three to four days. This period was marked by strikes (*hartals*), demonstrations, processions and meetings. The greatest enthusiasm was shown by labourers in mills and factories. The textile mills particularly those in Ahmedabad and Madras had to be closed. This imposed war efforts because the mills could not supply khaki cloth to the military. The Tata Iron and Steel Mills were also affected. The workers of Aircraft Factory, Bangalore, and Imperial Tobacco Company, Saharanpur, joined their fellow strikers at other places. The workers employed in big factories and mills returned to their villages and carried the flame of revolution with them. The Government resorted to repressive measures in order to suppress the movement. In Bombay alone the police opened fire as many as 13 times till 2.30 p.m. in a single day on 11th August, 1942. The casualties include women and children. This indiscriminate firing changed the character of movement which henceforth turned into a riot. Had the Government acted prudently and allowed the demonstrations to take place peacefully, the movement would have subsided automatically.

In the second phase of the movement, the people raided municipal and other Government buildings. Railway stations, police stations and post offices were also attacked and many of them set on fire. Wires were cut and rails were removed. In several Provinces the infuriated mob also attempted to capture the court buildings. Maximum damage was done to railway departments in Madras, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where even the train service had to be suspended for a few days. In some parts this mob tried to bum the records and loot the Government treasury. In Ballia and some other parts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, even provincial governments and courts were set up. Troops were called into terrorise the mob by firing and other atrocious measures.

The movement entered its third phase in September, 1942. In sheer desperation the mob resorted to armed attacks as happened in Madras and Bengal. In Bombay, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the mob is said to have thrown bombs on the police. In its fourth phase, the movement became mild again as in its first phase. It continued till Mahatma Gandhi's release in May, 1944, in the form of demonstrations and processions on certain days of the month. Bal Gangadhar Tilak Anniversary and Independence Day were observed by taking out processions. Shri Jaya Prakash Narain and Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali took leading part in this revolt. The contribution of students, peasants and workers was also commendable. The Muslims generally kept aloof. The landlords, rich merchants and princes also did not lend any support to the movement.

Importance of Movement.

The revolt of **1942** is a memorable event of our national movement. It cannot be brushed aside as a trivial attempt for freedom. It was, we may say, the last formidable mass movement for securing freedom. According to data collected from varied sources, the police and the military had to open fire on **538** occasions. The official figure of the persons dead as a result of firing is **1,028**, although unofficial estimates vary from **10,000** to **40,000**. **60,229** persons were arrested. The immediate goal of the great uprising of **1942** was to secure freedom which it, no doubt, failed to realise. *The movement, however, succeeded very well in awakening and emboldening the masses. It removed from Indian hearts the fear of bullets. The movement in fact prepared the ground for the transfer of power.* The slogan of 'do or die' entered the souls of the people.

This fury of unarmed people shook the roots of British rule in India. Even the Englishmen had to admit and prophesy that if the British failed to find soon a way of handing over power smoothly, there was likelihood of a greater revolution to drive them out. One unfortunate result of the movement was that the British and the Muslims in their common hatred for the Congress, came closer to each other. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah acted as a staunch ally of the Government. He tapped all his resources to help the British war effort. He also told the Muslims to keep away from the Congress Movement of **1942**. The Government, at a time when Japan was knocking at the door, badly needed. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's faithfulness to the Crown, that the British Government obliged him by granting his demand for Pakistan.

Some Reactions Abroad.

One important gain of the revolt of **1942** was that it drew the attention of many nations to India's demand for Independence. The moral pressure of American public opinion became so strong that the British Government willy-nilly had to hand over independence to India. Marshal Chiang kai-shek also wrote to American President, Mr. Roosevelt, in July, **1942**, that it was in British interest to expedite the transfer of real political power to Indians. Mr. Chiang kai-shek then wrote to British Prime Minister also in the same tone.

Attitude of Muslim League and Communist Party Towards this Upheaval.

The attitude of Indian Communist Party towards the Second World War was governed by the instructions received from Moscow. At the outbreak of war, the party called it an imperialistic war. But this stand changed completely as soon as Germany invaded Russia and Russia signed a defence pact with England and France. The Indian Communists began to call it

Peoples' war to extend helping hand to the Government. The Communists naturally boycotted the Quit India Movement of 1942. For this betrayal, the Congress expelled all Communists from its fold.

The Congress did not get much active support from the Indian Muslims, except the Nationalist Muslims like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah in order to earn the goodwill of the Government, denounced the movement and directed his followers not to have anything to do with it. The Muslim League endorsed the stand taken by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in a resolution adopted on August 20, 1942, the League declared that: "The Muslim were not a whit less insistent than the Congress on the attainment of independence, but the purpose of the Congress was not to secure freedom for all constituent elements in the life of India but to bring the establishment of a Hindu Raj and to deal a death-blow to the Muslim goal of Pakistan." The League also warned the revolutionaries that if they attempted to interfere in the normal life of the Muslims, they would meet with stiff resistance.

Causes of the Failure of 1942 Movement.

The revolt of 1942 lasted for three months only. Broadly speaking, it failed in its attempt to paralyse the Government machinery in order to seize power. According to Dr. Amba Prasad, there were three main causes of its failure :

- “(1) Tactical mistakes of organisation and planning;
- (2) loyalty of the services; and
- (3) superior physical strength of the Government.”

Dr. Amba Prasad writes: "Since it was a mass movement and involved a programme of action much wider in scope than that of any of the earlier movements, it required a different technique from the one Mahatma Gandhi was used to in his satyagraha campaigns. It was necessary that leaders should know the entire strategy and go underground before the Government clapped them into jails. As we have seen no one knew what course of action had to be taken. Mahatma Gandhi was proceeding on two assumptions: firstly, that the British would be willing to negotiate if threatened with a mass movement at that moment of crisis, since he credited them with a high sense of realism; secondly, he had hoped that he would not be arrested as was the case in 1930." Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru also felt likewise. He wrote that: "Mahatma Gandhi, to our surprise, still clung to the belief that a settlement with the British Government was possible, and he said he would try his utmost to achieve it. And so, though he talked a great deal about action, he did not define it or indicate what he intended to do." According to Jai Prakash Narain, "the lack of organisation was so considerable that even important Congressmen were not aware of the progress of the revolt and, till late in the course of the uprising, it remained a matter of debate in many Congress quarters whether what the people were doing was really in accordance with the Congress programme."

The second factor that accounted for the failure of the movement was the unflinching loyalty of the Government servants and officials. The military, the police, the State rulers and the big businessmen—all helped the Government in crushing the revolt. The Government offices in spite of such a mass uprising continued to work smoothly. Thirdly, it was ^{not} a child's play to measure swords with the Government which had ample resources at its disposal to run the engine of repression. The satyagrahis and demonstrators had no intelligence department to

communicate with their fellowmen in other towns under cover of secrecy. Their financial position was also immensely weak. Despite the failure and weakness of revolt, it created mass awakening never witnessed before.

Results.

The heroism and courage shown by the people did not go waste. The sacrifice of the patriots brought the country nearer its goal of independence and within five years of this uprising, the country got her freedom. All the national leaders after their release from jail stated very clearly that they were proud of the doings of the people. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru declared : “I am very proud of what happened in 1942 ... I make it plain that I cannot condemn those who took part in the 1942 movement.” Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel’s strong words were : *Never before had such widespread uprising happened in India in the history of British Raj; as they did during the last three years. We are proud of the spirit in which the people reached.*” Mahatma Gandhi told Sir Reginald Maxwell in unequivocal terms: “I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it. I have no reparations to make, for I have no consciousness of guilt.” According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, “*All talk of Dominion Status was consumed in the fires of the revolt. India could have nothing short of independence. ‘Quit India’ had come to stay. It was a terrific blow to the imperial India.*”

Gandhiji’s Fast and Release from Jail.

The Government threw the entire responsibility of widespread violence on Gandhiji. It claimed to be in possession of ample documentary evidence to prove that he Congress kept a double face, it talked of peace and non-violence in one breath but encouraged armed rebellion in the other. Gandhiji rebutted such baseless charges and decided to observe 21 days’ fast to prove his innocence before God. The fast began on 19th February, 1943. He grew weaker day by day. His condition became critical after 13 days. There was countrywide agitation for his release. But the Viceroy refused to set him free. In protest, the three Indian members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council—H.P. Modi, N.R. Sarkar and M.S. Aney—laid down their offices. Even the physicians attending on Gandhiji doubted if Gandhi would outlive the fast. But despite his old age and worsening condition, Gandhi survived his fast. Kasturba Gandhi died while Gandhi was in detention. In April, 1944, Mahatma Gandhi fell seriously ill again. Lord Wavell, who had taken over as the Viceroy of India, in October, 1943, released him on 6th May, 1944.

WAVELL PLAN AND SIMLA CONFERENCE (JUNE, 1945)

The war in Europe had ended but it was raging in Asia. Japan was still unbeaten. World attention was now focussed on the Eastern front. India was to be the base of military operations against Japan. The British now more than ever before needed the moral and material support of the Indian people. It was the one reason why the British Government made a new offer for settlement. The other two reasons were the pressure from the Russian Government and the accusation by the Labour Party that Churchill was incapable of handling the constitutional crisis in India. Lord Linlithgow completed his term in October, 1943, and Lord Wavell became the new incumbent of the office of Viceroy of India. Soon after his appointment Wavell announced that he was carrying bagful of presents for the Indian people. But after taking over the charge, he did nothing except releasing Mahatma Gandhi from jail in May, 1944.

Wavell flew to London on 21st March, 1945 to consult His Majesty's Government on Indian affairs for about a month and a half. During this period, the hostilities in Europe had ended and the entire attention of Allies was diverted towards Japan. This necessitated the return of Mr. Wavell to India and Mr. Amery, The secretary of state for India and Lord Wavell simultaneously issued a statement which is known as Amery-Wavell Plan or simply Wavell Plan. Wavell came back on 4th June, 1945. On 4th June, 1945 he published his new plan known as Wavell Plan.

Main Provisions of Wavell Plan

This plan was mainly related to Viceroy's Executive Council and the following provisions were proposed :

Lord Wavell's Plan was a sort of interim arrangement till a new Constitution for India was framed and agreed to by Indians themselves. The highlight of the Plan was the reconstitution of Viceroy's Executive Council. It was to be largely Indian in character and composition, and more representative of the organised political opinion in the country. It was to have only two Englishmen—the Viceroy acting as its President and the Commander-in-Chief holding war portfolio. The Executive was to include equal number of Caste Hindus and the Muslims.

The proposals, as Wavell said in his broadcast, were designed to ease the political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government.

Leaving the border arrangement and tribal affairs, all other affairs were to be looked after by the Indians themselves.

The new Executive Council was to work under the Act of 1935. Lord Wavell, however, assured that he would not exercise his overriding powers unreasonably. He also promised that if at all the Secretary of State interfered, it would be not in British interests but in the interests of India.

Since the Viceroy had to perform the dual role of the representative of the Crown and Head of the Indian Executive, the Wavell Plan proposed to appoint a High Commissioner to look after Great Britain's commercial interests in India.

The Executive Council was to work like a Provisional National Government.

The formation of the Interim Government was in no way to prejudice the framing of a New Constitution at some later stage by the Indians themselves.

The Provinces, which were being administered by the Governors under Section 93, were to have ministries again formed on coalition basis.

All these changes will be introduced without making any change in the existing statute law except for one amendment to the 9th schedule to the Act of 1935 requiring that not less than three members of the Council must have at least 10 years service under Crown in India.

Simla Conference and its Failure

With most of the political leaders in jail, political life of the country was practically at a standstill. In order to enable the Congress leaders to participate in the conference and also make the atmosphere congenial for a settlement, Lord Wavell ordered the release of all the members of the Congress Working Committee. He sent invitations to 21 leaders including the former Chief Ministers of Provincial Governments, the leaders of the Congress and the League in the

Council of State, Gandhiji and Jinnah and one representative each of the Sikhs and the Scheduled Castes. The political conference began its deliberations in Simla on 29th June, 1945. The question of parity of Caste Hindus and Muslims in the Viceroy's Executive also created some problem. The Congress, although quite unwillingly, agreed to equal representation of Hindus and Muslims in the Cabinet, it was certainly not prepared to forgo its right of appointing nationalist Muslims. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, however, stuck to the point that only the League was competent to send Muslim Representatives in the Executive. *Dawn*, the official organ of the Muslim League, on 15th June, 1945 said 'that with regard to Muslim Society, the Mussalmans will tolerate no infiltration of non-League stooges to humour any party.' Had the Congress submitted to this unreasonable demand of the League, then it would have lost its national character and Mohammad Ali Jinnah would have characterised the Congress as a purely Hindu organisation. The Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Punjab Chief Minister Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, strongly protested against League's exclusive claim of sending Muslims to the reconstituted Cabinet. Mr. Tiwana was intending to send one Muslim to represent the Unionist Party in the Cabinet. The Congress too had in mind to offer a couple of seats to the Nationalist Muslims. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah refused to budge from the stand he had taken. He could not agree to the appointment in Executive Council of Muslims who did not belong to the league. The talks crashed on the rock of communalism. Lord Wavell announced the failure of conference on 14th July, 1945.

After the failure of talks, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad issued a statement at Simla. He declared that the Viceroy had assured him "In his first interview that no party to the conference would be allowed to obstruct settlement out of wilfulness. Everyone knew what Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah would do and everyone believed that against that possibility the Viceroy had armed himself with ~ authority to deal with him appropriately. Yet Wavell's hand was stayed at the last moment even as Cripps' was."

Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah had his own explanation regarding the failure of Simla Conference. At a Press Conference on 14th July, 1945, he remarked: "On a final examination and analysis of the Wavell Plan, we found that it was a snare. There was the combination consisting of Gandhi-Hindu Congress, who stood for India's Hindu National Unity, Lord Wavell, and Glancy-Khizr, who were bent upon creating disruption among the Mussalmans in Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement, by which, if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we would have signed our death warrant."

"On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back, that even about the five members of the Muslim Bloc, which were allotted to us community-wise, which is the essence of the Wavell proposals, we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim Representatives as our chosen spokesmen and there were two claimants—the Congress which claimed two, and Glancy-Khizr on behalf of the Punjab claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-Leaguer, a Nominee of Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, representing the Punjab Muslims."

I.N.A. TRIAL, NOVEMBER, 1945

Wavell's Plan was a sincere attempt to lead the country to the goal of independence. The failure of Simla Conference plunged the country into despair once again. Nevertheless, it led to the release of all the members of the Congress Working Committee. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel after their release heartily praised the doings of the people and also paid homage to the martyrs of the revolt of 1942 and thus removed the gloom of despair. Moreover, the trial of I.N.A. personnel and their magnificent defence by our leaders further enthused the people. The trial was staged in the Red Fort, Delhi. Three officers who stood in the dock were Dhillon, Sehgal and Shah Nawaz. They were convicted for defection from the British forces and joining the Indian National Army of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The three Generals — one a Hindu, other a Sikh and the third a Muslim—fell into British hands after the fall of Japan on 14th August, 1945. In order to defend the brave sons of soil, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru appeared in the court donned as a barrister. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai also acted as defence counsels. In spite of their best efforts, the judges found the accused guilty and awarded death sentences. All the three were, however, released by the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Claude Auchinlek.

The release of the three I.N.A. accused meant another political victory of the Congress. The inspiring arguments of the defence counsels roused a wave of patriotism in every part of the country. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai in the course of his arguments asserted that it was the birth right of a slave people to take up arms against the foreign rulers. Another good outcome of the trial was that it dispelled the fear of British imperialism from Indian hearts. Thirdly, it had its stimulating effect on the Indian army. The Government was convinced that it would be foolish to expect faithfulness and loyalty from the Indian forces. The Naval Mutiny in February, 1946, further impressed on the British overlords the desirability of leaving India to Indians themselves.

BROADCASTS BY LORD WAVELL AND ATTLEE

Labour Party comes to power in Great Britain.

On 10th July, 1945, Labour Party in England came to power. Mr. Attlee replaced Churchill as Prime Minister and Mr. Pethick Lawrence became the Secretary of State in place of Mr. Amery. Both Attlee and Lawrence were in sympathy with India's demand for self-government. The change in British Cabinet was a good augury for India.

In August, 1945, Lord Wavell summoned all the Governors of the Provinces for consultations. It was decided to hold elections. On 25th August, 1945 the Viceroy flew to London and after conferring with Labour Leaders returned to India on 18th September, 1945. Next day he declared that the elections which had been postponed owing to the outbreak of war, would be held in coming winter. The British King in his address to the British Parliament declared that in accordance with the promises already made to my Indian people, my Government will do their utmost to promote to conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, early realisation of full self-government in India. The Viceroy also declared on behalf of the Crown that a constitution-making body would be set up soon after discussing the matter with the State Representatives. He expressed his hope that not before long the Provinces would again have responsible governments.

Results of the Election in India.

During the winter months of the year 1945, elections were conducted in all the Provinces. The Congress made the famous 'Quit India' resolution as the central issue in its election manifesto and gained spectacular success. It swept the polls in general constituencies. It, however, could not gain much in Muslim Constituencies. The Muslim League captured 446 Muslim seats out of 495. Even the Unionist Party in the Punjab had a bad luck and it lost most of the seats to the League. The Congress succeeded in forming ministries in seven out of eleven Provinces. In North West Frontier Province, the Red Shirts formed the Ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib, who was a Congressman. The Muslim League seized power in Sind and Bengal. In the Punjab, a coalition Ministry was formed by Khizr Hayat Khan with the support of the Congress and the Sikhs led by Akali Party.

NAVAL MUTINY (FEBRUARY, 1946)

Before we proceed further, we must mention another incident which has serious bearing on the subject we are discussing. On the 19th of February, 1946, some personnel of Royal Indian Navy mutinied against the British officers. Some 3,000 ratings of the Signal School in Bombay held demonstration and went on hungerstrike in protest against 'untold hardships regarding pay and food, racial discrimination and against their commander's derogatory references to their national character.' Batches of ratings roamed the city in trucks and lorries. In the next two days the strike and trouble spread to other ports of Karachi, Calcutta and Madras. Congress, Communist and League flags were hoisted on lorries. The demonstrators attacked the British officers. When the British troops opened fire, the ratings retaliated with hand-grenades. By 22nd the mutineers got control of 20 naval vessels with guns mounted on them to open fire. At last Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel intervened and persuaded the mutineers on 23rd February, 1946 to surrender. In the meantime disturbances broke out in Bombay city. The police opened fire several times. As a result of the civil and naval turmoil, over 200 persons were killed and more than 1,000 injured.

"The mutiny opened the eyes of the British to the fact that Indian nationalism could no longer be contained in the ring drawn with armed forces as Indian personnel in the forces were beginning to succumb to the attraction of nationalism and there was not enough British personnel to go to the full round:"

Mr.VP.Menon, Constitutional Adviser to the Governor-General, has written, "The Viceroy (Lord Waved) was confident that in a conflict with the Congress, he could count generally on the support of the officials, the police and the army. At the same time, it would be unwise to try the Indian Army too highly in the suppression of their own people and as time went on the loyalty of even the Indian officials, the Indian Army and the police might become problematical. A large number of British Officials would probably take the first opportunity to retire, so that the British Government in India would be placed in a quite untenable position unless it found a very early solution and this it should do at any cost. The chief problem was to find some kind of bridge between the Hindu and Muslim."

Lord Attlee's announcement, 15 March, 1946.

The British Labour Party on the eve of elections in Great Britain had repeatedly assured the Indians that it would take up the case of India's Independence most sympathetically. After coming to office, despite the threat of Japan, it began to take interest in Indian Affairs. When the deliberations were being held in India, the Labour Government sent a parliamentary delegation consisting of the representatives of all the British political parties to gather first-hand information about India. On the basis of the delegation's report, Mr. Attlee announced in the House of Commons on 15th March, 1946 that the tide of nationalism was surging very fast in India and that it was in the British interest to take a positive action. He further said that the Cabinet Mission was visiting India with the intention of helping her to attain independence as speedily as possible. The Indians themselves were to decide what form of government would suit them although he hoped that they would elect to remain in the Commonwealth. Concluding his speech, he said, "*we are mindful of the rights of minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority.*" This significant and historic announcement was a severe blow to the fantastic and silly demands of the League.

CABINET MISSION PLAN (16th MAY, 1946)

The cabinet Mission which consisted of three British Cabinet Ministers—Lord Pethick-Lawrence. Secretary of state for India, Sir Stafford Cripps President of the Board of Trade and Mr. A.V. Alexander- First Lord of Admiralty—arrived in New Delhi on 24th March, 1946. Just after arrival, the leader of the Commission said, "We are convinced that India is on the threshold of a great future." The members of the Mission contacted and discussed with the leaders of Indian opinion one by one. In the round of talks they gathered that the outstanding issue of communal deadlock was a United India versus Pakistan. Excepting the League, all other parties were in favour of a United India. The Mission studied various alternative schemes with a view to finding out some formula agreeable to the Congress as well as the League. The Commission started its work and presented a plan, which was known 'Cabinet Mission Plan' of 1946.

The Mission closely and partially examined League's demand for Pakistan. It felt that such a proposition was not likely to solve the communal minority problem. Moreover, the members of the delegation could see no justification for including Hindu-Majority areas of the Punjab, Assam and Bengal in the proposed scheme of Pakistan. They said that the partition of India would in no case be acceptable to the Hindus including Sikhs. There were other weighty considerations also against the creation of a separate sovereign State. The New State according to delegation would be sound neither economically nor militarily. "Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps", writes Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, "said repeatedly that they could not see how a State like the Pakistan envisaged by the Muslim League could be viable and stable."

The Cabinet Mission, hence, made the following proposals: —

Union of India.

There should be a Union of India embodying both British India and the States. It should deal with foreign affairs, defence and communications, and should have the power, to raise finances necessary for these subjects.

The Union should have an executive and a Legislature constituted from British India and States' Representatives.

Communal Questions.

Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces. The States should retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

Groups of the Provinces.

Provinces should be free to form groups and each group should determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common. The first group embodied Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Central Province and Orissa. The Second group consisted of the Punjab, Northwest Frontier Province and Sind whereas the third included Bengal and Assam.

Reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution after an initial period of ten years and at every ten-years interval thereafter.

Composition of the Constituent Assembly.

The Mission also felt the need of suggesting the broad basis of future Constitution because without doing so, there was hardly any hope of persuading the Hindus and Muslims to join hands in the setting up of the constitution-making body.

The Mission proposed the formation of a Constituent Assembly consisting of 389 members—93 States' Representatives; 4 from the Chief Commissioner's Provinces; and the remaining 292 from the British Indian Provinces.

The Seats allotted to the Provinces should be further allocated to the main communities in proportion to their numerical strength. Every Province should send as many representatives to the Constituent Assembly as were proportionate to its population in the ratio of one to a million.

The Representatives allocated to each community in a Province should be elected by members of that community in its Legislative Assembly.

The Mission discarded the practice of giving over-representation to the minorities. It recognised only three categories of electorate—General, Muslim and Sikhs. Hindus, Parsees and Anglo-Indians were placed in the first group.

The Representatives of the States not exceeding 93 should be distributed among the States on the basis of the population of each State. To begin with, the mode of their selection was to be decided by mutual talks between the Negotiating Committee of British Indian Provinces and a committee set up for that purpose by the Indian States.

After the elections, the Constituent Assembly should meet at New Delhi as one body and elect a chairman. The Representative of the Provincial Legislatures then should break up into three sections, as follows:

Section A—Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Central Province and Orissa.

Section B—Punjab, North West Frontier Province and Sind.

Section C—Bengal and Assam.

The Representatives of each group should confer separately and decide the constitutions for the Provinces within their group and also what Provincial subjects they deal with commonly, leaving the rest to be handled by the Legislature of each Province.

The Provinces should have the power to withdraw from one group and join another, by a decision of their new Legislature after the new Union Constitution had come into force.

If the Constituent Assembly proposed to make any change in recommendations of the Mission regarding the form of constitution or the raising of any communal issue, it could not do so without obtaining the approval of the majority of the representatives of both the Hindus and the Muslims.

The new Constituent Assembly was not to be a sovereign body. There were some limitations placed on its powers, Besides observing the pattern given in the Mission Plan, it was to safeguard the interests of the minorities also.

Interim Government.

The Mission Plan stated that until the new constitution was framed, the administration should be run by an interim Government having the support of all major political parties. All the portfolios including that of War Minister should be held by Indian leaders enjoying the full confidence of the people. The British Government promised to give the fullest co-operation to the Interim Government in the smooth administration of India and also in accomplishing the transfer of power at some early date.

Treaty. The Cabinet Mission also provided for the negotiation of a treaty between the Constituent Assembly and Great Britain to cover all matters arising out of the transfer of power. The Mission declared that after the transition, it would not be possible for the Crown to retain paramountcy over the States. That paramountcy could also not be transferred to the Indian Union. (*Implicitly it mean: that the States would be free to become sovereign States after the withdrawal of the British*). The Mission hoped that India would not break off with the Commonwealth although she would be legally free to do so.

DIRECT ACTION BY THE MUSLIM LEAGUE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Since the Congress had ultimately accepted both the long-term and short-term plans of the Cabinet Mission, both of which had been rejected by the League completely, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, Invited Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru on 12th August, 1946, to form the Interim Government. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to do so. The Viceroy and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru both made fresh efforts to bring round the League to agree to forming a coalition Government. Mohammad Ali Jinnah remained obstinate. He decided to bid good-bye to constitutional methods. He called upon his followers to observe 16th August, 1946 as direct-action day. The Bengal and Sind ministries declared the 16th August, 1946 a public holiday. The Muslims took out processions and held meetings in all the big towns Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister of Bengal, went to the extent of saying that in case the Congress were put into power, the result would be 'the declaration of complete independence by Bengal and the setting up of a parallel Government.' The Result was lawlessness and bloodshed on an unprecedented scale in Calcutta. Suhrawardy encouraged the Muslims to kill Hindus and pillage their property.

According to rough official estimate nearly 5,000 Hindus lost their lives and over 15,000 were injured in Calcutta alone. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who happened to be in Calcutta on that day writes in '*India Wins Freedom*' - *The 16th August, 1946 was a black day in the History of India. Unprecedented mob violence plunged the great city into an orgy of bloodshed, murder and terror. Hundreds of lives were lost. Thousands were injured and property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. The city was in the grip of goondas.*

The Interim Government assumed office on September 2, 1946. The Viceroy renewed his efforts to induce the League to join the Cabinet and take part in the Constituent Assembly. The League agreed to enter the Executive Council but rejected the other part of the Plan. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah in his letter of 13th October, 1946 to the Viceroy wrote; 'but since, according to your decision, we have a right to nominate five members of the Executive Council on behalf of the Muslim League, my committee have, for *various* reasons, come to the conclusion to join the Interim Government.' Thus, the League's decision was not guided by the spirit of co-operation but to keep a check on the position of the Congress. It was hoping against hope that the two parties work together. The League continued its campaign of 'direct action.' In October, 1946, there was a large-scale outbreak of lawlessness, loot and arson in Noakhali and Tipperah Districts of East Bengal. In fact, it was not hooliganism by goondas but an organised attack planned by the Muslim League with the connivance of the executive officials. The Hindus suffered enormously both in person and property. The happenings of Noakhali sparked off communal trouble in Bihar, Garh Mukteshwar and Ahmedabad. The Muslim League then incited the Muslims in Punjab and North-West Frontier Province to raid Hindu houses and kill the inmates.

Attlee's Declaration to Leave India.

When the country was in grip of communal frenzy and riots; when everything was in a state of flux; when law was in the hands of wolves (and all of British creation) the British Government decided to Quit India by a fixed date. Mr. Attlee made an announcement in the House of Commons on February 20, 1947

"His Majesty's Government desires to hand over responsibility to authorities established by a Constitution approved by all parties in India. But unfortunately, there was at present no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities would emerge. If it should appear that an agreed constitution would not have been worked out by June, 1948, it should transfer the powers of the Central Government, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other ways as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian People."

It was also announced that Lord Wavell would be succeeded by Mountbatten as the last incumbent to the Viceregal office.

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY (PAKISTAN)

The statement of Mr. Attlee aroused mixed feelings of joy and tears. The Congress welcomed the first part of it which contained the desire of the British Government to Quit India soon, but the leaders felt nervous and panicky to learn that should India fail to draft constitution agreeable to all the parties, the Government would be free to leave India to any party it liked.

The Constituent Assembly met on 9th December, 1946, with League benches lying unoccupied. The Congress set about wooing the League again but without any response from the other side. The League in Attlee's statement saw the implied acceptance of Pakistan.

As a result of League's 'direct action', gap between the standpoints of the League and Congress appeared to be unbridgeable. One stood for partition while the other for undivided India. The country was in the teeth of anarchy. Law and order had been thrown to the winds. Lord Mountbatten was called upon to take a quick and final course of action. He held discussions with the Congress high-ups and tried to explain the inevitability of partition. He did not approach Mahatma Gandhi to whom the very thought of the division of India was chilling and revolting. Mahatma Gandhi had once said. "Even if the whole of India is in flames, it will not bring Pakistan." In another context he had said that Pakistan would be made on his dead body. In view of Mahatma Gandhi's rigid unrelenting attitudes, Lord Mountbatten argued with Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Both reviewed the past and foresaw the dark shadow of communal riots hanging over the country. Quite unwillingly, they gave their consent. The following are some of the reasons which induced them to submit to Pakistan scheme:

1. Communal Riots. As a result of League's 'direct action', several parts of India witnessed the worst form of communal riots. Thousands of lives were lost in the flames of communalism. The League engineered organised raids on Hindu localities and caravans of refugees. The police and British Officers stood away as silent spectators. Although defence had been entrusted to Sardar Baldev Singh in the Interim Cabinet, the British were still the masters of the whole machinery. Had the British wanted, they could easily have restored law and order in the country. But instead of remaining neutral, they played the partisan role. They encouraged the riots so as to compel the Congress to accept 'Two Nation Theory'. The British Government as well as the British Officers in India played up and supported the demand of Pakistan, for they hoped to get more concessions in the Muslim State.

Mr. V.P. Menon, the Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy, in his talks with Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel pressed the point of Dominion Status. He said the Congress by consenting to accept Dominion Status for the time being, would gain three advantages a peaceful transfer of power, the goodwill of Britain and thirdly the smooth future administration of the country including the taking over of top posts by Indian Officers. Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel accepted Menon's plan even though the Constituent Assembly had adopted a resolution to declare India a Sovereign Democratic Republic soon after the departure of the British. He in his forthright fashion declared that the British Policy of remaining neutral but holding on to power was a subtle way to promote civil war. There would be peace in the country within a week if power was transferred to the Central Government. In the absence of interference by a third party to whom either side could appeal, the Congress and Muslim League would settle their differences at once. If there still arose conflict in the Cabinet over any question, the majority would rule.

So, the question which was uppermost in the minds of Congress Leaders at the time was somehow to get rid of the British Elements in India at any cost. The British Officers neither governed themselves nor let others govern. The law and order situation consequently deteriorated at such a rate that, in a speech before the London Royal Empire Society, Lord Ismay made this admission that whereas before coming to India he had felt that the deadline of

June, 1948, for the completion of British evacuation of India was “far too early”, upon his arrival in India he began to feel that it was almost “too late”. The machinery of administration was cracking and communal bitterness was more intense both at headquarters in Delhi and in the Provinces than anything I could have imagined.”¹

The Congress was although determined not to partition the country, yet the circumstances seemed to conspire against it. The Congress Leadership, as Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said, became at last willing "to cut off the head in order to get rid of the headache". The Congress High Command feared that if the matters were allowed to drift, the country would soon be overwhelmed by the wild forces of communalism, by riots and murders. The intention of the British Government was to hold on to power still. Lord Mountbatten once declared also that the British Power could agree to continue its rule at the request of the Indian Political Parties. The very presence of the British on top of Indian scene was the bane of Indian Politics. Mahatma Gandhi was constrained to say, “*It would be a good thing if the British were to go today thirteen months means mischief to India...the thirteen months' stay of British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help*”. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru too was afraid of the growing lawlessness in the country and the intransigent attitude of the League. In short, every Congress Leader began to feel that the only alternative of communal riots and civil war was the acceptance of the demand of Pakistan.

2. Intrigues of the British Officers. The disturbances in India on the eve of independence were largely the creation of the British Bureaucracy. The British Officers sided with League. It was so managed that the Muslims who were pro-League came to occupy all the key positions in police, information and defence. A League nominee was also holding in the Interim Government the key portfolio of Finance. ‘Brisk, illegal traffic in arms was going on not without the connivance and sometimes active co-operation of British and Indian Military Officers. It had grown into an open scandal. Later, the Congress High Command had documentary evidence of the complicity of the Political Department; how in league with certain princes it was busy hatching a conspiracy to break in India’s unity.” Referring to the way in which the Political Department was behaving, *Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel gave expression to his feelings in the following words : — “It was then that I was made fully conscious of the extent to which our interests were being prejudiced in every way by the machinations of the Political Department and came to the conclusion that the best course was to -as ten the departure of these foreigners even at the cost of the partition of the country. It was also then that I felt that there was one way to make the country safe and strong that was the unification of the rest of India.”*¹ On 25th November, 1948, Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel again referred to this issue in the course of another speech at the Benaras Hindu University: “I felt that if we did not accept partition, India would be split into many bits and would lead us to disaster. We would not then have one Pakistan but several. There would have been Pakistan cells in every office”.

In November, 1949, speaking in the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel gave more details which showed how effectively the two trump cards which the British had kept up their sleeves, till the very last, were played to force the hands of the Indian Leaders to barter their cherished ideal of Indian unity for an early transfer of power. Of these the first was the reserve powers and control over the Services, the second was paramountcy in relation to

the Indian States. "You have seen what was happening in the Punjab. In the five districts, where havoc was being wrought five British Officers were in power and nothing could be done. I tried to get the District Magistrate of Gurgaon transferred. I could not succeed. I agreed to partition as a last resort, when we had reached a stage we would have lost all." *"We had five or six members of Muslim League in the Government—they had already established themselves as Members who had come to partition the country. At that stage we agreed to partition. We decided that partition could be agreed upon the terms that the Punjab should be partitioned—that Bengal should be partitioned. Mr. Jinnah did not want a truncated Pakistan but he had to swallow it."*

Encouragement of the British to Muslim League.

It had been the most calculated and sustained policy of the British to create rift between the Hindus and Muslims. They patronised the League and both directly and indirectly supported its demand for Pakistan. It was the usual British game to divide the country into warring camps and to hold on to power with a support of one of them. This is evidenced from the increasing communal elements in the Legislatures under the three Acts of 1909, 1919 and 1935. There were two motives of the British Appeasement of the Muslims the first to weaken the Congress and the national demand for freedom; and secondly, to secure the loyalties of the Muslim Members in the Government. With this end in view, efforts were not wanting on the part of Cripps' Cabinet Mission and Attlee's announcement to please the League to the farthest extent. Lord Wavell too approached Mohammad Ali Jinnah time and again with his revised offers. The pro-Muslim attitude of the British Government was one reason why Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah remained so adamant on his demand for Pakistan.

Policy of the Congress.

The Congress, too, had to own a part of responsibility for the partition of India. It pursued the policy of giving a long rope to Muslim League by meeting its unreasonable demands one after another. Without caring to understand the Muslim League's policy of isolation and aggression, the Congress lived on the false hope that the League would see reason. Moreover, its effort to negotiate with League raised the stature of the League disproportionately, the initial mistake was made by the Congress in 1916 when under Lucknow Pact it agreed to separate electorate and separate Sind from Bombay. C.R. formula went too far to the extent of accepting the demand of Pakistan in substance. In their utterances, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel also admitted publicly that they would not compel any Province to remain in the Union of India. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was, thus, strengthened in his belief that a little pressure would bring round off Congress to concede Pakistan.

Congress Desire to Make India Strong.

Another consideration which brought a change in Congress attitude; was the desire to end riots and bloodsheds. The attitude of the League had been non-co-operative and outrageous both in the Interim Government and in the public field. It was very clear to the Congress Leaders that if they insisted on unified India, there would be Pakistan cells in every office and the whole administrative machinery would begin to reek with communalism. the League Members in the Interim Government were openly talking of carving out a Pakistan. The

Congress felt that the partition of the country would at least enable to make the partitioned Hindustan a strong and prosperous country. Then there would be no Muslim League to hinder its efforts.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah's Defiant Attitude.

The greatest credit of founding the sovereign Muslim State of Pakistan goes to Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah who proved too good a match for the leaders of the Congress camp. The Nationalists of India mistakenly believed that their only enemy was the British Government and not the dragon of communalism. They sought Mohammad Ali Jinnah's friendship in driving out the British Rulers. Shrewd Mohammad Ali Jinnah exploited the situation and continued multiplying his demands. His stubborn attitude led to the failure of the two Round Table Conference besides the Simla Conference. His clear-cut stand was that the Congress represented the Hindus while the League represented the Muslims. In spite of his anti-national ideas and doings, Mahatma Gandhi met him time and again to discuss the communal deadlock. The results were, however, just the reverse. Such negotiations simply raised the political stature of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his arrogance and obstinacy increased after every meeting he had with Mahatma Gandhi. He drifted apart day by day. The weakened policy of the Congress emboldened him so much that he launched 'direct action' against Hindus. He frightened the Congress Leaders and terrorised the Hindus by massacre and loot. The Congress ultimately had to listen to his language of force and grant him Pakistan.

Failure of the Interim Government.

The difficult functioning of the Interim Government also convinced the Congress that Coalition Government was not the solution of communal problem, league's Representatives in the Cabinet, particularly Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan who held the Finance, punctured all the plans of the Congress. No department could work smoothly for want of finance

which Liaquat Ali refused to release. In these circumstances Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel said, "If one limb is poisoned, it must be removed quickly lest the entire organisation should suffer irreparably". He showed his preparedness to allow the League to have a part of India if only such a step meant the end of League's mischief.

Influence of Lord Mountbatten.

The loss of Hindu lives and property in Calcutta and other parts of India created a situation that made Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel declare that Pakistan was better than the murder of innocent citizens. Lord Mountbatten also impressed upon Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru the desirability of getting rid of League by allowing it to have its Pakistan, so that the Congress might devote its energies to strengthening Hindu India. The British Government changed its date of departure from June, 1948 to 15th August, 1947. The Congress as such, had to choose between two evils the Partition of India and Civil War. Naturally it opted for Pakistan which was relatively a lesser evil. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, nine years after partition, stated, "A feeling that even if we got freedom for India with the background, it would be very weak India, that is, a Federal India with far too much power in the federating units. A larger India would have constant troubles, constant disintegrating pulls.... So, we accepted and said, let us build a strong India. And if others do not want to be in it, well how can we and why should we force them to be in it." Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru further said, "It was the compulsion of events and the feeling that

we could not get out of the deadlock morass by pursuing the way we had done. So, we accepted the partition.”

MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (3RD JUNE, 1947)

Lord Mountbatten even before being sent to India had been briefed by the British Government to arrange for the transfer of power in as smooth and quick a way as possible. He set himself to this task by holding talks with the leaders of both the Congress and the League. He settled the details with the Congress and League Leaders. He left for England to discuss finally with Home Government and returned on June 2, with certain definite proposals. Next day he published his Plan. The salient features of Mountbatten Plan were as follows:

Mountbatten's Plan set down the partition of India as a settled fact. It proposed the division of India into two Dominions and the transference of power to take place on 15th August, 1947, instead of June, 1948, as declared earlier.

Contrary to League's demand for a Pakistan including the whole of Bengal and Assam in the East and the Punjab in the West, the plan excluded Assam completely and also suggested the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. The Provincial Legislatures of Bengal and Punjab were to meet separately in two parts each one representing the Muslim majority districts and the other Hindu majority districts. The members of the two parts of each Legislature were empowered to vote whether or not the Provinces should be partitioned.

Referendum in Sylhet and N.W.F.P.

The Muslim majority district of Sylhet was to decide by a referendum whether it was to join East Bengal or remain in Assam. In the case of North-West Frontier Province., there was to be a referendum to ascertain whether the people wanted to be in Pakistan or India. The need arose because of the fact that North-West Frontier Province had a Congress Ministry.

Acceptance of Plan.

The Representatives of the Hindu Majority Districts of the Punjab led by Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Bengal led by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in their respective Assemblies voted in favour of the partition of the provinces. Sylhet mainly chose to merge in East Bengal. The followers of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in North-West Frontier Province boycotted referendum. The remaining Muslim population opted for Pakistan. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah refused to accept mutilated Pakistan but ultimately had to submit to the pressure of Mountbatten and Churchill. The Working Committee of the Congress met at Delhi on 14th June, 1947, to discuss the draft plan of the Viceroy. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Nationalist Muslims, the Hindu Members representing Pakistan districts and Sri Purushottam Das Tandon opposed the Plan but Govind Ballabh Pant, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, Acharya Kripalani and Mahatma Gandhi accepted it in view of the conditions prevailing in the country. Govind Ballabh Pant moving the resolution of acceptance said that “acceptance of June 3rd Plan was the only way to achieve freedom and liberty for the country. It would assure an Indian Union with a strong Centre which could ensure progress.... The choice today was between accepting the Plan or committing suicide.” Master Tara Singh opposed the partition of the Punjab tooth and nail.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's Victory over 2nd World War could have averted Partition

The three surviving veterans of Indian National Army (I.N.A.) said in Singapore on 16th December, 1995, "India would not have been partitioned, had their Leader Subhas Chandra Bose been victorious."

As the three, Colonel G. S. Dhillon, Captain Lakshmi Sehgal and Captain S.S. Yadav prepare to re-enact their famous march from here to India after 50 years they look back at their native land and see a world gone wrong. But the trio insisted, however, that despite the post-Independence decline and the INA's own defeat after Japan's fall, they did not feel their efforts were wasted and would repeat the struggle if they had to do it all over again.

They all believe that had Subhas Chandra Bose lived and the INA been victorious, India would not have been partitioned. Also, that politics in free India would not have the deep taints of caste *and* community it now displays.

"India would have been more secular, disciplined as well as socialistic, religion would have been respected but it would have been an individual show, not a communal one," Col. G.S. Dhillon, who led the INA commando wing that bottled up the Royal Army's General Willian Slim on the banks of Burma's Irawaddy river for a critical six days in 1945, said.

In order to give effect to the scheme given by Mountbatten and agreed upon both by the Congress and the League the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act on July 5, 1947 and it received Royal assent on July 18, to become operative on August 15, 1947.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT, 1947 (END OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM)

The provisions of the Act were as given below: —

- The Act provided for the creation of two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan, from 15th August, 1947.

"The word independent emphasised", as Earl Listowel, Secretary of State for India, said in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Bill, "the absence of any external restraint. Independence in this sense is a universal attribute of Dominion Status, a fact that is often misunderstood by the outside world. It is also in accordance with the famous definition of the British Empire in the Report of the Imperial conference of 1926."

- The Independence Act defined the territories of the two Dominions adjustable after the Award of the Boundary Commission (for that purpose two Boundary Commissions, one for the Punjab and another for Bengal had been set up both under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliff. In each Boundary Commission two representatives of Hindus and two representatives of Muslims had been taken). The partition of Bengal and the Punjab and secession of Sylhet from Assam after the wishes of the people have been known and also for the fixation of the final boundaries of India and Pakistan after the award of the Boundary Commission. When the Dominion of Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947 after the Partition of India, it consisted of two wings, Eastern and Western Pakistan. The Eastern Pakistan consisted of East Bengal and Sylhet. Sylhet was the Muslim majority district of Assam which had opted for East Pakistan in a referendum. The Western Wing of Pakistan consisted of West Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province, Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Baluchistan and eight other relatively minor States in Baluchistan.

- Both the Dominions were to have Governor-Generals appointed by British King for the purpose. The Act also provided for one common Governor-General if both the Dominions so agreed.
- The Constituent Assemblies of both the Dominions got the power to draft a new constitution according to their wishes in addition to the right to withdraw from the British Commonwealth.
- For the time being till the new constitutions were framed each of the Dominion and all the Provinces were to be governed in accordance with the Act of 1935. Each Dominion was, however, authorised to modify the Act of 1935 as it pleased. In the case of each of the Dominions, the powers of the Legislature of the Dominions would be exercisable in the first instance by the Constituent Assembly of that Dominion. If any other provision is not made by the Constituent Assembly, then both the Dominions will be governed according to the Act of 1935 with such modifications, omissions or additions as may be done by the Governor General-in-Council. The provisions regarding the Discretionary and Individual Judgement's powers will not remain effective after independence.
- The British Government no longer possessed any control over the Dominions, Provinces or any part of the Dominions after 15th August, 1947.
- The Legislature of each Dominion was empowered to frame the laws for the governance of that Dominion. No law made by that Dominion will be treated as null and void on this ground that it conflicted with any law of England or the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 or any rules regulation made thereunder.
- The King of Great Britain ceased to be Emperor of India. The British King will no longer possess the power of disallowing any law made by the Dominion Legislature. The Governor-Generals became the constitutional heads. They were empowered to give assent to any ordinary Bill on behalf of the Crown.
- No Provincial Bill was to be reserved for the assent of His Majesty in future. The Governor - general was, however, invested with adequate powers until March, 1948 to issue orders for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 and the division of the assets between the two Dominions and to make suitable changes in the Government of India Act, 1935 to remove any difficulty that might arise in the transitional period.
- The office of Secretary of State for India and his advisers was abolished and affairs relating to the Dominions of India and Pakistan were to be conducted in future by Secretary of the Commonwealth Relation's Department.
- Those persons who had been appointed by the Secretary of State or Secretary of State-in-Council to a civil service under the Crown in India before August 15, 1947 would continue in that service after Independence and enjoy the same privileges and rights in respect of leave, remuneration and pension, disciplinary matters and tenure of office which had been enjoyed by them before Independence.
- After the establishment of two independent Dominions, the British Government would have absolutely no responsibility in regard to any territory which was included in British India. The paramountcy of His Majesty's Government over the Indian States lapsed and with it all treaties and agreements between the British Government and Indian Rulers

which were in force at the time of the passing of the Indian Independence Act also lapsed. All obligation, jurisdiction and functions of His Majesty arising out of the various treaties, grants, usage, sufferance, or otherwise were also to lapse and the Indian States would become independent in their political relations with the Governments of the new Dominions. In other words, the British Government would have absolutely no relation of any kind with the Indian States and they will be free either to join India or Pakistan or remain independent.

- The British Government would exercise no authority in future over the tribal areas and any treaty or agreement in force at the time of the passing of the Indian Independence Act between His Majesty and any tribal authority would also lapse.
- Pakistan was henceforth to negotiate with the tribes of North Western Frontier Province.

THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE

India got out of the British Domination and became an independent State on 15th August, 1947. It was a historic day indeed. The chapter of India's slavery which had its beginning in 1757 with bad luck in the battle of Plassey, finally closed in 1947. After a long-drawn struggle our dream took a concrete shape. We owe the deepest gratitude to those countless heroes of our national struggle, who had to pay price for it through their precious blood or numerous other sacrifices. India will always remember her great sons with thankfulness and pride. Let us now review the helping factors which led India to her goal. Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his thanks-giving speech in the Constituent Assembly said, "While our achievement is in no small measure due to our own sufferings and sacrifices it is also the result of world forces and events and last though not least, it is the consummation and fulfilment of the historic tradition and the democratic ideals of the British race."

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRY

A country usually gets freedom not by begging but by force. Freedom is never got on a silver platter; it is wrested from the unwilling hands. It is a unique event in the history of the world that an Imperialist country like England agreed to surrender power without much of bloodshed. History cannot cite any other example when a country got her independence through non-violent methods in such a short time though with a lot of sacrifice. The factors responsible for the transfer of power were as follows:

1. The spirit of nationalism and the strength of national movement—extremist, revolutionary and constitutional.
2. The growing consciousness in the whole of Asia that the people of the East were being exploited by the Colonial Nations of the West.
3. Weakening of England at the end of Second World War.
4. The alarm in the minds of the British Officers that the Indian armed forces were becoming disloyal and rebellious.
5. The coming of Labour Party to power a party which had always been inclined to confer Independence on India.
6. Growing realisation in England that holding India in subjection was not at all profitable for war-torn England.

7. *The acceptance of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's demand of Pakistan by the Congress.* Had the Congress not accepted the League's demand, and the British Government might have postponed the issue of our freedom for an indefinite period.

8. *The pressure of world opinion.* England feared that she may not be able to save her face if she liquidated the German and Japanese possessions and not her own.

9. Last but not least was the pressure of the Governments of the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and China, who championed the cause of India.

Thus, we learn that factors no. 1, 4, 5 and 7 were most potent in bringing Independence to India and drove the British beyond Indian shores by non-violent methods, many more potent factors compelled the British Government to hasten their withdrawal from the Indian scene. After achieving independence, the Constituent Assembly of India pushed on with the work of constitution-making. In the meantime, India had to handle another problem of great magnitude, namely the rehabilitation of lakhs of Hindus who migrated to India in the wake of disturbances in Pakistan. Then the Government applied itself to reconstruction work, for which it launched Five-year Plans and community projects (now rural integrated programme) and construction of various dams. Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel accomplished the miracle of securing the merger of all the petty and big Indian States in the Indian Union. A new India, cheerful and prosperous is emerging out of the rut of backwardness and poverty. It is hoped that soon we will catch up with the highly advanced nations of the West.