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JOURNAL OF INDIAN HISTORY

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Journal of Indian History

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Partition of Bengal — 1947

BY

A. K. MAJUMDAR

Bengal was partitioned in 1905, reunited in 1911 and re-partitioned in 1947. But the reunion of 1911 left three Bengali Hindu majority districts in Bihar which were united to Bengal when the States were reorganized after Independence. If these three districts had been left with Bengal in 1911, she would have had a Hindu majority, so that probably there would have been no cause to partition her again in 1947.

The reasons which led to the final partition of 1947—with which this paper is concerned—are complex and would need years of patient research to unravel. In the meantime we can present certain unpublished materials and indicate certain trends which may help the scholars in their investigations. Three broad questions may be framed in this connection, namely, (1) was the partition inevitable, (2) who were responsible for partition and (3) was it beneficial or at all necessary. The third question is actually a corollary of the first, and we need not discuss it at all. Actually at present we need confine our attention only to the second problem, and investigate the process which led to partition.

Language is the link between the two Bengals, and at the early phase of its development Muslim contribution was probably of no less importance than that of the Hindus. But there was sharp cleavage with the past tradition during the 19th Century, when Bengali prose was born. The highly Sanskritized Bengali of the first half of the 19th century is usually ascribed to the Pundits of Fort William College but it is overlooked that Raja Rammohun Roy, the father of Bengali language, had set the pace. On behalf of the Fort William College Pundits it may be said that the only language they knew was Sanskrit, but Rammohun was a polyglot, and not only knew Urdu, but had a fair knowledge of Persian and Arabic. Yet his Bengali writings are not only as Sanskritized as that of his contemporary Pundits,

but does not betray any influence of Persian or Arabic. The reason may be that Rammohun was mainly engaged in translating Sanskrit scriptures but that does not alter the fact.

However, the great phase of Bengali literature was from 1865, when Bankimchandra's *Durgēśanandini* was published, to the death of Rabīndranth in 1941. During this period of nearly eight decades Hindus dominated Bengali literature, and seemed to have transformed it into a vehicle for transmission of Hindu ideals. There was only one exception of whom we shall speak presently, but in the main Bengali Hindus dominated all fields of intellectual activities.

It is difficult to assign any single cause or even causes for the sudden spurt of Hindu brilliance and Muslim apathy without going into the history of this period which is beyond the scope of this paper. The result however was that the Bengali Muslims spun themselves into a cocoon of their past glory which included the achievements of the Saracens and the Turks, not to speak of the Sultans and Mughal Emperors. Hindus on the other hand were drawing inspiration from Rajput, Maratha, and Sikh heroes, particularly Mahārāṇa Pratāp, Mahārāṇa Rājasimha, Durgādās Rāthod, Chhatrapati Śivāji, Samārtha Rāmdas, Guru Gōvind Singh, and Banda, that is, the persons who not only brought the Mughal rule to an end, but destroyed Muslim hegemony in India. This antagonistic approach to history created a hiatus between educated leaders of the two communities which was never bridged.

Muslims did write in Bengali and all of them were not poor writers. There were many competent writers, and a few good ones, but there was only one among them whose contribution to the literature was as great as that of any Hindu, and greater than most; he is Kasi Nazrul Islam. Personally Nazrul has been above all communal considerations, and some of his devotional songs could be written by an orthodox Hindu. However, in some of his most famous poems which gained instant popularity, he used a large number of Arabic and Persian words; his *ghazal* also became very popular. Apart from the fact, that Nazrul's choice of word was invariably happy, the use of Persian words in Bengali poems to create an esoteric atmosphere had been attempted before him, particularly Mōhit Lāl Majumdār, but he never gained Nazrul's popularity.

Nazrul was a bard of nationalism, but on the Muslim youth his poems had a strange effect. Amir Ali had preached with some effect through his Central National Muhammadan Association (founded in 1877), that Urdu and not Sanskritized Bengali was the language of the Muslims of Bengal. Thus ground had been in preparation for a long time when the Bengali Muslims found in Nazrul, a Muslim poet of Bengal, and totally disregarding his theme, adopted his style of using Arabic and Persian words. This tendency became very marked in the late thirties and early forties, though there were exceptions, like Maulāna Akram Khān, the most rabidly communal of all journalists in Bengal. During this period, great controversy was raging over Hindi and Urdu, and Bengali Muslims unreservedly supported Urdu as the national language. It is doubtful whether there would have been a partition if the Bengali Muslims had unequivocally declared Bengali as their mother tongue in 1947 instead of doing so a few years later.

Actually in 1947, when the country was divided, the Muslims of Bengal no less than those of the Punjab seemed to be repeating Hāli:

rukhsat āye Hindustān āye bustān-be- khazān
rah chuke teri bahut dīn ham bedeshī mehmān

(Farewell to thee, oh! Hindustan, the garden of autumn; we foreign guests have stayed too long).

The separation freed them from the burden of all non-Islamic heritage of Indian traditions.

Bengal became politically conscious before the rest of India, which led to her partition in 1905 and the Partition provided the incentive to the development of a revolutionary movement. Inspiration for this movement was partly derived from European models like the French Revolution, and the Italian War of Unification, and Mazzini and Garibaldi became to a section of the Bengalis almost what Chairman Mao and Premier Chou are today to a particular section in Bengal. But the *swadeshi* movement could not thrive entirely on foreign heroes; hence Mahārāṇa Pratāp, Śivāji and others were selected as rallying points of nationalist struggle, as symbols of India's urge to free herself from foreign domination. But as stated above, the symbolism was

lost on the Muslims, not unnaturally since the first phase of revolutionary movement (1905-1921) was inextricably linked with image worship, particularly Kālī or *Shakti*.

This would have normally acted as a deterrent to any Muslim from joining the movement, which the British Government had convinced them was detrimental to Muslim interests. These are well-known facts, but what is usually overlooked is that the Revolutionary leaders at no time did make any attempt to recruit Muslim youths to their party. Actually in Dacca, Comilla and Barisal they had to come out with their followers to save Hindus from Muslim hooligans during communal riots. There were other reasons also, which possibly justified the attitude of the Revolutionary leaders, but the fact is that even after 1921 when the Revolutionary parties were practically free of all religious practices, they still remained pure Hindu organizations. The Revolutionary Parties were in practice upper caste Hindu associations, open to Brahmins, Vaidyas, and Kayasthas; Gopinath Shah and a few others were exceptions, but their participation in freedom struggle was as much indicative of their community's role in the revolutionary movement as the performance of Dr. Mēghnād Sāhā was in the academic field. Condition has changed since 1947.

The Revolutionary movement was an underground movement and had to be conducted along certain narrow limits. But its effects became ominous when gradually the Revolutionary Parties began to dominate Bengal Congress and, as in other provinces, in Bengal too the Congress became a Hindu organization. The Gandhi-ite group led by Mr. Satish Chandra Ghōsh, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghōsh, Mr. Prafulla Chandra Sen, Mr. Haripada Chatterjee and others were no better. The overwhelming majority of weavers in Bengal were Muslim, and Gandhiji's message of Khadi may have had some attraction for them. What special effort, if any, was made to establish contact between Muslim weavers and Khadi workers is not known. It is obvious, however, that no rapport was established, and the Muslim mass was left in the hands of the reactionary Maulvis. One of the reasons for this failure was that the Khadi movement was conducted by semi-sanyasis who observed rigid orthodoxy about their food, which could have only rendered them aliens to the Muslims.

The personal magnetism of Deshabandhu C. R. Das held the Hindus and Muslims together for a short period. But after Desha-

bandhu's death, the frail link of communal amity forged by his individual effort snapped and the two communities fell apart never again to unite under a common leader. In 1937, the Congress in Bengal could not put up a single Muslim candidate.

During this period Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the representative of the Congress High Command in Bengal. He was a great leader, but it is doubtful whether he was the best choice for Bengal. The Maulana's high Urdu was a foreign language to all Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims, and he never had any personal following among Bengali Muslims, nor indeed did he ever make any serious effort to become a popular leader of Bengal. He was content with his all-India role from the beginning to the end of his career.

The idea of Pakistan may be traced back up to the year 1928, and there were several schemes propounded at different times by different authors. But the scheme that mattered took shape after the Muslim League Session at Lahore in March 1940 passed its famous resolution, proposed by Mr. Fazlul Huq, then the Prime Minister of Bengal. The word 'Pakistan' was not used in this resolution, and the Hindu Press has been blamed for labelling it as 'Pakistan Resolution', thereby giving it an emotional content which it had lacked hitherto. This may or may not have been true; but certain it is that Mr. Jinnah had given the Indian Muslims rallying point and a war cry. However, having passed this resolution Mr. Jinnah lapsed into a profound silence about the implications of his resolution, and neither Mr. Fazlul Huq nor anyone else could fathom out of him the meaning of 'necessary territorial readjustments' which was a pre-condition of Pakistan.¹

Reading it today, the Lahore resolution does not appear to have been a model of lucidity, but here precisely lay its strength and utility; it could mean anything to anyone. From the beginning of the century, if not from the days of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the Muslims had been tutored to consider themselves as a minority,

1. The operative part of the Lahore resolution was: 'Resolved that .. geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

which needed safeguards, protection, reservation of government jobs etc.; otherwise, they were told, they would be swamped by the rapacious Hindu majority. These minority rights and privileges could be sufficient so long there was an alien Government to enforce those rights. But who would guarantee these rights after the departure of the British? Therefore, Muslim interest demanded a separate homeland where the Muslims were in a majority. The Pakistan demand was a logical outcome of the separate electorate granted under the Morley-Minto reform.

The British took full advantage of the deteriorating communal position. The Lahore resolution was passed on 24 March 1940; on 8 August 1940, the Governor-General issued a statement in which he reiterated that the Government of India Act 1935 and the 'policy and the plans on which it is based' could be examined, in other words changed; but even more momentous was his declaration: 'It goes without saying that they (British Government) could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government.'

This was the veto power which Mr. Jinnah had been seeking all his life, and may be he received it as a reward for the Lahore resolution, though there is no evidence on this point. For some unconvincing reason, the editors of the series of documents entitled *'The Transfer of Power'* begin with the year 1942 or Cripps Mission, though the fate of India had been sealed by the August Declaration. For example, the Downing Street Statement of 6 December 1946 concluded: 'There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of an agreed procedure. Should a Constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the Country.'² Indeed in his statement on 20 Feb-

2. This statement was issued after the breakdown of the London Conference under the Chairmanship of Mr. Attlee and attended by Pandit Nehru, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Liaqut Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh.

ruary 1947, Mr. Attlee recalled that the 1940 declaration was issued under the authority of the Coalition Government, (of which he was the Deputy Prime Minister) though he did not go into its communal implications.

Those implications were by no means unknown to the British politicians, and they admitted amongst themselves that they had given 'veto power' to Mr. Jinnah, and that the Muslim League was blackmailing the Congress.³ But this was the only way open to them to curb the power of the Congress, which came almost as a revelation after the 1937 election under the Government of India Act 1935. This act was a natural sequence of earlier reforms, under which power was gradually transferred from British to Indian hands by instalments. Under the Act of 1935, the Provinces became autonomous and limited power was contemplated to be transferred to Indian hands at the Centre where the undue weightage given to the Princes was expected to act as a sufficient check on national democratic forces. It became apparent, however, that after the war was over the next instalment of transfer of power would fall due, and the nationalist forces under the Congress might capture power at the Centre as effectively as they had done in eight provinces out of eleven. To prevent this natural progress to a democratic form of government, the British Government through the Viceroy declared that the Act of 1935 was to be examined, that is changed.

So far as Lord Linlithgow and his British advisers in India were concerned, they were perfectly content to sit tight on the 1940 Declaration, at least for the duration of the war. But this was rendered impossible due to various factors. Even in England, some Members of Parliament had begun to question the propriety of giving veto power on constitutional progress to a recalcitrant minority. Secondly, Mr. Attlee was making things difficult for Mr. Amery, and began to insist on a fresh approach to the problem

3. These were freely acknowledged by the Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery and the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in their correspondence which have been published in the first two volumes of *The Transfer of Power 1942-7* edited by Mansergh and Lumby. I have dealt with this episode with full references in a paper entitled 'British Attitude To Communal Problem, Last Phase', in a Seminar organized by the Nehru Museum at New Delhi, 20 to 22 December 1971.



after Pearl Harbour. Then Sir Stafford Cripps joined the Cabinet (19 February, 1942). But the decisive pressure seems to have been exerted at this critical moment by the public feeling in the U.S.A. officially transmitted to the British Prime Minister by President Roosevelt.

It is also possible that Mr. Amery had begun to feel a qualm of conscience about relegating the future of a subcontinent to the whims of one man: Mr. Jinnah. Anyway, Mr. Amery in a Minute to Mr. Churchill stated (25 February 1942):

'Any declaration of Indian policy for the future must make it clear, unequivocally, that we stand by our pledge of 1940, to the Moslems and the Princes, that they are not to be coerced into any system of Indian Government of which they disapprove. This is in any case vital at present in view of the possible effects upon the Moslem elements in the Indian Army.

'On the other hand our insistence on agreement has been widely taken as giving Mr. Jinnah a veto on all constitutional progress in India, and as a mere excuse on our part for doing nothing. This has peculiarly infuriated Hindu leaders, vide Sapru's comments on myself as the most disastrous Secretary of State of India has ever known.

'There is only one way of meeting this criticism, and that is to couple with a reaffirmation of our pledge to the minorities, the positive affirmation that the majority can go ahead of itself if it wants to.

'Happily, the distribution of Moslems and Hindus is such that this can be done on a purely provincial basis, by declaring that if a majority of provinces agree upon a constitution, we will accept it so far as they are concerned, leaving dissident provinces to stay out for the time being or even altogether...'⁴

4. Mansergh and Lumby: *The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, Vol. I Document No. 181; Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru made the remark about Mr. Amery during the course of his Presidential Address to the non-Party Leaders Conference at Delhi on 21 February, 1942. Actually the question of the re-examination of the 1940 Declaration was taken up because of a letter addressed to Mr. Churchill by Liberal Indian Leaders headed by Sir Tej Bahadur, and resulted in the Cripps Mission. Mr. Amery seems to have

This policy was accepted by Mr. Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps and formed the basis of Cripps Mission. That this, offer might be taken 'as a British Invitation or incitement to partition' was pointed out among others by Field Marshal Smuts and his old adversary, Gandhiji.⁵

So far as is known Mr. Amery's Minute to Mr. Churchill quoted above was the earliest formulation of policy for dividing India. But the basis of division was that a province should be taken as a unit. Sir Stafford Cripps however refused to face the question unequivocally. In a Press Conference held at New Delhi on 29 March 1942, he said in reply to questions: '..... Two contiguous provinces may form a unit you have to take some existing undisputed area. If you have to settle the areas which can secede afterwards, the various communities will try create areas in which their communities are in a majority and you will get no nearer a decisionNon-acceding provinces shall be given some status as the new Indian Union.'

Next in answer to correspondents' direct question as to what would happen in an 'area' in a part of which one community was

been so stung by Sir Tej Bahadur's remark, that he allowed Sir Stafford Cripps to go to India instead of himself coming with the proposals. In a letter to Lord Linlithgow on 10th March he wrote: 'The next question, then, was who should go out? I confess I felt at first that, both from your point of view and from mine, it might have been better if I had gone. The Secretary of State is in many ways the more obvious person, and you and I know each other's mind so well....I should at any rate have come enjoying a good deal of confidence from the Muslims. On the other hand, I am afraid my going would have been generally interpreted committing the Government to nothing more than a very limited policy of talking about agreement. The Sapru crowd in particular resent all that I have said in the past in the way of bringing out the inherent difficulties of the Indian situation. From the point of view of putting across what is essentially a Conservative policy, both as regards the future and as regards the immediate refusal to transfer control of the Executive there is much to be said for sending out someone who has always been an extreme Left Winger and in close touch with Nehru and Congress....' Ibid, I, Document No. 304, para 2, emphasis added.

5. Field Marshal Smuts to Mr. Churchill, letter dated 5 March 1942, Ibid, Document No. 244. Gandhiji in his interview with Sir Stafford Cripps stated 'that the document (i.e. Cripps' Proposals) was an invitation to the Moslems to create a Pakistan'. Ibid, Document No. 397.



in a majority in another a minority, Sir Stafford Cripps said: The answer to a case of that kind would be, if there be the smallest amount of commonsense amongst the Indians, there would be a rearrangement of boundaries as between the two Unions, and exchange of population to get the larger majority in each.'

This was not a counsel of perfection, but a statement of the logical consequence of the British policy in India. This was to form a Muslim majority and a Hindu majority union, followed by a rectification of boundary and exchange of population, so that instead of Muslim majority or Hindu majority state, there might be a Muslim State and a Hindu State.

This policy was pursued by the successive British Governments till the end.

With the end of war a new situation arose and the Labour Government had to take measures for the protection of British empire in South East Asia. Mr. Attlee in consultation with Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Mr. A. V. Alexander and Sir Stafford Cripps decided that it would be 'a condition precedent to the grant of Dominion Status or independence to India, that India should undertake to provide defence forces sufficient for her own local defence, and in addition assist, in Commonwealth or United Nations interests, in the defence of the "South-East Asia Area".⁶ This doctrine introduced a new element in British policy which now needed a united Indian army. The Cabinet Mission therefore sought to win over Mr. Jinnah by giving him full control over Bengal and Assam in exchange for a weak centre with control over defence, foreign affairs, and communications, because 'defence' becomes meaningless without the other two.

This was the best bargain that Mr. Jinnah had ever made, and he could have got away with it if at this moment he would have made one single friendly gesture towards the Hindus. Instead, he unleashed the Calcutta and Noakhali riots of 1946, and created an impasse by refusing to take part in the Constituent Assembly.

It was in this desperate situation that Lord Mountbatten accepted Mr. V. P. Menon's scheme which envisaged transfer of

6. For details see A. K. Majumdar: *Advent of Independence*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1961, p. 219.

power to two dominions and partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Mr. Menon had prepared his plan much earlier and had sent it through Mr. Sudhir Ghosh to England where it was peremptorily rejected by Sir Stafford Cripps.⁷ The British Cabinet accepted this plan with great reluctance and only because they could not produce any alternative; Mr. Menon once told me that when he visited England with Lord Mountbatten to explain the plan to the British Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps did not speak to him, so great was his disappointment at the failure of his pet scheme. Possibly the 'Heads of Agreement' drafted by Mr. Menon, and to which Lord Mountbatten had taken the consent of both the Congress and the Muslim League, forestalled Sir Stafford Cripps.⁸ For the first time the British Government was faced with a solution agreed upon by both the parties, and no room was left for manoeuvring. But both the sides had paid heavily.

It will be observed that the leaders from neither of the two affected Provinces participated in the decision to partition the Punjab and Bengal; but the decision of the central leaders was later confirmed by votes in the provincial legislatures. But the case of the Punjab and Bengal are slightly different, partition of the former Province having been envisaged much earlier.

On 15 January 1942, Mr. Jinnah had informed the Governor of Bombay, Sir Roger Lumley, that he 'excluded from the Mus-

7. Sudhir Ghosh: *Gandhi's Emissary*. Rupa & Co., Calcutta, 1967, p. 204, f.n. Unfortunately it appears that Mr. Ghosh failed to grasp the significance of Mr. Menon's plan, for which see V. P. Menon: *The Transfer of Power in India*, Orient Longmans, 1957, pp. 358-59.

8. For 'Heads of agreement', see V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 366. The 'Heads of Agreement' do not directly mention partition of Provinces, but Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel had agreed to it only on that basis. Hence the 3 June plan of the British Cabinet issued after consultation with Lord Mountbatten, with Mr. Menon as his adviser, partition of Bengal and the Punjab was provided for.

Mr. Menon had another grievance against Sir Stafford Cripps. When the Cabinet Mission came, Mr. Menon was the Reforms Commissioner, but in spite of the Viceroy Lord Wavell's plea, Sir Stafford Cripps refused to permit Mr. Menon to attend the Staff meetings, because he was a Hindu. But when the Cabinet Mission got into some difficulties, they obtained Mr. Menon's opinion through Mr. Abell, the Viceroy's Private Secretary.



lim Zone the predominant Hindu area centering on Ambala.⁹ Mr. Jinnah's hands had actually been forced by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, and in his conversations with Sir Roger Lumley he actually referred to the difficulties which the Punjab Premier had to face owing to a small Muslim majority, which induced Mr. Jinnah to get rid of Ambala area.

Sir Sikander was opposed to the idea of Pakistan, and some time after the Lahore Resolution was passed, he published a small tract entitled *Outlines of a Scheme of Indian Federation*. On 11 March 1911, Sir Sikander reiterated his scheme during a debate in the Punjab Legislative Assembly in course of which he said: 'We do not ask for freedom, that there may be Muslim Raj here Hindu Raj elsewhere. If that is what Pakistan means, I will have nothing to do with it.'¹⁰ Unfortunately, Sir Sikander evoked no response from the British authorities nor did he receive any support from the Muslim leaders of Bengal.

The Cripps Mission must have made it clear to Sir Sikander, that the British Government were prepared to concede some sort of Pakistan. In any case after the return of Sir Stafford Cripps, Sir Sikander felt it necessary to show the real implications of Pakistan for the Punjabis. In a note handed to Sir Bertrand Glancy on 10 July 1942 he set forth a scheme under which if Muslims of Punjab wanted to opt out of India, the Hindus of 'the Ambala Division, and a large part of the Jullundur Division and also the Amritsar District would cease to belong to the Punjab.' Sir Bertrand Glancy while forwarding the note to the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, wrote in his covering letter: 'The underlying idea of the scheme is therefore to bring it home to all reasonably-

9. Sir Roger Lumley to Lord Linlithgow, Mansergh and Lumby *op.cit.*, Document No. 13, para 3. Sir R. Lumley had asked Mr. Jinnah to a lunch at the instance of Lord Linlithgow who passed on the gist of the Governor's conversation with Mr. Jinnah to the Secretary of State Mr. Amery, but did not mention that Mr. Jinnah wanted to exclude Ambala from Pakistan; *Ibid.*, Document No. 23, para 4. It should be noted that these letters were available to Mr. Menon, the Deputy Reforms Commissioner.

10. For the text of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan's speech, see V. P. Menon *op.cit.*, pp. 443-589. The basic idea of Mr. Amery's Minute to Mr. Churchill quoted above may have been borrowed from Sir Sikander, at least there are strange resemblance between the two. For Lord Linlithgow's treatment of Sir Sikander, see my paper referred to above in note 3.

ninded men that Pakistan, should it ever eventuate, would mash the Province as it now exists."¹¹

Sir Sikander's opposition to full-blooded Pakistan scheme was due to his realization that if a Muslim Raj were established it would be impossible to retain the Hindu majority area of eastern Punjab, which Mr. Jinnah, who had no provincial ties, was ready to abandon. Actually, though Mr. Jinnah and the British politicians were incessantly talking about the 'Muslim Minority', their sole concern was about the consolidation of Muslim power in areas where they were in a majority. No scheme was ever decided or even considered about the future of the Muslims where they were a real minority. Strangely, the most strident cry for Pakistan came from the U.P. where the Muslims were a minority: the contribution of the U.P. Muslim leaders to the creation of Pakistan needs separate treatment.

The Muslim leaders of Bengal were content to follow the lead of their non-Bengali brethren. Several reasons may be ascribed for this political somnolence: firstly, the urbane U.P. leaders like Liaqat Ali Khan or Choudhry Khaliquzzaman were far too clever for the simple-minded Bengalis, who mostly came from rural areas; under influence of the Aligarh University, the Bengali Muslims at this time had developed a great admiration for their Urdu-speaking brothers. Secondly, few would believe that the Hindus who had fought so bitterly against partition of Bengal in 1905, would ever agree to her partition again; and if Bengal were left intact what was there to bother about; for the Muslims would be in majority, and Mr. Jinnah and the British Government had ruled out any redrawing of Provincial boundary, which alone could bring back the Hindu districts from Bihar and reduce the Muslims from a majority to minority. But the main reason for the Bengali leaders apathy towards the broader questions of future was 'hat

11. Mansergh and Lumby, *op.cit.*, II Document No. 243: see also *Ibid.*, Nos. 280, 281. Lord Linlithgow brushed aside Sir Sikander's ideas, as these might have brought a Hindu-Muslim reconciliation. Under the Radcliffe award East Punjab got 13 districts comprising the whole of Jullundur and Ambala divisions, the Amritsar district of the Lahore division and certain *tehsils* of the Lahore and Gurdaspur district; Sir Sikander's prediction was vindicated.

all of them were busy fighting amongst themselves in the Legislative Assembly to capture power.

It has been rightly said that the Punjab was impressively different from Bengal. Though for tactical reasons Sir Sikandar was unable to break away from the Muslim League, his position in the Punjab legislature was unassailable. His Unionist Party—composed both of Hindus and Muslims—had captured 96 out of 175 seats in the 1937 elections, and Sir Sikander's Cabinet colleagues gave him unstinted loyalty. Very different was the case of Bengal.

The seats in the Bengal legislature was so distributed under the Act of 1935, that 25 Europeans, that is British merchants of Calcutta, held the balance between the two communities. After the 1937 election the party position in Bengal was as follows: Congress 60, Independent Muslims 41, Muslim League 40, Krishak Praja Party led by Mr. Fazlul Huq 35, Europeans 25, Independent Scheduled Castes 23 and Independent Caste Hindus 14 seats. The most notable victory of the election was won by Mr. Fazlul Huq who defeated Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, leader of the Muslim League in the Patuakhali constituency, and a contributory cause of Sir Nazimuddin's defeat was that he could hardly make himself understood in Bengali; Urdu speeches in the heart of Buckergunje (Barisal) District failed to captivate the voters. There were also other reasons for Mr. Huq's victory, and he emerged as the outstanding Muslim leader of Bengal after the election, though in point of seats, his party came second among the Muslims.

Mr. Huq had a distinguished political career having worked under Deshabandhu C. R. Das. He was one of the signatories of the Congress-League pact of 1916 at Lucknow, and in 1918 he was at the same time President of the Muslim League and a General Secretary of the Congress, though later he had moved away from both the organizations. As soon as the election was over, Mr. Huq approached Mr. Sarat C. Bose, the leader of the Congress party, to form a coalition, but at this time the Congress High Command had not decided to form ministry, and were against the Congress joining in any coalition. Mr. Huq then turned towards his defeated rival Sir Nazimuddin (who had another seat) and with the help of Independent Caste Hindus and Scheduled

Castes formed a Cabinet of ten ministers five of whom were Hindus and five Muslims.

Under similar conditions a Muslim League ministry was formed in Assam. Later when Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose became the Congress President, he helped to install a Congress ministry in Assam under Mr. Bardoli in September 1938. But unfortunately for Bengal, his move came too late, and in the meantime Mr. Huq had joined the Muslim League to retain his position.

When Mr. Huq formed his first Cabinet in March 1937 the political atmosphere in Bengal was unusually quiet. The Government report for 1937 stated: 'Active demonstration of terrorism which had shown a marked decline in 1936, nearly came to an end altogether in 1937.¹² Both the Muslim League and the Praja Party had as their aims the repeal of repressive laws and the release of political prisoners and detenus. The Government assured the Congress that the Andaman prisoners would be released.

Gandhiji twice visited Calcutta (March and November 1937) in this connection; 1115 detenus were released and only 245 remained in detention camps; 136 prisoners were brought back from Andaman during the same period and slowly released. Release of the detenus was completed in 1938, and about 40 political prisoners remained in jail. The revolutionary movement which had burst out in the wake of Bengal Partition of 1905, was petering out. At Chittagong of all places, two ex-prisoners of 'Armoury-raid' case boldly declared at a condolence meeting at the death of a fellow prisoner, that they had come to realize that terrorism was not the road to freedom.¹³

The Government Report also states: 'On the whole the year 1937 was from the communal standpoint remarkably peaceful'.

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A Home Department Report of 1941 stated: 'A significant event is the re-appointment by Jinnah of the Premiers of the

12. Only 3 minor cases were reported, 2 were attempts to murder party members on suspicions of disloyalty and in the third case a goldsmith was robbed at Dacca. *A Brief Summary of Political events in the Presidency of Bengal during the year 1937*; File No. 132/38; Political, 1938.

13. *Ibid.*, para 8, p. 22.



Punjab and Bengal to the League Working Committee, despite their thinly disguised dissent from his Pakistan policy. The claim of the League to represent Muslim opinion of the country and so to be entitled to a more powerful voice in the Government depends entirely on maintaining a united front, and therefore entails keeping the allegiance of the Governments of the two chief Muslim Provinces.¹⁴

This political tactic which could turn a defeat into victory was apparent to Mr. Jinnah after the election of 1937, and Mr. Fazlul Huq was allowed to lead the coalition, that is, he became the Prime Minister on the condition that he joined the League. This he did, along with his party and the Muslim League's seat in the legislature increased to 75.

Trouble soon arose and Mr. Huq was forced to dismiss Mr. Nausher Ali from his Cabinet in June 1938. This created a group of opposition Muslims and Mr. Shamsuddin increased their rank when he resigned in February 1939. On 20th December, 1939, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar also resigned ostensibly due to his difference on the War Resolution of the Government, but in fact the Muslim League members may be said to have eased him out, and his portfolio of finance was taken over by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy. No Hindu of importance was left in the Cabinet.

In the meantime the Congress under Mr. Sarat C. Bose had not been inactive. Mr. Huq had for some time turned into a most virulent type of Muslim Leaguer, but he was probably never happy with his principal colleagues, namely Sir Nazimuddin and Mr. Suhrawardy, the former an Urdu-speaking aristocrat and the latter a well-bred man about town with peculiar friends, and uncertain manners.

Congress seems to have made overtures to Mr. Huq in 1937 and 1938, and it was rumoured that even Gandhiji, during his Bengal tour mentioned above, had tried to win him over. In a statement on 20th April, 1938, Mr. Huq admitted that Congress had more than once offered him the Premiership in a coalition

14. From Secretary, Governor-General (Public) to Secretary Home Department *Appreciation for the Dominions*, No. 6 of the 1941 Series, June 21; 1941, Home Department, Political, (Internal) 1941, No. 39/1041 Poll. para. 2.

Ministry, but if he had accepted he would have 'signed the death-warrant of Islam'. However, in August 1941, Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League Working Committee insisted that the League Premiers should resign from the Defence Council set up by the Government of India. Mr. Huq, after some delay, resigned under protest, and at the same time resigned his membership of the Muslim League Working Committee, protesting against outside interference in Bengal politics. But, by this time Mr. Jinnah had consolidated his position so far as the British Government were concerned, and it was no longer necessary for the Muslim League to have provincial Prime Ministers as its members to demonstrate its status as the authoritative organization of Indian Muslims.

However, Mr. Jinnah had not been unmindful of other opportunities. The Chief Intelligence Officer in his report on the political situation for the first half of November 1940 states:

'Subas Bose pressed for an early opportunity to see his mother who was ill ... Subhas Bose was permitted to go to his house and see his mother ... Secret information now indicates that he had a detailed discussion with Sarat Bose, Amulya Mukherji, Dwijen Bose, Ganesh Bose and other brothers. Sarat Bose told him that Mr. Jinnah had asked for his opinion on the proposed scheme for rallying the non-Congress elements and in combination with the Muslim League, forming coalition Ministries in the Provinces and gaining control at the centre. Subhas Bose is reported to have replied that Gandhi's plan for widening the scope of the Civil Disobedience Movement meant that the masses would ultimately be drawn into the struggle and consequently any such move against the Congress as that proposed would only render their party unpopular.'¹⁵

During this period Mr. Huq had sought Mr. Jinnah's permission to form a coalition Ministry with the Forward Bloc. For the

15. Extracts from C.I.O. Calcutta's Report on the Political situation for the 1st Half of November 1940. *Home Department Political*. 1(i), Section 1940. The value of this and the other intelligence reports quoted in this paper may not be free from doubt; but in view of the fact that the Forward Bloc joined the Ministry when Netaji was in Germany and Sarat C. Bose in jail indicates that these reports are based on fact. Further investigation will undoubtedly bring out the truth, but in the meantime these reports have to be utilised being the only material available.



same report states: 'It is now reported that Mr. Jinnah's reply to the proposal sent to him by Mr. Fazlul Huq regarding the formation of a Coalition Ministry in Bengal by combining with the Bose group has been received. Mr. Jinnah disapproves of the proposal and considers that so long as the Cabinet can maintain its present stable position there is no necessity for any such combination with other group.' Possibly Mr. Jinnah would have entered into a political alliance with the Forward Bloc on an all-India anti-Congress basis.

One may ponder as to whether a chance for preserving the unity of the country was not missed due to what appeared then as the broader consideration of national liberation movement, which does not now appear to have been a success.

In spite of his failure to form a coalition in 1940, Mr. Sarat C. Bose maintained his contact with Mr. Huq.

Mr. Sarat C. Bose was also negotiating with the Congress High Command. An intelligence report of 9th September, 1940, says that Mr. Bose returned from Bombay on 6-9-40. 'He appeared to be disappointed with the result of his negotiations with Sardar Patel, (who) demanded the immediate liquidation of the suspended B.P.C.C., unconditional surrender of Bose brothers by tendering an unqualified apology and the resignation of Jnan Majumdar who should seek re-election through the new B.P.C.C. after securing Parliamentary subcommittee's nomination. In addition to this, Pratul Ganguly, Hema Praba Majumdar and others who have sponsored and supported the candidature of Jnan Majumdar will also have to tender an apology ...'¹⁶

16. 4/13/40, *Poll, Home Poll, (Internal)*. It is only fair to add that when Sardar met Mr. Sarat C. Bose again in 1945, he burst into tears as he embraced the latter, and Sardar was not an emotional man. As for Netaji, Sardar completely changed his attitude after Netaji had left India. Mr. K. M. Munshi used to tell me that it became 'impossible to discuss with Sardar any proposal for negotiations with the Government on any terms; Sardar's invariable reply to all arguments being '*Subhas a gya*' (Subhas is about to come) Mr. Munshi was of the opinion that the failure of the Cripps Mission was partly due to the stand taken by Sardar, who by that time had convinced Gandhiji that nothing should be done which could impede Netaji's activities abroad.

Apparently Mr. Sarat C. Bose had conducted negotiations both with Mr. Jinnah and Sardar Patel while he visited Bombay, during the first week of September. It is impossible to say whether Sardar Patel's vindictive attitude impelled Mr. Bose to lend a willing ear to Mr. Jinnah's overtures, or whether Sardar's attitude was formed by his knowledge that Mr. Bose was having secret *pourparlers* with Mr. Jinnah.

Whatever may have been the cause, the failure of Mr. Bose to arrive at an understanding with Mr. Jinnah must be reckoned as unfortunate. However, he did not give up his attempt and went on with his negotiations till he was arrested on 11th December, 1941, under the Defence of India Rules.

Mr. Sarat C. Bose's arrest was decided after a voluminous correspondence between the Home Member, Governor of Bengal, Governor-General, and the Secretary of State. The final charges against him appears to have been (1) his Japanese contacts and (2) the certainty of his inclusion as a minister in the pending ministerial changes in Bengal.¹⁷ The matter seems to have been clinched after the Home Member received a telegram from Bengal on 8th December, 1941, advising that Mr. Bose would insist on Home Portfolio in the Huq Ministry.¹⁸

We have printed in Appendix I a letter dated, 14th December, 1944, from Sir Nazimuddin to Mr. Jinnah. This letter shows the dominant role played by the Governor and the European bloc in Ministry-making in Bengal. Communal riots had become nearly endemic in Bengal, particularly at Dacca, since August, 1940, and the Muslim League had become almost an anathema to the Hindus, yet the Governor was trying his best to break the coalition and instal a Muslim League Ministry. As Sir Nazimuddin writes: 'The break with Mr. Fazlul Huq took place with practically the tacit approval of H(is) E(xcellency), and we were given to understand that when the Coalition Party elected the new Leader he would be sent for.'

17. Letter dated 4 December 1941 from Sir Richard Tottenham to Secretary (Public) to the Governor-General, 94/26/Poll.(I) 1941. Home Department. Poll (I) Sec. For Mr. Bose's version of his nature of Japanese contact see Appendix II.

18. Home Department file mentioned in note 17.



Unfortunately for Sir Nazimuddin the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbour on 7th December, 1941, the very day on which the Governor accepted Mr. Huq's resignation submitted on 1st December, and immediately the Governor asked Sir Nazimuddin to patch up his differences with Mr. Huq. This however, was not possible, one of the reasons being that Mr. Huq had formed the Progressive Coalition Party under his leadership on 3rd December, 1941, which consisted of members drawn from Muslim League dissidents, Congress (Forward Bloc), Krishak Praja Party, Hindu Mahasabha, Nationalists (Hindus), Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Labour. Under the circumstances then prevailing this was possibly the most representative coalition that could be formed.

Sir Nazimuddin also writes: 'The arrest of Mr. Sarat Bose came as a surprise to everyone, excepting myself'. Apparently he had prior information about the impending arrest from the highest sources, which could only be the Governor, and it is possible that he had advised Mr. Bose's arrest in order to break the Progressive Coalition Party. However he laments: '...but neither it (the arrest of Mr. Bose) has improved our position nor has it in any way, affected the subversive elements in the Government of Bengal. Mr. Sarat Bose and his followers know that they have, at last, got the Government of Bengal in their hands and would fully exert every nerve to keep their grip on it.'

A contemporary Government report described the provincial affairs as follows: 'Two of the three Provincial Premiers who professed allegiance to the Muslim League have (with their colleagues) lately resigned. In Assam, where the Premier could no longer command a majority, a new ministry has not yet been formed. In Bengal differences between the Premier, Mr. Fazlul Huq, and his Muslim League colleagues have been much aggravated by Mr. Jinnah's attempt to repress the Premier's independence of action; and in the outcome the League Ministers have passed into opposition while Mr. Fazlul Huq (now finally excommunicated from the League) has formed a coalition Ministry in which most of the other elements in the Assembly are represented. Thus he retains office, though the Ministry which he has led since April 1937 has fallen to pieces. The Muslim League, and Mr. Jinnah's leadership of it have certainly lost credit by these

events.¹⁹ The British authorities and officials tried their utmost to restore Mr. Jinnah's credit.

On 28th March, 1942, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy was writing to Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India: 'I have had clear indication both from Dow in Sind and from Bengal of the growing reluctance of the Ministers to put their heart into the war effort or take responsibility for unpleasant decisions ... While in Bengal the Civil Defence Minister (Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu) is achieving good results, some of the Ministry seem to have put about the ingenious theory that the Council of Ministers is distinct from the Government of Bengal—a theory which the Chief Minister puts into practice by agreeing departmentally to the issue of orders necessitated under direction from the Centre, and then coming back with a memorandum from the "Council of Ministers" protesting against the policy. In brief the idea appears to be to hang on to the sweets of office without accepting its responsibilities. I feel I ought to let you know of this tendency because I have the strong impression that the situation is deteriorating and that a situation might develop in which Herbert (Sir John, Governor of Bengal) ought to force the issue even to the point of Fazlul Huq's resignation ...'²⁰

It is apparent that a difficult situation had been created by the operation of Section 126A of the Government of India Act (Amendment Act) 1939, which had received the Royal Assent on 1st September, 1939. This Act, which was claimed to be a war measure, authorised the Central Government, during an emergency, to give directions to the Provinces as to the way in which their executive authority was to be exercised, and empowered the Centre to make laws regarding a provincial subject by which executive

19. Appreciation for The Dominions, No. 12 of the 1941 Series, December 17, 1941, Home Department Political (Internal) No. 39/10/41/Poll. By the middle of August 1942, Sir Mohammad Saadullah managed to form another Ministry with European support on condition that 'the schemes for supply will be administered by competent commercial firm; Mansergh and Lumby, *op.cit.*, II, Document No. 568.

20. Mansergh and Lumby, *op.cit.*, I Document No. 426. The Prime Minister of Sind, Mr. Allah Bakhsh was dismissed by the Governor on October 10, 1942 ostensibly for renouncing his titles of Khan Bahadur and O.B.E. which, he said were 'tokens of British Imperialism'.

authority was conferred upon the Centre or its officers. In practice, the Central officers were passing orders to the Provincial officers and ministers were practically reduced to rubber stamps. The operation of Section 126A must have been very humiliating to the ministers, particularly to Mr. Fazlul Huq, who had acted as Prime Minister before the obnoxious amending Act was passed. In any case, it was impossible for the Ministry to assume responsibility for policies and acts dictated from the Centre. Hence, however, irritating their behaviour may have appeared to the Viceroy it seems to have been the only possible solution of the problem.

The real trouble, however, was that the Governor was not quite sure of Mr. Fazlul Huq's attitude towards the Congress, which was about to begin its movement under Gandhiji. In a letter to Mr. Amery written on the day the August Movement started, Lord Linlithgow wrote: 'Herbert is not very certain of the attitude of Huq who under Shyama Prasad Mookerji's influence shows signs of wobbling with the result that Bengal Government may be reluctant to take necessary action.'²¹

One of the main pillars of the new coalition was Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha. Intelligence report of the Home Department records that during this period communal tension was increasing the popularity of the Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal led by its energetic leader, Dr. Mukherjee, and he was gaining at the expense of the Congress, which was hard put to explain its inactive policy regarding the communal problem even in the face of rising onslaught by the Muslim League.

Dr. Mukherjee was impelled by the deteriorating political situation to arrive at a settlement with Mr. Jinnah. They apparently had a friendly talk, and then Dr. Mukherjee saw the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, on 9th September, 1942. Lord Linlithgow told Dr. Mukherjee that 'he (Dr. Mukherjee) had ruined his chances of acting as a mediator by the insistence laid on prior repudiation of Pakistan by His Majesty's Government as a condition of any settlement.' Lord Linlithgow also 'warned' Dr. Mukherjee that 'if he was thinking of a Government based essentially on the Maha-

21. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Document No. 461, para 2, see also Documents Nos. 309, para 3, and 313.

sabha, with odd sections of Muslims, such as those represented by Fazlul Huq and other oddments, he could hardly hope for such success if Congress were out in opposition and the Muslim League (and probably the Sikhs also) were also in opposition'.²²

That is, the Viceroy made it clear to Dr. Mukherjee that the British authorities were not prepared to take any notice of a political leader who did not enjoy the support of the Congress and the Muslim League (and of the Sikhs also), and indirectly, accept Pakistan at least by implication, though in a letter written to Mr. Amery only four days before his interview with Dr. Mukherjee, Lord Linlithgow had stated: 'The Hindus have made the mistake of taking Jinnah seriously about Pakistan, and as a result they have given substance to a shadow.'²³ But British politicians and administrators since Lord Clive have not been above guile when dealing with Indian leaders.

Lord Linlithgow may have cautioned Mr. Jinnah about Dr. Mukherjee's move; in any case on 14th September, 1943, that is four days after Dr. Mukherjee's interview with the Viceroy, Mr. Jinnah called a Press Conference in course of which he declared the Hindu Mahasabha was out to establish a Hindu Raj in which Mussalmans will be treated as Jews.²⁴ This statement strengthened the Viceroy in his stand, and in his letter to Mr. Amery next day (14th September, 1942) he referred to it and concluded: "The individuals he mentions as supporting the stand taken by the Hindu Mahasabha are all respectable and some of them important;

22. Mansergh and Lumby, *op.cit.*, II, Document No. 722, paras 2 and 4. see also Nos. 741 and 744 para 2. Mr. K. M. Munshi in his *Pilgrimage to Freedom*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1967, p. 84-6 has given a slightly different account. Actually I found the document from his papers which he identified as Dr. Mukherji's proposals. But I was not satisfied that it was Dr. Mukherji's note and wrote the foot-note on p. 84. The letter to Rajaji was also written at my request. The publication of the letter from Lord Linlithgow to Mr. Amery confirms me in my view that the note which Mr. Munshi said was Dr. Mukherji's was actually Raja Maheswar Dayal's. That Mr. Munshi was in Dr. Mukherji's confidence is stated by Lord Linlithgow also, *ibid.*, II Document No. 741.

23. Mansergh and Lumby *op.cit.*, II, Document No. 701, para 12. In this letter Lord Linlithgow expressed himself against giving any concession to Sikh demand.

24. *Ibid.*, II Document No. 740, p. 958.

but there is nothing behind them that matters. Equally, so far as Muslims are concerned, Jinnah is the only person that matters'.²⁵ Lord Linlithgow, however, admitted in the same letter that Dr. Mukherjee had 'secured the support of Rajagopalachari, Jayakar, Munshi, Tara Singh, Maharaj Singh, and also has the support of the Premier of Sind, and the President of the Momin Conference.' As Dr. Mukherjee had the full support and co-operation of Mr. Fazlul Huq, he actually represented at this time, the non-Congress Hindus, non-League Muslims (including premiers of two provinces), Sikhs and Indian Christians; yet he was rebuffed by the Viceroy who was out to build up Mr. Jinnah.²⁶

Bengal at this time had three Hindu leaders; of them Netaji was out of the country; we have seen his brother Mr. Sarat C. Bose had tried his utmost to come to an understanding with the Muslims, both League and non-League. Even after his arrest, which seems to have been intended to prevent a coalition between his party and non-League Muslims, his followers joined the Ministry, and even the Viceroy admitted that at least one of them namely Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu 'the Civil Defence Minister was achieving good results'.²⁷ Thus they were trying their best to achieve success for their coalition Ministry under Mr. Fazlul Huq, even though their Party leader was rotting in jail. In Appendix II we have given an account of an interview of Mr. Sarat C. Bose with Mr. Santosh K. Basu and the Nawab of Dacca—who by all accounts was a leader of Muslim opinion—at the Trichi Jail, which will show the affectionate regard which the Nawab had for Mr. Sarat C. Bose.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee is now known as a communal leader of the Hindus, and his efforts to establish harmonious relation and political understanding between the Hindus and Muslims particularly of Bengal, have been forgotten. It seems to have been forgotten also, that the Muslim League Leaders, Bengalis and non-Bengalis alike, set their face adamantly against any understanding with the Hindus, unless their demand for Pakistan was

25. *Ibid.*, II Document No. 741.

26. For an explanation of British attitude see my paper referred to in note 3.

27. Mansergh and Lumby, *op.cit.*, I, Document No. 426.



conceded; and they were being encouraged to remain adamant by their British patrons.

As we have seen from Sir Nazimuddin's letter to Mr. Jinnah (Appendix I), the Governor allowed the formation of non-League Coalition Ministry due to the situation created by the entry of Japan into the war. Even so, he had hoped that the Forward Bloc would not join or support the Ministry since their leader had been arrested. But his expectations of a short-lived Ministry proved futile, and he had to take recourse to other measures to get rid of it and instal a League Ministry. The Huq Ministry's refusal to toe the line chalked out by the Central Government and Mr. Jinnah brought about its downfall.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the Minister for Finance, was the first to go. He resigned on 16th November, 1942, and in his letter of resignation addressed to the Governor stated :

'Let me refer briefly to the general political situation in the country ... I should record here the extraordinary manner in which you acted when you received information of policy as determined by the Government of India regarding the threatened Congress movement. When the letter from the Government of India came to the Chief Secretary, you showed it to and discussed it with the Chief Minister who rightly suggested that the policy enunciated by the Government of India on so important a subject should be fully discussed by Cabinet. You deliberately rejected this advice and even asked the Chief Minister to keep back the contents of the letter from his colleagues, although some permanent officials saw it and recorded their plans for giving effect to the directions. You decided that the Cabinet would consider the letter only after information had been received from the Government of India that effect had actually been given to the policy formulated by it, following the arrest of the Congress leaders. Consultation at this stage was utterly useless as it gave no opportunity to Cabinet to record its views and communicate them for the effective consideration of the Government of India.

'When on August 9, after the arrest of the Congress leaders at Bombay, you called us together and asked us either to accept the policy or to resign, I pointed out to you that your action was extraordinary and brought Provincial autonomy to a state of

ridicule. You expected Ministers to stand by you on the basis of collective responsibility but declined to trust them and consult them on such a vital matter except at the very last moment when consultation was indeed fruitless.

I regret to say that from the very beginning of our association with you, you have failed to rise to that impartial height of a Provincial Governor.... You have all along permitted yourself to be guided by a section of permanent officials—loyal diehards according to you; short-sighted and reactionary, according to us—resulting in the establishment of a Government within a Government which has proved disastrous to the interest of the province.

....you showed no sympathy whenever proposals for the recognition of the people's rights in various fields of activity were made. They were turned down by you because of deep-rooted distrust and suspicion. Our proposal for raising a Bengal Army was not acceptable to you for reasons which would not even bear scrutiny.... The scheme for popularizing the Home Guard was rejected by you in spite of unanimous advice of all the Ministers, simply (because) you and your officials were afraid of trusting the people. You have systematically resisted the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries and the expansion of Cabinet, just to embarrass the Ministry.... In matters relating to the Denial Policy you failed to realize the untold suffering into which thousands of people would be thrown and discontent that was bound to follow; and only after a good deal of effort could that policy be only slightly modified. We do not yet know what plans have been kept ready for destruction of plants, machinery and other properties in case of enemy invasion. Even in matters relating to supply of food and control of supply you have interfered with Ministerial action and have rendered our task extremely embarrassing. You have discouraged the growth of collective responsibility among Ministers while taking momentous decisions on vital issues. Ministerial advice has been brushed aside in regard to selection and posting of officers, while your unabashed softness for the present Opposition Party is in marked contrast to the treatment we used to receive in a similar capacity when the last Ministry was in office. Even with regard to a simple question like prorogation of the last session of the Assembly, you have declined to accept our advice. Indeed I did not even receive a reply from you to my letter written in

early October, pointing out how the Province had to incur wasteful and avoidable expenditure due to your decision not to prorogue the Assembly, simply to harass the Ministry.... You and some of your officers will commit Government to policies and acts which Ministers do not approve of and afterwards you expect them to stand up as obedient persons, fully justifying the results of your mistaken policy....

"The manner in which collective fines have been imposed by Government throughout the Province deserves severe condemnation. The scheme of imposition of collective fines on Hindus alone, irrespective of their guilt, has been an all-India feature and is a British revival of the ancient policy of *jiziya* for which Aurangzeb made himself famous. In Bengal the Chief Minister has been averse to the imposition of such fines and tried again and again to lay down certain principles which were unimpeachable from the point of view of elementary justice. You have interfered with the Chief Minister's decision and have prevented him from giving effect to these directions. Amounts have been imposed in many cases without any regard to the total damage caused or to the part played by the inhabitants concerned... Fines have been imposed in many cases without the Chief Minister knowing what was being done. Only recently it was suggested by the Chief Minister that the realization might be delayed by a fortnight and the entire policy considered at a Cabinet meeting. Your answer to this request, which was made on behalf of us all, was in full conformity with the traditions which you had already established. You had no objection to a Cabinet meeting being held. But you indicated beforehand with sufficient clearness, but with unbecoming impropriety and discourtesy to Ministers, that you would in any case pass order in exercise of your individual judgment for the immediate collection of the fine."²⁸

We have given lengthy extracts from Dr. Mukherjee's letter for it is the only available evidence on the activities of the Governor and his relation with the coalition Ministry. It reveals the attempt of the white bureaucracy to get rid of a popular

28. Quoted in J. S. Sharma: *India's Struggle for Freedom*, S. Chand, Delhi, 1962, pp. 582-85.



ministry so that the Muslim League might be restored to office and Mr. Jinnah's hands strengthened. The white officials had by this time become corrupt, and was out to make money in collusion with some non-Bengali commercial firms which were entrusted to procure food; the Governor Sir John Herbert was their mouthpiece.

On 24th March, 1943, the Muslim League moved a cut motion to the Budget in the Bengal Assembly, but it was rejected by 116 votes to 86. Three days later, on March 27, the League moved a resolution of no-confidence, which also failed but by a narrower majority: 109 votes to 99. In the best style of a Nazi *Gauleiter* the Governor then summoned Mr. Huq to the Government House and forced him to sign a letter of resignation which had already been typed. Mr. Huq was told that his fault was that in August 1942 he had failed to institute an enquiry into a shooting incident at Dacca, when asked by the Governor to do so.

Sir Nazimuddin could not rally enough support for a Muslim League Ministry, so the Governor took up the administration of the Province under Section 93 to give Sir Nazimuddin the time he needed to win over sufficient support. Constitutional Government was restored on April 24, by which time Sir Nazimuddin had been able to collect sufficient non-descript elements to command a majority in the Assembly. In July the opposition led by Mr. Huq forced a motion over the Ministry's culpable mishandling of the food situation, but now the European Bloc of 25 members came to the rescue of the Muslim League Ministry.

In October 1943 Lord Wavell replaced Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy. He was appalled by the Bengal famine, and on 6th January, 1944 wrote to Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State:

'We must not let constitutional technicalities obscure realities of situation. Bengal famine of 1943 and its aftermath of misery and disease are grave national disaster with death roll which will never be known but may amount to one million or more. If we believe that this disaster which was largely due to ministerial incompetence may be repeated perhaps on an even larger scale in 1944 and that the remedy is direct administration by the Governor then we must find means to apply the remedy whatever the constitutional position may be. I admit the force of what you say about provincial autonomy, but there must be limits to the price we pay for preserving it...

'Your view is that Section 93 can be employed only when administration becomes constitutionally impossible and not as a remedy for inefficiency. But surely you cannot push this argument to the point of sacrificing another million lives on the ground that they are being sacrificed in a strictly constitutional manner...' ²⁹

However, on various ingenious pleas, the Secretary of State declined to interfere and the horrible famine continued to take its toll of human life. The Muslim League Ministry unperturbed by the misery of its creation continued in office till they were defeated by an adverse vote in the legislature on 28th March, 1945.

During the two years of its existence, the Muslim League Ministry had managed to change completely the communal atmosphere of Bengal. Communal riots become almost part of political life, but what was even worse, Muslim youth became fanatic protagonists of Pakistan of their fervid imagination, which indeed included not only the whole of Bengal but Assam also.

After the League Ministry in Bengal was voted out of office on 28 March, 1945, the Governor took up the administration of the Province under Section 93. Various attempts to form a Ministry failed mainly due to the tactics adopted by the Muslim League, which refused to form a coalition with any party unless their Pakistan demand was conceded. The Muslim League also deliberately embittered the already bad communal situation.

Fresh elections were held in December 1945, but the results were declared next January. In Bengal Assembly of 250 members, the Muslim League won 113 out of the total of 119 Muslim seats, and the Congress obtained 87. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, who now led the Muslim League in the Assembly, made half-hearted attempts to induce the Congress to join him in a coalition, but ultimately formed a League Ministry, which included a few independent elements. Mr. Fazlul Huq was totally eliminated from power, though he too had been returned and ultimately managed to be elected to the Constituent Assembly.

At this point the politics of Bengal becomes a part of all-India politics, and it is no longer necessary for our present purpose to

29. Telegram XX, from Viceroy to Secretary of State, dated 8 January 1944 (1230) IMMEDIATE, 389-6; *Menon Papers*.



go into either. It is however, instructive to study the reactions and responses of two Congress leaders to the communal situation.

Towards the end of August 1945, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad approached Gandhiji with a plan for communal settlement. The main features of this plan was fully autonomous provinces with minimum necessary power for the centre, and the provinces were to have the right to secede. Joint electorates were provided for both at the Centre and the provinces, 'with reservation and such differential franchise as might be needed to make the electorate reflect the strength of population of the communities. There must be parity of Hindus and Muslims in the central legislature and the central executive till such time as communal suspicion disappeared and parties were formed on economic and political lines. There should also be a convention by which the head of the India federation would in the initial period be Hindu and Muslim by turn.'³⁰

In a letter to Sir Stafford Cripps dated 27th January 1946, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

The British Government has to decide once for all its policy in regard to this matter. It can no longer sit on the hedge. It cannot force Pakistan on India, in the form demanded by Jinnah, for that certainly will lead to Civil war. Jinnah's demand includes Assam, Delhi, the whole of the Punjab, and Bengal, the N-W.F. Province, Sind, (and) Baluchistan. By no stretch of imagination can Assam, Delhi and large parts of Punjab and Bengal which have a non-Muslim majority, be included in Pakistan. Probably even in these elections the N-W.F.P. will declare against the League. Even if the Muslims as a whole support the League and Pakistan, that can only mean a division of both Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah has indignantly rejected this. What then? Compulsion of other areas to join Pakistan? That is inconceivable and impossible. Thus the crux of the Pakistan issue is this: a Pakistan consisting of only part of Punjab and part of Bengal, or no separation at all.'³¹

30. V. P. Menon: *The Transfer of Power in India*, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1957, p. 221. Mr. Menon got this information from an intercepted letter from Maulana Azad to Gandhiji in which the scheme was presented; a copy of Maulana Azad's letter was sent to the Secretary of State; the Viceroy had of course seen it. I got this information from Mr. Menon.

31. Menon Papers.

So far as we have been able to find out, Maulana Azad's scheme was never discussed by other Congress leaders, from which it appears that Gandhiji did not favour this scheme. Gandhiji was also against partition of the Punjab and Bengal, for he was at this time trying his best to maintain the country's unity.

Meanwhile, inspired by Sir Nazimuddin and directed by the Prime Minister of Bengal, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Muslim League started a massive communal riot on 16 August 1946, which even the British Press called 'The Great Calcutta Killing'. According to the Viceroy, by 28 August 1946, 4400 people were dead, 16000 injured and 100,000 rendered homeless;³² unofficial figures were much higher.

By the time the Hindus of Calcutta succeeded in organizing themselves, riot broke out in Noakhali (October 10, 1946). Acharya Kripalani, then the President of the Congress came to Bengal to find out the truth about Noakhali, as no news was available. He met the Governor at Chittagong and writes about this meeting:

'When we met the Governor, he appeared to be quite unconcerned and at ease. The Chief Minister also happened to be there. The Governor said that the Chief Minister had reported to him that everything was under control and peace and order had been restored. When we talked of kidnapping of Hindu women by the Muslims, his laconic reply was that that was inevitable, as the Hindu women there were more handsome than Muslim women. I felt like hitting him....³³ This attitude of extreme indifference to the fate of the Hindus, and an equally intense eagerness to pander to the misdeeds of the Muslims characterized the Britishers.

32. Cypher Telegram O.T.P. Top Secret from Viceroy to Secretary of State No. 1804-S dated the 28 August 1946, (1715) MOST IMMEDIATE, SUPERINTENDENT, SERIES: Menon Papers.

33. J. B. Kripalani, *Gandhi: His Life and Thought*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1970, pp. 255-56. At this time Sir Frederic Burrows was the Governor of Bengal. He had the unique distinction of being the only 'Labour' Governor of British India. He had served as a parcel clerk at a small station in Herefordshire, and had been President of the National Union of Railwaymen and a member of the Labour Party Executive. He was appointed by Mr. Attlee, who had a high opinion about him. C. R. Attlee: *As It Happened*. William Heinemann, London, 1954, p. 183.



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The Hindus in Naokhali received no protection from any quarter. Ultimately Gandhiji went there to lend them his moral support and focus the attention of the world to the sufferings of the Hindus there.

Describing the reaction of the Congress, her President Acharya Kripalani writes: 'The long period of negotiations marked by intrigues, communal rioting and the bringing in of the League into the Central Cabinet had created conditions in which nobody knew where the real authority lay

'This had made Congress leaders reluctantly realise that there was no possibility of peace between the Hindus and Muslims in the foreseeable future and some kind of division of the country, they held, had become necessary. But at the time they were thinking in terms of administrative division of certain areas. However, the British bureaucracy, it would appear, was determined to satisfy Jinnah and the League about their demand for Pakistan as a separate sovereign state. This was clear from the announcement made by Attlee on February 20....'³⁴

The Congress Working Committee considered the British Prime Minister's offer on 6th March 1947. Acharya Kripalani writes of this meeting: 'The members felt that Pakistan which the Muslim League was insisting upon and which had the backing of the British Government was inevitable. If India was divided, the division of the Punjab and Bengal should be the necessary corollary. It was therefore as a lesser evil that they suggested the administrative division of the Punjab. Asked by the Press whether the same principle would apply to Bengal, I said "Naturally so."'³⁵

Gandhiji reacted sharply against Acharya Kripalani's statement to the Press, and demanded an explanation. But ultimately he had to accept the facts of political life.

34. Acharya Kripalani, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 279. The resolution was passed on 8 March and stated that the situation 'would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.' It is well known that this was the only major decision taken by the Congress in Gandhiji's absence, for which Acharya Kripalani has given an explanation.

Still there was, no change in the attitude of the Muslim leaders of Bengal. Probably they felt confident that with British support, they would be able to get whole of Bengal, and Assam in Pakistan. They were therefore dazed by the statement of 3rd June 1947 which provided for partition of Bengal and the Punjab. The Hindus of East Bengal were dismayed; but there was relief in West Bengal; sporadic riots were still going on in Calcutta.

As stated earlier, Mr. V. P. Menon's plan for transfer of power to two Dominions and partition of the Punjab and Bengal was accepted in principle by the middle of May 1947. As a result, as Mr. Pyarelal put it, 'Chickens of destiny had come to roost in Shaheed Suhrawardy's Bengal.'³⁶

As early as 19th March 1947, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee had demanded division of Bengal even in an undivided India. But Muslim leaders paid no heed to him. Now the situation was different, and faced with the prospect of losing Calcutta, the jute mills, coal belt and the iron industry, Mr. Suhrawardy and his Muslim League colleagues turned to the Congress leaders, and particularly to Gandhiji, whose dislike of partition was well known, to preserve the unity of Bengal.

Dr. B. C. Roy and Mr. Kiran Sankar Ray saw Gandhiji at Delhi, and at his advice Mr. K. S. Roy met the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten's advice was that if the Muslim League offered joint electorate and the constitution of a composite Cabinet and recruitment in the services upon a 50:50 basis, Bengal Congress should accept the offer even if it meant setting up a sovereign State of Bengal.³⁷ Nothing seems to have come out of this move; apparently the Muslim League leaders refused to accept these terms.

Mr. Sarat C. Bose then took up the cause of a Sovereign United Bengal. He saw Gandhiji several times in this connection and more than once took Mr. Suhrawardy and Abul Hashem, the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League to Gandhiji. Gandhiji was happy to learn from Mr. Hashem that his case for a united Bengal was on the grounds of 'common language, common culture

36. Pyarelal: *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1958, Vol. II, p. 177.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 180.



and common history that united the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal alike. Whether Hindu or Muslim, Bengali was a Bengali; and hated the rule of Pakistanis from over 1000 miles away.'

Gandhiji then asked Mr. Hashem whether they would object to join Pakistan, if instead of incorporation, Pakistan invited them to enter into a 'voluntary federation for the propagation of Islamic culture and religion'. Mr. Hashem kept quiet. Gandhiji then said that since Bengal's common culture as embodied in Tagore had its roots in the Upanishads, which was the common heritage not only of Bengal but of the whole of India, 'would sovereign Bengal contemplate entering into a "voluntary association" with the rest of India.' Again Mr. Hashem failed to answer.

By this time Mr. Suhrawardy practically renounced the two nation theory at a Press interview, while at another he agreed that Sovereign Bengal would enter into any arrangement with the Indian Union. But he had no prestige left, at least with the Hindus, and his assurances and pledges were dismissed as lightly as they were made. He requested Gandhiji to help him by inducing the Hindus not to insist on partitioning Bengal, but totally ignored Gandhiji's advice to make an all out effort to win the confidence of the Hindus.

Later in May a conference was held in Mr. Sarat C. Bose's house which was attended by Mr. Suhrawardy, Fazlur Rahaman (Dacca) Mohammed Ali (Bogra), Abdul Hashem (Secretary Bengal Muslim League on leave), Abdul Malek (Labour) Kiran Sankar Ray and Satya Rajan Bakshi. This meeting arrived at a tentative agreement which Mr. Bose and Mr. Hashem signed for purposes of identification, and Mr. Bose sent a copy of the agreement to Gandhiji, who was then at Patna (23rd May 1947).

Even when Gandhiji had met the Muslim leaders and Mr. Bose at Calcutta or Sodepur, he had suggested that instead of 'mutual consent every major decision would have to be taken by two-thirds majority of each community.' But this point was not found in the 'tentative agreement' accepted by Mr. Sarat C. Bose. Hence Gandhiji wrote to him:

'There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two-thirds of the Hindu mino-

rity in the executive and the legislature. There should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother-tongue Bengali. Make sure that the Central Muslim League approves of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary. If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee.³⁸

Mr. Sarat C. Bose failed to get satisfaction from Mr. Suhrawardy on the points raised by Gandhiji. Still he met Gandhiji at Delhi on June 6th 1947, and discussed with him his plan of 'United Bengal' though by that time both Congress and the League had accepted partition under June 3 plan. On 8th June 1947, Gandhiji wrote to Mr. Sarat C. Bose:

'I have gone through your draft. I have now discussed the scheme roughly with Pandit Nehru and the Sardar. Both of them are dead against the proposal and they are of opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindu and Scheduled Caste leaders. With them it is not merely a suspicion but almost a conviction.'³⁹

Mr. Sarat C. Bose, however, did not give up his attempt. He had met Mr. Jinnah at Delhi, and on June 9th wrote to him from Calcutta to instruct the Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly to vote against Pakistan.⁴⁰ But, as Mr. Pyarelal has said, 'at the stage, this was like looking for last year's eggs in this year's nests.'

APPENDIX I

Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941 No. 232/41 Pol.

Copy of a letter dated 14-12-41, from Sir Nazimuddin, Calcutta to Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Bombay.

I have been so busy during the last fortnight that I have not been able to write to you and give you detailed information. I hope Hassan kept you posted with all the news. I am glad to

38. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

40. For the text of this letter, see *ibid.*, p. 190.



find that you have nominated Hassan on the Working Committee. I would like to have had Shaheed there, specially as he feels that he has a prior claim to any one of us. But, under the present circumstances, your decision is a very wise one. We are hopelessly short of funds and our future success depends on our ability to organise which cannot be done without money. Both the Ispahani Brothers are very keen and genuine Leaguers and our main and perhaps, the only hope. Mirza Ahmed Ispahani has undertaken to find about twenty-five to thirty thousand rupees for organising the Muslim League in Bengal. He expects to raise this sum from the mercantile community in Calcutta, but I am afraid, in the end he may have to meet practically the whole of it.

Now let me tell you of what happened here—Upto a point everything went according to my plan; that is to say H.E. and the European Group were supporting us and when it was announced (that) Messrs Sarat Bose, Shyama Prashad Mookerjee and others had accepted Mr. Fazlul Huq as leader, H.E. decided that break was inevitable and we were given to understand that we would be called. The only difficulty was the H.E. has so committed himself that he was not prepared to prorogue the Assembly and the Speaker was also not prepared to adjourn the House, *sine die*. The latter's attitude was inexplicable and as a Muslim Leaguer he disappointed us very much. The break with Mr. Fazlul Huq took place with practically the tacit approval of H.E. and we were given to understand that when the Coalition Party elected the new Leader he would be sent for. We then decided to form the Muslim League Legislature Party. We had about 55 to 60 signatures and at the meeting of the Coalition Party, which was held on the same day 72 members were present and they unanimously passed a vote of no-confidence on Mr. Fazlul Huq. But suddenly H.E.'s attitude changed and we later came to learn that the non-official Europeans also adopted that what may be called a hostile attitude towards us, and it is my personal opinion that the attitude of the non-official Europeans influenced H.E. also. I had long and heated discussion with H.E. and once, after a protracted argument when H.E. could not find any reply to my claim to be sent for, he promised to do so the next day, provided I was prepared to face the Legislature in seven days' time. He asked me to consult my friends and come back the next day. I was definitely given to understand that if I agreed to meet a vote of no-confidence

immediately, he would give me the first chance. Next morning I went back with the information that I had received very good response and there was every chance of my forming a stable Ministry and I was prepared to face the legislature according to H.E.'s wishes. H.E. told me that the war news was very bad; that the Japs had the command of the sea and were able to land troops in Malaya and therefore he wanted to have a War Cabinet; that Mr. Fazlul Huq and I should agree to work together. He insisted on our meeting together. We met and I reported to you over the telephone the gist of the conversation we had. He had been toying with the idea of a War Cabinet and although I pointed out to him that it was neither a practicable nor a feasible proposition, yet throughout the day he tried his best to have a War Cabinet. Mr. Fazlul Huq, under the guidance of Mr. Sarat Bose and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, refused to work under Sir Azizul Haque and H.E. therefore, had to drop the idea. After that he definitely made up his mind to send for Mr. Fazlul Huq. The main consideration which led H.E. to this decision was the fact that if he asked me to form the Ministry his position with the Hindus would be mud. I told him that the Muslims were receiving the same treatment which they got at the time of cancelling the Partition of Bengal, which H.E. himself had denounced. I also told him many home-truths and pointed out that he was handing over the Government to the 5th columnists and to persons whom he knew definitely to be anti-British and in favour of Hitler and Japan. But nothing would shake him from the fear of what the Hindu Press would say and thus, once again, the Muslims of Bengal have been let down by the Governor and the non-official Europeans.

The arrest of Mr. Sarat Bose came as a big surprise to everyone, excepting myself, but neither it has improved our position nor has it in any way affected the influence of the subversive elements on the Government of Bengal. Mr. Sarat Bose and his followers know that they have, at last, got the Government of Bengal in their hands and would fully exert every nerve to keep their grip on it. And they have got it at a time when they wanted it most, with Subhas Bose in Germany and Japan knocking at the doors of Burma. It is a chance of a life-time for the terrorists in Bengal. Akbar Allahabadi's verse appears to have been written for an occasion like this.

We have now got about 50 Muslims in the opposition. There may be addition in our rank after the Ministry is completely formed, when the disappointed ones will come to us, or we may be reduced to 40. But, Inshallah, we will not go below 40 and they will be the solid ones. The public is whole-heartedly with us. There is great indignation at the treachery of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca and the poor Muslim officers are heart-broken and frightened. The student community is highly excited and solidly behind us. An attempt is being made to stop all demonstrations and public meetings on the ground of war emergency. I consider this absolutely unjustifiable, as we are not going to say anything against war; we are not against war efforts, and as long as there is a legislature working, there can be no possible ground for preventing the discussion of matters that are going to come up before the legislature, particularly expression of public opinion on the character of the Ministry. There is going to be a public meeting today and I am told that the Commissioner of Police may make an attempt to stop it. The Calcutta public are determined to hold the meeting. We are going to attend in full force and it is possible that we may be arrested. But it is, in my opinion, a life and death question for the Muslims of Bengal and for the organisation of the Muslim League. The Hindus have succeeded in dividing us with the help of the "Mir Jaffars". We have got to make sacrifices and be prepared for the worst. I am confident that the Muslims of Bengal will be true Muslims and will not fail you and their organisation. If Bengal Government and the Governor try to suppress us unlawfully then they will find that Muslims are different now from what they were, and have been in the past.

I have heard on the radio, last night, that you have called a meeting of the Working Committee at Nagpur. I think Bengal, at the present time, has a prior claim on you, and the working committee meeting at Calcutta is far more urgent and necessary than at any other place in India. A meeting of the Working Committee at Calcutta will help to rouse the Muslims and counter the effect of Mr. Fazlul Huq's and the Nawab Bahadur's propaganda that they are Muslim Leaguers and that they are loyal to the Muslim League. I know that nobody believes them, specially after the inclusion of Dr. S. P. Mookerjee in the Cabinet, but they have got the press in their hands and thus have an advantage

over us. As far as propaganda is concerned, if the Working Committee meeting is held here then even the Hindu Press will have to give publicity to it. I therefore, most earnestly request you, on behalf of the Muslims of Bengal, to change the venue of the meeting to Calcutta. I am sure you will be flooded with telegrams and requests for this. We consider this of vital importance, specially if we are all arrested and sent to jail.

Shaheed is very disappointed and dejected particularly as people are sympathising with him for not being nominated to the W.C. He thinks that in view of his stand for the League and attacks on him his position in Bengal will be jeopardised. The Muslims of Bengal will not understand why Isphahani has been preferred to him.

APPENDIX II

Home Department Political (i) Section 1941 No. 94/26/41
Poll. (i)

Detention under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules of
Sarat Chandra Bose.

Secret:

Interview of Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, Minister of Public Health and Civil Defence, Bengal and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, Minister for Agriculture and Industries, Bengal, with Sarat Chandra Bose at Trichi Jail on 11-2-42 between 9-30 A.M. and 11-30 A.M.

Bose: "Well, Nawab Bahadur, how do you do?"

Nawab: "How are you keeping? Did you get your cook?"

Bose: "They said he was a professional cook, but he is a convict. This petty thing they cannot give. That is the trouble".

Nawab: "I will see about that. What is happening now?"

Bose: "Now he is in hospital. I have got the old convict whom I taught".

Nawab: "I wonder if the Madras Government can do something".

Bose: "Why do you bother about these things."

Nawab: "But you must have your food."

Bose: "Leave that to me."

Santosh: "We all had interview with the Governor. Each one of us saw the Viceroy. They will consider your case along with other security prisoners. They are willing to send you to Kodaikanal or Ooty, but not to Mussorie. They have not yet decided. Government of Bengal has nothing to do. The Bengal Governor has to act under India Government. We are looking into the legal aspect".

Nawab: "I cannot think for a moment whether the Bengal Officers have anything to do with the transfer.

Bose: "The Superintendent of the Presidency Jails, Calcutta knew at least two days in advance that I was to be transferred. How did he know? The ground was that my presence in the Jail was embarrassing to the Bengal Ministers. I won't tell you the source."

Santosh: "This is so important I want to note it down."

Bose: "What was the message given by Porter (Under Secretary) to the Jailor on the 26th afternoon? The message was, "tell Mr. Bose that he must get ready. He must make no excuses." In fact I tackled him to give it in writing. It must be cleared, let the world know. It has been done behind the back of everybody, even behind the Home Minister."

Bose: "My letters are seen at the other end. The Superintendent told me that the Intelligence Section here are very prompt. On that basis I calculated and they were one day late."

Santosh: "They are willing to transfer you anywhere within Madras but we are fighting. They haven't ruled it out yet."

Bose: "Ooty, I understand, has only a sub-jail."

Santosh: "You may be given a house, and home-interned."

- Bose: "They have sanctioned rupees thirty for clothing allowance and family allowance on the same lines. My reply to that was "In no time of my life was I a beggar of Rs. 30 "Do you know this? The Governor told the Chief Minister that the Government of India ordered my arrest by the end of August or beginning of September. The Governor put it off. In what way the Japanese contact affected them from August to December. It is said that I met some Japanese. Churchill did not know until recently that Japan would fight. Am I such a big nationalist to know 6 months in advance that Japan would fight?"
- Nawab: "Now, come to our home affairs."
- Bose: "I did not want to give you any trouble of 6 days going and coming."
- Nawab: "I have come only because of you. Will all the hopes that you have been building be shattered. Dr. Shyam Prasad is rather communal. His mentality is not clear. Your friend here was keeping him under control."
- Santosh: "As regards the speeches of Shyam Prasad, people are hesitant. It is because you are not there. If there was another election, the dream you built will be shattered."
- Nawab: "If you think members of your bloc should not be in the Government you will be breaking our unity. We are calling a Muslim League conference in Bengal outside Jinnah. It will be a wonderful thing. We are trying our utmost. The more we work together the more strength we will get."
- Bose: "If one or two officers in the India Government or Bengal Government could flout the public will, and the Ministry's will in my case, what would be the fate of other prisoners".
- Santosh: "If you are going to fight, we will all fight together. We are solid. We must be prepared to act. The Government of India has already passed orders that the cases should be examined by the High Court Judge. I understand that many people have been released in Madras. We are taking our stand upon this."

- Bose: "It is impossible for any Judge to come to any conclusion without hearing both sides."
- Santosh: "There is a feeling that a 'No-confidence Motion' will be brought in the next Budget session. We are not strictly on our saddle yet. That is our position."
- Bose: "Has any political prisoner been released during the past two months? If Ministers do not take any real interest in these things, what will happen?"
- Santosh: "We have not tackled about release. We have not been able to do it."
- Bose: "Everything depends upon the man who is in charge."
- Santosh: "The Home Minister looks at the file. The file does not come to us."
- Bose: "It seems Bannerjee is drawing a scheme to give employment to the detenus inside the jail for some remuneration."
- Santosh: "I do not think that is correct. Politicals did not come to jail for employment."
- Bose: "Has any release been demanded?"
- Santosh: "The question of release will be taken up."
- Bose: "If you cannot do this what is the use of being in the Ministry?"
- Santosh: "It is difficult to do in two months our 'Five Years Plan'. I understand all the cases of security prisoners should be examined. We have even suggested the names of judges. We want to make an approach like Madras."
- Bose: "You can put up a fight."
- Santosh: "That is what we are doing. We are not quiet."
- Bose: "If you allow Bengal Ministry to be merely a Post Office then new orders will be coming every day. If the Government of India could not arrest me in August, then Bengal Government comes in. If it be a fact that I am not disclosing my card. There is time

yet. U Saw is charged for contact with *Japanese Authority*. I am charged with having contacts with Japanese. There is a world of difference. I won't mention the name. Supposing some Japanese client comes to my house for consultation, why should he not.... I have not met even a single Japanese client for three months prior to my arrest. Supposing a Japanese comes and asks me "What is the idea of 'Freezing Order', will you advise me". I am giving you an instance. I won't disclose my card yet, but this I know, no Japanese client saw me."

Santosh: "The whole question is how to bring it out."

Bose: Why not the Bengal Cabinet ask? You can say 'You have made allegations. We won't be satisfied unless the paper is shown to us. If there is danger to the British Empire.... It is nothing to me. They think that because they get a kicking from the Japanese they can send one or two people outside the province. If U Saw is a Fifth Columnist, why not Churchill? Why did he block the Burma Road? Why not the Government of Bengal say, "We do want him back at Bengal? You have not got the grit."

Santosh: "Supposing they do not yield what are we to do?"

Bose: "You can make things hot for the Government. You want some strong man. About repatriation you ask Home Minister. I am giving you a little time and then I am going to fight. The Bengal convict cook should be taken back. I can receive only four letters a week and write only two. About 18 letters are waiting in the office. There are pin pricks such as I cannot write on my paper, I am supplied with a dirty paper. I cannot keep my own razor."

Santosh: "Lest you should cut your throat."

Bose: "There will be no compromise on the issue of repatriation. They think I am old. My letters will tell them I am not. I buy my own chicken every day. I will be thankful if the Government does not demand rent for my quarters."

Santosh: "What is the use of our visit, if you do not put it off. Give us some breathing time. We will make an attempt. If we try and fail, what is our position?"

Bose: "I will think over. If the policy continues to be the same, there is no use."

Santosh: "We want to be assured of our position. If we do not succeed in Bengal matters, there is no use of continuing. Money is spent like water. War propaganda is going on with paid lecturers and paid volunteers."

Bose: "What is to be done? How can I sit quite without launching a fight of my own?"

Santosh: "Things are moving slowly. Everything has to move from Madras to Bengal and Delhi, you should consider. Within seven days of our visit if it (fast?) comes, what will our party think?"

Bose: "You think of the party. But what about me? I will be done away with. How can I live on 9 annas?"

Santosh: "Can we arrange by subscriptions?"

Bose: "No. Why should I depend on charity?"

Santosh: "What about nominations?"

Bose: "Leave it to the Party".

Santosh: "But everybody is looking up to you, you mentioned the three names."

Bose: "I have no opportunity to discuss with Party Members. You can leave it to the Party. Once I launch a fight the very day you will get a telegram that I have resigned from the Party. I won't start it till the 19th."

Santosh: "You should not till you hear from us".

Bose: "When do I hear from you?"

Santosh: "I must consult everybody."

The Bengal Ministers wanted to have another interview in the afternoon, but it was not allowed. The Superintendent gave them

permission to extend the time limit by half-an-hour. They brought cheroots, cloths and eatables to Bose. The conversations were in English and not in Bengali. Bose gave them a send off by saying "It is very good of you to come all the way from Calcutta."

Private AU Personal

Forwarded for information to V. T. Bayley Esq., Assistant Director (R), Intelligence Bureau, New Delhi.

No. 973/C.
Madras,
12th February, 1942.

Superintendent of Poilce.
Special Branch C.I.D.



American Official Views of Indian Nationalism 1905—1929

BY

DIWAKAR P. SINGH

Hitherto the generally accepted view had been that American official interest in Indian nationalism began during the Second World War (1939-1945), that prior to it the United States Government had little knowledge of or interest in Indian nationalism. The fact, however, seems to be that American official interest in Indian nationalism began with the manifestation of first symptoms of extremism in Indian politics during the closing decade of the nineteenth century, following the advent of Bal Gangadhar Tilak on the Indian political scene.¹

The beginning of American official interest in Indian nationalism, moreover, was neither sudden nor accidental, but a culmination of more than a century of Indo-American relations, which had "started before the American Revolution."² No doubt, much of this early relationship is shrouded in obscurity, but what has come to light through the efforts of scholars and researchers suggests that from an inconspicuous beginning, the relations between America and India by the end of the nineteenth century had become many-sided and full of possibilities.

This promising relationship between America and India had been cultivated on the unofficial level by American merchantmen, missionaries, poets, philosophers and scholars of Indic studies and by the visiting American statesmen and travellers to India: and on the official level by American Foreign Service Officials (Consuls)

1. Elting E. Morison (ed.), *The letters of Theodore Roosevelt* Vol. 1 1868-1898 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951) p. 648.

Also see Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and Rise of America to World Power* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 140.

2. W. Norman Brown, *The United States and India and Pakistan* (Cambridge; Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 361.

stationed in India.³ By 1900, the American Consular establishments in India had expanded to nearly half a dozen posts and their "work on the information level had increased."⁴

It was just when the United States had vigorously started to "look outward"⁵ and begun to play a more active role in the world affairs than ever before, that the first signs of a revolutionary nationalism also made its appearance in India. The political phenomena which seemed to be developing in India created uneasiness in American official circles. Moreover, the Spanish-American War had already begun an era of Anglo-American cordiality and laid the foundations for a closer concert between the United States and Great Britain in facing the problems of the world.^{5a} Under these circumstances, it was natural that as soon as there were new manifestations of nationalism in India in 1905, the American official response to it was sharp and immediate. As a matter of fact, if there appears to be a general paucity of attention paid by the United States Government and its representatives in India to Indian nationalism before 1905, it was "because more serious crises incurred by Indian demands for *Swaraj* did not assume wide significance until after the beginning of the twentieth century."⁶

It was in 1905 that "the Indian Revolution began."⁷ The period before 1905, although important, was the seed-time of Indian

3. Bernard Saul Stern, 'American Views of India and Indians, 1857-1900', (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1956) pp. 1-6; Also see Harold R. Issacs, *Scratches on our Minds, American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day Co., 1958), p. 259; Also S. M. Pathak "American Protestant Missions in India, A study of their Activities and Influences, 1813-1910" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1964), p. 335.

4. Earl Robert Schmidt, "American Relations with South Asia, 1900-1940, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation in International Relations, University of Pennsylvania, 1955), p. 370.

5. Julius W. Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Prentice Hall and Co., 1955), p. 381.

5a. Sir Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Vol. IV (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1958), p. 332.

6. Bernard Saul Stern, "American Views of India and Indians, 1857-1900", p. 370.

7. R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1963), p. xvi.

nationalism, when the foundation for future progress was laid. Gandhi has rightly said that "the seed is never seen" and "works underneath the ground." Thus, it was only when "the real awakening took place after the partition of Bengal"⁸ and the Swadeshi and the boycott movement, though beginning as a local movement of protest, led to and merged itself in, a national struggle of all-India character that its impact was directly felt by American official representatives stationed in India. As a result, between 1905 and 1929, there was steady growth in American official interest in Indian nationalism.

Both these dates, i.e., 1905 and 1929, are great landmarks in the history of India's struggle for freedom. The year 1905 marked the end of the period of "political mendicancy"⁹ and the beginning of a more militant phase of Indian nationalism. This phase came to an end with the advent of Gandhi on the Indian political scene in 1919, who gave a new direction and a new purpose to the Indian nationalist movement. Henceforth, Gandhi dominated the political scene; it mattered little whether he was in the vanguard of the national struggle, or in prison or political retirement. The period between 1919-1929 marked the first crucial decade of the Gandhian era. It began with the first experiment of non-violent non-cooperation on a national scale and ended with the demand for complete independence and a call for the launching of general civil disobedience.

During this period of nearly a quarter of a century (from 1905 to 1929), American official views and attitudes towards Indian nationalism were subject to change with the changing political kaleidoscope in India. It depended as much on the nature and complexion of a particular political phenomena in India as on the state of the political climate in the United States. No less important in its influence on the American official attitude were the balance of power among nations and other world events and international

8. M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1938), pp. 24-25.

9. C. Y. Chintamani, *Indian Politics Since the Mutiny* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1947), p. 82.

developments.¹⁰ In the period between 1905-1919 also, all these forces can be seen at work in determining American official attitude towards Indian nationalism. The extent of the influence of each factor, however, varied from event to event.

The Swadeshi and boycott movements first drew the American official attention towards Indian nationalism. Although the immediate cause of the Swadeshi and boycott campaigns had been the partition of Bengal, the new spirit which was growing and spreading over India was also being fostered by an awakening in the entire Eastern World following the marvellous victories of a little Asiatic David (Japan) over an European Goliath (Russia). The decisive battle of the Tsushima Straits moved Asia from one end to the other; the sleep of the centuries was finally broken. The United States could not have remained indifferent to the impact of the Russo-Japanese War in other parts of Asia. In India moreover, the Swadeshi and boycott campaigns posed an ideological threat to the concepts of free trade and the open-door and a practical threat to foreign governments and foreign merchants interested in trade with India. These two principles (free trade and the open-door) had been the basic tenets of the United States policy since the beginning of its contacts with Asia and, as the boycott campaign affected the sale of American manufactures as well, American official concern for events in India was genuine.¹¹

But the Swadeshi and boycott campaigns, which were being preached in India with religious fervor, did not excite that concern and anxiety in American minds which were later shown when there was manifestation of extremism and terrorism in India. Despite the fact that the boycott adversely affected the sale of American manufactures in India and hurt American economic interests, an undercurrent of sympathy and understanding of this phase of Indian nationalist protest to British administrative policies were noticeable in the American Consular reports on political developments in India. According to American Consul General William H. Michael, the only way the Indian could oppose the British was

10. Author's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on "American Official Attitudes Towards the Indian Nationalist Movement", University of Hawaii, 1964, p. 446.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 447.



"by protest in words, by the boycott without violence, and by lifting himself above dependence as far as possible,"¹² thus foreshadowing the philosophy of Gandhi's non-violent resistance and economic self-dependence. In the situation then obtaining in India, a boycott was considered to be "the only logical and potent argument in their fight for large concern in the Government."¹³ Moreover, there was also a clear recognition of the fact that India would continue to "groan" in its wretched poverty so long as her movable and surplus wealth continued to flow "into the coffers of English capitalists."¹⁴ This attitude, however, changed with the Rawalpindi riots and manifestations of widespread violence and bomb-outrages in and out of Bengal.

Not since the Mutiny had India witnessed the violence that broke out in the last months of 1908. At this, the American official representatives in India began to feel that there was a plan of kindling a revolution along the line of 1857, although it was never seriously felt that such an uprising would succeed.

Since the closing decade of the nineteenth century the British Government had attached great importance to American official and unofficial views of British rule in India. As early as December 1897, Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British Ambassador in Washington, had drawn the attention of the British Foreign Office to defamatory articles in the United States against British rule in India.¹⁵ In view of this the statement of a distinguished American, William Jennings Bryan, after his visit to India in 1906, that the British rule in India was "worse than Russian despotism"¹⁶ was enough

12. Calcutta, September 19, 1906.

Records of the U.S. Deptt. of State in the National Archives, Washington D.C. (hereinafter indicated by the post and date of the despatch.)

13. Calcutta, August 8, 1907.

14. Calcutta, October 27, 1906.

15. British Foreign Office, A despatch relating to defamatory articles published in the United States against British rule in India, No. 2600, India Office Library, IOL, LI 610|590|105; Mic. Reel 10, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

16. William Jennings Bryan, *British Rule in India* (Westminster: published by the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, 1906), pp. 6-8.

to cause concern in the British mind. Moreover, a section of the American press during 1907-1908 published certain articles which were critical of British rule in India. On the other hand, President Theodore Roosevelt, in response to the appeals of British friends, openly praised British rule in India to the great delight of the British.^{16a} William Howard Taft thought precisely the same way as his predecessor, holding that "English rule in India was a great advance for humanity."¹⁷ Both represented and reflected a state of American opinion and political climate which was in the ascendancy.

President Theodore Roosevelt, however, was not opposed to orderly constitutional advance in India. Indeed, when Sir John Morley, the Liberal British Secretary of State for India undertook to introduce reforms in India, Roosevelt wished him god-speed in his efforts. Roosevelt realized that the conquering countries had a moral responsibility of administering their conquered territories and possessions not in their own interests, but in the interests of the conquered peoples.^{17a} Similarly, American official representatives in India saw in the contemplated reforms the dawn of a new era in India and expressed immense gratification when the British Government revoked the hated partition of Bengal.

Efforts by Indian nationals in the United States to promote India's freedom also drew American official attention during 1905-1919. The Indian nationalist emigres in the United States rendered yeomen's service to the cause of Indian freedom by exposing the true nature of British rule and by counteracting false British propaganda regarding India in America. Although in the nineties of the last century Vivekananda had tried to correct the many misconceptions about India in America and made a section of the American public appreciative of India's hoary past and her emerg-

16a. Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, Vol. VI. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 1370. Also see "Theodore Roosevelt on India," *Current Literature*, Vol. 45, pp. 376-8 (April 1909): Also *The New York Times*, January 19, 1909.

17. *Some American Opinions on the Indian Empire* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1916), p. 3.

17a. Elting E. Morison, *Op. cit.* p. 1206.

ing national aspirations, organized nationalist activities began only after 1905.

The British Ambassador in Washington, Sir James Bryce, took cognizance of the nationalist activities of British Indian subjects in the United States. In a letter to the Governor General of India in 1908, Sir John Morley expressed his concern "that a tide of strong opinion might one day swell in U.S.A. about our rule in India, of the same kind as had prevailed here (in England) about Austria, Russia and the Turks."¹⁸ By 1910, the Inspector General of the Criminal Investigation of the Government of India was drawing the attention of American Consul General in India to the fact that American soil was being utilized by Indian nationals to undermine the British rule in India by the publication of "revolutionary and anarchical papers,"¹⁹ and their shipment to India. The United States Government however, did not take any drastic measure to stop the legitimate and perfectly peaceful Indian nationalist propaganda on its soil.

In 1910 an Indian Association was organized in Portland (Oregon) and in 1913 during the "anti-imperialist Wilson administration,"²⁰ the Hindustan Ghadar Party was formed on American soil with its avowed object of overthrowing British imperialist rule in India and establishing a sovereign democratic national republic.^{20a} It aimed at an armed revolution.

With the outbreak of the First World War, the members of the Hindustan Ghadar Party in America became involved in clandestine conspirational plots^{20b} with the German diplomatic representatives in

18. Secretary of State for India, "Letters to Earl of Minto, Vol. I, 1906-1908," India Office Library, Mic. Reel 5, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

19. Calcutta, January 23, 1910.

20. Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

20a. Madras, May 6, 1915; Also see Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1953), pp. 123-124.

20b. Mark Naidis, "Propaganda of the Godor Party" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XX, No. 13 (August, 1951), p. 251. Also see Girles T. Brown, "The Hindi Conspiracy 1914-1917" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (August, 1948). See also, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers, Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Revolutionary Conspiracies in India*, Cmd. 9190 (London, H. M. Stationary office, 1918), VIII, 61.

the United States, under the direction of the Berlin Committee for India's Freedom and the German Foreign Office. With their base in California, the Ghadarites were engaged in gathering arms and smuggling them to India. There was also an effort to organize an armed expedition to bring about an armed rebellion in India, on the largest scale since the Mutiny. But the Ghadarites, who had sailed on the steamship *Korea* from San Francisco on their revolutionary expedition, were apprehended and the plan of revolution was nipped in the bud.

This, however, brought to light the "freedom of restraint which they (Indian nationals) were allowed to enjoy in the United States."²¹ In spite of British diplomatic representations, the United States Government was not disposed to take action against Indian nationals so long as no unimpeachable connection was established between them and the German sabotage ring, thus warranting their conviction under the Federal Criminal laws.

The Lahore conspiracy trial, however, proved without a shadow of doubt that the "conspiracy for the overthrow of British rule in India was, in fact, planned, organized and financed in the United States."²² The British Government sent a special representative to Washington, who on January 24, 1916, presented a memorandum to the Secretary of State on the Ghadar activities in the United States and also impressed upon the Secretary of State that the suppression of the pernicious Ghadar propaganda and breaking up of the seditious society by the U.S. Government "would be regarded both by the British Government and the British people as a most friendly act."²³ No action however, was taken by the United States Government until March 1916, when it was fully established that Indian nationals were involved with German agents in the United States to bring about an armed rebellion in India. Large numbers of Indians were taken into custody in San Francisco, Chicago and New York charged with violating the

21. From the letter of Sir Charles Cleveland, Director General of Criminal Investigation, Government of India to American Consul in Bombay. See despatch from Bombay, August 2, 1914.

22. British Memorandum to the Sec. of State on the Indian Revolutionary Movement in the U.S., January 25, 1916, NA, RDS, Index No. 845. 00/206.

23. *Ibid.*

neutrality of the United States under Section 37 of the Criminal Code. Thus the hey-day of Ghadar revolutionary activity was over and there was a decided hardening of American official opinion towards Indian nationalist activities in the United States.

If, however, the clandestine and conspirational activities of the members of the Hindustan Ghadar Party and their involvement in plot with German agents hardened American official attitude towards Indian nationalist activities in the United States and caused incalculable harm to India's cause, the perfectly constitutional, peaceful and legitimate propaganda work of Lala Lajpat Rai, and his India Home Rule League of America, for the cause of Indian freedom, proved far more enduring in its results. With a break of six months, Rai lived in exile in the United States continuously for more than five years (November 1914 to November 1919). As a result of his efforts the cause of Indian freedom was carried to the Chambers of U.S. Congress, at a time when the Paris Peace Conference was re-drawing the map of Europe and Asia on the doctrine of self-determination.^{23a} Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. N. S. Hardiker assisted Mr Dudley Field Malone in presenting on behalf of the India Home Rule League of America the Indian nationalist case for self-determination before the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate.^{23b} As a result of Rai's efforts various Congressmen and Senators echoed, in their speeches to the House of Representatives and the Senate, India's national aspirations for self-determination and openly condemned the British rule in India.^{23c} The pattern of constructive and constitutional work and nation-wide lecture tours, initiated by Lajpat Rai, was carried forward by Dr Syed Hussain, Dr. Krishnalal Shridharani, Dr. Anup Singh, Dr. H. T. Mazumdar, and Sardar J. J. Singh. Their sustain-

23a. J. T. Sundarland, "Mr. Rai's Work in America," *Young India*, Rai Number, Vol. III. No. 2 (February, 1920) p. 42. *Young India*, a monthly magazine was founded by Lala Lajpat Rai, himself as its editor as the organ of *India Home Rule League of America* (Oct. 1917) Rai was its founder President.

23b. "India Before the Senate." *Young India*, Vol. II No. 10 (October, 1919) pp. 219-220. Also see Rusom Rustomji's letter to Senator Lodge, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *National Archives*, Records of the Deptt. of State, Index No. 845 00|247.

23c. U.S. Congressional Record, Vol. 58 Part 4 (Washington: Govt. Printing office, 1919), pp. 4042-4043. Also see Vol. 58, Part 8, pp. 6607-6609.

ed efforts of decades also received impetus from temporary visitors from India—such as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Reverend C. F. Andrews, and the sister of Prime Minister Nehru, Madame V. L. Pandit.

Moreover, during the first World War, the principle of Wilsonian self-determination stimulated greatly the Home Rule movement in India. The War, although it did not originate the demand for Home Rule in India, gave it a new significance and a new urgency and an air of reality which it had never possessed before. The unequivocal support which the ideal of self-determination received from the American President, Woodrow Wilson, gave moral impetus to the cause of freedom everywhere. Lala Lajpat Rai firmly believed that Wilson's words were "going to be the war-cry of all small and subject and oppressed nationalities in the world" for whom Woodrow Wilson had conferred "a new charter of democracy and liberty."²⁴

In India, the Home Rule movement, which had been gathering momentum under the leadership of Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant, reached its peak in 1917. For carrying on Home Rule agitation and shortly after printing and circulating Wilson's War message in India, Mrs. Besant was interned by the Madras Government. Voices of protest were raised in the United States, by American Theosophists and others. The President of the All India Home Rule League, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, addressed a letter to President Wilson in which he drew President Wilson's attention to British misrule and oppression in India, the latest instance of which was the internment of Mrs. Annie Besant.^{24a}

But as Sir Subramania Aiyar's letter to President Wilson was released to the press by Mr. and Mrs. Hotchner, who had been the bearers of the letter, without the prior consent or approval of its distinguished addressee, on the advice of the Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, the letter was not formally acknowledged by the President.^{24b} But its publication in the American press created an

24. Lala Lajpat Rai, "India and the World War," *Young India*, Vol. I, No. 2 (February, 1918), p. 2.

24a. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1919, part II, p. 45.

24b. See National Archives, Records of the U.S. Department of State, Index Nos. 845.00|512 and 849.00|213; 845.00|217. Also see British Embassy Memorandum No. 3 January 2, 1918, National Archives, Records of the U.S. Deptt. of State, Index No. 845.00|216.

impression in India that Sir Subramania's letter "profoundly convulsed America"²⁵ and brought about some unwonted change in the angle of vision of the stolid Indian Government, whose evidences were seen in the decision to release Mrs. Annie Besant and the announced visit to India of the Secretary of State for India.

On January 2nd, 1919 Lokamanya Tilak, accredited by the Indian National Congress to present India's case before the Paris Peace Conference, addressed a letter to President Woodrow Wilson, asking for support in favour of India's claim to self-determination.

Tilak wrote :

The world's hope for peace and justice is centered in you as the author of the great principle of self-determination. I, therefore, feel impelled to bring the enclosed brochure (on India's case for self-determination) to your notice for consideration and such action as the peace of the world and the principles of right and justice for all nations may demand in the case of India.²⁶

On behalf of President-Wilson, Tilak's letter was acknowledged by Mr. Gilbert Close, who expressed the hope that India would achieve its goal of self-determination in the fullness of time.²⁷

In India, the influence of the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination was pronounced. In a sense it became the battle-cry of the post-war Indian nationalist movement

The fact that the tempo of political agitation in India had risen to new heights during the War did not remain unnoticed by the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, who instructed the American Consular officials to report "promptly and frequently all political developments in India."²⁸

In the immediate post-war years, American official interest in Indian nationalism rose to new heights. It was primarily due to

25. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1919, part II p. 46.

26. Editorial Notes and News, "Tilak and Mr. Wilson," *Young India*, Vol. II, No. 2 (November, 1919), p. 244.

27. T. V. Parvate, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), p. 463.

28. U.S. Department of State, Telegram sent to American Consul General in Calcutta, April 18, 1918, NA, RDS, Index No. 845 00/219 a.

the post-war nationalist upsurge in India. Moreover, there was a resurgence of Pan-Islamic sentiment in India in support of the decadent Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph of Islam. This had solidified the Indian opposition to Britain. Just at this time the advent of Gandhi on the Indian political scene, gave to Indian nationalism a new depth and a new direction. It was generally believed by the American official representatives in India that as a result of the advent of Gandhi the situation in India had irrevocably changed. India would never be the same and England's position there would become as "untenable as in Ireland."²⁹

Although for about half a decade from 1922 to 1927 there was a lull in the political life of India and the course of the Indian nationalist movement look like a monotonous tale of pious resolutions, factional bickerings, perpetual strifes in the Councils and worst of all, of occasional orgies of communal violence, the extent of the American official interest, instead of diminishing, further increased. It was evident in the large volume of political reportings on the Indian political situation from American official representatives in India and England.

With the appointment of the Simon Commission in the latter part of 1927, there was a clear recognition in the American official circles in India and Britain that the peaceful realization by India of her national destiny within the British Empire was destined to be of "supreme consequence"³⁰ not only to India and Britain who were directly connected, but to the United States as well. Although there seemed to be general agreement among them that only a purely Parliamentary Commission was conceivable at the moment, they also took note of the strong disaffection which the British decision to exclude Indians from the Commission roused in India.

However keenly the American officials and the Government of the United States felt for the Indian nationalist cause, they had to keep their views and feelings to themselves, a closely guarded confidential secret of the files, to avoid any diplomatic embarrass-

29. Bombay, August 21, 1921, letter from American Consul in Bombay to U. Grant Smith of the American legation in Vienna, forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of State.

30. London, November 14, 1927, despatch from American Embassy in London, NA, RDS, Index No. - 845. 01/32.

ment in their relations with Britain. Still, the invitation extended by the United States Government to the Government of India in 1928 to become an original signatory to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, on the same footing as that of other self-Governing Dominions of the British Empire, showed the working of American official mind on this point. The Department of State was neither apathetic to nor unaware of political developments in India, from the very outset of the manifestations of nationalism in India. The pronounced interest evinced by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the Indian problem during the Second World War was, therefore, not an isolated phenomenon or just an outcome of political expediency or the exigencies of war, but the culmination of an interest which had begun decades ago in the democratic development and self-determination of the Indian nation.



S. A. Bhisey

BY

R. P. PATWARDHAN

Shankar Abaji Bhisey (1867-1935) was an exceptional man for his time and people. Born in a high-caste Hindu family in Bombay in the latter half of the nineteenth century, he displayed from early childhood a bent towards mechanics and craftsmanship. He finished his High School education in 1888, and then took up service under Government. In 1895 he had an opportunity to go to England, where he spent six months and exhibited some of the scientific optical illusions invented by himself, which won praise from several English papers. In 1898 he happened to see the advertisement of a prize by the London Society of Arts, Letters and Sciences for an automatic Weighing, Delivering, and Registering Machine for sugar, flour, tea, coffee etc. He competed, and won the prize. That made him known in the scientific world, and the Society of Arts offered him its fellowship. Next year (1899), encouraged by some prominent Bombay leaders, he went to England to see if his inventive talent could be put to more effective use there. He had an introduction to Dadabhai Naoroji from D. E. Wacha, and he met Dadabhai and tried to interest him in his attempt to form a Syndicate or Syndicates to exploit his inventions commercially.

He had made several inventions already: artistic lamps (to which he gave the name of "Vertoscopes") which might be used as shop-window attraction or for advertisement purposes, and which won a gold medal at an international Exhibition in 1902; auto-flushers, for flushing and disinfecting water-closets; a tyre puncture preventer; a machine for casting and setting types (which he called 'Spasotype') etc. He devised some improvements in the existing type-writing machines, which, in the opinion of Dadabhai's socialist friend, H. M. Hyndman, although not of a crucial character, were calculated to "greatly improve the appearance of type-written work." He thought of a device by which an electric lamp could

be regulated to any candle power as desired, and of another by which electric lamps could be fixed at any point without requiring holders. Indeed, it seemed as if his inventive genius knew no limitation of subject in its endeavour to alleviate human toil or suffering; thus, he devised a mechanical apparatus to relieve headache. "I have sent to Bombay," he says in a letter to Dadabhai, dated 7th December, 1904, "by last mail an apparatus to cure headache mechanically. It is simply in the form of a hoop or frame having forked ends and holding air-inflated pads which latter could be easily adjusted right on the temples of the forehead and screwed forward to bring about desired pressure on the temples to relieve the pain. Mrs. Bhise was suffering severely from headache during her late confinement and the device was found to be very effective. I enclose Dr. Griffith's testimonial." In another letter, dated 16th December 1904, he tells Dadabhai, "Last week I was very busy in making a Lavigating (?) machine for spices as described in the accompanying circular. I completed the machine and sent it to Bombay by last mail for exhibiting at the Exhibition. I feel sure it would be appreciated by Indian ladies for being a handy machine for making Chutnies and grinding spices". And, as is well-known, he invented and put on the market an iodine compound known as atomidine (atomic iodine), which, he says, was "acknowledged to be the only water-soluble, non-poisonous, non-irritating, odourless compound of iodine known to science.... It is the result of 10 years of my research work and is prescribed by thousands of physicians and dentists in this country (meaning U.S.A.) and abroad." But the inventions on which he spent years of his life, and which attracted most attention, were the multiple mould type-founding machine, and the Single Type Casting and Composing machine. Of the former, Hyndman said in a letter to Dadabhai, dated 11th January, 1902, that "in proper hand a great deal could be made of this invention". "The Scientific American", Bhisey tells us, "published an illustrated article about these machines in August 1917, and the 'Inland Printer' and other technical papers also published illustrated articles".

Unfortunately, it seems that the financial backing, which was necessary to make a commercial success of the inventions, was not easy to find. A 'Bhise Patents Syndicate' was formed in 1901, with Dadabhai's help, to exploit the earlier inventions—the adver-

tising lamp and others. Dadabhai agreed to put £ 300 in this venture, and ultimately, during the next seven years, he advanced to Bhise as much as £ 2600." Another Company, named "Bhiso-Type Ltd.", was formed in 1905, to 'patent, further develop and exploit' the type-casting and composing invention, which had been theoretically completed by that time. Hyndman helped in founding his new Company. The resources of Bhiso-Type Ltd, too, however, fell short of the needs; Dadabhai stopped giving further help after about August 1908—he himself had left England for good a year before)—and for some time Bhisey and his family were reduced to severe straits in England. Luckily, just then, Mr. Ratan Tata's interest was drawn to his inventions; G. K. Gokhale, who also took keen interest in Bhisey's inventions, exerted his influence with Mr. Tata; and so a 'Tata-Bhiso Syndicate' was formed in 1909. Unfortunately, even this did not bring an end to Bhise's troubles. Writing to Dadabhai from London on 7th October, 1915, Bhisey says, "I did not write to you for a long time because I had not any cheering news to give you. I had been frightfully worried to progress with my work. Owing to the war many men left my workshop and I could not get any new men nor get any work done outside. However, with greatest difficulty and with your blessings and good wishes I am very glad to inform you that I recently succeeded in successfully completing my new machine for casting *Single Types* specially designed for Printers' use which I invented nearly two years ago and which is different in principle and working of the multiple mould machine for Type Founders on which I spent previous years. I have the pleasure of sending you per separate Book Post today a copy of the British and Colonial Printer in which you will find a special editorial about this new machine.

My present difficulty and great anxiety is to get more machines built commercially on the lines of my present model machine for sale. In the present state of war work it is difficult to get any such machines built here. The only course is to get these built in America where it is also a difficult matter, and besides as it will be necessary for me and my foreman to go there for some months and will require a further capital of at least a £ 1000 I have to depend upon Mr. Tata's further help and should I fail to get it my whole life's work will be precarious. It is a great pity and mis-

fortune that the war should break out when my work was coming to a fruitful issue."

Bhisey's next letter to Dadabhai is written from America. It is dated August 4, 1916, and says, "As I wrote to you some time ago, my Single Type Casting machine was completed in December 1914, and Mr. Tata was very pleased with its successful working in London before he went to India. I succeeded in accomplishing then the 'Inventor's Task' of bringing an invention from a theoretical to a practical stage and in doing that, even my competitors had to admit frankly of my succeeding in solving some intricate problems that were unsuccessfully tried by many noted inventors during the last sixty-five years."

The present work of getting the machine manufactured and placed upon the market was beyond my power. Owing to the war I could not get any firm in England to manufacture the machine, so after spending uselessly over a year in England I came here last month to get the machine manufactured. Firms here are also very busy and caught with the war fever and the dollar-making spirit. Still I have a better chance of accomplishing my object here than in London. I expect to be here for about four months."

Ultimately, Bhisey stayed in America not for the next four months, but for eighteen years and more, and passed away in New York on 7th April, 1935. In a brief biography of Bhisey in Marathi, by Mr. J. B. Kulkarni, published in 1969, we are told that Bhisey succeeded in 1920 in forming a Company in America, called the 'Bisey Ideal Type-Caster Corporation', which manufactured and put his machines on the market, thus accomplishing the great object of his life.

What puzzles a student of Bhisey's life and work, however, is that the name of an inventor who made important contributions to the type-casting and composing industry should not find even a bare mention in such standard American reference works as McGraw-Hill's 'Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology' or the 'American Encyclopaedia.'



Issue Perception and the Indian Struggle for Independence—1885 to 1909

BY

LYNN TRIPLETT

The absence of revolutionary warfare, in comparison with other Asian experiences, characterizes the Indian struggle for independence. This was true even before Gandhi devised his non-violent approach to Indian freedom. In the analysis of the pre-Gandhian Indian movement for independence, the question is why a military confrontation or violent opposition against the British did not characterize the Indian freedom movement from 1885, the year of founding of the Indian National Congress, to 1909, the year which marks the end of the first phase of Indian Government-Congress relations.¹

The above question is even more pertinent when one remembers that the leaders of the national movement were western educated and very much aware of developments both in the West and Asia. The West surely supplied a surfeit of examples of successful violent revolution, and the Japanese demonstrated the applicability of this violence against the West in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. Violent militant confrontation with the British would certainly be one option open to the leaders in their struggle for Independence.

1. Indian nationalism always presents a problem for the scholar who wishes to take an integral approach. The phrase "Indian struggle" immediately leads one to ask which Indians—Hindu, Muslim, Bengali, Punjabi or Maharashtrian? Our first problem is to define who are talking about when we say issue perception on the part of the Indians. Despite the multiple nature of Indian participation, few will argue that the main thrust of Indian nationalism developed within the context of the Indian National Congress. Therefore, the Congress resolutions provide the best guide to the issues and factors the majority of participants in the struggle were perceiving. I have accordingly analysed the Congress resolutions to determine the issues and scope of perception on the part of the Indian Nationalists.

My hypothesis is that the scope of issue perception on the part of both the Indians and the British provides the key to the nature of the struggle for Independence during those years. The value of focussing on the issues of perception debated by both the British and the Indians lies in the conceptualization of the nature of the Indian struggle for Independence. The historian's treatment of this movement has resulted in little understanding of the dynamics of conflict between the British and the Indians. When this has been best accomplished, attention has been directed toward Gandhi and his satyagrahas; Joan Bondurant's *Conquest of Violence* is a good example.² The pre-Gandhi movement has not received such treatment. A typical example of the interpretation of the independence movement is Daniel Argov's description:

The national movement in India is distinguished from other searches for independence and national identity by the quality of intellectual debate among the political leaders.³

Although Argov, who is analyzing the Indian nationalist movement from within and focusing on the process of Indian demands, succeeds in providing and enumerating the positions taken by both the British and the Indians. His treatment does not provide any answers to such questions as why the Indians were content to agitate peacefully, even when it became clear that their demands and British interests were incompatible. I wish to go one step further and suggest that the content of the issues in that "debate" are of great importance in ascertaining the nature of the early struggle for independence. Recent conflict studies suggest that whether the issues perceived are symbolic and reified or concrete and specific indicate whether the confrontation may assume violent configurations or not.

Recent studies in conflict analysis provide insight into the dynamics of relationship between protagonist and antagonist.⁴

2. Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

3. Daniel Argov, *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement 1883-1920* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1967), Foreword. Hereafter cited as Argov.

4. Michael P. Sullivan, "International and Community Conflict: Comparing Levels of Theory" (Department of Government, University of Arizona, 1968). Hereafter cited as Sullivan.

Two important concepts in this paper are conflict and the "scope" of the conflict. For a definition of conflict, Kenneth Boulding provides a satisfactory beginning.

A situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of others.⁵

At the core of the conflict are certain issues that the individuals perceive to represent the conflict. The scope of the conflict then is how the participants view it; whether it is concentrated upon specific issues or questions or whether it is concentrated upon nebulous or symbolic issues would make the scope narrow or wide by our definition. Evidence suggests that resolution of a conflict depends on what kind of issues the decision makers are viewing at the time.⁶

Also, the findings in conflict studies provide a means of suggesting one factor, issues, pertinent to the shape and direction the Indian struggle for independence followed, i.e., further, one can also suggest reasons for variations within the method of opposition to the British. By this I am referring to the Extremist, Moderate split that finalized in 1907. The issue perception and pronouncements by both the British and the leaders of Congress have great impact on the timing of Indian terrorism, or even its appearance.

A psychological premise exists that relates issue perception to the probability of overt violence. Daniel Katz, in his article, "The Psychological Barriers to Communication," maintains that one problem in communication is the difficulty of differentiation between words which refer to actual reality and those which refer to concepts. People tend to reify concepts, and if the communication takes place in a stress situation, people undergo a reaction which may narrow the stressed individual's focus. Thus, if there is a failure to differentiate between reality and concepts in a stress situation, issue perception may become focussed narrowly on a reified concept. This holds great great importance in a conflict

5. Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defence: A General Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 5.

6. Sullivan, p. 12.

7. Sullivan, p. 11.

situation where the decision makers cast their choices in accordance with their issue perception.

A corollary to the importance of issue perception that has pertinence to the Indian movement is the observation that hostility rises when incompatible interests are present. And, "once set in motion, hostility can sustain conflict unaided by disagreement about particular issues. The original issues may be settled, yet the controversy continues unabated. The antagonistic relationship has now become direct; it no longer draws sustenance from an outside element—an issue."⁸ This holds importance for subsequent behavior of the "extremists" of the Indian independence movement.

James Coleman has developed a model of conflict that provides a means of measuring the development of the dynamics between the British and the Indians.⁹ In the focus on issues, Coleman maintains that if the conflict eventuates in violence, fundamental transformations take place in the course of a conflict—the issues move from the specific to the general; new and different issues arise; and what began as disagreement ends up in antagonism between the parties. The lack of these developments strongly indicates an adumbration of violent conflict occurring.¹⁰ When decision-makers have to decide whether a conflict is essential, and the perceived issues are general and symbolic, compromise is much less likely and violence much more probable. Conversely, if the focus on issues remains relatively stable, or they only change over long periods of time and are specific, the possibilities of resolution short of violence is likely.

This paper explores the probability that one factor in the lack of violent confrontation between the British and Indians from 1885 to 1919 was the ability of both the British and Indians to remain focussed upon specific issues. A consequence of this thesis is that the relatively violent period of British-Indian relations from 1905-1916 coincides with the allusion to more symbolic referents by both the British and Indians. To test this hypothesis, the issues and goals of both the National Congress and

8. Sullivan, p. 12.

9. James Coleman, *Community Conflict* (New York): The Free Press, 1957, p. 10. Hereafter cited as Coleman.

10. Coleman, p. 10.

the Government of India have been analysed to ascertain the nature of the scope of perception.

The period from 1885 to 1905 certainly was not one of immoderation on the part of Congress. Indeed, within the definition of this paper, it is not likely that a "conflict" existed between the Congress leaders and the Government of India. But the continuity of demands raised by Congress beginning in 1885 until 1905 form a commentary on the nature of the early Congress. It is significant to record the earliest resolution, if only to illustrate the specificity of the demands and the lack of symbolic issues.

The Congress in 1885 asked for the abolition of the Council of Secretary of State, to be replaced by a standing committee in Parliament. This was an early recognition of the need for a legislative check on government machinery that made the Government and the policies of the Secretary of State for India virtually autonomous. The resolution continued that since this object was not likely to be acceded to, a reform of the Council should take place. The character of the Council would be advisory, not administrative, and members of the Council would be partly elected and partly nominated.¹¹ In reference to constitutional changes, the first and second sessions called for the local legislative councils to be expanded with elected Indian members. In the second session, the percentage of elected Indians was to be fifty percent and provided for appeals against executive action by the Government of India.¹²

An explanation for the moderation of the first congresses, beyond that of a young organization seeking recognition by the Indians as a spokesman and by the Government of India as a surveyor of Indian grievances, is found in the social-economic-educational background of the leaders. The importance of this western educated middle class Indian background is found in the early Congress speech of Gokhale.

Liberalism and moderation will be the watch-words of our association. The spirit of liberalism implies a freedom

11. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress 1885-1935* (Bombay: Padma Publications Ltd., 1946), Vol. 1, p. 24. Hereafter cited as Sitaramayya.

12. Sitaramayya, pp. 24-25.

from race and creed prejudices and a steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to the rulers the loyalty due to the law that they are bound to administer, but securing at the same time to the people the equality which is their right under the law. Moderation implies the conditions of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but striving each day to take the next step in the order of natural growth that lies nearest to our hands in a spirit of compromise and fairness.¹³

This spirit set the context of National Congress resolutions for the next ten years. When the Ilbert Bill served to solidify both the British position and the Indian attitude, insight into the leaders' thinking is provided by the candid explanation of Banerjea as he returned to Calcutta with the failure of passage of the bill:

"We have everything to lose, nothing to gain by the severance of our connection with England. We owe whatever position or prestige we have acquired to our English education and culture. If you were to leave the country, our English education and culture would be at a discount. We are not particularly anxious to commit political suicide."¹⁴

The early Congress leaders, then, pinned their hopes on the Liberal party in England and justified their requests for Indian representation in the British Government of India on the basis of England's pledges to India by Munro, Lawrence and Queen Victoria. However, the Viceroys and Secretaries of State for India repudiated the feasibility of introducing those institutions until 1917. The effect of the latter's actions may perhaps be summed in the statement:

A time may conceivably come ... to leave India to herself but for the present it is necessary to govern her as if we were to govern her forever.¹⁵

Although this reluctance would come to define a conflict situation between the British and the Indians, this was not immediately so. On the contrary, the British demonstrated the trait so responsible for moderation on both sides. Lord Dufferin, by

13. K. P. Karunakaran, *Continuity and Change in Indian Politics*. (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1964), p. 30. Hereafter cited as Karunakaran.

14. Argov, p. 56.

15. Argov, foreward, pp. x and xi.

1892, saw fit to acknowledge demands Congress had been making. This was the Indian Councils Act of 1892. With the aid of a Council of India committee, Dufferin drew up "a plan for the enlargement of our Provincial Councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction... of the elective principle, and the liberalisation of their general character as political institutions."¹⁶ The bill finally provided for enlarged membership in the Provincial Councils, such membership at the discretion of nomination by the Governor-General. This was to allow a means of incorporating elected members into the Councils. The Act also allowed the Councils to *discuss*, not vote, the budget and indulge in criticism of the financial policy of the Government. Finally, the members of Councils were granted the right of questioning on matters of public interest, this being subject to conditions prescribed by the Governor-General or the Provincial Governor.¹⁷ Thus reinforced in the manner and mode of their demands, Congress continued making essentially the same overtures to the Government of India until the nineteen hundreds.

With precedent set for Indian involvement in the local and Provincial councils, the National Congress took up the matter of the rule of the Government of India. Demands were made for representation in the House of Commons, for expansion of the Councils in the country, and appointment of Indians to the Council of Secretary of State and Executive Council.¹⁸ These 1904 resolutions were reiterated by Gokhale in his 1905 address to the National Congress. He stated there that Congress sought those reforms "which aim at securing for our people a larger and larger share in the administration and control of our affairs; these include a reform of our legislative councils, the appointment of Indians to the Secretary of States Council (in London) and the Executive Council in India, and a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public service of the country."¹⁹ However, beneath the surface of these specific suggestions, a changed attitude and approach soon appeared.

16. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development, 1600-1919* (Delhi: Atma Ram and Sons, 1952), Vol. 1, p. 116. Hereafter cited as Singh.

17. Singh, pp. 117-118.

18. Sitaramayya, p. 25.

19. Karunakaran, p. 37.

During the five year period from 1900 to 1905, the questions of the partition of Bengal and employment of Indians in the higher Civil Service dominated. The method of approach and handling these two issues by Lord Curzon had no small effect on the National Congress. Congress had been reaching out from the specific proposals of Gokhale in the 1880's to the widening of the perception of issues as noted in 1903 when Sir Henry Cotton, President of the National Congress, addressed his fellow members. "The ideal of an Indian patriot is the establishment of a federation of free and separate states, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain."²⁰ The specific proposals of Congress were directed toward this end.

When in 1904, Congress emphasized employment of Indians in the Civil Service, Curzon's response constituted a focus on a symbolic issue that hardened feelings on both sides. Curzon intimated that British rule would be for a long time to come and repudiated hopes that Indians share in the administration of government.

The highest ranks of civil employment in India must as a general rule be held by Englishmen for the reason that they possess partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the habits of mind and the vigour of character which are essential for the task; and that the rule of India being a British rule and every other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it.²¹

This, coupled with the deep suspicion that Curzon's proposed partition of Bengal was to effect a demise of Bengali interests and articulation, made partition a symbol of Indian grievances and provoked a change in the tone and substance of subsequent Congress resolutions.

The introductory speech of the 1905 Congress set the tone. India was declared to be "distracted, discontented, despondent, the victim of many misfortunes, political and others"; the "cup

20. Argov, p. 103.

21. Argov, p. 105.

of national indignation had been filled to over-flowing by the Partition designed to break down the political power and influence of the educated opinion of Bengal."²² The combination of Curzon's racism and the evolution of Congress demands sustained a more symbolic resolution in 1906. Gokhale, in London, told Morley that the aim of Congress was self-government within the Empire.²³ In the 1906 Congress, Swaraj was mentioned for the first time in a presidential address and this loosely defined goal was posited as the object of Congress activities.²⁴ However, the question of whether agitation for self-government was to be outside or within the Government of India marked the divergence between the moderate and extremist factions of Congress.

The possible development of Indian Nationalism along uncompromising symbolic lines is indicated by statements in the Bengali newspapers. The *New India* wrote: "Absolute national autonomy is the goal. The Nation must succeed in gaining it or must perish in the attempt. Revolution is inevitable."²⁵ The *Yugantar* commented that war or revolution was far better than death in peace and it urged the Indians to draw inspiration from Japan's victory over Russia.

The transformation for many Congress leaders can be seen in the words of Bipin C. Pal.

We loved the abstraction we called India but hated the thing that it actually was. Our Patriotism was not composed of our love for our own history, literature, arts, industries, culture and institutions, but as a prototype of England which we wished her to be. The new spirit cured us of an imaginary and abstract patriotism. Love of India means a love for its rivers and mountains, for its paddy fields and its sandy lands, its towns and villages and poor people, for its languages, literature, philosophy, religion, culture and civilization.²⁶

When one juxtaposes the nationalist attachment to "mother India" with Gokhale's statement of commitment to western Liberalism,

22. Sir Verney Louett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1968), p. 61.

23. Argov, p. 118.

24. Ram Gopal, *How India Struggled for Freedom* (Delhi, 1958), p. 168.

25. Argov, p. 118.

26. Argov, p. 122.

the degree of separation and transformation of issue perception from 1885 to 1905 is apparent. Although the years from 1905 to 1916 mark the most radical and violent opposition to British rule, neither the Anarchist movement nor the Extremist New Party faction fomented an Indian revolution. One key to this development is the British reaction to Congress's proclamation of home-rule and *swadeshi*.

On June 6, 1906, Morley wrote Lord Minto to the effect that informed Indian watchers were of the opinion that it was not possible "to go on governing in the same spirit; you have got to deal with the Congress Party and Congress principles."²⁷ As a first step, Minto in August of 1906 stated his objectives of possible reform: "(a) a Council of Princes, and should this be impossible, whether they might be represented in the Viceroy's Legislative Council; (b) an Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council; (c) increased representation on the Legislative Council of the Viceroy and of Local Governments; and (d) prolongation of the budget debate and increased power of moving amendments."²⁸ Instead of an emotional outburst which would match the emotional quality of Indian pronouncements, the British remained focussed on specific issues, and acknowledged Congress demands. That this did not have to be the course of British reaction is illustrated by the *Civil and Military Gazette*, a spokesman for the English in India.

We must hold the country with the power of the sword and in the interests of our women and children and the Empire. We must see that the edge of the sword is not dulled The only thing an oriental respects is power.²⁹

However, the Morley-Minto Reforms remained tied to specific issues, although they did raise the new issues of weightage with regard to Muslim representation.

Again the notable aspect of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 is the specificity of its provisions. The size of the Legislative Councils were enlarged, and additional members of the Governor General's Council provided. It was also provided that the Imperial Legislative Council would consist of 37 official and 32 non-official members.

27. Singh, p. 167.

28. Singh, p. 168.

29. Argov, p. 130.

This retained a substantial official majority for the Indian Government. The Act did not provide for official majority in the Provincial Legislative Councils, and it was in the Legislative Councils that the Indian realized the greatest gains. The majority of the members were to be non-officials. Although this did not mean elected majorities in the Provincial Council, the possibility of this development in the future was ensured. In the Legislative Councils, the functions of the Councils were increased. This included discussion of the budget and other financial matters. Members were allowed to ask any pertinent questions thought necessary, and to move resolutions. These would be in the form of a definite recommendation to the Government. In terms of local power, municipalities and other local government institutions were to elect members.³⁰

The development of the Congress mentality from loyal British subjects to the nationalism (albeit moderate) visible in Pal's statement wrested the initiative from the Government of India. With the proclamation of swaraj, and the inauguration of boycott and swadeshi, the British were faced with demands perhaps incompatible with their objectives. Hence, what were British objectives in India became the most crucial question for the Government of India. Congress wanted autonomy at least, absolute independence at most, and was being fast convinced that England was not really committed to either possibility. The moderates pinned their hopes on the Liberal victory in Parliament in England and the New Governor General and Secretary of State for India, Lord Minto and John Morley respectively. Just what were the goals and shades of political thinking of these two gentlemen has been the subject of considerable debate.³¹ The resolution of that interpretation, however, is not a purpose of this paper.

One clue to British reaction to a more militant Congress is the position of the aforementioned question and its answer by John Morley in 1908. "What are we in India for?" he challenged Minto. "Surely in order to implant—slowly, prudently, judiciously,—those ideas of justice, law, humanity, which are the foundation of our

30. R. R. Sethi and V. D. Mahajan, *Constitutional History of India* (Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1956), pp. 64-66.

31. M. N. Das, Syed Wasti, and Stanley Wolpert all provide interpretations of Morley and Minto.

own civilization."³² Whether the motivation for this statement, and for the 1909 reforms was to lay the frame work for final self-rule is immaterial. What is important is that the symbolic referent was not the glory of Empire, or the permanency of British rule, rather it was an outline that demanded specific issues be spelled out to accomplish such an aim. The compatibility of such an outline is demonstrated in the speech of the same year by Gokhale. He stated that Indians might gain provincial self-government in ten years and explained: "It is no use trying to overthrow the present administration before we have something to put in its place."³³

The result of the 1909 reforms had significance for the possibility of violent confrontation with the Congress party. Until 1909, Congress fulfilled the task of criticizing Government of India from without, and the Government regarded Congress as a body which articulated educated Indians' thoughts and demands. With the expansion of the Councils and Legislative Councils and the incorporation of many Congress members into these bodies, Congress no longer served the same function. Criticism now came from within the various organs of Government. This not only increased the specificity of the debates between the two, in terms of conflict resolution, this development greatly ameliorated the amount of hostility between Congress and the Government of India.

It was not that the Reforms did not arouse any reaction from Congress. As with partition, the Reforms created a new issue, "weightage." And Congress, while thanking the British Government for many of the provisions in the Reforms, expressed its unhappiness with the general tone of the reform (prejudicial to educated Indians) and with the weighted representation the Muslims received. But Congress ended the 1909 reform with a call for a reform of the reforms, quite a specific resolution.

32. Stanely Wolpert, *Morley and India 1906-1910* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

33. Argov, p. 142.

The Political Theory of India's Struggle for Freedom

BY

K. SHESHADRI

1. *An Apology*

It is rather presumptuous to pretend to weave a theory on a long and disjointed process which is what India's struggle for liberation was. It is a matter still unsettled among scholars of both historical and political persuasions, whether there was any 'theory' in political science in India at all, as compared to, say, Greece or Rome and later the Medieval Europe. India never had an Aristotle nor a Hobbes or any of the various political theorists of Europe who wrote on politics. Such of the political writings as have been handed down to us, are so interwoven into 'legal-ethical-religious' texture that informed all intellectual work in ancient and medieval India, (the latter's contribution in this regard being utterly negligible), that it is difficult to separate the political strand from them. According to the Hindu way of thinking, even scientific study of History was a fruitless venture and thus legend and mythology so hopelessly coloured the few traces of history that one does not know where history begins and mythology ends. It is only after the Muslim conquest of India, that we have the beginnings of a chronologically, though at times with lot of bias,¹ recorded list of events, which go by the name of history.

Ibn Khaldun's prodigious effort, the 'Universal History' has had no parallel in India. And where India excelled was in the speculative nature of their intellectual effort in which ethical and legal aspects formed an inseparable component. As a sort of obiter dicta, Sukra Nīthi or Shanti Parva may give a few guidelines as to what political ethics should be; but they are far from political theoretical treatises. One may mention Artha Sastra as a deviant

1. It should also be noted that some historians like Khafkhan, for instance, wrote with an amazing sense of historical impartiality.

case, rather unique from the general Indian tradition, that discusses political-cum-economic questions with a refreshing air of independence from the influence of ethics and myths. Perhaps 'Kamasutra' is another in its field which, to some extent, takes an amoral stand, howsoever absurd and unscientific certain observations might be. On the basis of one Artha Sastra which is generally compared to Machiavelli's "Prince", (why one should seek solace and pride under such comparisons with things Western is rather unintelligible) to claim that India's political theoretical heritage is rich, would be rather unwarranted. If India did not have political theorists, well, she did not have them. She had other compensations. Why should Indian scholars labour hard to prove that the Indian political system was democratically informed as if democracy is the best form of government and any country that did not have it in its past is thereby condemned to be a backward country? Democracy is a value judgement and one needn't attach such importance to it, especially when reading a country's history.²

Hence it is, that if there was no political theoretical heritage that is indigenous to India, there is no question of its continuity when India's struggle for independence began. The very beginnings of this struggle itself cannot be correctly assessed, though some Indian historians have characterised the Indian Mutiny of 1857 as a struggle for independence.³ Whether or not it was fought on the basis of any patriotism and nationalism is a matter of doubt, though two things were certain—

(1) That the people in those days were loyal to their Kings and their Kings' battles were theirs and this loyalty also changed as easily when the Kings changed. Hence if the native rulers like Rani of Jhansi or Tantia Tope or Bahadur Shah Zafar revolted, their armies and their subjects were equally involved.

2. Eminent scholars like K. P. Jaiswal, Beni Prasad and K. S. Aiyangar tend to import some of the Western political categories into the ancient Hindu political systems. May be some type of democracy and some varieties of republics existed, but they are not of the same type as those contemplated according to the Western norms.

3. Only V. D. Savarkar characterised it as war of independence and wrote rather passionately than historically accurately about it. This was of course done with a purpose,

(2) There was a general dislike of the beef and pork eating while the Feringhi ruling over the Indians coming from a far away country had no such feelings. In a rather unarticulated form patriotic sentiment was expressed in this dislike, though earlier the rise of Rajputs and Maharattas against the Mughuls was more distinct and articulate patriotic expressions. Even these risings were to establish the Hindu dharma.

Thus in the sense that Rousseau's 'Social Contract' and Voltaire's prodigious writings formed the ideological base for the French Revolution of 1789 or the writings of Locke formed the base for American War of Independence or Marx and Engels' writings led to further elaboration of Lenin's writings which formed the bases for the Russian Revolution, there was nothing that could be thought of as the basis for the Indian struggle for independence. The theoretical base for India's struggle was almost coeval with the birth pangs of the struggle for Indians' national identity and striving for liberty.

Another peculiar feature of India's struggle is the very nature of the struggle itself which qualitatively differed from similar struggles in other enslaved countries, though one must hasten to add here that many of these independence struggles all over the world gave Indians an inspiration and a moral strength. Thus the American War of Independence, the Sinn-Finn movement in Ireland, and the Russian Revolution did have their impact on the Indian patriots with different degrees of intensity at different times. Yet in the main, the struggle assumed a form where violent individual acts of terrorism, violent mass agitations, peaceful mass acts of protest and constitutionalism became components of a peculiar amalgum each one becoming a prominent feature at different stages in the whole movement. In America it was the same stock of people mainly, who revolted against the mother country on a rather constitutional issue that there should be no taxation without representation—a typical 'shop-keeper's' attitude. In the case of both French and Russian Revolutions again, it was the same people revolting against their ruling classes. All these are not strictly patriotic struggles, though they are struggles for democratic rights to start with. The Irish struggle was in a way a struggle of one country against another though even in this case,

England felt that Ireland was an integral part of Great Britain and representation in the British Parliament was given to the Irish even as the Scots and Welsh had it. But for the fact that there was a difference in the denomination of religions, Ireland might have got integrated with Britain even as Scotland and Wales did.

That way after the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the movement for self-determination of nations began to be recognised all over the West though struggles for national identification had to be waged much later. The whole concept of nationalism was getting crystallised in a gradual process, wherein people speaking the same language and professing similar culture divided into different empires began to feel a sense of solidarity breaking the boundaries and barriers set by empires. In this process, unification as evidenced in Italy under the inspiration and leadership of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, and Germany under Bismarck's policy of 'blood and iron', and consolidation as in the case of Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus, and reshuffling of boundaries to satisfy the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians at a much later date, were all the different components. This process perhaps did not end with any finality as the reordering of boundaries in Europe again after the Second World War evidenced. As Bertrand de Jouvenal said, boundaries are the most perishable commodities in the world. All these examples are cited only to show that the struggle for independence in different countries took different forms, they went through the painful process of violent upheavals, wars, foreign interventions etc., for their ultimate resolution. Though President Wilson of the United States championed the cause of national self-determination to all nations, to the Western mind this principle was applicable only to the Western peoples. Be that as it may.

In India, there was no sentiment of nationalism, as such, in the beginnings though it is undeniable that Indians from Kashmir to Cape Camorin felt as one whole for ages inspite of there being certain measure of truth in the oft-repeated saying that India is a geographical expression. As in Europe, religion generally never interfered with politics as such in India. This needs a slight clarification. Except for giving advice to the Rajah or the Sultan, the purohit or the mullah, as the case may be, never interfered in

purely temporal matters as the Church did in medieval Europe. There was no organised Church which sought to indoctrinate people and interpret the Ruler's actions in terms of Christian theology and pass verdicts of condemnation or commendation.

All these facts have to be mentioned in order to show the historical fact that there was no traditional roots for any national movements in India that could immediately appeal to the people and recruit them to the movement. Such of the movements as India had were purely religious movements or cults like Buddhism or Vaishnavism which were completely free from political overtones and were not movements of revolt or rebellion in the political sense. Later on, the various movements of revolt by the Hindus against Muslim Rulers were more due to the religious frictions than for organised capture of political power. As long as the Muslim Rulers left the people alone in their religious worship, the people by and large acknowledged their sovereignty (even to the extent prescribed in Austinian jurisprudence) and never demanded any secular rights. Even the neighbouring Rajput princes waged only defensive wars when their territory was attacked. Thus the concepts of patriotism and struggle for liberation etc., were unknown to the people in general who were as indifferent to an alien rule as they were to an indigenous rule. Hence the task of communicating the imperative need for struggle for liberty is rather stupendous. This process of introducing the concept not only among the intellectual elite but also among the general masses of Indians is not a mean task since, as argued earlier, there were no such traditions in the country. Secondly, by the time this new consciousness got generated, the different groups and communities began to seek their identification and in the process their mutual interests were running counter to each other. It is against this back-ground that any theory of national struggle had to be developed and not by going into the roots of traditions as found in Sanskrit texts and Dharma Sastras. This is not to disparage the most scholarly attempts by P. V. Kane or B. K. Sarkar or Nilakanta Sastri etc., to dig into the past in pursuit of finding the line of continuity in the Indian political culture but only to demonstrate that whatever be the reality of the so-called continuing tradition, its influence on the political struggle was rather negligible. On the contrary, the influence of Western thought was much more

relevant. What was needed was a proper formula for adopting the Western concepts and fitting them with suitable Indian idiom and charging them with the sentiments of indigenous tradition.

2. *The Early Political Theories*

It is not the intention here to go through the historical development but only to see if those who were motivated of patriotism had any theoretical understanding for their acts of disobedience to a foreign ruler. From the battle of Plassey in 1757, there have been many uprisings throughout India against the British finally culminating in the Mutiny of 1857.⁴ As Tara Chand rightly pointed out, "It was not inspired by any positive creative idea; it did not entertain either the vision of a higher social order or of a higher political system. As it was an almost spontaneous episodic outburst, there was no stable well-ordered organisation behind the movement as a whole. It lacked plan, programme and funds. The only thing which united the rebels was the desire to eliminate foreign rule. . . . It was dimly perceived that Hindu-Muslim co-operation was necessary, but it was not realized that the nation was an organic unity, that no mere temporary co-operation of independent units was enough, and that a fusion of communities into a higher political organism alone could guarantee success against a modern power."⁵

Thus excepting vague notion among the feudal elements that a foreign rule which had deprived them of their privileges should be ended, there was no political understanding as such and even the concept of an Indian nation was not known. The ancient Hindu division of India into fifty-six nations had of course undergone a change, but among the masses of the people loyalty was more to the sovereign than to the nation. Even in Europe, it may be argued, that nationalism as a concept came into vogue after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. But it is to be noted, for example, that the British considered themselves as one people and continued to resist Norman rule. The Scotts rebelled against

4. For details see Tara Chand. "History of the Freedom Movement in India"—Vol. II. Publications Division, Government of India, 1967. pp. 1-107.

5. *Ibid*, pp. 103-107

the English, the Dutch fought the French and so on, long before the Napoleonic wars. The ancient Athenians as a people had resisted the Persians with a feeling of pride in their citizenship of the City State. In India even the vagueness about political unity and national identity was non-existent though from times immemorial culturally, which included religion as well, India was deemed to be a 'Bharata Varsha'. But this unity and resilience is the most important dimension of our national character.

The British rule with its superior organisation, its scientific temper, its historical perspective and traditions of liberal thought indirectly helped to build in India a force that was to ultimately undermine the British rule itself. This is neither a great astounding truth nor is admission of this fact a point against Indian national self-respect, because the self same imperialist rule in other developing countries in Africa and South East Asia, for instance, did not produce any national consciousness till almost the Russian Revolution of 1917. Long before these people were awakened to national consciousness, India had developed a movement, a number of political philosophical thinkers. It is in this sense that India's freedom became the harbinger of national liberation struggles all over the world.

After the unsuccessful bid for driving out a 'White Foreigner', the responsibility of directing the political fervent begins to fall not on the forces that fought the British in 1857 and earlier, but on a new class of intellectual elite that formed the bridge between the rulers and the ruled. The British supremacy was accepted and the uniform administration it brought about throughout the length and breadth of the country enabled a free exchange of ideas among these intellectual elites and later on facilitated a co-ordinated mass action which was what was lacking in the Sepoy Mutiny, as noted earlier.

The political revolt was followed by a political lull and the self-same feudal elements who led the revolt against the British later on became their most trusted vassals and in that sense have become irrelevant to the development of a positive political process in the country. Hence the political role had to be performed by others who were intellectually equipped for the task. The first impact of modernisation that the British administration wrought and the results that flowed from Macaulay's famous minute on education was

on the Hindu middle classes since both the Hindu aristocracy and the general masses of Muslims kept themselves aloof from it⁶—the latter almost viewed English with contempt. The masses in general were also completely neglected in the scheme of education Macaulay contemplated. While critical of the mythological content that informed most of the works in the classical languages of India 'which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school', he was oblivious to many 'historical' incidents in the Bible that would move a country yokel in India to peels of laughter, though even the most scientifically advanced Westerner to this day believes in them. It is not to deny the role modern education played in shaping the Indian nation-hood in the subsequent period. But because of the 'filtration theory' advocated by the Anglicists⁷ the process of modernisation did not permeate into the nooks and corners of the land and thus paved the way for the ever-widening chasm between the elites and the masses in the country. It is in this light that the insistence at a later date by Gandhi for vernacularising education has to be viewed.

The impact of the new knowledge served to throw ample light on the dark crevices of the Indian society on the one hand and served to introduce a greater spirit of reverence to the profound thought content in the classical philosophies of India which was far superior to the superficial theology of the ruling classes. At purely philosophical level freed from the mythological references, they were comparable to the great non-Christian-theological philosophies of the West.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn

6. See R. C. Majumdar, *et al*: 'An Advanced History of India', London 1958, p. 816-821.

7. It is a well known fact that at the time, i.e., in the first quarter of the 19th century the thinkers in both India and Europe were divided into two groups—Orientalists and Anglicists. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was opposed to Orientalists because he felt that oriental education would keep the people in darkness. The Anglicists admitted that English education would not reach all the people but would spread through the medium of the English-educated elite to the people at large. This was called the 'filtration theory'.

about.....the meaning and mystery of this Universe, he must sit at the feet of Orient to learn.⁸

We are now here concerned with the first aspect of it viz., the exposure of the disabilities in the society to scientific scrutiny as a result of the refreshing light that English education threw on them. It is here that Raja Ram Mohan Roy occupies a place of pre-eminence among modern Indian political thinkers—we use the term political thinkers quite advisedly because his quest for social reform was pregnant with political content. His depth of knowledge of both the modern and ancient learning enabled him to reinterpret the texts and show that the so-called new thoughts were not altogether unknown to the ancients. He struck at the root of social evils not by quoting English texts but by quoting the ancient texts. Tilak later on did a similar thing by reinterpreting the Bhagawad Gita and imbuing a political meaning to its message which was relevant to the contemporary period. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's struggle for the freedom of the press, his championing the cause of peasants against the Zemindars, his plea for the appointment of Indian Collectors in the place of expensive European Collectors, his petition against the July Act of 1827 which denied a place of honour to the Indians, his advocacy of Indianisation of the army, separation of the jury from the executive, etc., were all the precursors of the new political philosophy that was to shape the liberation movement in India. This spirit of intertwining social reform with liberation movement is one of the fundamental contributions to political theory in India starting from Raja Ram Mohan Roy and continuing upto Pandit Nehru's time. Leader after leader saw in the social disabilities a monstrous impediment to political and economic progress and when they were not involved in a direct action against the British Raj, they all turned their might and mien to remove them. In various regions, especially Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Andhra, there was a greater accent on social reform movements to integrate the Hindu society, remove untouchability, liberate women from bondage, infuse rational and scientific spirit etc., and the medium of vernacular languages proved effective. An out-and-out religious reformer like Swami Vivekananda wrote in Bengali language exhorting Indians to be

8. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV, Almora, p. 151.

proud of being Indians and to declare that the 'ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmen Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother'.⁹

3. *The Liberalist Philosophies of Nationalism*

Along with this social reform movement and the plea for 'Western' out-look came a sort of a militant revolt against the West which almost verged on xenophobia. Though the Mutiny and the subsequent revolts against the Whiteman's rule were characterised by an intense hatred of the foreigner—his colour, his religion, his habits and his arrogance, political articulation for freedom started with Ram Mohan Roy, who understood the British system and played the game according to their rules. Thus he is generally believed to be the forerunner of the constitutional struggle waged by the Liberals subsequently. Together with this, but rejecting the rules of the British game, came the extremist thinking which with all the hatred for the British that was characteristic of earlier revolts was based on a more scientific and clear understanding of the political process. It took inspiration from these sporadic and disorganised movements for all the acts of courage and love of the land they exhibited, but built its theory on a study of patriotic movements from the West. In their attempt to socialise the masses and involve them, they searched out methods which were more indigenous and hence more appealing than the rules of the constitutional game. The "filtration theory" of which we spoke earlier failed to penetrate deeper than the skin.

The Liberals for all their sympathy for the Indian masses failed to reach them and understand them. Since in the evolution of national struggle, the Liberal thinking came first, we shall examine the reason for this and then analyse their philosophy of political action. Then we shall proceed to examine how along with these liberal or moderate forces were born the extremists who advocated violent and forceful methods to eliminate the foreign rule. Coeval with this or perhaps even pre-dating it were the forces of minority separatism based on suspicion of the majority if the 'neutral' foreign rule were to be eliminated and democracy were to be established.

9. *Ibid*, p. 413.



We may say that the forces of minority separatism began even during the agitation of the liberals because if as liberals argued, greater political participation were to be permitted to the natives, naturally by sheer numbers the majority of the Hindus would claim more power.

Generally whenever an enslaved nation fights for emancipation it does not resort to constitutionalism alone. It is at once a compliment to the nature of the British rule as well as the adaptability of the intellectuals of India to the new situation, that the struggle for independence in India took a constitutional form. It is also because the struggle was headed by the middle class intellectuals who took to English education and served in the British Government as their clerks, administrators, and brokers, they understood the nature of English ruling class and contrived to speak the language the rulers understood. Secondly, it is an undeniable fact that the British administration brought about a measure of stability and peace, which was rather unknown during the earlier princely rule whether it be Hindu or Muslim. For the first time the impersonal rule of law with all its concomitant factors like predictability, and equality was enforced and medieval arbitrariness was completely eliminated. In fact, as is well known, the seeds of national movement were sown by liberal Britishers themselves. Going back to the original rule of the Indian princes with all its tyranny and cruelty was completely out of the question, and hence even the most ardent patriot in India felt that British supremacy should continue while at the same time greater participation in the national affairs be provided for the Indians. It is also an important factor that quite a number of Englishmen themselves were in the beginning sympathetic to these moderate aspirations of the Indian leaders. The writings and speeches by Surendranath Banerji or Dadabhai Naoroji or even Gokhale are replete with sentiments of loyalty to the British Crown and in the name of British justice they appealed for greater freedom to the Indian masses. In all the thinking of the liberals, the Indian masses in general were not taken into serious consideration even though they make reference to them to demonstrate the nature of foreign rule and its exploitative character. Moreover, being intellectuals and having studied the liberal thought of the West, they devoted themselves to a great deal of introspection—to examine the Indian society and see that the inherent defects in the society were

eliminated before they craved for freedom. A country cannot be free with all the social disabilities prevailing in it. Most of these moderate leaders were scholars both in English as well as the Indian classical languages. While they observed the customs and habits of traditional Hindus, in their outward lives they were as Macaulay wanted—'English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.'

The introduction of English language brought about a fruitful dialogue and unity of action among all the intellectual Indians who were hitherto separated by linguistic, regional and sub-cultural and even religious barriers. This brought about a new political culture leading to the birth of a new political consciousness. The liberals, taking their origin from Ram Mohan Roy began assiduously to reform Hindu society and attacked all attempts at revivalism of Hindu religion. Mahadev Govinda Ranade challenging the revivalists' argument asks what in Hinduism is to be revived—the twelve forms of sons and eight forms of marriages, the *niyoga* system, the debauchery of the *rishis* and their wives, the *Shakti* worship with all its sacrifices including human sacrifice, polyandry and polygamy and so on ... "Besides, it seems to be forgotten that in a living organism, as any society is, no revival is possible. The dead are buried or burnt once for all, and the dead past cannot therefore be revived except by a reformation of the old materials into new organised beings."¹⁰

Together with this new spirit that was born among the Indian intellectuals to reform their society, pursue the policy of constitutional reformation as a result of the windows being thrown open to the Western thought, new fears and suspicions were generated among Muslim minority that they might lose in the competition with the more out-going Hindus. When English education was introduced and the process of reconciliation to the British rule was taking place, the Muslims, like Achilles were sulking in their tents, being too proud to accept the superiority of the Britisher and his language while at the same time too wounded to rise in militant revolt against the usurpers of their dominance. The burden of historical memory was pulling them back from joining the mainstream of politics in which they saw the hitherto servile Hindus

10. See Chintamani "Indian Social Reform" Part II, Madras, pp. 89, 90,

were participating in full vigour. This burden of historical memory has been haunting both the communities and still persists and influences not only the relationship between Pakistan and India adversely but also the feelings between Hindus and Muslims in India. The loyalty of the Muslim in India is always suspect in the eyes of the Hindu and the Hindu's political dominance in a democratic system by virtue of his majority has remained an irritation to the Muslim.¹¹ All talk of secularism by the Hindus sounds ambivalent to the Muslim. All that the Muslim could concede, is that India is a *darul aman*¹² and hence he need not be opposed to it or disloyal to it. Thus, from the very initial stages of independence struggle, the role of the Muslims—their fears, suspicions, aloofness, was a major factor to be reckoned with. It is an oversimplification to brush aside the whole thing as a creation of the British administration whose dictum was 'divide et impera'.

Though by and large an influential section of the Muslims kept themselves aloof from the main stream of independence movement, it has also to be borne in mind that quite a large number of Muslims did join not only national liberal movement but also the extremist, terrorist and later on the socialist and communist movements. Side by side with the new liberal spirit of the Hindus, Muslims also gradually realised the importance of new education as is evidenced by the institution of Aligarh Muslim University under the stewardship of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Apart from Sir Syed, Muhammed Iqbal, the poet, brought to bear a vigour in Muslim exclusiveness by rationalising the precepts of Islam to harmonise with scientific thinking. It is not the intention in this paper to go into the details of this deviant trend in the political theory of national struggle but only to point out how this factor influenced political thinking to a great extent, sometimes frustrating attempts at secularising and unitedly articulating the national aspiration.

11. See, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan "Akharī Madamin" and other tracts.

12. According to Islamic jurisprudence Darul Islam is a country which is governed by Koranic injunctions and no Muslim can rebel against it. Darul Aman is a country which is not governed by Koranic injunctions but they are respected. A muslim living in it is enjoined to be loyal. But Darul Harb is anti-Islamic state against which the Muslim has to fight.

4. Extremists

Extremism in India is a result of the smug attitude adopted by the British government towards the aspirations of the Indians. The protection of the minority Muslims also became an alibi for the British government's lack of response to India's demands. Since extremists, in which category the terrorists may also be included, rejected the stand of the Liberals, they had to find a theoretical basis in the indigenous traditions of the country and to interpret them in the light of contemporary situation. Going back to the traditional sources for theorising the patriotic struggle naturally meant interpreting the religious texts. As argued earlier, Indians, in particular the Hindus, had no political treatises as such nor did they have a sense of history. Such of the religious texts as would be suitable for political action were very few. Gita was perhaps the only book which provided the suitable source since it had the battlefield as its background and it sought to inspire the dis-spirited Arjuna into militant action to wipe out *adharma* from the land. In the divine scheme of things, man had to do his duty in furtherance of the divine will viz., fighting injustice, tyranny and wickedness. Atleast the Muslims who rebelled against the British dominance could find not only a historical justification but also invoke the teachings of Islam in which political theory is closely inter-woven with religious doctrine. It should be borne in mind that in the rise of Islam not merely religious conversion but also political action played a great role. Islam has a clear cut division of state into *Darul Islam*, *Darul Aman* and *Darul Harb* and people living in these states has definite duties towards the state. The so-called Wahabi movement which started prior to the Indian Mutiny and even inspired it, and continued till 1914 had declared British India as a *Darul Harb* against which a Mussalman was enjoined to fight.¹³ Some of the Muslim religious scholars of the Deoband School advocated joining hands with the Hindus in the task of driving out the British. What is contended here is that the Hindu masses did not have the benefit

13. It is a matter of doubt whether Wahabi movement could be termed as a national movement since it was aimed at re-establishment of Muslim rule in India. But in the sense that the Muslims were the rulers in India before the British occupied it, the re-establishment of the Indian rule albeit exclusively and dominantly Muslim rule has to be considered national in that, historical context. See Qahmed *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966.

of such clear-cut political philosophy on which they could base their call for struggle. Hence it is, that some of the revolutionery leaders had to create a theory using only some symbols that would inspire the people. They had also to take recourse to philosophies of revolt propounded in the Western countries. Thus the theories in the literature on French Revolution, writings of Mazzini etc., were intermixed with the Hindu religious texts. Not only the Gita but other symbols that would infuse courage and militancy like the "Shakti" were sought to be invoked. The writings of Aurobindo for instance in *Indu Prakash* are replete with militant exhortations to the Indians to awake and in the name of Motherland and God fight for deliverence. Rejecting the plea of the Moderate elements in the Congress as an attempt at flattery to gain the goodwill of the foreign rulers instead of relying on the inherent strength of the nation, he said that the work of national emancipation was a great and holy 'Yagna'.¹⁴ The partition of Bengal and the subsequent eruption of Bengali extremism gave rise to a veritable crop of revolutionery theorising. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee urged Bengalis to 'disanglicise' themselves. His *Ananda Math* became one of the first political novels inspiring the spirit of nationalism among the Hindus. The various terroristic activities were emotional outbursts displaying tremendous courage and self-sacrifice. To inspire such an abandon, a very powerful and passionate appeal was necessary and hence the religious or semi-religious appeals were made. But it was left to Tilak to base his revolutionary theory not on mere motive appeal but on terse logic of the Hindu classics. Tilak can be called the doyen of Indian extremists. He reinterpreted the message of Gita and organised political agitation by using the popular Hindu symbols and Ganapati festivals.¹⁵ He was one of the most colourful personalities that the Indian

14. See Aurobindo, 'Speeches' Calcutta, Arya Publishing House, 1948 and also Karan Singh, "Prophet of Indian Nationalism", London, George Allen & Unwin, 1963.

15. There are quite a large number of books on Tilak including some by Westerners who were fascinated by his political personality. I. M. Keisner and N. M. Golaberg, (Eds) *Tilak and the Struggle for Freedom*, New Delhi, 1966, T. L. Shay, *The Legacy of Lokmanya*, S. A. Wolpent, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*, Berkeley, 1962.

Freedom movement witnessed. He brought to bear his tremendous classical learning on his own philosophy of political action. He was rightly the 'Father of Indian Unrest' as the imprudent British Journalist Sir Valentine Chirol called him. Using his knowledge of the ancient classics and comprehending the weaknesses and strength of both the British administration and the Indian people he propounded the theory of boycott as a political weapon. To him Gita's message was a political message. He very clearly visualised that no empire was dissolved by a free grant of concessions by the rulers to the ruled. Power must be wrested from the unwilling hands of the rulers.

Both the Bengalis and Maharashtra extremists in their militancy advocated the policy of 'disanglicising' and usage of vernacular as powerful medium for mass education in their respective regions. This should not be mistaken for any attempt at sub-national identity, but has to be understood as the only alternative left for them in the absence of any other national language to communicate with the masses, once English was rejected as one of the symbols of India's bondage.

Certain political scientists have observed that the theories of the extremists, for all their anti-British tone, tended to become communal and anti-Muslim. Their invocation of the ancient texts, their usage of symbols, their fierce nationalism drove the Muslims away from them and made even the Congress movement suspect in their eyes. Tilak, especially, has been subjected to this criticism. Most of the other extremists like Lala Lajpat Rai and terrorists like Chandra Sekhar Azad etc., have all been termed Hindu militants. In such characterisations, one has to go deeper than what just meets the eye. These men were dealing with large masses of ignorant people who were unaware of elementary patriotic obligations. They had taken the British dominance for granted and in accordance with the law of destiny suffered their grinding poverty and humiliation with a sense of abject resignation. Though the Muslims were also economically down-trodden in many places much more acutely than the Hindus, they had one thing in which they were superior—their unity and identity as a community in general and a memory of their supremacy in the sub-continent. The majority of the Hindus had neither modern knowledge nor pride in the past. It is to such

people that the message of freedom had to be carried and unless the leaders speak the idiom of the common people and use the symbols that they venerate it would be well nigh impossible to establish any communication between them and the elites. For mass mobilization proper techniques of mass-communication are essential and Tilak was the first to realize that unless there was mobilization of the people leading to their participation in the political struggle, nothing would come out of the few intellectual exercises that were indulged in by the Congress leaders. To do this Tilak exploited the memories of the glorious past, the memories of their common struggles and sufferings. It is in this light that his Ganapathi festivals become positively meaningful. He did not start them but he exploited these festivals where people congregated, to give them a political turn. To Tilak political action was the enjoined religious duty as Gita taught.¹⁶ Thus Tilak was the first Indian political leader who had formulated a political theory based on teachings of Gita interpreted to suit the times with an indigenous strategy for political action. He destroyed the intellectual notion that constitutional methods should be adopted to bring about political change but argued in favour of even forceful overthrow of a government whose moral foundation and legitimacy he had rejected. To minimise the distance between the masses and the intellectuals and to unite all the people in a programme of action by a realistic understanding of the existing conditions in the country and not by quoting Mill or Bentham without any relevance to the Indian situation, he undertook to write extensively in both his English and Marathi journals, 'Maharatta' and 'Kesari'. Thus Tilak was not only the father of Indian unrest but also the father of Indian theory of political struggle which in its essentials was to be continued by Gandhi.

Tilak's fearless upholding of violence when necessary was in conformity with the philosophy of Gita. Non-violence is after all not a Hindu creed and Tilak advocated boycott only as an alternative to violence since an unorganised people cannot defend themselves against a powerful enemy.

16. See G. D. Parik 'Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Humanist Review, July-Sept. 1970 for an excellent exposition of Tilak's ideas regarding the minorities, religious reform, etc.

5. Gandhism

It may be rightfully said that it was Gandhi who for the first time sought to evolve a political theory for national struggle in India. The uniqueness in Gandhian theory of national struggle, if we may call it so, is in its originality, indigenous character and its ethical content. It is a positive synthesis of the economic and social reform visualised by the Liberals in their purely legislative activities with the dynamic action programme for mass mobilization attempted by the extremists. Unlike the Machiavellian way of thinking of politics as amoral or trying to rationalise many an unscrupulous act as a part of the *realpolitik*, and hence not to be condemned severely, which is what contemporary political scientists heavily influenced by the American political theorists are trying to do, it sought to give a positive moral and economic direction to political activity.

The influence of this American political models on Indian thinkers forms a distinct subject in itself that deserves to be very carefully examined. It is not the purpose of this paper to go into this aspect.

The way Selig Harrison's book 'India, The Dangerous Decades' was given an undue and disproportionate prominence by the Western thinkers and their Indian counterparts bears a clear testimony to the possibility of arriving at very misleading and sometimes dangerous conclusions, if a mechanical application of political models and methodology relevant in the American context is made in India. It would be too obvious a statement to say that Indian political development must be interpreted through the usage of concepts that are indigenous and certain courage and self-confidence are the essential requisites for this liberation. This liberation need not necessarily mean putting the clock back when political scientists were preoccupied only with constitutionalism and historians with listing of chronological events, it calls, for coming to grips with the real problems facing the country and entering into meaningful debate as to what political scientists should do in order to help political policy making and socio-economic planning.

The importance that was previously accorded to Tilak and his thoughts arises out of the fact that he was the first in a way to think of political action with a refreshing originality free from the Mill-Bentham jargon, but relevant to the context of the times and

the peoples. It is in this tradition that the role of Gandhi has to be viewed—a tradition with deep roots in the country absorbing the rich thoughts from the Western nations and synthesising them to suit the challenges of the Indian society which was essentially traditionalistic at its core. Tilak and after him Gandhi understood very clearly that to mobilise the people to action Indian philosophical tradition, Indian national character and the folk symbols have to be properly used and in so using them they also had taken into consideration the regional variations. Tilak used the Marathi medium for speaking to the people and Gandhi also used Gujarati language to communicate to the Gujarati masses. Thus the efficacy of using the vernacular language to communicate with the masses was realised by them.

Gandhi as is well known derived his inspiration from Tolstoy, Ruskin and Waldo whose teaching he blended with his own understanding of the philosophy of Gita, his knowledge of the India's national psyche, so to say, and evolved out of this a course of action wherein the means adopted to achieve his goal were to be as noble as the goal itself. He was thus trying to synthesise in his political philosophy the rich heritage of his own country's ethical and spiritual values with the philosophy of rightful protest as preached by the Western minds. This is very important because in India there has been no indigenous tradition of fighting for civil rights and carrying out a revolution or revolt against constituted authority howsoever tyrannical it might be. The semi-political *obiter dicta* that are found in the epics of the Hindus deal with how a good prince should behave and uphold *Dharma* and certainly not how a prince should somehow try to maintain his authority by whatever means available as Machiavelli was advocating. Hence it is that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is peculiarly untypical of Hindu political thinking. There is not even the Hobbesian justification of absoluteness of the ruler or the state, though in effect what was obtaining in the country till the British established the rule of law was more or less Hobbesian tempered by the soothing all-pervasive influence of *Dharma* or the Shariat as the case may be. Gandhi was operating in a country where the bulk of the population did not know their rights to self-rule and such of those as knew it were Western educated elites who either followed the more convenient path of constitutionalism and bargaining or the hazardous

and doubtful path of extremism. Both of these in a way did not count with the masses and the importance of mobilising them for action while simultaneously educating them about their own inherent right to breathe the air of freedom had to be stressed. Many terrorists by their reckless courage had sacrificed their lives to liberate the country but that had no effect on the masses as such most of whom did not even perhaps understand what it was all about. They kept themselves aloof as admiring on-lookers at best and indifferent cynics at worst. The Liberals confined their activities only among the urban people and that too among the intellectual elites. As mentioned earlier it was Tilak who tried to approach the masses and even he did not reach the mass of people who lived in rural areas. The unique nature of Gandhian struggle is the drawing into the vortex of struggle the peasantry in villages and the workers in both factories and even plantations. Champaran Satyagraha led by him was by the plantation workers. In this respect Gandhi was like Lenin who devised new techniques of struggle.

Even in adopting and devising these techniques of struggle Gandhi borrowed from indigenous ways of resisting the government, though he did acknowledge his debt to Thoreau's article on 'civil disobedience'. These techniques which Gandhi adopted were said to have had their origin in the methods prevalent in Saurashtra from where he hailed. The people of Saurashtra whenever they were aggrieved by the ruler's misconduct adopted three methods:

(1) Traga was a self imposition of pain to express righteous indignation.

(2) Dharna was bringing of moral pressure on the oppressor by squatting before the oppressor's house and fasting, and

(3) Baharvatiya was a method according to which the rebel outlaws himself and attacks the officials in order to make the people realize that the King's writ does not run.

One can easily see in the various struggles that Gandhi launched, traces of these traditional methods of resistance to authority which had ceased to have a moral sanction and hence in the Gandhian spirit legal sanctity. But in all these the central theme was

non-violence and truth which to him were creeds and not mere tactics. This is where he differs with Lenin to whom tactics were different from creeds and to attain the latter there was always room for change in tactics. If ends justify the means, Gandhi would say ends are means since both are moral. Only when people are moral, truthful and non-violent can they attain Swaraj and Ram Raj which to him was almost synonymous with socialism—Gandhi styled himself a socialist. If morality informs all actions and struggles, there is no defeat because even in physical defeat the Satyagrahi is the moral victor since immorality can gain only a momentary victory over morality and such a victory is no victory. If the government is moral, there can be no contradiction between the ruler and the ruled. No foreign government howsoever good it might pretend to be, is not morally justifiable and hence in the final analysis immoral and illegal. A good government is no substitute for self-government, as Gandhi maintained. If the struggle is itself informed by morality then all actions after victory is won will have to be moral. One who follows the path of the morality which in quintessence is truthfulness and non-violence, there is no place for the two evils of cowardice and hatred to exist.

Gandhi viewed political action not in its isolation but as an important part of the whole gamut of activities in the economic, social and cultural fields. To him winning of independence was linked up with Harijan uplift, Hindu-Muslim unity, vernacularisation, removal of social disabilities, cleanliness, Panchayat Raj, Village uplift, uplift of women, economic self-sufficiency, upholding the cultural values and heritage of the country, etc. For the first time a political theory views all these aspects as components of an organic whole and all of them were woven by the thread of truth and nonviolence. As a result of this style of his politics he converted the Congress Party into a movement and not a party in the strict sense. That is to say, he opposed polarisation of issues by calling himself a socialist among socialists, a sanatan Hindu among Hindus, a unifier of Hindus and Muslims, iconoclast who demolished caste system, untouchability and such other traditional disabilities which he considered to be in the way of his struggle. This style did give the Congress Party an eclectic colour at best and an ambivalence at worst which still persists. The dread of

cowardice was almost an obsession with him and he felt it was a part of the Hindu psyche. All his actions and preachings were aimed at the removal of cowardice. A person who upholds truth has no fear of fear. The 'Charkha' became the overall spinning symbol of this progress of a backward, colonial and timid people towards a new transformation into an independent, self-reliant, fearless, truthful and virile nation.

It is not the purpose of this paper to go into the details of Gandhian philosophy and economics but only to indicate the fact for the first time a comprehensive political theory was propounded which is at bottom in consonance with India's indigenous tradition and culture but has assimilated in itself the theories of the West. It was a sort of a compromise between tradition and modernity, both of which Gandhi in a peculiar way championed. The same fusion of seeming opposites characterise many of his actions. While not being a four-anna member of the congress, he was still its centre. While upholding democracy, he demanded absolute discipline and unity of action among the diverse elements that composed the leadership of the various parts of the country voicing divergent view points. It was perhaps the amazing elusive quality of his personality that baffled both the British and Jinnah but endeared him to the masses as the 'Mahatma'.

There are so many competent writings on the various facets of Gandhism that this exercise would be only superfluous and shallow. That there are equally competent and rich criticisms of Gandhian theory does not alter the fact of the strength of his theory and the fact of its influence to a very great extent upon the struggle of India for independence. Just as every post-Marxian theory of economics makes Marxism a point of reference so also every political theoretician in India as well as abroad, makes Gandhism a reference point and from there on goes to uphold it or criticise it or partly uphold and partly criticise it. From Communists and Royalists to communalists and traditionalists everyone had to contend with the force of Gandhian 'unlogic'.

The various sections of Socialists, Communists and others had all rallied round Gandhi agreeing with him on the main objectives of winning independence by defying the British, mobilising the masses for action, awakening them to the economic and social

exploitation to which they were subjected, though they had their own concrete differences with him on various other counts. Even his own successor, Pandit Nehru, differed with him though Gandhi maintained that Nehru would speak his language after his death. His theory of trusteeship, his uncompromising stand on non-violence which went to the extent of his condemning the activities of terrorists, the militant stand of Subhas Chandra Bose, the R. I. N. Ratings' strike, his opposition to legitimate strikes by industrial workers in various places are all of questionable validity even if judged according to his own principles. In international affairs though he kept himself aloof he was not insensitive to the fact that the world was shrinking and international interdependence would be inevitable in the emerging new age. Even there he felt that political action should have morals and principles. Hence it is that he supported the cause of democracy against Nazism and Fascism though he was himself struggling with the British, who were on the camp of democracy. If democracy should triumph as a principle, as a way of life, the British government also should give up its imperialist ambitions and grant independence to India so as to permit her as a free and democratic nation to participate in the war against fascism with the full support of her people. To this end he was prepared to negotiate with the British. Thus at the conference tables as well as in the streets, factories and fields he carried the struggle with a disarming freedom from hatred but with the relentlessness of a hard-boiled revolutionary.

His theory of democracy extends to the last unit of community life since to him democracy was a way of life and was quite indigenous to India's rural life as exemplified in the ancient village panchayats or the rural republics as he called them. He visualised a democracy which is not vitiated by uncompromising opposition but enlivened by active and positive participation of all people in the community. Out of a few houses a representative and out of those, a representative body for the village, out of a few villages a representative for a district and so on upto the national level was the sort of a structure he visualised for the country. This would prevent the community from being torn apart by parties, factions, castes and religions. Thus the Sarvodaya theory was developed. Jayaprakash Narayan's idea of Communitarian society is a further extension of Gandhi's seminal

ideas on decentralised society. All these may be very idealistic, visionary and out of tune with the times.

Pandit Nehru who spanned both the pre-independence struggle era and the post-independence developmental era tried to synthesise Gandhism and socialism; tried to bridge the gap between heavy industrialisation and rural small-scale industrialisation, tried to link representative big democracy with decentralised grass-root democracy, and in the field of international relations compromise rightful use of force with peaceful coexistence and settlement of disputes. M. N. Roy starting as a Marxist and a trenchant critic of Gandhi travelled far towards the last days of his life and arrived at humanism. Though he rejected the traditionalism of Gandhi, the religious outlook on life which stagnated Indian society and advocated rationalism, basically his approach to social problems were near Gandhian inasmuch as he too advocated decentralisation of power and organised democracy and establishment of a moral order. "Any effort for reorganisation of society must begin from the unit of society—from the root, so to say".¹⁷ But Roy's thought remained unrelated to the main-stream of India's politics.

Contemporaneous with Gandhi and Gandhian political thinkers mention must be made of the socialist and communist political theorists, though from the point of originality and applicability of theory to the political culture of the country, so to say, their contribution has not been significant. For a long time both the groups, socialists and communists, worked together and tried to apply the Marxian theory to the Indian situation. They were incapable of assimilating the Marxian thought and properly interpreting it to suit the Indian situation. This needed a deeper understanding of the culture of the Indian society which they seem to have lacked. Either they ended as camp followers of Gandhian leaders or became totally alienated from the people as most communists became. They lacked the original thinking and an understanding of the people of India to link those ideas meaningfully by a theory. This is precisely what Mao Tse-tung did in China. Though he was essentially a Marxist-Leninist he could propound an original theory of struggle most suited to the objective conditions

17. See his *New Humanism: A Manifesto*, Calcutta, 1947 for details.

obtaining in his country. Even G. Adhikari, the most outstanding theoretician that the communists could boast of, came out with a poor version of the theory of nationalities after unsuccessfully trying to support the demand for Pakistan and Sikhistan. Originally, misguided by their over-enthusiasm to support and win the minorities, the communists supported Jinnah and also the Sikh separatists. Punjab, said Adhikari, was the homeland of Sikhs. After a time this was sought to be replaced by a "new" theory of sixteen nationalities in India. This was nothing but giving the linguistic provinces a grand name of nationalities *a la* Soviet Union. But all these pseudo-theories did not produce any mass action and whatever mass mobilisation that the communists could accomplish was in their leading the working classes and the peasantry in their economic struggles. Even these were in the conventional communist fashion rather than according to any original theory. They failed to accomplish the task of politicalising the economic struggles except in small isolated pockets.

There has been no dearth of theoreticians in the pre-independence India but most of their thoughts have not been systematically and coherently argued out. True it is, that most of them were not political philosophers mainly but men of action leading agitations and speaking to people. Only when in gaol, men like Nehru wrote anything, if at all and even then Nehru tried to run away from it all either to have a glimpse of World history or to discover India. Even such an excellent and analytical mind like that of Rajaji's also did not produce any coherent treatise on politics, except for occasional articles. One has only to glean through the various writings in different journals or papers by some of the intellectuals among the Indian leaders to churn out a political theory.

After independence, there has been a significant growth in intellectual activity and political theory came to be more meaningfully linked with socio-economic development. With the ushering in of planning a grasp of the proper linkages between the different systems within the country, social, political, economic, cultural, etc., as well as international, has been attempted. There has also arisen a great danger from pernicious and shallow theory-building mostly undertaken by some American political scientists and their Indian imitators who paint a distorted and fragmented picture of

India's basic unity and resilience. They reject the historical context of the whole Indian nationhood and indulge in superficial theorisation based upon a pseudo-scientific interpretation of soft behavioural data acquired through means of doubtful validity. We are told, for instance, that these are dangerous decades, that our caste system is asserting itself as a result of the participatory democracy and that the country awaits to be fragmented by the struggle for regional and linguistic identity. These theories need not be taken into serious consideration though they may serve to point out certain tendencies at the micro-level.

There is now need for thinking in terms of political theories that would take the socio-economic goals set before the nation into consideration and link them up with appropriate political structures and methods so as to achieve national goals of social change, national consolidation and national self-reliance both economic and military. The impact of administration and the need for a new outlook in the face of new challenges facing the country, the compulsions of international relations, the absorption and adoption of scientific and technological knowledge are all germane to the new thinking. It is a very idle exercise to go on discussing about parliamentary democracy or constitutionalism in the present context; as they perhaps were even during the context of our struggle for freedom. This does not mean doing away with democracy. On the contrary to a great extent, economists in the country have exhibited a great awareness of the national need for performance. This paper is an attempt to place this need for a proper political theory in the historic perspective.



Netaji and The Nazis: a Study in their Relations

BY

ARUN COOMER BOSE

Although a couple of rather reliable personal accounts are there dealing with the activities of the Indian nationalists in Germany during the Second World War, this interesting topic has hitherto escaped the serious attention of any researcher. This essay — as the title suggests — is a study in relations, and is based solely on available printed sources and written statements of some highly-placed Germans¹ and Indians² who were closely associated with the decisions and considerations that form the theme of this paper.

1. Late Dr. Wilhelm Keppler, former Secretary of State of the Third Reich, interviewed at Hamburg on 17-8-1957.

Dr. Kurt Assmann, a Calcutta-born businessman entrusted with liaison work between the German Foreign Office and the Indians, interviewed at Hamburg on 18-8-1957.

Colonel Krappe (Retd.), formerly the chief of the Azad Hind Fauj in Europe, interviewed at Hanover on 20-8-1957.

Capt. Kutscher (Retd.) of the Azad Hind Fauj and later a judge of the Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany, interviewed at Karlsruhe on 23-8-1957.

Dr. Heinrich von Trott zu Solz, brother of Adam von Trott zu Solz, interviewed at Bebra near Hanover on 21-8-1957.

Dr. Ludwig Alsdorf, Professor of Indology, University of Hamburg and one-time personal assistant to Netaji in Germany, interviewed at Hamburg on 19-8-1957.

Late Dr. Helmuth von Glasenapp, formerly Professor of Indology in the Universities of Koenigsberg and Tuebingen, interviewed at Tuebingen on 25-8-1957.

2. Dr. A. C. N. Nambiar, the then Indian Ambassador in Germany, interviewed at Bonn on 10-8-1956.

Dr. Girija Mukerjee, the then Press Attache to the Indian Embassy at Bonn, interviewed there on 10-8-1956.

Dr. Tarachand Roy, teacher in the Department of Hindi, University of Bonn, interviewed there on 11-8-1956.

Dr. P. K. Dhavan, a practising physician and one-time member of the Free India Centre, interviewed at Hamburg on 17-8-1957.

Indian nationalists usually had a rather ambivalent attitude towards Germany, whether under the Hohenzollerns or the Nazis. To the educated among them Germany was the home of savants like Goethe and Schopenhauer — both great admirers of India's literary and philosophical heritage — and the leading centre for Indological studies, where — as many fancied — Max Muellars and Paul Duessens crowded the narrow streets of the university towns. To the ardent Indian nationalists Germany was the strongest opponent of their common enemy, and they naturally looked to her for help and encouragement. In Germany too there were people who sought to weaken Britain during the First World War by helping the Indian revolutionaries in creating trouble in their country³.

Still, the Indian nationalists, with their attachment for decorum and decency found the aggressive militarism and racial arrogance of modern Germany rather distasteful. The Indian National Congress never expressed any sympathy or admiration for the Kaiser's Germany. The great Tilak after his release from gaol in 1914 exhorted his countrymen to support British war effort,⁴ while Gandhi toured the country recruiting soldiers for the empire in its hour of need. Even Lajpat Rai, who was mostly in the U.S.A. during the First World War, twice refused invitations to go over to Germany to guide Indian revolutionary effort from Berlin.⁵

Twenty years later the Nazis were in power in Germany. They were too steeped in the belief in their racial superiority

3. Gen. Frederich von Bernhardi, in his book, *Germany and the Next War*, published in 1911, first spoke of utilising the Indian revolutionaries against Britain. During World War I, an agreement was arrived at between the German Government and the Indian revolutionaries in Germany, and efforts were made to supply money and arms to the latter's comrades at home, and to persuade the Amir of Afghanistan to invade India.

4. Tilak's statement on 27-8-1914, cited in Stanley A. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale*, (University of California, 1962), pp. 264-65.

5. Letter, dated 13-7-1916, from the German Foreign Office to Chandra Chakravarty in file No. 43253 with No. 5784, vol. 1542 of 1918. Also, Chakravarty's reply in file No. 16027 with 57894, vol. 1542 of 1918.

(The above files of the Justice and Public Dept. are in the former India Office Library, London.)

Also, V. C. Joshi (Ed.), *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings*, (Delhi, 1965), pp. 201-02 and 216.

and historic mission to have any interest in India's rich heritage. The Germany of their dreams, the *lebensraum* of the *herrenvolk*, was to expand into the heart of Russia, and India hardly figured in their immediate political or strategic calculations. All that they cared to know about India was that—though ruled by the British—her leaders usually disliked their aims and methods. That made them all the more indifferent to the four hundred million Indians and their aspirations.⁶ Indian nationalists too were not only the inheritors of the great cultural traditions of their country but had been considerably influenced by the world outlook and ethical approach of Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru. Naturally they found the unscrupulous expansionism and arrogant racialism of the Nazis positively repulsive. At home they were fighting for individual liberty, democratic rights and social justice and therefore, could not wish well of a system or power that stood for their ruthless suppression.

Still, there were among them men, like Subhas Chandra Bose, who believed that foreign help was essential to their armed struggle against the British *Raj*, and that it was possible to secure effective help from Germany or her allies without in any way sharing or supporting the darker aspects of their policies. He believed like Palmerston that a nation's foreign relations should be based on its own interests and not on sentiments and prejudices.⁷ If Indian independence required a friendly understanding and cooperation with the hated Axis Powers, he was prepared to

6. N. G. Ganpuley, *Netaji in Germany* (paperback, Bombay, 1959), p. 23. Also, statements of Keppler, Glasenapp and Alsdorf.

7. (a) While founding the All-India Forward Bloc, he said that he had planned the launching of "an uncompromising struggle with British Imperialism for winning independence. To this end all possible means should be employed and the Indian people should not be hampered by any philosophical notions like Gandhian non-violence or any sentimentalism like Nehru's anti-Axis foreign policy".

(b) To Nehru also he wrote on 28-3-1939, "Foreign policy is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self-interest It is no use championing lost causes all the time, and it is no use condemning countries like Germany and Italy....."—J. L. Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (London, 1958), p. 334.

(c) In another context he wrote, "The issues involved are not those of principle but of expediency, and the standpoint from which I judge such issues is entirely realistic,—*Modern Review*, (Calcutta), August, 1938.

have these. He was in Europe more than once in the thirties, and was full of admiration for the unity, efficiency, discipline, and sense of purpose that he saw in new Germany and Italy. Those virtues, he felt, were India's need of the hour. But at the same time he was extremely critical of the racial arrogance and expansionist ambition of the Nazis, and never made any secret of it.⁸

It is not known whether Bose had any meaningful contact with the German or Italian leaders in course of these visits. But it is believed that after the Munich Pact he had secret meetings

(d) Addressing a gathering in Tokyo in June 1943 he said, "All revolutions have succeeded only with outside help".—*References to Activities of Indians in Japan and Occupied Areas*, (Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch, No. 2702 A, November 16, 1944), p. 5.

8. (a) In an interview with R. Palme Dutt in London in January 1938, he admitted that in his book, *The Indian Struggle*, he had spoken of Fascism with approval because the latter's expansionist role was not known at that time.—*The Daily Worker* (London), 24-1-19389.

(b) He wrote to Dr. Thierfelder, Director of the German Academy for Foreign Relations at Stuttgart, on 24-3-1936, "Today I regret that I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant the present atmosphere in Germany is rather disappointing for us After the (recent Munich) speech of Herr Hitler, I have issued a very strong statement to the Indian press which I hope will be published in due course I am still prepared to work for an understanding between Germany and India. This understanding must be consistent with our national self-respect. When we are fighting the greatest Empire in the world for our freedom and for our rights, and when we are confident of our ultimate success, we cannot brook any insult from any other nation or any attack on our race or culture I am an optimist and I hope that the present atmosphere will change and we shall ultimately arrive at an understanding". Then he added in post-script, "... the above represents not only my personal views but also the views of Indian nationalists in general. I have no objection if you forward a copy of this letter to any friends or to any state department in order to inform them about the Indian attitude to Germany".

H.O. Guenther, *Indien und Deutschland—Ein Sammelband*, (Frankfurt on Maine, 1956), pp. 154-56.

(c) He wrote in *The Forward Bloc* of 13-3-1940, "Germany may be a Fascist or an Imperialist power, ruthless or cruel, but one cannot help admiring these qualities of her Could not these qualities be utilised for promoting a nobler cause".

(d) Earlier he had written in *The Forward Bloc* of 28-8-1939, "It would be correct to say that if war broke out between Germany and Poland, the sympathy of Indian people would be with the Poles".

with the German Consuls at Calcutta and Bombay in the autumn of 1938.⁹ Thereafter he placed before Nehru his plans for the utilisation of Axis help during the war, which he expected would break out within a year. Nehru, the anti-Fascist, would have no truck with the hated Axis Powers.¹⁰ It is suspected that reports of these clandestine contacts made Gandhi oppose Bose's candidature for Congress Presidentship at Tripuri in 1939.¹¹

What actually transpired between Bose and the German Consuls may never be accurately known, but it is clear that the German Government did not take a serious note of his overtures. Else, why was he keen on going to Soviet Russia, after his escape from India, and why could he not make any contact with the German Embassy at Kabul, even when he needed their help?¹² In fact, the latter sent to Berlin a rather unfavourable report about him, suggesting that he was probably a British spy.¹³

Here one may pause to ponder over the question, why was Bose so keen on reaching either Russia or Germany. The reason was that he had failed to convince the Congress high command that England's difficulty was India's opportunity, and that they should seek help from England's enemies and start organising the people for an armed rising. What the Congress refused to do he took upon himself as his sacred task, and began that lonely trek that took him first to Berlin and then to Tokyo. He believed

9. Statement of the former revolutionary leader, late Pratul Ganguly cited in A. K. Majumdar, *The Advent of Independence*, (Bombay, 1963), p. 155. Also, K. M. Munshi's letter to A. K. Majumdar, dated 9-12-62, quoted in the above book, p. 409.

10. Bose wrote in *The Forward Bloc* of 11-5-1940. 'In October 1938, we began to talk publicly about the impending war-crisis in Europe'. The Bengal Provincial Conference meeting at Jalpaiguri in February 1939 suggested giving an ultimatum to British Government on the issue of independence. When brought before the Tripuri Congress it was rejected.

Also, J. N. Sahn, *The Lid Off*, (Delhi, 1971), pp. 138-39.

11. A. K. Majumdar, p. 409.

12. Both Uttam Chand Malhotra, Netaji's host at Kabul, and Sisir Kumar Bose (presently Director, Netaji Research Museum, Calcutta), Netaji's nephew who drove him by car from Calcutta to Gomoh in Bihar during his escape from India, confirm that he did not have any secret understanding with any foreign power or its representatives before leaving home.

13. Girija Mookerjee, *Europe At War*, (Meerut, 1968), p. 244.

that from Russia or Germany he would be able to carry out an effective wireless propaganda directed to his countrymen,¹⁴ and if only fifty thousand Axis troops could appear near the Indian frontier—Soviet Russia in those days was an ally of Germany—Indian soldiers would desert their alien masters *en masse*.¹⁵ He believed that the sight of a few units of Indian prisoners of war fighting at the head of the advancing Axis forces, under their own tricolour flag, would ensure not only the rapid disintegration of the British-Indian Army but also an armed rising by the general public.¹⁶ Moreover, he believed like many others that Germany would win the war, and at least one senior Indian leader should be there to earn their goodwill and to influence post-war negotiations in India's favour.¹⁷ If however, a small army could be created out of the Indian prisoners and a national revolt could be stirred up, the victors would be naturally thankful to Indians for such assistance, and would respect them for having fought for their own freedom. Besides, that would have a sobering effect on those in Germany who might dream of keeping India under their control.¹⁸

However, when Bose reached Berlin on 3 April 1941 with an Italian passport issued at Kabul and the alias Orlando Mazzota, the Germans flushed with victory and sure of success cared little for the possible cooperation of a subject people.¹⁹ The Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop, was glad that an eminent Indian was available for their anti-British propaganda. But the Secretary of State, Wilhelm Keppler, and most of the senior officials of the German Foreign Office were in the beginning rather cynical about him. Even if he was no British spy, what influence could he still have over Indians after having openly fallen out with

14. The Italian Ambassador, Quaronni's report from Kabul, dated 2-4-1941, quoted in *The Indian Struggle*, op. cit., p. 416.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Statements of Keppler, Alsdorf and Nambiar,

17. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 196-97, 231-32.

18. Statements of Nambiar, Tarachand Roy and P. K. Dhavan.

19. Girija Mookerjee, p. 198. Ganpuley, pp. 29-32. Also, statements of Glasenapp, Alsdorf and Heinrich von Trott zu Solz (hereinafter referred to as Heinrich Trott).

20. Statements of Heinrich Trott and Kurt Assmann.

Gandhi and other Congress leaders?²¹ In fact, for a couple of months after his arrival he was treated rather like an honourable prisoner. His presence and identity were not disclosed even to the local Indians, the police shadowed him constantly, and even his telephone was tapped.²² For some time it appeared as if coming to Germany was for him a mistake.

Bose, however was not the man to lose heart or to play another's game. He was very sensitive about the honour of his country and the cause he represented, and took special care never to do anything or to appear as a stooge of the Axis Powers. Within a week of his arrival in Germany he submitted to their Foreign Officer a memorandum (9 April) wherein he insisted on the following: Indo-German cooperation to be on equal terms, as between two governments; Indian independence to be recognised by Germany; and the status of an independent government to be accorded to the organisation which he was planning to set up with the help of the locally available Indians.²³ In his first meeting with Ribbentrop at Vienna on 29 April he personally requested him for an early German declaration in support of Indian independence, and made it clear to him that Indians should never be expected to support the actions and ideology of the German Government.²⁴ He also suggested that all German financial assistance should be in the nature of loans to be repaid later. (It may be pointed out that in 1944 he actually paid 500,000 yens to the German Ambassador in Tokyo out of the contributions made by the Indians in Japanese-occupied territories as a token repayment of the loans received.)²⁵ In fact, Bose viewed his war-time collaboration with Germany as something strictly limited to fighting Britain for Indian independence, and insisted that the proposed Indian legion should never be used against any other power or

21. Malcolm Muggeridge (Ed.), *Ciana's Diary*, (London, 1947), p. 355 Also, Girija Mookerjee, 244.

22. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 198 and 244. Also, statements of Tarachand Roy and P. K. Dhavan

23. As cited in *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942*, pp. 420-22.

24. Dr. D. Weidemann, "Revealing Facts on Netaji", *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 2-11-1967.

25. Ganpuley, p. 38. Also, Alexander Werth and Walter Harbich, *Netaji in Germany*, (Calcuta, 1970), p. 19.

people.²⁶ (As the Azad Hind Sarkar in South-East Asia declared war on Britain and the U.S.A. on 23 October 1943, their troops in Europe were used against the Anglo-Americans in France in 1944-45 but never against any other power or any popular resistance movement)

Obviously, Bose's constant assertion of independence and complete equality was not to the liking of many German officials, particularly the Nazi fanatics who under Goebbels controlled the Ministry of Propaganda and Broadcasting.²⁷ But the professionals in the Foreign Office gradually changed their views about him and India's importance in the war. The first to come under the spell of his charismatic personality was Adam von Trott zu Solz. A graduate of Oxford University—where he was a Rhodes Scholar and a close friend of Humayun Kabir—he was then in charge of the India section of the German Foreign Office, and he recommended Bose's bonafide to his superiors in strong terms.²⁸ Indologists like Professors Helmuth von Glasenapp and Ludwig Alsdorf also endorsed his views. As his reputation spread, and his position and popularity in India became known German officials became increasingly interested in securing his cooperation. Moreover, by the end of June 1941 Germany was involved in a war with Russia, and Axis forces were soon to launch an offensive in North Africa. In this changed situation India acquired a new importance in the eyes of the Germans, and they realised the value of an organised psychological offensive against Britain in Asia.³⁰ So there was a marked change in German attitude towards Bose, and they began respectfully agreeing to most of his demands.

In September 1941 began the recruitment for the future Azad Hind Fauj from among the Indian prisoners-of-war in German and Italian hands.³¹ Initially some senior German generals were

26. Girija Mookerjee, p. 197. Also, Ganpuley, pp. 70-71. Also, statements of Keppler and Col. Krappe.

27. Statements of Keppler and Alsdorf. Also, Girija Mookerjee, pp. 203, 205.

28. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 197-98. Statements of Heinrich Trott, Alsdorf and Nambiar.

29. Statements of Glasenapp and Alsdorf.

30. Ganpuley, pp. 40-41. Girija Mookerjee, p. 205. Also, Werth and Harbich, pp. 21, 23 and 33.

31. Werth and Harbich, p. 33. Also, statements of Krappe and Kutscher.

opposed to the idea of equipping Indians for fighting the Whites and of giving them training in the use of heavy guns and tanks.³² But their objections were soon waived, and by the time Bose left Germany in February 1943 the Azad Hind Fauj was about 5000 strong, grouped in four battalions.³³ Many of them were eventually selected for training in the use of modern sophisticated weapons.³⁴ The Azad Hind Radio too went on the air in October, and on 2 November 1941 the Free India Centre was formally opened in Berlin.³⁵ The Government agreed to bear all the expenses of the Fauj and of the Radio. They also agreed to pay Bose £800 per mensem as his personal allowance and £1200 to the Free India Centre. Subsequently the monthly grant to the Centre was raised to £3200.³⁶

Before the year was out, German attitude had changed still further in favour of Bose and the Indian national movement. By December their thrust towards Moscow had failed, and they were resigned to the depressing prospect of a long war of attrition with Russia. Since September Japan, too, was taking an interest in Bose, and her ambassador in Berlin, Count Hiroshi Oshima and his Military Attache, Yamamoto had a couple of meetings with him.³⁷ On 7 December she joined the war, and within a couple of months the banner of the Rising Sun was carried in triumph across South-East Asia to the very gates of Assam and Bengal. Suddenly India was hurled into the very centre of world politics, and the attitudes and aspirations of her people began figuring prominently in the political and military calculations of both the Allied and the Axis Powers.³⁸ Moreover, there are reasons to believe that though Germany and Italy, as members of the Anti-Comintern Pact, were the allies of Japan in their common struggle, they never actually

32. Girija Mookerjee, p. 209. Also, statements of Krappe and Kutscher.

33. Ganpuley, p. 96. Statement of a Seifriz in the preface to Ganpuley's book. Also, Werth and Harbich, p. 35.

34. Statements of Krappe and Kutscher. Also, Girija Mookerjee, p. 209.

35. Ganpuley, p. 41. Also, Werth and Harbich, pp. 21, 23. According to Girija Mookerjee, p. 207 the Free India Centre was formally opened in April 1942.

36. Ganpuley, p. 38. Statements of Keppler and Nambiar.

37. Joyce Lebra, *Chandra Bose to Nihon*, (Tokyo, 1963), p. 138.

38. Girija Mookerjee, p. 198. Also, statements of Nambiar and Alsdorf.

welcomed a Japanese occupation of India.³⁹ Though they benefitted from Japanese victories, they were envious of them too, and were somewhat mortified at the humiliation of their fellow Europeans at the hands of the yellow people.⁴⁰ Naturally they thought of protecting their future interests and influence in India by ingratiating themselves with her people,⁴¹ and for the Germans in those days Bose was the key to India. He, too, in the meantime, had impressed those around him with his organisational abilities, self confidence and dedication. Against the backdrop of the recent events in the east many in Germany began looking upon him as the future head of free India. People even thought that by helping and honouring him they would be able to enjoy special privileges in India after the war.⁴² So by January 1942 the Free India Centre had begun enjoying the status of a foreign diplomatic mission, and in official functions Bose soon came to be treated as the visiting head of a state.⁴³ Much of his personal position was also owing to his very friendly relations with and the respect he received from such illustrious Arab leaders in exile as Rashid Ali Jilani of Iraq and Haj al-Amini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.⁴⁴ The celerity with which Bose could acquire command over spoken German and the nuances of diplomatic etiquette and inter-state relations further added to the general respect for him.⁴⁵

However, Bose was extremely cautious in his dealings. He knew that close association with the Axis Powers would be looked upon with suspicion in India, and in the first few months he himself was not very sure of German intentions. So till the end of the year 1941 he kept his presence a secret from the outside world, and used to write in the Free India Centre's weekly, *The Azad Hind*, under the pen name of Orlando Mazzota.⁴⁶ Even the Azad Hind Radio

39. *Ciano's Diary*, op. cit., entries for 7 and 15 March 1942, pp. 443-46.

40. Statements of Girija Mookerjee, Nambiar and Dhavan.

41. Girija Mookerjee, p. 205. Also, statements of Nambiar and Dhavan.

42. *Ibid.* Also, Louis Lochner (Ed.), *Goebbels' Diary*, (London, 1948),

p. 81. Also see *Schellenberg Memoirs*.

43. Ganpuley, p. 46. Also, Girija Mookerjee, pp. 209-10.

44. Girija Mookerjee, p. 215. Also, statements of Keppler and Alsdorf.

45. Girija Mookerjee, p. 215. Statements of Keppler and Nambiar.

46. The author has seen the entire collection of *The Azad Hind* with Dr. Kutscher at Karlsruhe.

used to make broadcasts as if from within India.⁴⁷ Only after most of his immediate demands had been met and relations between the German Government and his Centre had been put on a satisfactory footing did Bose make his first public appearance in Berlin on 26 January 1942, and addressed his countrymen over the radio.⁴⁸

Even so, the Germans, particularly Hitler, refused to make any declaration regarding India's independence. It is very difficult to explain why Hitler was so very shy in publicly committing himself in support of India. Keppler was of the view that Hitler nourished till the end of 1943 the secret hope of a separate peace with Britain—for whom he always had a grudging admiration—and that is why he was reluctant to do anything that might harden British attitude. To Bose's repeated requests Ribbentrop replied in November 1941 that Hitler was unwilling to make any statement which Germany would not be able to carry out in the near future.⁴⁹ Even a secret note of the German Ministry of information, dated 1 March 1942, was as follows: "We shall fight openly for India, but now we do not admit it so openly".⁵⁰ In May the Italians supported Bose's demand that the Free India Centre be accorded the legal status of a provisional government in exile. Japan too supported the above proposal.⁵¹ (In April the Japanese Government had already decided that Bose should be brought over to the east to lead the Indian national movement). But the Germans still refused to agree. So Bose sought an interview with Hitler himself. The meeting took place on 29 May but yielded little result.⁵² (Bose said in private that Hitler had impressed him as the German version of the Fakir of Ipi).⁵³ Naturally, Bose was embittered and frustrated, and began

47. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 199-211-12. Also, Ganpuley, p. 57.

48. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 194-95. Also, statements of Nambiar and Alsdorf.

49. Hirzowich Kukasz, *The Third Reich and the Arab East*, (London, 1946), pp. 211-19.

50. Goebbels' *Diary*, p. 67.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 157. Werth and Harbich, p. 35.

52. Werth and Harbich, p. 36, say the meeting took place on 28 May. Ganpuley, pp. 38, 44. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 209-10.

They all admit that after this meeting Bose's complete autonomy in his Indian affairs and the *de facto* diplomatic status of his organisation were guaranteed.

53. Girija Mookerjee, p. 210.

trying seriously to reach South-East Asia by any means so that he could play a more effective role in the struggle. After the German arms had reverses at Stalingrad and El Alamein towards the end of 1942, Bose lost all hope of a German victory, and was all the more eager to reach the east.⁵⁴ The Germans, however, were not very willing to let go such an influential figure from their country, but ultimately yielded to the importunities of Bose and their Japanese allies. He left Kiel by submarine on 8 February 1943 to reach Sabang in Sumatra on 5 May.⁵⁵

Even after Bose's departure—when A. C. N. Nambiar became the head of the Free India Centre—Indo-German relations remained as cordial as before, and the agreements arrived at earlier were meticulously observed by both the parties till the last month of the War. There was perfect understanding and goodwill between the Indians and Germans at all levels even when the Third Reich was crumbling, and years later they now recall those days with pride and pleasure.⁵⁶ This was possible primarily because—as Bose realised quite early—there were two Germanies. If the Nazi leaders had their own peculiar ideas and ambitions, the average German, including generals and diplomats, shared the expectations and behaviour patterns of their counterparts elsewhere. They respected Bose for his personality and manifold qualities, and found in Indian nationalism an emerging ally. Bose too, like a practical politician, never expected an identity of views and values, and while agreeing to disagree on various points sought to ensure a common effort against the common enemy.

54. *Ibid.*, 202. Also, Werth and Harbich, p. 39.

55. Lebra, pp. 139, 141-42. Also, A. C. Chatterjee, *India's Fight for Freedom*, (Calcutta, 1947), p. 67.

56. Girija Mookerjee, pp. 255-60. A. Seifriz in the preface to Ganpuley's book. Also, statements of Alsdorf, Kutscher and Nambiar.

Sir Henry Cotton (1845-1915)

BY

PRAPHULLADATTA GOSWAMI

I

Sir Henry Cotton was one of those outstanding Civil Service men who left a mark on Indian administration. A graduate of King's College, London, his interests were wide and when he came to India he began showing a grasp of affairs and an observation of political movements in this land that lent him competence to even criticise Government policy in relation to India.

He wrote two books, *New India or India in Transition* (1885) and *Indian and Home Memories* (1911), besides several reports the most important of which being, *Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong* (April 1880), some articles in Indian papers and magazines like *The Bengalee* and *Calcutta Review*, and in England in the *Fortnightly*, edited by John Morley and in other magazines and papers. The article that John Morley accepted (Dec. 1877), was 'Has India Food for its People?' He also co-operated with Sir William Hunter in the preparation of the *Gazetteer of India*.

Cotton appreciated the attitude of Lord Ripon and the latter's attempt to encourage local self-government to withdraw the privilege held by European British subjects of being tried by magistrates of their own race, and to initiate other liberal measures. On the Ilbert Bill issue of 1883-4 Cotton sided with the Indians.¹ His opponents came to describe him as a 'white babu'. A slightly junior contemporary of him said, "I never met a man more enthusiastic for Indians and their cause."² What Cotton has to say on the matter has a ring of prophesy: "The ultimate effect of the insane agitation was to

1. The amendment was originally proposed by Sir Ashley Eden, Lt. Governor of Bengal. The Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by Sir Courtenay Ilbert.

2. Lord Beveridge, *India Called Them*, 1947, p. 392.

give rise to a movement of the widest reaching character and scope which few at that time were able to foresee. The great Indian movement of which we now hear so much and are assuredly destined to hear much more, is due to causes intended to produce a very different effect. The germ of a national organisation on the basis of English education had long existed, but it only sprang to life in the eighties. The Anglo-Indian agitation against Lord Ripon's government, the protests which asserted that 'the only people who have any right to India are the British,' the whole attitude of Englishmen in regard to Indian interests—these things have succeeded far more in advancing the cause of Indian unity than any action or legislation on the lines contemplated by that Viceroy could have accomplished."³

Cotton was a thoroughgoing man. He had already in 1883 delivered a public address to a London audience vindicating the policy of Lord Ripon. This was published in the form of a pamphlet, which later, in 1885, took the shape of *New India*. The book passed through many editions. Let me present a few excerpts from the edition of 1904:

One of the healthiest impulses which can be traced in the Hindoo society is the corresponding change which has come over the masses of the people, who have now learnt to transfer their allegiance to the educated classes as their natural and best representatives. (p. 20)

The Indian Services as a body have no sympathy with the aspirations of the educated portion of the native community. The opposition to all proposals for the enlargement of India's liberties is headed by members of the Civil Service, and the unanimity of opposition is almost as marked among magistrates and judges as it is among planters, merchants, and members of other professions. The dislike to the educated natives of India is shared by all classes of Englishmen. (p. 63)

Cotton notes that Englishmen's dislike is stronger than native dislike and observes:

Those who know the Indians best will be the first to acknowledge the natural affection and gratefulness of their disposition. (p. 63)

3. Cotton: *Indian and Home Memories*, pp. 180-81.

Cotton had the generosity to appreciate with sympathy the discontent from which educated Indians suffered, for he knew that at the root of this discontent were "political disabilities" and "the consciousness of the economic evil which the exploitation of the country by foreign capital and foreign agencies inflict on it." (p. 67)

If he went out of his way to publicise Lord Ripon's policies, he found it hard to appreciate Lord Curzon's opinions and activities. As he writes:

The identification of interests of all classes of Europeans in India has been Lord Curzon's consistent endeavour. To the tea-planters of Assam he said: "I look upon all Englishmen in this country as engaged in different branches of the same great undertaking. Here we are all fellow-countrymen, comrades and friends. The fact that some of us earn our livelihood or discharge our duty by the will of administration, and others by cultivating the resources of the soil, does not differentiate us one from the other. These are merely the subdivisions of labour; they are not distinctions of object or purpose or aim." And again on another occasion in addressing the mine-owners he declared: "My work lies in administration, yours in exploitation; but both are aspects of the same question and of the same duty." There is no word of the obligation of English officials to devote themselves to the duty of championing the cause of their suffering fellow-subjects, or of protecting them from oppression; no word of the duty of the strong to protect the weak. (pp. 55-56)

The Curzon Hall (now Nabinchandra Bardaloi) at Gauhati commemorates Lord Curzon's visit to Assam in March, 1900. In *Indian and Home Memories* Cotton notes with a little bitterness that the Viceroy was not only unwilling to offer some help to this backward province but did not have even the grace to say something consolatory to win the heart of the people. Curzon said in reply to an address: "It is not fair of you to tax the Government of India with neglect; as a fact it has always taken a very great interest in the province; but the true secret of the woes of Assam is the same as that which Mr. Disraeli said was the true secret of the woes of Ireland. He said that Ireland lay under weeping skies surrounded by a melancholy ocean." (pp. 243-244) As pointed out by Cotton, Curzon held the climate of Assam responsible for its failure to prosper! Further, after debiting to

Assam "the prodigious losses which had been incurred by the mistaken alignment of the Assam Bengal Railway, a measure of high policy in which local interests had received a very small share of consideration," the Viceroy charged: "You complain of the want of pecuniary assistance from the Government, but, when I examine the accounts, I find that the annual balance is against Assam." (p. 294).

As Chief Commissioner Cotton meant well by Assam. As he writes in *Indian and Home Memories*:

Nevertheless, although the resources at my disposal were always insufficient, I did something for the good of the province. I point to none of the features of my administration with more satisfaction than to the improvement in jail management....I reduced the number of jail floggings by three-quarters,....and spared no exertion to improve the sanitary conditions of jail life....I reorganised the civil police. I reconstituted both the Assam Commission and the Provincial Service on terms very favourable to their members. I prepared a scheme for the reconstruction of Local Boards. To the encouragement of education I devoted the best of my energies. I regard it as a great honour that my name should be associated with a first-class college which I inaugurated at Gowhatty.... I combated energetically the ravages of *kalaazar* and remedied as far as possible a standing grievance from all parts of Assam known as *begar*, or forced labour. I improved communications, and encouraged both the railway system and river steam companies. In a general scheme for developing the resources of the province, I pressed forward a well-devised system of tramways as feeders to the main line of railway and to the river bank. Metalled roads cannot be maintained on account of the cost, and no earthen road is capable of standing regular wheeled traffic when the rainfall is as heavy as it is in Assam. (pp. 244-245).

The proposal of tramways, which did not materialise, reminds us of a question which Manik Chandra Barooah raised in the Legislative Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam on the matter of a tramway line from Kampur to Silghat in the Nowgong district.

Cotton did a lot for the tea industry with which the progress of Assam was linked up and it was this industry which ultimately forced him to leave this province. Let us first hear what he did for the industry:

I threw open large tracts of country for occupation.... I did my utmost to extend and encourage the local manufacture of tea-boxes. The Surma Valley Tea Association owes its existence to my initiative I spent the public funds liberally in the furtherance of tea interests. I devoted my private funds, to the same object. I gave every encouragement to planters to take up lands for ordinary cultivation in the neighbourhood of their gardens, and granted them leases on very favourable terms for the cultivation of new staples, such as sisal, hemp, rhea, and rubber. I helped them in their endeavours to strike oil and coal and other minerals. I spared no pains to improve conditions of coolie transit from the recruiting districts to Assam, and may boast that I improved them to the immense advantage of the industry. (p. 246)

What made the industry forget his contributions was his interest in the welfare of coolies. At that time the monthly wage of a male labourer was Rs. 5, rising to Rs. 6 in the fourth year, the coolie having been under agreement to work for four years. The Government wanted to raise this miserably inadequate wage and proposed a new Assam Labour and Emigration Bill.^{3a} Cotton was temporarily appointed member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council in addition to his duties as Chief Commissioner for the consideration of the new Bill. In the words of Cotton, "An acute issue had been drawn up between the interests of Capital and Labour. The labourers in Assam are an ignorant and voiceless community, and they had no organ to press their demands there was no labour member to argue the coolies' cause, So I was left to fight the cause of Labour single-handed and alone, and found myself during our discussions in a hopeless minority." (pp. 259-260)

The Bill had proposed to alter the wage rate to Rs. 6 per man throughout the period of the contract. The opposition was such that Lord Curzon quailed and the status quo remained. Cotton "challenged him across the Council Board with the charge that he was stultifying his own policy, and he rejoined that I was exceeding the limits of decorous debate. I forced a division in Council

3a. Surendranath Banerjea had tried to raise the question of the Assam Emigration Act and discuss the grievances of the Assam coolies at the second Congress at Allahabad, but Dadabhai Naoroji persuaded him to drop it since it was 'rather a subject for the discussion of the Bengal Provincial Congress.'—Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 1968, p. 296.

on the question of this postponment (of the new rate, now badly modified) but was supported by only a few Indian members." (p. 261)

Worse was to come. "The scene of battle shifted to the question of the actual condition of the labouring population It was impossible for me to express the conviction that the gravest abuses were prevalent on tea gardens without at the same time substantiating it by the production of evidence I wrote my last Labour Report for 1900. It was a tale of misery and wrong which it was my duty to unfold from my seat in Council and in that Report." (pp. 264-265) Cotton mentions that he had seen with his own eyes a Government hospital full of sickly and dying coolies whose contracts had been cancelled and who had been expelled from their garden. He had seen dead and dying coolies lying in the ditch by the roadside and in the bazaar. He had noticed that the death rate of imported coolies was as high as 84 or 85 per thousand. Further, the relation between the employer and the employee was not only unfair but when there was a case of collision between the planter and the coolie the hand of justice came down heavily on the latter.

At first Curzon himself wrote to Cotton, in 1899, drawing the latter's attention to the many cases of collision. The subject was one which was sure to get the planters' hackles up. Cotton, therefore, replied rather in an evasive manner. "It is to Lord Curzon's credit" that he insisted on a special enquiry for details of every case of collision between planters and coolies. This strengthened the hands of Cotton and he furnished cases in which magistrates had administered justice in a very one-sided manner. But "the floodgates of abuse in the Anglo-Indian Press were opened," and he was attacked with unusual virulence. As he observes, "A section of the [planting] community had set itself up in an attitude of defiance of the Administration because I ventured to expose in fearless terms that everything connected with the industry was not *couleur de thé*." (p. 275)

The worst was that "In the face of a rising storm of unpopularity from his own countrymen, Lord Curzon quailed. In a published letter to the Indian Tea Association on the 5th of February, 1902, he saved his own skin but deliberately flung me to

the wolves." (p. 276) It was now time for Cotton to leave. "I had already received an intimation that the sooner I vacated my appointment the more convenient it would be for the Government of India. I had no desire to make any protest. My health was at the time very much broken, and in case I should have been compelled to seek an interval of rest. So it came about that I applied for and obtained leave from the end of April to the end of October, when my thirty-five years of service would have expired." (p. 277)

When he left, from Assam to Bombay, no provincial Governor was accorded the demonstrations of sympathy and regret that he received. He was given an ovation in Calcutta, and his marble bust was kept in the Town Hall. A replica of this bust, both made by the London sculptor Henry Hugh Armstead, has also been preserved at Cotton College, Gauhati. When Cotton visited India again as Congress President in 1904, he paid a visit to Assam too. "From Calcutta I extended my visit to Assam as far as Gowhatty, where I met with another great ovation from my Indian friends, but marked inattention from my successor [Sir Bamfylde Fuller] in the government of the province, which was reflected by the local subordinate officials. I was left to put up at the public dawkh bungalow." (p. 291)

II

Cotton was born in September, 1845, at Kumbakonam in Madras (Tamil Nadu) and was the fourth of his family to be in India. As he writes in the Preface to the 1904 edition of *New India*, "I have served thirty-five years as a member of the Indian Civil Service. My father and grandfather were members of that service before me for sixty years. My son⁴ is now employed in that service A spirit of devotion to the people of the country is not inconsistent with, and has never obliterated my sense of official duties." (p. vii)

4. Perhaps his second son; his eldest son, H.E.A. Cotton (1868-1939), practised as Barrister in Calcutta during the days of Partition of Bengal; later President of the Bengal Legislature (1922-25); editor of *India*, the London newspaper of the Indian National Congress, 1906-18; Liberal M.P., 1918; knighted in 1925. He received Surendranath Banerjea on the latter's visit to England in 1909.

He came to India in 1867 and had his first appointment at Midnapore as Assistant to the Magistrate. Later he was given charge of the Chuadanga Sub-Division (now in E. Pakistan). He wrote the *Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong* while serving as Magistrate and Collector of Chittagong district (now in E. Pakistan). The separation of Assam from Bengal was definitely settled in 1873; Cotton's name had cropped up as Chief Secretary to Assam's first Chief Commissioner Col. R. H. Keatinge, V. C., but the person finally appointed was one Luttinan-Johnson. Cotton's name occurs again in relation to Assam. In 1896 Sir William Ward, Chief Commissioner of Assam, submitted a scheme for the transfer of the Chittagong Division of Bengal to Assam. There was already a proposal for the transfer of the Lushai Hills to Assam. It was owing to Cotton, who succeeded Ward as Chief Commissioner, after serving for a period as Chief Secretary in Bengal, and who was aware of the strong public reaction to the proposal, that the transfer of Chittagong was stopped. The Lushai Hills, however, were tagged on to Assam.

Sir Surendranath Banerjea appreciated Cotton's role as Chief Secretary of Bengal and valued the latter as a friend and guide. Cotton too was outspoken in his moral support of Banerjea. In 1909, when Banerjea was on a visit to London, Cotton said at a dinner, "if the growth of national feeling in India and of the sense of patriotism and enthusiasm for the motherland was due to any man, that man was Babu Surendranath Banerjea."⁵ It is interesting what a diehard like Valentine Chirol, Director of the Foreign Department of *The Times*, 1899-1912, has to say on the role of Civilians of the kind of Cotton:⁶ "Do not, however, let us throw the blame wholly upon the Congress. For, like Mr. Telang, it has been induced to put its trust in 'the friends amongst the garrison'—Englishmen often of widely different types and characters, like Bradlaugh and Hume [founder of the Indian National Congress] and Webb and Sir William Wedderburn, and in more recent days Sir Henry Cotton and Mr. Mackarness—and upon them must rest no small responsibility for the diversion of many of the best talents and energies of educated India from the thorny path of social reform into the more popular field of political agitation."

5. Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, 1925, p. 269.

6. Sir Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, 1910, pp. 156-157.

Even after retirement Cotton kept his eye on Indian affairs. When the suspicion of Russian intrigue in Lhasa led Curzon to send an expedition to Tibet and when the "pacific mission" on March 30, 1904, mowed down some seven hundred monks and husbandmen at a place called Guru,⁷ Cotton wrote forceful letters in the *Times* criticizing the Tibetan policy of the Viceroy. He points out in his autobiography that it was Curzon's move which ultimately strengthened the hands of China over Tibet.

Cotton got elected as Liberal M.P. from East Nottingham and remained in Parliament from 1906 to 1910. He was at the head of a group of Members known as the Indian group, for they all had been in the Indian Civil Service, men like Sir John Jardine and T. Hart-Davies of Bombay, Donald Smeaton and C. J. O'Donnell of Bengal. These Members put supplementary questions and tried to embarrass John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, whenever Government measures in India became too restrictive or Government policy seemed to be wrongheaded. The news that Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, the latter a youth of twenty-two, had been arrested and deported without charge or trial, was a shock to Cotton and on June 11, 1907 he put the question: Will the right hon. gentleman lay the facts of the case on the Table of the House? Morley replied: I think anything more injudicious, from the point of view of Government of law and order, than that which the hon. gentleman suggests cannot be imagined. (p. 319)

Cotton ruefully observes that in a similar case, when one Cartwright was arbitrarily detained in Capetown, only five years earlier Morely had characterised the action as "the most outrageous and indefensible answer ever given within these walls since Simon de Montfort invented Parliament." But as the charges against Lajpat Rai could not be substantiated, he as well as the youth were released after six months' imprisonment, and the charges originally made in the House of Commons were also deleted by Morley from his published speeches. (pp. 310-320)

7. According to another version, "Over 600 of the 1500 Tibetans were killed. There were no British deaths."—Martin Gilbert, *Servant of India*, 1966, p. 17.

Cotton seemed to have lost his faith in the great Morley's liberalism. One contemporary of his, Sir James Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to Lord Minto, seems to suggest however that the Secretary of State was not quite indifferent to affairs in India and made an attempt to check some of the repressive measures and miscarriage of justice so usual at the time. On August 26, 1908, he wrote to Lord Minto:⁸

If we are not strong enough to prevent murder, then our pharisaic glorification of the stern justice of the British Raj is windy non-sense. And the fundamental question for you and me today is whether the excited Corporal and the Angry Planter are to be the arbiters of our policy On the other hand, is it not idle for us to pretend to the Natives that we wish to understand their sentiment, and satisfy the demands of 'honest reformers', and all the rest of our benignant talk, and yet silently acquiesce in all the rest violent sentences?

It was also at Morley's pressure that Lord Minto accepted the resignation of Sir Bamfylde Fuller, Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, who had started showing preference to Muslims rather tactlessly and "played the fool in many ways."⁹

As it seems, Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton lived a full and useful life. He rendered distinct services to India not merely as an administrator but as one who gave moral support to Sir Surendranath Banerjea, exposed the Divide and Rule principle of the British in partitioning Bengal and inciting religious feud, helped in the amelioration of the abominable conditions in Assam's tea gardens, worked hard for the welfare of Assam, and generally fought for the Indian cause. His name should, I feel, find a niche in the annals of modern India. His two books—*New India* and *Indian and Home Memories* are valuable source material for a study of India's social and political development and deserve reprint.

8. Martin Gilbert, *Servant of India*, 1966, pp. 168-169.

9. *Ibid*, p. 48 and p. 50.

The Panjab and The Indian "Mutiny"

BY

SALAHUDDIN MALIK

The years 1857-59 were certainly a turning point in the history of India; during these fateful years practically the whole of India was convulsed in what has been variously described as the "Great Mutiny," a "social rebellion miscalled a military mutiny,"¹ a "servile war and a sort of jacquerie combined,"² a "patriotic war,"³ a "Muslim rebellion,"⁴ a "national movement in the fullest sense,"⁵ a "Russian intrigue,"⁶ and the like. In certain regions the tremors of the uprising were felt rather severely, while in certain others, their intensity was comparatively lighter. It cannot, however, be denied that the revolt was virtually India-wide and that the British were genuinely alarmed at its extent and were greatly concerned about India, British prestige, and the Empire.

1. Gen. Sir Robert William Gardner, *Military Analysis of the Remote and Proximate Causes of the Indian Rebellion* (2nd. ed., Lond: 1858), p. 34.

2. W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India* (Two Vols.; 7th Thousand; Lond: 1860) I, p. 164.

3. *People's Paper*, July 11, 1857.

4. This was a very widely held opinion. For a greater comprehension of this interpretation, the reader is advised to refer to the author's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: *Mutiny, Revolution Or Muslim Rebellion? British Public Reactions Toward the Indian Crisis of 1857*, McGill, 1966.

In chapters seven and eight of the dissertation, the author has thrown sufficient light on this well-substantiated view of the uprising.

5. *Morning Herald*, cited in the *People's Paper*, Sept. 26, 1857.

6. David Urquhart, [Speech of] Mr. Urquhart in Newcastle, May 27, 1858 (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: 1858), pp. 10-12; Lieut. William A. Aikman, *The Bengal Mutiny* (Lond: 1857), p. 1; *How to Keep India* (Lond: Richardson Bros., 1857), pp. IV-V and 2; "The Mutiny at Delhi," *London Journal and Weekly Record of Literature, Science and Arts*, XXV, 1857, p. 361; *Illustrated London News*, July 3, 1857; L. E. Ruutz Rees, *A Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow* (Lond: 1858), p. 117.

Every effort was made to preserve the integrity of the Empire. From official and private prayers for Divine succour,⁷ public urging for national unity, diversion to India of Canton-bound expeditionary force,⁸ reinforcements from Great Britain, South Africa, Ceylon, Pegu and Mauritius which more than doubled the European army already stationed in India,⁹ military equipment, horses, and financial assistance from all over the Empire,¹⁰ reduction at home in the height for many enlistment to five feet four inches,¹¹ to the unpalatable military help from the Portuguese at Goa,¹² no stone was left unturned and no avenue unexplored which could aid the administration in the quick and effective suppression of the insurrection.

It is believed that at this hour of grave crisis in British history, the Panjab stood aloof from the rebels and helped the English to re-establish their rule in India. If Sir John Lawrence was hailed as the savior of India,¹³ the Panjabis were frequently referred to as

7. The Government of Lord Palmerston appointed Wednesday, October 7, 1857, a working day, as a "Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer." All over Britain, people were urged to go to the churches, humiliate themselves before God, seek forgiveness of their past national sins, and, above all, pray for the safety of their kith and kin and the success of their armies in India. In consequence, throughout the land several services were held in every church, especially the conforming ones, and Divine mercy was passionately and, perhaps, successfully sought.

8. Hansard 3, CXLVII, c. 62 and CXLVIII, cc. 811-12; *Punjab Government Records: Mutiny Reports*, hereafter referred to as PGR: MR, (Lahore: 1911), VIII, pt. I, p. 94.

9. Hansard 3, CXLVIII, cc. 463-64, 811-12, and 873-74, CLI, c. 1182, and CLII, c. 359; PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, pp. 94 and 100.

10. Hansard 3, CXLVIII, cc. 463-64, 705, 811-12, 861, and 874.

11. *The Nation*, Oct. 31, 1857. This was described to be an all time low standard, "one inch below the lowest standard during the Crimean War."

12. Sir G. Le Jacob, *Western India Before and During the Mutinies* (Lond: 1871), pp. 232-36.

13. Many Britons believed that God specifically created Sir John Lawrence to save India for their country. The British Parliament, however, gave a more practical shape to their gratitude to the Chief Commissioner. In recognition of the valuable services rendered by Sir John in the Punjab and India as a whole, the House of Commons passed a vote of thanks to him, raised his salary from £ 7,500 to £ 10,000 a year, and awarded him Grand Cross of Eath. The Court of Directors of the East India Company, on the other hand, settled an annuity of £ 2,000 upon him. Senior, "The Man for India,"

the bulwarks of his efforts. In fact, the loyalty of the Panjabis was often quoted to disprove the view that the uprising was a show of popular disaffection against the colonial government. This, however, does not seem to have been the whole truth—at least this is how it appears from the reports, official and private, of Englishmen of the "mutiny" experience in India. The present research, therefore, attempts to throw light on the situation in the Panjab as analyzed by the British.

The Panjab, its people, and the native regiments stationed in the region were certainly not out of the anti-British schemes of the mutineers, rebels, and patriots of 1857. Every effort was made at all levels to bring the Panjabis into the network of the revolt. Bahādur Shāh, Nānā Sāhib, 'Azīmullāh Khān, and other leaders of the rebellion established contacts with the people of the Panjab, including the Sikhs. William Howard Russel,¹⁴ who successfully established 'Azīmullāh's role in the outbreak, points out that soon after his arrival in India from his travels in England, France, Turkey, and the Crimea, 'Azīm accompanied Nānā Sāhib to the Panjab in order to tamper with the loyalty of sepoy regiments in that province. Russell observes that

...the worthy couple, on the pretence of a pilgrimage to the hills—a Hindu and Mussulman joined in a holy excursion!—visited the military stations all along the main trunk road and went as far as Umballah [Ambala]. It has been suggested that

Letter to *The Spectator*, Dec. 5, 1857; Hansard 3, CXLVIII, c. 814 and CLI, c. 2125; The Rev. W. J. Newman, "Our Mercies in the Past and Our Prospects for the Future," (a sermon preached on May 1, 1859, being the Day of General Thanksgiving for the Success in India), *The Pulpit*, LXXV, 1859, p. 442; *After Deliverance Trial* (a sermon preached on May 1, 1859), (Lond: Ravington, 1859). pp. 5-6; George Crawshay, *Proselytism Destructive of Christianity and Incompatible with Political Dominion. Speech of Mr. Crawshay at the India House on the Vote of an Annuity to Sir John Lawrence* (Lond: 1859), p. 25.

14. The world's first war correspondent and a seasoned journalist, W. H. Russell was the only professional correspondent stationed in India by *The Times* to cover the "mutiny". Before going to India, Russell had earlier covered the Schleswig-Holstein affair, 1850, and the Crimean War, 1854-56, for *The Times*. After the revolt was over, Russell published an authentic two-volume account of the uprising in the form of a diary. His views gained so much acceptance that Routledge, Warne and Co. published 7,000 copies before the end of 1860.

their object in going to Simla was to tamper with the Goorkha [Görkha] regiment stationed in the hills; but that, finding on their arrival at Umballah, a portion of the regiment were in the cantonements, they were able to effect their purpose with these men, and desisted from the proposed journey on the plea of the cold weather.¹⁵

Robert Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner of the Panjab, reports that Muslims of Patna and Thanesar were in correspondence with the 64th N. I. Regiment near Peshawar and urged the unit to revolt against the Government. The anti-British elements at Patna went to the extent of procuring letters from the mothers of several soldiers of the 64th, which impressed upon them the necessity of emulating the deeds performed in Central India. The letters emphasized that the soldiers should resort to such a course of action even at the expense of their lives; that, in doing so, if they died they would be entitled to enter heaven and "their deaths ... would be pleasant news at home."¹⁶ It was further reported that Muslims of Patna were also in correspondence with some Indian Muslims settled in Swat and at Sittana and that the agency employed for such contacts was the 64th itself.¹⁷

In the course of the rebellion, however, Bahādur Shāh made desperate efforts to influence the course of events in the Panjab. It was authoritatively reported that Bahādur sent messenger after messenger to the Rājā of Patiala and tried to convince him of his cause. One of his letters to the Prince of Patiala read in these words:

To him of noble rank and lordly dignity, our own devoted vassal, worthy of our confidence and favour, the union of benevolence and high-mindedness, Nur Inder Singh, Bahadur, the Maharaja of Pattiala.

Dated the 21st Ramzan.

15. W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India*, I, p. 168.

16. [Robert Montgomery and Richard Temple], *Selections from the Public Correspondence of the Administration for the Affairs of the Punjab—Punjab Mutiny Report* (Lahore: 1859), IV, No. I, p. 86. For similar information, see also: The Rev. J. Cave-Brown, *the Punjab and Delhi in 1857*. (Two Vols; Eding and Lond: 1861), I, p. 154; Col. S. Dewe White, *A Complete History of the Indian Mutiny* (Weston-Super-Mare: 1885), p. 52; T. Rice Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (5th ed. rev. and encl., Lond: 1898), p. 324.

17. White, p. 52; Holmes, p. 324, cf. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 60-61.

'My life is passing from my lips; come then, that I may survive; For if I cease to be, what will become of you?'

Of the down fall of this Government, and of the great revolutions in the course of development, which are at the present being bruited about, you have heard from the papers. Relying upon your well-proved devotedness and loyalty towards this our own favour-bestowing family, you are written to, that, with all possible speed, you present yourself at our Court, resembling that of Khusrau, with a suitably-equipped force.

'This matter admits of no delay,
for in this extremity,
There is neither plan of attack
nor way of escape.'

In such straits, therefore, it behoves you, as you desire the increase of our power and our welfare, to obey this summons without delay.¹⁸

At one point, Douglas Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of Ambala, found the emissaries of the King of Delhi in audience with the Rājā of Patiala.¹⁹ Failing with the Rājā, Bahadur turned to his subjects; several seditious letters sent by the "Rebel King" to the people of Patiala were intercepted by the Rājā and forwarded to the British commissioner of the district.²⁰

Proclamations were issued to the sepoy regiments at Lahore and elsewhere in the Panjab ordering them to revolt against the British and join in the common cause at Delhi.²¹ The mutiny and the uprising at Sialkot were described as an immediate result of the arrival of a messenger from Delhi who was said to have come

18. "The Poorbeah Mutiny; The Punjab—No. III," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXXXIII, 1858, p. 601; Cave-Browne, I, pp. 224-25. For similar information, see also: PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, pp. 73-74; Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India* (Two Vols.; Lond: 1897), I, p. 103; Sir Douglas Forsyth, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of*, ed. by Ethel Forsyth (Lond: 1887), pp. 20-21.

19. Roberts, I, p. 103; Forsyth, pp. 20-21.

20. Thomas Frost (ed.), *Complete Narrative of the Mutiny in India, from its Commencement to the Present Time* (Lond: n.d.), p. 11.

21. PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, p. 143.

to remind the 35th Light Infantry and 46th Native Infantry regiments to "fulfil their pledge" made as long ago as January 1857.²² Emissaries of disaffection were also sent to the states of Alwar, Bharatpur, and Jaipur.²³ The far-flung hills of the Panjab were not safe from the agents of Delhi either. Discussing the situation at Kasauli and Sanaur, Frederick Henry Cooper, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, reported:

Before and during these troubles, *faqeers* [Faqirs, meaning beggars, religious mendicants] were everywhere seen about the neighbourhood; and I have since learnt that emissaries from Oude [Awadh] and Delhi were empowered to offer seven rupees per month to anyone willing to enter the service of the respective pretenders to sovereignty. About a hundred *coolies* [Qulis, meaning porters] employed at the [Lawrence] Asylum went off to Oude in consequence, and small drafts of Poorbeas have been continually leaving the hills during the whole period for Oude and Delhi.²⁴

Nearer Delhi Bahādur Shāh issued proclamations to the besieging Sikh regiments calling upon them to "desert from the British army and join the army of Islam." In return he promised to receive them with "open arms" and reward "their devotion . . . by *jagheers* [Jāgirs, meaning land grants]."²⁵

So sure the luckless Emperor seems to have been of the Panjab that earlier he is even said to have written a letter to Robert Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner of the province. In it the *Mughal* sovereign was rumoured to have expressed his deep gratitude to Montgomery for his "excellent" administration of the Panjab on behalf of Delhi. Bahādur further added that since he was now himself "prepared to undertake the necessary arrangements for the future government of India," he could dispense with the services of the commissioner and accord him his "royal permission . . . to retire via Bombay."²⁶

22. "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Punjab—No. V", *Blackwood's*... LXXXIV, 1858, p. p. 31; Cave-Browne, II, p. 60 and 60n.

23. *PGR*: MR, VIII, pt. I, pp. 75 and 244.

24. Fredrick H. Cooper, *The Crisis in the Punjab from the 10th of May until the Fall of Delhi* (Lond: 1858), pp. 117-18.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. cf. Montgomery and Temple, p. 58.

Evidently, these known, unknown, and rumoured efforts of the rebels and mutineers to charm the province of Panjab into their movement failed to achieve satisfactory results. The comparative calm in the province, however, was not as much due to the loyalty of the people to the British as it was due to their greater diversity and the steps taken by the Government.

The unruly spirits and the fighting potential in the Panjab had already been much reduced as a result of the two Sikh wars. The administrative measures which followed the British conquest of the Panjab further tamed the co-religionists of Ranjīt Singh; the province was completely disarmed; non-government fortifications were razed to the ground; manufacture and sale of arms and munitions of war were forbidden; the Khālśa army was disbanded; the estates of powerful nobles were seized and, above all, 8,000 persons were jailed in the very first year of the British administration of the province.²⁷ Steps such as these took the heart out of the Sikh nation; the blows received were too recent and too hard to inspire them to another trial of strength.

Also, in 1857 the Sikhs were a leaderless mass. Many of their leaders had perished in the military upheavels and the two Sikh wars which followed the death of Ranjit Singh. Those living were either prisoners or had converted to Christianity, i.e., Shēr Singh, one of the most popular Sikh leaders, was a prisoner at Calcutta; Dalip Singh embraced Christianity and became a Scottish laird; Tējā Singh who led the Sikh armies at Ferozeshah and Sobraon was a pensioner of the British, and Bikram Singh, Sikh high priest and a lineal descendant of Guru Nānak, "was virtually a prisoner within his own holy city."²⁸ Indeed, the Sikh defeat and pacification were complete. As early as July 31, 1856, an Englishman of Indian experience observed:

27. "India under Dalhousie," *Blackwood's...*, LXXXI, 1856, pp. 239-4; Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (Lond: 1882), p. 67. Referring to the easy compliance of the Sikhs to the steps taken by the Government, Richard Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner for the Punjab, observed, "Upon these sturdy and courageous people the British victories seemed to have acted like a spell."

28. Cave-Browne, I, p. 223 and 233n.

In the strange history of British India I know no fact more strange than this. It is not twelve years since the followers of this faith (Sikhism) formed the dominant military class of a great country and rivaled and almost defeated the British in the field. Yet they have been so utterly subjugated that they have lost not only the hope but also the desire of resistance.²⁹

The condition of Panjabi Muslims was still worse. They had gone through long years of Sikh oppression and were certainly not in a position to actively join the rebels.

More importantly, the Panjab had received the largest share of the European army stationed in India—twelve European regiments for an estimated population of thirteen million heterogeneous people.³⁰ Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Panjab, was pre-eminently fortunate in the choice of his officers. He had gathered around him a group of splendid soldier-administrators and empire-builders, men like John Nicholson, Robert Montgomery, Herbert Edwardes, Donald Macleod, General Reed, Sir Sydney Cotton, Neville Chamberlain, Frederick Henry Cooper, Arthur Roberts, Richard Lawrence, George Ricketts, Douglas Forsyth, George Barnes, Lieut. Col. James Macpherson and so on.³¹ The *Church of England Magazine* affectionately described them as "Christian militants."³² They acted as one man and at once put the entire administrative machinery into active gear; their first care was to secure the native army stationed in the Panjab as well as the Sikh nation and the princely states in the region.

The Lahore administration was lucky to have received timely and advance warnings via telegram of the adverse winds which

29. *Manchester Guardian*, July 31, 1856.

30. *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1857; PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, p. 95; Montgomery and Temple, p. 153.

31. In 1858 Sir John Lawrence wrote to the Secretary of State for India: Had it not been for men like Robert Montgomerie, Herbert Edwardes, Neville Chamberlain, Mr. Frere, the Commissioner of Scinde, George Barnes, Arthur Roberts, George Ricketts and others, we could never have weathered the storm. *Life of Lord Lawrence*, II, pp. 343-43, cited in White, p. 48.

32. "Missionary Records—Punjab, its Loyalty," *Church of England Magazine*, XLIV, 1858, p. 33.

had started to blow in the central provinces. While the sepoys in the Panjab were getting ready to revolt, the administration took them by surprise by its foreknowledge of their intentions. The disarmings which followed took the sting out of a dangerous situation in the province. A slight let-up on the part of the civil and military authorities in the Panjab might well have cost Britain her Indian Empire.³³ In fact, it was discovered that a general revolt of the native regiments stationed in the Panjab was a matter of days and, in some cases, only a few hours.³⁴ Had the sepoys been able to seize the initiative, civilian population would have readily joined them in large numbers, especially the Muslims. As will be shown later on, even the Government was under no illusions about the loyalty of Panjabi Muslims.

Take for instance Peshawar: military and civilian situation at that station was highly menacing. Stringent postal censorship revealed that nearly all the native regiments stationed at Peshawar were disaffected and ready to revolt. Intercepted letters disclosed May 22, 1857, as the day appointed for the uprising. Sepoy preparations were so complete that they had sent their women and children to the city. Elaborate espionage and postal censorship saved the British. A few hours before the sepoys could translate their plans into action they were taken to the parade ground and disarmed in the presence of European artillery.³⁵ To intimidate the disloyal and wavering elements in the Peshawar valley, 523 sepoys were publicly executed during the next few days. Of

33. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 2 and 38-39. In fact, it was a very widely-shared view that the electric telegraph had saved the Punjab and that the latter, in turn, had saved India for Britain.

34. Cave-Browne, I, pp. 92-96 and 120; White, p. 49; Cooper, p. 7; Henry Beveridge, *A Comprehensive History of India, Civil, Military and Social, from the first Landing of the English, to the Suppression of the Sepoy Revolt* (Three Vols.; Lond: 1862), III. p. 573; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 2 and 38-39.

35. Gen. Sir Sydney Cotton, *Nine Years on the North-West Frontier of India* (Lond: 1868), p. 171; "A Few Words from the Khyber," *Blackwood's*... LXXXII, 1857, pp. 607-608; White, p. 52; R. G. Wilberforce, *An Un-Recorded Chapter of the Indian Mutiny, being the Personal Reminiscences of*.... (3rd ed.; Lond: 1895), p. 37.

these 44 were blown from the cannon, 459 were shot by musketry, and 20 were hanged.³⁶

The case of a Havildār at Peshawar further illustrates the grim determination of the sepoys to overthrow the Government. Having been convicted of "seditious correspondence with one of the hill tribes," the Havildār was "sentenced to be blown away." When tied up to the cannon, he was offered his life on the condition that he would turn "Queen's evidence, and give up the names of other traitors in his regiment," but in vain. From the ghastly scene of the execution an Englishman ruefully observed:

Faithless as he has been to us [the British], he was faithful to them [fellow conspirators]; he refused to reveal anything, and met his doom with a firmness worthy of a better cause.³⁷

By June 1857, most of the suspected regiments in the Panjab were either disarmed or disbanded, and —the province was secured as a base of operations against the rebels at Delhi.³⁸

Immediate efforts were also made to inveigle the "former enemies [the Sikhs] to cast in their lot with" the British, "at a time when an excellent opportunity presented itself for asserting their national independence." The credit for retaining the loyalty of Sikhs goes to Sir John Lawrence; but for his tactful handling of the situation, the Sikhs might have risen in revolt against their conquerors. However, the followers of Gūrū Nānak were allowed no time to think. Aided by his Sikh aide-de-camp, Sir John at once prepared a "list of all those Sikh chiefs who had suffered for the rebellion of 1848" and hurriedly addressed personal letters to all of them. The memos urged the Sikh nobility "to retrieve their character and come down at once with their retainers, naming the numbers to be brought by each."³⁹

36. Montgomery and Temple, p. 102; White, p. 57; Crawshaw, p. 19.

37. "A Few Words from the Khyber," *Blackwood's...* LXXXII., 1857, p. 610.

38. *Annual Register*, 18957, pp. 261-52.

39. *Life of Lord Lawrence*, II, p. 97, cited in White, p. 46.

As the Sikh chiefs came accompanied by their attendants, they were organized into cavalry and quickly sent off to Delhi even before they could grasp the situation. The yearning of the vanquished Sikhs for arms, munitions, and horses had become so great during the past years of their deprivation that they were only too glad to have secured "any specimen of the old Sikh cavalry." In their delight at this partial military rehabilitation they forgot to think of their opportunity, and when they did, it was too late to retract. Thus, Lawrence shrewdly denied the Sikh nation its possible leaders in a possible insurrection against the British by pushing their chiefs against the walls of Delhi.⁴⁰ Indeed, this was a master stroke of Sir John's diplomacy.

Simultaneously, steps were also taken to secure the loyalty of the princes in the Panjab and its neighbourhood. To achieve this, Gölāb Singh of Kashmir was "cajoled into active allegiance"; Dōst Muhammad of Afghanistan was "subsidized into quiescence,"⁴¹ and the Nawāb of Bahawalpur was "intimidated into neutrality."⁴² Already kindly disposed, the allegiance of the Sikh ruler of Patiala was easily secured through the "judicious" efforts of Douglas Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of Ambala, and George Barnes, Commissioner and Superintendent of Cis-Sutlej states. In addition to liberally providing the British with men, money, and materials of war, Raja Inder Singh took upon himself the responsibility of "guarding the out-stations, furnishing escorts for convoys of stores, protecting the country, cutting off stragglers, and even in recovering districts which had fallen into the hands of the rebels."⁴³

40. *Ibid.*

41. Cooper, p. 238. For similar information, see also: Cave-Browne, I, p. 151.

42. Cooper, p. 238. Cave-Browne, Chaplain of the Moveable Column in the Panjab described the Nawab of Bahawalpur as "an ally certainly, yet one mistrusted as dangerous and false." Actually, that prince is said to have ordered his troops to occupy Dera Ghazi Khan and then attack Multan, but was desisted from doing so by his Wazir. Cave-Browne, I, p. 122 and 122n.

43. Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny* (Two Vols.; Lond. and New York: [1858-59]), I, p. 127; Cave-Browne, II, p. 124n. The ruler of Patiala furnished the British with eight guns, 2,156 cavalry, 2846 infantry, and 40,000 pounds. Roberts, I, p. 103; Lieut.-Gen. McLeod Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt. A Critical Narrative* (Lond: 1897), p. 85.

The conduct of the ruler of Patiala, in turn, influenced the attitude of minor Sikh chiefs of Jheend, Nabha, Karnal, and Kapurthala, who were easily 'led to cast in their lot heartily with the British."⁴⁴

However, Hindu-Muslim masses, especially the latter, presented a difficult front. Every effort was made to obtain their good will; failing that coercion was used to intimidate them. Suspects were imprisoned *en masse* and were given exemplary punishments. Frederick Henry Cooper, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, wrote that

...no half measures were adopted. Moreover the principle that he who is not for us is against us was strictly followed. There was no pause. Treason and sedition were dogged into the very privacy of the Harem and up to the sacred sanctuaries of mosques and shrines. Learned *Moulvies* [Mawlawis, meaning Muslim priests or learned men] were seized in the midst of a croud of fanatic worshippers, and men of distinction and note were wanted at dead of night. Like sleuthhounds, the district police, on the first scent of treason, egged only by certainty of reward, fastened on the track, and left it not until the astonished intriguer was grounded in his lair.⁴⁵

A highly oppressive act was passed and vigorously enforced to curb the increasing turbulence in the province; Act XIV of 1857 empowered "any two officers sitting in Commission to try and execute any traitor."⁴⁶ Likewise, the police was exhorted to use their arms freely "against anyone found in the act of perpetrating violent crime."⁴⁷

Strict mail censorship was introduced in the Panjab; at "most places the district officers in person opened every post bag, and suppressed suspicious letters, especially those addressed to sepoys."⁴⁸ Licenses to carry fire arms were withdrawn and sale of lead and

44. Innes, p. 85. For similar information, see also; Roberts, I, p. 103; "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Punjab—No. III," Blackwood's.... LXXXIII, 1858, pp. 600-602; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 32-33.

45. Cooper, pp. 24-25.

46. Montgomery and Temple, p. 10.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

48. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 6, 19, 41, 46, and 37.

sulphur were prohibited. Ferries were closely guarded, boats withdrawn, and free movement of people restricted.⁴⁹ Non-military Hindostanis in the Panjab were suspected of disloyalty to the Government; they were either closely watched or expelled from the province.⁵⁰ Above all, a ruthless system of collective responsibility and community punishment was instituted to subdue the province.⁵¹

No stone was left unturned to pacify the Panjab. This is evident from the treatment which the fugitives of the disarmed 26th N.I. Regiment received from Frederick Henry Cooper and the spontaneous approbation with which his barbaric cruelties were affirmed by the Government, especially by John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the province, and Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner. Of the 282 apprehended runaways, 237 were publicly shot in batches of ten each on August 1, 1857. It would be apt to reproduce part of the story in the language of the chief actor himself. He reports:

The climax of the fortunate coincidences seemed to have arrived when it was remembered that the 1st of August was the anniversary of the great Mohammedan sacrificial festival of the *Bukra Eid*. A capital excuse was thus afforded to permit the Hindostanee Mussulman horsemen to return to celebrate it at Umritsar [Amritsar]; while the single Christian unembarrassed by their presence, and aided by the faithful Sikh, might perform a ceremonial sacrifice of a different nature on the same morrow. When that morrow dawned, sentries were placed round the town to prevent the egress of sightseers. The officials were called and they were made aware of the character of the spectacle they were about to witness.

Ten by ten the sepoy were called forth. Their names having been taken down in succession, they were pinioned, linked together, and marched to execution; a firing party being in readiness. Every phase of deportment was manifested by the doomed men, after the sullen firing of the volleys of distant musketry forced the conviction of inevitable death; astonishment, rage, frantic despair, the most stoic calmness. One detachment, as they passed, yelled to the solitary Anglo-Saxon magistrate....that he, the Christian, would meet the same

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 42, 48, 57; Cotton, pp. 163-64; White, p. 52.

50. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 8, 42, 47, 57-58, and 170.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 22.



fate; then as they passed the reserve of the young Sikh, who were to relieve the executioners after a certain period, they danced, though pinioned, insulted the Sikh religion, and called on Gangajee [the sacred Ganges river; sacred to the Hindus] to aid them....

At least one executioner swooned in the performance of this tragic drama. Of the 282, 45 escaped execution; they died of "fright, exhaustion, fatigue, heat, and partial suffocation" in the small bastion in which they were huddled together a few hours before. The bodies of these 282 "martyrs" were, to the boast of Henry Cooper, an important member of the civil and judicial administration, judiciously "consigned in common....into one common pit, by the hands of the village sweepers." Cooper prided in his performance as that of a "single Christian" and a "solitary Anglo-Saxon." The praise was well deserved; he finished in one day what history took one hundred years to enact—successfully avenged Holwell's half-historical Blackhole of Calcutta and Nānā Sāhib's well at Kanpur with the zeal of a religious fanatic.⁵²

Both Lawrence and Montgomery hurried to congratulate Cooper for his heroic performance. The latter jealously called it a "feather" in Cooper's cap as long as he lived and requested him to hound out all other stragglers and send them to Lahore. "You have had slaughter enough. We want a few for the troops here, and also for evidence". The request was faithfully granted; forty-one more fugitives were "gleaned" from the surrounding country and sent to Lahore where they were all blown to pieces along with a severely wounded man who earlier could not walk to the place of execution at Ajnala. Montgomery also requested Cooper to write an official report of his proceedings and list all men who performed their duties honestly:

Do this judiciously. I mean discriminate between the medium, the good and the super-excellent.

Again:

You will have abundant money to reward all, and the (executioners) Sikhs should have a good round sum given to them.⁵³

52. Cooper, pp. 161-67.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

Steps were also taken to suppress the Fourth Estate in the Panjab. On May 23, 1857, strict censorship was imposed upon the native newspapers in Lahore Division. H. E. Perkins, Assist. Commissioner, Lahore, was enjoined to rigorously enforce the restrictions on the press.⁵⁴ At Peshawar the editor of the *Moortizae* was convicted for publishing treasonable matter and his paper was confiscated. Likewise, the publication of another newspaper was stopped at Multan. The editor of *Chesma-i-Feiz* was ordered to remove his head-quarters from Sialkot to Lahore, where his paper, together with two other newspapers of Lahore, "was put under rigid surveillance."⁵⁵

The oppressive steps taken by Sir John Lawrence provoked a strong protest from George Crawshay, a proprietor of the East India Company and Mayor of Gateshead. Crawshay criticized the Chief Commissioner for launching a "Reign of Terror" in the Panjab, matched only by its predecessor in Paris. He strongly opposed the grant of an annuity of 2,000 pounds to Sir John for his success in the Panjab. Crawshay maintained that Robespierre was also successful in France.⁵⁶

British position in the Panjab was also helped by the popularity of a number of English officials among the Sikhs. The humanity of Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir John's brother and predecessor in his office, had won him and his countrymen a good name among a cross section of the Sikhs. Sir Henry's kindness gave them such confidence in the Government that it could not be much impaired by the stern administration of his brother.⁵⁷ The "school of Henry Lawrence" included men like Lt.-Col. Nicholson, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. Nicholson's popularity with Sikhs earned him the place and respect of a saint; his followers lovingly called him "Nikkul Seyn Sā'in"⁵⁸ and even worshipped him.

54. Montgomery and Temple, p. 42.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7 and 83; PGRs MR, VIII. pt. II, pp. 202-203

56. Crawshay, p. 20.

57. Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces of India* (Lond: 1858), pp. 20-37.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32; W. H. Fitchett, *The Tale of the Great Mutiny*. (Lond: 1901), pp. 296 and 324.

Evidently, Nikkul Sa'in was a corruption of Nicholson. Upon analysis, however, the Indianized form of Nicholson's name gives the following meanings.

This enabled Nicholson to render invaluable assistance to his countrymen during the crisis of 1857. Frontier soldiers in the "Mooltanee Horse" joined his ranks out of personal devotion. They asked for no emoluments and accepted nobody at their head except Nicholson. They fought valiantly in front of Delhi and played a highly important role in the reconquest of the city.⁵⁹

Above all, the Panjab was one of the greater hotbeds of religio-political strife in India. This greatly aided the British in their hold upon the province. Even an all-pervading spirit of disaffection against the British was sure to be weakened by the existing politico-military antagonism between the Sikhs and Hindostanis,⁶⁰ and the religio-political antipathy between the Sikhs and the Muslims. More important than these differences, however, is the fact that they were adroitly exploited by the British.⁶¹

a) Nikkul: It is generally used as a corrupt form of the Indian name Nakkul, which means: the fourth son of Pāṇḍu, a son (*Bhargava's Standard Illustrated Dictionary of the Hindi Language, Hindi-English Edition*); name of a people in Maha Bharata; name of a plant, supposed to furnish with an antidote when bitten by a snake (*Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary*).

b) Sā'in: A Darwesh, a holy man, a saintly person, a saint; a beggar.

One wonders if there was any connection between the Indian name of Nicholson and the reverence he received from his followers.

59. Wilberforce, pp. 27-30.

Nicholson was so popular among his followers that when some of them heard of his death in Hazara district, "they came together to lament, and one of them stood forth and said there was no gain from living in a world that no longer had 'Nikalsain.' So he cut his throat deliberately and died. The others, however, reflected that this was not the way to serve their guru; they must learn to worship 'Nikalsain's God' and the entire group actually accepted Christianity on the evidence of Nicholson's personality!" Fitchett, p. 324.

60. Cave-Browne, I, p. 146n; Holmes, p. 311; Sir Orfeur Cavenagh. *Reminiscences of an Indian Official* (Lond.: 1884), p. 208, *The Examiner*, Oct. 17, 1857; *People's Paper*, Sept. 26, 1857, and Jan. 2, 1858.

The following instance would help to indicate the extent to which the Sikhs disliked the Hindustanis. After the 1,500 soldiers of the 33rd N. I. and 35th L. I. regiments had been disarmed at Philor, an old Sikh went to Capt. Farrington and remarked:

You have to-day drawn the fangs of 1500 snakes; truly your *ikhbal* [Iqbal] (good fortune) is great. Cave-Browne, I, p. 303.

61. *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 31, 1857.

The bitterness between the Sikhs and the Muslims dated back to the time of Aurangzēb. It was believed that the head of Gūrū Tēg Bahādur was exposed in Delhi by the orders of that sovereign. Consequently, the Sikhs nursed a grudge against the co-religionists of Aurangzēb and squarely avenged themselves upon their Muslim subjects in the Panjab. However, this does not seem to have fully satisfied them.

In 1857 a prophecy was ripe among the followers of Gūrū Tēg Bahādur that they would attack Delhi with the help of the white man and completely avenge the old insult. The British who seem to have initiated the prophecy were, of course, most willing to gratify their new allies. In order to please the Sikhs, Capt. Hodson's Horse "deliberately shot" and killed two Mughal princes after having promised them safe conduct. Thereafter, he ordered their bodies to be taken into Delhi and put on public display at the same place where the head of Tēg Bahādur was supposed to have been exposed over a century and a half before. After three days Hodson ordered the corpses to be removed for sanitary reasons.⁶²

As expected, the murder of the Mughal princes very much appeased the Sikh "national Nemesis," so observed the Rev. Cave-Browne, Chaplain of the Moveable Column in the Panjab.⁶³ Henceforth, the followers of Tēg Bahādur regarded Capt. Hodson as an "avenger of their martyred Gooroo [Gūrū]" and were more ready than ever before to "follow him anywhere."⁶⁴ No wonder, Sikhs fought valiantly everywhere; they were rightly regarded among the saviours of British India.

The above discussion is apt to give one the impression that the entire province of Panjab was either loyal to the British or was forced into acquiescence. This, however, was not completely the case. It was not true even in the case of the entire Sikh

62. Maj. W. S. R. Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India*, ed. by the Rev. George H. Hodson (2nd. ed.; Lond: 1859), p. 302. For similar information, see also: Cave-Browne, I, p. 296.

63. Cave-Browne, II, p. 194.

64. Hodson, p. 302n.

population. There did exist a sullen discontent among the people, which was sure to overflow the limits of patience had the native army in the province been able to play the political role which its counterpart did in Central India, or, had the province been administered by less competent men like Colvin, Anson, and the like. Though all these factors did not exist and though Panjab did save India, still the picture was certainly not as rosy as many tried to depict. Several sections of the Panjabis, especially Muslims, were highly disaffected. Whenever and wherever an opportunity presented itself they invariably availed themselves of it and did so heartily.

Both the Central and the Panjab governments were deeply concerned about the loyalty of the Muslims in the province.⁶⁵ Long before the uprising of May 10, 1857, the *First Punjab Report* had clearly expressed its fears on the allegiance and continued faithfulness of the followers of Islam. Speaking hopefully of other components of the Panjabi population, the *Report* maintained that

...the pure Mussulman races, descendants of Arab conquerors of Asia, retain much of the ferocity, bigotry, and independence of ancient days. They look upon the Empire as their heritage, and consider themselves as foreigners settled in the land for the purpose of ruling it. They hate every dynasty except their own, and regard the British as the worst because the most powerful of usurpers.⁶⁶

As a result, the Panjab administration took special safety measures in Muslim neighborhoods to prevent possible uprisings, but not always with success.

Frederick Cooper, Deputy Commissioner. Amritsar, reports that the Muslims of Lahore were fully alive to the situation in India and were maintaining a close watch on the activities of the British

65. PGR: MR, VIII, pt I, pp. 61 and 68; Cave-Browne, II, p. 271;

66. *First Punjab Report*, p. 5, cited in "India under Lord Dalhousie," *Blackwood's*.., LXXX, 1856 pp. 254-55. For a similar opinion, see also: Cave-Browne, I, p. 234.

After the suppression of the revolt as well, the Panjab Government declared the outbreak to be essentially of "Hindustanee and Mohammedan origin: the Mohammedans they regarded as the instigators, and Hindoos as the dupes." Cave-Browne, I, p. 271.

officials.⁶⁷ Richard Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner for the Panjab, disclosed that the Muslim priests in Lahore did actually set up a plan to overthrow the Government. In order to achieve their objective they tried to enlist the sympathies of native civil officials. The project included the murder of principal European officials at the station. The killings were expected to enable the army and the people to rise *en masse*.

Seditious meetings were held on religious pretensions; mosques were freely used for political preaching, and the faithful were exhorted "on the duty of rebellion." The situation seems to have gained such an enormity that Temple was forced to take action. He "herded together" all the priests in the courtyard of a principal mosque and warned them that the "Government would not suffer the use of mosques to be perverted for the profane purpose of sedition."⁶⁸

Likewise, at Ferozepore Mawlawis "openly preached a crusade in the bazars" and in the mosques. Their desperate determination was in clear evidence when they publicly tampered with the loyalty of the 45th N. I. Regiment at a time that corps was marching through the city under the watchful eyes of British officers. In this case, city Banyās also joined hands with the Muslim priests. The situation was brought under control with difficulty and after blood was shed.⁶⁹

More trouble was to follow elsewhere in the district; another revolt and a serious one—purely civil—was in the making. The middle of June saw a Hindu Faqīr, Shām Dās, raising the standard of rebellion in the nearby loyal state of Nabha. Before anything could be done by the Government, Shām Dās had rallied around him a following of four to five thousand insurgents. The strength of rebels and their turbulence posed a great threat to

67. Cooper, p. 20.

68. Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (2nd; Thousand; Lond: 1882, p. 158.

69. PGRs MR, VIII, pt. I, p. 117; Cooper, pp. 13-14; Cave-Browne, I, p. 108

the district. A wing of the 10th L. C. Regiment and two guns were rushed in advance. Finally, calm was restored after a strong show of force by Maj. Von Cortlandt; a number of rebels were killed in the encounter and their leader was executed.⁷⁰

Thirty-two miles to the north-east of Lahore, the situation in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar was still worse. Frederick Cooper, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, reports that Muslim rebels operated in the city in the guise of Fakirs. One of them, Nūr Muhammad Khan, came from Delhi to launch what Cooper called a "crusade" against the British. When apprehended, a number of "suits of Fakeers' clothes and disguises" were discovered in his possession for use in emergency. Consequently, emphasized Cooper, the "shops of Elahee and Nubee Bush [Muslim stores], as familiar in India as Moses and Son in England, . . . became arenas of political discussion. The Delhi, Bareilly, and Shahjahanpur massacres were freely discussed, and the necessity of imitation became a matter of commonplace talk." The efforts of these messengers from Delhi were not confined to their co-religionists; attempts were also made to gain the confidence of the Sikhs. They spread the story of cow-bones and instigated the followers of Gūrū Nānak to make it into "a *causus belli*" against the British.⁷¹

Cooper also uncovered a "very desperate" Muslim conspiracy, which included native officials of the district court. The prime objective of the plan was to massacre the entire European population of Amritsar; Cooper was to have been the first victim.⁷² In fact, Amritsar Muslims were so emotion-charged that they also insulted and threatened the native Christians for their complicity with the British.⁷³ Desperate remedies enabled Cooper and his colleagues to subdue the rising turbulence at Amritsar.

70. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 16-17; Cave-Browne, II, pp. 80-81.

71. Cooper, pp. 33-34.

72. "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Punjab—No. IV," *Blackwood's*. . . LXXXIII, 1858, p. 653; Cave-Browne, I, p. 234n. The Rev. Cave-Browne reported that "being purely Mohammedan, the conspiracy 'was disclosed by some Sikhs.'"

73. Sir Joseph Kingsmill, *British Rule and British Christianity in India* (Lond: 1859), p. 69; "The Crisis in India," *Church of England Magazine*, XLIII, p. 196; Cooper, pp. 33-34.

In eastern Panjab, the people of Ludhiana resorted to a novel method. They petitioned the restored monarch at Delhi to rescue them from the tyranny of the British rule.⁷⁴ The entire city of Ludhiana seemed to be disaffected, especially the Muslims. Infused with sense of "fellow feeling," the rebels were led by one Mawlawī 'Abdul Qādir, described by G. Ricketts, Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, as "a most troublesome man." Twice before the actual uprising at Ludhiana, 'Abdul Qādir had "raised the city into a ferment." The arrival of mutineers from Jalandhar on June 9, 1857, set the already tense situation aflame. Headed by Qādir, the rebel citizenry gave a rousing reception to the sepoy and guided them in the task of plunder and devastation. Together, they attacked the houses of the British officials, burnt the mission church, the school house, the library and the book-depot, released the prisoners, and marched off to Delhi.⁷⁵

The "ill-famed and troublesome city" of Ludhiana did not go unpunished; it soon felt the "first stroke of the iron rod with which Mr. G. Ricketts quelled the disturbances in his district, and won for himself the well-deserved reputation." Cooper maintained that the name of Ricketts soon became a byword for "terror" with the people of Ludhiana.⁷⁶ The timely arrival of a body of loyal Sikh soldiers enabled Ricketts to chastise the people of Ludhiana and its suburbs. Door to door search for concealed arms yielded eleven cart-loads of weapons in the city. Consequently, the city and the district were completely disarmed. Heavy fines were imposed upon the inhabitants of Ludhiana and a good number of them had to pay the penalty with their lives.⁷⁷

74. Cooper, p. 41.

75. PGR: MR, VIII, pt. 1, p. 138; The Rev. Mathew A. Sherring, *The Indian Church during the Great Rebellion: An Authentic Narrative of Disasters that befell it; its Sufferings; and Faithfulness unto Death of many of its European and Native Members* (Lond: 1859), pp. 319-20; Holmes, p. 331; Cave-Browne, I, p. 263.

76. Cooper, p. 41. For similar information, see also: Cave-Browne, I, pp. 263-64.

77. Sherring, p. 320; Col. John Chalmers, *Letters Written from India during the Mutiny and Waziri Campaigns* (Eding: 1904), p. 19; Holmes, p. 332; Cave-Browne, I, p. 264; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 21-23; PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, p. 132.

Eighty-two miles north of Lahore, the uprising at Sialkot was long in planning. The Darogha of the city jail worked closely with the 9th Cavalry long before the actual revolt. The domestic servants at the station were mentioned as a "privy to the whole plot." In some cases even fifteen to twenty years service was disregarded.⁷⁸ As soon as the conspiracy came to fruition on July 9, 1857, and the native regiments at Sialkot mutinied, the city and its neighboring areas "emptied their hordes upon the ill-fated" Sialkot cantonement and "left it a complete wreck."⁷⁹ While Col. Farquharson and Capt. Caulfield were offered high salaries if they would consent to lead the mutineers, Brig. Brind, Dr. Gorham, Capt. Bishop, and others were murdered.⁸⁰ The Rev. Hunter and his family were said to have been murdered by "Fanatical" Muslims.⁸¹ Sialkot cooks, on the other hand, attempted to poison an entire regiment loyal to the British. The timely prick to the conscience of one of the accomplices avoided "the wholesale murder." The "renegade" went to Nicholson and informed him of the misdeed; it was soon discovered that the soup contained aconite.⁸³ Finally, it was the patent punishment of fines and a free use of ropes and guns that brought order to this revolt-torn city and the surrounding villages.⁸³

Up in the hills of west Panjab, the position of the British was far from enviable. Muslim tribesmen at Murree hatched a conspiracy with the help of native servants of European household. The combination spread as far as Hazara and Rawalpindi.⁸⁴ "The people of that country [north-western Panjab], who were all Mahomedans, were doubtless ripe for an outbreak. The success of the mutineers at Delhi, and the hopes thereby inspired of restoring

78. PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, p. 226; "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Punjab—No. V," *Blackwood's*., LXXXIV, 1858, p. 34.

79. Cooper, p. 140; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 4 and 51; Cave-Browne, II, pp. 68-69.

80. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 49-50.

81. Sherring, p. 326. The Rev. Cave-Browne, on the other hand, holds that the assassins were Chaprasis (peons). He, however, fails to specify their religion. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 64-65.

82. Wilberforce, p. 91.

83. "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Punjab—No. V" *Blackwood's*., LXXXIV, 1858, p. 34; Montgomery and Temple, p. 52.

84. Cooper, p. 118; Roberts, I, p. 214.

Mahomedan power, had offered irresistible temptation."⁸⁵ The scheme of the conspirators, however, could not be translated into action. Hakīm khān, a personal attendant of Lady Lawrence then residing at Murree, divulged the entire plot. Consequently, when the rebels descended upon Murree, they found the British on their "*qui vive*." Only a few skirmishes assured the leaders of the revolt of the futility of fighting against a technologically superior and highly disciplined enemy. They desisted from an open attack and retired. Two British-trained Hindostani doctors were found deeply involved in the entire conspiracy; they were executed along with several others.⁸⁶

Further away at Peshawar there was every possibility of 50,000 inhabitants of the city and the entire population of Peshawar valley joining in an armed uprising with the army. The situation was so grave that Gen. Sir Sydney Cotton, Commander at Peshawar, observed:

This is a fact worthy of special notice, because it tends to show that the author's position at Peshawar was entirely surrounded by combinations in front, on both flanks, and in the rear, indeed in every direction, requiring the strictest surveillance.

Seditious letters having been intercepted and emissaries detected, a "passport system and a strict system of espionage were adopted at all passages leading into the Peshawar valley."⁸⁷ Extreme vigilance, timely disarming of native regiments, exemplary punishments of the guilty and, above all, the presence of two European regiments and artillery, denied the rebels and mutineers the opportunity to revolt.⁸⁸

One hundred and forty miles south of Lahore, the Muslims of Gogira district revolted and for a while threatened the British fortunes in that quarter. The rebellion started on September 17, 1857 (the third day of the final and successful assault on Delhi), quickly engulfed the important stations of Kamalia, Tolumba,

85. Montgomery and Temple, p. 184.

86. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 224-26; Cooper, p. 118; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 58-59; Roberts, I, pp. 214-15; Innes, pp. 138 and 192.

87. Cotton pp. 163-64. For similar information, see also: White, p. 52.

88. Roberts, I, p. 64; Holmes, p. 323; Cave-Browne, I, pp. 153-54.

Chichawatni, Shorkote, Harappa, and Pakpattan.⁸⁹ Ahmad Khān Khral, the mastermind behind this uprising, was reported to have been in "constant communication with the rebels of Delhi and Hansi, and with the King of Delhi himself." He publicly renounced his allegiance to the British and claimed to fight under the orders of Bahādur Shāh. Other Muslim chiefs listed in the rebellion included several Wattō leaders, Mīr Bahāwal of Fātāna tribe, and Muhammad Khān of Kāthiā clan. Mīr Bahāwal was described as the "greatest among them [the rebels], the bravest, and [the] most influential" person. "In their Mohammedan fanaticism," the rebels sought to restore Muslim supremacy over India.⁹⁰ They killed Lt. Neville as he proceeded down the river Sutlej on his way to Bombay and forced the Government to impose restrictions upon the movement of Europeans along that river. Likewise, regular dispatch of mail between Lahore, Multan, and Bombay had to be suspended.⁹¹

Captain Fraser having been sent to suppress the revolt failed to achieve satisfactory results. Lt. Berkeley, Assist. Commissioner of Gogira, was killed in one of the battles. The strength of the rebels was estimated at several thousands. Muslim women were also sighted in action, "moving along the tops of the houses with their skirts stretched out, so as to cover the matchlockmen as they crept about from point to point."⁹² A much more determined and co-ordinated effort was needed to suppress the revolt. Consequently, reinforcements were rushed from all possible quarters, i.e., Jhang, Leiah, and repeatedly from Lahore and Multan. Still the insurgents held out; even the fall of Delhi failed to discourage them. The town of Kamalia twice changed hands between the patriots and the British. It was not until the month of November (more than six weeks after the fall of Delhi) that the backbone of the revolt was broken. Muhammad Khān, Mīr Bahāwal, and several other lesser

89. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 200-223; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 4-5, 69, and 74; Roberts, I, pp. 214-15; Innes, pp. 138 and 192.

90. Cave-Browne, II, p. 203-204, and 214; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 76-79; PGR: MR, VII, pt. II, pp. 42, 44, and 72.

91. Montgomery and Temple, pp. 4-5, and 69; *The Scotsman*, Oct. 28, 1857; *The Spectator*, Jan. 2, 1858; The Rev. Alexander Duff, *The Indian Rebellion: its Causes and Results in a Series of Letters from...* (Lond: 1858), p. 259.

92. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 204-208; Montgomery and Temple, p. 77.

surrendered to Maj. Hamilton; Ahmad Khān had died in action earlier.⁹³ Complete suppression of the Gogira revolt was followed by swift retribution. Apart from 2,300 heads of cattle and "thousands of sheep and goats" seized toward the end of the revolt, the rebels had to pay 15,000 pounds in property confiscation and 25,000 pounds in fines.⁹⁴

Toward Delhi, the districts of Hariana, Hansi, Hissar, and Sirsa were thoroughly disaffected. In complete sympathy with the rebels and mutineers, the people of these counties of the Panjab "declared for the cause of the King of Delhi," and revolted almost simultaneously.⁹⁵ British authority suffered one of its most serious setbacks in this part of the Panjab. Thousands of Bhatīs and Gūjars joined the standard of rebellion. The name and sight of a Briton was an anathema to the rebels. Consequently, those Europeans who escaped the upheavals at Delhi were most barbarously treated by the people of these districts. Indian Christians who were considered staunch allies of the British were forced to share in their lot with the Europeans. The aversion to British rule grew so strong that the people of Sirsa trespassed the limits of human decency and ravaged the local Christian cemetery. Several engagements and highly repressive measures, including destruction of villages, were needed to bring calm to the area.⁹⁶

93. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 209-223; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 76-78.

The list of following officers who led and supervised the operations against Gogira rebels does, in some measure, indicate the extent of the revolt. It included: Maj. Hamilton, Commissioner of Multan Division; Mr. Robertson, Commissioner of Lahore Division; Mr. R. E. Egerton, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore; Lt.-Col. Paton; Maj. Crawford Chamberlain; Maj. F. W. Voyle; D. C. of Multan; Maj. Jackson; Maj. Marsden; Capt. Balmain; Capt. Hockin; Capt. Tronson; Capt. Cureton; Capt. Fraser; Capt. Denniss; Capt. Snow; Capt. McAndrews; Capt. Black; Lt. Pearse; Lt. Lane; Lt. Chichester; Lt. Elphinstone; Lt. Berkley, Assist. Commissioner of Gogira, and Lt. Mitchels. PGR: MR, VIII, pt. II, pp. 41-789; Montgomery and Temple, pp. 70-80.

94. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 218 and 223n; Montgomery and Temple, p. 79.

95. [Col. George Bruce Malleon], *The Mutiny of the Bengal Army* (London: 1858), p. 197.

96. "The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Puniab—No. IV," *Blackwood's...*, LXXXIII, 1858, pp. 653-54; PGR: MR, VIII, pt. I, pp. 156, 172, and 184; Cooper, pp. 16-17; Cave-Browne, I, p. 227.

The situation in the adjacent districts of Panipat, Rohtak and Karnal was still worse, Panipat occupied a highly important position on the road to Delhi. Every time European or loyal native regiments passed through this city, its dwellers jeered at the British officers and threw stones and bricks at them. Brute force was employed to curb this deep-seated hostility, and the city was disarmed. It seems that the rural population in these districts expressed greater ill-will toward the British than the townspeople. A British soldier deplored the extreme hostility evinced by village people all along his regiment's march from Panipat to Raei. In consequence, a large number of villages were burnt, and their headmen were hanged—seven of them at one place.⁹⁷

The Ambala army went through similar situations on its march from Rohtak to Delhi; the inhabitants of the roadside villages freely expressed their hatred of the British and fired at the soldiers. In this case, the British could not even punish the insurgents: they "did not feel strong enough to enter these villages and demand water, although much in need of it"; therefore there was no question of chastising the rebels.⁹⁸ The situation in the district of Rohtak kept deteriorating and it became difficult to maintain the line of communications with Ambala and Lahore. In July, 1857, Capt. Hughes of the 1st Panjab Cavalry was sent against the rebels. His appearance in the district, however, produced a reverse effect; instead of frightening the turbulent spirits away, it quickly brought thousands of rebels into the field. Repeated encounters were fought, and the city of Rohtak changed hands a number of times. The rebels suffered heavy casualties, but it was not until late August that calm was restored in the district.⁹⁹

Muslim princes in the Panjab fully shared the general antipathy toward the British. The Nawāb of Jhajjar, whose house was a creation of the British and who was regarded as an "avowed friend of the English Government," presented himself at Delhi on May 11,

97. "The First Bengal European Fusilers in the Delhi Campaign." Blackwood's....., LXXXIII, 1858, p. 122; Col. Thomas N. Walker, *Through the Mutiny: Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Active Service and Sport in India* (Lond: 1907), p. 33; *The Press*, Aug. 89, 1857; *The Spectator*, Aug. 8, 1857.

98. Walker, p. 40.

99. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 142-48.

1857, and offered his allegiance to Bahādur Shāh. He is not only said to have taken his seat beside the Mughal Emperor and made offerings to him, but is also reported to have "sent his troops into the city to fight the English." Likewise, the nawābs of Dadree and Runeea were found deeply involved on the side of the rebels. In line with the British tradition, all three of them had to pay the penalty with their lives.¹⁰⁰

Thus, large parts of the Panjab were either seething with a spirit of discontent or were in actual revolt against the British. The situation became more and more tense every day. The ability of Delhi to withstand the British siege for such a long time prompted second thoughts among many loyal Panjabis. Even non-Muslims began to show a spirit of increasing restlessness and the most faithfully disposed started to question, speculate and waver. Toward the end of July, Rām Parshād, described as an old Hindu priest at Lahore and a man reputed for his sanctity, wealth, and understanding of the British, wrote a highly seditious letter to the chief priest of Patiala. In his letter Rām Parshād urged his counterpart in the Sikh State "to use all his influence to alienate his chief from the 'unclean cow-slaying English'." The letter emphasized that "every hill raja and rana were ready to rise and looked only to their liege lord [the Prince of Patiala] for the signal." Fortunately for the British, the letter was intercepted at Ambala post-office and forwarded to George Barnes, Commissioner of Cis-Sutlej States. While Rām Parshād was at once seized, "brought down to Umballa, tried, convicted, and hanged," the British also took immediate measures to reassure themselves of the loyalty of Patiala and other princes.¹⁰¹

Partāp Singh, the pretender to the throne of Kulu, and Nahur Singh, Rājā of Ballabgarh, however, actually took to

100. Cave-Browne, I, pp. 226-27, and II, pp. 232-36 and 274-75; Montgomery and Temple, p. 17. Nur Samad Khan, Nawab of Runeea, declared for the King of Delhi and proclaimed himself as his governor of Sirsa.

Ahmad Ali Khan, Nawab of Karnal, seems to have been the only Muslim prince in the Panjab who remained loyal to the British. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 142-43 and 143n.

101. Cave-Browne, II, pp. 96-97 and 97n.

the field. Quite naturally, both of them were sentenced to be hanged.¹⁰²

As a matter of fact, it was discovered that a Sikh insurrection was being discussed and inquiries were being made "for leaders to take advantage of this opportunity. But none could be found. They were at Delhi...." Several intercepted letters of Sikh chiefs, who had earlier committed themselves on the side of the British at the manoeuvring of Sir John Lawrence, revealed that they were painfully conscious of the "mistake they had made."¹⁰³ Thus, it is not surprising when one reads about the growing Sikh consciousness of the value of their help to the Government and the consequent insubordination of Sikh soldiers in the British army. They openly discussed their misfortune in not having a capable leader to lead them against the British.¹⁰⁴

Indeed, the bond of Sikh loyalty to the British was far from durable. The curious fact is that the first man hanged for sedition in the Panjab was a Sikh civilian at Raupur in the district of Ambala. Many people in the very loyal state of Patiala opposed the pro-British policies pursued by its prince.¹⁰⁵ To be sure, it was the Sikh hatred of the Muslims and the Hindustanis rather than affection for the British, their conviction in the military superiority of the British and, above all, their love of plunder which had taken them to Delhi and elsewhere. The memory of their decade old defeats by the British assured them that this time too their own victors were going to carry the day; the Sikhs certainly wanted to join the winning side. The Rev. J. E. W. Rotton, chaplain of the besieging army at Delhi, observed that the Sikhs "were willing to serve... [the English], as long as they could serve themselves at the same time."¹⁰⁶

102. 'The Poorbeah Mutiny: The Panjab—No. V,' *Blackwood's*, LXXXIV, 1858, pp. 40-41; Cave-Browne, I, pp. 304-308, and II, pp. 235-36.

103. *Life of Lord Lawrence*, II, p. 97, cited in White, p. 46.

104. Col. Francis Cornwallis Maude, *Memories of the Mutiny* (Two Vols.; Lond: 1894), I, p. 31; *The Future of India* (Lond: L. Booth, 1859, pp. 7-8.

105. Forsyth, p. 31; Russell, II, p. 252; Roberts, I, p. 103.

106. The Rev. J. E. W. Rotton, *The Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi* (Lond: 1858) pp. 224-25; Maude, I, p. 31; *Peoples's Paper*, Jan. 2, 1858.

Under these circumstances, it was genuinely felt in the official circles that a persistent stand by Delhi was sure to erode the remaining loyalty of the thus-far loyal civilian population and, above all, of the Panjabi regiments.¹⁰⁷ Already, continued British failure at Delhi had consumed much of the Sikh loyalty.¹⁰⁸ Capt. Hodson observed before Delhi:

If we fail here at Delhi, not a soul in the Punjab or Upper Provinces would be safe for a day.¹⁰⁹

During the month preceding the recapture of Delhi several unseemly signs "had manifested themselves in the Punjab"—manifestations which were sure to multiply every week and every day Delhi remained untaken. Immediate reduction of Delhi was, therefore, felt to be the most pressing need of the hour; that alone could restore the shaky confidence of the staggering elements in the land of five rivers.¹¹⁰

Consequently, Sir John Lawrence never lost any "opportunity of impressing upon General Wilson the danger of the impromptitude in action and the absolute necessity for immediately striking a decisive blow" against Delhi.¹¹¹ The situation seems to have become so desperate that the Chief Commissioner gave 20th September as a warning date for reducing Delhi; failing that, he cautioned, he would not be able to hold Panjab.¹¹² To achieve this Lawrence took every conceivable step in his power. He set up a military base for the siege of Delhi at Ambala—a distance of one hundred miles—and kept vigilant watch over this important line of communications.¹¹³ He denuded the Panjab of as much of native and European army as possible and sent practically every loyal native soldier under the walls of Delhi.¹¹⁴ If needed, he was even prepared

* 107. This was a very widely-held opinion.

108. For detailed information on the feelings of the Sikh community, read: Cave-Browne, II, pp. 127-29.

109. Hodson, p. 224.

110. Temple, (Lond: Second Thousand, 1882), p. 147. For similar information, see also: Rotton, p. 222; Cave-Browne, II, p. 97.

111. Rotton, p. 222.

112. Wilberforce, p. 206.

113. Fitchett, p. 270.

114. Temple, (Lond: Second Thousand, 1882), p. 147; Fitchett, p. 270; Cave-Browne, II, p. 130.

to surrender Peshawar to Dōst Muhammad of Kaul "in order to ensure the capture of the imperial city."¹¹⁵ As late as July 24, 1857, Sir John wrote to Herbert Edwardes, Commissioner of Peshawar Division:

If matters do not prosper, if more aid be required and Government leave the matter with me, I will recall all the troops from Kohat and send every man we can spare, which be the greater part of the Europeans and all the Punjaubis to Delhi.¹¹⁶

In short, just about the time when the Panjab was getting ready to rise, a singular event in the history of the Indian "mutiny" changed the whole trend of events in that province. Delhi fell on Sunday, September 20, 1857, and took the teeth out of growing opposition in the Panjab. The fall of this metropolitan city of Mughal India was announced with a "royal salute...fired at all principal stations in the Punjab"; the capture of Delhi made Panjab safe for the British.¹¹⁷

From the above discussion it is obvious that the Panjab was not as loyal to the British as it is often depicted. It has been fashionable among the British and the people of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent to refer to the Panjab as a faithful British pocket, the one doing so with a sense of joy, satisfaction, and achievement, and the other with a feeling of dismay, disdain, and injured pride. The facts, however, are contrary to such a belief, based as it seems to be on, (a) an inadequate knowledge of the situation in the Panjab from June to November 1857, and (b) upon official bulletins issued by the Government of Sir John Lawrence, bulletins like, "The Punjab perfectly quiet," "All well in the Punjab,"¹¹⁸ calculated to nourish the weakening British authority in India, especially in the Panjab, and also to discourage further uprisings.

115. White, p. 45. For similar information, see also: Fitchett, p. 271; Cave-Browne, II, p. 45.

116. *Life of Lord Lawrence*, II, p. 153, quoted by White, pp. 45-46.

117. Cave-Browne, II, p. 199.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 47. The Rev. Cave-Browne maintained that these bulletins "told only half the truth; and perhaps less.

Just because the Panjab supplied men, money, and materials—the much needed sinews of war—to the British does not mean that this represented the sentiments of the Panjabis as a whole. The pro-British leanings of Sikh princes were not even shared by their civil and military populations, still less by the general mass of people in the rest of Panjab. The scattered uprisings in the districts of Panipat, Rohtak, Hissar, Hansi, Sirsa, Hariana, Ludhiana, Sialkot, Ferozepore, Murree and Gogira, and sullen discontent at Lahore, Amritsar, and elsewhere, strongly refute the myth of popular support received by the British in the Panjab during the revolt.

The critical nature of the situation in the province conspicuously stands out by the fact that even the absence of leaders, of finances, of arms and munitions proper means of communications, the presence in the province of an artillery-equipped large European army and, above all unleashing of a "Reign of Terror" by the administration of Sir John Lawrence, one and all proved insufficient to curb the anti-British sentiments of Panjabis. Whenever and wherever possible, the people of the Panjab successfully defied authority and did so in the face of condign punishments. In this situation, had Delhi been able to withstand the siege for another month or so, the history of India might have been written differently. There would have been revolts everywhere in the Panjab; the majority of Muslims would have been up in arms. There was a strong possibility as well of the Sikhs withdrawing their support of the British and throwing their weight behind the insurgents. The widow of Ranjīt Singh was already said to be fomenting strife "among the Punjabi troops quartered in Oudh and the Sikhs in the Punjab itself."¹¹⁹ Earlier, the Ludhiana Sikh corps had defected to the rebels.¹²⁰

At such a juncture, the fall of Delhi on 20th September was highly untimely; it broke the backbone of the growing opposition to the British in the Panjab. If the rebels in the province were discouraged, the wavering elements at once hurried to reaffirm

119. Temple (Lond: Second Thousand, 1882), p. 150.

120. Maude, I, p. 31.



their loyalty to the Government. The worst wound, however, was inflicted by Bahādur Shāh when he and his family surrendered to Capt. Hodson. The last representative of the House of Timūr was a prisoner in the hands of the British. All hopes of a Mughal revival suddenly vanished. For some time the Gogira rebels tried to keep the spark alive but to no purpose; within the next two months they threw down their arms and surrendered to the British. In the end, it would be appropriate to say that it was Sir John Lawrence and his team who secured the fall of Delhi; the fall of Delhi, in turn, preserved the Panjab for the British.

Sir William Wedderburn—A Towering Congressman in England during 1885-1900

BY

HARISH P. KAUSHIK

The history of the Indian National movement is studded with some precious jewels still hidden and uncared for. Sir William Wedderburn is one among the personalities whose services and dedication to India's cause are little known. Retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1887, this liberal-minded Englishman was equally concerned about the political unrest in India. Like Allan Octavian Hume, he too desired that the history of 1857 should not be repeated.¹ Therefore he shared the efforts of Hume, and helped him in forming the Indian National Congress in 1885. He supported the Indian national movement initiated by the Congress, and worked for it wholeheartedly. He was elected the President of this national body for two sessions i.e. 1889 and 1910. As an active worker of the Indian National Congress, he identified himself with the Indian struggle for freedom from British rule. This British liberal leader championed the Indian cause, and pleaded for its fulfilment till the close of his eventful life in 1918.

However, much of his work for India's cause was carried on in England rather than in India. The early Congressmen were of the view that if the British Parliament and the British people were acquainted properly with the Indian affairs and aspirations, the Indian problems would be solved. It was further considered that England was the real seat of power,² and Indian agitation by the Congress would be carried on free from the atmosphere of doubts and suspicion of the British. The only way to get

1. Gupta, D. C.: *Indian National Movement* (Delhi, 1970) p. 34.

2. Vide, *Report of the Indian National Congress*, 6th session Calcutta, 1890, p. 65: Speech of Narendranath Sen.

them heard in sympathy, therefore, lay in pressing the British nation for their demands. With this object the Congress established its regular branch in London popularly known as the British Congress Committee.³ Sir William Wedderburn was appointed its first Chairman, and he retained this office till his death.⁴ The other members of the Committee were William Digby (Secretary), W. S. Caine, M.P., J. E. Ellis, M.P., W. S. Bright, Mc Laren, M.P., Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerjee, C. E. Schwann, M.P., A. O. Hume, Herbert Roberts, M.P. and several other British publicmen and members of Parliament.

This Committee was to keep the Congress in India informed of Indian affairs in England, and to advise about the policies that required to be formulated, and the measures that ought to be taken. Moreover it was to carry on propaganda in England to advance India politically. At first the British Committee maintained correspondence with the Indian Congress leaders. Members of this Committee visited India and presided over or attended the sessions of the Indian National Congress.⁵ The second object was served by a war of the Committee for Indian reforms on three major fronts—Parliament, Platform and the Press. Interchange of British and Indian leaders was also considered to be one of the various methods to get the demands fulfilled. To maintain this British work, the Indian National Congress contributed a sum of nearly half a lakh of rupees each year.⁶ Sir Wedderburn along with other patriots like Dadabhai Naoroji and A. O. Hume maintained the expenses of the Committee out of his pocket. He handed over every year his whole

3. Vide, *Minutes of the British Congress Committee*, July 27, 1889 (Volume June 1889-October 1890).

4. Dr. Garisan Brown Clark was member of the British Congress Committee since its inception and succeeded Wedderburn as Chairman in 1918. He continued in the post till the Committee was officially closed down in 1920.

5. Among notables included Charles Bradlaugh, W. S. Caine, C. E. Schwann, G. B. Clark, Samuel Smith, Keir Hardie, H. W. Nevins and many others.

6. Vide, *Department of Home* (Public—A) Progs. 272-75 of January 1890—Congress Resolution XIII (f). Rs. 40,000 in 1890 & 91, from 1893 to 1898 the grant amounted to Rs. 68,000 per year, Rs. 58,000 in 1899 but the grant was reduced in the successive years. It was Rs. 30,000 in 1900, Rs. 10,500 in 1903 & £ 700 in 1904.

pension of £1000 a year towards the amount spent in England for Congress propaganda.

The object in establishing the London branch of the Congress was the desire of early Congressmen for enlightening and educating the British public on Indian issues. (The Congress also wanted to place the Indian view of Indian affairs before the British people.⁷ The British Committee was, therefore, called upon to impress on the English people the need for redressing grievances and solving Indian problems. In order to achieve this object, the Committee adopted persuasive methods and constitutional means of propaganda which it regularly carried on through various ways, namely, public speeches, *India* journal, Indian Parliamentary Committee and personal contacts. Sir William was entrusted by the Indian National Congress with the important task of carrying on British propaganda in favour of Indian nationalist movement. Indeed he was the spokesman of the Congress in the British Parliament for seven years.⁸ The work of the British Congress Committee was entirely in his charge. As Chairman of this Committee he threw himself heart and soul to advocate the Indian cause in England. Soon after the establishment of the British Congress Committee, a journal known as *India* was started.⁹ This paper was the media through which the British public opinion was mobilised in favour of Indian demands. It was distributed free of charge to political associations and to the members of Parliament for their support. The paper became very popular within a short time, and it attracted the attention of the British officials. In connection with the Congress propaganda in England, and in order to further disarm the critics of the Congress, the fifth Congress session held in 1889 at Bombay elected Wedderburn its President.¹⁰

7. *Gokhale Papers*, File No. 579 Pt. IV: Douglas Hall to Gokhale October 1, 1912.

8. Singh, Hira Lal, *Problems and Policies of the British in India* (1885-1898), Bombay 1963, p. 222.

9. First it appeared as monthly, but on Jan. 7, 1898 it became a weekly paper and continued to be as such upto the end of 1920. It was edited by eminent and influential persons having intimate knowledge of India and her problems. Its first paid Editor was William Digby.

10. Argov, Daniel, *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement* (1883-1920), Bombay, 1967, p. 42.

Referring to the prospects of the Congress in England he affirmed that the success of the Congress depended solely upon the degree to which the British public would be induced to exert their influence on Indian affairs.¹¹

From time to time the Congress deputed able, trustworthy and prominent personalities to place India's case before the British people and convince them of their demands. Among those included Surendranath Banerjea, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozshah Mehta, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhupendranath Basu and many others. These delegates delivered a series of lectures, met the British Press, and held interviews with prominent English statesmen and other political leaders. They also addressed several social gatherings. Although these engagements were organised by the British Congress Committee, yet Wedderburn was the moving spirit, and played a vital role in making these a success. He introduced them to the British public, and even participated actively in the deliberations. For instance he spoke at Forster's Hall, Clerkenwell Road, London in April, 1890. He advocated India's case: "I plead for my voiceless countrymen.....for liberty and justice, and if these words have any importance, any weight, any significance among Christian people, I am sure, I shall not have pleaded in vain....."¹² At all such gatherings subjects like Indianisation of Civil services, reforms of the Indian Councils, economic condition of India and other relevant matters relating to India's prosperity were discussed.

In 1892 Sir William Wedderburn and Dadabhai Naoroji were elected to the House of Commons representing Bamfshshire and Central Finsbury constituencies respectively. Thus they joined our British supporters in Parliament like John Bright, W. S. Caine, Samuel Smith, Sir C. E. Schwann and Herbert Paul. It added strength to the Indian agitation in British Parliament. Inspired by the results arising from the efforts of British liberals in furthering India's cause in the Parliament, William Wedderburn arranged a dinner party for a few leading independent members of Parliament. On this occasion he opened a discussion in which Indian

11. Vide, *Report of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay, 1889), p. 8.

12. Vide, *India*, April 25, 1890, p. 89.L

affairs were the main plank. It led to moving a resolution for the revival of a Committee for the purpose 'of promoting combined and well-directed action among those interested in Indian affairs.' The result of this discussion was the formation of an Indian Parliamentary Committee to look after the Indian interests in the Parliament. It came into existence on July 27, 1893 and it included several British liberals and radicals.¹³ William Wedderburn became its chairman. Due to his continued and persistent efforts the strength of this Committee rose to 152 members in 1894.¹⁴ As an active member of this Committee he justified the Congress organization which was giving the best expression to the Indian public opinion, and demanded the immediate action of the British Government in regard to India's prosperity. Appealing to the House he remarked: "If we could find out a way of making the whole India prosperous and contented, we had the clue to making the whole India prosperous and contented."¹⁵

He used every opportunity in bringing to the notice of the Parliament the evils of British administration, and advocated the Congress demands for reforms. He also spoke about the poor economic condition of Indian people due to the outbreak of severe famines at the close of the 19th century, and heavy taxes imposed on them.¹⁶ As a result of keen interest in the economic problems and their solution, the Indian Parliamentary Committee wanted an inquiry into the Civil and Military administration involving distinctive principles. Dadabhai persisted in the demand and asked to appoint a Royal Commission for the matter.¹⁷ William Wedderburn went on justifying the demand which was the 'most urgent' and much-needed. He affirmed: "We ask simply for an inde-

13. Notably among those were W. S. Caine, J. Ellis, John Bright, W. A. Hunter, Sir Illingworth, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mc Laren, Joseph Pease, T. H. Roberts, C. E. Schwann, Samuel Smith, Herbert Paul, E. Wasan and Dadabhai Naoroji.

14. But in 1895 the number reduced to 85 as a large number of members suffered defeat at the general elections. In 1896 some new members joined it, and its total strength rose to 125.

15. *Parliamentary Debates* (House of Commons) September 21, 1893, 1810.

16. *Ibid.*, 20-9-1893, 1770-71.

17. *Ibid.*

pendent inquiry in order to learn the true state, and in order to do justice."¹⁸

On 6th of July 1894 he addressed a letter to Sir H. H. Fowler—the then Secretary of State for India—which accompanied a note on Mr. Westland's Budget for 1894-95. This led to a debate in Parliament for the conduct of an independent inquiry.¹⁹ Along with his colleagues Dadabhai, Herbert Paul and Samuel Smith, he participated in the debate actively and urged for an inquiry in order to have a proper and effective control over the English officials in India. He even warned of the forthcoming danger arising from 'neglecting to hear the grievances of the people'.²⁰ On this significant issue he was successful in obtaining vigorous support of English friends. The result of the demand for the Parliamentary inquiry was significant and a brilliant discussion followed. In spite of differences of opinion and conflicts, the debate was carried on in good spirits. The participating members like Smith, Paul, Coble, Chesney, Reay, Temple, Fowler, Dadabhai and Wedderburn spoke convincingly. Finally, a Commission was appointed by Royal Warrant dated May 24, 1895 'to inquire into the administration and management of the Military and Civil Expenditure in India, and the apportionment of the cost of administration between the British and Indian Governments'.²¹

Sir Wedderburn had the privilege to sit on the Commission as one of the members. In that capacity too his performance was excellent when he placed before the Commission the Indian view on Indian questions.²² The other members of the Commission were W. S. Caine, and Dadabhai Naoroji. As the Commission was not scheduled to visit India, public bodies of the country (India) were invited to send their representatives to England in order to place their views before the Commission.²³ William Wedderburn,

18. *Ibid*, 21-9-1893, 1803.

19. *Vide India*, August, 1894, pp. 236-37.

20. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 15-8-1894, 128-33.

21. *Parliamentary Papers* (House of Commons), 151, 1897, C 8252: Expenditure Commission Vol. I First Report of the Royal Commission with Minutes.

22. Patwardhan, R. P. & Ambekar, D.V., *The Speeches And Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, (Bombay 1962), p. 522.

23. S. N. Banerjee, D. E. Wacha, G. K. Gokhale G. S. Aiyer and K. N. Bahadurji were the Indian witnesses,

apart from their engagements in the Commission, took the Indian witnesses to the political world of England. He utilised their presence in England to the maximum, and organised a political propaganda on behalf of the Congress. These Indian delegates gave interviews to the representatives of the London Press on Indian affairs and addressed a number of public meetings in different parts of the Country. Gokhale left a great impression on the English people. The time of the year was not favourable as India was facing a disastrous famine affecting millions of Indian people and a large area of British India. The Government did not fully realise the nature and magnitude of the calamity arising from the famine, nor did it perform its duty properly in doing anything for the relief. Wedderburn, in collaboration with Dadabhai, and other members of the British Congress Committee founded the Lord Mayor's Fund for famine relief.

No less important than immediate relief was the problem of focussing the attention of Parliament on the basic economic issues of India, of breaking through the spell of official optimism to underline the terrible poverty, which made it difficult, rather impossible for the poverty-stricken peasantry to withstand the possible effect of a single failure of harvest.²⁴ The expenditure on relief work too was to come from Indian people which meant further increase in taxation. Wedderburn raised his voice aloud in the Parliament, and explained the nature and effect to the economic policy. He asked the members of Parliament to take notice of the sufferings of the Indian masses, and to take steps to remedy the sufferings and to restore peace and prosperity. He said: "The fact is that the people of India have during the past year suffered from almost every possible calamity—famine, plague, war and earthquakes and those sufferings have been aggravated by the very measures taken for their relief."²⁵ Not only this, he also drew the attention of the then Secretary of State for India, George Hamilton, to the serious question which faced Indian administration, and insisted on establishing more harmonious relations between the authorities and the Indian public.²⁶

24. *Parliamentary Debates* (House of Commons) 26-1-1897, 518.

25. *Ibid.*, 17-2-1898, 990.

26. Wedderburn to Hamilton Oct. 19, 1900: Hamilton Collection Microfilm Reel 2, Vol. I/II.

Between 1885-1900 the British agency of the Congress concentrated its activities more on economic issues. However, William Wedderburn as a Parliamentarian and as the chief spokes-man of the Indian National Congress spoke on every subject relating to India and her people, and cautioned the British Government against neglecting the welfare of Indian masses for imperial interests. He always made loud protests to the British authorities against the injustice done to India and pleaded for the political advancement of India. As an advocate of the Congress, he placed the Congress' views and demands before the British nation, and endeavoured to change the political climate of England in India's favour.

No less important than immediate relief was the problem of focusing the attention of Parliament on the basic economic issues of India, of breaking through the spell of official optimism to underline the terrible poverty which made it difficult, rather impossible for the poverty-stricken peasantry to withstand the possible effect of a single failure of harvest. The expenditure on relief work too was to come from Indian people which meant further increase in taxation. Wedderburn raised his voice aloud in the Parliament and explained the nature and effect to the economy of India. He asked the members of Parliament to take notice of the sufferings of the Indian masses and to take steps to remedy them and to restore peace and prosperity. He said, "The fact is that the people of India have during the past year suffered almost every possible calamity—famine, plague, war, earthquakes and those sufferings have been aggravated by the very measures taken for their relief." Not only this he also drew the attention of the then Secretary of State for India, George Hamilton, to the serious question which faced Indian administration and insisted on establishing more harmonious relations between the authorities and the Indian public.

51. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 20-1-1897, 518.

52. Ibid. 17-2-1897, 890.

53. Wedderburn to Hamilton Oct. 19, 1900. Hamilton Collection, Madras.

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The Deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai

BY

PARDAMAN SINGH

The deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, the well known and popular leader of the Indian National Congress, in 1907 was an event of great significance. The aim of this brief paper is to analyse the circumstances which led to his deportation.¹

There was "unrest" in Punjab during 1906-07; "new air" (naya hawa) was blowing in men's minds. The national movement had secured considerable strength and appeal in Punjab. The Indian National Congress had held its session at Lahore twice within a decade (1893 and 1900). The teachings of Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, had received wide popularity throughout the province. They fostered pride in the country and its past, and were responsible for awakening. Later, the partition agitation and the *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal also influenced Punjab. But the chief factor in the growing unrest was agrarian grievances. Enhanced land revenue² and water-rates contributed to the prevailing discontent. The passing of the Colonisation of Government Lands Bill added fuel to the fire. The Bill aimed at stopping further fragmentation of land holdings in the Chenab Colony—mostly inhabited by ex-soldiers—by introducing the law of primogeniture. There was great resentment against the measure; people regarded it as unjustified interference in their traditional rights relating to the division of property. A large number of protest meetings was held throughout the Punjab. Some of the meetings were addressed by Lala Lajpat Rai and S. Ajit Singh. It was strongly opposed in

1. Based on a study of the private papers of Minto, the Governor-General, and Morley, the Secretary of State for India.

2. The districts in which new land revenue assessment was sanctioned since the beginning of 1904 were: Attock, increase 28 per cent; Jhang, increase 48 per cent; Rawalpindi, increase 25 per cent; the Hafizabad Tehsil in the Gujranwala district, increase 71 per cent—Telegram, 13 May 1907, Viceroy to Secretary of State *Minto Papers*.

the Punjab legislative council and was rushed through its last stages.

The discontent it caused was, in the opinion of Minto, the Governor General, "genuine and justifiable",³ and he was inclined to veto the Bill. But Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, was strongly opposed to disallowing the Bill on the ground that it would be a surrender to agitation and derogatory to the prestige of the Punjab Government.⁴ Minto, however, ignored the protest of the Punjab Government. Refusing his assent to the Bill, he characterised it as "a very faulty piece of legislation,— legislation which would be unadvisable at any time, but which at the present moment, if it becomes law, would add fuel to the justifiable discontent which has already been caused— whilst the appearance of surrender to agitation, should any portion of the public entertain such reasoning, would in my opinion be far less dangerous than to insist on enforcing the unfortunate legislation proposed upon a warlike and loyal section of the Indian community."⁵

Imposition of illegal fines in the canal colonies was still another cause of discontent. "I am told on excellent authority", Minto informed Morley, "that the amount collected in fines during the last four years was 11 lakhs, and that in all probability reckoning in addition to the fines, bribes paid by the colonists to subordinate officials, the whole amount would equal about a crore and a half. It is perfectly monstrous. It really makes my blood boil. No wonder there was discontent, and yet in all probability, I believe, these poor people would have continued to be mulcted if the agitators had not seen their opportunity of publishing their grievances to the world. It is no excuse whatever for the Punjab Government to say that they were ignorant of what was going on. They must at any rate have known that 11 lakhs of fines were contributed to their revenues."⁶

3. Telegram, 25 May 1907, Viceroy to Secretary of State, *Ibid.*

4. Letter, 8 May 1907, Minto to Morley, *Ibid.*

5. Viceroy's order on the file deciding to withhold assent from Colonisation Bill, enclosure to letter, 27 May 1907, Dunlop Smith to MacLagan, Chief Secretary, Punjab, *Ibid.*

6. Letter, 7 August 1907, Minto to Morley, *Ibid.*

Then, there was plague. The first plague case in the Punjab was detected in 1897 and soon it spread taking about two million lives by 1910.⁷ The large-scale mortality was responsible for creating bitterness in the minds of the people and the comparative immunity of the Europeans led to rumours that the British were spreading the disease. This gave a fillip to racial antagonism.

A number of press prosecutions also excited much popular feeling in the province. In the issue of 11 April 1906, the *Punjabee* of Lahore published two editorial paragraphs entitled "How Misunderstandings Occur" and "A Deliberate Murder". The first article referred to the death of two *begaris*⁸ from exhaustion and cold when employed to carry the luggage of the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi who was out on tour. The second article mentioned the death of a Muslim orderly who was shot dead by a European officer in "a district not very far from Lahore" for refusing to carry home the carcass of a boar.⁹ Prosecution was launched against the *Punjabee* and the result was that the proprietor L. Jaswant Rai was sentenced under section 153-A, Indian Penal Code, to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000, and the editor K. K. Athavale was sentenced under the same section to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200.¹⁰ The Sessions Court regarded the sentence on the proprietor as "too severe" and consequently reduced it to six months' rigorous imprisonment.¹¹ Later on it was altered to simple imprisonment by the Chief Court.¹² The editor and proprietor of the weekly *India*, Gujranwala, were also prosecuted under sections 124-A and 131 of the Indian Penal Code for publishing an appeal to the "Men of the British Indian Army" by "the natives

7. The figure is given in Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, (1966), p. 561.

8. From the word *begar* — pressing of men and beasts in service of official without any payment.

9. *Vide*, *Public A Progs.*, August 1906, no. 168.

10. Letter, 4 March 1907, Punjab to India, *Public A Progs.*: May 1907, No. 127.

11. Letter, 8 April 1907, Punjab to India, *Public A Progs.*: May 1907, No. 132.

12. Letter, 7 May 1907, Punjab to India, *Public A Progs.*: May 1907, No. 134.

of India and Afghanistan who have emigrated to America". It urged them to rise against the British Government.¹³

The Punjab in 1906-1907 was in ferment on account of a number of causes. Unjust administrative and legislative measures of the government, the Colonization Bill, increase in irrigation rates and land revenue, the imposition of illegal fines and the spread of the plague all contributed to discontent among the people of the province. The unrest in the Punjab, for the most part, was not the result of outside influence nor was it engineered by the extremist agitators.

This popular discontent led to riots in Rawalpindi in May, 1907. On 21 April a public meeting was held at Rawalpindi to protest against the Colonisation Bill. It was attended by S. Ajit Singh, "notorious anti-British agitator", where he delivered a seditious speech. The Deputy Commissioner sent notice to three pleaders, Lala Hans Raj, Lala Amolak Ram, Lala Gurdas Ram, the organisers of the meeting, and summoned them to his court for an enquiry. A large crowd gathered at court to express sympathy with the pleaders, and when informed that the proposed enquiry would not be held, they committed acts of violence.¹⁴ On 27 May sixty-eight persons, including six lawyers, were brought to trial before a Special Magistrate on charges of rioting, criminal trespass and arson and abetment of the above. The trial dragged on for many months. In November 1907 six persons were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The six lawyers charged with "aiding and abetting" were acquitted.

This agitation in the Punjab unnerved the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Denzil Ibbetson. He came to believe that the political situation in the province was "exceedingly serious, and exceedingly dangerous, and as urgently demanding a remedy." He informed the Viceroy that a definite anti-British propaganda had started in the villages; corruption of the yeomanry, Sikhs and the military pensioners, was systematically planned; the movement of withholding the payment of Government revenue, water-rates and other dues was beginning to take a prominent position and every-

13. Vide, *Political A Progs.*, July 1907, No. 3-5.

14. Private telegrams, 3 May 1907, 5 May 1907, Viceroy to Secretary of State, *Minto Papers*... ..

where 'people are sensible of a change of a "new air" (naya hawa).'¹⁵ In view of the "persistent", "malignant" and "widespread" agitation the Lieutenant-Governor asked the Government of India for a power "to prevent, by executive action, the stream of seditious poison being poured into the minds of our people, either by printed matter or orally",¹⁶ and to deport (under section 2 of Regulation III of 1818) Ajit Singh, "the most active and the most virulent of those who have spoken against the British Government" and Lala Lajpat Rai, "a revolutionary, a political enthusiast, probably honest" who was everywhere recognised as "the moving spirit" of the whole agitation.¹⁷ These "executive powers of a somewhat arbitrary character" were necessary if the peace of the province was to be preserved, declared Sir Denzil Ibbetson.¹⁸

Ibbetson entirely misjudged the character and volume of the unrest prevalent in the Punjab. Unable to gauge the real feelings of the people and analyse the causes of the mounting discontent the Local Government came under the influence of panic, more so as the year 1907 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the sepoys' uprising and there was nervous apprehension among the European community that there would be a fresh outbreak of the mutiny in the province. In this tense atmosphere the Government wanted to make an impressive show of force and they struck, as Gokhale said, Lala Lajpat Rai, "simply because he was the most prominent political worker in the Province."¹⁹

Lord Minto was taken aback by this official information about the existence of so much sedition in Punjab. His own reaction was, "we are just now at a moment when if we act quickly, we may save a lot of trouble", and he favoured the issue of warrants at once. He did not consult Morley. "It is a matter of a few days. If we temporise and ask advice from home, things may drift from

15. Sir Denzil Ibbetson's minute, 30 April 1907, enclosure to letter, 3 May 1907, Punjab to India, *Political A Progs.*, August 1907, No. 148.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Letter, 3 May 1907, Punjab to India, *Political A Progs.*, August 1907, No. 149.

18. Letter, 3 May 1907, Ibbetson to Minto, *Minto Papers*.

19. Gokhale's letter to the Editor, *Times of India*, 21 May 1907, *Gokhale Papers*.

bad to worse."²⁰ The question was discussed in the Executive Council. The Home Member, H. Adamson, and the Legal Member, Erle Richards, were in favour of employing only the legal machinery "now in existence and against utilising an old Act."²¹ The orders of warrant were issued and Lajpat Rai was arrested and deported on 9 May and Ajit Singh on 3 June 1907. They were sent to Mandalay, Burma.²²

The arrest of Lajpat Rai caused countrywide sympathy for him. G. K. Gokhale felt that the Government had done a "grievous wrong" to him in depriving him of his liberty without a trial and deporting him out of the country. About his activities he said: "Again and again he (Lajpat Rai) and I have discussed our aims, hopes, our methods of work and there never has been any substantial difference of opinion between us. His language was at times a trifle strong—this must necessarily be a matter of temperament—but his aims and methods have always been strictly constitutional and I refuse to believe—unless clear evidence to the contrary is forthcoming—that he could ever have done anything that could in any way constitute a justification for the action of the Government."²³ Later on even the Viceroy doubted "whether there was sufficient cause for Lajpat's arrest." He never admired the action of the Punjab Government and believed that they came under the influence of "scare". But for political reasons Minto supported the action of Ibbetson, and in his opinion the arrest of Lajpat Rai, "whether technically justifiable or not, undoubtedly had the effect of restoring confidence in the strength of British administration, and very possibly saved us from great dangers."²⁴

20. Letter, 5 May 1907, Minto to Kitchener, *Minto Papers*.

21. *Ibid.* . . .

22. After the deportation of these two leaders Morley was "wounded" by such remarks! "shelving the principles of a life time", "violently unsaying all that he has been saying for thirty or forty years". Letter, 28 June, 1907, Morley to Minto, *ibid.*

23. Gokhale's letter to the editor, *Times of India*, 21 May 1907, *Gokhale Papers*.

24. Letter, 6 May 1908, Minto to Morley, *Minto Papers*.

Genesis and Growth of Indian National Congress

BY

P. N. CHOPRA

The origin of the Indian National Congress has baffled many a historian including Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, official historian of the Congress, who thought it to be shrouded in mystery. Conflicting opinions have been expressed by different writers about its inception. Some regard it to be the creation of an individual, others seek to give it an "impersonal origin, a birth in circumstance, a spontaneous character" rather than to admit that it was the creation of an individual. "Its roots", it is said, "are to be discovered in the separate political associations in various parts of India. It was watered, we are told, by the controversies over the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the reduction of age limit for entrance into Indian Civil Service and the Ilbert Bill." There are a few others who regard it to be a "Child of Russophobia". But many incline to the view that the Congress was "but the first rich harvest of what had been sown long before by wise and beneficent statesmen in the shape of schools and colleges."¹

A thorough study of the contemporary literature and private papers, however, enables us to arrive at certain reasonably definite conclusions. None of the above-mentioned factors can take the sole credit for the origin of the Congress. It was rather a combination of all these and many more factors, as we shall trace in the following pages, that paved the way for the birth of this premier political organisation which was destined to play a leading role in the history of India's Freedom struggle.

Surendranath Banerjea (1849-1925) declared the Indian National Congress "to be the outcome of those civilizing influences, which Macaulay and his co-adjutors were instrumental in implanting in the Government of the country".

1. Report of the Indian National Congress, 'Presidential Address,' 1895.

Wedderburn² (1838-1918), biographer and close friend of Hume, who was lavish in his praise of the British, regarded it to be "the direct result of the noblest efforts of the British statesmanship; the national and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions" granted to the people of India. In fact, "the Congress constitutes a visible embodiment of the national awakening", that came over India as a result of the impact of western civilization on Indian thought. According to them, it is the ideals of Milton, Locke, Wilberforce, Mill, Bright and Gladstone that kindled the Indian mind. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta also spoke in the same strain at the 4th session of the Indian National Congress. "We launched the Congress", he said, "on its enterprise— not of supplanting the existing rulers of the country but of supplementing the endeavours of the best and the most sagacious among them by proposing modifications and developments based on our peculiar and native knowledge and information suggested gratefully by that enlightenment and education, which is one of the most precious gifts bestowed upon us by British rule"³.... But we must remember that there were also other forces at work that accelerated this process of evolution. As a result of the political consciousness aroused in the educated community due to these influences, many political associations of the natives sprang up in different parts of the country before the birth of All India Congress. Indian Association⁴ in Bengal (founded on July 2, 1876), Bombay Presidency Association in Bombay,⁵ (January, 31st, 1885), Mahajan Sabha in Madras,⁶ (May 16, 1884) and Sarvajanik Sabha in Poona,⁷ (founded in 1870) were the most prominent of them. Besides the branches of the Indian Association set up throughout northern India even upto Lahore⁸ after that historic tour of Surendranath Banerjea (1877)

2. Wedderburn, *Speeches and writings*, 1918, p. 2.

3. *Report of the Indian National Congress, 'Presidential Address', 1892.*

4. For its activities refer to:—

Bagal, J. C.: *History of the Indian Association*, (1876-1951), Calcutta, 1953.

5. Tyabji B. Hussain: *Baduruddin*, 1952; Masani R. P.: *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 1939; Modi, H. P.: *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, 2 vol., 1921.

6. *Proc. Home—Public*, April, 1888, Nos. 173-75.

7. Zacharias, H.C.E., *Renascent India*, (1933) p. 46.

8. Bagal, *op. cit.*, p. 58, Surendranath writes: "There is indeed life in Northern India. There is a hidden but deep under-current of political feeling in the Punjab and the North Western Provinces ... They are not insensible

which has perhaps been rightly acclaimed as "the first successful attempt of its kind at uniting India on political basis", there seemed to have local associations in existence on the eve of the birth of the Congress in all the big cities of India. Agra Association at Agra, Rifah-Am Association at Lucknow, Hindu Samaj at Allahabad, Vaidik Samaj at Farukhabad,⁹ Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, Social Club and Anjuman-i-Islamiya at Ferozepore,¹⁰ Anjuman-i-Faiz-i-Am at Gujranwala, Hindu Sabha and Singh Sabha at Ambala, Meerut Association,^{10a} Meerut, Bhartri Sabha at Dera Ismal Khan,¹¹ Prajahit Vardhak Sabha At Surat, Sind Sabha at Sukhar, Barisal People's Association at Bachergunge, Dacca People's Association at Dacca, Rajshaya Association at Rajshaiye, Indian Union at Calcutta, Triplicane Literary Society at Madras, Shillong Association at Shillong, Upper Association at Dibrugarh, and Habibganj People's Association at Silchar, deserve special mention.¹² Some of these associations were quite active. It was under their directive that countrywide demonstrations were held to bid farewell to Lord Ripon. It was due to the influence of these bodies that the Surat Municipality declined to vote an address of welcome or to grant funds for the reception of Lord Dufferin, 2 years later in 1886. Similar bodies in Eastern Bengal tried to carry out a similar device at Dacca but their attempts failed due to the influence of certain Muhammadans.^{12a} These

to the interests of their fatherland. They are not deaf to the calls of patriotism and above all they have loving and sympathetic hearts and are ever willing to extend the hand of brotherhood to their countrymen of other presidencies". op. cit., p. 26.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

10. For a detailed list of these associations refer to *Proc. Home—Public*, April, 1888. Nos. 172-75.

10a. Founded in 1881 for "helping in the formation of a healthy public opinion in all questions of importance, to promote by every legitimate means, the political, social, intellectual and material advancement of the people". *Meerut District Gazetteer*, p. 439).

11. For a detailed list of these associations as appended to the list of delegates who attended the Second Indian National Congress held at Calcutta, December 1886 refer to *Proc. Home, Public* April, 1888. Nos. 173-75.

12. Andrews C.F. and Mukerjee G.; *Rise and Growth of Congress in India*, London, 1938, p. 88.

12a. Rattray, Austin: "The Indian National Congress." *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*. Jan.-April, 1889.

associations no doubt, did a lot to prepare the ground for an all India organisation as we have mentioned already, but there were also other forces at work which accelerated this process of evolution.

Lord Lytton's disastrous rule nearly brought ruin to India.¹³ His imposition of the infamous Vernacular Press Act and Arms Act were bitterly resented by Indians.¹⁴ He provoked a war with Afghanistan and relentlessly pursued it with the money extorted from the poor ryots who became so desperate that very serious agrarian anti-tax riots swept, for instance, the Deccan.¹⁵ Armed bands were moving about the country and as Sir William Wedderburn told W. S. Blunt, "the state of things at the end of Lord Lytton's reign (1876-1880) was bordering upon revolution."¹⁶ Lord Ripon's arrival, however, had kindled a new hope and gave a great stimulus to the revival of public activities.¹⁷ "Political Life had sprung up in the atmosphere created by Lord Ripon's policy" says Lajpat Rai¹⁸ but his defeat on the Ilbert Bill did more. "Not only did it leave ranking sense of humiliation on the minds of educated Indians, but also set on foot a national movement of organised co-operation among the Indian people which as the Indian National Congress had a great influence upon the political emancipation of India."

Lord Ripon's just and generous attempt aiming at racial justice practically failed in face of the organised Anglo-Indian Opposition,¹⁹ but it let loose a national avalanche particularly in Bengal referring to which Blunt wrote in his private diary that a catastrophe was in the air.²⁰ The cry of revolution had caught the imagination of the responsible leaders like Surendranath Banerji

13. Zacharias, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Andrews & Mukerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 898-90.

16. Blunt, W.S., *India under Ripon* (1885), p. 216.

17. Chintamani. C.Y., *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*, London, 1940, p. 13; Mazumdar, A.C., *Indian National Evolution*, Madras, 1917, p. 34, Zacharias, *op. cit.*

18. Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, (1917) p. 130....

19. Andrews C.F., & Mukherjee, G., *Op. cit.*, p. 89, Mazumdar, A.C., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

20. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

(1848-1925) who "let slip the gros mot of revolution" in regard to it.²¹ Blunt's conversation during the talks with Ananda Mohan Bose, Secretary of the National Conference, also revealed that "the danger of a revolution was very great as the people were loosing confidence in Lord Ripon having it in the British Government." Malabari, the Bombay leader, was no less disappointed and declared that they will never get anything new without something like a revolution which is wholly my own opinion."²²

The imprisonment of Surendranath Banerjea on the charge of contempt of Court had aroused a wide-spread sympathy throughout the country.²³ In fact he had become the idol of the youth of the country.²⁴ The leaders of the Indian Association were shrewd enough not to allow the universal awakening that followed the Ilbert Bill Agitation²⁵ and Surendranath's imprisonment to slip by.²⁶ Surendranath's attempts at the suggestions of certain politically-conscious Indians like Tarapade Benerji, a Bengali lawyer of Krishnanagore²⁷ near Calcutta, to "raise a national fund to secure the political advancement of the country by means of constitutional agitation in England and in India" met with considerable success.

Taking advantage of the International Exhibition scheduled to be held in Calcutta in December, 1883, the leaders of the Indian Association²⁸ called the first National Conference in Calcutta on

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

23. Surendranath Banerjea was convicted for 2 months. May 5, 1883 to July 4, 1883. Bagal, J.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60 and 60-61.

24. *Ibid.* For details of the case refer to *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61...

25. For its effects refer to A. C. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, 38-39.

26. Bagal, J. C. *op. cit.*, pp 63-64.

27. He wrote a letter to the Indian Mirror to which we will have the occasion to refer in detail later on. A paragraph of it runs as follows: "The imprisonment of Surendranath Banerjea suggested to me as it must have suggested to many of my countrymen who care to think of India's welfare that the opportunity had come to do something towards the creation of a national fund and the formation of a national Assembly". Andrews & Mukherji *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.

28. Bagal J. C., *op. cit.*, 61-62.



December 28 to December 30, 1883.²⁹ This National Conference, perhaps the first of its kind in India may rightly be regarded as the predecessor of the Indian National Congress to be started two years later in 1885.³⁰ C. F. Andrews and Girija Mookerjee pay a well deserved tribute to the sponsors of the Indian Association when they write: "With the full establishment of the Congress, the Indian Association gradually lost its political importance. Yet it has to be remembered that the idea of holding an All India Conference with representatives from every province was its own invention."³¹ This Conference seemed to have been quite successful and was regarded by the Secretary, Ananda Mohan Bose as the first stage towards a Parliament.³² Wilfred Scawen Blunt who was a visitor at the Conference tells us that the Conference was "very provincial in its interests as quite three parts (three quarters of the hundred) of the delegates are Bengalis."³³ Muhammadans and landed aristocracy were conspicuous by their absence.³⁴

Nine months before this Conference had met, a noble-minded Scotsman Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912) reputed to be the father of the Indian National Congress had addressed an open letter dated March 1, 1883 to the graduates of the Calcutta University as largely representing the educated Community in India. As the worthy son of the founder of the Radical Party in England,³⁵ Hume was essentially democratic in his instincts.³⁶ His kind and considerate treatment of the people of Etawah during the dark days of the Mutiny when he was a Magistrate there had endeared him throughout Panjab.³⁷ He was Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department in the year 1870 and then in the

29. British Indian Association did not participate. Bagal J.C. *op. cit.*, 64. Delhi Darbar held in 1877 was perhaps the first occasion which suggested to the Indian leaders the idea of holding a national Congress of the representatives of the people.

30. Bagal, *op. cit.*, pp 80-81

31. *Ibid.*, p. 64. Andrews & Mukherji, *op. cit.*, 115-16.

32. Bagal *op. cit.*, 81.

33. Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

34. Bagal, *op. cit.*, p. 81..

35. Joseph Hume. For his life sketch refer to Wedderburn: *Allan Octavian Hume*, pp. 3-5.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

37. For his reforms refer to *Ibid.*, pp. 15-31.

newly created Department of Revenue, and Agriculture and Commerce from 1871 to 1879.³⁸ His removal from the latter post in 1879 was mainly due to his liberal views.³⁹ Referring to the "measure by which Mr. Hume was summarily superseded and degraded" the Englishman wrote, "the plea advanced in justification of this arbitrary act was that Mr. Hume habitually in his minutes on measures coming up for discussion in his department expressed his views with great freedom without regard to what might be the wishes or intention of his superiors."⁴⁰

Deeply devoted as he was, to the welfare of the people of India, Hume watched with deep concern the tremendous unrest during the closing years of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty (1876-1880) to which we have referred earlier. His biographer (Wedderburn) writes: And about the years 1878 and 1879 economic in combination with political troubles were actively at work throughout India, the physical suffering of the many acted on by intellectual discontent of the few was rapidly bringing popular unrest to the danger point.⁴¹ Wedderburn (1838-1918) describes in detail Hume's special sources of information about the grave danger "to the Government and to the future welfare of India if nothing was done immediately to counteract it". Fifteen months before the departure of Lord Lytton, Wedderburn tells us, Hume came across seven large volumes containing a vast number of communications from over 30,000 reporters from different parts of India. "The jungle is all dry, they said, fire does spread wonderfully in such when the right wind blows and it is blowing now and hard". Most of these entries, reported conversations between men of the lowest classes "all going to show that these poormen were pervaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs, that they were convinced that they would starve and starve and die and that they wanted to do something, they were going to do something and stand by each other and that something meant violence,"⁴² for

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, p. 77...

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

innumerable entries referred to the secretion of old swords, spears, and matchlocks which would be ready when required."⁴³

That Hume's fears were not unfounded is evident from the reports which were published in some of the native newspapers and were quoted in *London Times* dated 21st September, 1884. A gist of these reports as quoted by Dinshah Ardeshir Taleyarkhan in his *Selections from my recent notes on the Indian Empire* was "Foreigners have taken possession of India and are sucking her dry. The people of India look on in a helpless manner. Their best interests" are sacrificed for the benefit of the English. Over and above this, "the innocent natives are insulted and killed. At every step the people send up a cry for succour, when the English whip or the English kick falls upon them. The demons are engaged, heart and soul, in violating the "chastity and taking the lives of Indian females. What a heart-rending scene! It is a matter of regret that the people of India do not gird up their loins to get rid of the oppression of whitemen."

Hume was convinced of the imminence of a terrible outbreak as he stated a few year later "I could not then and do not now entertain a shadow of doubt that we were truly in extreme danger of a most terrible revolution."⁴⁴ Hume was approached by the Indian leaders of these religious sects from whom the reports referred earlier had emanated to do something to avert the calamity.⁴⁵ His attitude was one of co-operation and he was determined to provide a safety valve for the escape of these "great and growing forces." After some anxious thoughts he reached the conclusion that "the solution of this fateful problem lay in associating the natives in the management of their own affairs." It must be added, however, that at those early stages it was certainly not India's freedom or home rule to which Hume could possibly have looked forward to. His idea was to find ways and means of directing the popular impulse of which he had such alarming evidence into an innocuous channel. However, Hume postponed definite action; it appears, mainly due to the arrival of Lord Ripon which had revived hopes among the people. Retiring from service in 1882, he refused the Lieutenant Gover-

43. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

nership of the Panjab⁴⁶ and dramatically addressed the letter dated March 1, 1883 to the graduates of the Calcutta University.⁴⁷

This soul-stirring letter bespeaks of the organising ability and deep knowledge of psychology of the shrewd Scotsman whose historic letter opens with these wise and kindly words: "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 the nation, all vital progress must spring from within and it is to you, her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative. In vain may 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."⁴⁸ Hume then suggests the necessity of an organisation. "Scattered individuals, however, capable and however well-meaning, are powerless singly. What is needed is Union, organisation and to secure these an association is required armed and organised with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India." He wanted only those educated people to come forward who have moral courage, self-control and active spirit of benevolence." And then he proposed that a commencement should be made with a body of fifty founders to be the mustard seed of future growth; if only fifty men, good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and the future development will be comparatively easy." The details of the organisation were left for the members to decide. Hume however, laid emphasis on its constitution being democratic, free from personal ambitions; the head should merely be the chief servant and his council assistant servants. And then Hume sounds

46. *Ibid*, p. 46.

47. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

48. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

a warning that if fifty persons with "sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heart-felt patriotism to take initiative and if need be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause could not be available, then there is no hope for India." And the concluding portion of this memorable letter both stirs and stings, "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, and our adversaries right; then are Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary; then, at present at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys. Only, if this be so, let us hear no more factions, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings, and treated like children, for you will have proved yourselves such. Men know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are. Then rightly are these preferred to you, and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and taskmasters they must continue. Let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realize and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that, whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."⁴⁹

There is no contemporary evidence available as to the circumstances which prompted Hume to issue the above circular letter in March, 1883. Obviously Hume was encouraged by the favourable

atmosphere then prevailing in the country due to Lord Ripon's conciliatory policy. In fact he had postponed his idea of starting an organisation (during Lord Lytton's time). "Until his retirement from the service," as Wedderburn tells us "he should be free to act and able to take advantage of the growing improvement in the popular feeling produced by Lord Ripon's benign presence."⁵⁰

Time was now ripe to make a beginning and Hume struck at the right moment. In fact Hume was not the only person in the field. That many politically-conscious Indians were also inclining towards the thought of an All India organisation as early as 1883 is evident from the letters of Tarapada Banerjee which appeared in the *Indian Mirror*.⁵¹ Tarapada had suggested on July 4, 1883, a meeting of delegates from all India at Calcutta. Later on, he elaborated his scheme to "appoint a managing Committee and a fund" with the object of having a permanent delegate in England to represent and agitate there for our grievances; to adopt suitable measures for imparting political education to our people; to encourage national trade and industry and to adopt means for the creation of good feeling between the different religious sects of India. Kristo Das Pal, a well-known public leader (He was nominated to the Council by Lord Ripon at the recommendation of the British India Association) had also expressed similar views. Hume himself in a speech at a public meeting at Allahabad on April 30, 1888, modestly disclaimed his own single authorship of the idea. "The Congress movement" he said "is only one outcome—though at the movement the most prominent and tangible—of the labours of a body of cultured men mostly born natives of India who, some years ago, banded themselves together to labour⁵² silently for the good of India. To say this does not in the least take away the great credit which is due to Hume for his dynamic personality and energy which obviously needed in order to make the venture a success. Gokhale was not wrong when he declared in 1913,⁵³ "No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart

50. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

51. Andrews & Mookerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

53. De Mello, F.M. *The Indian National Congress*, p-2.

from the fact that anyone putting his hand to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume's commanding personality, even if an Indian had possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials would not have allowed it to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman, and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the other of suppressing the movement."

That this passionate appeal of Hume which "in its deep pathos and eloquence no less than in its burning zeal and warm sympathy reads like St. Paul's epistles to the Romans",⁵⁴ did not go in vain we learn from Annie Besant's reference to a meeting in December, 1884 at the house of Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao of seventeen "good and true men who out of their love and their hope conceived the idea of a political national movement for the saving of the motherland."⁵⁵ Most of them were delegates to the just ended annual convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar and others had been there as friends and admirers.⁵⁶ Prof. Sunder Raman who was one of the members of the first Congress Session refers to this meeting called by Raghunath Rao "to find ways and means of bringing together Indian politicians to inaugurate a political movement for the regeneration and reform of the methods of Government of this country calculated to promote a future Indian advance towards Swaraj." If we are to believe Mrs. Besant this meeting of the seventeen men "good and true" whose names she mentions in her book was the precursor of the Congress.⁵⁷ Strangely enough Mr. Hume's name is not there. Instead Surendranath Banerjea who denied any knowledge about the foundation of the Congress "until on the eve of its sitting"⁵⁸ has been included among those who were present at that meeting at Adyar. Majority of these persons it may be interesting to recall, were not present at the first session of the Congress. Moreover, neither Wedderburn in his biography of Hume nor Surendranath Banerjea in his auto-

54. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

55. Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 2.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

57. Andrews & Mookerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

58. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

biography or the official proceedings of the Congress refer to this meeting.⁵⁹ The only tangible explanation that can be offered in the circumstances is that this meeting though having no direct bearing on the foundation of the Congress indirectly stressed upon Hume the necessity of expediting his plans for the formation of an organisation lest the initiative might pass on to more ambitious hands. So Hume at once started the consultations and discussed his plan with "all the most eminent and earnest politicians of the Empire." Badruddin Tyabji's (1844-1906) biographer informs us that Hume "had of course met and discussed his plan with Badruddin and the other great leaders of Bombay"⁶⁰ (obviously he refers to Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1913), Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915) and Telang. Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901) was another Indian leader who is given credit by his biographer to have played a leading role in the establishment of the Congress. Karve writes: "Ranade with the help of the progressive elements among official and non-official Englishmen laid the foundation of the premier political association of the land. He had to work, having been an official, mostly from behind the scenes."⁶¹

Bombay's share in the foundation of the Congress has not received due recognition. The foundation of a National Political Association in Bombay in February 1885 with the avowed object of watching the interests of the country as a whole has escaped the notice of the scholars. As explained by one of its founder-members, Badruddin Tyabji, it meant to be an all India political body. This is clear from his inaugural address: "It is, I think, with nations as with individuals that with the growth of political life, new aspirations arise and these aspirations require an organisation to give their due expression and the organisation in its turn watches, regulates, and develops the national aspirations." He desired it to be a truly national association founded upon a permanent basis. He even thought ahead of the founders of the Congress when he said "Let there be a financial non-official Parliament. No Parliament in the true sense of the term, will just now be allowed to

59. Bagal, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

60. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

61. Karve, D.G., *Ranade, the prophet of Liberated India*, pp. XXXIV-XXXV.

India. Instead of a ponderous association let there be a financial Parliament founded on self-imposed obligations. Take up the previous budgets, study them thoroughly, compare its facts and figures with the actual internal circumstances from which they may have been drawn, and let each member of that Parliament criticise it and throw out tangible suggestions to improve the revenues and regulate the expenditures. The proceedings of the people's representatives should be published far and wide and sent to the Government. Every large question should be thoroughly and openly discussed in the people's assembly or the non-official Parliament before a representation is made to the Government on the subject. As one of the first measures—discuss the eligibility of some high-posted judicial native officer of long standing in the service, or some native officer of great administrative experience to be recommended as an executive member in the Viceregal or a subordinate Government's Council. If this be not practicable just now, induce the Government to promise that certain classes of native officials will be eligible to executive seats in the Council on so many years' approved service (8th February, 1885). Dadabhai Naoroji, U. J. Telong, P. M. Mehta, Nowrasji Furdunji were its active leaders."^{61a}

It is surprising to note that Surendranath Banerjea, the recognised leader of Bengal who had played such an important role in the national awakening and political unification of the country does not figure among the founders of the Congress. He could not attend the first session of the Congress though an invitation was extended to him by the President W. C. Banerjee (1844-1906) as he writes: "I told him it was too late to suspend the Conference (National Conference, 1885) and that as I had a large share in its organisation it would not be possible for me to leave Calcutta and attend the Bombay Congress." The reasons for this are not far to seek. As a dismissed Government official, he was looked upon with suspicion by the British Government. That's why Surendranath, though working zealously for the Indian Association, kept himself deliberately in the background.⁶² His political

61a. Taleyar Khan: *Selections from my recent notes on the Indian Empire*, pp. 206-7, 211, 235.

62. Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 42.

agitations, and the enthusiasm they created particularly in Bengal embittered the Government and there were rumours as stated by the newspaper Kala Kankar, "that Lord Dufferin intends on his arrival to follow a coercive policy in Bengal"⁶³—the centre of political activities in those days. Lord Dufferin's attack on the dress of the deputation of the Indian Association led by Surendranath at the Government House is a further proof of Viceroy's displeasure.⁶⁴ Naturally the founders of the Congress who were men of moderate views thought it advisable not to arouse the hostility of the Government by aligning themselves with a leader or a party towards whom the Government was not well-disposed. That may also explain why in preference to Surendranath the recognised leader of Bengal, the presidentship of the first Congress session was offered to W. C. Bannerji who, to all intents and purposes, as recorded by P. C. Ray in his *Life and Times of C. R. Das*,⁶⁵ "lived the life of an Englishman and whose full name many Bengalis of his day hardly knew, had all his life ridiculed all sorts of political agitation, until he became a convert to the nationalist ideas of his day by the fact of having brushed aside by the Government for the crime of being native, when the appointment of the Standing Council of the High Court of Calcutta fell vacant."⁶⁶ The presumption of the founders of the Congress was correct. His association with the Congress would have certainly raised doubts about the aims and objectives of the organisation. Even in 1889, five years after the inception of the Congress, the British writer Austin Rattary strongly criticised him and called him a 'great Congress agitator'.⁶⁷ But the way in which the Indian Association led by Surendranath Banerjea, though first in the

63. Kala Kankar, April 289, 1886, Report on Native Newspapers of Punjab, N.W.P. and Oudh, 1886, p. 386.

64. Bagal, *op. cit.*, 83.

65. R. P. Modi in his biography of Pherozeshah Mehta (p. 184) assures us that "Bengal has produced no greater and more capable leader than W. C. Bannerjee."

66. Ray, P. C., *Life and Times of C. R. Das*, Madras, 1928 pp. 121-22.

67. Rattary Austin, "The Indian National Congress" *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Jan-April, 1889.

field, gave way to the newly founded organisation in the interest of the nation, as stated earlier, speaks well of the patriotism of the great Bengali leader.

Another point which requires further elaboration is the part played by Lord Dufferin (1884-1888) in the foundation of the Congress. Wedderburn tells us that in initiating the National Movement, Hume took counsel from the Viceroy Lord Dufferin and whereas he was himself disposed to begin his reform propaganda on the social side, it was apparently due to Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organisation, as the matter first to be dealt with. Lord Dufferin seems to have told him that as head of the Government, he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people and that for the purpose of administration it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organisation through which the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion. He further observed that owing to the wide difference in caste, race, and religion, social reform in India required local treatment rather than the guidance of national organisation.⁶⁸ There is a further corroboration of this interesting episode from no less an authority than W. C. Bannerji, first President of Indian National Congress.⁶⁹ "If Allan Hume was the father of the Congress, the Marquis of Dufferin was the God-father", writes R. P. Masani in his biography of Dadabhai "for it was he who advised Hume not to" restrict its scope to agitation on the social side as was Hume's original idea but to widen its scope and definitely aim at the political education of the people.⁷⁰ Dufferin himself recorded a note on the subject. It said, "Under existing circumstance, the Government of India has no adequate medium through which it can explain its policy, correct a wrong information or controvert a false statement and though upto the present time, the consequences of the evils, I have not indicated, may not become very serious or widespread, they contain the germs of incalculable danger. Consequently it would prove as great an advantage to the

68. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, 59-60; A. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

69. Natesan, G. A., *Indian Politics*

70. Lyall, A. *The Life of Marquis of Dufferin & Ava*, p. 155.

Administration as it would frequently be a satisfaction to the members of the Council and the public at large, if reasonable opportunities were afforded of communicating to those interested in the existing facts in regard to any questionable matter.”⁷¹ Lala Lajpat Rai also thought that the Congress was an English product—a product of Lord Dufferin’s brain that considered such an organisation essential so that “the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion.”⁷² It would thus appear that the idea of the Congress party as a political organisation originated with Dufferin. It is rather difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the part played by Dufferin in shaping the destinies of the Congress.⁷³ Hume had addressed his famous letter to the Calcutta graduates as we know, on March 1, 1883. A cursory perusal of this letter quoted already will convince that Hume had made up his mind to start a political organisation to agitate for constitutional reforms long before the arrival of Lord Dufferin.⁷⁴ Prof. Sundar Raman who attended the first Congress session as one of the members makes a very revealing as well as a convincing statement about Hume’s original idea and Dufferin’s role.⁷⁵ He writes: “Mr. Hume’s idea was to rouse the conscience of the people of England by carrying on a persistent agitation in Great Britain with the support and encouragement of leading friends of India. Lord Dufferin considered the question from a purely private sympathiser’s point of view and expressed his opinion that such an agitation in England was fore-doomed to failure, as all Englishmen were fully aware of the advantages of all kinds, economic, political, administrative etc. which great Britain derived from her huge and passive Dependency. He also convinced Hume that the latter could secure his own aims best by confining the agitation to India, for the present and by making Indian public men all over

71. Masani, R. P., *op. cit.*, p. 302.

72. Reproduced in the *Indian Social Reformer* Jan. 4, 1936.

73. Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, p. 137.

74. *Dufferin Papers* Rect. no. 5289, Letter No. 237 a. From A. O. Hume to Earl of Dufferin, April 8, 1885.

75. Rattary Austin: *The Indian National Congress, The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January-April, 1889.

the land to start to organise and develop to its full strength a national organisation in India itself, conducted with zeal and discretion by her own leaders under Mr. Hume's sympathetic and courageous lead." If Professor Sunder Raman's statement may be taken as correct, it would reject the long-held view that Hume's original idea was to start an organisation for social reform.

That the credit for starting a political organisation to agitate for the association of the natives in the governance of the country is due to Hume and not to Dufferin is further clear from his observation in a letter, dated April 8, 1885, he wrote to the Viceroy regarding the serious grievances of the people of Thana in Bombay Presidency. "It will show you", he wrote, "to what lengths benevolent, bureaucratic despotism unchecked by public opinion may go.....some popular element must be infused into our governments, if we wish these to continue safe and the people to have fair play". In fact Dufferin had considerable objection to the political organisation to start with. In a letter (dated May 17, 1885) to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, Dufferin referred to his meeting with Hume when the latter informed him about his plan to organise a political convention of delegates from different parts of India, on the lines adopted by O. 'Connell previous to Catholic Emancipation. He expressed misgivings about such an assembly which would "but criticize the acts or policy of the Government, in formulating demands which probably it would be impossible to grant."⁷⁶ In his reply, Lord Reay informed Dufferin (letter dated May 24, 1885) that "Hume is the head-centre of an organisation from which emanated all the Ripon demonstrations, which has spread and is spreading all over India, and has for its object to bring native opinion into a focus."⁷⁷

Dufferin, who had cordial relations with Hume in the beginning, did not dissuade him from starting a political organisation. In fact he praised Hume in his letter to Reay; "Hume is clever

76. Earl of Dufferin, Private letter to Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, May 17, 1885.

77. From Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay to Earl of Dufferin, Confidential letter, May 24, 1885.

and gentleman-like but seems to have a bee in his bonnet. Ripon told me that he knew a good deal of Natives and advised me to see him from time to time which I have done with both pleasure and profit."⁷⁸

There remains yet another controversial point as to how far the statement that the "congress was a child of Russo-Phobia" is true. Dr. Nandlal Chatterji has tried to prove that the "Congress was founded in fact as a precautionary move against an apprehended Russian invasion of India."⁷⁹ But, he has not been able to deduce any direct and convincing evidence in support of his contention. There is a possibility, however, that the critical state of affairs at the frontier during 1884 and 1885, when an open rupture between Russia and Afghanistan over the disputed Panjdeh territory, seemed imminent and would have involved Britain also,⁸⁰ might have been one of the many factors which suggested Hume the advisability of checkmating the growing unrest in India by diverting it into constitutional channels. It may also explain the position of neutralists like Dufferin and his Government in earlier stages. But there is no direct evidence in our possession in support of this contention. There is, however, no doubt that the Indian statesmen were fully alive to the exigencies of the problem. Dadabhai had declared: "The Indian authorities are doing everything in their power to tempt Russia to invade India, both by their policy of dissatisfying the Indian people with their rule and by making an easy road for Russia through the mountains of Afghanistan at our expense."⁸¹

Wedderburn referred to the possibility of a Russian invasion in his presidential address at the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress, 1889 and added that the Russian generals

78. *Op. cit.*, f.n., p. 76.

79. *The Modern Review*, Oct. 1950, pp. 273-75.

80. In fact the "invasion of India by land has been the nightmare of Anglo-Indian statesmen from the time when Napoleon proposed to Russia in 1808 in his scheme for a joint expedition to India through Persia from Constantinople." For details refer to Lall, A, *The Life of Marquis of Dufferin & Ava*, pp. 85, 87, 88, 99, 143.

81. Masani, R. P. *op. cit.*, p. 358.

depended for success on "a hoped for rising of the native population."⁸² W. S. Blunt noted in his Diary "Russia might well appear as an ally, a liberator from the deadly embrace of our financial system, a friend of liberty, sound economy and material progress which is to say that Russia should not, in exchange for a new commercial pact with herself, offer to establish India in complete Home Rule, and thus outbid us in the popular affection."⁸³

To resume our narrative, Hume's appeal issued at the psychological moment went home and the politically conscious Indians who were already looking for an opportunity, at once joined hands with the result that a National Union was formed towards the close of 1884.⁸⁴

In March 1885, as the official proceedings of the Congress relate, it was decided to "hold a meeting of representatives from all parts of India at the then coming Christmas." According to the biographer of Tyabji, Hume's original intention was to hold the first session of the Indian National Union in the Bombay Presidency.⁸⁵ Mahadev Govind Ranade, formerly a judge of the Bombay High Court, seemed to have prevailed upon Hume to hold it at Poona.⁸⁶ And, as the official proceedings relate, Poona was considered to be the most suitable place for the purpose and a circular was issued to the effect that a conference of the Indian National Union would be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885. "The Conference will be composed of delegates (1) leading politicians well-acquainted with the English language—from all parts of Bengal, Bombay and Madras presidencies. Amongst the qualifications for membership were:—

- (1) An unblemished record, public and private, (2) and earnest and unwavering desire to improve the status, either material, mental, moral or political, of the people of India, (3) marked natural intelligence adequately developed by

82. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Natesan & Co., I, p. 57.

83. Blunt, W. S., *op. cit.*, p. 292.

84. Mazumdar, A. C., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

85. Tyabji, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

86. Ray, P.C., *Life and Times of C. R. Das*, 1929, p. 121.



education, (4) a willingness to sink when occasion demands this sacrifice, selfish and personal in altruistic and public considerations and (5) independence of character coupled with sobriety of judgement.⁸⁷ The direct objects of the Conference will be (i) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (ii) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year." It was also stated that the "Union is prepared when necessary to oppose by all constitutional methods, all authorities, high or low, here or in England whose acts or commissions are opposed to those principles of the Government of India laid down from time to time, by the British sovereign but it holds the continued affiliations of India to Great Britain at any rate for a period far exceeding the range of any practical forecast to be absolutely essential for the interest of our own national development."⁸⁸

This conference was expected to "form the germ of a native parliament and if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions." It was also made clear to the delegates that they will have to "find their own way to and from Poona—but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food etc. will be provided for them gratuitously." Chiplankar and others of the Sarvajanic Sabha had consented to form a Reception Committee and meet these expenses from the reception fund.⁸⁹

As for the delegates, the founders hoped that "exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency including Sindh and the Berar will furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Lower

87. Wedderburn, *op. cit.* p. 53-54.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

89. *Proc. of the First Indian National Congress Session, 1885 (Madras), 1905.* Also see Modi's *Pheroze Shah Mehta, I*, 180.

Bengal each about the same number and the N.W. Provinces, Oudh and the Punjab together about half this number."⁹⁰

Select Committees were formed at all the principal towns as Karachi, Ahmadabad, Surat, Bombay, Poona, Madras, Calcutta, Banaras (Varanasi), Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra and Lahore, all of which promised to send their representatives to the coming session.

Having made all preparations in India, Hume left for England where he enlisted the support of such liberal-minded British politicians as Lord Ripon, John Bright, M.P., R.T. Reid, M.P., Lord Dalhousie, the heir and successor of the Indian Governor-General, and many other friends of India.⁹¹ He also made arrangements for the reception and publication of the Union's messages by a section of the liberal Press including *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Scotsman*, *The Glasgow Daily Mail*⁹² etc., and returned to India in time for the first session of the Congress. Several cases of cholera were reported in Poona and it was decided that the National Conference which in the meantime had been named as the Indian National Congress, should instead meet at Bombay⁹³ and the delegates were to be accommodated in the "Gokuldas Tejpal Boarding School, Sanskrit College and Library."⁹⁴ The first Congress was fairly well-attended. There were not less than 72 delegates⁹⁵ (may be more as "It is feared that some few names have been omitted from the Register"). And as for its representative character, the proceedings state "all the leading native political associations and the principal Anglo-native newspapers were

90. *Proc. First Indian National Congress Session 1885*, p. 2.

91. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Proc. First, I.N.C.*, 1885, p. 4.

94. *Ibid.*

95. *Ibid.*, From Karachi, 2; Viramgaum 1; Surat 6; Poona 6; Calcutta, 3; Agra, 2; Benares, 1; Simla, 1; Lucknow, 31; Allahabad 1, Lahore 1, Ambala 1, Ahmedabad 3, Bombay 18, Madras 8, Behrampore 1, Masulipatnam 1, Chingleput 2, Tanjore 1, Kumbakonam 1, Cuddapah-Ananthapore 1, Bellary; 1. *Ibid.*, p. 4. For names of delegates refer to *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

represented, there were members of Legislative Councils, Presidents and members of Municipal Committees and Local Boards and is difficult to conceive any gathering of this restricted number thoroughly representative of the entire nation than was the Congress⁹⁶ about which the *Times* Correspondent in India wrote rather in exaggerated terms. "The whole of India was represented from Madras to Lahore, from Bombay to Calcutta. For the first time perhaps, since the world began India as a nation met together."⁹⁷ But as we shall discuss later on, the representative character of the Congress suffered from certain limitations as for example there were only a few Muhammadan delegates⁹⁸ and the Bengal too, was inadequately represented due to, as the President of the first Congress Session W. C. Bannerjee declared, "a series of misfortunes, deaths, illness and the like."⁹⁹ Among the delegates at the first Congress who were afterwards to occupy the Presidential chair were Dadabhai Naroji (1886, 1893, and 1906). M. R. Sayani (1896), N. G. Chandravarkar (1900) and C. Vijayaragavachariar (1920).¹⁰⁰ W. C. Bannerjee,¹⁰¹ as stated already, was elected President of the Congress on the proposal of Hume seconded by Subramania Iyer. "The first impression one gets.....and it was confirmed to me afterwards by several who were present," so writes Frederick Grubb, "is the studiously moderate tone of all the speeches and resolutions."¹⁰² The objects of the Congress, as set out in W. C. Bannerjee's Presidential address were:—

96. *Ibid*, p. 6.

97. *Ibid*, p. 78.

98. M. R. Sayani and A. M. Dharamsi, *Proc. First Congress Session*, 1885, p. 5.

99. *Ibid*, p. 89.

100. Frederick Grubb's article in the '*Hindu*' Dec. 27, 1935.

101. Supported by Hon'ble K. T. Telang. *Proc. First Indian National Congress Session*, 1885, p. 7.

102. It is interesting to recall that W. C. Bonnerjee who to all intents and purposes lived the life of an Englishman whose full name many Bengalis of his day hardly knew—had all his life ridiculed all sorts of political agitation until he became a convert to the nationalist ideas of his day by the fact of his having brushed aside by the Govt. for the crime of being a 'native' when the appointment of the Standing Counsel of the High Court of Calcutta fell vacant". (Prithwis Chandra Ray: *Life and Times of C. R. Das*, Madras, 1929, pp. 121-22.)

- (a) 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.
- (b) The eradication by direct friendly personal inter-course of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's memorable reign.
- (c) The authoritative record after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.
- (d) The determination of the lines upon which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests."¹⁰³

The first Congress gave it attention to a number of important subjects and the resolutions were passed demanding:—

- (1) The Royal Commission of Indian Administration.
- (2) Abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State.
- (3) Creation of Legislative Councils for the N.W. Provinces and Oudh and the Punjab with the right of discussing the budget and of interpellation.
- (4) Reduction of military expenditure.
- (5) The introduction of simultaneous Public Service Examinations in England and India.¹⁰⁴ These in short constituted our political demands for nearly two decades,¹⁰⁵ or as

103. *Pro. First Indian National Congress Session, 1885*, p. 9.

104. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 13-14; A. C. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

105. *Ibid.*

Grubb put it some of them were "hardy annuals in the Congress debates" for many years.¹⁰⁶ The benevolent attitude of the Government was clearly manifested by the presence of a large number of Government officials who freely took part in the deliberations and if we are to believe Sir Chintamani "the resolutions of the first Congress were settled at a private meeting held at the residence of Principal Wordsworth of Elphinstone College, and attended by other officials who included Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Ranade, and Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath of Agra."¹⁰⁷ Ranade often took part in the deliberations at the open session of the Congress.¹⁰⁸ Bannerjee, on his part, praised the British Government for having done so much for the benefit of India and as he elaborated "She had given them order, she had given them the Railways, and above all she had given them the inestimable blessings of Western education."¹⁰⁹ And Hume, the General Secretary, while rising to acknowledge the compliments paid to him added that he must be allowed to propose, on the principle of better late than never the giving of cheers and that not only three, but three times three and if possible thrice that, for one the latchet of whose shoe he was unworthy to loose, one to whom they were all dear, to whom they were all children—need he say, Her most Gracious Majesty the Queen Empress."¹¹⁰ That even this cordial atmosphere and moderate demands of the First Congress did not meet with the approval of the Anglo Indians was evident from the editorial of the *Times* which alluding to the resolutions passed by the Congress said "if India can govern itself, our stay in the country is no longer called for. All we have to do is to preside over the construction of the new system and then

106. *The Hindu*, December 27, 1935.

107. Chintamani, C. Y., *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*, 1937, pp. 18-19.

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Proc. First Indian National Congress Session*, 1885, p. 9.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 76.



to leave it to work. The lawyers and schoolmasters and newspaper editors will step into the vacant place and will conduct affairs with no help from us. Those who know India will be the first to recognise the absurd impracticability of such a change" and then it went on to comment on the "un-representative character" of the Congress.¹¹¹

111. *Ibid*, Appendix 'C', p. 50.

Indian Revolutionaries Abroad (1891-1919)

BY

N. N. BHATTACHARYA

I

Raja Rammohun Roy during his stay in England (1832-33) exchanged his ideas with Robert Owen,¹ the great socialist thinker and a constant friend of the working class, and since then European political ideas began to influence the English-educated Indians, especially the young Bengalis and their successors. But influence, although valuable in itself, was mainly academic in character, having little bearing on revolutionary political activities. In the sphere of practical politics, the Indian intelligentsia of nineteenth century had pinned their faith on the parliamentary principles of liberalism and on the honesty and sense of justice of the British people. Still it is interesting to note that the inauguration of the First International in 1864 was congratulated by a Bengali journal called *Somaprakasa*² and that in 1871 the General Council of the First International received a letter from someone of Calcutta asking for powers to start a section of the International in India.³ This proves that there were at least a few persons in India who were interested in revolutionary activities going on in different parts of the globe. Within a short period of time, however, revolutionary sentiments were spread far and wide—in different parts of Asia, Europe and America—and a large number of students, who chose a life of exile, did contribute much to the cause of India's freedom, not only by revealing the ugliness of British rule in India to foreigners hitherto misled by the false propaganda of the British, but also by active participation in revolutionary plans and programmes which were marked by sacrifice and sufferings of all kinds.

1. Collet S. D., *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Ed. by D. K. Biswas and P. C. Ganguli, pp. 494-95.

2. Chatterjee G. in *Lenin in Contemporary Indian Press*, p. 100.

3. *The General Council of First International: 1870-71 Minutes*, p. 258; cf. *Sehanabis in Kaldantar* (Bengali Weekly) 5-9-1970.

II

The earliest revolutionary organisation in the pattern of a secret society was the "Lotus and Dagger"⁴ which was set up in England by Arabindo Ghosh in 1891. Nothing precise is known about its function. Charu Chandra Dutt, one of the recruits of Arabindo, said that they came into close touch with the Irish freedom fighters who offered the Indians eight parliamentary seats of their own,⁵ provided India should give them funds—a proposal which was, however, rejected by Dadabhai Naoroji who was then a member of the British Parliament and a propagandist of the Indian National Congress.

The credit of establishing in England a more important organisation which in course of time acquired a complete revolutionary character goes to Shyamji Krishnavarma⁶ who left India for good in 1897 with the belief that there was no justice in India, which he experienced in the arrest of the Natu brothers and trial of Balgangadhar Tilak. Shyamji established six lecture-ships of Rs. 1,000 each for Indian students visiting foreign countries and thus gathered round him a group of young men of sacrificing spirit. He did not subscribe to the moderate views of Dadabhai Naoroji and preferred to remain aloof from the London branch of the Indian National Congress. He believed with Herbert Spencer that "resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative. Non-resistance hurts both altruism and egoism". When the Boer War broke out in 1899, he was displeased with M. K. Gandhi's pro-British role and made a statement of protest. Shyamji was constantly assisted by Sardar Singh Rana,⁷ a businessman and a patriot with revolutionary ideas, who was staying at Paris and by Madam Bhikhaji Rustam Cama,⁸ 'the Mother of Indian Revolution', who left India for Europe in

4. Raychaudhuri G. S., *Sri Arabinda O Bāṅgālāy Svadeshī Yug* (in Bengali), p. 54.

5. Dutt C. C. *Purāṇokathā* (in Bengali), pp. 6-7.

6. For the biography of Shyamji Krishnavarma see Bhattacharya A.C. *Europe Bhāratīya Biplabī Sādhana* (in Bengali), Ch. I; Sarda H. *Shyamji Krishnavarma*; Yajnik I. L. *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Life and Time of an Indian Revolutionary*.

7. Bhattacharya A. C., *op. cit.*, ch. II.

8. *Ibid.*, ch. III; cf. *Essays Presented to Sir Jadunath Sarkar*, pp. 227 ff.

1902, and worked in London for some time with Dadabhai Naoroji, but subsequently came in close relation with Shyamji and Sardar Singh Rana. The latter, who left India in 1898, following the instance of Shyamji, offered three travelling fellowships of Rs. 2,000 each to Indian students for the purpose of recruiting revolutionaries, and organised a number of protest-meetings in Paris against British rule.

The Indian Home Rule Society was founded by Shyamji and his associates on the 18th of February, 1905. The India House was also founded for the Indian students, which was subsequently manned by such well-known revolutionaries like V. D. Savarkar, Lala Hardayal, Madanlal Dhingra, Birendranath Chattopadhyay, Tirumal Achariya and others. Regarding the general object, both of the Indian Home Rule Society and of its organ, the *Indian Sociologist*, Shyamji wrote: "No systematic attempt has ever been made by the Indians to enlighten the British public with regard to the grievances, demands and aspirations of the people of India. It will be our duty and privilege to plead the cause of India and its unrepresented millions before the bar of the public opinion in Great Britain and Ireland."⁹ The *Indian Sociologist* kept a vigilant eye upon the day to day politics of India. It expressed its views against the moderate leader Gokhale, supported the candidacy of Tilak for Congress Presidentship and protested against the massacre at Barisal Political conference and the arrest of Surendranath Banerjee which took place in 1906. In the next year (1907), in connexion with the celebration of the anniversary of the Indian revolution of 1857 in the India House, the *Indian Sociologist* published a daring placard, originally issued in April 1859 by Richard Congrave, which was a protest against the thanksgiving ceremony on the victorious conclusion of the war against the Indian sepoys. In the same year, in view of a protest meeting of the Indians against the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh which was held in London, it published an exciting appeal of Madam Cama. Hemchandra Kanungo, a revolutionary who was staying in Paris, wrote that the *Indian Sociologist* maintained a close relation with

9. Majumdar R. C., *History of the Freedom Movement of India*, II, p. 318.



eminent journals like the *Gaelic American*, Hyndman's *Justice* and the *Jugāntar* of Bengal.¹⁰

The British press and politicians, getting alarmed at their activities, made attempts to 'wash the brains' of the Indian students. In a meeting which the British authorities organised for this purpose under the presidency of Lord Lamington, Sir William Lee-Warner, who was one of the speakers, called Kunjabihari Bhattacharya, an Indian revolutionary, "a dirty nigger", and this remark enraged the audience so much that one of them, Basudeb Bhattacharya struck a blow on the face of Sir William. The target of British press was, however, Shyamji whose views were growing more and more revolutionary. Originally he stood for passive resistance but later admitted the necessity of violent activities in response to the demand of the situation. Fully conscious of the British conspiracy against him Shyamji thought it wise to leave London and settle in Paris which he did accordingly in 1907. In Paris he joined Sardar Singh Rana and Madam Cama.

During the absence of Shyamji, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar assumed the political leadership of the India House. Savarkar came to England in 1906. In India he had an organisation which was known as *Abhinava Bharat*, a militant organisation having its branches in Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Mysore and Madhya Pradesh. The proceedings of the Nasik Conspiracy Case show that Savarkar used to send secretly arms to India from the Continent. A member of Savarkar's Indian organisation, P. N. Bapat was sent to Paris to learn the art of bomb-making who worked along with Hem Chandra Das and Mirza Abbas who were also there for the same purpose.¹¹ Another associate of Shyamji, Lala Hardayal left London in 1907, and after staying for a short time in India, rejoined Shyamji in Paris in 1908. Hardayal had by this time become an extremist and thought it prudent to transfer the centre of his activities to America.¹²

Both Madam Cama and Sardar Singh Rana were elected to represent India at the International Socialist Congress which met

10. *Bāṅgālāy Biplab Pracheṣṭā* (in Bengali), pp. 178-79.

11. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, II, p. 308.

12. Hardayal, *Fortyfour Months in Germany and Turkey*, p. 29.



at Stuttgart on the 18th of August 1907. The British labour leader, Ramsay Macdonald, who later, became the Prime Minister of England, tried his best to prevent their participation in the Congress, but he failed, thanks to the efforts of the German Socialist leaders Bebel, Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the British labour leader Hyndman who had been always friendly with the Indian revolutionaries. Madam Cama moved there the following resolution: "That the continuance of British rule in India is positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the best interests of India, and lovers of freedom all over the world ought to co-operate in freeing from slavery the fifth of the human race inhabiting that oppressed country, since the perfect social state demands that no people should be subject to any despotic and tyrannical form of government."¹³ In support of her resolution Madam Cama made a fiery speech and waved a tri-coloured Indian National Flag which was probably designed by Hemchandra Kanungo. The resolution however, was not allowed by Singer, the President, to be put to vote on a technical ground.

On July 1, 1909, Curzon Wyllie was shot dead by Madanlal Dhingra who "attempted to shed English blood as a humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths."¹⁴ A meeting of the Indians condemning the act of Dhingra was held in London under the presidency of Aga Khan where Savarkar made a speech of protest against such condemnation especially when Dhingra's case was sub-judice. Personally Shyamji did not support such feats of individual violence, but Sardar Singh Rana and Madam Cama thought that Dhingra's action was justified. Although Dhingra was sentenced to death, Irish revolutionaries paid glowing tributes to him, and it is interesting to note that Lloyd George and Winston Churchill admired his patriotism.¹⁵ Savarkar was also arrested and sent to India as the principal accused of the Nasik Conspiracy Case. On his way to India Savarkar made a desperate but futile attempt to escape to the French territory. However, with all these events the activities of the India House of London practically

13. Bhattacharya A. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

14. Keer D. *Savarkar and His Times*, p. 55.

15. *Ibid*, pp. 56-57; Blunt W. S., *My Diaries*, II, pp. 276, 288.

came to an end. Shyamji continued to edit the *Indian Sociologist* in Paris till the outbreak of the World War in 1914, and then he left Paris for Switzerland where he stayed till his death in 1930. Birendra Nath Chattopadhyay, who was in England since 1903, and Tirumal Acharya left England for Paris to avoid arrest. In 1910, Madam Cama and Chattopadhyay became members of the French Socialist Party. During the World War I Madam Cama was imprisoned in the Vici fort and Sardar Singh Rana was deported to the island of Martinique by the French Government for their pro-German leanings.¹⁶

III

In the U.S.A. nationalistic activities were carried on by the Indian students and also by the Indian working class settled therein who drew their inspiration from Shyamji's *Indian Sociologist* and Madam Cama's *Bandemataram* and *Talwar* which had unrestricted entry into that country. In 1907 the Indian Independence League was established in California by Khagendra Chandra Das, Tarak Nath Das, Adhar Chandra Laskar, Pandurang Khankhoje and a few other Indian students. The League had two branches and 499 members, and its main activities were to preach militant nationalism among the Sikh settlers in America and to send revolutionary leaflets to India. It also had a journal known as *Free Hindustan* which was edited by Tarak Nath Das. Similar organisations very soon developed among the Indian settlers in different parts of America. The one of Portland became prominent in 1911-12 under the leadership of Kanshiram Joshi. Such organisations under different groups or individual leaders which sprang up at different times finally culminated into the formation of Ghadar Party in 1913. According to Randhir Singh,¹⁷ the historian of the Ghadar movement, two meetings of the

16. On 12th August 1936 "Madam Cama died unnoticed in Bombay amidst ungrateful surroundings" (Savarkar). In her old age she was probably inclined towards Communism. In an article published in the *Inprecor* of 1st May, 1924 (IV, pt. XXVII, pp. 263-65) one Rustam Shama is mentioned as 'the famous old revolutionary who is now a communist.' Evidently it refers to Madam Cama, since C in Syriac alphabet pronounces like S. (See Sehanabis in *Kālāntar*, 3-10-1970).

17. Singh R., *The Ghadar Heroes*, pp. 8-9.



Indian workers were held respectively on 13th March and 1st November, 1913, at Astoria, and it was decided to establish the 'Hindi Association of America' and to bring out a weekly paper, *Ghadar*, in different languages. Later on, the name *Ghadar* came to denote the party itself which was formed with Sohan Singh Bhakna as President and Hardayal as Secretary. The Central Office of the party was at 436 Hill Street, San Francisco. In 1918 the party had its own building at 5 Wood Street.¹⁸

The Ghadar party believed that freedom of India could be achieved only by an armed national revolution, and its main activities, besides the regular campaign of lectures, were the publication of the *Ghadar* in Gurumukhi, Urdu, Hindi and English and various books and pamphlets. In 1914 the New Immigration Policy of the U.S.A. created a feeling of indignation among the Indians and Hardayal, as the leader of the Ghadar party, not only denounced in strong language the discriminating policy of the American government, but also actively participated in American politics, supporting the cause of the Syndicalist party of America and making public speeches from its platform. Eventually Hardayal had to leave America for Switzerland. During his absence Ram Chandra became the leader of the Ghadar party and invited Bhagwan Singh and Muhammad Barkatulla, who were then in Japan, to come to his aid. They joined him towards the end of May 1914. Barkatulla was a strong advocate of anti-British Pan-Islamism and the editor of a paper called the *Islamic Fraternity*.

IV

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the revolutionary activities of the Indians living abroad assumed a new character. An organisation, which later came to be known as the Indian Independence Committee or the Berlin Committee, was set up in Berlin. Indian revolutionaries who were staying in Germany were trying to secure German help for a rising against the British in India, and when the war broke out the

18. For different views regarding the genesis of the Ghadar party see Majumdar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 397 ff, also Datta B.N., *Aprakāśita Rājnaitik Itihās* (in Bengali), pp. 228ff.

Germans also became equally eager to utilise the revolutionary activities of the Indians against the British. There is a good deal of controversy regarding the genesis of the Berlin Committee.¹⁹ According to Bhupendra Nath Datta, who was himself an influential collaborator of the Berlin Committee, a meeting was held between Baron Oppenheim and Birendra Nath Chattopadhyay on September 3, 1914, as a result of which a committee was formally constituted with the name 'The German Union of Friendly India'. Albercht became its President, Oppenheim and Sukhthankar Vice-presidents, and Dhiren Sarkar, the Secretary. After some time Sukhthankar was replaced by Chattopadhyay and Dhiren by Dr. Mueller. There were 17 other Indian members in the Committee. By the middle of 1915 the German Union of Friendly India was renamed as Indian Independence Committee and its constitution was thoroughly changed. Its office was filled up solely by the Indians.²⁰ But according to another account, which Dr. Majumdar quotes from the work of Landau, it was Hardayal who organised the Indian Independence Committee with the help of Von Wesendonck who was the secretary in charge of the Indian section of the German Foreign Office.²¹ Likewise Chempakaraman Pillai of Kerala, who left India in 1908, is credited with playing an important role. Before the outbreak of the war he set up at Zurich an association, called the International Pro-Indian Committee, and started a journal called *Pro-India* and it is said that he came in agreement with Chattopadhyay, Abdul Hafiz, Dr. Prabhakar, Bhupendra Nath Dutta and Barkatulla which marked the inception of the Indian Independence Committee. It therefore appears that like the Ghadar party of America, different streams headed by individual leaders coalesced into a single organisation, the Berlin Committee, and the process was quickened by the German Official enthusiasm.

V

The Berlin Committee established contact with the Indian revolutionaries in U.S.A. through German Embassy in that country and it was decided that the Ghadar party would carry on

19. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 404 ff.

20. Datta B. N., *op. cit.*, chs., I-III

21. Landau H., *The Enemy Within*, p. 29.

revolutionary work in accordance with the direction of Berlin Committee. We have a fairly authentic account of the Indo-German activities in U.S.A.²² Ram Chandra of the Ghadar party was entrusted with the task of sending men and arms to India. He was receiving monthly a thousand dollars from the German Consulate. Although he was able to send some men through the Chinese ports, Shanghai and Swato, little progress was made in securing arms. It is said that Franz Von Papen of the German embassy in U.S.A. managed to get arms and ammunition in considerable quantity which were sent to San Diego, California, in January 1915. It was planned that these would be carried by the Schooner, *Annie Larsen*, and then transferred to the tanker *Maverick*. With the arms *Annie Larsen* arrived at the meeting place, but there was no trace of *Maverick*, and thus the whole scheme fell through.²³

Heramba Gupta, who was working in the U.S.A. on behalf of the Berlin Committee, was replaced by Chandra Chakravarty in February 1916 by orders of the German authorities. The latter, as an organiser of the Pan-Asiatic League, tried to enlist support of China and Japan. It was proposed that China and Japan, by forming an alliance with Germany, would help the Indian revolutionaries by sending forces and arms to them across the border. But no positive response came from China and Japan. Sun Yat-sen, who was a source of inspiration to the Indian revolutionaries, unexpectedly disappointed them. The net result was shocking. Men sent to India through the Chinese ports by Ram Chandra of the Ghadar party were arrested.²⁴ Arms could not be secured. In one report Chakravarty admitted that in a period of six months no more than two hundred pistols could be sent. It is indeed surprising why the Germans themselves did not supply arms and why Gupta and Chakravarty had to negotiate with China and Japan for the same purpose.

22. The following account is based upon Majumdar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 414 cf. Brown G.T. 'The Hindu Conspiracy 1914-17' in *Pacific Historical Review*, XVII, pp. 289-310.

23. See Sec., VIII.

24. Sedition Committee Report, p. 149.

However, Chakravathy was arrested in U.S.A. on 6th March 1917. Soon after his arrest he disclosed the identity of his associates, as a result of which, on April 7, 1917 Ram Chandra and sixteen other Indians were arrested in San Fransisco. The famous San Fransisco trial opened on November 20, 1917 in which 105 persons were accused as conspirators. On the last day of the trial Ram Chandra was shot dead in the court by one of his comrades, Ram Singh, who in turn was also killed by a Marshall. The Judgment was delivered on April 23, 1918. Of the original 105 accused, 29 were convicted. Thus ended the Indo-German conspiracy in the U.S.A.

VI

It appears that all the attempts to despatch arms to India failed owing to the reluctance of the Germans to take this business seriously, M. N. Roy said in his *Memoirs* that on the suggestion of Helfferich a plan was made to storm the Andamans by the German ships staying in the Dutch harbours, but it failed because the Germans refused to play such a serious game. The German Consul-General disappeared mysteriously on the way when he was expected to issue orders for the execution of the plan. Later on, a proposal was given to the Germans that if they gave India money she might herself purchase arms from different countries. This proposal was sent to the German Embassy in the U.S.A. and in reply M. N. Roy was asked to go to China and meet there the German Ambassador Admiral Hintze. Roy thereupon left Java and went to the Philippines, Japan and Korea *en route* to China. In Japan Rash Behari Bose asked him to wait and told him that the liberation of India was conditional upon the success of the bigger mission of Japan, namely, to free Asia from white domination. He met Sun Yatsen who told him that if sufficient amount of money could be raised, there would be no difficulty in collecting necessary arms and ammunition and handing them over to India at any place on the frontier. With this proposal Roy met Admiral Hintze and had long talks with him. The Admiral showed great interest in the said proposal and an agreement was made at Hankow, but all on a sudden, when the plan was finalised, the German Ambassador began to speak in a different language. Recalling this, Roy wrote: "The conversation with

von Hintze dispelled my still lingering illusion about Germany's sympathy for the victims of British Imperialism."²⁵

VII

Indian revolutionaries also went to various countries of South East Asia, and men like Kshirod Gopal Mukherjee, Bhola Nath Chatterjee and others had already set up revolutionary organisations in those countries. Originally it was decided that Germans in Siam would attack Burma and that three ships, full of arms, would be sent to India. The invasion of Burma would be followed by revolutionary outbreaks in different parts of India under the leadership of Rashbihari Bose, Sachindra Sanyal and Jatindra Nath Mukherjee. The outbreak in India was to be held on 15th February, 1915, but the plan was disclosed by Kripal Singh, a police-informer who managed to get himself acquainted with the revolutionaries. Rashbihari thereupon fled to Japan. On the same day the Fifth Light Infantry at Alexandria Barracks of Singapore rose to a mutiny, which was, however, crushed very soon.²⁶

In March, 1915, Atmaram of the Ghadar Party met Jadugopal Mukherjee in Calcutta and assured him of arms coming through the German Consul-General of Bangkok. This was the plan referred to in the preceding section in connexion with the *Memoirs* of M. N. Roy. It was decided that three ships would be used for this purpose: the first was to go to Hatia, the second to Balasore while the third to the Andamans for conquering the islands and releasing the political prisoners staying therein. It was also decided that from the Andamans the Germans along with the Indians would attack Rangoon and Singapore. But the scheme was disclosed as a result of which Phani Chakrabarty was arrested at Shanghai and Abani Mukherjee at Singapore. From Abani's notebook a few names of Indian revolutionaries were found and they were also arrested. Of them Amar Singh of Packo was later sentenced to death.²⁷

25. Bhattacharjee G. P., *Evolution of Political Philosophy of M. N. Roy*, pp. 19-20.

26. MacMunn G. *The Turmoil and Tragedy in India, 1914 and After* pp. 106-13.

27. Bhattacharyya N. N., *Bhārater Svādhinatā Sangrāmer Itihās*, pp. 113 ff.

In May 1915, the Berlin Committee sent Vincent Kraft to Batavia with a similar programme of invading the Andamans, but nothing came out of this plan. Kraft was arrested at Singapore. In July 1915, the Berlin committee sent Dr. Daus Dekkar, but he was arrested in China. According to the British Official version, "Gupta returned to San Francisco from Berlin to organise the Siam expedition by which depots were to be established on the Siamese frontiers of Burma where Indian revolutionaries could be trained by German officers, equipped with arms, and launched against Burma. There Ramchand sent many of the Ghadar Party, while the Sikh, Bhagwan Singh was despatched to Japan, China, and Manila to collect recruits from among the Indians serving there. But most of these were arrested at Bangkok in August, 1915, shortly after their arrival there."²⁸

VIII

Now we shall give a brief note on the Indian consequences of the activities of the Berlin Committee and the Ghadar Party. As soon as the Indian revolutionaries came to know of the arrangements being made by Germany for sending arms, the plan for a general rising took definite shape under the leadership of Rashbihari Bose, Sachindra Sanyal, Vinayak Rao Kaple, Damodar Swarup, Pratap Singh, Avadh Bihari, Balmukund, Bachcha Singh, Kartar Singh, Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, Jatindra Nath Mukherjee, Nalini Mukherjee, and others. It was decided that on February 21, 1915, the sepoys in the cantonment all over North India would suddenly attack the English soldiers, and thus begin a countrywide revolution. As we have seen above²⁹ the plan was disclosed by Kripal Singh and the whole plot miscarried. One of the plotters, Pingley made another desperate attempt, but he was arrested and tried along with his followers in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.³⁰

On behalf of the Bengal group, headed by Jatindra Nath Mukherjee, Naren Bhattacharya (who later became famous as M. N. Roy), adopting the pseudonym Martin, went to Batavia

28. MacMunn, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

29. Sec. VII.

30. Sedition Committee Report, p. 157.

and making arrangements to receive the cargo of the *Maverick*, which was said to consist of 30,000 rifles with 400 rounds of ammunition each and 2 lakhs of rupees, wired to Harry and Sons, a bogus business concern managed by Hari Kumar Chakrabarti, a well known revolutionary, that the 'business was helpful.' The task of taking delivery of the cargo of the *Maverick* was entrusted upon Jadugopal Mukherjee. He communicated with a zamindar in the vicinity of Rai Mangal who had promised to provide all sorts of help. It was hoped that the ship would arrive by 1st of July 1915. Some men under Atul Ghosh kept constant watch from boats. But the *Maverick* did not arrive. On 3rd July, 1915, the revolutionaries received a messages that the German Consul in Siam was sending by boat a consignment of 5,000 rifles and ammunition to Rai Mangal. But this also did not arrive.³¹ On 7th August, 1915, the police searched the premises of Harry and Sons and arrested some revolutionaries. Then they turned their attention to Balasore where the leader Jatindra Nath Mukherjee and his associates were staying with the hope of receiving arms. After a heroic fight with the police, Jatindra and his associates were killed.

IX

Turkey's entry into the war against Britain created a strong anti-British feeling in the Muslim states, and attempt was made by the Indian revolutionaries living abroad, and especially the Berlin Committee, to utilise this feeling in their favour. Chempakaramen Pillai, of whom we had already occasion to refer, made an attempt to induce the Indian prisoners of war to join the Indian National Volunteer Corps, organised by him, and chose Mesopotamia as the centre for his Corps to wage war against the English.³² At the beginning of 1915, Barkatullah, Kersamp and Tarak Nath Das went to Istanbul where they were received by Enver Pasha and were assured by the Turkish Government of help in the task of formulating a plan of enlisting the Indian war prisoners into a revolutionary army. But this plan could not be worked with success on account of the communal spirit between the Hindu and Muslim soldiers resulting from the per-

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22.

32. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, II, p. 412.



tiality shown to the latter by the Turks. A revolutionary committee was also set up in Iran with headquarters in Berlin. Attempts were also made to combine the Muslim states against the British, and Obeidullah carried on negotiations for this purpose with various Arab states. He maintained close contact with the *Mujahids* of North Western India,³³ a Pan-Islamic group determined to destroy the British rule and create a Muslim India, and left secretly for Kabul where he met other revolutionaries from India and got himself specially acquainted with Raja Mahendrapratap who came to Afghanistan, along with Von Hentig and Barkatullah, as the head of an Indo-German Mission. Mahendrapratap who was especially honoured by the Kaiser himself carried with him 26 letters from Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor, addressed to Indian Princes requesting them to rise against the British and assuring them of the German support. The Mission on its way visited the Turkish Sultan at Istanbul who gave him a letter for the Amir of Afghanistan. His associate Barkatullah procured a *futwa* from Sheikh-ul-Islam asking the Muslims of India to act in union with the Hindus. On its way to Persia Mahendrapratap's Mission met another Mission led by Niedermayer. On 2 October, 1915, the Mission reached Kabul and was received by King Habibullah. A Provisional Government of India was set up in Kabul on 1st December 1915 with Mahendrapratap as its President and Barkatullah and Obeidullah as the Prime Minister and Home Minister respectively. This Provisional Government sent several missions to the Indian princes and tried to come to some kind of understanding with Russia.³⁴

Shortly after Obeidullah left for Kabul, his followers Mahmud Hassan and Mian Ansari, met Ghalib Pasha, then Turkish Military Governor of Hedjas and obtained from him a declaration of *jihad* (holy war) against the British and distributed its copies to the frontier tribes of India. A scheme of a Pan-Islamic army, to be formed under the active guidance of Turkish Government and the Sheriff of Mecca with its headquarters at Medina and subordinate commands at Constantinople, Teheran and Kabul was chalked by Obeidullah who wrote a series of letters to different influential persons of the Muslim world. These letters were

33. Sedition Committee Report, pp. 174-75.

34. See Mahendrapratap's *My Life Story of Fiftyfive Years*.

dated 9th July 1916, written on yellow silk and sewn up inside the lining of the coat of a special messenger who was to convey them in person to Mahmud Hasan for sending to proper places. But this 'silk letter conspiracy' was disclosed, and no positive result came out of it.³⁵

X

The famous San Francisco trial, mentioned above, marked the end of the Indo-German revolutionary activities in the U.S.A. Chandra Chakravarty and Se Kunna were arrested on 6th March 1917, and this was followed by the arrests of Heramba Gupta, Agnes Smedley, Sailendra Nath Ghosh, Pulin Bihari Bose, Tarak Nath Das, Bhai Bhagwan, Dhiren Sarkar and others. The German agents—Frank Bopp, Von Schack, Wilhelm Von Brincken etc.—were also convicted in a supplementary trial. The Indo-German conspiracy thus disclosed, there was no scope for reviving the revolutionary activities once again in the U.S.A. A feeling of frustration pervaded among the revolutionaries of the Berlin Committee. The end of war could be seen, and Germany was inevitably running towards defeat and disaster. After 1917 the Committee devoted its energy mainly to the propaganda war giving up all hopes of a rebellion in India. In the International Socialist Conference held at Stockholm in 1917, the Berlin Committee took chance of raising the question of Indian independence. It sent a telegram to Trotsky at Brest Lito-vsk requesting him to uphold the cause of India and also sent one to Philip Snowden for the same purpose.

With the end of the First World War and the complete defeat of the Axis Powers, Germany ceased to be the theatre of the revolutionary activities of the Indians. They now became interested in the Soviet Union. The success of the socialist revolution in Russia, and the prospect of Soviet help to the Indian struggle for freedom inspired them evidently. The first to realise the great significance of the Russian revolution, with a thorough training in Marxian ideas, was M. N. Roy who had escaped to Mexico during the San Francisco trial and managed to become a prominent figure in the left-wing politics of that country. He

35. O'Dwyer M.F., *India as I knew it*, pp. 180-81.

was selected to head a delegation to the Second World Congress of the Communist International and in November 1919 he started for Moscow with a Mexican diplomatic pass-port. His training of Marxism was very helpful in securing a good ground there, and eventually he could become a favourite of Lenin who made him a member of the Presidium of the Communist International and the Head of its Eastern Department.

Roy was not, however, the first Indian revolutionary to go to the Soviet Union or to meet Lenin. In May, 1919, Raja Mahendrapratap along with Tirumal Acharya and Abdur Rob Peshwari, met Lenin in Moscow, and in June Rahamat Karim Elahi Zhacharia had the occasion to address the third Congress of the Turkistan Communist Party. Obeidulla, who was a minister of the Provisional Government of India in Kabul, went to Russia in October 1919 to see the consequences of the revolution and to draw the attention of the Soviet Government to the cause of the Indian freedom movement. Barkatullah went as the personal ambassador of King Amanulla of Afghanistan and in one of his lectures in the Soviet Union, he invited Communist help to crush the British power in India which, according to him, was the biggest representative of Asian capitalism. Dalip Singh Gill, another Indian revolutionary, also met Lenin for securing Russian help in the Indian freedom movement. But Roy was especially selected by the Soviet authorities for reasons we have stated above.

During the Khilafat movement in India, a number of Pan-Islamic workers, known as *Muhajirs*, left India for Turkey and a few of them could reach Tashkent in September 1920. M. N. Roy, on behalf of the Communist International, made contact with them and was able to convert some of these fanatic Pan-Islamists into confirmed communists. In 1921, the Berlin Committee group consisting of Birendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendra Nath Datta, Birendra Nath Dasgupta, Abdul Wahed, Panduran Khankhoje, Gholam Ambia Khan Lohani, Heramba Gupta, Nalini Gupta, and Agnes Smedley also went to Moscow. (Thus after the fall of Berlin, Moscow became the seat of Indian revolutionaries. How far this new atmosphere could speed up the Indian freedom movement, we propose to demonstrate in a subsequent article.

Bipincandra Pal's Synthesis of Modernity and Tradition

BY

ALEXANDER LIPSKI*

While there is general agreement about the meaning of tradition, there is no consensus regarding the definition of modernity. In this paper, for simplicity's sake, modernity will be equated with a rational, scientific and secular view of life.¹ This view was dominant in the West from the middle of the nineteenth century on. It was most clearly expressed by those whom Carlton Hayes categorized as the "Generation of Materialism," (1871-1900).² Man was certain that reason was the arbiter of all questions. He was confident that he could solve all of his problems and bring about a millennium. He strictly limited reality to those data which were subject to verification by the senses and he considered a transcendental view of life fanciful and outmoded. Towards the turn of the century, however, man's self-assuredness began to diminish. The more the frontiers of science advanced, the less certain were the scientists that they could fathom the universe. The cosmos seemed no longer a limited mass of matter; it began to look like an infinite universe of energy. As a matter of fact, one of the greatest astronomers, Sir James Jeans, concluded that the universe was more akin to a thought than a machine.³

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1. See also Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 3-4.

2. C. J. H. Hayes, *A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900* (New York, 1935).

3. Sir James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 215-17.

Loss of scientific certitude naturally affected world view of modern western man. It is not by chance that the historian Franklin Le Van Baumer in his book *Main Currents of Western Thought* refers to our age as "The Age of Anxiety."⁴ He argues that in the twentieth century man feels insecure because he has no acceptable value system to guide him. Although technological advance continues, people are becoming aware of the fact that the increase in man's ability to produce gadgets does not necessarily make his life more meaningful. It moreover has become apparent that a wholly secularized life is devoid of ultimate purposefulness. The distinguished Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung, diagnosed the illness of the present age as being due to man's alienation from his Creator: "It is easy enough to drive the spirit out of the door, but when we have done so the salt of life grows flat—it loses its savour."⁵ Consequently, in the West, men such as the historian, Sir Arnold Toynbee, and the philosopher, Jacques Maritain, turned towards tradition, particularly in its spiritual aspect, to reconstruct their *Weltanschauung*.

In India, Bipinchandra Pāl (1858-1932) was acutely aware of the fact that the conflict between modernity and tradition applied equally to the East and the West, and he evolved a synthesis which he hoped would have relevance to both civilizations. As is well known, Bipinchandra revolted in his youth against hidebound tradition, especially against the over-ritualization of Hinduism, image veneration and caste strictures. He prided himself on being a rationalist. In 1877 he joined the Brahmo movement. In 1878, when a split occurred in the Brahmo Samaj, Bipinchandra sided not with Kesabchandra Sen but with the more radical wing represented by Sivanath Sastri and Anandamohan Bose who favoured an increased emphasis on social reforms. Over all, during his youth, Bipinchandra's religious concerns were largely confined to social action. While championing social reforms, Bipinchandra was actively opposed what he termed "medievalism": 1) unqualified monism which viewed the material universe as delusionary, 2)

4. Franklin Le Van Baumer, *Main Currents of Western Thought* (New York, 1964), pp. 587-97.

5. C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York, 1939), p. 142.

extreme asceticism, in particular, celibacy, 3) over-ritualization of religion, 4) "slavish" dependence upon a guru, 5) religious inequality (application of caste distinctions to religious worship).⁶

In the 1880's Bipincandra changed his religious views markedly. The problem of life and death was intimately connected with his transformation. In his *Memories of My Life and Times* he relates how profoundly he was affected by the death of his father in 1886 and the death of his first wife in 1890.⁷ He became intensely aware of the precariousness of man's earthly existence. According to those who accepted matter as the ultimate reality of the universe, death meant the disintegration of one's physical substance, i.e., one's total extinction. Such a view was unacceptable to Bipincandra. He was convinced that there must be more to man's life than his short earthly sojourn. Modern science failed to furnish him with a meaningful answer to the enigma of death. Gradually he came to the conclusion that the ancient Hindu scriptures offered satisfactory answers to his spiritual quest.

It is significant that it was through the writings of a westerner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, that Bipincandra found his way back to Hindu tradition. In this connection it must be borne in mind that the currents of thought of East and West were constantly intermingling. We are all aware, for example, of eastern influence on Sir Edwin Arnold and, at the same time, of Sir Edwin Arnold's impact on Gandhiji. The light of truth had travelled from the East to the West and back to the East: its intrinsic validity had remained unharmed. Acknowledging his indebtedness to the great American transcendentalist, Bipincandra states that Emerson converted him from dualism to monism. Henceforth he accepted a God who was immanent as well as transcendent and he no longer regarded matter and spirit as separate entities.⁸ Bipincandra

6. Alexander Lipski, "Bipincandra Pāl and Reform Hinduism," *History of Religions*, November, 1971.

7. Bipincandra Pāl, *Memories of My Life and Times* (Calcutta, 1932) II, 3, 19-34, 97-102.

8. *Ibid.*, II, 121.



found the strongest intellectual support for his changed world view in the Bhṛgu-Varuna dialogue of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. In his search for ultimate reality, Bhṛgu practised yogic meditation and eventually recognized that the essence of the universe was neither food, nor life, nor breath, nor mind, nor intellect, but bliss.⁹ In Bipincandra's estimation, Bhṛgu had proven 'scientifically' that there was a transcendent reality. Yoga thus emerged as the supreme science that could lead man to the realm beyond sense perception where neither microscopes nor telescopes were of any use.¹⁰

Modern science and the materialistic *Weltanschauung* suffered a spectacular defeat, as far as Bipincandra was concerned, when in 1912 the White Star liner "Titanic" sank as a result of a collision with an iceberg in the Atlantic. In an essay in *Sāhitya o sādhanā*, Bipincandra dramatically describes the disaster at sea. The "Titanic" appears to him the embodiment of western man's pride in his technological prowess; her extravagant conveniences, a symbol of man's hankering after physical comforts. In the drawing of her dancing, sporting passengers he perceives a warning against placing prime importance on sense indulgence.¹¹ Was this calamity not meant to remind us of the fact that the path of pleasure leads to perdition, whereas the yogic path of austerities leads to immortality? He added that this truth had not only been preached by India's ṛṣis, but by the sages of all religions. And he cited Christ's sayings: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me," and "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."¹² Renunciation and not dissipation was thus the way to true fulfilment.

9. Bipin Candra Pāl, *The Soul of India*, 4th ed., (Calcutta, 1958), pp. 151-55.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-84.

11. Bipincandra Pal, *Sāhitya o sādhanā* (Calcutta, 1959), 1st part, pp. 19-29.

12. *St. Matthew*, 19:21 and 16:25,

Bipincandra's reaction to the sinking of the "Titanic" provides a striking contrast to Voltaire's response to the earthquake of Lisbon in 1775. As a result of the earthquake the French philosopher lost all faith in a benevolent deity. Bengal's great son, Bipincandra, on the contrary, was inspired by the shipwreck of the "Titanic" to place his whole trust in divine protection, provided one adhered to the yogic path.

Bipincandra's reliance on yoga was partially due to the influence of his neo-Vaiṣṇava guru, Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Gōṣvāmī. He considered Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Gōṣvāmī as important as Rāmākṛṣṇa Paramahansa for Bengal's religious renaissance. Personally he was more attracted to Vijaya Kṛṣṇa than to Rāmākṛṣṇa. He had no sympathy for Rāmākṛṣṇa's strict asceticism and preferred the process of gradual sublimation of the senses practised by Vijaya Kṛṣṇa. He claimed that it was much more natural to experience the divine through all senses than to suppress the senses altogether.¹³ One can, of course, argue that in the case of Rāmākṛṣṇa no mere suppression of the senses had occurred but that he had turned his sensory energy entirely towards the divine. Probably Bipincandra's criticism of Rāmākṛṣṇa was due to the fact that he considered Rāmākṛṣṇa an unqualified monist, hence medieval. On the other hand, Vijaya Kṛṣṇa was his ideal combination of modernity and tradition. In his writings, Bipincandra repeatedly mentioned that Neo-Vaiṣṇavas adhered to qualified monism which he equated with a modern outlook.¹⁴ As far as Vijaya Kṛṣṇa was concerned, Bipincandra valued the fact that the guru held progressive views regarding caste and ritual. Above all, he was grateful to the guru for initiating him in mantra yoga. Previously Bipincandra had gained an intellectual understanding of man's immortality. Through Vijaya Kṛṣṇa he attained what to him seemed empirical evidence of the fact that man was indestructible spirit: there was thus no reason to fear death.¹⁵

13. Bipincandra Pāl, *Saint Bijayakrishna Goswami* (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 29-33.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5; 70-78; Bipincandra Pāl, *Bengal Vaishnavism*, 2nd ed., (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 9-11.

15. *Saint Bijayakrishna Goswami*, pp. 98-99.

While Bipincandra revered his guru, at no time did he unconditionally surrender to him. The traditional guru-disciple relationship was unacceptable to him who valued so highly independence of mind and proudly styled himself a "born rebel."¹⁶ Although he was unwilling to be a traditional disciple, he drastically changed his way of living, following his initiation. He devoted a larger portion of his day to spiritual activities, such as reading sacred writings. He strictly regulated his diet and practised *ahimsā*.¹⁷

The change in Bipincandra's views affected his attitude towards image veneration. Under Brāhmo influence, he had rejected the use of images as idolatrous. He now concluded that images were material approximations of spiritual entities which the advanced yogis perceived during meditation. The existence of these entities did not negate the oneness of the creation. They were various aspects of the One, as was the Holy Trinity in Christianity.¹⁸ It seems worth mentioning that during his stay in England and the United States, Bipincandra discovered that he was better equipped to understand the concept of the Christian Trinity—one in *ousia*, different in *hypostatis*—than many representatives of the Christian clergy for whom it was an inexplicable mystery.¹⁹

Bipincandra's sympathetic view of image veneration and his acceptance of the Trinity signifies a decisive turning away from rationalism and distinguishes him clearly from Rājā Rāmmōhan Roy and Dēbendranāth Tagore, the pioneers of the Brāhmo movement.

Roy and Tagore had tried to base their reforms on the Upanisads alone and had rejected the *Purāṇas* as medieval. Bipincandra greatly valued the *Upanisads* but he contended that the *Purāṇas* and not the *Upanisads* constituted the highest stage in the evolution of Hinduism. In his *Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*, Bipin-

16. Bipincandra Pāl, *Mrs. Annie Besant* (Madras, 1917), p. 14.

17. *Saint Bijayakrishna Goswami*, pp. 100-106.

18. *The Soul of India*, pp. 192-202.

19. Bipincandra Pāl, *Mārkine Cārimāsa* (Calcutta, 1945) pp. 68-69.

candra, employing Hegelian dialectic, posits three stages in the evolution of Hinduism: (1) The perceptive stage—time of the Vedas (thesis): in this phase cognition is based on sense perception: "The Deity here is not really an invisible, supersensuous Being but are [sic] all visible and 'sensible' gods and goddesses..."²⁰ (2) The reflective stage—time of the *Upanisads* (antithesis): Man has risen above sense perception to the realization of the *transcendental plane* (the formless unseen). (3) The imaginative or idealistic stage—time of *Purāṇas* (synthesis): by means of imagination man has given concrete shape to the unseen, transcendental.²¹ Bipincandra uses the fact that the use of images is normally associated with the *Purāṇic* age and not with the time of the *Upanisads* as an additional argument in defense of image veneration. In summary, he concludes that the *Purāṇas* have successfully reconciled the relative with the absolute, the seen with the unseen. Undoubtedly his Vaiṣṇava background influenced his attitude towards the *Purāṇas*. After all, it was in the *Purāṇic* age that the Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā concept crystallized. And Bipincandra contends that the Brahman of the *Upanisads* is inferior Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā. Brahman constitutes undifferentiated impersonal ultimate reality, whereas Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā are self-differentiated personal ultimate reality. It is through Rādhā, the embodiment of Love, that Kṛṣṇa realizes "His Own Personality":²² "Their mutual relation is one of inconceivable difference in identity and identity in difference."²³ Bipincandra's insistence on the superiority of the *Purāṇic* concept of the absolute over that of the *Upanisads* is clearly based on his fear that unqualified monism inevitably

20. Bipincandra Pāl, *An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*, 2nd ed., (Calcutta, 1951), p. 99.

21. Bipincandra defends the use of imagination:

All our generalizations are really the children of Imagination. Scientific laws are not apprehended by the senses nor are they capable of any "sensible" or sensuous verification. The senses apprehend only particulars of our experience; it is the function of the imaginative faculty to peer beyond these particulars and discover the general or universal truths or principles underlying them. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

22. *Soul of India*, pp. 115-117.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.



results in an other-wordly attitude and thus keeps man from playing an active part in this world.

The defense of the *Purāṇas* in no way implies that Bipincandra has turned reactionary. On the contrary, he consistently opposed reactionary movements. He was especially concerned that the religious revival that was overtaking India might assume extreme dimensions. He personally favoured a middle ground between modernity and tradition. The best elements of modernity ought to be combined with the most valuable heritage of the past. While he praised the progressive outlook of the *Ārya Samāj*, he was dismayed by its intolerance and its narrow-minded insistence upon Vedic infallibility.²⁴

Bipincandra supported modern education which ought to include science and technology. He willingly recognized the fact that English education had made positive contributions to the freedom movement in India. At the same time he criticized the English educational system for its failure to make subject matter relevant to Indians. Of what use was a knowledge of the British fauna or flora to Indian students?²⁵ A modern Indian educational system must foster a spirit of patriotism. But patriotism alone was insufficient. He felt strongly that modern ideas, such as liberty, equality and fraternity must be the underpinning of an independent India. Upon attaining *swarāj*, India ought to be governed on a truly democratic basis, which must include provisions for initiative, recall and referendum.²⁶ In view of his suspicion of the traditional guru-disciple relationship, it is not surprising that he was particularly concerned about the possibility that Gandhiji might turn into a political guru whom the Indian people would blindly follow,²⁷ and

24. *Memories of My Life and Times*, II, 71-74.

25. Bengal Provincial Conference, Barisal—1921 Presidential Address by Bipincandra Pāl (Calcutta, 1291), pp. 38-41.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 63-64.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22; Bipincandra Pāl's Letter to Pandit Motilal Nehru, September 10, 1920 (a copy of this letter has been transmitted to me by Prafulla Mitra, a personal friend of Pāl).

his opposition to the Mahatma is partially based on such considerations. A staunch advocate of individual freedom, Bipincandra, however, clearly stated that freedom must not be confused with licence, and the defence of individual rights must not lead to the unbridled individualism of the West. The traditional Hindu emphasis on duty ought to be retained.²⁸

Bipincandra was not only opposed to modern man's selfish pursuit of his individual goals, he was also apprehensive about the dangers lurking in modern nationalism. Independence must be coupled with inter-dependence, he contended. In this age of shrinking distances, ruthless competition among the nations was suicidal. He, therefore, pleaded for a world-federation. Competition was a slogan of the past. It had to be replaced by cooperation.²⁹ And cooperation must go beyond the realm of politics and economics. Bipincandra was convinced that the Hindu vision of an ultimate unity underlying all diversity was an essential basis for human co-operation. After all, were not all nations particular aspects of the One reality? Was it not the Hindu synthesizing genius that had led him to the scheme of world federation just as it had led India's eminent scientist, Sir Jagadīścandra Bose to detect the unity of the organic and unorganic world? Yoga, the science which could cope with man's inner nature and with the transcendent reality, was most appropriate for this modern age. And had not India's sages proclaimed that it was man's foremost purpose to unfold his latent divinity?³⁰ Seeing the divine potential in man was decidedly a more noble view than that of the modern social scientists who regarded man as the hapless product of his environment. Thus Bipincandra's personal solution of combining a modern way of life with Hindu spirituality seemed universally applicable. By offering India's spiritual riches to the world while accepting the best of the

28. P. D. Saggi, *Life and World of Lal, Bal and Pal* (New Delhi, 1962), p. 268.

29. Bipincandra Pāl, *Responsible Government* (Calcutta, 1917), p. 33; *Speeches of Sri Bepin Chandra Pal, delivered at Madras* (Madras, 1907), pp. 118-19.

30. Saggi, pp. 261-69.



West, Bipincandra had arrived at a similar solution as had been suggested by Swāmi Vivēkānanda and Śrī Aurobindo Ghōse. Alas, the proposed synthesis still awaits implementation on a more than individual basis, both in the East and in the West.

The Indian Mutiny-Cum-Revolt of 1857 and Trinidad (West Indies)

BY

J. C. JHA

The year 1857 was indeed a turning-point in the history of British India and in some respects of the British West Indies: both the regions faced a crisis and both entered a new era soon after. It is the purpose of this paper to focus attention on the impact of the Indian Mutiny-cum-Revolt of 1857¹ on the development of Trinidad.

Early in 1856 the Government and the planters of Trinidad and British Guiana showed great anxiety over the 'unfavourable opinion' expressed by the Emigration Agent at Calcutta, T. Caird, regarding 'the future supply of coolie labour'.² A memorial of the Reform Association of Trinidad said, "Without a steady stream of Indian Immigration this colony could not long continue its present exports, and this was threatened to be impeded...."³ New efforts were made to make Indian labourers in this country happy: the proposal of Dr. H. Mitchell, Agent General of Immigrants in Trinidad, concerning the education and industrial training of the children of Indian immigrants was accepted by the London authorities, and Caird was directed to arrange a 'comfortable' voyage for the Indian teachers and their families from Calcutta to Port-of-Spain.⁴

1. *Port-of-Spain Gazette*, 8 June 1857, said that 'the crisis in Indian affairs' was sufficiently momentous.

2. Public Record Office, London, C.D. 295/191, p. 176.

3. C.D. 295/190, p. 315, Immigration was 'no longer defrayed from the general revenues; it was made 'self-supporting by means of a tax on indentures paid by the planters, and a duty on rum. At this moment there was 'at the credit of this fund £36,000 and yet only one vessel with Indian immigrants had arrived during this year so far.

4. C.O. 295/193, pp. 3389-339; also see *P.O.S. Gazette*, 4, April 1857; for further inducements see *P.O.S. Gazette*, 21 September 1857.

By 1857 it was felt that the salvation of Trinidad economy lay in getting as many Indians to work on the plantations as possible. Steps to get free labourers from other regions like Africa had failed and between 1852 and 1857 only a few slave ships could be captured, yielding only a few emigrants for Jamaica and British Guiana, but none for Trinidad.⁵ Besides, out of about 20,000 African labourers introduced into Trinidad at the state expense since the Emancipation of slaves only about 6,000 could be readily available for work in 1857 and of the emancipated slaves and their descendants three-fourths contributed 'little to the production of the colony'.⁶ This happened at a time when the 'unequalled fertility' of the soil of Trinidad and its easy clearing and cultivation were obvious phenomena in Naparima and Couva districts and the exploitation of 'a tract of undulating land' of about thirty miles—by forty—, 'all capable of cultivation' on the eastern coast⁷ and a large portion of the northern bank of the Caroni river was urgently needed.

Naturally enough, Indian immigration became the most vital problem of Trinidad by 1857: the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* called it 'our great immigration question'.⁸ Between 31 May 1845 and 30 June 1857, 11,458 Indians had been brought to this country and not only 'the increased production' of the colony since emancipation but 'its very existence, social and political' was attributed to this Indian immigration.⁹ The immigration report of Trinidad for 1856 had noted that there was 'preference for Hindoo labour' because they gave 'unalloyed satisfaction to their employers'; they were laborious and dependable.¹⁰

Serious efforts were therefore made in 1857 to get as many Indians as possible. The Trinidad newspaper, the *Port-of-Spain*

5. C.O. 318/220, Memorandum, 4, December 1858.

6. C.O. 25/195, Also see *Papers relating to the West India Colonies and Mauritius* (henceforth referred to as *Papers*), 1859, Part 1, p. 311.

7. C.O. 295/195. The lower grounds of Trinidad, it was asserted by the Immigration Committee of Trinidad, could produce more than Great Britain consumed.

8. 28, October 18957.

9. *Papers*, p. 311.

10. C.O. 295/195, p. 408.

Gazette, expressed disgust at the Immigration Agent, Thompson, at Madras being 'outmanoeuvred by a Mauritius planter' as also at the baseless rumours being circulated in India to prevent Indians from going to Trinidad at a time when planters were 'looking so impatiently for a full supply of labour [sic]'.¹¹ The Council of the Government of Trinidad resolved on 9 January that "with a view to encourage immigration from India it is expedient that the immigration agents in India be authorised to pay by way of free gift to each adult coolie immigrating to Trinidad, a bounty of five rupees, and also to advance to him a further sum not exceeding ten rupees to be repaid from the wages of such a coolie".¹² Eventually on 2 June, Ordinance No. 9 of 1857 was passed with 'the hope of an increased immigration of labourers' from the British possessions in India,¹³ and steps were taken to prevent mortality on the emigrant ships.¹⁴ Trinidad also wanted to nominate its own agents at the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay so that they could work 'specially and exclusively in the interests of this island'.¹⁵ There was also a talk of getting Indian labourers in private vessels and at private expense.¹⁶

It was at this juncture that the news of the great rising in India came to Trinidad—a real bolt from the blue. The Trinidad newspapers published day to day details of the Indian crisis. The *Port-of-Spain Gazette* and the *Trinidad Sentinel* printed the dramatic stories of the outbreaks in the different areas of India and despatches from London on the latest developments were regularly published. Speculations were made on the safety of the British dominion in India as well as on the developments in the North Indian cities. When the news of the rising in Meerut and Delhi of May 1857 reached Trinidad the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* printed the

11. P.O.S. *Gazette*, 24 Jan. 1857. One of the rumours was that the arms and legs of immigrants to Trinidad would be chopped off.

12. C.O. 295/194, p. 31. According to the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* of 24 January 1857, this was an imitation of what the French had been doing in their Indian enclave of Pondicherry to get more and more emigrants.

13. C.O. 295/195, p. 408.

14. P.O.S. *Gazette*, 28 March, 20 May, 24 Oct. and 13 Nov. 1857.

15. *Papers*, p. 312.

16. *Ibid.*

views of London Press, expressing surprise at its suddenness and noted the uncalled for complacency and optimism of Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856.¹⁷ It also quoted sharp criticisms of the acts of Governor-General Canning and his Council.¹⁸ The atrocities committed by the rebels on the Europeans—even women and children—for example, at Cawnpore (Kanpur)—were publicised in the Trinidad newspapers¹⁹ and appeals for contributions to the Indian Relief Fund²⁰ as well as for the observance of purifactory fast were issued.

The *Port-of-Spain Gazette* of 26 August extensively quoted the seditious proclamation from Delhi, calling upon 'all the Hindoos and Mahomedans' at Delhi and Meerut to rise in the name of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi against the 'Christianising measures' of the Europeans, like using the 'swine and beef-fat' in the cartridges. The places worst affected and mentioned in the '*Overland Bombay Times*' of 1 July 1857²¹ were Allahabad, Delhi, Meerut, Ferozepore, Aligarh, Lucknow, Banaras, Hansi, Hissar, Jhansi, Jullundhar, Azamgarh, Fategarh, Jaunpore, Bereily, Shahjahanpur and Aurangabad. Also the accounts of both civil and military risings in Arrah, Patna and Danapur in Bihar²² and the widespread unrest in Central India and Bombay and the signs of disaffection in Madras, Rajasthan, Panjab and Peshawar were printed in the Trinidad press.²³ The idea of exemplary punishments to

17. P.O.S. Gazette, 24 October 1857: his famous remark, "the condition of the Sepoy left nothing to be desired" proved incorrect.

18. P.O.S. Gazette, 7 Nov. 1857. Also see *Trinidad Sentinel*, 13 Nov. 1857. John Peter Grant, who was appointed to pacify the North West Provinces was also bitterly criticised: See *Sentinel*, 10 Dec. 1857 and Edward Thompson & G.T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, new edition, Allahabad, 1958, p. 411.

19. Vide P.O.S. Gazette, 25 July, 7, Sept., 24 Oct., 9, Dec., 1857 and 20 Jan. 1858.

20. P.O.S. Gazette, 9 Dec. and 23 Dec. 1857. Also see *Sentinel* 24 Oct. 10 Nov. and 10 Dec. 1857.

21. P.O.S. Gazette, 26 Aug. 1857.

22. *Ibid.*, 10 Sept. and 26 Sept. 1857 and 17 Apl. 1858; *Trinidad Sentinel*, 26 Nov. 1857.

23. *Trinidad Sentinel*, 27 Aug. and 10 Sep. 1857; P.O.S. Gazette, 26 Aug. 1857.

the rebels suggested in some London newspapers was supported by atleast one Trinidad newspaper²⁴ Even the news of summary trial and hanging or blowing on the guns of the captured rebels found a place in the press. The failure of the British troops to capture Delhi was looked upon with dismay and the capture of the last Mughal emperor and his family was described with a sense of relief in the Trinidad press.²⁵ The *Sentinel* of 26 November 1857 mentioned Delhi as 'that sacred shrine towards which the mutineer sepoy devoutly turned his gaze, that rallying point of disaffection' and on 10 December noted the loss of 61 officers and 1,178 men on the British side in the recapture of the city.

The *Port-of-Spain Gazette* of 24 October 1857 went to the length of suggesting readings 'for a right appreciation of the Great Mutiny in the Bengal Presidency': atlas, encyclopaedia and historical geographies. On the other hand, the *Trinidad Sentinel* of 13 November 1857 printed extracts from the supplement to the *Fort St. George (Madras Gazette)* of 17 July a 'loyal address of Hindoo and Mahomedan inhabitants of Madras' signed by some hundred people to the Governor, George Francis Robert, the third Lord Harris, who had been the Governor of Trinidad from 1848 to 1854.²⁶

As for Indian emigration to Trinidad, the news of the rebellion at first caused dismay in the mind of the planters and the emigration authorities in Calcutta, London and Port-of-Spain. The Emigration Agent at Calcutta reported on 21 September 1857 that his recruiting operations on behalf of the West Indies were "greatly

24. *Sentinel*, 30 July and 10 Sept. 1857.

25. P.O.S. *Gazette*, 24 Oct., 10 Nov. and 25 Nov. 1857.

26. K. N. Bell and W. P. Morrell (ed.), *Select Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1830-1860*, Oxford reprint, 1968, p. 428, f.n.: Harris was married to a daughter of the Archdeacon of Trinidad, and 'was sometimes accused of undue partiality towards the planters'. Possibly he had been instrumental in reviving Indian Immigration to Trinidad in 1851. Also perhaps an emigration depot was established in Madras and emigration from that port was resumed after a lapse of ten years with his goodwill in 1857. While eulogising the great work of Harris in the field of educational development in Trinidad the Attorney General of this country said in August 1857 that like other British administrators in India, he would be 'in the midst of all the anxieties created by the Mutiny: see *Papers*, p. 313.

impeded in consequence of the disturbed state of the Upper Provinces [Bihar and Uttar Pradesh]"²⁷ H. Labouchere informed the Governor of Trinidad, R. Keate, that "the disturbances in India, which have hitherto seriously retarded emigration, leave little hope that the Emigration agents would be able to send out anything to the number which has been ordered"²⁸ and the latter reported that the 'present disturbed state of India has produced an uneasy feeling with regard to the immigration during this season'.²⁹ But soon it was realised that the Indian Rebellion could prove a boon to the Trinidad plantations and the crisis on the labour front in Trinidad could be averted as a result of this rebellion.

One of the reasons for this optimism was the possibility of getting a large number of people out of work because of the disturbance. Keate reported in December 1857 that private intelligence indicated that "in consequence of the troubles in the North of India and the drain on the finances of the country resulting therefrom, all public works have been brought to a standstill" and consequently he imagined that there would be no want of persons ready to emigrate" from Madras.³⁰ But the demand for labour was so great that the Trinidad Legislative Council on 15 December expressed fear that due to the disturbed conditions of North India they would not get more than 3,000 persons in 1858.³¹

Meanwhile even before the rebellion was suppressed and India 'reconquered', speculations began in Indian, British and Trinidad press on the fate of the captured rebel soldiers. One 'Indophilus' in the *Times* suggested that they could be sent to the West Indies—a fate "intolerable to them, though their company, we imagine, would be still more intolerable to the West Indians".³² Around

27. C.O. 318/219, p. 441.

28. *Papers*, p. 382. Also C.O. 295/196: Henry Labouchere (later Lord Taunton) was Secretary of State for the Colonies from Nov. 1855 to Feb. 1868: Sell and Morrel (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 122, f.n.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 324. Also C.O. 295/196.

30. C.O. 295/196.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Vide P.O.S. Gazette, 24 Oct. 1857.

the same time, the West India Committee in London wrote that on the termination of the Indian struggle and the re-establishment of the British Supremacy, the rebel soldiers could be transported for life to the distant land of the West Indies where they could be divided into small groups and utilised as labourers.³³ The Committee said that a preliminary discussion between the leading Directors of the English East India Company and the prominent West Indian planters and well wishers of the West Indies revealed that there was 'a general desire' for trying this experiment, even though there was some risk involved in it. An Act of the British Parliament, it was suggested, should authorise this transportation, the East India Company should bear its cost and the West Indies might meet the expense of reception, employment and control of the exiles. They could as well be allowed to bring their families at the cost of the colonial funds to earn their wages as free labourers; those who were found 'refractory and unmanageable' might be employed on Government work in penal gangs.³⁴ Only two things would distinguish them from the free emigrants: the deductions from their wages and their inability to return.

Similar proposals of the Standing Committee of the Trinidad Council of Immigration were sent to the Board of Land and Emigration in London who on 23 December 1857 forwarded them to the Commissioner for the affairs of India (Board of Control). The Committee thought that additional soldiers and police would be needed for keeping a proper watch on the convict soldiers for whom barracks could be made at St. Joseph and Naparima and the cost might be met from the indenture fees charged on the latter: at the end of indenture an annual fee of two pounds might be charged. An ordinance would be needed to prevent the exiles from getting firearms and gun-powder which would be deposited in the same custody of the Government.

Ten thousand of such convicts, the Committee said, might be brought to Trinidad annually for several years³⁵ because very soon

33. *Ibid.*, 30 Dec. 1857: The memorial was submitted on 16 October 1857.

34. *Ibid.* Also see C.O. 295/196.

35. C.O. 295/196, pp. 384-85. Later in June 1858 a request was made by some people of the valleys of St. Mary (Jamaica) to the Governor of that island that a portion of these mutineer sepoys should be sent there.

the building of railroad, the cultivation of new and fertile lands, and possibly the asphalt and other mines³⁶ would absorb them. If the British Government was willing to get a guaranteed loan for Trinidad 'all persons sentenced to deportation' could be sent to Trinidad even within a limited time.³⁷

The Governor of Trinidad, while generally agreeing with these suggestions, emphasized the necessity of removing all semblance of compulsion and penal labour camp, lest the normal Indian immigration might be adversely affected. "The cost of deportation, he thought, should not be charged on the convicts for this would put them in a different category from the normal indentured Indian labourers and bring in an element of dissatisfaction. The ex-soldiers might be indentured to agricultural farms for ten years,³⁸ but the Governor could transfer their services or cancel their indentures. Their services could as well be assigned to the Government rather than to the individual estates and like other Indian labourers, they could be permitted to purchase their time.

By early 1858 these proposals were discussed several times in the columns of the Trinidad press. The *Sentinel* of 17 December 1857 saw an evidence of 'madness' and 'cupidity' in this 'much talked of matter of sepoy [soldier] immigration' and opposed 'the plan of foisting upon us the rebels from India' even though at the cost of the East India Company. Unlike the low-caste Indian labourers who had so far been satisfied in Trinidad, it pointed out, a 'Brahmin sepoy' would foster discontent among the immigrants and this would eventually prove to be 'a dearer bargain'.³⁹

36. Around this time there was a possibility of discovering coal, iron, gold, etc., in Trinidad.

37. C.O. 295/196: About £50,000 would be needed every six months for deporting 10,000 convicts.

38. Under the Immigration Ordinance No. 24 of 1854 the indentured Indian labourer had to stay for ten years in Trinidad before getting a return passage, but in the case of the soldiers the question of return should not arise.

39. One 'Philos' wrote in the *Sentinel* of 18 Feb. 1858 that the 'tens of thousands of semi-friends from the charnel house of Bengal, even though alleged to be high-caste men, would not behave better than the low-caste ones, who some time back attempted to murder their Manager for refusing

The *Gazette* of 27 January 1858 quoted from the *Times* the view of 'Indophilus' that the soldier exiles might come in contact with their countrymen in the West Indies and effect their escape. Yet another view expressed here was that the soldiers could be first brought to Barbados and then permanently employed in different parts of the West Indies with a climate similar to India. Far removed from 'their idolatrous temples, their priests and heathen practices',⁴⁰ they would exploit the 'inexhaustible resources in fertile soil', atone for their offences and could become Christians and good citizens in due course.

On 17 April 1858 the *Gazette* quoted from Bengal Hurkaru or Hircarrah⁴¹ of Calcutta rumours regarding the deportation of the Indian rebels to the Andaman islands in the Bay of Bengal where they would die a slow death and called it a design of the Indian Government to select... [a] less distant position as a penal settlement' when the West Indies had been willing to take them. The *Gazette* pleaded that even though the proposal of the West Indies smacked of self-interest' it should have been presented in a clear way in the British Parliament: the West Indian Governments, the planters in England and the West India Association

them permission to travel: "If those who act thus came from the Feet of Brahma, what may be expect from those who proceeded from his mouth!" 'philos' was obviously referring to the ancient Hindu theory of the *Purushasukta* on the origin of *chaturvarnya* (four orders): "When they divided the primeval being (*Purusha*), the Brahman was his mouth, the Rajanya (*Kahatriya*) became his arms, the Vaishya was his thighs, and from his feet sprang the Shudra." At one time in Bengal the British recruited only the "largest, handsomest, and cleverest-looking men, who are undoubtedly the high castes": quoted in Stephen P. Cohan, 'The Untouchable Soldier: Caste, Politics, and the Indian Army', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, May 1969. Of the untouchables, Chamars and Mahars of Western India were recruited in large numbers before the Mutiny, but after this event their recruitment stopped. That is one reason why large numbers of them emigrated to Trinidad.

40. How off the mark and what a prophecy!

41. This newspaper, founded in 1793, had a circulation in 1828 of 155 daily average and 1,000 weekly and it was one of the main defenders of Indian emigrants: I. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories* (1834-1864), London, 1953, p. 5, fn. 5. The India Office Library in the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, has a full collection of this newspaper.

would not in any case carry so much weight as the 'clearly expressed wish of the people' of the West Indies in favour of bringing the banished Indian soldiers to their territories.

Nothing came out of these pleadings because of certain significant developments on the British Indian scene: the termination of the East India Company's Government, the taking over of the Indian administration by the British Crown through the Government of India Act of 1858 which created the office of the Secretary of State for India with a Council of India as the highest policy-making body in place of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control; Queen Victoria's proclamation of amnesty to those Indians who were not involved in serious crimes; and the clemency shown by Governor-General Canning.⁴² On new 'political considerations the British Government decided not to deport the convicted sepoys to the West Indies.⁴³ Looking back at this decision and considering the fate of some of these unfortunate sepoys in the Andamans,⁴⁴ one can say that their deportation to Trinidad would have been better at least from the humanitarian point of view.

All the same, some of the rebel sepoys and civilians did trickle into Trinidad. In fact, the Indian Revolt of 1857 did for Trinidad what all other inducements would have failed to do; the trickle of Indian immigrants became a stream. While only 673 Indians had emigrated to Trinidad from Calcutta in 1854, 290 in 1855 and 608 in 1856, now in 1857 came 1,374; in 1858 Calcutta yielded 1,638 and Madras 379; in 1859, 3288 came (1,867 from Calcutta and 1,421 from Madras); in 1860 came 2,160 (1,327 from Calcutta and 833 from Madras); and in 1861 came 2,541 (2,306

42. *The P.O.S. Gazette* of 26 January 1859 called the year 'a memorable year for India'

43. C.O. 318/220, p. 13.

44. D. W. D. Comins, *Note on Emigration from India to Trinidad*, Cal. 1893, p. 24. In 1858 the number of Indians emigrating to Mauritius was 29,948; British Parliamentary Papers, *Emigration*, No. 14, Sessions 1859-61, Appendix No. 19. For the first time Grenada received about 1,000 Indians in 1857-59; St. Lucia 555 in 1859 and 660 in 1860; St. Vincent received 700 in 1860 and 1861; See W. P. Morrell (ed.), *British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age* Oxford 1969 p. 459.

from Calcutta and 235 from Madras. By 1861 the Indians formed 15.9 per cent (13,488) of the population of 84,438.⁴⁵

During 1858-59 there was a sense of relief at the prospect of getting more and more Indians for the West Indies. The London Emigration Office reported on 9 December 1858 that Trinidad would now get 'a considerable number of emigrants in excess of the number ordered (3,000)'⁴⁶ and the Trinidad Legislative Council in February 1859 took note of it.

Later Richard Temple in his minute of 14 September 1875 noted that the highest total figure ever reached by emigration from Calcutta was 27,779 in 1858 and in only one other year it was more than 25,000.⁴⁷ The Government of India in one of their despatches of 3 May 1877 corroborated this: "the largest number of emigrants that ever sailed from Calcutta was in 1858, immediately after the Mutiny; and it has been conjectured that the two circumstances were not without connexion; next to that year came the following one, 1859, when 25,337 persons left the Hooghly [Calcutta]".⁴⁸ Even the periods of famine and scarcity conditions did not lead to such an exodus: in 1860 and 1861, when the North-Western Provinces [Agra] were in the grips of famine, only 17,899 and 22,600, respectively, were recruited; and in 1865-66 when Orissa and Bihar were suffering from a terrible famine and scarcity conditions prevailed in Oudh and the eastern parts of the North-Western Provinces 24,571 and 20,109, respectively emigrated.

Uttar Pradesh, Western Bihar and Northern Madhya Pradesh were the worst affected areas during the stormy days of 1857-59. A great destruction of life and property took place during the risings and in the course of their suppression, all agricultural and commercial activities were stopped. The orgy of mutual slaughter in which even innocent lives were lost, and the fake trials and consequent hangings at the nearest trees left no other choice for

45. Donald Wood, *Trinidad in Transition*, London, 1968, p. 158: all estates except one indented for Indian labourers in 1857.

46. C.O. 318/220, p. 352. Also *P.O.S. Gazette*, 5 February 1859.

47. Vide, *Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates* (Sanderson Committee report), London, 1910, p. 8.

48. *Ibid.*



many people than to flee the country. The mopping-up operations were held not only in the urban areas but also in the countryside. Walled cities were stormed in the fashion of the irregular wars of the Middle Ages rather than in the way regular wars were fought in the nineteenth century. In the Oudh area alone more than 100,000 men were under arms apart from the rebel sepoys and over 1,500 forts were demolished.⁴⁹ The districts of Saharanpur, Muzzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bulandshehar and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh were 'scenes of utter anarchy and confusion' during this period when 'villages had arisen against villages, Hindoo against Muhammoden, debtor against creditor' and "lawlessness and plunder had run riot over these tracts, and the authority of the British Government had been for months suspended".⁵⁰ Eventually, "great and signal retribution fell upon them. Large properties were confiscated, towns laid waste, rebels actively hunted up, heavy fines inflicted. Villagers fled for fear of vengeance. Land fell out of cultivation. Arrears of collection of land revenue, suspended during the mutinies, hung heavily over the heads of the people. The excitement of the time of disturbance (*alam-i-bulma*) was followed by a period of reaction and of torpor."⁵¹ The famine, epidemics and the hostile attitude of most of the British officials ruined the peasants completely and they availed of every opportunity of escape.

In the light of this ruinous state of affairs, it is no surprise to find Caird at Calcutta writing on 31 October 1857 that the labourers with their families came walking sometimes forty days to Calcutta depot, mostly from the districts of Banaras, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Ghazipur—all in Uttar Pradesh—and Muzaffarpur, Saran with headquarters at Chapra, Shahabad with headquarters at Arrah, Patna, Gaya, Chota-Nagpur and Hazaribagh in Bihar⁵²—the most disturbed pockets of North India. The map of

49. L. S. S. O'Malley (ed.), *Modern India and the West*, London, 1941, p. 56. The P.O.S., *Gazette* of 20 February 1856 and 26 September 1857 described the fate of this area 'newly brought under British rule' (in 1856).

50. Vide B. B. Misra, *Administrative History of India, 1834-1947*, Bombay 1970, p. 439.

51. Report of Auckland Colvin, quoted, *ibid.*...

52. *Papers*, p. 450. The author of this paper has met many aged people in Trinidad who come from these districts and they still speak Amedhi or

North-Western and Central India provided in S. N. Sen's book, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (Calcutta, 1958 (reprint)), when compared to the map Judith Ann Weller's *The East Indian Indenture in Trinidad* (Puerto Rico, 1968), makes it clear that the vast majority of the indentured emigrants came from areas worst affected by the turmoil of 1857-58 and Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Azamgarh, Faizabad, Ghazipur, Basti, Balia, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Jaunpur, Sultanpur and Mizapur in Uttar Pradesh and Arrah, Chapra, Patna, Gaya and Hazaribagh in Bihar contributed most to Mutiny as well as to emigration to Trinidad through the port of Calcutta. Geoghegan's *Report on Coolie Emigration* says that up to 1871, 36,413⁵³ Indians emigrated to Trinidad from these areas via the port of Calcutta of which 8,396 (21.9 per cent) were from West Bengal, 1,305 (3.6 per cent) from Central Bengal, 11,278 (29.3 per cent) from Bihar, 16,027 (41.7 per cent) from the North-West Provinces (Agra), Oudh and Central India. Temple in the above-mentioned report of 1875 naturally said that the North-West Provinces, Oudh and Bihar were 'the fields' from which the emigrants were chiefly drawn.⁵⁴

The Bengal native army consisted mostly of recruits from Oudh and Bhojpur and most of them were of high castes—Brahman and Kshatriya. Now that this army was disbanded and the recruitment of Bhojpuris stopped as a result of their part in the Mutiny, many of them had to emigrate to foreign countries. For fear of being arrested and charged on suspicion of complicity in the rebellion, many gave wrong information regarding name, address and caste. The Register of the ship "Ellenborough" of 1858 kept in the Warden's Office, Hart Street, Port-of-Spain, does not mention the *zila* (administrative division), *pargana* (revenue divi-

Bhojpuri dialects of Hindi. Indian place names in Trinidad connected with the cities of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and names of persons connected with Rama and Krishna are further evidence of their connection with these parts of India.

53. According to *Sanderson Report*, p. 5, in Trinidad there were 103,000 Indians in 1887 and between 1845 and 1871 Calcutta, Bombay and Madras ports contributed 42,519 emigrants.

54. *Sanderson Report*, p. 8.

sion) and the village, not even the names of relatives of the emigrants.⁵⁵ Also, of 191 immigrants in 1859-60, brought by "Bruce", 108 are recorded only as Tamil (of Madras or Tamilnadu) and Telugu (of Andhra Pradesh) speaking, one as Zamindar and another as just a Hindu, and their caste and other details are left out.⁵⁶

Underhill, a Christian missionary, spoke to the people from Bihar, the North-west Province, Oudh and Bengal in 1859 and in Arouca (on the Eastern Main Road between Arims and Tunapuna) he 'discovered among them some rebel sepoys from India', one of them being 'a follower of Ummar [Amar] Singh of Jugdes-pore [Jegadishpur of Shahabed district near Arrah in Bihar].⁵⁷ Underhill says that these sepoys were 'far removed from the leanness and obsequiousness' of the Bengali ryot and their 'demeanour and plumpness of form' testified to their prosperous condition.⁵⁸ However, as soon as they learnt that Underhill knows 'those parts of India from which they came, they quickly walked off, apparently fearing that the discovery of their connection with the mutiny might in some way compromise them.⁵⁹ Again, Charles Kingsley wrote in 1890 that some high-caste Hindu sepoys emigrated to Trinidad after the Rebellion of 1857.⁶⁰

55. J. A. Weller, *The East-Indian Indenture in Trinidad*, p. 123, fn.2.

56. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

57. E. B. Underhill, *The West Indies, their social and religious condition* 1862. Two brothers, Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh, were the Rajput (Kshatriya) Zamindars and leaders of the rebels in Bhojpur, West Bihar. The former, 80 years old marched through Rohtas, Mirzapur, Rewa and Bandel threatening British communications, tried to establish contact with the Maratha rebel leader Nana Sahib, at Cawnpore and the Begam of Oudh at Lucknow, occupied Azamgarh for some time and died of gun wounds on April 1858. See S. N. Sen., *op. cit.*, pp. 248-56. Some of the descendants of those heroes of 1857 may be found today in Arouca and other areas. Also see *Sentinel*, 13 November and 26 November 1857. One Trinidad Indian, Tesh Ramnarine Mahabir Singh's great grandfather, Echchow Singh, had been killed in action in the Indian Mutiny: M. J. Kirpalani & others (ed.), *Indian Centenary Review, Trinidad—1845-1945*, p. 147.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *At last, a Christmas in the West Indies*, London, p. 99.

G. K. Gohale, one of the top Indian liberal leaders, who was instrumental in getting the indenture system abolished in 1917, once said in the Indian Imperial Legislative Council that the mutiny was 'a serious national disaster' and 'the cloud of distrust, suspicion, and prejudice then raised still hangs over the country'.⁶¹ Part of this 'cloud' seems to have come over to Trinidad also. Indian labourers who had so far been treated as meek, docile and trustworthy creatures by the white planters were now on occasions looked upon with suspicion. Some Trinidadians even thought that 'violence lurked just below the surface in the Indian temperament' and that they were 'living on the crust of a volcano'.⁶² Repeated discussion of atrocities committed from both sides in India in 1857-59 only increased the bitterness. In 1859 there were 'boisterous parades' during the Muharram celebrations in Port-of-Spain and a riot at St. Joseph.⁶³ Between 1859 and 1865 there were several cases of serious fighting and murder by Indians, and these were treated as an aftermath of the mutiny.⁶⁴

The Indian Mutiny-cum-Revolt of 1857 indeed accelerated the process of Indian emigration and brought a new dimension into the relationship between the planters and the indentured Indian labourers in Trinidad. Since the emotions were at 'a high pitch' during the post-mutiny period, every little incident among the Indians in Trinidad was connected with the frenzy of the mutiny. Sweeping remarks were made about the temperament of the Indians in general and too much was read in the increase in the case of 'ferocious onslaughts with their cutlass', 'steeped in barbaric darkness' and 'like the monster in Frankenstein', said the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* of 18 January 1865, the Indian portion of Trinidad population might acquire 'a vitality and strength', carrying it beyond control, and 'hurl it headlong on the community that has matured it'. Even the agitation for an increase of wages among Indians

61. R. P. Patwardhan & D. V. Ambekar (ed.), *The Speeches and writings of G. K. Gokhale*, Poona, 1962, p. 472.

62. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 154; C.O. 295/204 and P.O.S. Gazette, 18 August 1860.

63. P.O.S. Gazette, 13 July 1859.

64. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-54.



was interpreted as sedition. A letter to the editor of the *Gazette*⁶⁵ asserted that there might not be obviously a 'deep laid scheme' maturing in Trinidad, but 'can any one explain the mysterious chuputties which first appeared near Delhi and traversed the whole length and breadth of the land?' It also referred to cartridge incident and the developments at Meerut, Delhi, and other places during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and suggested the creation of a special constabulary and a Rifle Corps or Artillery for nipping the trouble in the bud. A report of the Immigration Office of Trinidad of 3 April 1856 said that the retired Mohommedan soldier or sepoy', considered inferior in domestic and social relations to every grade of Hindoo and utterly unfitted for agricultural pursuits' and anti-Christian in attitude, had not satisfied the planters, but 'the number of sepoys is fortunately as yet too scanty to admit proof of the latter'.⁶⁶

Nothing like a widespread rebellion occurred in Trinidad and the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* of 3 May allayed the fears of 'timid' sceptics by asserting that there was no disaffection among the Indians and there was no need of a special police either, asking them further "to discard the ideas of even remote danger in connexion with our Indian population' and to believe that there is not a single feature of the great military insurrection among the native troops of India in 1857 that justifies reference to it while speaking of the Coolie laborer [sic] on the Sugar Estates of Trinidad".

However, from 1882 to 1884 'strikes of a very serious nature' occurred on the estates in Naparima and El Socorro and Laurel Hill in Tacarigua.⁶⁷ The Hindus of South Trinidad were reported during this period to be fostering dissatisfaction in the Naparima districts and Regulation No. 9 of 1882 was passed by the Government of Trinidad to restrict processions during the Muharram and the Madrasi Temitarna festivals.⁶⁸ What followed in San Fer-

65. 4 Feb. 1865. Chapati is a lighter variety of roti (Indian bread). For this chapati incident of the Mutiny of 1857, see S. N. Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-401.

66. *Vide P.O.S. Gazette*, 3 May 1865.

67. Comins, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

68. *Papers on Recent Coolie Disturbances at the Mohurram Festival*, 1885, encl. I, No. 5.

nando in 1884 as a reaction to these restrictions was a repetition of what had happened near Hyderabad (now capital of Andhra Pradesh in South India) in 1855 on the Muharram day and a reenactment of some of the scenes of the Mutiny of 1857 in North India; Hindus and Muslims combined to protest against restrictions imposed by the British Government on their religious customs and movements during festivals and in the confrontation that followed, several Indians were killed and injured.⁶⁹ The Muharram (Husain) riot of 1884 was perhaps "a demonstration of Indian nationalism in which the Hindus also took part".⁷⁰

The bogey⁷¹ of the Mutiny of 1857 seems to have continued to haunt the planters and some others in Trinidad for quite some time and they kept themselves in readiness to contain any confrontation; they perhaps forgot that the atrocities had been committed in India in 1857-58 by both parties during the heat of the moment and that the shameful acts were committed on the Indian side 'either by sepoys who were maddened by religious fanaticism and stricken by terror, or by ruffians and criminals who had been let out of jails'⁷² and the common peasants, artisans and others who,

69. *Ibid.* Many Indians who had emigrated through the ports of Calcutta and Madras during the post-Mutiny period might have taken part in the confrontation of 1884. Colonel Colin Mackenzie was attacked at Solarum near Hyderabad for banning 'procession, music and noise on Mohurram Day, for which some people were punished: See S. N. Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

70. Alan Burns, *History of the British West Indies*, London, 1954, p. 679. One of the main causes of the riots, according to Norman report, was the resentment among the indentured labourers at the increase in the size of tasks (allotted works) in the preceding months: Br. pp. 1884-5, LIII, C. 4366. Also *Recent Coolie Disturbances in Trinidad*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 59.

71. K. A. Grant in *My Missionary Memories* (Halifax, 1923), p. 94, says that in the course of a sermon at San Fernando he emphasised the necessity of 'using and strengthening moral forces, lest on a limited scale we should be exposed to the tragedies of 1857 in India, and this was misrepresented as a threat of another mutiny in a local newspaper. Indeed, Cawnpore, as Wood says (*op. cit.*, pp. 154-55) had joined Haiti in creating a terror among whites and coloured planters and other rich men and the Trinidad Governor in 1859 even suggested the recruitment of additional black soldiers in the West India Regiment.

72. Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Delhi, Vol. II, p. 105.

by and large, emigrated to Trinidad were peace-loving people and their labour bore such a fruit that by 1861 Mitchell was boasting that with the labour force of 15,000 Indians that year, Trinidad would export about 700,000 tons of sugar, more than the expected crop of Cuba.⁷³

73. P.O.S. Gazette, 1 March 1861.

Mass Politics and the Punjab Congress in the Pre-Gandhian Era*

BY

N. G. BARRIER

Recent studies on South Asian political history question the standard view of Congress primacy in regional affairs. This paper places the nationalist movement within the context of what was happening in one province, the Punjab, prior to 1919, and examines its weakness in developing broad-based or mass political support. The first section discusses the major concerns of Punjab politicians and shows the relevance of these elements for the Congress. The second deals with a set of incidents, the 1907 Punjab disturbances, as a case study of an attempt at mass recruitment.

The Punjab has acquired a reputation as being non-political prior to the Gandhian era, a backwater of Indian nationalism. Punjabis often accepted the assessment. In fact, the Punjab was politicized but in a fashion dissimilar to that of other provinces. Karl Deutsch has suggested that communication networks consist of two aspects relevant to political development, structure and content. In the Punjab, both reflected parochial patterns and interests. Economic and social considerations (tribe and caste) influenced emerging links among agriculturists. Urban politics tended to revolve around religious communalism. Possessing journals, finances, and instant appeal, religious organizations influenced political commitment and on occasion mobilized sections of the population. Agrarian and communal networks created the political context within which the Congress had to operate.

The communal pattern which became increasingly apparent after 1849 had its roots in the social and political structure of pre-British Punjab. Continual invasion and cultural confrontation had

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produced a society composed of three different but sometimes overlapping segments—Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh—each with its customs, boundaries, and traditional elites (landed and religious). Virtually balanced population, with the western districts primarily Muslim and the east Hindu-Sikh, these communities shared a heritage of conflict involving war, rioting, and struggle for converts.

British rule accentuated religious divisions. Ideas and institutions accompanying the *raj* stimulated a sorting out of identity and goals, with the result that each community developed revivalist and reform associations, propaganda media, schools, and related programmes. Muslims had two organizations with district branches, the Anjuman-i-Islamia and the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, newspapers, and a tract society (the Mohamedan Tract and Book Depot). The Arya Samaj had dozens of branches and between 1885 and 1905 was involved in at least fifteen journalistic enterprises. Singh Sabhas dotted the Punjab, with propaganda agencies including the Khalsa Tract Society and the Sikh Handbill Society. These facilitated communication within religious groups and spread political awareness based on assessments of history and current events.¹

Communal identity found expression in the British system which set the rules, goals, and structures for formal political activity.

The British encouraged agitation along western lines by indicating that Punjabis' wishes could affect policy and by introducing arenas of competition such as municipal elections.² Punjab religious communities responded with efforts to influence the British and control new institutions. Associations such as the Arya Samaj provided leaders and funds for political maneuvering. In addition

1. Discussion of organizations in the following: Mian Shah Din, "Mohamedan Societies in the Punjab," *The Indian Magazine*, 1898, pp. 188-90; N. G. Barrier, "Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 1870-1890", *Punjab Past and Present* (forthcoming, Spring 1970); Barrier, "The Punjab Government and Communal Politics", *JAS*, 27 (1968) 363-79; Barrier, *The Sikhs and Their Literature* (Delhi, 1970); Kenneth Jones, "Communalism in the Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution", *JAS*, 27 (1968) 39-54; Munsha Singh Dukhi, *Jivan Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid* (Amritsar, n.d.); Harbans Singh and Jagjit Singh, "Singh Sabha Lahir", in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Panjab 1849-1960* (Ludhiana, 1962).

2. The Punjab case illustrated in Barrier, "The Punjab Government".

to agitation, the organizations also were involved in politics in that they marshalled resources to determine the allocation of values, power and prestige within and outside their community.³

The gradual institutionalization of communal identity meant that religious issues tended to dominate urban activities. The western-educated elite led the new organizations, cooperating with the aristocracy in order to legitimize programmes. This involvement did not preclude alliance on a secular basis, although competition and conflict usually made cooperation temporary. Between 1882 and 1884, for example, Lahore residents held meetings over the Ilbert Bill and the Norris Court case involving Surendranath Banerjea.⁴ Religious affiliation nevertheless overrode class interest. As a prominent Sikh commented, almost every attempt to perpetuate Hindu-Muslim unity disappeared as immediate issues became less important.⁵

Moreover, spreading religious nationalism made such experiments increasingly difficult. By 1909, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims were involved in all-Punjab organizations—the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Punjab Hindu Sabha, and the Punjab Muslim League.⁶

In the last years of the century, town-based communal organizations began to harness the resources of co-religionist in the

3. On the various agitations, see "Special Branch Note on the Agitation against Cow-Killing", in GIP (GI Public), Jan. 1894, 309-414B (NAI); PGG (PG Committee), May 1886 9-12A (West Pak. Record Office); evidence and resolutions in *Report of the Public Service Commissions Punjab Evidence* (Calcutta, 1887). This broader concept of politics opens the possibility of discussion beyond the usual form of political activity associated with the period (exemplified by the definitions and approach of a recent book on Indian nationalism by Anil Seal).

4. *Tribune*, March 17, 1883, p. 2; September 15, 1883, p. 4. One product of these agitations was a "unity society" to bridge religious differences.

5. Mohan Singh Vaid, pp. 71-73.

6. On the Sikhs, see *Golden Jubilee Book, Chief Khalsa Diwan* (Amritsar, 1958), Nahar Singh (ed.), "Developments in Sikh Politics, 1900-1911", *Gurduara Gazette*, April 1969, English section, pp. 6-70; Muslim League, Muahmmad Shafi memorandum, July 25, 1908, GIP, August 1908, 45B.; Hindu Sabha, noting and memorials in GIPOL (Home-Political), October 1909, 29-31A. Hindu concern over their proportionate loss in population was illustrated in essay contests on the theme, "Why are Hindus in decline?" Sikhs and Muslims voiced similar concerns, mobilizing co-religionists for census and to protect themselves in areas of conversion and language controversy.

countryside. The rampant paranoid of Punjab sects, accentuated by constitutional developments, fostered the extension of networks beyond urban centers. Believing that survival depended on its size and overall condition, each community tried to widen its membership and strengthen its position through education, improved health, and ultimately boundary maintenance (new stress on symbols, purification, and self-identity as contrasted with other Punjabis). The Arya Samaj, for example, sponsored *Shuddhi* (cleansing, conversion ceremonies) among low caste agriculturists, a tactic designed to increase the Hindu population and to weaken opponents. Arya Samaj propaganda tended to be in sanskritized Urdu, intelligible only to the most educated, but the Samaj did dispatch *prachar* or preaching teams to instruct Hindus and prevent conversion to Islam or Sikhism. The Sikhs already had limited involvement outside the cities, with the village-based Singh Sabhas reflecting the demography and lines of authority within the community.

The Sabhas produced thousands of publications, usually in simple Panjabi, and sent out preaching-singing bands for work with illiterate villagers. Delegates attended fairs and historic gurudwaras, both central spots for the dispersed and primarily agrarian Sikhs.⁷

These movements had the long-range potential of influencing agrarian alignments. They also created new channels of communication which could be tapped if necessary. In 1908-9, for example, Singh Sabhas contacted a large portion of the Sikh community and prepared monster petitions on the Anand Marriage Bill.⁸

The penetration of communal networks coincided with the emergence of another link among agriculturists, organizations articulating rural interests, Jat, Rajput, and eventually zamindar associations began to meet for conferences, discuss issues and prepare resolutions. The government provided impetus for the development by encouraging associations as a means of dealing with debt and related problems. Pro-rural sentiment, as exhibited

7. For example, the publications discussed in Barrier. The Sikhs and articles by Kenneth Jones and Barrier which deal with Sikh and Hindu movements (*The Indian Archives*, forthcoming, Spring 1970).

8. Background in K. S. Talwar, "The Anand Marriage Act," *Punjab Past and Present*, II (1968), 400-410.

by the Punjab Alienation of Land Act and later by reserved seats for agriculturists, also stimulated political awareness. *Jagirdars* and other landed aristocrats led the associations with the assistance of retired officials and lawyers who purchased farm land (often in the canal colonies).⁹

In their early stages, these rural associations had no definite connection with the cities. The professional classes prominent in urban affairs generally were disinterested in organizing the masses. Their concerns and constituencies were local. To them, politics consisted of presenting "public opinion" in the form of speeches and petitions and then letting the British reach decisions. Rare attempts at united action focussed on horizontal mobilization, involving the formation of corresponding committees and coordination of meetings. Why develop new techniques and broaden a political base, especially along vertical lines? The need did not seem to exist as long as leaders of a small elite accepted a limited notion of politics involving constitutional agitation and issues touching less than one percent of the population. Some such as Lajpat Rai did claim to "represent the masses," but politicians usually lacked the empathy and skills necessary to reach beyond their own interest groups. Punjabis were not alone in this regard. Their orientation toward politics was a common one shared by most westernized elites in India. As in other provinces, politicians developed new techniques and programmes aiming at mass recruitment primarily in response to challenges to their position and claims.

The commitments and self-image of Punjab politicians also influenced their role in the Indian National Congress. The Punjab then as now boomed with activity and excitement—urban groups were creating institutions, competing, working in caste and religious organizations, founding companies, and vying for prestige. Nationalism appeared irrelevant in light of those local concerns. Only when provincial developments or outside forces affected leaders

9. The *Civil and Military Gazette* and the *Tribune* occasionally printed articles on the associations, 1880-1907. For the British attitude toward rural classes and resulting policies, Barrier, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill* of 1900 (Durham, 1965). The Punjab Unionist Party tended to view the alienation act as a touchstone of their programme.

did they show enthusiasm for Indian nationalism.¹⁰ Punjabis wrote and spoke of nationalism, but almost invariably they meant the Hindu, or Sikh, or Muslim nation.¹¹ Even early in Punjab political development, religious consciousness among the western-educated elite interfered with the growth of a broader notion of nationhood.

From another perspective, the Congress tended to develop when and where specific groups championed its cause.¹² The Punjab lacked a core of politicians interested in cooperation across provincial or communal lines. The few supporters of Congress, such as Jaishi Ram, Dyal Singh, J. C. Bose, and K. P. Roy, either were Bengali or Punjabis who because of their background shared the cosmopolitan outlook of the Bengalis. Another generation of politicians appearing by the 1890's, however, shared a different orientation.¹³ Although sometimes attending sessions and working within the mildly pro-Congress Lahore Indian Association, the new men (predominately Khatri and Arora with Hindu or Arya Samaj leanings) challenged Congress goals. Lajpat Rai's references to a forthcoming session in 1901, for example, contained attacks on alleged Muslim appeasement by national leaders and a call for an all-India Hindu Congress.¹⁴ Others demanded that the Congress espouse "practical" programmes such as national education and industry, activities modelled on what *bania* politicians were talking about doing in the Punjab. Parochialism and arrogance characterized Punjabis' dealings at annual meetings. Their speeches reflected conflicting but vivid self-images—we are warlike, rustic and unpolished, but practical, honest, and most importantly, efficient.¹⁵ Although taking second place in speechmaking, Punjab delegates

10. Patterns of participation evaluated in Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics", *JAS*, 26 (1967), 363-79.

11. Such references often appear in the tracts and speeches of the period.

12. For example, the Chitpavan Brahmans in Maharashtra or Kayasthas in the United Provinces.

13. Biographical information in Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress".

14. Lajpat Rai, "The Coming Indian National Congress," *Kayastha Samachar*, IV (1901), 376-85.

15. Letters and articles in *Tribune*, December 1900, and April 1903. Also, Lajpat Rai, "The Coming Congress". For the Congress leadership's response, see Dinshaw Wacha to Pherozeshah Mehta, February 2, 1889, Mehta Papers (filmed copy. NAI), Wacha to Dadabhai Naoroji, December 19, 1903, Naoroji Papers (NAI).

wheeled and dealed behind the scenes in much the same fashion they did at home. They took pride in their huffy, periodic withdrawals from Congress circles.

II

Between 1904 and 1907, Punjab politicians renewed contact with the Congress, a process culminating in the first attempt to link divergent sections in province-wide politics. The resulting disturbances involved three different but some-what connected sets of agitation. Examination of what happened illustrates problems relevant to this panel.

The Punjab government's zeal to protect canal colonists created the very situation it most feared, an aroused countryside susceptible to anti-British propaganda.¹⁶ The paternal canal legislation, which cut across existing rights, and increased rates along the Bari Doab canal precipitated a unique popular agitation. The campaign to alter British policy had rural leaders, techniques, and goals. The colonists leading the movement developed their own strategies without prior planning or coordination with urban organizations. Although mass demonstrations brought out as many as ten thousand protestors, leaders did not stop with petitions but escalated toward nonpayment of land revenue and pressure exerted through Indian army units. Propaganda was designed to appeal to generally illiterate agriculturists, such as cartoons, circulars, and songs echoing the self-respect and warlike traditions of Puniabis. Besides being a rural movement, the agitation also was differentiated from past activity by its noncommunal nature. The colonization bill affected Hindus and Muslims, who mixed freely and even drank from the same vessels. Finally, the agitation was tied to specific issues, and when the British backed down, organized opposition ended.

The Hindu-dominated Lahore Indian Association and a loose coalition of urban Puniabis rallying under the Congress banner led a second agitation. As in the past and future, communal cooperation

16. The following treatment of the disturbances is based on my unpublished dissertation from Duke, 1966 ("The Punjab Disturbances of 1907") and an article "The Punjab Disturbances of 1907," *Modern Asian Studies*, 1 (1967), 353-383.

and Congress involvement were due primarily to a combination of local circumstance and pressures from outside the Punjab. British favoritism toward the rural population and bureaucratic insensitivity to the expectations of western-educated Punjabis alienated Hindu and Muslim politicians. Non-recognition of elite claims fostered resentment and political experimentation such as had occurred in Bengal and Bombay earlier. This coincided with a tendency to identify with other Indians in response to the climate of racism and imperial domination symbolized by the Curzon regime, and particular events such as the Bengal partition. In addition to sending delegates to Congress sessions, the Indian Association formed branches to organize agitation on a systematic basis. The British were to be coerced into listening to the self-declared leaders of the Punjab. The same men, primarily lawyers, led the district organizations, but the tone of speeches and journalism was anti-British, meetings larger, and demands more radical. Boycott and hartal were employed gingerly for the first time. Amidst the waves of patriotism, some politicians even discussed harnessing discontent in the canal colonies.

British mistakes, such as ill-chosen prosecutions and mishandling of local issues (*begar*, Octroi) fed the agitation, and their responses eventually undercut the mushrooming unrest. The government employed a combination of tactics to maintain order. These included manipulation of groups, seizing suspected ring-leaders (Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai) and attempts to rebuild trust between the bureaucracy and moderate Punjabis.

Despite the British contribution to quieting urban and rural demonstrations, the fact remains that the Punjab Congress proved ineffectual at developing sustained organization and contacts which might have survived the loss of immediate issues. The district organizations disintegrated, secular political activity outside a small elitist circle ended, and the Congress did not become prominent for another decade. The failure further denotes dominant themes in Punjab politics.

Congress supporters were unprepared to capitalize on opportunities for mass mobilization. Surprised by the degree of unrest, they searched for innovations or a plan which would aid in focusing public sentiment. Lajpat Rai, for example, attempted to

secure books on Irish rural politics and unions.¹⁷ Other politicians suggested transplanting a modified form of the Shivaji festival to coordinate resentment and action. Only recently shaken from reliance on petitions, Punjabis had no experience with tactics which might have been successfully employed.

Conflict of interests added to the Congress predicament. The Lahore Indian Association had just completed demonstrations against amendment of the Land Alienation Act. A session of the Punjab Jat Mahasabha in Delhi, reflecting landowning interests, was quick to note the contradiction between that agitation and newly found concern over land revenue rates and hardship in the canal colonies.¹⁸ Unsure of themselves and concerned essentially with their own issues, Congressmen did not know how to proceed.

Unsolved questions of what and how to communicate also affected the effort of politicians. The content of messages—words, symbols, metaphors—are vital in reaching an audience. In the Punjab, the classes active in urban politics tended to value Urdu and English. While conversant with Panjabi, they were not comfortable with the idiom, often agricultural and localised, which could have aided communication with a broader constituency. Such problems were recognized and undoubtedly influenced Lajpat Rai's advocacy of a band of political missionaries to work outside the towns.¹⁹ Significantly, however, he and associates did not carry out the work themselves except on a sporadic basis. The spector of communalism also affected choice of terminology and allusions. Reference to Guru Gobind Singh or Ranjit Singh, for example, might rally Sikhs but alienate Muslims. Finding a continuing issue or appeal common to various sections of Punjab society was difficult if not impossible. Barred from using the rich religious metaphors that previously had been a part of their political life, Congress leaders made short tours to the canal colonies to preach a bland message of national unity and criticism of the British.

17. Lajpat Rai correspondence with Bhai Parmanand in J & P (Judicial and Public files, IOL) 2273, 1911.

18. Meetings reports in *Tribune*, February 15, 1907, p. 4. Also, notes by Charles Rivaz February 12, 1907) and Thomas Walker (February 2, 1907). Keep-With to PRF 108A (Punjab Revenue File, Board of Revenue, Lahore).

19. Editorials and articles by Lajpat Rai in the *Panjabee*, 1905-7.

A final element in the Congress-related agitation was fear of the consequences of open challenges to the British. The western-educated Punjabi did not want to overthrow the government, rather, to assist in decision-making. His previous assumptions remained just below the surface, especially a tendency to identify with the *raj* and western institutions. Thus, checks existed on developing new tactics or going beyond previous agitational limits. Too politicians were vulnerable. Often employed in Government service or the legal profession, they realized that the British would strike out against those in activities judged "seditious". That the government also could injure a particular community or institution associated with "disloyalty" provided an even more effective constraint on wholesale participation by a faction or group. Punjabis were ready to label each other "seditious" in order to injure opponents. Given that atmosphere, to be identified as anti-British could mean having your reference group or favorite charity similarly labelled. This helps explain the vocal Muslim withdrawal from agitation in April 1907 and their attempts to throw all blame on the Hindu Arya Samaj (in the short-run a successful move).²⁰ Within two months, other groups reacted to impending British sanctions in a similar fashion. Once a movement some thought a permanent Congress resurgence began to break into quarrelling parties, the ill-feeling and old grudges hindered attempts to recoup losses. Repeated failures at politicalization, especially dramatic ones like 1907, further strengthened sub-national patterns.

Those taking advantage of the 1907 unrest were not Congressmen but a few revolutionists just appearing in the Punjab—Ajit Singh and the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh members of the Anjuman-i-Mohibban-i-Watan (Society of the Lovers of Country). Drawn primarily from the nonprofessional classes, they hated the British for a variety of personal reasons.²¹ The Anjuman lacked a vested interest in maintaining the government and therefore re-

20. Meeting reports in *Tribune*, April 25, 1907, pp. 2, 4; also, enclosures to PG to GI, 695, May 3, 1907, GIPOL (Home-Political) August, 1907, 148-235A.

21. Background of members in Barrier. "The Punjab Disturbances," pp. 201-205. Members of the Anjuman included Swaran Singh, Pindi Das, Kishan Singh, Sufi Amba Parshad, Kartar Singh, Ram Chand, Dina Nath.

jected the usual boundaries of politics. Instead, Ajit Singh preached overthrow of the British through resignation from the army, total boycott, and armed insurrection. He spent considerable time in the villages working with local organizations such as Singh Sabhas and the Bar Zamindar Association. A Jat, his speeches were in colloquial Panjabi, filled with misrepresentations of British plans and illusions to folk heroes and motifs familiar to the agriculturists. References to "broken water vessels" and "loss of the turban" stirred his audiences.²² It should be noted, however, that the excitability and daredevil aspects of Ajit Singh endearing him to Jats carried him close to tactical error. His colleagues monitored his speeches and intervened to prevent comments injurious to communal cooperation.

The Anjuman represented a style of politics so divergent from the Punjab experience that Congressmen shunned it. At meetings, for example, horrified lawyers attempted to hush Ajit Singh's call for revolt.²³ The British also observed the new direction, and while mistakingly linking the Arya Samaj, Congress, and Anjuman in a plot, they did isolate Ajit Singh and drive his followers from the Punjab.

III

In summary, what does the Punjab experience tell us about problems of politicization? First, it underscores the dominance of local conditions and patterns in provincial politics. Annexed in 1849, the Punjab was slow to evolve a politically active western-educated elite, and when the elite emerged, it became involved in communal affairs producing subnational commitments. Efforts at political mobilization were limited and directed horizontally rather than vertically. Politics focussed on class or religious issues, with agitation coordinated by communal associations or urban bodies formed to deal with immediate problems. The Lahore Indian

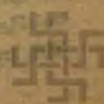
22. Speeches reproduced in GIPOL, August 1907, 148-235A.

23. In Rawalpindi, for example, lawyers literally pulled Ajit Singh from the speaker's platform. Testimony of Gurdas Ram, Amolak Ram, Uttam Chand, and Hans Raj in the Rawalpindi trial proceedings, *Panjabee*, September 4, 1907, pp. 5-8.

Association was an exception, but its Hindu character adversely affected efforts to unite the westernized classes or to generate Congress support. Relying on meetings and petitions, politicians saw no need to work with lower classes in towns or among agriculturists.

Secondly, the discussion demonstrates the often forgotten importance of the British in political development. As Cashman comments, the relationship between politicians and the government affected the range style of agitation. In the Punjab, official reluctance to permit elections for the legislative council postponed efforts to politicize larger groups or to create formal parties. Lagging at least a step behind the constitutional advance of other provinces, the Punjab electorate was extended substantially only in 1919. Before the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the government maintained itself through nominated majorities, suppression of real or imagined revolutionaries, manipulation of groups and reliance on aristocrats and rural proprietors for support. The 1907 disturbances illustrate how British action could foster or curtail agitation going beyond acceptable limits. In the altered circumstances following the 1919 reforms, the government depended on a rural-based party and again manipulated classes and groups, this time within the legislative arena.

Finally, agrarian and communal networks operated to make the Congress irrelevant. Although we lack detailed treatment of the events between 1910 and 1947, it seems evident that the Punjab Congress rarely became a vital part of the political process, most notably in 1907 and 1919. On both occasions, conditions in the province combined with external stimuli to produce transient nationalist activity, and in both, British responses and the reappearance of communal politics injured attempts to perpetuate a Congress party. When constitutional change necessitated further institutionalization of politics, these now familiar factors weighed against nationalist popularity. Hindu-Muslim-Sikh communalism became more entrenched, and the possibility of unified opposition to the British was lost in legislative confrontation and the rumble of riots.



Political Awakening and Struggle for Freedom in Travancore

BY

M. J. KOSHY

In the decade following 1930 Travancore witnessed intense political unrest. This disquiet has to be viewed against the social and cultural background of the State. Hinduism, Christianity and Islam were the principal religions in Travancore. The followers of each of these religions were organized into numerous groups. Such groups were more numerous among the Hindus. They were divided and sub-divided into many exclusive groups. As the Hindu society was hierarchically organized there was always ground for complaint of domination, of one group by another. Divisions and differences there were among the Christians and Muslims as well; but they were not very conspicuous and on the political plain, they stood, each as one community.

Ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century the upper stratum of the Christian community had been becoming prominent in the State on account of education and enlightenment. The Nairs and the Ezhavas were impressed by the economic progress made by the Christian community. Further they realised that the unity and solidarity of the Christian organisation was what supplied its rank and file with additional strength. Consequently, they also took to English education, banking, trade and commerce. The educated section of the Hindus, Christians and Muslims made up a new Middle Class in the State. At the time of the 'Malayali Memorial'¹ members of this new Middle Class had stood shoulder to shoulder to challenge the monopoly of public services by outsiders and to demand their due share in the Government of the State. This had brought out in irrefutable terms how best they prized their liberties and rights and how steadfastly they combated the foe that had threatened their freedom. Class prejudice and schisms hardly deterred them from united action.

1. A Letter Addressed to the Governor of Madras on the Affairs of Travancore. Introduction. (Second Edition, 1887).

And further in point of education, political consciousness and leadership, Travancore was almost in the van.² Along with the liberal education imparted to the people, popular institutions modelled on those of the West had been introduced in the State, thus affording an opportunity for getting practical training in the art of administration. It was but natural that in the congenial soil of Travancore, noted for its ancient self-governing and democratic institutions, they struck deep roots and flourished. A Legislative Council was introduced so early as 1888³ and it was reconstituted in 1898⁴ and again in 1919⁵. Although the Council was reorganized on a representative basis and given deliberative powers, it may be noted that, the reform of the Legislative Council which came in 1919 was condemned by the people for, it was initiated by the Maharaja, who according to them had surrendered that right through the reform of 1898. But this contention was met with the counter-argument that the proclamations of the King were as valid as any other law. A wave of protest surged throughout the State and popular feelings ran high. This was followed by another significant event, the Students' Strike on August 23, 1921.⁶ The incident was significant since it rallied public opinion and awakened the political consciousness of the younger generation, who decided to fight for responsible government. The inadequacy of Regulation I of 1919 (embodying Legislative Council Reform) to meet the modest demands of the people for Responsible Government, created bitterness among the people. This was partly met by Regulation II of October 4, 1921.⁷ As per the provisions of this Regulation, the Legislative Council was constituted on a comparatively wider franchise with an elected non-official majority. Besides the right of interpellation, discussion of the budget and moving of resolutions was also granted to it. In addition to the Legislative Council, a Popular Assembly was also brought into existence in 1904 with the noble motive

2. Memorial submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy by the people of Travancore in 1931. (*Travancore Today: Her struggle for freedom*, pp. 29-30).

3. *The Travancore Government Gazette*, April 24, 1888.

4. *Ibid*; March 29, 1898, No. 13, XXXVI, 714-16.

5. *Ibid*; September 9, 1919, Part I, 1075-1111.

6. Important Papers connected with the Students' Strike (August-September) 1921, Kerala State Archives, Trivandrum.

7. *Op. cit.*, October 4, 1921, Part II, 747-54.

of popularising the administration and associating the people with the Government of the State.

In the field of civic administration also the State had made rapid strides. As early as the third decade of the twentieth century, Travancore had as many as nineteen Municipalities with large elective non-official majorities and with elected non-official presidents in all but one.⁸ There were other popular institutions also such as the Village Panchayat Courts, Irrigation Boards and the Economic Development Boards. All these institutions were working satisfactorily and the sobriety, moderation and sense of responsibility displayed by popular representatives therein, had been testified to by the successive Dewans of the State. In this connection it is worthy of notice that women here enjoyed equal status with men in respect of political and civic rights. And last but not least, an independent judiciary, another *sine qua non* of a constitutional State had been in existence here from 1882. Thus all elements of popular government had long been in existence and what now remained to make it logically complete so as to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people was to introduce full Responsible Government in the State.⁹

The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly had been a vigorous forum for highlighting the demand¹⁰ for Responsible Government. Apart from it, the Press had always been an important medium which infiltrated into the public mind and propogated the ideals of freedom and democracy. Most of the articles published in the Dailies reverberated with the spirit of questioning the authority of the executive and with the longing to have Responsible Government. Drastic measures were taken to suppress the newspapers that exposed villainy of the government. The agitation¹¹ that followed in its trail could not be deemed anything like a mass awakening. It was only the faint beginning of a revelation that the State was ultimately set for the realisation of Responsible Government. It was only natural that all political and social organisations in the State clamoured for the establishment of Responsible Gov-

8. The Memorial submitted to His Excellency, the Viceroy by the people of Travancore, 1931. (*Travancore Today—Her struggle for freedom*, p. 29).

9. *loc. cit.*

10. *The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly Proceedings*, 18th Session, March 11, 1922, p. 187.

11. File No. 717, 1926, Kerala Government Secretariat, Trivandrum.

ernment. At last under compelling circumstances like the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924, the South Indian States Peoples' Conference of 1929, and the sovereign yielded by granting the Reforms of 1932.¹²

Ever since the Malayali Memorial, the educated Nairs were admitted in large numbers to the public services. In the Legislative Council of the State the Nairs contrived to have a majority, under the Reforms of 1932. The Christian, Ezhava and Muslim sections of the New Middle Class in the State therefore drifted to one side while the Nairs to the other. Each group alerted its community in order to win its cause, by adducing a communal colouring to the movement of others. Thus when the Government officially announced the Constitutional Reforms of 1932, these neglected communities disapproved of them and decided to launch a statewide agitation to procure in the scheme of the legislature, their due representation. They organized themselves into a party called the All Travancore Joint Political Congress and the agitation organized by them had come to be known as the *Nivarthanam* or "The Abstention Movement".¹³ Since a state-wide agitation was not an easy job, it had always been exploring every possible avenue to find out an amicable settlement of the differences between the government and the Christian, Ezhava and Muslim communities, on the question of representation in the Legislative Council. A series of suggestions of constitutional reforms were made by the different organisations into which these communities were socially segregated which included among other things reservation of seats in proportion to population and Responsible Government. But the government's preparedness to sanction a few reserved seats to the aggrieved communities and filling them through nomination was deplored and the Joint Political Congress decided to abstain from the legislature envisaged through the Reforms of 1932.

It would be quite fitting here to investigate into the complicity of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer in the framing of the Legislative Reforms of 1932, although strictly speaking he was only the constitutional adviser and not the Dewan (Austin was the Dewan

12. *Travancore Government Gazette*, October 29, 1932.

13. *The Malabar Mail*, November 25, 1962. (Account of Willington's (Travancore) Visit by M. M. Varkey).

then). Despite the claims of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer that he had no hand in the internal administration of the State, he expressed himself quite subjectively,¹⁴ that, the prudent plan would be for all the communities to give the new reforms a trial. He shared the promise made to the Nair deputation that if after the first elections under the reforms any serious injustice manifested itself, he would also recommend reconsideration of the subject of representation.¹⁵ By this statement, it was believed that he was identifying himself with the Nairs and their newspapers and was giving a verified threat to the Christian, Ezhava and Muslim communities, that, if they did not stop their agitation, repression would be resorted to. This attitude of the constitutional adviser to the Maharaja obliged the Joint Political Congress to demand¹⁶ his dismissal from the service of the State. The statements made by the constitutional adviser were not credited with sincerity and truthfulness by the conscious public.¹⁷ Therefore no time was spared by the Joint Political Congress to launch the agitation.

Due publicity was given to the movement and the fairness of its demands by the Press within and outside the State. The government even resorted to the gagging of the Press. The suppression of *The Dasan*, to which reference was already made was the first step. At the same time, the Government took no action against *The Samadarsi* a newspaper owned by Nairs which published a highly provocative and explosive article against His Excellency the Viceroy, His Majesty the King Emperor and His Holiness the Pope. Commenting on it *The Malayala Manorama* observed that "it was one of the most mischievous publications calculated to produce class hatred. The unfailing sentinel of the interests of the Paramount Power, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, should not have

14. Statement by the Associated Press of India (Trivandrum Branch) February 21, 1933.

15. *Travancore—The Present Political Problem*, p. 162.

16. *The Dasan*, March 25, 1933 (The article under the caption 'Knight Errant' runs as follows: "One does not need much brains to see that in view of his apparently isolated position as the legal and constitutional adviser, and his now notorious interference in matters of internal administration, Sir C. P.'s retention in Travancore is at once dangerous and demoralising").

17. Resolution adopted at the joint meeting of the three communities—File No. 1751/1933, English Records, Kerala Government Secretariat, Trivandrum.