



# INDIA FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

— R.H. Deshpande



Maharashtra State Board for Literature & Culture

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—R. H. DESHPANDE



Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay.

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**Dedicated to the Memory of  
my Mother  
and  
eldest brother —G. H. Deshpande**

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## FOREWARD

We have great pleasure in publishing Shri R.H. Deshpande's book on Indian freedom movement. This is in keeping with the decision of the Board to bring out books of national significance in the Congress Centenary year.

Shri Deshpande's book is not a mere chronology of events. It also attempts to analyse situations and evaluate the role of different national groups and their place in the national struggle. The book should, therefore be useful to future generation and also to those who are interested in the academic pursuits of our history.

42, Yashodhan,  
Bombay-20.  
13th April, 1986.  
(Jalianwala Baug Day)

S. S. BARLINGAY.  
Chairman,  
Maharashtra State Board for  
Literature and Culture, Bombay.

## FOREWARD

Though we have a plethora of publications on the Freedom Movement of our country, additions to them are always welcome.

The reason is obvious. Many of these publications have been written from angle of projecting a particular movement or their leaders or a personality or certain political ideologies. Objectivity has been casualty in several of them with the result that many myths have been perpetrated.

During the centenary year of Indian National Congress, there have been several publications in which facts are distorted to suit the author's objectives.

Many of the modern writers seem to think that the campaign for freedom became a mass movement only since Gandhiji's commencement of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the twenties. They fail to realise that the ground work for the mass campaigns was done by Lokmanya Tilak for forty years since 1881 when he propagated his four pronged strategy of complete Independence or Home rule, National Education, Boycott of British goods and use of Swadeshi.

After his release from prison in 1915. Lokmanya Tilak's revival of Bombay Provincial Conferences and the setting up of the Indian Home Rule League in 1916 under the presidentship of Kaka Joseph Baptista virtually became mass movements with the spontaneous support of the people. The ground work was in fact intensified during the five years prior to Gandhiji appearing on the political horizon after Lokmanya's death.

Gandhiji's movements were consequently a continuance of Lokmanya Tilak's campaign for freedom. Unfortunately, modern historians have not laid stress on this aspect partly because Gandhiji during that period, repeatedly described Gopal Krishna's Gokhale as his guru and guide. In fact, Gandhiji's technique of Satyagrah and Boycott put forward at the Calcutta Congress were in reality the progeny of Tilak's four pronged strategy to achieve independence from British rule. Gandhiji's movements were based on these four pillars mainly giving more stress on साधन शुचिता ('Purity of Action').

Perhaps few realise that the Bombay Industrial Workers strike after Tilak's conviction for the sedition in 1908, paved the way for the labour movement in our country. This strike was also

taken note of by Lenin who commented that “workers in Europe now have Asian comrades whose number will grow by leaps and bounds”. Taking the cue from this event, Lala Lajpat Rai and Kaka Joseph Baptista started organising textile and other labour and founded the All India Trade Union Congress in 1921.

Mr. Deshpande’s attempt to give due recognition to several parties and leaders, other than the Indian National Congress, who played an important role in the campaigns for freedom and political independence, is laudable. The book covers a period of ninety years — from 1857 to 1947 — and throws light on activities of several revolutionaries, political leaders and persons in public life who kept the momentum of the campaigns even when the Congress leaders were in jail.

In our present exuberance, we must not forget the role of hundreds of political leaders who sacrificed their lives, time and wealth in the cause of our struggle for political freedom.

J. S. TILAK,  
CHAIRMAN,  
MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



## PREFACE

There is no doubt about Gandhiji's greatness. His greatness was undisputable. He was respected all over the World for his simplicity, innovation, audacity and wisdom. His methods of nonviolence and peaceful resistance were admired even by his enemies. His way of achieving freedom of the country was unique. His manners of disarming the other side with logical and lively argument has impressed the most outstanding leaders of the World during his time.

However some people go to the extreme while describing Gandhiji. They give us impression that the freedom of India was achieved with only non-violent methods. There was no bloodshed. Everything was done peacefully and the British Empire was moved by these tactics and we obtained the freedom.

If we are to encourage this impression and write the history of freedom movement only with this point of view, the future generation will never know the sacrifices made by millions of people in India. The people who participated in the freedom movement suffered in jails. A number of youths were hanged. Political prisoners were physically tortured. This was from the day the people thought of achieving freedom for the country. It began in subjection and its effect were seen in uprising in 1857. The British Rule wanted to isolate intelligentsia from the masses. So came the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885. Till 1905, the National Congress did not become a fighting force.

People like Lokmanya Tilak, Desh Bandhu das, Lala Lajpat Rai and a numbers of others saw the game of the rule and turned the Indian National Congress into a real fighting force. This radical leaders never believed in violence and chaos. However the hardly discouraged the tendencies of youth for adopting revolutionary methods. Gandhiji also never doubted their patriotism, their urge and their enthusiasm to do away with the foreign rule.

In fact these revolutionaries rarely came in the way and methods followed by National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji. Whenever they found the National movement was coming to a low ebb or was on the verge of demoralisation by their own methods they created the much needed urge of patriotism among the people. They had their own independent organisations. They always encouraged any struggle against the British Rule. They did not bother about Gandhiji and his methods.

It was Gandhiji who did not like the methods adopted by other national and revolutionary organisations and was under impression that if a free play was given to the revolutionaries there would be chaos in the country. He would apply brakes to the National Movement which was in full swing and which created alarm in the Imperialist Camp.

To say that National Congress was alone responsible for the freedom of India and its non-violent methods were the only weapons in the hands of the freedom fighters is distorting the facts.

It is not only the National Congress or the Revolutionary Organisation that brought freedom to India. People like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Tej Bahadur Sapru, M. R. Jaykar and others who were not associated either with the National Congress or Revolutionary parties have also played important part in the freedom struggle.

With a view to educate the future generation of India I have made an attempt to show how different people and organisations have played their part in the freedom struggle from 1857 to 1947, While doing so I have divided the books in five parts.

The first part deals with the formation of National Congress in 1885 and shows how in the subsequent years it became a real national and the mass organisation.

The second part deals with the Revolutionaries. This force was definitely supplementary to the main National movements started by the National Congress.

The third part deals with the communal organisations. These were mainly encouraged by the British rule to achieve their own objects. These forces prolonged the achievement of the freedom of the country.

The fourth part deals with Indian Princes and explains how they were used as a special force of imperialism to consolidate its hold on the country.

The fifth part deals with the various constitutions offered by the British Rule just to increase their hold and divide national forces in India.

The purpose of this book is to describe the freedom struggle in India and to show how various forces were instigated by the British Rule with the object of keeping them away from the

National Movements, how people have struggled and how various methods were employed to achieve the freedom.

The freedom struggle was not an easy one. Educated and uneducated, old and young, men and women, rich and poor able bodied and crippled workers, landlords and peasants and a number of students in the schools and colleges participated in the national movement. They sacrificed their lives, property and the love for the family.

I am really thankful to a number of social institutions and public libraries and the social workers who helped me to complete the task.

Shri A. G. Tilak, principal of Saraswati Secondary School, Thane was kind enough to lend me the books from his school library and also went through the manuscript at initial stage.

Rev. Father, Ernest Fernandes, Principal of St. John Baptista High School Thane, not only went through the manuscript very carefully but could spare his valuable time to discuss problems arising out of it at length.

Prof. S. S. Ghate, of New College of Kolhapur, took lot of troubles to go through the initial writing and made very valuable contributions.

Mrs. Rose, Head of the English department of Vidya Prasarak Mandal's Arts, Commerce and Science College Thane, took lot of interest in my work and added the needed strength to my vocabulary.

Most of all I owe a profound debt of gratitude to Shri & Smt. S. S. Bhandarkar, Shri. S. S. Bhandarkar, retired as a Director of Education, Government of Maharashtra. He was also Vice-Chancellor of Jiwaji University, Gwalior. Smt. Bhandarkar was Professor in H. L. College of Commerce Ahmedabad and is a well-known Social Worker. Both of them went through the entire manuscript with great care and expert knowledge and provided invaluable comments.

Shri Sadanand Bhise, General Secretary of the Congress (I), Thane, a well-known Advocate and a Social Worker of Thane made me available some of required books and references and spared his valuable time to discuss problems at every stage of the writing without any hesitation.

Dr. Chandrakant Dhanak, my wife – Shanta, son Sadanand, his wife Sandhya, my daughters – Mrs. Mrunalini Ghate and Dr. (Mrs.) Nalini Dhanak were generous with their time and eagerness to help me.

I am grateful to Shri V. S. Page, ex-Speaker of the Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly who took lot of interest in my work and Shri Jayantrao Tilak, Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council who was kind enough to go through the manuscript and to write a forward.

Lastly, I am thankful to Maharashtra Board for Literature and culture for publishing the book.

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R. H. DESHPANDE  
Freedom Fighter.

## PART I

## THE EFFECTS OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

The establishment of British rule brought into India all the problems and conflicts of the modern world. To begin with it brought about the ruin of an old historic civilisation which was submerged under the crushing weight of modern conqueror. The lowest levels of primitive economy, poverty and servitude existed alongside the most advanced forms of modern exploitation. Thus the problems involved were chronic agrarian crises, famine, debt-slavery the shackles of caste and the out caste, industrial exploitation without limit, contrast of wealth and poverty more appalling than in any country in the world, social and religious conflicts and emergent national issues within India.

The British rule in India is historically significant. Its impact on Indian life was far reaching. There is no reason to minimise its beneficial effects. Though the rule was based exclusively on selfish motives, it did introduce an element of progress for the people in India and these forces have moulded the course of Indian history.

The first and the most important effect of the British conquest was destructive. It destroyed the foundations of the old order of society in India. But such destruction was necessary in the interest of progress. This happened in the first half of the 19th century. The foreign power combated the conservative and feudal forces of Indian society. A policy of ruthless annexation was adopted which wiped out some of the princedoms and filled the minds of the remaining rulers with alarm. This was the period of courageous reforms, of such measures as the abolition of 'Sati' and slavery. war on infanticide and thuggism. British rule consequently gave an impression to the people that it was humane and progressive.

The second beneficial effect was the unification of the country. India was never a nation. It was ruled by different rulers in different areas. Indian monarchs were frequently busy in fighting, conquering and reconquering each other. These were brought, under one rule. Each of the hundred odd princely states had sovereign authority. but they were also under the overall command of the British. The effect of this military rule brought all the regions and various types of people belonging to different relegions and castes together. It was the first time that the Indian people became a nation. Under oppression they became conscious of a common destiny. Now, for first time the Indian people were free from outside invasions. The British rule sealed off the mountain passes through which the invaders had entered in the past. No maritime power could think of entering the Indian waters as the British themselves were the masters of the sea.

The Third effect was political and economic unification of the country. India had not so far been linked with the world market. But now modern modes of communication came in. Commerce and defence advanced the means of the communications. The railways, the telegraphic system and the post offices were established. Steamships began to ply. The British rule also introduced the technological advances available in the west. This made the beginning of modern industry and brought in, the training of the necessary personnel with administrative and scientific qualifications all this helped in making the British rule firmer in India.

The development was made for selfish reasons. The British wanted India to produce raw materials like jute, cotton, indigo for factories in the United Kingdom. A network of canals brought thousands of acres of desert land under irrigation and became India's 'granary'. Crops which yielded large profits were mainly controlled by English Companies. Tea plantations, jute mills, cotton mills, coffee estates etc. brought them huge profits.

The fourth effect was the introduction of modern medicine, sanitation and health services, education etc. Malaria, cholera, small pox, plague were kept under control. The English language was introduced into India and replaced Persian, Hindi and other languages in offices. It was taught in schools and colleges. But English remained confined to the upper classes only and they learnt science, philosophy as well as political ideas like equality, freedom and democracy. However the top posts in the Government, Semi-Government offices, Railways, educational institutions, research centres were manned only by Englishmen. The ideas of democracy, freedom, equality, fraternity, justice, though learnt in 'English Text Books' were hardly applied to Indian institutions.

The fifth effect was the introduction of the Press. The publication of newspapers, periodicals and journals became a regular feature. Text-books for schools and colleges were printed. And yet the Press was under severe restrictions. Naturally the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech were limited to suit the purposes of the rulers.

The sixth effect was the discovery of our Indian heritage. Western education certainly helped the Indians to discover their own heritage. The scholarly labours of men like William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Henry Thomas, Cole Brooke, Nathaniel Halhed, H. H. Wilson and others unfolded the antiquity and splendour of the Indian civilization. In fact, Western enlightenment created a new intellectual elite in India. It not only helped this class to learn to admire the knowledge of the West, but also to acquire a capacity for a discriminatively appreciation of the civilization of its own country. This was rare service and should never be forgotten.

The traditional Indian economy was shattered to its foundations by the onset of British rule. The British conquest differed from every previous conquest. The previous conquerors left untouched the country's economic base and eventually grew into its structure. The British conquest shattered that base and remained a foreign force, acting from outside and withdrawing its tribute outside. The victory of British rule in India also differed from the victory of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. The destructive process in India was not accompanied by any corresponding growth of new forces.

In the earlier period the initial steps of destruction were accomplished first, by the East India Company's colossal direct plunder. The public works which had been maintained under the previous governments were allowed to fall into neglect. The introduction of the English landed system, private property in land, with sale and alienation, and the whole English criminal code added to the misery of the masses. The direct prohibition or heavy duties on the import of Indian manufacturers first into England and later also to Europe upset the economic basis.

The era of East India Company may be counted from its first Charter in 1600 to its final merging in the Crown in 1858 and its main period of domination of India was the second half of the 18th Century. By the middle of the 18th century the company began to build up its territorial power in India. After the decline of Mogul Empire India, racked with internal wars ensued a period of inner confusion necessary for the break up of the old order. In the normal course of evolution this would have passed the need for the rise of a new power on the basis of the advancing merchant shipping and manufacturing interests in Indian Society. This did not happen.

The foreign rule forcibly superimposing itself on the old society smashed the emergence of a rising Indian mercantile class. Here lay the tragedy of Indian development, which thereafter became a thwarted or distorted social development for the benefit of the British rule.

The confusion and the transition that characterised 18th century India gave to the foreign invaders the opportunity to fight and intrigue for areas of domination. In this war of all against all, the British representing the most advanced power, was successful. Territorial Power in India, at first nominally within the old forms, was established with the conquest of Bengal and was steadily extended to supreme power throughout India by the beginning of the 19th Century.

The original aim of East India Company in its trade with India was the typical aim of the monopolist companies of Merchant Capital. It was to make profit by the securing a monopoly trade in the goods and products of an overseas country. The governing objective was not the



hunt for a market for British manufacturers but the endeavour to secure a supply of the products of India and the East Indies especially spices, cotton goods and silk goods - which found a ready market in England and Europe. This could yield a rich profit on every successful expedition that could return with a supply.

However from the outset the company had to face the problem of securing these goods from India by way of trade. It was necessary to offer India something in exchange. England at the stage of development reached in the early 17th century had nothing of value to offer India in the way of products comparable in quality or technical standard with Indian products. Therefore precious metal had to be taken out to buy the goods in India. Accordingly at its commencement the East India Company was given a special authorisation to export an annual value of £ 30,000 in silver, gold and foreign coin. But this was most painful and repugnant to the whole system of Merchantalism which regarded the precious metals an object of trade as to secure a net favourable balance expressed in an influx of precious metal or increase of real wealth.

From the beginning the merchant class of the East India Company was much concerned to devise a means to solve this problem and secure the goods of India for little or no payment. One of their first devices was to develop a system of roundabout trade and in particular to utilise the plunder from the rest of colonial system in Africa and America to meet the cost in India where they had not yet the power to plunder directly. 'The English trade with India was really a chase to find something that India would be willing to take and the silver obtained by the sale of slaves in the West Indies and Spanish America was all important in this connection.' (C.A. Knowles 'Economic Development of the Overseas' P. 74)

Domination began to be established by the middle of the 18th Century. It was now easy to use methods of power increasingly to weight the balance of exchange and secure the maximum goods for the minimum payment. The margin between trade and plunder from the outset never very sharply drawn began to grow conspicuously thin. The merchant in any case was always favourably placed, in relation to the individual producer to dictate terms favourable to himself. He could now throw the sword into the scales to secure a bargain which abandoned all pretence of equality of exchange. By 1762, the Nawab of Bengal was complaining helplessly to the Company about the company's agents. 'They forcibly take away the goods and commodities of the Ryots (peasants) merchants for a fourth part of their value and by ways of violence and oppression they oblige the Ryots etc. to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee'. (Memorandum of the Nawab of Bengal to the English Governor May, 1762). Nominal trade was thus already more plunder than trade.

With the administration of the revenues passing into the hands of the Company of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765, a new field of limitless direct plunder was opened up. This was in addition to the profits of 'trade'. Then began a process of wholesale spoliation. Enormous fortunes were made by individual officers of the Company. Clive himself, who started from nothing. Returned home with a fortune estimated at £ 2,50,000 in addition to an Indian estate bringing in £ 27,000 a year. He reported that 'a fortune of £ 1,00,000 have been obtained in two years.'

A clearer picture is revealed by figures of exports and imports during the three years 1766-68. Exports amounted to £ 63,11,250 while imports amounted to £ 6,24,375. Thus ten time as much was taken out of the country as was sent into it under the ruling and governing care of this new type of merchant company. Thus the dream to draw the wealth out of India without having to send wealth in return was realised.

The effects of this system on the people of Bengal can be imagined. The ceaselessly renewed demand for more and more spoils led to the most reckless rising of the land revenue. This reached the heights which in many cases even meant taking the seed corn and the bullocks from the peasants. The last Indian ruler of Bengal in 1764-65 realised the land revenue of £ 8,17,000. In the first year of the company's administration in 1765-66 the land revenue realised in Bengal was £ 1,47,000. By 1771-72 it was £ 23,41,000 and by 1775-76 it was £ 28,18,000. When Lord Cornwallis fixed permanent settlement in 1793, he fixed it at £ 34,00,000.

A great series of inventions initiated the Industrial Revolution. In 1764 came the spinning Jenny of Hargreaves, in 1765 Watt's steam engine, in 1769 the water frame of Arkwright, in 1779 the mule of Crompton and in 1785 the Powerloom of Cart-wright. In 1788 the Steam Engine was applied to blast furnances. The Bank of England founded in 1694 could now provide the primary accumulation of capital, as in the second half of 18th century England had sudden access to the capital from the plunder. The spoliation of India was the hidden source of accumulation which played an all important role in the success of Industrial Revolution in England.

The problem now was to find adequate outlets for the flood of manufactured goods. This necessitated a revolution in the economic system and free-trade came into play. This in turn involved a complete change in the method of colonial system of government.

Lord Cornwallis as Governor General had recognized the administration in order to replace the system of anarchic individual corruption and spoliation by a well paid civil service. He

sought to end the previous arbitrary and continual increase of land revenue which turned the country into jungle and destroyed the very basis of exploitation. He made the experiment of Permanent Land settlement in Bengal, which established a new land lord class as the social base of British rule with a permanently fixed payment to the Government.

All these measures were intended as reforms. In reality they were necessary measures to clear the ground for more scientific exploitation of India. They prepared the way for the new stage of exploitation by industrial capital, which was to work for deeper havoc on whole economy of India than the previous haphazard plunder.

The monopoly of the East India Company in trade with India came to an end in 1813 and the new stage of exploitation of India started. The tariff discrimination against Indian manufacturers to build up the British textile industry was carried on in the first half of the 19th century. British cotton and silk goods imported into India paid a duty of 3½ percent and woollen goods 2 percent. Indian cotton goods imported into Britain paid 10 percent, silk goods 20 percent and woollen goods 30 percent.

Thus it was not only on the basis of the technical superiority of the machine industry , but also with the direct state assistance of one-way free trade that the predominance of British manufactures was built up in the Indian market and the Indian manufacturing industries were destroyed. Though this process was decisively carried through the first half of the 19th century, its effects continued to operate right through the 19th century and even into the 20th century. Alongside the headlong advance of British manufacturers went the decline of Indian manufacturers.

While machine-made cotton goods from England ruined the weavers, machine-made twist ruined the spinners. The same process could be traced in respect of silk goods, woollen goods, iron, pottery, glass and paper.

In England the ruin of the old hand-loom weavers was accompanied by the growth of the new machine industry. But in India, the ruin of millions of artisans and craftsmen was not accompanied by any alternative growth of new forms of industry. The old populous manufacturing towns, Dacca, Murshidabad, Surat and the like were in a few years rendered desolate.

It was not only the old manufacturing towns and centers that were laid waste and their population driven to crowd and overcrowded the villages; it was above all the basis of the old village economy, the union of agriculture and domestic industry that received its mortal blow. The millions of ruined artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, potters, smelters & smiths alike from towns and from villages had no alternative save to crowd into agriculture. In this way India was forcibly transformed from being a country of combined agriculture and manufacturers into an agriculture colony of British manufacturing industrialists. It is from this period of British rule that originates the deadly over-pressure on agriculture in India.

The growing poverty and desperation of the peasantry began to reach serious proportions. By the second half of the 19th century it found expression in mass unrest. In the first half of the 19th Century there were seven famines with an estimated total of one and half million deaths. Heavy exaction from the peasantry was adopted to sustain the cost of civil and military administration. This hastened the ruin of Indian agriculture. This in turn built up a common consciousness of the oppression to which Indians were subjected.

Meanwhile the British sponsored schools and colleges were encouraged to function in most of the cities in India. A large number of students drawn from the middle classes were educated in these institutions. They became civil servants, journalists, lawyers, doctors and engineers. Since they were in a close contact with the people they became the moulders of public opinion. They led popular movements. The British India Society in Bengal was founded in 1843. It mainly pleaded to secure welfare, extend just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of the common man. In 1851 this was merged into the British Indian Association which presented a Petition to the British parliament in 1852 declaring that they cannot but feel that they have not profited by their connection with Great Britain to the extent which they had a right to expect. They set forth grievances with regard to the revenue system, the discouragement of manufacturers, education and the question of admission to the higher administrative services. They demanded a Legislative Council 'possessing a popular character so as in some respects to represent the sentiment of the people'. The earlier associations of this kind were still mainly linked with the landowning class.

## **The Revolt of 1857**

The British Imperialists became very aggressive around the middle of the 19th century. This created discontent and unrest among masses. Some of the old Indian States had been destroyed. The British power spread. The administration became more and more centralised.

The maintenance of large armies became less necessary and soon the security attached to employment in the forces began to decline. The annexation of the Kingdom of Oudh, for instance, was followed by disbanding of the State Army thus rendering sixty thousand men idle. The same happened when Nagpur and Jhansi were absorbed in the Company administration. Thousands of disbanded soldiers returned to their homes and became a burden to their families which were already hard-pressed to make ends meet. As time went on, food production became progressively poorer. The tax had to be paid and the hapless peasantry was thus thrust into the clutches of the moneylenders.

Christian missionaries were establishing churches and preaching Christianity. In the great famine of 1837, thousands of children were baptized into the Christian faith without the knowledge or consent of their parents. The common man in India, Hindu and Muslim alike was convinced that the British would surely Christianise the whole country.

The East India Company started taking keen interest in the internal affairs of the States. It set one Indian ruler against the other and encouraged the existing bickering among the Indian rulers. Corruption was widespread. The moneylenders like Guptas and Jains were helping the East India Company, supplying loans before and during the wars. The Barter System was declining. The sales and purchases were based on cash only. The supply of the money was less than the demand, the prices of goods came down and the farmers had to sell their produce at very low prices. The East India Company was gaining ground and its trade was on the increase securing many concessions from the rulers who were becoming panicky. Not only did a vast territory come into its possession. but it had a strong military force and made treaties with some of the Princes.

In the year 1850 depression set in. The landlords in the conquered area were hardpressed and unemployment increased. Confusions spread everywhere at this stage the old Princes who had been dethroned decided to retaliate. They came together and decided to fight jointly against the British rule. At this time there was a rumour that the fat of cows and pigs was being used for the manufacture of cartridges. There was uneasiness in the army all over the British India. The Hindu and Muslims felt that their religions were in danger and decided to revolt against the British rule. The Princes and the landlords who were removed from power also joined this revolt.

In April, 1857 one of the regiments refused to touch the cartridges. They were court martialled, disarmed and their uniforms removed, in the presence of other soldiers. These very soldiers had fought for the British in Punjab and Burma and shown great courage. Soldiers in

other parts of the country decided to take revenge and in May 1857 the regiment of Meerut revolted.

The soldiers from the Meerut regiment began marching towards Delhi, slaughtered British officers on their way and setting fire to their establishments. They captured Delhi and the old Mughal Emperor who had been dethroned by the British rulers was declared king. At this time the British Army was preoccupied in establishing their rule in the Punjab and Burma.

Indian rulers from Northern Punjab and Burma and Southern parts of India, supported by a few landlords and Talukdars, made a joint effort to revolt against the newly established rule. They were Nana Saheb Peshwa, Tatyasaheb Tope and Rani Lakshmi Bai. One Rangoo Bapuji tried to spread discontent among the army for about six months. Jhansi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Delhi were the major centers of revolt. The struggle lasted for about one and a half year. Finally the bitter fight and the fierce revolt were suppressed ruthlessly by the powerful British Empire. Thus came the era of the British rule.

The British soon came to acquire a vast domain with ease for the resistance of the Indian people was very meagre. There are various reasons for this. First, we were never a nation. India was divided by religion, race, caste and language. The majority of the people were very hostile to the Princes and the nobility. In truth the Princes and the nobility actually commanded the leadership. But the Princes were not united. On the contrary they were eager to see the down fall of their rivals. The essential character of the leadership was feudal and those dominant among the leadership was very conservative lacking popular support. This reactionary character of the rising leadership was doomed to failure. Further the British were well trained, disciplined and equipped with modern weapons. Though few in number, they brought India under their subjection. What is more they achieved this with the help of Indians themselves. Disunity and military ineptitude were the main factors which brought about the fall of the nation. The common people were unwilling to serve the feudal regimes. The readiness and the willingness of so many Indians to serve the English in various ways helped to consolidation of the British Empire. Nevertheless the revolt of the Meerut regiment showed the depth of mass discontent and unrest beneath the surface. It definitely created alarm in the British Empire.

After 1857 a transformation took place in the British Policy which changed the character of the rule. It tried increasingly to win over the support of the reactionary feudal princes. An abrupt end was made of the system of annexation of the Indian states into British India. Henceforth the remaining Princes were zealously protected and treated as puppets. They were 'sovereign' rulers

and inflicted every form of feudal oppression on their subjects and the British rule protected them. The consequent political map of India was a senseless patchwork of petty princes and divided administration. The path of social reforms was no longer actively pursued. It gave place more markedly to active protection of every reactionary religious rite custom. The Queen's proclamation in 1858, pretended to grant racial equality to the Indians with the English. It emphasized the determination of the Government, to 'abstain from all interference with religious belief or worship.' It gave a pledge to the conservative forces of Indian society that due regard would be paid to the ancient rites, usages and customs of India. Under the Royal Titles Act of 1876 the Queen was proclaimed the Empress of India. In the year 1877 the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, declared that this represented the beginning of 'a new policy by virtue of which the crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sympathies and the interests of the powerful native aristocracy. From this period the methods of divide and rule followed. The British played off Hindus and Muslims against one another. They also utilized other forms of sectional division. After 1857, the Imperialists held back all progressive movements.

### **Rise of the National Congress**

In the later decades of the 19th Century, new forces were growing up within Indian society. During the second half of the 19th Century Indian capital was coming to the front. In 1853 the first successful cotton mill was started in Bombay. By 1880 there were 156 mills employing 44,000 workers and by the year 1900 there were 193 mills employing 1,61,000 workers. From the outset the new cotton textile industry was financed and controlled mainly by Indians. It had to make headway against heavy difficulties. At the same time, the new educated class advanced the claims based on 19th Century democratic conceptions of citizenship. These beginnings, both in the field of capitalist industry and of new westernised intelligentsia, were relatively small. But though few in number it was this intelligentsia who would produce the leadership to give the first expression to Indian national claims.

The basic economic conflict between Indian interests and British Imperialism was already revealed. In 1882 all duties on cotton imports into India were removed by the Government. This was in response to the demands of the Lancashire manufacturers against the rising Indian industry.

The British capitalists were penetrating into India. Their activities reached such serious proportions by the second half of the 19th century, especially during the last three decades that they began to give rise to mass unrest. The uprising of the peasants in the Deccan in 1875 was

the warning signal of the growing unrest in villages. The anxiety of the Government was revealed in the appointment of the Deccan Riots Commission in 1875. It conducted an exhaustive enquiry into the whole agrarian situation and causes leading to the unrest. A famine Commission was appointed in 1878.

In 1875 the Indian Association was founded by Surendranath Banerjee. It was the first organization representative of the educated middle class. The earlier associations formed were mainly linked with the landowning interests. The British India Association was formed with the merger of the Bengal Landholders' society. The Indian Association was in opposition to the domination of big land-owners. Both the British Indian Association as well as the Indian Association had their branches in various parts of India. In 1883 the Indian Association of Calcutta called the first All India National Conference. It was attended by representatives from Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Uttar Pradesh and was held under the presidency of Anand Mohan Bose. In his address Bose declared the conference to be the first stage of a National Parliament. Thus the conception of a National Congress was maturing through the initiative and activity of the Indian people themselves. The Government wishing to defeat the impending revolution, stepped in at this point to take charge of a movement which was in any case coming into existence.

Allen Octavian Hume was in Government service until 1882. On his retirement he took up the work of the formation of the 'Congress'. Hume in his official capacity had received secret police reports which revealed the growth of popular discontent, and the spread of an underground revolutionary organization. The revolt of the Deccan peasants had demonstrated the distress and the growth of unrest. This coincided with the lavish durbar at which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India. Some significant moves were made by Government about this time. The British protested violently against the proposed Ilbert Bill of 1883 which extended powers to Indian Magistrates to try the Europeans. The Government surrendered to this pressure by the white racists and to the surprise of educated Indians amended the legislation. During this time Indian troops were used in the conquest of Burma and second Afghan war. The British press was also discussing the possibility of employing Indian troops and finance for a war to curtail Russian expansion in Asia. The freedom of the Press was withdrawn by the vernacular Press Act of 1878. In the following year the Arms Act left the villages without even the means of defence against the raids of wild animals. The right of holding public meetings was abolished.

All these grievances needed ventilation. The move was made by Sir William Wedderburn and Allen Octavian Hume. The measures of repression preceded the foundation of the Congress



with official blessings. These two processes were not contradictory but complementary. The potential revolutionary movement was struck down. Now the way was opened for the formation of a legal movement. This was double edged method of repression and conciliation. It sought to strike down the stubborn fighters and made alliance with the moderates. This is the familiar and well known method of imperialist statesmanship. Hume established contacts with the viceroy Lord Dufferin who was an experienced politician. In the early part of 1885, Hume placed the situation before him. The plan of the Indian National Congress was hatched at Simla.

The National Congress came into existence in 1885. It was attended by Dadabhai Nowroji, Justice Ranade, Justice Telang, Surendranath Banarjee, Sir Phirozshah Mehta and other Indian leaders. There were 142 Indian and English delegates at the Congress. Subjects like taxes, military expenditure, the necessity of having Indian civil service examination in India as well as in London were discussed. For over 30 years the Congress remained only debating body. Its membership increased in 1909 with all the major communities, Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christian as its members. One third of the membership consisted of lawyers and the remaining two thirds of businessman and agriculturist.

### **The First Step of National Struggle (1905-1910)**

For 20 years the National Congress developed along the path laid down by its founders. In its resolutions no basic claim for self-Government in any form was made. The resolutions formulated later the demand for a greater degree of Indian representation within the British system of rule. The maximum demand was for representative institutions. There was no demand for Self-Government. The outlook for the early moderate leaders was very clear. They did not want any revolution. Ramesh Chandra Dutt a supremely able statesman was the President of the Congress in 1890. The following year he formulated the demand of 'The people of India' 'The people of India' he stated 'are not fond of sudden changes and revolution. They do not ask for new constituents issuing likes armed Minervas from the head of legislative Jupiters. They prefer to work on lines which have already been laid down. They desire to strengthen the present Government and to bring it more in touch with the people. They desire to see some Indian members in the Secretary of State's Council and in the Viceroy's Executive Council, representing Indian agriculture and industries. They wish to see Indian members in an Executive Council for each Province' (Preface to the Economic History of India Vol I 'India Under Early British Rule' P. XVIII).

The Congress of those days was exclusively representative of the educated middle class. These leaders were well aware that they did not represent masses. Sir Phirozshah Mehta, the principal leader declared, 'The Congress was indeed not the voice of the masses, but it was the duty of their educated compatriots to interpret their grievances and offer suggestions for their redress'. They knew that they were not in a position to challenge the British Rule in India. In fact they looked upon the British ruler as their friend. Their main worry was the backwardness of the people. They were eager to remove the lack of modern development of the country. They were aware of the strength of the forces of ignorance and that administrative shortcomings were responsible for the situation. To do away with these evils they sought the co-operation of the British rulers. Dadabhai Naoraji, the father of the Indian National Congress, appealed to the British rulers 'not to drive this force (the educated Indians) into opposition instead of drawing it to your side'.

It should not be thought from the tone of these declarations that these early Congress leaders were anti-nationals or reactionary. On the contrary, they were extremely progressive. As long as the majority of the people remained dumb, this was the only force which could advance the cause of the nation. They devoted their life to social reforms, to enlightenment and education. They wanted to modernise all that was backward in India and pressed their demand for industrial, technological and economic developments.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the father of Indian Nationalism in the first half of 19th Century. He too wanted his country to march towards modernisation, and for this purpose supported the British rule. He gave unhesitating support to their reforms for he saw in them the vanguard for a new civilization. Dadabhai Naoroji inspired a band of young men to devote themselves to public service through constructive activities. Mahadeo Govind Ranade distinguished himself for his devotion to the National cause. He was known for the depth of his scholarship and inspired a deep feeling of awe and reverence among all those who approached him. Another shining light of the Bombay province was Sir Pherozshah Mehta who dominated the public life of India for forty years. He won distinctive place for his service to the national cause. Badruddin Tayyabji a close colleague of Pherozshah Mehta and K. I. Telang had much illustrious service to his credit. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi he was a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress for many years. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the veteran leader of the Moderates. He shared in full measure the political philosophy of master, Justice Ranade. In the early days of Congress he was responsible for the policy adopted by it. He strictly adhered to the path of or constitutionalism as he felt this was necessary to prevent Congress from coming into collision

with the powerful Government prematurely. He was always armed with the facts and figures and even the Government could not challenge his statements.

British Imperialism understood very clearly the significance of the progressive role played by these leaders. Conflict was therefore unavoidable as their stand clashed with the interests of imperialist exploitation. The original Governmental patronage of the Congress soon turned suspicion and hostility. With three years of the foundation of the Congress, the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin spoke about it with contempt. Though he was the original inspirer of the Congress, he felt that the Congress represented the microscopic minority. In 1887, Mrs. Beasant in her book 'How India wrought for Freedom' states that the delegate attended the Congress "in defiance of his district officer and was called on to give a security of Rs. 20,000 to keep the peace". In 1890 the Government issued a circular prohibiting Government officials from attending the Congress even as visitors. In 1900 Lord Curzon wrote in a letter to the Secretary of State 'The Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise'. (Life of Lord Curzon — Ronald Shay)

Thus the early faith and hope of the Congress leaders in the British rule as their ally were doomed to disappointment. G.K. Gokhale, the veteran leader of the Moderate group, bitterly complained that "the bureaucracy was growing frankly selfish and hostile to National aspirations. It was not so in the past" (History of National Congress)

The failure of the old policy became very clear. It had to give way to a new policy. The new policy demanded a more positive programme for which it decided to break the ties with Imperialism if necessary. Moderates like Sir Pherozshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale began to lose popularity. Radicals like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal came to the forefront. The trio was popularly known as "Lal Bal Pal". In the last decade of 19th Century, the radicals associated themselves with the leadership of Lokmanya Tilak. He criticised the moderates, 'The three P's Pray-Please-Petition are not enough' he warned. However he was not able to play a decisive role as the situation was not yet ripe.

The revolutionary leaders were gaining ground all over the world. Mazzini in Italy became a political idol. There was resurgence of nationalism, in Turkey, China and Persia. Japan's victory over Russia raised high hopes in the Asian people. Naturally radicals in India became impatient. A Muslim organization known as Wahabis who hated the British domination over India, rejected everything foreign and preached resumption of war against the British. This group influenced religious minded Muslims in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal.

The opposition Leadership was with Tilak in Maharashtra. Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. They wanted a break with compromising policies of conciliation with Government. Their ambition was to enter on a path of decisive and uncompromising struggle against Imperialism. To this extent they were radicals and a potential revolutionary force but this was the personal desire on their part. There was no base yet for the mass movement which was needed to make such decisive struggle possible. However their appeal reached discontented lower middle class. Their thoughts moved the hearts of the literate youth and the students and the new growing army of the unemployed came to closer to them. The poorly paid intellectuals were becoming increasingly desperate at the beginning of the 20th Century as they realised that there was no avenue of advance open to them under the British Government. They were not inclined to be patient and chased against the slow and comfortable doctrines of gradual advance preached by the Moderates. These elements provided a very considerable dynamic force of unrest and revolutionary energy.

The new leaders did not have any scientific, social and political theory. They felt that the reason why the moderate leaders had failed was their westernised tendencies. These to them were anti national. Therefore they attacked the reforms which the old moderate leaders tried to introduce. They sought to build the national movement on the base of the massive forces of Indian conservatism. The antiquated religion and superstitious were their weapons. It was the beginning of the disastrous combination of political radicalism and social reaction in India, which created undesirable effects on the national movement. Indeed traces of these effect can still be felt.

In 1890 Lokmanya Tilak opened campaign against the Age of consent Bill, which aimed at raising the age of consummation of marriage for girls from 10 to 12 years. This Bill was supported by Ranade, doyen of moderate leaders. Tilak leading ferocious campaign against it, voiced the demand of the most reactionary forces of Hinduism. Later he organised 'Cow protection Society'. Shivaji being a national hero, 'Shivajayanti' was celebrated as a national festival. At the same time religious festivals also were organised. 'Ganesh Utsav' was celebrated for ten days in Maharashtra. Similarly in Bengal 'Durga Puja' was celebrated for nine days. The main purpose of this festivals was keep alive the memories of Swaraj in minds of the people. It also reminded them of their duty to work unitedly to regain the lost freedom. Most of the national leaders and social workers used to participate during these days of festivals.

It is necessary to recognise the patriotic purpose which under lay these religious forms. Under protective cover of a religion, wide spread national agitation was conducted through the

annual festivals and mass gatherings. Various organisations and gymnastic societies of youth came into existence. The direct political agitations were suppressed ruthlessly by Government and political organisations were banned. It was however necessary to reach the masses. As such the use of such a forms of religious social and culture organisations was not only justifiable but also essential. However, the insistence on orthodox religion as the heart of the national movement weakened the real advance of political consciousness. The proclamation at these functions of the supposed spiritual superiority of the ancient Hindu civilisation over modern Western civilisation retarded the progress of the independence movement. This also resulted in alienating large sections of Muslim opinion from national movement.

Tilak declared that 'Force' and not 'fear' was the proper policy towards the government. He adopted his own methods and forged his own weapons to rouse the people. He established the Deccan Education Society in Poona. The New English School and Fergusson College were founded around this time. He gave primacy to education in his campaign for national regeneration. Realising the power of the press he founded two bi-weeklies Kesari in Marathi and the Maratha in English. His righteous indignation often brought him into conflict with various Government authorities. His forthright criticism of the Government's anti-plague measures was remarkable. Mr. Rand and his soldiers had behaved brutally with the people. Indignant editorials in the Kesari asked the citizen of Poona to use force in self defence when British soldiers misbehaved. Rana had to pay with his life for his misdeeds. Tilak also was forced to pay dearly for his courageous articles. He was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

A new stage of struggle now set in. Bengal became the centre of political activity in India. Lord Curzon's plan to effect Partition of Bengal aroused universal indignation through country. The Congress session held at Calcutta in 1906 was under the strong influence of the extremists. It adopted a completely new programme, which was sponsored by the Father of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji himself. The programme proclaimed for the first time the aim of Swaraj or self Government. This was to be a colonial self-Government within the British Empire. It also supported the movement to boycott foreign goods and the use of swadeshi articles and national education. The swadeshi movement had already been started in 1905.

The Swadeshi movement won the spontaneous support of the people and the Bengal movement was watched with keen interest all over India. Leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Lokmanya Tilak and Ghokhale gave their unqualified support to it. Swaraj, Boycott of foreign goods, Swadeshi and National Education became the four cardinal points of the Congress programme.

In 1907 there was clear division in the Surat Congress between the Moderates led by Ghokhale and Extremist led by Tilak. The Moderates who feared the growing influence of the Extremists managed to forge the split. Thereafter two factions developed separately until their reunion in 1916.

With the new revitalising of the movement, repression followed rapidly. In 1907 Seditious Meetings Act was passed. In 1910 a new drastic Press Act followed. On the basis of the Regulation act of 1818 the method of deportation without trial was brought into play against the extremist leaders. All this took place under the reign of the 'Liberal' Lord Morley as the Secretary of State for India. In 1908 Lokmanya was sentenced for six years imprisonment for an article published in his newspapers and was held in Mandalay prison until the outbreak of world war I in 1914. He was the man to whom Government most feared. His arrest led to a general strike of the Bombay Textile Workers. This was the first political action of the Indian workers. Most of the other prominent leaders were either sentenced or deported or went into exile to escape sentence. Lala Rajpatrai and Ajit Singh were deported. Between 1906 and 1909 there were 505 political cases before the courts of Bengal alone. Police action was carried out with great rigour and political meetings were broken up. Agrarian riots were ruthlessly suppressed in the Punjab. School children were arrested for singing national songs. As in the earlier period, repression was followed and accompanied by concessions to rally the moderates. The Morley Minto Reforms were enacted in the Act of Parliament in 1909. This provided for the nominations of an Indian to the Viceroy's Executive Council and an increase in the number of elected members in the Central and State legislatures. It provided more portfolios to be handled by elected Indians. The moderate leaders now in sole control of the Congress, seized the occasion. They felt that these reforms were significant steps towards self government and proclaimed their unity with the ruler.

The reversion of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 meant a political victory for the boycott movement. A wave of struggle had developed and spread throughout the country between 1906 to 1911 but it could not maintain its strength during the immediately succeeding years. However, the permanent advance achieved in the stature of the national movement was never lost. Despite all the limitations of the Extremist leaders of those pre-1914 years, they achieved a great and lasting effect. The demand for freedom became the most dominating part of the movement. The aim of complete national liberation was made clear. The determined struggle to achieve the goal was implanted in the political movement. This was destined in the subsequent years to strike root in the masses of the people.

Towards the end of 1912 Indian politics was very dull. Extremists were lying low without any effective leadership. Bengal was quiet after the partition movement. Moderates effectively rallied round the Moreley Minto scheme. A wedge was driven between the Hindus and Muslims. Muslims were encouraged to put forward claims for separate constituencies and for weightage. This would offset the smallness of their numbers by greater representation in the Legislative bodies and services. Both these demands were readily accepted by the British.

### **THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS MASS MOVEMENT**

World War I was an important landmark in the History of India's freedom struggle. From the outset the British imperialists took firm measures to control the situation. They adopted special legislation to concentrate power in their hands. The Defence of India Act came into existence. The most irreconcilable fighters or members of the revolutionary groups were either imprisoned or interned. In this task they were assisted in the earlier period of war by willing co-operation of the upper sections of the political movements. The Congress under the control of moderate leaders proclaimed its loyalty to the British Government. It supported the cause of war. It adopted the resolutions at its annual sessions during the war to co-operate with the British rule. In return the Congress was treated with official favor. The 1914 Congress was attended by Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras; the 1915 Congress by Lord Willingdon, Governor of United Provinces. Representative Indian leaders who at this time were in London, hastened to offer their support to the Government. The Congress deputation in London included Lala Lajpat Rai, Jinnah, Sinha and others. They sent a letter to the Secretary of State proclaiming their conviction that 'Princes and People of India will readily and willingly co-operate to the best of their ability, and would afford opportunities of securing that end by placing the resources of their country at His Majesty's disposal for speedy victory for Empire'.

Indian Soldiers were encouraged to fight for the British, Indian Princes and industrialists opened their coffers. Nationalists put aside their aspiration and helped in the war efforts. Gandhiji who had arrived in London from South Africa, urged his young Indian friends to do their duty. He volunteered himself for services in the Red Cross. He responded to the Delhi war conference called by the Viceroy in 1917. As late as 1918 he was conducting a recruiting campaign in which he urged the Gujarati peasants to win swaraj by joining the army.

However, the conditions created by the war brought mass unrest. Heavy burdens were placed on poverty stricken people of India by crippling financial contributions exacted from them for the war effort. Prices were rising. Reckless profiteering created conditions of mass misery and

impoverishment. This was reflected in the unparalleled toll caused by widespread influenza at the end of war. Nearly 14 millions died in this epidemic. The growth of unrest was also reflected in the Ghadr Movement in Punjab. There were mutinies in the army. These were suppressed with ruthless executions and sentences. In 1917 the Rowlatt Committee was appointed under a judge of the King's Bench. It was to enquire into the 'the criminal conspiracies connected with revolutionary movement in India and recommend new repressive legislation.

The growing unrest began to find a reflection in the political movement in which new stirrings appeared from 1916 onwards. In 1916 Lokmanya Tilak founded the Home Rule for India League. His campaign was joined by the English Theosophist Mrs. Anne Besant. She sought to guide the national movement in channels of 'Loyalty' to the Empire. Later she took an active part in the fight against the non-cooperation movement. Reunion between the Extremists and Moderates was achieved at Lucknow Congress in 1916. The Muslim League had been founded in 1905 and efforts were made to reach an agreement with it at Karachi Congress in 1913. However the plan for alliance between the Congress and Muslim League reached fruition only in 1916. One of the reasons for this closer understanding was that Muslim feeling was strongly aroused by the war against Turkey. The Muslim League had already revealed this discontent in their conference in 1915. The two bodies reached the agreement on a common scheme. It was in favor of reforms in the direction of partial self-government within the Empire and became known as the Lucknow Pact. At the same time the aim of India becoming 'an equal partner in the Empire with self governing Dominions' was proclaimed.

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917. This was a great rival for the Imperialists. It affected the whole tempo of events in India and found speedy reflection in the relations between Britain and their countries. Within a few months of the fall of Tsarism the British Government hastened to issue a declaration. It proclaimed the aims of the British rule in India to bring about 'the gradual development of self governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. It promised 'Substantial steps in this direction as soon as possible'. The hasty character of this declaration was obvious. The statement was made first. Efforts to find out the intention behind it came later. The Montague Chelmsford Report was ready only in 1918 and the reforms were not enacted until the end of 1918. It came into operation only in 1920. By this time the whole situation in India had changed.

During the year 1919 a strong wave of unrest spread over India. In December 1918 about 1,25,000 mill hands went on strike in Bombay. The Rowlatt Act invested Government with



extraordinary repressive powers. It dispensed with ordinary court procedure and provided for imprisonment without trial. Gandhiji formed a Satyagraha league to deal with this situation. A hartal was called for on April 6. The response of the masses was overwhelming and even surprised the initiators of the movement. A mighty wave of mass demonstration, strikes, unrest and rioting set in. There was courageous resistance to Violent repression in the face of heavy casualties. The unrest spread over many parts of India. A new unity of the people was witnessed. All the communities backed by the workers faced the challenge. 'Hindus publicly accepted water from the hands of Muslims and vice versa. Hindu-Muslim unity was the watchword of processions indicated both by cries and by banners. Hindu leaders had actually been allowed to preach from the pulpit of a Mosque.'

The official Government Report for the year speaks with alarmed amazement of the newly formed unity of the people and breakdown of all official conception of Hindu Muslim antagonism.

Extraordinary measures of repression followed. It was at this time that the atrocities of Amritsar occurred. General Dyer fired 1600 rounds of ammunition into an unarmed crowd which had gathered in an enclosed area without means of exit. 379 persons were killed and 1200 wounded. The object was to create 'a moral effect from the military point of view not only on those who were present, but more specially throughout Punjab.' This was done to terrorise the population. The detailed news of this massacre did not reach even the leaders of the Congress committee till four months later. The news was suppressed and withheld from the British Parliament. The British public came to know about this event after about eight months. The Congress committee decided to have its own inquiry into this outrage. For diplomatic reasons the Government set up a committee of inquiry. It condemned this outrageous massacre. However, General Dyer received a purse of £ 20,000 from imperialists for his brave stand. His action was officially approved by the House of Lords. Martial law was resorted to in Punjab. During this reign of terror wholesale shooting, hanging, bombing from the air, and extraordinary sentences were sanctioned by the tribunals. Gandhiji was alarmed by the situation which was developing. There were sporadic cases of violence in Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad and elsewhere. The masses rose against the rulers. Gandhiji suspended the passive resistance movement in the middle of April 1919, within a week of the hartal. He felt he had committed 'a blunder of Himalayan dimensions which had enabled ill-disposed persons not true passive resisters at all, to perpetrate disorders.'

The revolutionary tide of rising mass unrest advanced in 1920 and 1921. It was further intensified by economic crises, which began to develop in the later part of 1920. The first six months of 1920 saw the greatest heights of the strike movement.

In this situation the main body of Congress Leadership executed a decisive change of strategy. It threw over the idea co-operation with the Reforms. It was determined to take up the leadership of the rising mass movement, for this it evolved the plan of 'Non-Violent non-co-operation' which was adopted at the Calcutta special congress in September 1920. It was carried by the alliance of Gandhiji and Motilal Nehru with the militant Muslim leaders, the Ali Brothers. Ali brothers were at the head of the then powerful Khilafat agitation. The resolution adopted the policy of 'Progressive movement of non-violent non-co-operation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, until the said wrongs were righted and swaraj was established'. The policy envisaged a succession of stages. The first stage was to renunciate the titles bestowed by the Government. The Second stage was to ensure the triple boycott of legislature, law courts and educational institutions. It was decided to revive hand spinning and hand weaving in every house. The final stage, was the non-payment of Government taxes.

Gandhiji returned to the Viceroy all the decorations and titles he had received from the Government. A number of others followed suit.

The boycott of the elections to the new legislatures which took place in November, was remarkably successful. Two thirds of the electors abstained from voting. The boycott of educational institutions had a considerable measure of success. Thousands of students were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm generated by the non-co-operation movement. The lawyers boycott was less successful except in the case of a few outstanding examples of great personalities like Motilal Nehru C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad and others.

The creed of the Congress changed at the annual session at Nagpur in December 1920. The new programme was finally adopted with unanimity. The aim of the previous proclamation was colonial self Government. The new aim was 'attainment of swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means.' The organisation of the Congress was carried forward from its loose character to the machinery of a modern party. Its units reached down to the villages and far into the interior. It had now a working committee of 15.

The new programme and policy was inaugurated by Gandhiji. It marked a giant advance for the National Congress which now stood out as a political party. It led the masses in struggle

against the Government for the realisation of the national freedom. From this point the National Congress won its position as the central focus of the National movement.

A rather extraordinary situation arose in the following year. The main trouble was agrarian problems in the villages. In big cities there was a rising working class movement. All these classes and groups of people were attracted towards Gandhiji. Hindus and other communities joined the movement in thousands. The Muslims though looking beyond the borders of India, joined the national movement to achieve their aim. The intense countrywide idealism tried to bring together all these various elements. Many of these elements were contradictory. Their grievances and discontents varied. Yet the movement succeeded in bringing them together. In all the cities 'Hindu, Musalman Kai Jai' was the popular slogan. These various groups were fighting the forces of Foreign Rule. Yet their desires and passions were free from hatred. Gandhiji's insistence on the implications of non-violence was the root cause for the absence of hatred, wrath and abuse. The demoralised obtained moral courage, the backward and broken up people suddenly straightened their bodies. Their heads were lifted. They took part in this massive movement on a nation-wide scale in a disciplined way. Congress workers were arrested and sentenced. The Ali Brothers were sentenced for inciting the Indian Army to disaffection. The Congress proclaimed a boycott on all the functions in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales who was coming to India.

Towards the end of 1921 the struggle leapt to new heights. The Government was in deep alarm and there was anxiety over the whole situation. They wanted to act against Gandhiji. They decided to invite the Prince of Wales to tour India. This was done perhaps with a vain hope of conciliating the people and also to test their feelings in relation to the royal image. On November 17th the Prince of Wales arrived in India. All over the country the arrival was greeted with Hartal and successful demonstrations of popular disaffection. This type of overwhelming and enthusiastic activity was unique. It was adopted for the first time in India. The hostility of the people was clearly demonstrated and was followed by angry repression by Government. The Congress volunteer organisation in Bengal was declared illegal. Deshbandhu Das gave a stirring message to the people. Even before the arrival of the Prince, mass arrests had begun.

From this point the National Volunteer movement began to consolidate its ranks. They were still organised within the frame work of the Congress on the basis of 'non-violent non-co-operation.' Many wore Uniforms. They drilled and marched in mass formations to organise hartals and the boycott of foreign cloth by picketing and peaceful persuasion. The Government directed all its force against the National Volunteers. The pro-Government Press such as the

Times of India, Statesman and Englishman raised a hue and cry that the National Volunteers had taken possession of Calcutta and that the Government had abdicated it. They demanded immediate action. The Government proclaimed the volunteers an illegal organisation. Arrests were made in thousands. Students and factory workers replenished the ranks of the volunteers.

The first wave of civil resistance amazed and frightened the Government. The Prince of Wales was in India. His presence prompted authorities to seek some compromise. A suggestion was made to this effect through Deshbhandu Das who was in jail. Gandhiji insisted that Maulana Mohommed Ali who was in jail at Karachi should be present but this suggestion was not accepted by the Government.

Whenever the Prince went he met with hartals and deserted streets. Gandhiji who was not yet arrested, still issued directions and inspired the people. The Government had not touched him so far as they feared that the Indian Army and police might react if they did so. The advance of the movement in 1921 was demonstrated not only in the enthusiastic development of the non-co-operation movement but in the emerging forms of mass struggle in all parts of the country. There was a railway strike in Assam and Bengal. 'No tax' campaign was launched in Midnapur. The Moplahs rebelled in Malbar. The militant Akalis started movement against the rich Mahants enjoying official protection in the Punjab.

By the end of December all the well-known Congress leaders except Gandhiji were imprisoned. 20,000 political prisoners filled the jails. At the pinnacle of the struggle 30,000 were in jail.

The Government was anxious and perplexed. The infection of the universal defiance of the Government spread out from the towns and reached millions of the peasantry. Govt. began to lose its nerve.

Amid enthusiasm the Ahmedabad Congress passed certain resolutions. The determination of the Congress to continue the campaign of non-violent non-cooperation was proclaimed with vigour. It was to continue till Swaraj was obtained and control of Government of India passed into the hands of the people. It called on young persons over 18 years of age to join 'illegal' National Volunteers and take a pledge to concentrate attention upon civil disobedience. Mahatma Gandhi was given the sole executive authority of the Congress.

With Gandhiji as the supreme authority in the Congress, the movement scaled greater heights. It created tremendous enthusiasm and brought hopeful results. However, in the midst of this ferment Gandhiji perceived alarming signs of disruption. His movement was not shaping at all the way he had intended. He had unchained 'a Monster.' Ugly elements had crept in. Reckless men, especially among his muslim Colleagues were pressing Gandhiji to abandon the 'non-violent' clause. At the close of 1921 more and more were going to prisons. Thousands of volunteers were facing lathi charges with Gandhiji's name on their lips. But Gandhiji began to feel perplexed.

After the Ahmedabad Congress various districts approached Gandhiji with a request to give permission to start the 'no tax' Campaign. One district-Guntur began without permission. Gandhiji sent an immediate note to the Congress officials of Guntur to ensure that all taxes were paid by the due date. To begin with this he selected Bardoli district in Gujrat to start the 'no tax' campaign On February 1st he sent his ultimatum to viceroy. He declared that unless the persons were released and repressive measures abandoned. 'Mass Civil Disobedience' would begin. Hardly he had done this hence few days later, news arrived that a little village, Chauri Chaura in the United provinces angry peasants stormed and burned the village police station. The unpopular village constabulary had perished in the flames. This news shocked Gandhiji. At a hasty meeting of the Working Committee at Bardoli on Feb 12,1921 the decision to abandon the 'no tax' movement was reached. The inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri-Chaura put a temporary halt to the entire civil disobedience movement.

Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and others sent from prison long and indignant letters to Gandhiji. They protested at his decision. Gandhiji replied that men in prison were 'Civilly dead' and had no claim to any say in the policy. The sudden suspension of the movement was resented everywhere. But Gandhiji had his own reasoning. For the national Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not a religion or dogma. Apart from the Cahauri Chaura incident Gandhiji might have sensed that movement was going to pieces. No doubt the movement had apparently produced some strength. It demonstrated the wide-spread enthusiasm of the people. However, except Gandhiji all the leaders were in prison. All the organization were becoming weak. Discipline in the movement was disappearing. Masses were not trained to carry on the movements by themselves. Undesirable men and women took charge even of the Congress committees. The Khilafat Organisation met the same fate. Agent-provocateurs were at work. Under the circumstances if the movement had been continued it could have been crushed miserably. A reign of terror would have come into existence. That would have demoralized the people.

The movement had been paralyzed from within. Demoralisation had set in. To take advantage of this situation, the Government struck with confidence. On March 10, Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment.

### **Simon Commission and the Second-Mass Movement**

The Congress was now at a low ebb. The national movement appeared to have flopped. Gandhiji wanted to increase the membership of the Congress to 10 millions. However, the Congress could not enlist more than 2000 members. The condition of 'Spinning Franchise' introduced by Gandhiji which required members of elected Congress organizations to send 2000 yards of self spun yarn every month was made optional. The Bombay Chronicle in 1925 spoke of a 'general paralysis and stagnation'. Lalaji described the situation as 'chaos' 'confusion'. People were sunk in depression. The drift to sporadic and futile violence in the political struggle was stopped, but suppressed violence found a way out in the following years. It aggravates the communal trouble. The Muslim league separated itself again from the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha conducted a narrow and reactionary counter-propaganda.

A section of the leadership of the Congress made a decisive turn away from the policies of Gandhiji. The leadership was represented by C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and others. They felt policies adopted by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji were sterile and unpractical. They decided to form a new party while remaining within the Congress. It was determined to contest the election and carry forward the fight on the parliamentary plane within the new legislatures. This new party was named the Swaraj Party.

The decision to end the boycott of the elections and of the legislatures was undoubtedly in view of the weakness of the mass movement. It was opposed by the 'no changers' move in the Congress. This group clung to Gandhiji and his program. But they were powerless to prevent the Swaraj party from contesting the elections. Moreover Gandhiji was in jail. In 1925, the Congress made its complete and unconditional surrender to the Swaraj party which held the majority. Its leaders took over decisive control while Gandhiji remains for the time being in the background. At the outset the aim of entry into the Councils was declared to be 'uniform' and consistence 'obstruction'. On this basis victory was won in the election of 1923. The party centered the central assembly as the strongest single party and was able by collaboration with the Independents or Liberals to establish a precarious majority. C. R. Das had become there to offer their co-operation. If the Government would receive co-operation, they would find that Swarajists were their men: In the spring of 1926 the Sabarmati pact contemplated acceptance of office. This

was turned down owing to opposition of the rank and file. At the new elections in 1928 the Swaraj party suffered a marked set back except in Madras.

By now it was clear that the forces of national struggle had weakened. The Swarajist were divorced from the mass movement. They were only pleading for terms with the British Government. The latter knew the weakness of the party. Consequently made a somersault. They begin to go back on the partial economic concessions granted to the Indian interests during the previous years. They opened a economic offensive to re-establish full domination through the currency bill of 1927. The rupee ratio was established at 15·6 d. This was in the face of universal Indian protests. The new Steel-Protection Bill of 1927 undermined the protection of the Act 1924 by introducing preferential rates of British steel. Towards the end of 1927 the Simon Commission was announced for India. It was appoint to settle the fate of the future constitution for India. But it had no India representative. Thus the Indian leadership once again to forced to turn away from their hopes of co-operation. They had to look towards the possibility of harnessing the mass forces., once more in their support to make a successful bargain. But the conditions were now far more difficult and more complicated then decade ago. The masses had began to awakens to new life on their o own. They had independent political expression and aims. They had to struggle not only against imperialism but against the Indian exploiters. The triangular character of the contest was now coming far more clearly to the front.

A new faction was facing for the first time. In the middle of 1920 the industrial working class as a decisive force. It began to develop its own leadership. It had its own ideology. Socialism began to develop for the first time as a political force in India. The influence of its ideas began to penetrate the youth. The left sections of Indian nationalism were bringing new vitality and energy to the political life in India. The Kanpur conspiracy trial of 1924 showed the sharp attitude of Imperialism. It wanted to stamp out first sign of revolutionary working class politics. But the trade unions and peasants organizations were growing in strength.

The reflection of this advance began to appear in the emergence of a new left wing in the Congress and the national movements. Towards the end of 1927 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru returned from a prolonged tour in Europe. He had acquainted himself with the socialist circles and the ideas there. The Madras Congress held at the end of 1927 showed more clearly the leftist inclinations. A resolution for complete independence at the aim of national movement was unanimously carried. Boycott of the Simon Commission was announced with a view to evolve an alternative constitutional scheme. Participation in all parties conference was approved. The Congress was affiliated to the newly founded International League Against Imperialism.

Jawaharlalji and Netaji Subhashchandra Bose were now the principal leaders of the youth. They introduced leftis tendencies into the Congress. They were appointed as general secretaries.

The apparent victory of the left at the 1927 Congress was superficial and based on lack of opposition. It was clear to the leadership that the left was developing as a force which could sweep the Congress. At the all parties conference the older leadership collaborated with the moderates. It evolved a scheme for a constitution based on responsible Government the British Empire. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the Chairman of the committee. It was the known as the Nehru report. This report shelved the demand for Independence.

In this critical balance of forces Gandhiji returned to active leadership of the Congress at the Calcutta session. No doubt he was the most subtle and experienced politician of the older group. He had unrivalled mass prestige. The world had now accepted him as the greatest Indian figure. He could justify and reconcile anything and everything in arguments. He was recognized as standing on a higher plane of spiritual reasoning. By his personal saintliness and selflessness he could unlock the door to the hearts of the masses. All the hopes were fixed on Gandhiji as the man to guide the mass movement.

At the Calcutta Congress in December 1928, Gandhiji had difficulty in securing acceptance of the Nehru Report. The resolution he drafted promised that this report should not be regarded as in any way withdrawing the aim of complete independence. If this report were not adopted by the Government by December 1929, the Congress would revive the campaign of non-violent non- co-operation and this time begin with non-payment of taxes. This resolution was carried by a narrow majority with a vote of 1,350 against 973. The left amendment sponsored by Netaji Bose and Jawaharlalji insisted on the immediate aim of complete independence. Twelve months notice was given to imperialism to accept the resolution. Meanwhile a warning signal of the situation appeared in the demonstration of 50,000 Calcutta workers ( History of the National Congress) who presented themselves to the Calcutta Congress with the slogans for national Independence and for the 'Independent Socialist Republic of India' It took possession of the pandal for two hours.

Imperialism did not waste its opportunity. In March 1929 all the prominent leaders of the rising working class movement were arrested all over India and brought to the remote Court of Meerut for trial which dragged on for four years. They were held in prison during all the succeeding waves of struggle, before even sentence was pronounced. Apart from representing the workers and peasants party, three of the arrested leaders were also members of the all India



Congress committee. They were elected executives of the National Congress. At the same time the Viceroy put into force the public Safety ordinance.

On eve of critical approaching Congress and the year of struggle. Gandhiji was elected its President. He made a skilful appreciation of the existing situation. He clearly understood the relation of forces. He stood down and nominated Jawaharlalji for election in his place. He was the leader of youth and of the independence League. He had also expressed sympathies for socialism. Gandhiji justified his choice by saying 'No one can surpass him in his love for his country; he is brave and passionate, and at this moment these qualities are very essential. But, although passionate and resolute in struggle still he possesses the reason of a statesman. An adherent of discipline, he has proved indeed his capability to submit to decisions with which he is not in agreement. He is modest and practical enough not to run extremes. In his hand the nation is perfectly secure'

One last effort was made by the moderate leadership to reach an agreement with Imperialism. On 31st October 1929, Viceroy issued the statement. He made a reference to the 'Goal of Dominion Status' to be reached at some unknown future date. The party leaders in India united to sign a response in reply known as 'Delhi Manifesto'. It was signed by Gandhiji, Mrs Beasant, Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Jawaharlal Nehru and others. It offered to co-operate with the Government. The Delhi Manifesto was received by the rulers with pleasure as sign of weakness. It produced no practical results. It only confused Congress ranks. The subsequent meeting with Viceroy was fruitless.

At the end of 1929 at the Lahore Congress, the decision for action was taken. The Nehru Report was declared to have lapsed. Complete Independence became the creed of Congress. The Congress authorised the All India Congress Committee 'whenever it deems fit, to launch a programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes'. At mid night as 1930 was ushered in, the Flag of Indian Independence was unfurled. On 26th January 1930 the first Independence Day was celebrated throughout India. The pledge to struggle for complete Independence was read out in vast demonstrations. It proclaimed to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to British Rule and determined to end this inhuman rule.

On 30th January 1930, through 'Young India', Gandhiji made an offer of Eleven Points in return for which civil disobedience would be called off. The Eleven points included rupee ratio of 1s.4p, total prohibition, reduction of land revenue and military expenditure, protective tariff on foreign cloth etc. Once again the Congress Committee Meeting at Sabarmati in February 1930

placed power in the hand of 'Mahatma Gandhi and those working with him'. He was to lead and Control the campaign.

The stage was for set for Gandhiji's next act of civil disobedience. He felt that to rouse the masses, a quicker method was needed. He hit upon the salt tax. The Govt. controlled the production of salt. In 1930 half, the retail price of salt represented tax. As everybody bought and ate salt. Gandhiji had found a novel way to rouse the masses. Salt suddenly become a mysterious word. The salt laws were to be broken. Thus began the great salt march. Gandhiji set off from Ahmedabad to Dandi on seashore. He walked the distance of 200 miles awakening the villages on the way. The march lasted for three weeks. The news-reel cameras of the world were elicking away. Enormous publicity was given to this salt march through the press, Cinemas and every other device. This was the regarded by the Congress leadership as a triumph of strategy for awakening and mobilizing the masses. It did help to perform this function. After three weeks, the March came to an end. Gandhiji picked some salt from sea and thousands followed suit by making salt illegally. Soon afterwards Gandhiji was arrested; Gandhiji's arrest gave a further stimulus th the movement. Woman in their thousands discarded the security of their home. Uneducated woman in large numbers came from the seclusion of their houses. They swelled the tide of civil resistance. Fifty thousand textile workers in Bombay struck work in protest against Gandhiji's arrest.

The overwhelming mass movement broke loose throughout the country. It look the leadership on both sides by surprise. All over the country people learnt the art of manufacturing salt. Many curious ways were adopted to produce salt. The official Congress instruction given were confined to the most limited and relatively harmless forms of civil disobedience like Violation of salt laws, boycott of foreign cloths, picketing of the foreign cloth shops and liquor shops. The mass movement which developed already in April crossed these simple limits. The arrested salt prisoners had to be housed and fed. This created a problem for the Government. It introduced a new strategy of beating up the salt depot raiders and leave them in the streets with their bodies battered or broken. The people also developed their own strategy. They collected in the meeting but as soon as a police squad came they disappeared. They gathered for the demonstration but as soon as they learnt from their volunteers that the police van was coming they would disperse. Nobody taught them this trick. They acquired it through trial. Strikes and powerful mass demonstration were on the increase.

Successful attempts were made to raid the Chittagong Armory in Bengal. Peshawar was in the hands of the people for ten days. The peasants in a number of localities started a

spontaneous no-rent movement. This was more predominant in the United Provinces. Those were the days of exciting news. Processions, Lathi Charges, firing, arrests of noted leaders, deaths of martyrs filled the columns of newspapers and magazines.

Most significant for the whole future was the mutiny of the Garhwali soldiers at Peshawar. Following the arrests of local leaders, armored cars were sent to cow down the angry crowds. One armored car was burned. Its occupants escaped. Wholesale firing on the crowds was followed. This resulted in hundreds of deaths and casualties. Two platoons of the second Battalion of the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles were deployed. These were Hindu troops. They were in the midst of Muslim crowds. The troops refused to obey orders to fire on an unarmed and innocent mob. They broke ranks and fraternised with the crowd. They handed over their arms. Immediately after this, the military and police were completely withdrawn from Peshawar. From April 25th to May 4th the city was in the hands of people. Immediately after this powerful British forces were air squadrons, were concentrated to recapture Peshawar. There was no resistance. The Government subsequently refused all demands for an enquiry into the incident. Seventeen men of the Garwali Rifles were subjected to court martial. Their memory lives in the heart of people still.

A remarkable exhibition of fortitude was put up by the Frontier Province before machine gunning. It was disciplined peaceful and very courageous. It had an extraordinary significance. The Pathans are also well known for their bold and courageous nature. but they are not known for peaceful and non-violent activities. However the Pathans set an example which was unique in the country. This was under inspiring leadership Khan Abdul Gafar-Khan and his brother Khan Saheb : This influenced a part of the India Army.

The Viceroy promulgated various ordinances prohibiting a number of activities. As these ordinances grew opportunities to act against them also grew. Civil disobedient meant to do the very thing which the law prohibited. There were painful incidents of police brutalities during the raids of salt pans and depot organised by the coast line people. Several emergencies hospital grew up to treat the injured.

In the industrial town of Solapur in Maharashtra, the workers held procession in the town for a week. Its population was 1,40,000 of whom 50,000 were textile workers. They replaced the police and established their own administration. 'They took charge of the administration', reported the Poona 'Star' and tried to establish their own laws and regulations'. Soon martial law was proclaimed.

Imperialist repression was limitless. Ordinances followed one another in rapid succession. It created situation comparable to the martial law. In June the Congress and its organisation were declared illegal. Official figures were recorded show that 60,000 civil resisters were sentenced in less than a year, upto the Irwin Gandhi agreement in the spring of 1931. These figures were certainly an underestimate. They omit the masses sentenced for offences of intimidation, rioting etc. They cover only those recognized by the Government as political prisoners. The very detailed Nationalist records place the total at 90,000 (History of National Congress) All this took place under a 'Labour Government' in England.

Imprisonment was the least of the forms of repression. The jails were filled to overflowing. It was clear that the mass arrests and imprisonment was powerless to check the movement. Therefore, the principal weapon employed was physical terrorism. The record of indiscriminate lathi charges, beating up, firing on unarmed crowds. Killing and wounding of men and women and in extreme cases shooting and hanging was unparalleled. The use of tanks, armored cars and bombing from the air sickened the most experienced local and foreign journalists. Strictest measures were employed to suppress the news and proceedings of various meetings. However the careful records of the Congress provided volumes of facts and incidents. They threw some light on the brutally employed. According to an official answer in the Legislative Assembly on July 14, 1930, 103 persons were killed and 420 wounded, in 24 cases of firing on the public from April 1, to that date.

Nevertheless the power of movement during 1930 exceeded every calculation of the authorities. It grew inspite of repression. It raised the most serious alarms in the Imperialist camp. It found open expression by the summer of 1930. The British Trading Community was hard hit by the boycott. This was specially noticeable in Bombay. It was centre of strength of industrial working class. Here the repression was most severe. The movement was the strongest here and again and again the workers held the possession of the streets, despite repeated police charges, in mass demonstration. Congress leaders vainly begged them to disperse. 'Visitors here from Calcutta and other big cities wrote the 'Observer' correspondent on June 29, 'are frankly amazed at the state to which Bombay has been reduced. 'But for the precedence of troops and armed police' declared. 'A letter from Bombay' published in the Spectator' of July 5th. 'The Government of Bombay would be overthrown in a day' and the administration would be taken over by Congress with the ascent of all' The British businessmen from Bombay joined with the India businessmen, through the Milliwners' Association and Chamber of Commerce to demand immediate self-Government for India on a Dominion basis. The amazing spectacle was interpreted by the 'Times of India' (Bombay) Clamoring for responsible Parliamentary

Government at the centre. By July 6th, the 'Observer' was reporting with the alarm the 'demonstration of the Europeans' in India. On the basis of the struggle and sacrifices of the Indian people the Congress leadership held a strong hand.

The British Government tried to break the impasse by holding a Round Table Conference. The Indian was represented by the feudal Princes in London. It was also represented by the known reactionaries and communalists. These elements called themselves progressive and nationalists. All of them found much in common between themselves and the British Government. The Congress hardly cared for what the R.T.C. did. However, the R.T.C. was then adjourned to enable the Congress to attend.

The first anniversary of Independence Day 26th Jan was celebrated all over India. It confirmed the resolution of independence and passed an identical resolution called the 'Resolution of Remembrance' As Jawaharlalji points out 'The Organisation of this celebration was a remarkable feat, for news papers and printing presses were not available. The post and telegraph could not be utilised and yet an identical resolution in the particular language of the province concerned, was passed at large gatherings held more or less the same time at innumerable places , urban and rural throughout the country'. (Autobiography). J. Nehru. Gandhiji and the Congress working Committee members were released unconditionally.

R.T.C. did not bring anything of importance. Dr. Jaykar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru intervened in the hope of bringing about an agreement between the Congress and the Government in August 1930.

Irwin agreed to meet Gandhiji. The Congress wanted National Independence, including the right to secede from the Empire. The Viceroy could not see his way to consider the demand. The deadlock continued.

Negotiations however began on February 17th 1931 between Gandhiji and the Viceroy. Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed on March 5th. There was no substantial gain to the country from the settlement. The Delhi pact ended the civil disobedience movement for time being. It was made clear to Lord Irwin that while no-tax campaign would be withdrawn, the Congress could not advise peasantry to pay beyond their capacity. The no-tax campaign was both practical and economic. The ordinances were to be withdrawn and political prisoners released but not prisoners guilty of violence or incitement to violence or soldiers guilty of disobeying orders. Freedom of boycott of foreign goods was allowed, but not exclusively against the British goods.

The British Government had been compelled to sign a public Treaty with the leader of the National Congress. It had previously declared this an unlawful association and sought to smash it. It was undoubtedly a tremendous demonstration of the strength of the National movement. Churchill, the most reactionary, declared that it was 'disgusting and nauseating to find Gandhi' this one time Inner Temple lawyer, new seditious fakir striding halfnaked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of king's Emperor'. This fact produced at first a wide spread sense of elation of victory. However the more politically conscious sections understood what had happened. They felt that all the struggle and sacrifice had been thrown away at negotiations table. The Congress was compelled to accept the R.T.C. which it had previously refused. Gandhiji did not regard the pact as defeat. He was least perturbed. The pact did not take away from him the right to wield the weapon of satyagraha again. He wanted to put the Government into trial. If it failed, he would fight it again with renewed energy.

The Karachi Congress hastily convened the same month unanimously endorsed the agreement.

Jawaharlalji was given the task of moving the resolution to endorse the agreement. He was not happy over the agreement. He felt, however, it would only be personal vanity to express his dissent. Netaji Bose, who was sharply critical at the Congress, on the grounds that this might appear as a breach of national unity. The Congress adopted a progressive social and economic programme embodied in a 'Fundamental Rights' resolution. It included a basic democratic character of an advance type. Nationalisation of key industries and transport, labor rights and agrarian reform. This programme which remains valid, marked an important step forward for the Congress.

The story of Karachi Congress would be incomplete without a reference to the Hindu-Muslim riots which broke out in Kanpur. A revolutionary upsurge was turned into a triumph of communalism by a few policemen disguised as members of the public. They were working according to plan. The news of execution of Bhagat Singh and his two associates resulted spontaneous protest hartals all over India. But in Kanpur it was changed into Hindu-Muslim riot. A large procession was taken out with the pictures of the three martyrs — Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhadeo — and black flags. The Hindu's closed their shops. The Muslims did not because shortly before when Mohamad Ali died, the Hindus had not participated in the hartal organized by the Muslims. A Muslim. According to reports he was a policeman- ran towards to the Muslim quarters shouting and shrieking that Hindus were killing Muslims. Thus spread the riot. It lasted

several days. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was engaged in the very noble work of rescuing Muslims from Hindu pockets and Hindus from Muslim pockets. While doing this he ventured into Muslim area and there the fanatics who did not know that he had saved many Muslims murdered him in cold blood.

The situation was developing swiftly in India, especially in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Frontier provinces.

In Bengal, the Delhi agreement made no difference. The tension continued to grow. Some civil, disobedience prisoners were discharged, but thousands of political prisoners remained in jail. The detenues also continued to be in Prison. Fresh arrests for 'seditious' speeches were made. The terrorist activities made a loud noise and attracted great attention.

In the Uttar Pradesh agrarian situation was becoming worse. The Government temporized with the problem and delayed decision about rent and revenue remissions and forcible collections were begun. There had been agrarian riots when forcible collection of rent was made. They resulted in the death of landlord or his agent. The peasantry was subjected to growing pressure both from the Government grew on peasantry. Thousands of tenants were objected from their holdings and their property was seized.

In the Frontier Province, there was a permanent state of tension and the Government was military affair. They were armed with special laws and ordinances and heavy punishment for tribal offences. In the year 1929 Abdul Gaffar Khan formed the Khuddi Khidmatgar other-wise known as Red Shirts Organisation. This functioned as the effective wing of the Congress. Abdul Gaffar Khan led the agitation against the state of affairs existing in the province. He went from village to village and established the centers of 'Redshirts'. The whole area of the province was covered with Khuddi Khidmatgars. They were very peaceful and non-violent. They had a tradition of war. They lived near turbulent frontier. This disciplined and peaceful movement, closely allied to the Indian national movement grew rapidly. This upset the Government. The head-Khan-Abdul Gaffar-Khan came to be known as Fakir-e-Afghan, Fakir-e-Pathan, Gandhi-e-Sarhad. He had won tremendous popularity through he was quiet. He always devoted to the cause of the people. He was undaunted by difficulties. Government actions did not worry him. He was not a politician. He hardly knew anything of tactics and maneuvers. He was tall and straight. He was well built. He used to talk less and do more work. He wanted freedom of his province within the framework of Indian freedom. The Redshirts always co-operated with the National Congress. They were a

separate organization. The real link was Khan-Abdul-Gaffar-Khan. The working committee considered this situation in 1931 and decided to absorb the 'Redshirt' into Congress.

The Congress working committee had a face the communal problems. There was nothing new about this. The British Government always kept this problem in the forefront. It made all other issues subordinate. The members of the R.T.C. were the nominees of the Government. They were selected with view to give importance of the communal and sectional interests. It wanted to stress these divergences. It did not give importance to common interests. The Government refused to nominate any Muslim from National Congress. In the circumstances the National Congress felt that the main political and economic issues would be set aside at the RTC. Efforts therefore, were made to reach an understanding on communal problems between the parties concerned. The efforts proved fruitless.

Various Congress committees pointed out the breaches of Delhi pact. These were forwarded to the Government. It is in turn brought counter charges. These were published in the press. This resulted in the status-quo of the relations between the Congress and the Government.

In 1931 Lord Irwin had left India. In his place Lord willingdon came as a Viceroy. Gandhiji's meeting with him at Simla. An agreement was arrived at. It was decided that Gandhiji would go to the RTC as the sole representative of the Congress. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also attended the RTC as a representative of Indian Womanhood.

It was manifestly clear that the British Government had no respect for demands of the India people. They never wanted to discuss the fundamental issues. Except Gandhiji no one represented the real interests of the people. Agakhan happened to combine the imperialist interests of feudal, financial, industrial and religious and communal nature over a long period. He was a close friend of British imperialism. He resided mainly outside India. Most of the other representatives were either reactionaries or puppets brought to fill up the chairs at the conference. There were very few eminent leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. M.R. Jaykar and others. But they were unable to play any decisive part. Only Gandhiji on behalf of the National Congress could play, the desired role. The British Government did not want him to play that part and hence the majority of the representatives were selected to ensure diversion from the main problem.



Gandhiji was an outstanding figure in the crowded hall of the Round Table Conference. His scanty dress distinguished him from others. There was a vast difference in his way of thinking and outlook and that of the well-dresses delegates around him. He made an attempt to find out some firm footing or agreement. He hated communal and sectional demands. Even then he was prepared to accept them provided these delegates joined forces with the Congress on the issue of complete independence. This was not agreeable to them. This exposed the real trouble. The real trouble was not communal or sectional. It was political reaction that barred all progress. The British Government which had brought these reactionaries together to control the proceedings of R.T.C. made the communal issue primary. No agreement was possible. On this issue — it was amply proved that the R.T.C. was convened not to accept the Indian demand but to repudiate it.

Imperialism had secured the whip hand. It was determined to use its advantage to the utmost. The 'Truce' had been one sided from the outset. Repression had continued. Gandhiji returned in the last days of 1931. He came to know the latest position in the Bengal, U.P. and Frontier Province. It was a pitiful tale. He called at once to the Viceroy to seek an interview. The interview could be granted provided Gandhiji agreed not to discuss the situation of Bengal, U.P. and Frontier Province. It meant that the Government was out to brush off the Congress. Imperialism had utilised every day of these nine months. 'Truce' to complete its grim preparations for a decisive battle. Sir John Anderson with the fresh experience of Black and Tan regime in Ireland had been nominated the Governor of Bengal to take in hand the arrangements. The Congress was to be taught a lesson. It was to be fought to be finished with unconditional surrender as the only term.

Swift and sharp the blow fell on Jan 4th 1932. On the same day negotiations broke down. The Viceroy issued his manifesto. Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai were arrested. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the president of the Congress. New ordinances were promulgated. They gave far reaching powers to the magistrates and police officers. Civil liberties ceased to exist. Both, a person and property could be seized by the authorities. The Congress and all other organisations were declared illegal. All the principal Congress leaders and the organisers were arrested all over the country. The Congress press was banned. Their premises, funds and property were confiscated. Kishan Sabhas, peasant unions, youth league students associations, advanced political organisations, national universities and schools, hospitals, swadeshi concerns, liberties etc. were declared illegal. This was to tribute to the Congress and the national sent an immediate note to the Congress officials of Guntur to ensure that all taxes were paid by the due date. To begin with this he selected Bardoli district in Gujrat to start the 'no tax' campaign. On February 1st he sent his ultimatum to viceroy. He declared that unless the persons were released and

repressive measures abandoned. 'Mass Civil Disobedience' would begin. Hardly he had done this hence few days later, news arrived that a little village, Chauri Chaura in the United provinces angry peasants stromed and burned the village police station. The unpopular village constabulary had perished in the flames. This news shocked Gandhiji. At a hasty meeting of the Working Committee at Bardoli on Feb 12,1921 the decision to abandon the 'no tax' movement was reached. The inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri-Chaura put a temporary halt to the entire civil disobedience movement.

Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and others sent from prison long and indignant letters to Gandhiji. They protested at his decision. Gandhiji replied that men in prison were 'Civilly dead' and had no claim to any say in the policy. The sudden suspension of the movement was resented everywhere. But Gandhiji had his own reasoning. For the national Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not a religion or dogma. Apart from the Cahauri Chaura incident Gandhiji might have sensed that movement was going to pieces. No doubt the movement had apparently produced some strength. It demonstrated the wide-spread enthusiasm of the people. However, except Gandhiji all the leaders were in prison. All the organization were becoming weak. Discipline in the movement was disappearing. Masses were not trained to carry on the movements by themselves. Undesirable men and women took charge even of the Congress committees. The Khilafat Organisation met the same fate. Agent-provocateurs were at work. Under the circumstances if the movement had been continued it could have been crushed miserably. A reign of terror would have come into existence. That would have demoralized the people.

The movement had been paralyzed from within. Demoralisation had set in. To take advantage of this situation, the Government struck with confidence. On March 10, Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment.

### **Simon Commission and the Second-Mass Movement**

The Congress was now at a low ebb. The national movement appeared to have flopped. Gandhiji wanted to increase the membership of the Congress to 10 millions. However, the Congress could not enlist more than 2000 members. The condition of 'Spinning Franchise' introduced by Gandhiji which required members of elected Congress organizations to send 2000 yards of self spun yarn every month was made optional. The Bombay Chronicle in 1925 spoke of a 'general paralysis and stagnation'. Lalaji described the situation as 'chaos' 'confusion'. People were sunk in depression. The drift to sporadic and futile violence in the political struggle was

stopped, but suppressed violence found a way out in the following years. It aggravates the communal trouble. The Muslim league separated itself again from the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha conducted a narrow and reactionary counter-propaganda.

A section of the leadership of the Congress made a decisive turn away from the policies of Gandhiji. The leadership was represented by C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and others. They felt policies adopted by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji were sterile and unpractical. They decided to form a new party while remaining within the Congress. It was determined to contest the election and carry forward the fight on the parliamentary plane within the new legislatures. This new party was named the Swaraj Party.

The decision to end the boycott of the elections and of the legislatures was undoubtedly in view of the weakness of the mass movement. It was opposed by the 'no changers' move in the Congress. This group clung to Gandhiji and his program. But they were powerless to prevent the Swaraj party from contesting the elections. Moreover Gandhiji was in jail. In 1925, the Congress made its complete and unconditional surrender to the Swaraj party which he'd the majority. Its leaders took over decisive control while Gandhiji remains for the time being in the background. At the outset the aim of entry into the Councils was declared to be 'uniform' and consistence 'obstruction'. On this basis victory was won in the election of 1923. The party centered the central assembly as the strongest single party and was able by collaboration with the Independents or Liberals to establish a precarious majority. C. R. Das had become there to offer their co-operation. If the Government would receive co-operation, they would find that Swarajists were their men: In the spring of 1926 the Sabarmati pact contemplated acceptance of office. This was turned down owing to opposition of the rank and file. At the new elections in 1928 the Swaraj party suffered a marked set back except in Madras.

By now it was clear that the forces of national struggle had weakened. The Swarajists were divorced from the mass movement. They were only pleading for terms with the British Government. The latter knew the weakness of the party. Consequently made a somersault. They begin to go back on the partial economic concessions granted to the Indian interests during the previous years. They opened a economic offensive to re-establish full domination through the currency bill of 1927. The rupee ratio was established at 15.6 d. This was in the face of universal Indian protests. The new Steel-Protection Bill of 1927 undermined the protection of the Act 1924 by introducing preferential rates of British steel. Towards the end of 1927 the Simon Commission was announced for India. It was appoint to settle the fate of the future constitution for India. But it had no India representative. Thus the Indian leadership once again to forced to turn away from

their hopes of co-operation. They had to look towards the possibility of harnessing the mass forces., once more in their support to make a successful bargain. But the conditions were now far more difficult and more complicated than decade ago. The masses had begun to awaken to new life on their own. They had independent political expression and aims. They had to struggle not only against imperialism but against the Indian exploiters. The triangular character of the contest was now coming far more clearly to the front.

A new faction was facing for the first time. In the middle of 1920 the industrial working class as a decisive force. It began to develop its own leadership its has his own ideology. Socialism began to develop for the first time as a political force in India. The influence of its ideas began to penetrate the youth. The left sections of Indian nationalism were bringing new vitality and energy to the political life in India. The Kanpur conspiracy trial of 1924 showed the sharp attitude of Imperialism. It wanted to stamp out first sign of revolutionary working class politics. But the trade unions and peasants organizations were growing in strength.

The reflection of this advance began to appear in the emergence of a new left wing in the Congress and the national movements. Towards the end of 1927 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru returned from a prolonged tour in Europe. He had acquainted himself with the socialist circles and the ideas there. The Madras Congress held at the end of 1927 showed more clearly the leftist inclinations. A resolution for complete independence at the aim of national movement was unanimously carried. Boycott of the Simon Commission was announced with a view to evolve an alternative constitutional scheme. Participation in all parties conference was approved. The Congress was affiliated to the newly founded International League Against Imperialism. Jawaharlalji and Netaji Subhashchandra Bose were now the principal leaders of the youth. They introduced lefties tendencies into the Congress. They were appointed as general secretaries.

The apparent victory of the left at the 1927 Congress was superficial and based on lack of opposition. It was clear to the leadership that the left was developing as a force which could sweep the Congress. At the all parties conference the older leadership collaborated with the moderates. It evolved a scheme for a constitution based on responsible Government the British Empire. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the Chairman of the committee. It was the known as the Nehru report. This report shelved the demand for Independence.

In this critical balance of forces Gandhiji returned to active leadership of the Congress at the Calcutta session. No doubt he was the most subtle and experienced politician of the older group. He had unrivalled mass prestige. The world had now accepted him as the greatest Indian

figure. He could justify and reconcile anything and everything in arguments. He was recognized as standing on a higher plane of spiritual reasoning. By his personal saintliness and selflessness he could unlock the door to the hearts of the masses. All the hopes were fixed on Gandhiji as the man to guide the mass movement.

At the Calcutta Congress in December 1928, Gandhiji had difficulty in securing acceptance of the Nehru Report. The resolution he drafted promised that this report should not be regarded as in any way withdrawing the aim of complete independence. If this report were not adopted by the Government by December 1929, the Congress would revive the campaign of non-violent non-co-operation and this time begin with non-payment of taxes. This resolution was carried by a narrow majority with a vote of 1,350 against 973. The left amendment sponsored by Netaji Bose and Jawaharlalji insisted on the immediate aim of complete independence. Twelve months notice was given to imperialism to accept the resolution. Meanwhile a warning signal of the situation appeared in the demonstration of 50,000 Calcutta workers ( History of the National Congress) who presented themselves to the Calcutta Congress with the slogans for national Independence and for the 'Independent Socialist Republic of India' It took possession of the pandal for two hours.

Imperialism did not waste its opportunity. In March 1929 all the prominent leaders of the rising working class movement were arrested all over India and brought to the remote Court of Meerut for trial which dragged on for four years. They were held in prison during all the succeeding waves of struggle, before even sentence was pronounced. Apart from representing the workers and peasants party, three of the arrested leaders were also members of the all India Congress committee. They were elected executives of the National Congress. At the same time the Viceroy put into force the public Safety ordinance.

On eve of critical approaching Congress and the year of struggle. Gandhiji was elected its President. He made a skilful appreciation of the existing situation. He clearly understood the relation of forces. He stood down and nominated Jawaharlalji for election in his place. He was the leader of youth and of the independence League. He had also expressed sympathies for socialism. Gandhiji justified his choice by saying 'No one can surpass him in his love for his country; he is brave and passionate, and at this moment these qualities are very essential. But, although passionate and resolute in struggle still he possesses the reason of a statesman. An adherent of discipline, he has proved indeed his capability to submit to decisions with which he is not in agreement. He is modest and practical enough not to run extremes. In his hand the nation is perfectly secure.'

One last effort was made by the moderate leadership to reach an agreement with Imperialism. On 31st October 1929, Viceroy issued the statement. He made a reference to the 'Goal of Dominion Status' to be reached at some unknown future date. The party leaders in India united to sign a response in reply known as 'Delhi Manifesto'. It was signed by Gandhiji, Mrs Beasant, Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Jawaharlal Nehru and others. It offered to co-operate with the Government. The Delhi Manifesto was received by the rulers with pleasure as sign of weakness. It produced no practical results. It only confused Congress ranks. The subsequent meeting with Viceroy was fruitless.

At the end of 1929 at the Lahore Congress, the decision for action was taken. The Nehru Report was declared to have lapsed. Complete Independence became the creed of Congress. The Congress authorised the All India Congress Committee 'whenever it deems fit, to launch a programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes' at mid night as 1930 was ushered in, the Flag of Indian Independence was unfurled. On 26th January 1930 the first Independence Day was celebrated throughout India. The pledge to struggle for complete Independence was read out in vast demonstrations. It proclaimed to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to British Rule and determined to end this inhuman rule.

On 30th January 1930, through 'Young India', Gandhiji made an offer of Eleven Points in return for which civil disobedience would be called off. The Eleven points included rupee ratio of 1s.4p, total prohibition, reduction of land revenue and military expenditure, protective tariff on foreign cloth etc. Once again the Congress Committee Meeting at Sabarmati in February 1930 placed power in the hand of 'Mahatma Gandhi and those working with him'. He was to lead and Control the campaign.

The stage was set for Gandhiji's next act of civil disobedience. He felt that to rouse the masses, a quicker method was needed. He hit upon the salt tax. The Govt. controlled the production of salt. In 1930 half, the retail price of salt represented tax. As everybody bought and ate salt. Gandhiji had found a novel way to rouse the masses. Salt suddenly became a mysterious word. The salt laws were to be broken. Thus began the great salt march. Gandhiji set off from Ahmedabad to Dandi on seashore. He walked the distance of 200 miles awakening the villages on the way. The march lasted for three weeks. The news-reel cameras of the world were clicking away. Enormous publicity was given to this salt march through the press, Cinemas and every other device. This was regarded by the Congress leadership as a triumph of strategy for awakening and mobilizing the masses. It did help to perform this function. After three weeks, the March came to an end. Gandhiji picked some salt from sea and thousands followed suit by

making salt illegally. Soon afterwards Gandhiji was arrested; Gandhiji's arrest gave a further stimulus to the movement. Women in their thousands discarded the security of their homes. Uneducated women in large numbers came from the seclusion of their houses. They swelled the tide of civil resistance. Fifty thousand textile workers in Bombay struck work in protest against Gandhiji's arrest.

The overwhelming mass movement broke loose throughout the country. It took the leadership on both sides by surprise. All over the country people learnt the art of manufacturing salt. Many curious ways were adopted to produce salt. The official Congress instructions given were confined to the most limited and relatively harmless forms of civil disobedience like violation of salt laws, boycott of foreign cloths, picketing of the foreign cloth shops and liquor shops. The mass movement which developed already in April crossed these simple limits. The arrested salt prisoners had to be housed and fed. This created a problem for the Government. It introduced a new strategy of beating up the salt depot raiders and leave them in the streets with their bodies battered or broken. The people also developed their own strategy. They collected in the meeting but as soon as a police squad came they disappeared. They gathered for the demonstration but as soon as they learnt from their volunteers that the police van was coming they would disperse. Nobody taught them this trick. They acquired it through trial. Strikes and powerful mass demonstrations were on the increase.

Successful attempts were made to raid the Chittagong Armory in Bengal. Peshawar was in the hands of the people for ten days. The peasants in a number of localities started a spontaneous no-rent movement. This was more predominant in the United Provinces. Those were the days of exciting news. Processions. Lathi Charges, firing, arrests of noted leaders, deaths of martyrs filled the columns of newspapers and magazines.

Most significant for the whole future was the mutiny of the Garhwali soldiers at Peshawar. Following the arrests of local leaders, armored cars were sent to cow down the angry crowds. One armored car was burned. Its occupants escaped. Wholesale firing on the crowds was followed. This resulted in hundreds of deaths and casualties. Two platoons of the second Battalion of the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles were deployed. These were Hindu troops. They were in the midst of Muslim crowds. The troops refused to obey orders to fire on an unarmed and innocent mob. They broke ranks and fraternised with the crowd. They handed over their arms. Immediately after this, the military and police were completely withdrawn from Peshawar. From April 25th to May 4th the city was in the hands of people. Immediately after this powerful British forces were air squadrons, were concentrated to recapture Peshawar. There was no resistance.

The Government subsequently refused all demands for an enquiry into the incident. Seventeen men of the Garwali Rifles were subjected to court martial. Their memory lives in the heart of people still.

A remarkable exhibition of fortitude was put up by the Frontier Province before machine gunning. It was disciplined peaceful and very courageous. It had an extraordinary significance. The Pathans are also well known for their bold and courageous nature. but they are not known for peaceful and non-violent activities. However the Pathans set an example which was unique in the country. This was under inspiring leadership Khan Abdul Gafar - Khan and his brother Khan Saheb: This influenced a part of the India Army.

The Viceroy promulgated various ordinances prohibiting a number of activities. As these ordinances grew opportunities to act against them also grew. Civil disobedient meant to do the very thing which the law prohibited. There were painful incidents of police brutalities during the raids of salt pans and depot organised by the coast line people. Several emergencies hospital grew up to treat the injured.

In the industrial town of Solapur in Maharashtra, the workers held procession in the town for a week. Its population was 1, 40,000 of whom 50,000 were textile workers. They replaced the police and established their own administration. 'They took charge of the administration', reported the Poona 'Star' and tried to establish their own laws and regulations'. Soon martial law was proclaimed.

Imperialist repression was limitless. Ordinances followed one another in rapid succession. It created situation comparable to the martial law. In June the Congress and its organisation were declared illegal. Official figures were recorded show that 60,000 civil resisters were sentenced in less than a year, upto the Irwin Gandhi agreement in the spring of 1931. These figures were certainly an underestimate. They omit the masses sentenced for offences of intimidation, rioting etc. They cover only those recognized by the Government as political prisoners. The very detailed Nationalist records place the total at 90,000 (History of National Congress) All this took place under a 'Labour Government' in England.

Imprisonment was the least of the forms of repression. The jails were filled to overflowing. It was clear that the mass arrests and imprisonment was powerless to check the movement. Therefore, the principal weapon employed was physical terrorism. The record of indiscriminate lathi charges, beating up, firing on unarmed crowds killing and wounding of men



and women and in extreme cases shooting and hanging was unparalleled. The use of tanks, armored cars and bombing from the air sickened the most experienced local and foreign journalists. Strictest measures were employed to suppress the news and proceedings of various meetings. However the careful records of the Congress provided volumes of facts and incidents. They threw some light on the brutally employed. According to an official answer in the Legislative Assembly on July 14, 1930, 103 persons were killed and 420 wounded, in 24 cases of firing on the public from April 1, to that date.

Nevertheless the power of movement during 1930 exceeded every calculation of the authorities. It grew inspite of repression. It raised the most serious alarms in the Imperialist camp. It found open expression by the summer of 1930. The British Trading Community was hard hit by the boycott. This was specially noticeable in Bombay. It was centre of strength of industrial working class. Here the repression was most severe. The movement was the strongest here and again and again the workers held the possession of the streets, despite repeated police charges , in mass demonstration. Congress leaders vainly begged them to disperse . ‘Visitors here from Calcutta and other big cities wrote the ‘Observer’ correspondent on June 29, ‘are frankly amazed at the state to which Bombay has been reduced. ‘But for the precedence of troops and armed police’ declared. ‘A letter from Bombay’ published in the Spectator’ of July 5th. ‘The Government of Bombay would be overthrown in a day’ and the administration would be taken over by Congress with the ascent of all’ The British businessmen from Bombay joined with the India businessmen, through the Milliwners’ Association and Chamber of Commerce to demand immediate self-Government for India on a Dominion basis. The amazing spectacle was interpreted by the ‘Times of India’ (Bombay) Clamoring for responsible Parliamentary Government at the centre. By July 6th, the ‘Observer’ was reporting with the alarm the ‘demonstration of the Europeans’ in India. On the basis of the struggle and sacrifices of the Indian people the Congress leadership held a strong hand.

The British Government tried no break the impasse by holding a Round Table Conference. The Indian was represented by the feudal Princes in London. It was also represented by the known reactionaries and communalists. These elements called themselves progressive and nationalists. All of them found much in common between themselves and the British Government. The Congress hardly cared for what the R.T.C. did. However, the R.T.C. was then adjourned to enable the Congress to attend.

The first anniversary of Independence Day 26th Jan was celebrated all over India. It confirmed the resolution of independence and passed an identical resolution called the

‘Resolution of Remembrance’ As Jawaharlalji points out ‘The Organisation of this celebration was a remarkable feat , for news papers and printing presses were not available. The post and telegraph could not be utilised and yet an identical resolution in the particular language of the province concerned, was passed at large gatherings held more or less the same time at innumerable places , urban and rural through- out the country,. (Autobiography). J. Nehru. Gandhiji and the Congress working Committee members were released unconditionally.

R.T.C. did not bring anything of importance . Dr. Jaykar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru intervened in the hope of bringing about an agreement between the Congress and the Government in August 1930.

Irwin agreed to meet Gandhiji. The Congress wanted National Independence, including the right to secede from the Empire. The Viceroy could not see his way to consider the demand. The deadlock continued.

Negotiations however began on February 17th 1931 between Gandhiji and the Viceroy. Gandhi —Irwin pact was signed on March 5th. There was no substantial gain to the country from the settlement. The Delhi pact ended the civil disobedience movement for time being. It was made clear to Lord Irwin that while no-tax campaign would be withdrawn, the Congress could not advise peasantry to pay beyond their capacity. The no-tax campaign was both practical and economic. The ordinances were to be withdrawn and political prisoners released but not prisoners guilty of violence or incitement to violence or soldiers guilty of disobeying orders.

Freedom of boycott of foreign goods was allowed, but not exclusively against the British goods.

The British Government had been compelled to sign a public Treaty with the leader of the National Congress. It had previously declared this an unlawful association and sought to smash it. It was undoubtedly a tremendous demonstration of the strength of the National movement. Churchill, the most reactionary, declared that it was ‘disgusting and nauseating to find Gandhi’ this one time Inner Temple lawyer , new seditious fakir striding halfnaked up the steps of the Viceroy’s palace. There to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of king’s Emperor’. This fact produced at first a wide spread sense of elation of victory. However the more politically conscious sections understood what had happened. They felt that all the struggle and sacrifice had been thrown away at negotiations table. The Congress was compelled to accept the R.T.C. which it had previously refused. Gandhiji did not regard tha pact as defeat.

He was least perturbed. The pact did not take away from him the right to wield the weapon of satyagraha again. He wanted to put the Government into trial. If it failed, he would fight it again with renewed energy.

The Karachi Congress hastily convened the same month unanimously endorsed the agreement.

Jawaharlalji was given the task of moving the resolution to endorse the agreement. He was not happy over the agreement. He felt, however, it would only be personal vanity to express his dissent. Netaji Bose, who was sharply critical at the Congress, on the grounds that this might appear as a breach of national unity. The Congress adopted a progressive social and economic programme embodied in a 'Fundamental Rights' resolution. It included a basic democratic character of an advance type. Nationalisation of key industries and transport, labor rights and agrarian reform. This programme which remains valid, marked an important step forward for the Congress.

The story of Karachi Congress would be incomplete without a reference to the Hindu-Muslim riots which broke out in Kanpur. A revolutionary upsurge was turned into a triumph of communalism by a few policemen disguised as members of the public. They were working according to plan. The news of execution of Bhagat Singh and his two associates resulted spontaneous protest hartals all over India. But in Kanpur it was changed into Hindu-Muslim riot. A large procession was taken out with the pictures of the three martyrs - Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdeo—and black flags. The Hindu's closed their shops. The Muslims did not because shortly before when Mohamad Ali died, the Hindus had not participated in the hartal organized by the Muslims. A Muslim. According to reports he was a policeman - ran towards to the Muslim quarters shouting and shrieking that Hindus were killing Muslims. Thus spread the riot. It lasted several days. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was engaged in the very noble work of rescuing Muslims from Hindu pockets and Hindus from Muslim pockets. While doing this he ventured into Muslim area and there the fanatics who did not know that he had saved many Muslims murdered him in cold blood.

The situation was developing swiftly in India, especially in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Frontier provinces.

In Bengal, the Delhi agreement made no difference. The tension continued to grow. Some civil, disobedience prisoners were discharged, but thousands of political prisoners

remained in jail. The detainees also continued to be in Prison. Fresh arrests for ‘seditious’ speeches were made. The terrorist activities made a loud noise and attracted great attention.

In the Uttar Pradesh agrarian situation was becoming worse. The Government temporized with the problem and delayed decision about rent and revenue remissions and forcible collections were begun. There had been agrarian riots when forcible collection of rent was made. They resulted in the death of landlord or his agent. The peasantry was subjected to growing pressure both from the Government grew on peasantry. Thousands of tenants were evicted from their holdings and their property was seized.

In the Frontier Province, there was a permanent state of tension and the Government was military affair, They were armed with special laws and ordinances and heavy punishment for tribal offences. In the year 1929 Abdul Gaffar Khan formed the Khuddi Khidmatgar other-wise known as Red Shirts Organisation. This functioned as the effective wing of the Congress. A Abdul Gaffar Khan led the agitation against the state of affairs existing in the province. He went from village to village and established the centers of ‘Redshirts’ The whole area of the province was covered with Khuddi Khidmatgars. They were very peaceful and non-violent. They had a tradition of war. They lived near turbulent frontier. This disciplined and peaceful movement, closely allied to the Indian national movement grew rapidly. This upset the Government. The head-Khan-Abdul Gaffar-Khan came to be known as Fakir-e-Afghan, Fakir-e-Pathan, Gandhi-e-Sarhad . He had won tremendous popularity through he was quiet. He always devoted to the cause of the people. He was undaunted by difficulties. Government actions did not worry him. He was not a politician. He hardly knew anything of tactics and maneuvers. He was tall and straight. He was well built. He used to talk less and do more work. He wanted freedom of his province within the framework of Indian freedom. The Redshirts always co-operated with the National Congress. They were a separate organization. The real link was Khan-Abdul-Gaffar-Khan. The working committee considered this situation in 1931 and decided to absorb the ‘Redshirt’ into Congress.

The Congress working committee had to face the communal problems. There was nothing new about this. The British Government always kept this problem in the forefront. It made all other issues subordinate. The members of the R.T.C. were the nominees of the Government. They were selected with view to give importance of the communal and sectional interests. It wanted to stress these divergences. It did not give importance to common interests. The Government refused to nominate any Muslim from National Congress. In the circumstances the National Congress felt that the main political and economic issues would be set aside at the RTC.

Efforts therefore, were made to reach an understanding on communal problems between the parties concerned. The efforts proved fruitless.

Various Congress committees pointed out the breaches of Delhi pact. These were forwarded to the Government. It is in turn brought counter charges . These were published in the press. This resulted in the status-quo of the relations between the Congress and the Government.

In 1931 Lord Irwin had left India. In his place Lord Willingdon came as a Viceroy. Gandhiji's meeting with him at Simla. An agreement was arrived at. It was decided that Gandhiji would go to the RTC as the sole representative of the Congress. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also attended the RTC as a representative of Indian Womanhood.

It was manifestly clear that the British Government had no respect for demands of the India people. They never wanted to discuss the fundamental issues. Except Gandhiji no one represented the real interests of the people. Agakhan happened to combine the imperialist interests of feudal, financial, industrial and religious and communal nature over a long period. He was a close friend of British imperialism. He resided mainly outside India. Most of the other representatives were either reactionaries or puppets brought to fill up the chairs at the conference. There were very few eminent leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. M.R. Jaykar and others. But they were unable to play any decisive part. Only Gandhiji on behalf of the National Congress could play, the desired role. The British Government did not want him to play that part and hence the majority of the representatives were selected to ensure diversion from the main problem.

Gandhiji was an outstanding figure in the crowded hall of the Round Table Conference. His scanty dress distinguished him from others. There was a vast difference in his way of thinking and outlook and that of the well-dresses delegates around him. He made an attempt to find out some firm footing or agreement. He hated communal and sectional demands. Even then he was prepared to accept them provided these delegates joined forces with the Congress on the issue of complete independence. This was not agreeable to them. This exposed the real trouble. The real trouble was not communal or sectional. It was political reaction that barred all progress. The British Government which had brought these reactionaries together to control the proceedings of R.T.C. made the communal issue primary. No agreement was possible. On this issue —it was amply proved that the R.T.C. was convened not to accept the Indian demand but to repudiate it.

Imperialism had secured the whip hand. It was determined to use its advantage to the utmost. The 'Truce' had been one-sided from the outset. Repression had continued. Gandhiji returned in the last days of 1931. He came to know the latest position in the Bengal, U.P. and Frontier Province. It was a pitiful tale. He called at once to the Viceroy to seek an interview. The interview could be granted provided Gandhiji agreed not to discuss the situation of Bengal, U.P. and Frontier Province. It meant that the Government was out to brush off the Congress. Imperialism had utilised every day of these nine months. 'Truce' to complete its grim preparations for a decisive battle. Sir John Anderson with the fresh experience of Black and Tan regime in Ireland had been nominated the Governor of Bengal to take in hand the arrangements. The Congress was to be taught a lesson. It was to be fought to be finished with unconditional surrender as the only term.

Swift and sharp the blow fell on Jan 4th 1932. On the same day negotiations broke down. The Viceroy issued his manifesto. Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai were arrested. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the president of the Congress. New ordinances were promulgated. They gave far-reaching powers to the magistrates and police officers. Civil liberties ceased to exist. Both, a person and property could be seized by the authorities. The Congress and all other organisations were declared illegal. All the principal Congress leaders and the organisers were arrested all over the country. The Congress press was banned. Their premises, funds and property were confiscated. Kishan Sabhas, peasant unions, youth league students associations, advanced political organisations, national universities and schools, hospitals, swadeshi concerns, liberties etc. were declared illegal. This was to tribute to the Congress and the national Committee Members were imprisoned in Ahmednagar Fort, Gandhiji was separately imprisoned in Aga Khan's Palace. The national Movement was thus left without leadership. No preparation whatever had been made either to provide for alternative leadership or to lay down the course of action to be followed in the event of the arrests.

The arrest of the national leaders provoked nation-wide demonstrations and disorganised partial conflicts and disorders. These were met with violent and brutal repression by political and military action. In the reckless firing many were killed, a great number wounded. Between August 9 and December 31, 1942 according to the Summary of official statement of the Home Member in the Central Legislative Assembly 60229 persons were arrested, 18,000 detained under the Defence of India Regulations, 940 killed and 1630 injured by police or military firing. The mass protests of national indignation following the arrests of the national leadership were spontaneous and widespread. But the sporadic disorders, unrest and confusion of conflicting directions did not represent an organised Congress Struggle. Gandhiji had

asked the foreign rule to 'quite India' in his speech of August – 8. "Quite India" became the slogan everywhere.

It was clear that following the Cripps Mission breakdown the Imperialists had made a tactical move. It placed the congress in a dilemma. It drove the congress to a step, which could give the excuse for aggressive measures. The moment 'quite India' resolution of August 11 was passed, the opportunity was seized by imperialism. It claimed that it stood for the defence of India against attempts at disrupting that defence. It branded the Indian national movement as being profascist and pro-Japanese. It alleged that the movement was sabotaging the war efforts of the people of the United Nations. It made this the political basis for carrying out its policy of reactionary suppression against the national movement. The national leadership never anticipated the immediate arrests of the leaders. They never had the time to make any preparations for such a situation. They never issued any directive for the course to be followed. This made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. This encouraged anarchist violence in contradiction to the congress the congress creed as congress action. As soon as the chief congress leaders were arrested, the socialists in the congress party, the members of the forward block and others went underground. At a number of points in the country the telegraph, telephone and wireless system was disorganized. The communication wires were cut. In a number of villages and towns a few Government offices, police stations and post offices were set on fire. Attempts were made to derail the trains. At few places paralell rules were established. It became increasingly difficult for the Government to control the situation. In Ahmedabad and other places strikes were carried out. The textile mills in Ahmedabad did not work for about six months. Schools and Colleges remained closed for a considerable period. Jails were overflowing with detenues and prisoners. People going to Cinema, houses, clubs, posh hotels were always the fear of 'bomb' explosions. Attempts were made to loot arms and ammunitions from Government ordenance factories and arsenals. Various sections and groups of political opinions were conducting the movement in their respective areas according to their own improvised programmes. It was during this period that the Muslim League rapidly grew in strength.

On May 6, 1944 Gandhiji was released from confinement on grounds of health. He lost no time thereafter announcing that mass civil disobedience portion of the resolution of August 8, 1942, stood automatically cancelled since in 1944 he could not go back to 1942. But the deadlock continued. The Government refused to consider The possibility of negotiations until August, Resolution was withdrawn and also be in a position to review the August Resolution and make new statement of policy.

One more attempt was made on resolving the deadlock in the summer of 1945. In July 1945 the working committee members were released. A provisional agreement was reached in May between the parliamentary leader of the Congress in the Central Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary leader of the Muslim League Party. Bhulabhai Desai was the leader of the Congress party who was acting in consultation with Gandhiji. Liaquat Ali Khan was the leader of Muslim League Party. The common ground between the Congress and the Muslim League was the agreement to form a provisional national Government the Congress and Muslim League with 80% participation equally shared between the Congress and the Muslim League and 20% by other groups. This proposal was placed before the Viceroy Lord Wavell, who flew to London for advice. On return he announced the British Government policy. It was a plan for Provisional National Government different from the one agreed to by the congress and the Muslim League, Except the Viceroy and the Commander-in-chief there were to be only Indian members in the Viceroy's executive Council. The Viceroy's reserve powers were not to be exercised unreasonably. In place of the Congress-League parity the British plan laid down 'Caste Hindu-Muslim Parity'. Thus the issue was forced back to communal plane. It means that either the congress would have to accept relegation to the status of Hindu organisation or by claiming one of the Muslim seats for a Congress Muslim, violate the basis of parity with the League. Alternately the League would either have to accept a Congress Muslim to one of the Muslim seats, thus surrendering parity and accepting an inferior position to the congress or by resisting this offer to take the responsibility of wrecking the conference.

The Simla Conference of the representatives of the congress Muslim league and others met in June 1945. The proceeding soon reached a deadlock. The congress working committee rejected the league claim to nominate all the Muslim members of the Viceroy's Council. Among the 21 members invited to Simla, the name of Maulana Azad, the congress President, was missing. The Viceroy Nominated all the Chief Ministers of the Provinces, the Congress and the League leaders in the Central Assembly and the Council of state, the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European group in the Central Assembly, a representative of scheduled castes and a representative of Sikhs, Gandhiji as the recognised leader of the Congress and Jinnah as the President of the Muslim League. As Gandhiji was not a member of the Congress, he declined the invitation but agreed to the Viceroy's request to attend as an observer. Maulana Azad, now recognised as the official spokesman of the Congress, was invited. The congress could not agree with the Muslim League's insistence on nominating all the Muslim members of the Viceroy's Council. Jinnah would not agree to meet Maulana Azad Whom he ridiculed as a 'Show boy' of the Congress. The Viceroy proposed that all parties should give him a list of person to be nominated to be Council. He would make selection out of it. On a prior assurance Jinnah insisted



that all the five members of the Muslim League should be accepted. This meant that the Congress would be free to include a Congress Muslim in its own quota of five members. The Viceroy could not commit himself. This procedure was not acceptable to Jinnah. The conference ended on 14th July Wavell accepted the responsibility for its failure.

General elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures were announced. In September Wavell issued a statement saying that Provincial Autonomy would be introduced after the elections. A constitution making body would be set up. The terms of treaty to be concluded between Britain and India were being considered. The Viceroy's council was to be reconstituted in consultation with the principal Indian Parties. The Muslim League reiterated that no solution would be acceptable to it except on the basis of Pakistan. The Congress called Wavell's proposal vague, inadequate and unsatisfactory. However both the parties preferred to fight the elections. In its election manifesto the Congress stood for a 'federal constitution with autonomy for constituent parts and essential common subjects for the centre; the people of any territorial unit would not be compelled to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will though every effort should be made to develop a common and co-operative national life.' The Muslim League reiterated its fear of Hindu domination and its demand for Pakistan. The Muslim League won all the Muslim seats in the Provisional Legislatures. The Khan Brothers and Red Shirts, however, won a majority for the Congress in the Frontier. Though Congress won most seats both in the central assembly and Provincial Councils comfortably, separatism had triumphed conclusively. The Nationalist Muslims lost whatever representative capacity they had.

The election results provided the grim outline of a communally divided India. Out of the eleven Provinces the Congress could form a ministry only in 8. In Bengal and Sind Muslim League and in Punjab Unionist ministry in which Congress was represented but not the League came into being. The case for Pakistan was strengthened; but except for Bengal and Sind it had found no Constitutional expression.

The British Government sent a Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord-Pentick-Law-rence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander to work out a rational and acceptable plan of action. There were various reasons which prompted the imperialists to send this mission.

First, the end of war brought a new popular upsurge all over the world. Fascism had been defeated by the united struggle of the democratic peoples. It was the most brutal exponent of the open and unconcealed theory of racial domination. Anglo-American imperialism remained; but had to share world leadership with the socialist Soviet Union in an uneasy partnership of the three

world powers. The Soviet Union which emerged from war, had enormously strengthened in the world position and influence. All colonial peoples in movement were demanding their freedom for which they were fighting.

Second, the British Empire was basically weakened despite its share in the Common Victory. There was relative decline of British Capitalism. Its economy at home was low. Its hold on the colonial empire had become weak during the era between the two wars. The masses of the British people were awakened to the new conditions. They were turning away from Toryism to find a new path of British progress and prosperity.

Third, change in British's position in the world was reflected also in the internal position in Britain. For the first time a labour majority was returned to power. The labour movement was officially committed to Indian Independence.

The fourth reason of decisive importance was the rising popular upsurge within India and universal national demand for immediate independence. The movement swept forward not only among the civilian population but also among the armed forces. This was a new development for India. Its revolutionary significance was not lost on the ruling authorities of British imperialism. It was also felt by the upper class leadership of the national movement. Widespread strikes in the armed forces, especially in the Air Force and Navy, revealed the disintegration of British authority. It was the very basis and machinery of its power. There was naval uprising in February 1946. It was the mass movement of support within India and the heroic support of the Bombay working people which constituted the signal of the new era opening in India. It was one of the great landmarks of Indian history. In those February days the friends and foes of Indian popular advance stood revealed. The rising of the rating of Royal Indian Navy developed in Bombay and Karachi and Madras. It won support from people in these and other towns. It began on the morning of 18 February at the Talwar Training school. It was result of a long series of unremedied grievances. By 19th February it had spread to all the 20,000 rating in the 12 store establishments in Bombay and the suburbs as well as to the twenty ships in the harbour. The union jack was removed from the ships mast and congress and Muslim League and Red flags were put up instead. Demonstrations followed in the town area with united Congress, Muslim League and Red flags. Slogans like 'Jaihind' 'Inquilab Zindabad' 'Hindus and Muslim unite' 'Down with British Imperialism' 'Release the INA and political Prisoners' 'Accept our Demands' 'Withdraw Indian Army from Indonesia' were raised. The strike also extended to the vessels of Indian Navy. It included the 'Hindustan' of Karachi which was later involved in armed action.

They elected a central naval strike committee. Perfect discipline was maintained. Support from Bombay people, who brought food to the ships, was overwhelming. The British authorities were completely taken by surprise by the extent of the movement. They resorted violent measures of suppression. Heavy naval and military reinforcements were hastily dispatched to Bombay and Karachi. The Indian Soldiers refused to fire. British troops were called in. A seven hour battle ensued on February 21 outside the castle barracks. Admiral Godfrey broadcast his ultimatum that ‘overwhelming forces at the disposal of the Govt. will be used to the utmost …… even if it means the destruction of the Navy.’ It was withdrawn on 23rd February unconditionally mainly on Sardar Vallabhabhai’s pressure. He promised that ‘the congress will do its level best to see that there is no victimisation’. This was followed by a similar assurance from the Muslim League. Within two days the leaders were arrested. The last statement of the President of the Strike Committee declared ‘we surrender to India and not British’. The I.N.A. affair and the mobilisation of national sentiment at the time of the trial in the Red Fort had affected the Indian elements of armed forces. It was clear to the congress that a direct clash would end only in bloodshed and frustration not in freedom. But another blow had been struck at British prestige and it was clear that India could not be ruled by force for long. The Cabinet Mission was the first in this direction. The Cabinet Mission which arrived in March had not come with any proposals. After a prolonged discussion mainly with the Congress and the League, the Cabinet Mission issued its statement of policy on 16th June.

The first set of proposals called for a long range plan and a second proposal for a short range plan. The first one suggested the Union of India should raise finances necessary for foreign affairs, defence and communication and power and entrust the provinces of British India with other subjects and residuary powers in three sections. B & C the Muslim majority provinces of North West Frontier Province, Punjab, Sind, Bengal and Assam and A the rest of British India. The elected representative of the provinces in each section would meet to form each group and draft the provincial and group constitutions each province having the right to opt out of a group by a simple majority of its legislature (after the first elections under the new Provincial constitutions) . Section B was to consist to a predominantly Muslim section with Punjab having the option to go out but with Muslim majority preventing it and the N.W.F.P. opting out only if there was a congress majority the new Provincial constitution after the elections, In section C, Bengal with its Muslim majority, was to dominate the group and Assam could opt out only if the group framed a provincial constitution which would permit such freedom. The rest of British India not only followed the congress but was predominantly Hindu and would preserve its unity.

An interim Government was to be formed. This was to consist of six Hindu members of the Congress - one of them to be from the scheduled castes; five Muslims to be nominated by the Muslim League; and three representatives of the minorities, one Sikh, one Christian and one Parsee. The Congress did not have the right to nominate a Muslim. Gandhiji advised to reject both plans. But the working committee rejected the plan for an Interim Government but accepted the long term plan. It added its interpretation of the contentious clauses. The Cabinet Mission left for England at the end of June.

The A.I.C.C. meeting in July approved the working committee's policy with big majority after an animated debate. Panditji expressed his view about what might happen in the frontier Assam under the new scheme. Jinnah felt that Nehru's speech was a further proof of Congress designs to thwart the Muslim League.

On July 27th the Muslim League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's long term plan and called for direct action to achieve Pakistan. August 16 was to be the Direct Action Day. In Jinnah's words 'it was not to be used against the British Government as in the case of the Congress, it was against the Congress meant for Hindus'. - a euphemism for letting loose violence without anyone taking responsibility for it.

The Viceroy held further talks with Jinnah and Jawaharlalji. Mr. Atlee had said before the Cabinet Mission was sent to India that the British could not allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority and his government also felt that the majority could not be allowed to have its own way and impose itself on a minority, especially on an organized minority pledged to direct action now. An interim Government might bring the parties together. Hence the Viceroy held the talks. Panditji declined the invitation to form a Government unless its status and powers were clarified in unambiguous terms. Jinnah ruled himself out with the direct action resolution. The Viceroy was keen on divesting himself of the responsibility. He called Panditji to submit proposals for an interim Government. Jawaharlalji held talks with Jinnah in Bombay but they could not come to any agreement. Panditji accepted the Viceroy's invitation. He became the Vice-president of the Executive Council and a member for external affairs and Commonwealth Relations. Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad were in the team. There was an additional Congress Muslim member and the third Muslim was Shafat Ahmed Khan an independent. Baldeo Singh did not belong to the Congress, He was a Sikh member. An independent Parsee businessman, C. H. Bhabha, was included. Amrut Kumari represented women and Christians. It was a small team. Muslim League was to be included when it came in. Jinnah's proclamation of Direct Action was followed by communal killing especially in Calcutta.

Surhawardy, Chief Minister of Bengal, had made violent speeches in the League's sessions. The Government involved itself by declaring a public holiday on August 16 — Direct Action Day. It enabled public servants to join in celebrating it. Muslim communalism was rampant throughout Bengal. Hindu communalism was rampant in Bihar with the installation of Interim Government. There were more outbreaks at the instigation of the Muslim League. Shafat Ahmed Khan was attacked and had received fatal injuries. Gandhiji went on a walking tour of Noakhali District in Eastern Bengal which had suffered much. Panditiji denounced Hindu communalism in Bihar. There was no chance for a minority to redeem itself by acts of courage in defence. The majority was brave everywhere.

The Interim Government showed initiative and energy in the early days. It was homogeneous and united. Panditiji announced a policy which included the objective of higher standards of living for the people, communal harmony, abolition of untouchability and freedom for all peoples from colonisation and racial discrimination, nonalignment with power blocks, friendship with the United States and Soviet Union, friendly relations with common Wealth, close ties with the rest of Asia and World Federation. He made an appeal for co-operation of all parties in achieving these objectives. He functioned with the outlook of the Prime-Minister of a free country. Ministers of the Interim Government were asked to notify the Political department before visiting any princely state and to abstain from making political speeches. Panditiji protested against such restrictions. He asked the Viceroy to see that the political department brought itself into line with the Government.

The Viceroy entered into negotiations with Jinnah for the Muslim League's entry into the Interim Government. Jinnah's demands were mainly: (1) the Congress should not have the right to nominate a nationalist Muslim. (2) the Muslim League should have veto in all decisions of the Executive Council on communal questions, (3) the Vice-Presidency should rotate between congress and Muslim league members, (4) the major port-folios be distributed equally between the two parties. (5) Vacancies be filled by the Viceroy in consultation with both parties and (6) no exchange be made in the allocation of port folis without the agreement of both the parties. Panditiji was only prepared to agree that the Muslim League should have the Vice-Chairmanship of the coordinating Committee of the Executive Council and vacancies should be decided by the Executive Council, not by the Viceroy. Most of Jinnah's demands were denied. However, he was willing that the Muslim League should join the Interim Government. He wanted the Muslim-League should join the interim Government. He wanted the Muslim League should to work the Government from within. So the Muslim League went in under protest though it had no right to join without accepting the Cabinet Missions long term plan. On 15th October the Interim

Government was reconstituted. The Muslim League's contribution of five members of the Executive Council included a scheduled caste member Jogendra Nath Mandal from Bengal. He enjoyed his unique distinction for a time. Later he served in the Pakistan cabinet and finally fled to India, because of maltreatment of the minorities in Pakistan. The Interim Government was to be one of the fronts of the Direct Action Campaign, according to one of the newly appointed Muslim League ministers and Wavell's well meaning but obviously unsound experiment was doomed to disaster. The Muslim League provided him with fresh demonstration and Hindus and the Muslim could not work in harmony. Jawaharlalji communicated to him his forebodings. The Muslim League had not formally accepted the Cabinet Mission plan. Jinnah did not make any commitment while assuring the Viceroy of his intention to co-operate. Panditiji wrote again and again to Wavell, protesting, remonstrating and warning of the drift of the events at the dictation of the Muslim League. Following the Muslim League's entry into the Interim Government Jawaharlalji in his turn would not yield, to the redistribution of portfolios. He refused to transfer on Viceroy's request, External Affairs, Defence and Home Affairs. All were important for the future of India and for the further course of events. Sardar Patel felt firmly about it. When Wavell persisted, Panditiji threatened to resign. The Viceroy yielded and The Muslim League had to share other portfolios with Finance going to Liaquat Ali Khan

The Muslim League ministers were to work for Pakistan from inside The Interim Government. Jinnah made public statement on the strategy. They were to resist anything that instigated against demand for Pakistan. Jinnah ordered Muslim League to boycott the constituent Assembly which Wavell had summoned. Wavell was fooled. He had work for joining of Muslim League with Interim Government without making sure that the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Missions long term plan. He had brought together two desperate elements. Panditiji denounced Muslim League's tactics and the Viceroy's complicity in them at the Meerut Session of the Congress, Wavell had departed from the spirit in which Interim Government had been first formed. He allowed senior British officials to work in alliance with the Muslim League.

Panditiji attended a conference in London with great reluctance. It consisted of the Viceroy, the representative of the Congress, two of the Muslim League and one Sikh. The British Government made a statement on 6th December after the deadlock was declared. It supported the Muslim League's view on the procedure for groups. It had sought legal advice on this point. The constituent Assembly was given the right to refer this and other disputes to the Federal Court. This was intended to please both. But Congress wanted to refer the group scheme to the Federal Court. Lord Penthiel Lawrence announced that the British Government would not depart

from its interpretation, even if there was a reference to the Federal Court. This was further appeasement of the Muslim League. The British Government was keen to see that the Muslim League should enter constituent Assembly for it to be successful. It declared that it would not contemplate forcing any constitution framed by an incomplete Constituent Assembly upon an unwilling part of the Country. The British Government did little to persuade the Muslim League to be on rightlines. For Panditiji and the Congress, the London Conference was barren and bitter.

The Constituent Assembly met with Sachchidanand Sinha as Provisional President. Panditiji spoke with magnificent eloquence. His speech showed a historical sense of the objective resolution. His mind was filled with the history of earlier Constituent Assemblies and of the revolution which they symbolised. He spoke of the American, the French, the Russian revolutions. He spoke to the members of the Constituent Assembly who were not only Congressman but eminent Liberals and independents and the representatives of non-Muslim minorities and some Muslim members from general seats. The prospect mattered more than the obstructive opposition of the Muslim League. Frustration was dispelled. It was to be not merely Constitution making. It was to be a political, social and economic resolution. He said the resolution was a declaration a resolve, a pledge and an under taking. After paying tributes to Gandhiji — the Father of the nation — he repudiated anyone's patronage or influence. He appealed the Muslim League to come in. He warned the British Government that the Constituent Assembly would make the Constitution for India and not the British Parliament in London. The Constituent Assembly was adjourned till 1947, to allow time for the Muslim League to come in. Since Jinnah demanded the acceptance of British Government's interpretation by the Congress before the Muslim- League came in, the All India Congress Committee decided to accept the British Government's interpretation with much opposition. It asked the Frontier Province, Assam, Sind and Sikhs to decide as they thought right in the circumstances. On 20th January the objective Resolution was passed unanimously in the constituent Assembly. The Muslim League denounced the A.I.C.C. resolution and repudicated the objective resolution as beyond the competence of the Constituent Assembly. It called upon the Government to withdraw the Cabinet Mission Plan and dismiss the Constituent Assembly. In February the Congress demanded that Muslim League Ministers be removed from the Indian Government. In the eyes of Sardar Patel it looked like a clash of swords.

The British Government was willing to be rid of the problem. But it did not know how to set about it. It issued a statement through Attlee on February 20th. It announced its definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. The British Government was forcing a dilemma. If it scrapped



the Constituent Assembly it would become a revolutionary body in particular and the Indian states in general. It was also difficult for it to ask the Muslim League Ministers to get out. It accepted withdrawal as a way out and forced it on India. It also recognized Wavell's bungling and recalled him. He was replaced by Mountbatten. Mountbatten arrived in India at this time. There was a lot of hardening of attitudes and evidence of much intriguing by the officials also around this time. Punjab, a Muslim majority province became a battlefield. The Muslim League was not in power there, though it had won over a great majority of the Muslim seats. The Unionist Ministry under Khizr Hayat Khan, leading a coalition of his group, the Congress and Sikhs was under assault. Three main communities were recruiting private armies to acquire battling power. The Chief Minister delayed proclaiming them unlawful. The Muslim League adopted Direct Action in January 1947, and started Civil Disobedience. He relented. He removed the ban on public meetings and released Muslim League political prisoners. After the Government's February declaration, he thought it fit to resign. The Constitution collapsed. A Muslim League Ministry was formed. The Sikhs held mass rallies where Tara Singh gave a call to action. Punjab was plunged into disorder. There were serious riots in several places. The Governor took over the administration. Lahor suffered most. The Congress Working Committee took the situation seriously. It made clear to the British Government that the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly would apply only to those areas, which accepted it. The Working Committee found that though the British used brutal methods and had contributed to the situation. The Proposition accorded with the Congress policy. But if the Muslim League still wanted partition, the proposition would have to be extended to mean that even parts of provinces, like the predominantly non-Muslim Eastern Punjab and Western Bengal could not be prevented from accepting the Constitution and joining the Union. This much of assurance was needed by the minorities living in contiguous areas in Punjab and Bengal.

Mountbatten held a series of discussions with various political Leaders-both important and not important. He declared that the June 3 Plan outlined the political processes by which the lines of partition were to be demarcated. The provincial legislatures were to decide the issues in Bengal and Punjab. The assemblies would divide into two sections representing the Muslim and non-Muslim districts. If either Section favoured partition, there was to be partition; but if both Sections decided on the two parts of Punjab being united, the legislature would vote on which Constituent Assembly it wished to join. A referendum was to be held in the Frontier. The Sylhet District of Assam, with its Muslim majority, would hold a referendum if Bengal favoured partition and would be joined to East Bengal if the vote was in favour of joining Pakistan. Power was not to be transferred before June 1948 to the two successor governments. They would have Dominion Status. They would decide through their Constituent Assemblies whether they would stay in the



Commonwealth or not. The Muslim League granted Jinnah complete authority to accept the plan. It rejected the principle of partition of Punjab and Bengal. The A.I.C.C. approved the Plan. It was a decision taken with pain and anguish.

August 15 was the day fixed for transfer of power. The partition Committee of the Interim Government was in overall charge of the administrative arrangements of the dual tasks of portion of power with Mountbatten as Chairman, and Sardar Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad representing the Congress. A Steering Committee of two senior Civil Servants to coordinate the work of expert committees and sub-committees was appointed. It was to deal with various subjects like the division of the armed forces and assets. Joint administrative control of the armed forces was to remain until April 1948 under Auchinleck. He became Commander-in-Chief for the second time. Operational control was, however, to pass on to the two Dominion governments on transfer of power. For coordination Auchinleck was responsible to a joint Defence Council. It consisted of Mountbatten and two Defence Ministers of the successor governments. The Commander-in-Chief was to be called Supreme Commander. The most difficult part of the division of the armed forces was to ascertain the option of every one of the members.

The Frontier was widely separated from Congress dominated India. A referendum had explosive potentialities. Khan Brothers, who were isolated proposed Pathanistan—a separate state consisting of the Frontier Province and contiguous tribal area. But under the Mountbatten Plan choice was between joining India or joining Pakistan. The Red Shirts boycotted the referendum and the result was overwhelmingly in favour of Pakistan. In Bengal and Punjab the decision was in favour of the partition and in Sind and Baluchistan and Sylher district in favour of Pakistan. In London, the Indian Independence Bill was rushed through both the Houses of Parliament and passed within a fortnight. The power of British Parliament and of the Government in British India were to be transferred to the Government of India and Pakistan on the appointed day. Paramountcy would Lapse. The princely states were to be free to accede to India or to Pakistan or to be independent. The territories of the two Dominions were defined. Each Dominion was to have a Governor General. An important provision was that the Constituent Assemblies should function as legislature as well as constitution-making bodies. The appointed day came. The sensation of freedom over-weighed the pain felt at the prospect of partition. Panditji spoke memorably in the Constituent Assembly sometimes before the midnight of August 14. He and his colleagues were sworn in. There have been more regrets among congress leaders about the way freedom came than among Congressmen and also among those who had no ultimate part in the events of 1946-47. Everyone's complicity was in evidence. Gandhiji was opposed to partition, but he did not oppose it openly. Jinnah wanted partition with undivided

Punjab and Bengal with possibly a corridor between the East and the West, but was thwarted. The Communists had supported the Muslim League demand with refined theories of self-determination, buttressed by quotations from Stalin. Congress Socialists made academic gestures. They were a part of the Congress and had no effect on policy. The Hindu Mahasabha swearing by Akhand Hindustan was in no position to inspire trust in any section of the Hindus. It had also no influence on the course of events. The Congress and the Muslim League alone were in a position to make history. Both of them were carrying the heavy heritage of pasts.

It cannot be established when Pakistan became inevitable. By the test of reason, it was never inevitable. Nationality cannot be based exclusively on religion. A set of people can feel like a nation in a moment of passion. Jinnah alone had not roused it. He only took advantage of it. He used it with a subtle sense of strategy and single-minded devotion. There was pride anger and frustration in his make-up. Jawaharlalji's experience was varied. He had command over logic. Once he made up his mind that the Hindus and Muslims could not live as one nation in an undivided India, he worked for partition. He took advantage of every turn of events. The impact of Islam on Indian life is not sufficiently known. The Hindus and Muslims were coming together and achieving a cultural unity. The process was interrupted by the advance of British rule in India. New history began. India was becoming a nation state, but there were two major communities in this single nationhood and for lack of understanding they remained different. It is however difficult to say when separatism began and whether the majority community contributed more to it or the minority community. Separate electorates gave a firm base for separatism. It is safe to say that without them there would have been no partition. These separate tendencies encouraged the Muslim League to prove that it predominantly represented the Muslims. The Lucknow Congress compromise was not correct. It certainly encouraged the British rule to practice the policy of divide and rule. It ultimately resulted in partition.

Gandhiji awakened the entire nation. This awakening was not partial or one-sided. The ideal of non-violence suited the instinct and the inclination of the people. His direct action could not be confined to the Congress or the Hindus. Jinnah was a constitutionalist by faith and temperament. He found it useful to move the Muslim masses to gain his ends. He took up the responsibility for the consequences of direct action. Like Gandhiji he too spoke in the language of the people and acquired the position of mass leader. Gandhiji believed in the universality of religions and respected the Koran as he respected the Gita. However, to the Muslims his ideas about Ramrajya and other symbolisms made him a Hindu leader.

The British had had no regrets. They played the part of 'divide and rule' policy to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims. Then they promoted the division of the country into two Dominions so that they could play one against the other. If they had agreed in principle to have self-government after the First World War India would have become committed to constitutional ways. Even if they had committed themselves to Dominion Status at the Round Table Conference. Perhaps the national leadership would have agreed to it. It required another World War to prove to the British the right capacity of Indians to rule themselves, but even in 1942, the British showed no foresight and they had no trust or understanding.

Hindu communalism was not politically well organised. At the Round Table Conference, Pandit Malaviya and other Hindu leaders would not agree to concede even one-third representation at the Centre. The demand of the Muslim League was gradually raised till it became a demand for parity. Even in 1940, the Viceroy was offering three seats only to the Muslim League on the Executive Council. Soon it had to be four and ultimately parity with Caste Hindus. Lord Linlithgow encouraged Jinnah under his seven year regime. Jinnah was inspired and had decided to treat Hindus and Muslims as two nations. He would not allow the Congress to claim to represent Muslims. Nationalist Muslims were losing ground because they had no sufficient backing from the Congress leadership. Ultimately, they lost all representative character. No one, not even Jinnah, would have insisted on partition if it had been foreseen that it would have meant bloodshed. They would have all waited for it. Jinnah was a secularist. He had nothing to do with Muslim and Maulanas. He had wanted undivided Punjab and Bengal with their large populations of Hindus in Pakistan. He did not ask for exchange of population and did not even insist on an untenable corridor. He assured protection for the minorities. Large parts of territory and populations of Assam too were lost. Naturally, he gave up secularism for thoughts of Islamic State. The 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity' as Sarojini Naidu had called him had become the 'Saladin' of a communal crusade.

In 1946 and 1947, Pakistan was inevitable. Various confederation schemes had been suggested by Reginald Coupland and others, but first separation had to take place. The choice was whether to have Pakistan inside or outside the country. The best use of Cabinet Mission's long range plan and with all possible compromises, there was a danger of a split personality about India. It would have resulted in a weak Centre. The vested interests would have gained ground. Even after partition, India is the third largest Muslim country in the world. Her culture remains composite and she has obligations to Muslims and other communities. All Congress leaders resisted the idea of creating Pakistan from beginning to end They became reconciled to Partition from confidence, not from defeatism. To them it was not transfer of power; it was

achievement of freedom. The Congress always wanted complete freedom. It was offered to a large part of the country, hence they accepted it. The question was only that the people would be able to make of their freedom.

## PART II

## THE REVOLUTIONARIES

On a world scale, the subjection of India had been the largest. It was the most important basis of the imperial domination of the modern world. For centuries the wealth and national resources of this vast territory was the main object of western penetration. The life and labour of Indian people attracted aggression. Expansion was made easy. It ultimately resulted in absolute domination. This in return brought in intensive exploitation of men and material. The ending of this system was a challenge to the Indian people. Tens of thousands of patriots have made sacrifices in this herculean struggle. A number of organisations came into existence to end the foreign rule. But there were only two approaches worth the name. The first was the revolutionary movement and the second was the national movement of the Congress.

Since the British occupied India the revolutionaries were first in the field. The National Congress came into existence in 1885.

In the beginning people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Phirozshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, G.K. Gokhale, and others were very moderate. Their policy was to write petitions indicating the wrongs done. Then they prayed to remove the wrongs.

This had no effect on the imperialist rule. The young blood was very courageous and hated the policy of 'Pray, please, and petition'. They wanted an immediate end of the foreign rule. At regular intervals the revolutionaries played a substantial part side by side with the National movement. It is only when the imperialist became aggressive and suppressive that the revolutionaries retaliated. The uprising of 1857 was provoked by the unwise and illogical annexationist policy of the British rule. The dispossessed princes and their dependent aristocracy nursed a deep grudge against the British for bringing about their downfall.

There was also general discontent in the country. The outmoded beliefs and practices in India were a grave threat to its existence. The abolition of 'Sati' and infanticide were an added cause. The foreign rule was unsympathetic. It reduced the Indian people to a mere animal existence. Its whole outlook was insulting to Indian self-respect. No doubt it was a formidable upheaval. It was without any high purpose behind it. However, there were a few honourable participants in the revolt. It was the first armed revolt against the British rule. Mangal Pande and Tatya Tope were hanged.

It was no longer possible to organise another revolt like that of 1857. The British rule had changed its policy in respect of the princes and the religious beliefs.

Vasudeo Balvant Phadke organised a revolt in 1878-79 near Poona. He was a clerk in the military Accounts Department. In the beginning he tried to get the grievances of the backward and uneducated farmers and tribes redressed through peaceful means. He failed in his task and organised an armed revolt. These were a sporadic acts of violence. Moreover Phadke could not control the elements he had gathered and his effort came to an end. He was arrested and tried on the charge of attempting to overthrow the British rule. Nobody was coming forth to side with Phadke. It was 'Sarvajanik kaka' who showed courage of accepting his brief. The result of his advocacy was Phadke escaped the death sentence and was sent to transportation for life. He died at Aden after four years. His attempt though crude and untimely created sensation in Maharashtra. His unflinching courage aroused admiration. It moved both the British Government and also the most moderate leaders to think and plan. There was no one to guide Phadke and his gang properly. Hence his attempt for revolt proved to be futile. No doubt his action was both courageous and heroic. This provided both a warning and a lesson.

The revolutionaries scored heavily over the bureaucracy in 1897. Rand had let loose a reign of terror in Poona city by his anti-plague measures. These measures were dreaded far more than the pestilence itself. Even Lokmanya Tilak had written a number of times in his 'Kesari' about the way anti-plague measures were employed.

He had warned the Government not to play with the sentiments of the people. Damodar Chaphekar was a priest by profession. He was a member of a revolutionary organisation. It was known as 'Hindu Dharma Sangha'. He assassinated Rand at Poona on the night of June 22, 1897. Lieutenant Ayerst who was with Rand also died. Damodar Chaphekar was arrested. His confession was staggering in its sweep. He confessed to have tarred the queen's statue, desecrated it with a garland of old shoes. He burnt the University Pandal. He was also implicated in the assaults of Mr. Gadgil, Bar-at-law, and Prof. Patwardhan, The editor of 'Sudharak', who being reformers had attacked religion. Damodar's brother Balkrishna, who was his accomplice, had now absconded. Damodar was executed on 18th April 1898 in Yervada Prison.

The Chaphekar case had a terrible sequel. The Dravid brothers, who were accomplices of the Chaphekars, had turned against them. On 8th February 1899 at about 10 at night the two Dravid brothers were called out by two strangers under the pretext that there was a message for them from Bruin. Bruin was investigating the case. They came out unsuspecting. They walked a

distance. Suddenly shots rang out and there were cries of ‘Murder’ ‘Murder’. The two brothers were shot at and later died in a hospital the next day.

Chaphekar’s third brother — Vasudeo and two of his accomplices were arrested. Subsequently Vasudeo, Balkrishna and Mahadeo Ranade were hanged after trial.

The young revolutionaries knew the power of bomb and pistol. Even the mighty Czar of Russia trembled at bombs. Revolutionary organisations like the Abhinav Bharat Society, the Anusilan Samiti and the Ghadr party came into existence. They delivered staggering blows at the bureaucracy by killing some of its most obnoxious representatives.

The revolutionary movement drew some of the ablest young men to its ranks. Swatantrya Veer Savarkar rose to legendary fame by his exploits in Europe. Aurobindo Ghosh, a well know scholar and later a great ‘Savant’, his brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Lala Haradayaal-a brilliant intellectual and founder of the ‘Ghadr’ movement , V.V.S. Aiyer the right hand man of Savarkar in London. Madam Cama, one time Secretary of Dadabhai Naoroj iand a large number of others joined and led the campaign against the British rule that asserted its claim to remain in India till the eternally. Not all the attempts on the lives of the reactionary henchmen of imperialism were successful. Some of them were in fact unfortunate. They involved the death of innocent persons. For instance Khudiram Bose did not intend to kill Mrs. and Miss. Kennedy when a flung his bomb on April 30, 1908, at a carriage at Muzaffarpur. The bomb was meant for Kingsford a throughly wicked magistrate. Khudiram was arrested on 1st May 1908. He was hanged on 11th August 1908. He was hardly 19 years old.

Madanlal Dhingre hailed from rich feudal family of Punjab. Madanlal had been sent to England for higher studies. But instead of prosecuting his studies he came into intimate contact with V.D. Savarkar. Savarkar was a prominent revolutionary and had formed the Indian Revolutionary Party in London. Madanlal joined this organisation.

The authorities in London were aware of the activities of the Indian Students working under the guidance of Veer Savarkar. At that time many important Indian revolutionaries such as- Shyamji Krishna Varma, Madam Cama, S.S. Rana and others were living in London.

The British Government was keeping an eye over the activities of all these Indians. Sir Curzon Wylie was the head of the ‘India office’ in London. He was supposed to look after the



comfort of the Indian Students. In reality he was acting as a spy. This the Indian revolutionaries resented. They decided to liquidate Wylie.

Madanlal was chosen to carry out the task. On the 1st of July 1909 the National Indian Association was holding a meeting. This was the occasion chosen for the action. Armed with a pistol Madanlal came to play his part. Ghyanchand Verma and Koregaokar working in the organisation were to assist Madanlal in this task. But Madanlal did not want any assistance. After the function was over Sir Curzon Wylie was having his round of courtesy talks with his words. When he approached Madanlal, he was shot at and Wylie collapsed on the spot. An Indian, Lala Kaka, rushed towards Wylie. Madanlal shot him through. Then Madanlal threw his pistol and surrendered himself to the authorities. He had a prepared statement in his pocket. He was hanged on 16th August 1909.

Madanlal and his supreme sacrifice received more publicity in the world press than did all the moderate leaders put together. This was remarkable because this was the first time that an attempt was made abroad to fight the ways of the bureaucracy. This also became an inspiration for other young revolutionaries. This created sensation all over the British Empire. It provoked thinking men to wonder whether it was right on the part of Britain to hold India in duress.

Bureaucracy in Indian became nervous at the rising tide of the revolutionary movement. The fear of the revolution penetrated even the strong walls of the Viceroy's residence.

The British Government was thus confronted in India by a band of brave and courageous men and women who were daunted by neither death nor deportation.

Anant Kanhere came into contact with the revolutionary organization, 'Abhinav Bharat'. They had obtained 21 Browning pistols which were received from England. They were eager to make use to these weapons in hand. At this time Lokmanya Tilak was sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment. They decided to liquidate Jackson, the Collector of Nasik. Anant Kanhere was chosen to carry out the command.

On 21st December 1909 Jackson was to come Vijayanand theatre in Nasik to see the performance of Marathi drama 'SHARADA'. Anant went to this theatre at the right time and did his job just according to the plan. Anant, alongwith his two accomplices, was arrested. Anna Karve and V.N. Deshpande were his associates. All the three were tried and hanged on 19th December 1910.

Veer Savarkar faced the grim prospect of burying his own brilliant life in the distant Andamans. After Kanhere's arrest in India in connection with the murder of Jackson at Nasik Savarkar's residence was searched. He was arrested and tried. He told the Tribuna, which sentenced him on January 30, 1911. 'I am prepared to face ungrudgingly the extreme penalty of your laws in the belief that through suffering and sacrifice alone our beloved motherland can march on to an assured if not speedy triumph'.

Vishnu Ganesh Pingale was studying in America. He came into contact with Lala Hardayal. Lala Hardayal was a close associate of Veer Savarkar. He was organizing Ghadr party. Pingle joined the Ghadr party and started taking keen interest in its activities. He was moving from place to place in America and Europe advocating the cause of the Indian freedom.

During the first World War of 1914, he came to India. In close association with Rashbihari Bose, he approached the 4000 young Sikhs who had returned from America. He wanted to organize a revolt with the help of the Indians in the Army against the British rule. But one Kripal Singh defected and supplied all the details of the plan to the authorities. Pingle was arrested in Meerut on 23rd March 1915. After the arrest he was tortured physically and mentally. On the charge of overthrowing the British rule in India he was tried and hanged on 16th November 1915.

At the time of Search and arrest of Pingle the Government authorities were shocked to notice a number of weapons, material for preparation of bombs and 18 ready made bombs. These bombs were very explosive. One bomb could have destroyed a single regiment within no time.

Eighty one persons were involved in this Lahor conspiracy. Sixty two were produced before The court. Twenty two were hanged. Sixteen were sent for transportation for life.

Aurobindo's career as a revolutionary was short lived. He withdrew from politics after a trial in which the police failed to get him convicted. He was working mainly through his brother, Barindra Kumar Ghosh. His brother, however, was sentenced to transportation for life along-with some other important revolutionaries.

Sachindranath, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ashfaqulla, Rajendranath Lahari, Roshansingh, Ram Prasad Bismal, Manmathnath Gupta, Keshav Chakravarti, Murarilal, Sharma, Thakoresingh and a number of others were the members of the 'Hindustan Republic Association'. This also was a revolutionary organization. They were working under the directions of Chandra Shekar

Azad and Rash Bihari. They were short of funds. They could not collect the funds openly. They decided to loot the Government money. They entered the 8 down railway train at Kankori. They arranged to step into the train on its way. They managed to take the possession of the safe. They broke open the safe and escaped with the money. However Pandit Ram Prasad, Ashfaqulla, Rajendranath Lahari and Roshan Singh were arrested and after trial they were hanged.

Ashfaqulla's last words before he was hanged were that he was very proud to be hanged as a first Muslim for the cause of the Indian National Freedom.

Simon Commission was appointed toward the end of 1927. The appointment of this commission was protested all over India. Demonstrations were held throughout the country. Lala Lajapat Rai was leading a demonstration at Lahore. The police made a lathicharge. Lalaji sustained serious injuries at the hands of the police. The Police Superintendent Saunders was responsible for the fatal injuries.

Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad decided to avenge. Their band of youths shot Saunders dead.

Even before his trial in the Saunders murder case Bhagat Singh became popular overnight. He became a national hero by throwing bombs in the Central Assembly. While throwing the bombs he declared that socialism was the objective of his revolutionary party.

The Indian revolutionaries had never stopped their struggle. They were always moved by the national interest. They always believed that the fight against imperialism was one and indivisible both from the point of view of the Indian masses and that of the enemy.

Industrial labour in India was steadily organizing itself into trade unions. It was particularly active in big cities like Bombay and Calcutta. There was a large concentration of the working class population in these cities. The Communists were on the forefront. They made the trade union movement very powerful. The British Labour Leaders including B.F. Bradley and Philip Spratt, were interested in fostering the growth of trade unionism in India. They came to India specially to work towards that end. The working class fought for its rights by resorting to strikes frequently. It alarmed the European Commercial Community in Calcutta. It urged the Government to adopt stringent legislative measures to combat this tendency.

On September, 4, 1928 the Home member James CRERAR introduced a Bill in the Legislatives Assembly. It provided for deportation of persons, not being Indian subjects of British India and the Princely States, who might seek to overthrow the Government by certain destructive methods such as those employed by the communists. The Bill was referred to the select Committee. It came back to the House with some minor changes. On the motion that it be taken into consideration, the vote was 61 for and 61 against. President Viltabhbhai Patel showed no hesitation in giving his casting vote against the motion. He pointed out that an extra ordinary measure like that ought to command a clear majority in its favour. It should not be allowed to become law with the support of the President's Casting Vote.

A revised Bill incorporating a few more stringent provisions was introduced in the Assembly in January 1929. The consideration of the Bill could not however be proceeded with soon after its emergence from the Select Committee. Meanwhile in March 1929 the Viceroy's Executive Council sanctioned the arrest of 32 communists. This action was taken the morning of the 20th day before the revised Public Safety Bill was to be taken up by the Legislative Assembly. The arrested persons were drawn mostly frohm Bengal, Bombay, Punjab, and U.P. They included such well known persons as S.A. Dange, S.S. Mirajkar, G.M. Adhikari, S.H. Usman, Shibnath Banerjee, Spratt and Bradley. They were put on trial at Meerut, a small place near Delhi.

The Public Safety Bill was brought before the Assembly for consideration. President Patel held that the fundamental basis for the proposed measure was virtually identical with that of the conspiracy case. He, therefore, called upon the Government either to withdraw the case or to drp the Bill till the verdict of the courts became available. The stand taken by him was perfectly valid. It had the support of eminent jurists. Besides no less a person than the law minister B. L. Mitter conceded that the House would be handicapped in discussing the Bill. He pointed out that some of the material on which it was based was almost the same as that on which the prosecution depended in the conspiracy case.

As the President was about to give his ruling on April 8 two bombs were thrown from the gallery into the chamber near the seat of George Schuster. There was a cry of 'Long Live Revolution'. Sir John Simon was present when the bomb fell. The President was unable to give his ruling that day.

Later Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were arrested for the alleged outrage. The revolutionary atmosphere was rendered more explosive by the death of Jatin Das after 62 days'

hunger strike. Bhagat Singh and his undertrial comrades were impelled by the desire to pick up the thread of the struggle left by the supreme sacrifice of Jatin Das. The struggle was for the amelioration of political prisoners. Bhagat Singh and his Comrades were eager to ensure that the sacrifice of Jathin Das did not go in vain.

Bhagat Singh and his associates were certain that they were to be hanged. However, they desired that others who would survive with long terms of convictions should have a better life in jail. As soon as they declared hunger strike, they were joined by other political prisoners in other jails. The hunger strike was taken up by other revolutionaries in jails throughout India. This created a great commotion.

Bhagat Singh and his comrades had timed the hunger strike very well. The Government had to give up the delaying tactics. Immediately the Government came out with a press communique on February 19; 1930 on the classification of the prisoners. The communique did not concede what Jatin Das and other revolutionaries involved in kankori case had demanded. They wanted the creation of a class of political prisoners. Nevertheless this new classification was an improvement on the situation. It abolished the distinction between European and Indian prisoners. The Government was compelled to admit a good number of Indian prisoners in the former European class. It was to be called B class.

According to these revolutionaries the sole purpose of their struggle was to awaken the Imperialist from Slumber. To this extent they were successful as the government which turned deaf ear to them was forced to listen to them. It was a timely warning against highhandedness.

Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhadeo were sentenced to death. They regarded the gallows as their garlands. They kissed the noose that was to end their lives. Bhagat Singh told the jailor 'you will kill us, but not the patriotism in us. The fragrance of freedom shall arise from our pyres.

The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in 1930 caused public excitement all over India. In Sholapur, with a large industrial population, people rose in revolt and overpowered the local police. They took possession of the town, hoisted the national flag and declared independence. They held the town for sometimes, but troops were rushed in from Bombay and the authority of the British rule was once again restored. Martial law was then imposed and this was followed by a reign of terror. During the Martial law regime various restrictions and humiliations were inflicted on the people. For instance people were not allowed to wear Gandhi-cap in public; the national flag was pulled down wherever it was seen. Those who were suspected of taking part in the

disturbances were sent up trial. Some of them were hanged and others sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Suryasen, the great leader of Chittagogn revolutionaries, made use of the crucial movement to trail the blaze of capture of power. They wanted the movement to grow into a full fledged revolution. They decided to show the path.

On 18th April 1930 several revolutionaries divided into groups. Simultaneously they raided the police line, the telephone exchange and all key points of Chittageng city. Railway lines were also cut and the city liberated. Ultimately there was a pitched battle between the Government forces and the revolutionaries the next day and in the battle of Jalalabad 49 young revolutionaries were killed.

The revolution had set an example. Had it been taken up by the masses it would have resulted in a disaster for the British rule. But the event received insufficient publicity as all the news of Chittagang armory raid was ruthlessly suppressed. It did not have the impact which it should have had. Suryasen was a great organizer and the death of so many revolutionaries in a gun battle was by itself a first class news. This was very novel as this was the first attempt to capture arms and ammunition on such a large scale.

‘A fight to Finish’ was clearly the conception of the Lahor Congress. This is exactly what people all over the country were expecting. They expected a coordinated ‘No-Tax and No-Rent’ movement followed by the setting up of a parallel National Government with its organs, courts, volunteer corps etc. throughout the nation. If such a campaign were conducted and handled with extreme speed and resolutions when the national feeling was at its highest it would have stood a reasonable change of paralysing the enemy. It had the potentiality of undermining the armed forces and winning independence.

The notorious Rowlatt Bills were designed to empower the administration to detain people without trial and try them without jury or legal representation. Gandhiji proclaimed the nation’s decision to fight the hateful law through a mass civil disobedience. The demonstrations on April 6 1919 were staged on a country wide scale. The bureaucracy was astonished at their magnitude and spontaneity. In Punjab Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs came together to compel the Government to drop the Bill. Sir Michael O’Dwyer was offended to watch the increasing tendency of nationalism in his province. Martial law was promulgated in Punjab. Gandhiji wanted to ensure that the national protest in Punjab was peaceful. He proposed to be present in Delhi and Punjab.

He was not allowed to do so. He was arrested and sent back to the Bombay province on April 9. Riots broke out in many parts of the country including Amritsar. One Miss. Sherwood, a missionary was brutally assaulted while she was going on her bicycle. She was rescued by the people in the locality. Three European bank officials were murdered. This much provocation was enough for O'Dwyer.

On April 12, General Dyer, issued a proclamation prohibiting all public meetings in the city of Amritsar. Indian nation still remembers General Dyer for contributing a bloody page to the British Indian History.

The prohibitory order was not sufficiently known to the people in Amritsar. April 13 was a new year Day in Punjab. They gathered for a widely advertised public meeting to be held at Jallianwala Baug. There were twenty thousand people. Amongst them were children and babes-in-arms. General Dyer marched to the place with ninety troops and ordered them to open fire on the crowd. The crowd was completely unarmed and peaceful. It was not given any opportunity to disperse, 1650 rounds of firing were ordered. The entrances and exits to the Jallianwala Baug were few, narrow and imperfect. People could not run for safety. A number of them died in the firing and many were wounded. In a civilized and impartial rule General Dyer would have forfeited his head on trial.

The street where Miss Sherwood was assaulted was set apart for flogging the residents. They were forced to crawl like reptiles when using the road. Students were whipped and marched long distances so that they might learn a lesson. The atrocities and the horror created in Punjab had no parallel in the history of the world.

Udham Singh, who was a witness to such atrocities, had lost a number of relations in the firing at Jallianwala Baug. He decided to punish Dyer. He was hardly 15 years old in 1919. He went to England. He was watching the movements of Sir Michael O'Dwyer there. He sought an opportunity in one of the meetings and shot O'Dwyer in Cacustan Hall on 13th March 1940. He was hanged on 31st July 1940 in Pante Ville Jail.

The revolutionaries had no illusions about the consequences of their activities. Their action alone would not have been decisive enough to force the British rule to Quit India but they could certainly undermine its morale by their heroic sacrifices. By making the cause of their country widely known, they could certainly assist in rousing the conscience of the world against inequity of the British imperialist policy. They offered their all in the service of their motherland and

expected nothing in return. The revolutionaries who remained more or less active throughout the British period, deserve a glittering chapter for themselves in the history of the Country's freedom.

It was the genius of the revolutionaries which gave an added international perspective and dimension to India's struggle for freedom. The major honour in this respect certainly goes to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and the National Congress.

The attitude of the National Congress, especially that of Gandhiji, towards a fight for the rights was basically different from that of the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries were not prepared to accept the freedom of the country by stages. For revolutionaries morality was entirely subordinate to the interest of the national cause. The national interest counted first and had to be protected by all means.

No doubt the major portion of honour for winning the freedom goes to the National Congress. At the same time it should be remembered that the freedom struggle and were a supplementary force of the national movement.



## PART III

## COMMUNAL DIVISION

Prior to the British rule there was no trace of Hindu - Muslim conflict. This conflict was associated with the British rule, especially with the latest period of imperialist rule. The conflict arose on account of Socio-economical rivalry. The growth of trade, commerce and education had begun earlier in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. These Cities had Hindu majority. The Hunter Commission Report in 1882 found that the Muslim average in University education was only 3.65 percent. Even on the day of independence, the percentage of literacy was low among the Muslims. Hence with the rise of trade and industries, the conditions of sectional rivalry came into existence. This assumed a Communal guise. The great landlord formed the main basis of the Muslim upper class. They viewed with displeasure the advance made by Hindus in trade and industry. A basis for communal antagonism existed in the rising middle class. Muslims were at a disadvantage in the field of administrative posts as there were based on educational qualifications. The representative institutions began to develop in the restricted electoral qualifications based on poverty and education. This weighed against the Muslims and stimulated the demand for separate representation. This helped the imperialists to frame up the whole political system.

Somewhere in 1890 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan made plea for special privileges and seats for Muslims. This was however opposed by responsible Muslim opinion. The MOSLEM HERALD condemned it as something sure to 'Poison the social life of districts and villages and make a hell of India'. Nothing more came out of this.

In 1906 a Muslim deputation presented itself to the Viceroy and demanded separate and privileged representation in any electoral system that might be set up. The Viceroy Lord Minto immediately announced his acceptance of the demand. (Life of Lord Minto by John Bucher 1925 P. 244) In his presidential address to the 1923 National Congress Mohamad Ali revealed that the Muslim deputation was 'a command performance' arranged by the Government.

Thus came the system of communal electorals and representation. It struck at the roots of democratic system.

It was argued that this system was indispensable in order to prevent the Muslims being swamped by the Hindu majority. The local Government elections in the same period disprove this argument. The elections were held on the old basis. In 1910 in the U.P. the joint electorates, with the Muslims forming only 1/7 part of the population, returned 189 Muslims and 445 Hindus to the

District Boards; 310 Muslims and 562 Hindus to the Municipalities. This method was supposed to secure the support of a privileged minority. It was also intended to turn the anger of the majority against the privileged minority instead of against the imperialist rule. In the subsequent constitution this system was extended and elaborated. It reached the climax in 1935 constitution. By this Act separate representation was provided not only for Muslims but for the Sikhs, the Anglo-Indians, the Indian Christians, the depressed classes as well as European, Land Lords, Commerce and Trade etc. The President of the All Indian Christian conference in 1938 protested; 'My greater objection to separate electorates is that it prevents us from coming into close contact with other communities' (Dr. H.C. Mukerjee — President of the All Indian Christian conference Madras, December 1938).

It encouraged the sharpest possible stimulus to communal antagonism. These antagonisms promoted the protection of the system of exploitation and the imperialist rule in respect of Social and economic question. This was obvious in the case of the middle class communalist competing for position and jobs. It was not less true where communal difficulties reached the masses. In Bengal and Punjab the Hindus included the richer landlords as well as trading and money lending interest. The Muslims were more often the poorer peasants and debtors. In other cases big Muslim landlords would be found among Hindu peasants. Again and again what was reported as a 'Communal' struggle concealed a struggle of Muslim peasants against Hindu Landlords, Muslim debtors against Hindu Money lenders or Hindu workers against, Muslim owners.

The Hindu and Muslim masses had no different objectives. Their poverty and servitude were not different. In the village the overwhelming majority of Hindus and Muslims lived under the same burdens of landlordism, the same exactions of moneylenders and under the same imperialism. The object of promoting division were to protect the system of exploitation.

The final solution lay in the social and economic advance.

## **MUSLIM LEAGUE AND THE CONGRESS**

The Muslim League was founded in December 1906. As in the case of the foundation of the National Congress, British official policy played an important part in the foundation of Muslim League.

In the early stages the League was a narrow communal organisation. It appealed mainly to the upper class Muslim Landlords. Like the national Congress, the anti-imperialist feeling soon began to be felt within Muslim League. By 1913 the Muslim League adopted the aim of 'Self Government for India' within the Empire and sought. 'Co-operation with other communities' to achieve this object. Negotiations between the Congress and the Muslim League were opened. By 1916 the Lucknow pact of the Congress-League unity was signed. It accepted the system of separate electorates and proclaimed the common aim of Dominion Status to be striven for by both organisations.

A joint session of the congress and the League was held at Lucknow. Lokmanya Tilak declared; 'It has been said gentlemen. By some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammedan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu Community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much... ..when we have to fight against a third party. It is a great thing a very important event, that we stand on this platform united, untied in race, united in region, united as regard all different shades of political creed'. Mr. M.A. Jinnah had been most active in promoting Congress-League unity. Presiding over the League session he declared 'I have been a staunch Congressman throughout my life and have been no lover of sectarian cries. But it appears to me that the reproach of separation sometimes levelled at the Musalmans is singularly inept and wide of the mark when I see this great communal organisation rapidly growing into a powerful factor for the birth of a United India'.

During the first world war the bonds of Hindu-Muslim unity were forged still closer. The alliance of the Congress and the Khilafat Committee developed into a powerful joint front of struggle against the Government for the aim of Swaraj. During this period of national upsurge, the Muslim leaders and masses proved their militancy alongside the Congress. Ali brothers and Hussein Ahmed Madani boldly preached sedition to the Army. They were sentenced to six years of imprisonment for it.

The Khilafat leaders were the first to demand that Swaraj be defined as complete independence. Similarly the Muslim League at its Amritsar Session, as early as 1919. passed a resolution calling the Muslims in India not to join the Indian Army. In June 1922 a joint Session of Khilafat and the Jamiat Ul-Ulema at Lucknow passed a resolution to the effect that the term 'Swaraj' be substituted henceforth by the term 'Complete independence'.

However, the unity achieved by the Congress-Khilafat struggle was not maintained. The abrupt calling off the struggle by the Congress led to a rift. The subsequent period of frustration

opened the way for the renewal of the Congress-League separation and Hindu-Muslim antagonism. The imperialist utilized this favourable development to the full. In the succeeding years communal riots replaced the united mass struggle for freedom. Communal reaction came to the forefront. The Hindu-Mahasabha was organised on an all India basis in 1925 under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. The National Congress and the Muslim League were united in boycotting the Simon Commission in 1927. However, renewed attempts to reach an agreement in the All Parties Conference of 1928 ended in failure.

Thus the 1937 elections under the new constitution of 1935 found the Congress and the League in opposition. Following the elections, the Muslim Leadership made unofficial approaches to the leadership of the Congress for an agreement. It was in relation to the provincial ministries to be formed and the allocation of seats. The Congress being in a strong position rejected the approach. It repudiated the claim of Muslim League to any political role. It conveyed the claim of the Congress to represent the Indian Nation as a whole. In a letter in January 1937 Pandit Nehru declared. 'In the final analysis there are only two forces in India today... British imperialism and the Congress representing Indian Nationalism... the Muslim League represents a group of Muslims, no doubt highly estimable persons, but functioning in the higher regions of the upper middle classes and having no common contact with the Muslim masses and few within the Muslim lower middle class'.

From this stage the conflict became increasingly sharp. The Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah set itself to strengthen its organization. It extended its base of support among the Muslim masses. It consolidated the various dissident Muslim groups and organizations so as to make the league the main organization of the Muslim in India. This policy was successful. During the period 1937-45 a decisive change took place in the position and the relative strength of the Muslim League. It was mustering mass support among the Muslims. It became a major political organisation.

Both the Congress and the league grew rapidly in strength during this period. In January 1938, according to a press statement issued by Jawaharlalji, out of 3.1 million members of the Congress only 1,00,000 or 3.1% were Muslims. The Muslims had turned to the League.

Within the Muslim League, there developed a younger radical section, It pressed forward for a democratic programme against the resistance of the older reactionary leadership at the top. In certain places these younger sections conducted an active campaign for social and economic

mass issues. They won mass support among the poorer Muslims especially in Punjab and Bengal.

Poor representation of the Muslim in the Congress reflected certain political, organizational and technical weaknesses in the Congress approach. The original aim of the Congress was to include Hindus & Muslims equally. This aim could not be realized in the proportions of membership won. The situation during the period preceding the war and during it became complex. The degree of confusion and conflicting trends increased. The political leadership of the Congress during this period was vacillating. The leadership neglected the economic situation created during the war. All this led to a measure of political disorganisation and demoralization during the later stages of the war. This weakened the appeal of the United National Movement during the period. The growth of the Muslim League reflected the failure of the Congress to make any serious, and consistent effort to reach out and appeal to the Muslim masses. The only exception was North-West frontier province. Abdul Gaffar Khan had conducted massive work among the Muslims seriously and held them firmly in favour of the Congress. The Congress platform was non communal. However, it had the religious flavour of Gandhiji. A great many Muslims were not attracted to the Congress platform.

A serious share of the responsibility had to be laid at the door of the national movement. In the first wave of national movement it appeared that Lokmanya Tilak, Arvind Ghosh and others were seeking to build up a basis of Hindu religion for their agitation. There was a feeling that these leaders were trying to identify the National awakening with a revival of Hinduism. The Muslim masses were cut off. In the subsequent events Gandhiji dominated the national movement. In all his propaganda the preaching of Hindu-ism, his religious conceptions, and preaching of the general political aims were not very clear to the Muslim masses. They got confused and mixed up.

The British Government in its exploitation of communal divisions undoubtedly used an infamous weapon against the people's movement. The lack of understanding of Gandhism helped to place that weapon in its hands.

The demand of Pakistan was first advocated by the Muslim League in 1940. The poet Iqbal in 1930 and some students of Cambridge in 1933 put forth a proposal to this effect. It was rejected as being childish. As late as 1937 the annual session of the League proclaimed the aim of 'The establishment in India of full independence, in the form of a federation of free democratic states'. Finally in 1946 the League defined Pakistan in the following terms; that these zones

comprising Bengal and Assam in the North East and Punjab, North-West Frontier Province. Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India, namely Pakistan zones, where Muslims are in a dominant majority be constituted into a sovereign independent State’.

The theory of Pakistan was based on the Conception of Hindus and Muslims as two ‘nations’. It is obvious that this attempt to base nationality on religion runs contrary to every accepted historical and international experience of the character of a nation. The logic behind this is very strange. This implies that nationality coincides with being a Muslim. If so, all Muslims from Africa to India would be a single ‘nation’ and the theory of Pakistan would find its final extension in Pan-Islamism.

The Muslims of India could not be called one nation, as their languages, territories and culture were different. Ethnically they were different. Between the Pathan and Bengali Muslim, only religion was common. This was not sufficient to constitute a nation. The proposal for a plebiscite of the whole population in Muslim majority region was put up by C. Rajgopalachariar in 1942. A similar proposal was put up by Gandhiji in Gandhi-Zinah parleys of 1944. This was rejected by Zinnah.

The demand for Pakistan was officially presented by way of an ultimatum. Popular wishes of the people were ignored. Logic and reason made no sense. In short the demand for Pakistan was reactionary. It was anti-democratic and disruptive. The League ultimately played into the hands of imperialism.

## **CAST AND RELIGION**

India had a heavy heritage of burdens. It has survived over a long past. Divisions and inequalities have not been over come yet. As every nation has its own inheritance and peculiar problems, India has the problem of untouchability. In the modern phase of imperialist decay, the national movement led the offensive against these evils.

It was, of course, unthinkable to remove untouchability in no time. Caste system, has ruled India for generations.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Balshastri Jambhekar, Jagganath Shankar Seth, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, Jyotirao Phule and many other reformists laid greater emphasis on social and religious ills than on political ills. They

wanted to reform the society as a necessary prelude to the attainment of Swaraj. However, the role of the imperialists was quite opposite. The reformists had pressed and demanded the removal of so many evils in the Society. The British rule had maintained an obstructive role against innumerable projects for reforms. In fact it had worked in such way as to sustain and even intensify these evils.

The fight against untouchability had been led not by imperialism but by the progressive national movement. In the beginning the national movement laid more stress on political issues and the demand for reforms was set aside. The reformists laid all the stress on the reforms and side tracked the political issues. The British rule took maximum advantage of this situation and did nothing either to reform the society or to give political concessions. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar organized depressed classes. He made it clear that if the untouchables wanted to get rid of the evils they would need political power in their hands.

Certain famous temples in Southern India had been tradition-ally closed to the untouchables. Under the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji a movement was started. The aim was to secure entry into the temples. The police were thereupon dispatched to prevent access of the untouchables. This action was justified on the grounds that such access would be offensive to the religious sentiments of the people. It was the sacred duty of the Government to protect, them.

The same British rule had certainly shown concern about organizing a separate electoral roll of the untouchables with guaranteed separate representation. It was in order to introduce a new element of division and weaken the National Congress.

In his Presidential Address to the All India Depressed Classes Congress in August 1930 Dr. Ambedkar said 'I am afraid the British choose to advertise unfortunate condition, not with the object of removing them, but only because such course serves well as an excuse for retarding the political progress of India'. He further pointed out that before the British rule came to India the Depressed Classes were in loathsome condition due to untouchability. They could not draw water from the village well. They could not enter the temple. They were denied entry into the police force. They were not allowed to serve in the military. Those who held so much power over the country for such long time should have done some good. But there was certainly no fundamental improvement in their position. So far as the untouchables were concerned, the British Government had accepted the arrangements as had existed traditionally. It had preserved them faithfully. Their wrongs had remained as open sores and they had not been righted.



Nobody could remove these grievances. The untouchables could not get away from them unless they secured political power. No share of this political power could come to them so long as the British Government remained as it was. It was only in a Swaraj that they stood any chance of getting the political power into their hands. In the absence of this they could not bring salvation to their people.

The interest and the liberation of the depressed classes were inevitably linked up with the common national movement of freedom. The crippling institutions of Caste could only vanish by the advance of modern industry, technology and political democracy. Any amount of preaching and denunciation was of no help.

## PART IV

## THE PRINCES

The rising forces of Indian nationalism, of the peasant revolt and of the working class movement represented the progressive elements of Indian Society. But they were by no means the whole picture of Indian Society. Although they constituted the over-whelming majority of the Indian people, they were not the whole people. If they were the domination could never arisen. The conflict was not a simple conflict between a united Indian people ranged in one camp and the handful of British rulers ranged in the other. There was a third force. The Indian Society under imperialist rule was chartered by arrested development. It was inevitable that the conservative forces of the society should assume an importance out of all proportion to their inner strength. These decaying forces helped to make possible the original conquest. As the tide of national awakening swept forward, the role of these out-dated relics appeared to grow more important and prominent. They were the sole surviving props of the imperialist rule.

The maintenance of a social basis, allied to imperialism, with- in the Indian population was the condition of the maintenance of imperialist rule. As in the case of every reactionary rule, especially of alien rule, the division of the people was the necessary law of ruler's statecraft. But such a social basis could not be found in the progressive elements which were straining against imperialism. It could only be found in the reactionary elements whose interests were opposed to those of the people. This policy was more signally demonstrated in two spheres. They were the Indian Princes or so called 'Indian States' and the question of communal divisions, especially in the form of Hindu-Muslim antagonism.

Both these problems were, in reality, aspects of the general problem confronting the national movement in respect of the reactionary forces in India. With the advance of national liberation movement desperate efforts were being made to use these reactionary forces. The solution of these problems was vital for the victory of democracy in India.

Imperialism had divided India into unequal segments- British India and the so called 'Indian States' The fantastic and irrational character of this division, which was far more than an administrative division had extended deeply into social, economic and political conditions. It only could be appreciated by the examination of the map.

There were 563 States with a total area of 712,000 square miles and a population of 81 million (in 1931 census) of nearly one quarter of the Indian population. There sixes varies. A State like Hyderabad, was as large as Italy, with a population of 14 million whereas a petty State like

Lawa had an area of only 19 square miles. The Simla hill States, were little more than a small holdings. The variety of their status and jurisdiction defied any generalised description. There were 108 major States whose rulers were directly included in the Chamber of Princes. There were 172 minor States which indirectly returned 12 representatives to the Chamber of Princes. The remaining 328 States were in practice special forms of land holdings with certain feudal rights, but with very limited jurisdiction. In the more important States a British Resident was the decisive power. The lesser States were grouped under British Political Agents who managed bunches of them in different geographical regions.

To call the 'States' was really a misnomer. They were the preserved ruins of former States. These puppet Princes were maintained for political reasons by an entirely different ruling power. While plenty of despotism, tyranny and arbitrary lawlessness was freely allowed, all decisive political power was in British hands.

In the first half of 19th century, while the British domination was still vigorous, it confidently advanced a policy of expanding absorption of the decaying States into British territory, under any and every pretext. But the turning point came with Revolt of 1857. The Revolt was the last attempt of the decaying feudal forces, of the former Rulers of the country to turn back the tide of foreign domination. The Revolt was crushed, but the lesson was learned. From this point of feudal forces no longer presented the main potential menace and rival to British rule. They were the main barrier against the advance of the awakening masses. The progressive elements which had formerly been treated with favour, were now regarded with increasing suspicion as the potential new leadership of awakening masses. The policy of building more and more decisively on the feudal elements was consciously adopted. They preserved the Princes and their States, as the bulwark of British rule.

The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 gave out the new policy: 'we shall respect the rights, dignity and honors of Native Princess as our own". The preservation of the Indian States from the dissolution which would have been sooner or later their fate, was thus an instrument of modern British policy. It was no means an expression of the survival of ancient institutions and tradition in India.

It is doubtful whether there had been any regime in history to parallel that of India puppet Princes under the British protection. A few princely States had been administered on levels above the low level of British India. They even carried out partially realised schemes of compulsory education. They also established very rudimentary forms of restricted advisory representative

Bodies. But these were exceptions. In the majority of the States, the servitude, despotism and oppression exceeded description. Corruption and oppression had been sufficiently familiar in the history of Asiatic despotisms. But this had, at any rate, had to face the self-acting checks of the fear of external aggression or internal up risings. Both these checks were removed by the British protection. The power of supervision to control or remove rulers in case of flagrant misgovernment was in practice used, not to check misgovernments, but to check disloyalty. The Princes were functionless puppets fulfilling a degraded role. Hence the notorious degradation of the people in the Indian States under conditions of extreme backwardness even for India.

The declaration of the States People's Conference in 1939 summed up the character of regime of these Princes. "In these States, big or small, with very few exceptions, personal, autocratic rule prevails. There is no rule of law and taxation is excessive and unbearable. Civil liberties are crushed. The privy purse of the Rulers is usually not fixed and even where it is fixed, this is not adhere to. On the one hand there is extravagance and luxury of the Princess, and on the other is extreme poverty of the people" (Statement of the Standing Committee of the All India State People's Conference June 1939).

The Princely Indian States represented the most backward agrarian economy of a feudal type. In only a few was there any industrial development. Slavery was rampant in many (P. L. Chudgar 'Indian Princes under British Protection, 1929, p. 33). Forced labour, which may be imposed for any of variety of services with no remuneration, other than food, was a regular rule (Ibid p. 37). Taxes were imposed at will, to grind even poorest in order to provide the insatiable demands of the palace (Ibid p. 45-47).

As the national movement of liberation had advanced. So imperialism had increasingly thrown the weight of its policy on the alliance with Princes. It sought to make Princes its counter-force against the national movement. In 1921, the Chamber of Princes was instituted. The role of Princess was the corner-stone of the Federal Constitution projected by the Act of 1935. The Princes were given over 2/5th of the representation in the Upper House and 1/3rd of the representation in the Lower House. The purpose was very clear.

After 1937 the advance of the national democratic movement was more and more powerfully sweeping past the rotten barriers of the puppet States. The States People's Conference, which organised the popular movement in the States, had rapidly grown up in strength. Active struggles for elementary Civil Rights developed in a number of States.

The advance of the popular movement in the States had also been reflected in changes in the policy of the National Congress. In the past, the National Congress refrained from taking up directly agitational activity in the Indian States. The policy of non-interference was mistakenly followed. This was done in the imaginary hope of attaining some kind of solidarity with the puppet Princes instead of with the 80 million Indians oppressed under them. "Upto now", Gandhiji declared at the Round Table Conference, "the Congress endeavored to save the Princes by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs". This disastrous policy was defeated by events. The Congress voluntarily limited its own jurisdiction to the British India. It claimed to be an All India National Body. But did not attempt to set up any parallel organisation under its leadership in the Indian States. But the princes resorted to violent repression on their States. This was done even in so called most "Progressive" States, like Travancore and Mysore. Even the most elementary beginnings suppressed was of a popular movement or sympathy with the national cause. The Indian National Congress was compelled to wage a fight against this in 1938-39 in the new circumstances. It was for democratic rights and the right of existence in the Indian States. The question of the support for the civil disobedience movement in the States became a burning issue in the National Congress. The Haripura Session of the National Congress in 1938 declared the general principles of Congress policy in relation to the States. Pursuant to this policy the national leaders took an active part in the States people's movement.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared in his Presidential address at the All India States People's Conference in Udaipur in December 1945, "It is inevitable that the vast majority of States which cannot possibly form economic units should be absorbed into neighboring areas".... It adopted the goal of "attainment by peaceful and legitimate means of full responsible government by the people of the States as integral part of a free and federated India."

With the resumption of Popular Ministries in the Provinces in 1937/38 and the initiations of Constitutional discussions in face of the rising revolutionary upsurge, the Indian States had become the storm-centres of Indian Political situation. Spontaneous struggles against the feudal autocracy in the States began. These were met with the most intense repression by the Princes. They were backed by the British Political Department.

The first and the most important task before the National Congress was to safeguard the territorial integrity to strengthen India politically and constitutionally. India had for centuries a cultural unity, whatever the boundaries and empires. The British rule had brought about political unity and sense of nationality. The Cripps proposal suggested the idea of partition. This was

enough to incite all the reactionary feudal and socially backward groups to demand partition. Pakistan creation of alone was not the threat. There was the threat of balkanization.

The Indian States People's movement had made a dent on the autocracy of the ruling Princes, yet the autocracy was powerful. The decision about the future of the Indian States was not to be made by the people of those States or their representatives. It has left to the sweet will of the autocratic rulers. The British Government insisted on bringing about a federation. Here the elected representatives of the provinces would be compelled to sit with the nominees of irresponsible rulers. Like the Congress, the British Constitutional Experts were of the opinion that the princes were bound to follow the Crown in the transfer of authority to the people and the Paramountcy would pass on to the British India. The Princes, on account of false notions of power, prestige and privileges, were likely to keep out of the Indian Union. They would be left to seek British military support against their own people. The Cabinet Mission proposals were supposed to be an improvement on Cripps' proposal. However, presented an even clearer threat of Balkanisation. The 55A States were not compact. They were islands surrounded by British India. Without cooperation or with conflict they would be hostile enclaves. If they relied on some external power for protection, it would be a mence to free India. They would not have survived, but for the protection of a single paramount power. At the beginning of the 19th century, the States had entered into treaties with the East India Company. They acted as the Agent of the Delhi Emperor. They had no earlier history except some States like Rajutana. But for the British most of them would have gone out of existence. The British Parliament took greater interest in the Indian affairs and after 1857 Mutiny, the Crown took over India form the Company. The States had no separate relation with the Crown or the Parliament. The Viceroy, on behalf of parliament, exercised effective suztrainty over the States. He decided questions of Succession, transfer of territory and suggested who should be the Prime Minister or Diwan. The Princes raised constitutional controversies. A British-appointed Committee presided over by Sir Harcourt. Butler settled them with the ponderous declaration that Paramountcy must remain paramount. There was a suggestion underlying the Cripps proposal and the Cabinet Mission plan that paramountcy would lapse on transfer of power. It seemed a mean act of statesmanship and however constitutionally justifiable, politically as incitement to Balkanisation.

Only 40 States had Treaty. The rest possessed engagements or Sanads. The Government of India Act, 1935, made a distinction between the relation of the States and those of the rest of India with the British Parliament. The States were placed directly under the Viceroy, They were given constitutional protection though according to the Butler Committee: "It is not in accordance with historical facts that when the Indian States came in to connect with British

power, they were independent.” Some were secured, others were created for the consolidation of the British Power in India. In the mutiny, the most Indian Princes were on the side of the British either in sympathy or in action. But this policy was out of question 1947. There was a feeling among the Indian nationalists that the Political Department at least wanted the Indian States to be Britain’s fifth column in India.

The Princes realised that they not be able to withstand for long the pressure of the State’s People’s movement. The movement was backed by political upsurge in free India. The British would not come back just to protect the rebellious Princes and alienate the Indian public. Except for about a dozen, all the States lay within the jurisdiction of the India union and the Indian leaders had made known their stand persuasively. There was a timely advice from a Diwans drawn from British India to the younger, modern minded Princes. By the time Mountbatten Plan was in operation, the sentiment among the overwhelming majority of the Princes was in favor of accession and Mountbatten advised them to accede without hesitation. The Congress had already made it clear that they would deal fairly with the Princes who acceded to the Domination of India. Except for Hyderabad, Junagarh and Kashmir the Princes of all the States adjacent to or within India acceded by August 15. Travancore was hesitant on the plea that if it was contiguous to India by land, it was contiguous to Pakistan by sea. However it acceded to India only under pressure of people. In Junagarh, force had to be used. The Muslim ruler of the State, with overwhelming Hindu majority and with no connection with Pakistan, except by sea, had been persuaded to accede to Pakistan. The Government of India argued with the Government of Pakistan and the Ruler that the accession was not fair and right. It was a threat to the security of India. The popular forces of the Indian Army and the popular forces from outside Gujrat moved into Junagarh. A plebiscite was held resulting in a verdict for accession to India.

Hyderabad was the premier State in India and its Ruler had a special position as the faithful ally of the British Crown. It was a small State to start with but its boundaries had extended after Tippu Sultan’s defeat by the British. The British helped in addition of these territories on the stipulation that the Nizam was to function in a sub ordinate capacity to them with a high sounding title. At the time of Independence, Nizam had his vanity. He had lost the benefit of the advice of Prime Minister like Mirza Ismail and was under pressure from Liaquat. Ali, Liaquat Ali represented the interests of the Muslim autocracy which had dominated Hindu majority. The Nizam had armed forces of 50,000 men in strength. He was encouraged by his Indian and Foreign advisers to think of resistance. He was also under the blackmailing influence of Kasim Rizvi. Rizvi was a Sinister Rasputin of Hyderabad. He rose rapidly as the war-like leader of the Razakars and two lack irregulars who represented Muslim communal reaction. The situation took a serious and



Sydney Cotton, a British adventurer, added to the tension by smuggling arms. The Indian Government ultimately decided on the 'Police Action'. On 13th September the Indian Army moved in. In four days the Nizam's government surrendered and collapsed.

The State of Kashmir was sold by East India Company to Gulab Singh. He was the great grandfather of Indian ruler Hari Singh. A Hindu Maharaja ruled the Muslim majority. The subjects- predominantly Muslims, were led by Shaikh Abdullah, the leader of the Muslim National Conference. Later its name changed to Kashmir National Conference and Hindus also took part in it. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came in close touch with Sheikh Abdullah as with other States peoples' struggle. In June 1946 when the Cabinet Mission carrying on talks with political leaders, Panditji rushed to Kashmir to assist Sheikh Abdullah there on trial for treason. Jawaharlalji was prohibited entry and when he broke the ban was kept under detention. He was wanted in New Delhi for negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. He was released at the Viceroy's intervention.

The Maharaja behaved in a strange manner on eve of Independence and after and made Kashmir a permanent problem. He had right to accede either to India or Pakistan and his right as a ruler was conceded by Jinnah who had shown hardly any interest in the States people's struggle. The Maharaja dallied. He would not agree to the persuasive advice of Mr. Mahajan, the then Diwan. He entered into a status-quo agreement with Pakistan and could not respond to Jinnah's overtures too. Towards the end of 1947, armed raiders from Rawalpindi side infiltrated into the State and began advancing. They spread destruction along the way with rapine, loot, rape and arson. Shrinagar was under threat. The Maharaja realised the danger, packed up and went to Jammu, the Capital of the predominantly Hindu area, and sought India's help. After dramatic developments and the signing by the Maharaja of the Instrument of Accession. Indian troops were flown to the Shrinagar Valley. Soon the tide of the battle was turned. The National Conference under Sheikh Abdulla's leadership played a valiant part. It organized supplies, raised militia and roused the peoples' will for resistance. Mountbatten, as the Governor-General declared that, after things had settled down, there would be "a reference to the wishes of people". This was the origin of the idea of plebiscite and subsequent controversy.

## PART V

## CONSTITUTIONS FOR INDIA

In the early stages of National movement in India, the moderates held the pious view that the real purpose of the British Rule in India had been to train the Indian people for self-government. However this was not the view of the early British rulers in India. The view changed only when the strength of the National movement for liberation forced the issue for self-Government. Any possibility of such a development was rejected by the British with contempt. Apart from conservative opinion, liberal opinion also concurred with this view. MaCaulay declared in 1833, "In India, you cannot have representative institutions. Of all innumerable speculators, who have offered their suggestions on Indian politics, not a single one, as far as I know, however, democratical his opinion, has ever maintained the possibility of giving at the present time such institutions to India." (T. B. Macaulay, speech in the House of Commons, July 10, 1833).

On the eve of the First World War, Lord Cromar emphatically made this standpoint clear. "To speak of self-government for India under conditions such as these, is as it were to advocate self-government for united Europe... .. The idea is not only absurd, it is not only impracticable. I would go further and say that to entertain it would be a crime against civilization and especially against voiceless millions in India, whose interests are committed to our charge". (Lord Cromer "Ancient and Modern Imperialism 1910, P. 123).

Lord Morley introduced the Constitutional reforms. They were known as Morley-Minto Reforms. Lord Morley was most insistent that they should not be regarded as in any sense preparing the way for Parliament institution.

"It could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India. I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it!" (Lord Morley's speech in the House of Lords December 17, 1908) This was the consistent position of the imperialism in relation to India up to 1917.

Since 1917, a sudden change in the expression had appeared. This abrupt transformation in the policy came from the sharp impact of external events. The national movement within India and the Russian Revolution were the main factors.

Up to the war of 1914, the British imperialism had a proclaimed aim: It was to draw India into the imperialist drawing of Indian administrative machine progressively. This aim was

indispensable for successful implementation with due caution to maintain hold of all strategic positions of control. This aim should not be confused with the aim of self-government. The aim of self-government was in reality contrary to it. Up to 1917, it was consistently repudiated. There was a confusion between these two aims. It misled some to believe that the government aimed at a gradual advance towards the objective of responsible government.

The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had been commonly presented as the starting point of new policy:

“It is our will that, so far as many as be our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education ability and integrity duly to discharge.”

These pledged or promises made to India assured complete equality and disappearance of distinction between the rulers and the ruled. However, the British were not interested in fulfilling them even in the broad sense in which they appeared to be made.

The real aim of the government, however, was expressed in misleadingly flamboyant form in these pledges. It was a gradual extension of a carefully controlled subordinate association of Indians in the imperialist administration. The British rulers wanted to secure the support of the trained buyers of upper and middle class Indians. In this way they could assist the government in holding the masses in subjection. The number of posts of the Indians in the Civil Service was cautiously increased. A series of reform were carried from 1861 onwards. However care was taken to ensure that no Indian was posted in a decision making position.

In 1861 the Indian Council Act provided for the addition of six nominated, non-official members to the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Some of these nominated members were carefully selected Indians. It is worth nothing that like every subsequent reforms measure, this reform was accompanied by a new repressive weapon. The Viceroy was given the power to issue Ordinances having the force of law for six months at any time. This power was carefully used.

In 1833/34, the local self-government Acts introduces the elective principle in to Municipal Government and established rural Boards and District Councils.

In 1892, the Indian Councils Act added a few selected members to the Provincial Legislative Councils and through them, at a further stage of indirectness, to the Viceroy's

Legislative Council. The indirectly elected members to the Provincial Legislative Council were actually by recommended for approval. They were not formally elected by the Local Self-Government and other bodies.

In 1909, the Indian Councils Act introduced the principle of elected majority into the Provincial Legislative Councils and an elected minority into Viceroy's Legislative Council. The Provincial Legislative Council was elected in part indirectly and in part directly. The minority, except for the land owners and the Muslim seats, was elected indirectly.

The functions of these Councils remained severely restricted. They had no control over administration and finance. The legislation could be voted, if disapproved. The franchise was extremely narrow and to the existing multiplication of electing bodies was added the system of separate Muslim electorates.

The Morley-Minto Reforms were the first reforms to be carried out in the midst of national agitation. The reforms were first thought of in 1906 in 1905, there was great upsurge of national movement. The boycott of foreign goods and Swadeshi campaign were launched. The wide spread national agitation and the demand for self-government moved the British rule. The real political aim was to defeat this agitation. It was to isolate the extremists and attracts the moderates towards the reforms. Thus began a new era.

The meaning of the declaration had remained a subject of controversy. Whether it was intend to imply "Dominion Status" in the same sense as the self-governing Dominion or the reaching of such a goal in any measurable term of time remained unanswered. In fact, the term, "Dominion Status" was not used in the Declaration.

The key to the policy was conception of 'stages'. The British ruling authorities were to be judges of time and measure of each advance. The first stage took two years to reach. This was a lighting speed compared to the second stage. The Montague-Chelmsford Report had contemplated ten-year intervals for periodic review and revision to advance to a new stage. The second stage, however, took sixteen years to reach. The Government of India Act, 1935, came after seven years of exhaustive enquiry. The Simon Report recommended the ten year intervals as far too short. "Ten year is not a long enough to see the real effect on administration of the new 'system' " (Simon Report Vo. II P.7)

Two legislative measures had been enacted to implement the policy.

The first, the Government of India Act, 1919, established the system known as Dyarchy. No change was made in the Central Governments. In the Provincial Governments, certain subjects such as Health, Education and similar subjects were transferred to Indian Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures. The strategic subjects, such as, Police and Land Revenue were reserved in the hands of the Ministers responsible to the Government.

The Provincial Legislatures were established with a majority of elected members. It was on the basis of a restricted property franchise representing 2·8% of the population. The Provincial Governors had power to veto legislation. They also had a power to certify legislation which was not accepted by the Legislature. As the Centre two Chambers were established (1) a Council of State nearly half nominated and the rest elected from narrowest upper circle. There were less than 18,000 electors for the whole country. (2) Legislative Assembly with an elected majority on the basis of franchise even more restricted than that for the Provinces. The Governor General had unlimited overriding powers to veto or certify legislation.

Dyarchy was universally condemned by Indian opinion. After a few years' experience, the ruling imperialist opinion also condemned it.

The responsibility of Indian Ministers was admittedly a farce. Each successive stage of imperialist constitution-making had exposed the pretensions of its preceding one. The Montague-Chelmsford Report was merciless to the illusory claims of the Morley-Minto Reforms. The Simon Report was no less unsparing. It pointed out the shortcomings and failure of Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.

The Declaration of 1917 contained no mention of Dominion Status. Nor did the Government of India Act of 1919. The demand for a preamble to the Government of India Act of 1935 to contain explicit reference to the promise of Dominion status refused.

In 1928 T. R. MacDonald, in a speech at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference on July 2, assured that India would be a new Dominion added to the Commonwealth. The new Dominion did not come in to existence. Instead, there was a reign of terror in India. A number of Indians were imprisoned for the crime of agitating for self-government.

In 1929, the Viceroy Lord Irwin issued a statement. This was intended to prepare the ground for Round Table Conference. In this Statement he promised 'Dominion Status'. This

Statement aroused a storm of protest in the British Parliament. This was, however, justified on the ground that it was necessary in a difficult diplomatic situation in India.

The term 'Dominion Status' was meaningless as long as it was not defined. The Indian Secretary of State, in December 1929, came out with a witty argument. He claimed that the Dominion Status had already been achieved by India for a decade. She had signed the Versailles Treaty and thus became a member of the League of Nations.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 brought to the fore-front the question of "Dominion Status" again. The Government spokesman once again sought to hold out this as the alternative to the demand for independence. On October 17, 1939, the Viceroy Lord Linlithgon declared that India might attain her due place amongst the great Dominions. The 'due place' was not clarified.

Sir Samuel Hoare, on behalf of the British Government, affirmed that the aim was 'Dominion Status of 1926'. He further stated, "Dominion Status" is not a prize that is given to a deserving community, but is the recognition of facts that should actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India —and in my own view the sooner they exist the better- the aim of our policy will be achieved".

He ruled out any possibility of self-government by declaring: "If there are difficulties in the way, they are not of our making. They are inherent in the many divisions between classes and communities in a great sub-continent.... The Princes are afraid of domination of the British India. Muslims are opposed to a Hindu majority at the Centre. The Depressed classes and other minorities genuinely believe that a responsible government, meaning a government dependent up on a Hindu majority, will sacrifice their interests. These anxieties still exist. I wish that they did not. But as long as they do exist, it is impossible for the government to accept a demand for immediate and full responsibility at the Centre on a particular date". (Sir Samuel Hoare, House of Commons, Oct 26, 1939)

This was the familiar manoeuvre. On the one hand the promise of Dominion Status was held out in ambiguous words without any fixed date. On the other hand, the plea of the "divisions" of Indian people was brought into play to defeat any possibility of its realisation. The promise of Dominion Status was used as a diplomatic power. This was done to meet a critical situation and counter the demand for independence.

Thus the basic aim of maintenance of imperialist domination continued as in the preceding period.

The Constitution embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, consisted of two main sections: The Federal Section and the Provincial Section.

The Federal Section did not come into operation till 1946. The National Congress, which took office in the majority of Provinces, opposed the Federal Section.

The political unification of India was essential for political, social and economic advance in India. This was not possible because of the senseless divisions of India into hundreds of petty Indian States. There was a complete division of unity of India into two entirely different administrative systems. The British India and the Indian State. The existence of Indian states was maintained artificially. They were saved from collapse solely by strong arm of the British power. This was not any needs of Indian people. It was to support British rule. As such, the Federal proposals were only to increase the power of these reactionary tiny rulers. The idea was to bring them into the heart of the Central Government of India in order to strengthen the imperialist hold in India. The ultimate aim was to counter national movement in order to save the weakening imperialist hold.

A Federation meant the voluntary union of independent sovereign units. In the proposed Federation, the sovereignty did not lie in the Federation. It was explicitly laid down by the Act that sovereignty should lie in the British ruling power outside the Federation. i.e. with the British Crown. The British Governor General was appointed from London. He was responsible solely to the British Government.

The creation of the Provinces of British India composing three-fourth of the Federation was a compulsory act imposed from outside. It was not a voluntary Act.

There was no system of Federal Law. No law-making body or administration was established for the Federation as a whole. There was no fundamental Declaration of Rights of the citizens of the Federation. The subjects of the Princes remained without their rights being unaffected by the Federation. But the Princess were free to take part in the Federal Chambers to make laws for semi-enfranchised citizens of British India.



In effect, it allowed all the evils of the existing political division. It sought to introduce a new reactionary force to check the advance of the national movement.

The Federal Legislature was to consist of two Chambers- an Upper Chamber or Council of State and a Lower Chamber or Federal Assembly. The Princes had over-representation in both the Houses. It was out of all proportion to the size of their States. In the Council of States, out of 260 seats, 104 (two-fifth) seats were allowed to the Princes. In the Federal Assembly, out of 375 seats, 125 (one-third) were allotted to the Princes. The proportion of population of the Indian States to the whole of India was 24%.

This disproportion was still more obvious if a financial basis was taken. It was estimated that 90% of the Federal revenues would be drawn from British India and only 10% from the Indian States.

A Council of Ministers chosen by and responsible to the Governor General was to be set up. However their competence was strictly limited.

The Defence, External Affairs, Ecclesiastical Affairs and Excluded Areas were to be under the sole control of the Governor General. Special authorities were to be separately appointed to deal with several other subject - a financial Advisor for safeguarding financial stability and credit, Advocate General for legal matters Federal bank to control Banking and Railway to control the various rail lines. The Civil Service and the Police were under the sole appointment of the Secretary of State.

A host of other special powers prevented infringement of the basis laws of British the power. It also prevented any action detrimental to British economic interests, or the rights of minorities or rights of the States. The Governor General had unlimited powers. In short, nothing remained within the competence of the Ministers.

There was nothing in the Act requiring the Ministers to be responsible to the legislature. Their salaries were not be voted by the legislature. They were not required to resign if a majority voted 'No Confidence' in them. Only the Instrument of Instructions and the Governor General recommended the selection of Ministers likely to command a stable majority in the legislature. But they also recommended the inclusion of the Representatives of the States and minorities.

The Provincial sections of the Constitution were subordinate to the autocratic machinery at the Centre. The Provincial Governor had corresponding overriding powers; powers to veto legislation or pass independent legislation, effective control of police, law and order and finance.

Nevertheless the machinery was more elastic in the Provinces than in the Centre. It was also susceptible to a popular movement.

There was no element of Princes in the Provinces. The legislatures were entirely and directly elected. There were no Reserved Departments in the same way as at the Centre, although there were special provisions with regard to the Police. The Governor could assume sole control by any directive he thought fit.

Within narrow limits, therefore, there was a scope and possibility for popular Minister to perform restricted but useful role in the Provinces.

The Constitution, as a whole stood repealed as denial of democracy. It was a mechanism for strengthening the imperialist hold on India.

Gandhiji, in an article in the Harijan in August 1938, exposed the extreme limitations of the powers of the Congress Ministries. "Democratic Britain has set up an ingenious system in India. When you look at it in its nakedness is nothing but highly organised military control. It is not less so under the present Government of India Act. The Ministries are mere puppets so far as the real control is concerned. The Collector and the Police may at a mere command from Governors, unseat the Ministers, arrest them and put them in a lockup. Hence it is that I have suggested that the Congress has entered upon office, not to work the Act in the manner expected by the framers, but in manner so as to hasten the day of substituting it by a genuine Act of India's own making."

The Cripps Mission in March and April, 1942, represented no basic change of policy. The plan was rejected by all sections of the Indian opinion. Gandhiji dismissed the Cripps' offer as post-dated cheque on a crushing bank.

It is thus clear that the various "constitutions" of British imperialism did not even attempt solutions of the Indian problems.