

Spardha Mithra Coaching Centre

Indian National Movement

1. INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

I.I Emergency of a National Consciousness

The material basis for the rise of Indian nationalism was provided by the political unification of the country. This was achieved in stage by 1858, when India came under the central authority of the Crown. A uniform system of administration all over the British-ruled territories brought the Indians under the jurisdiction of the British law and institutions, thus putting them in a common mould. The introduction of modern infrastructure like railways, telegraph, the postal system, development of roads, and motor transport by the British to serve their own economic and strategic interests had the same unifying effect. Economic integration was brought about by the railways which began in 1853. Within two decades all the major towns of India were connected. It reduced the isolation and self-sufficiency of villages, encouraged the growth of internal trade, and helped in making different parts of the country inter-dependent. It led to the creation of a national market which facilitated exploitation of India as a whole, both as the source of raw materials and market for its goods. Even its labour force had a wide inter-regional base.

The socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century represented the evolving national consciousness. They led to an intellectual and cultural renaissance which made a new vision of the future possible. The movements defended indigenous culture against western colonial intellectual domination. The reformation of Hinduism and a rational interpretation of its dogmas led to a remarkable strengthening of its hold over the masses. The spiritual unity of India propounded by the reformers acted as a great binding force on the minds of the people. Modern literature in vernaculars (particularly prose) arose everywhere in close association with the reform movements. It was soon lent a patriotic flavour by the emerging Indian intelligentsia. In Bengal, the greatest single example is that of Bankim Chandra's historical novels, topped by Anandnath (1882) with its Vande Mataram hymn.

The Emergency of the modern Indian intelligentsia provided the necessary thrust towards organising radical nationalist activities. The response of the Indian intellectuals of the first half of the 19th century of British rule was positive and was even described as 'providential'. They hoped that Britain, which was the most advanced nation of the time, would help modernise India by introducing modern science and technology and a capitalistic economy. The awareness of the nature of British imperialism gradually began to develop after 1960. What really distinguished the Indian intellectuals of the second half of the 19th century is their economic critique of foreign rule which enabled economic domination. This critique was one of their most important contributions to the development of Indian National Movement.

The series of devastating famines from 1866 to 1901 jerked the Indian intelligentsia awake from their day dreams of progress and prosperity under British rule. It brought home to them the stark poverty and misery of the people and the extent of India's economic underdevelopment. Three names stand out among the Indians who carried out the economic

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analysis of British rule during 1875-1905. Dababhai Naoroji made poverty his special subject and attributed it to the deliberate British policies, particularly to the **drain of wealth** through an artificially created export surplus. The entire economic record of colonial rule since 1757, were destruction of handicrafts, hindrances to modern Indian industry, and excessive land revenue burdens. Justice Mahadev Ranade emphasized the need for modern industrial development. Eventually, together with others like G V Joshi, Subramaniya Iyer, G K Gokhale and P C Ray, they were able to trace the process of colonization of the Indian economy and conclude that colonialism was the main obstacle to India's economic development.

In the political field, they realized that the British Indian administration was all-white, despotic, and totally geared to the task of exploitation. Occasionally, they talked of trusteeship and training Indians for self-government to draw a veil over the realities of the British Raj. In 1861, a few Indians were nominated to the Provincial and Supreme Councils but simultaneously their powers were reduced. Even the local self-government introduced by Ripon was essentially a measure of financial decentralization. In the 1880s, all but 16 of the 900-odd posts in the Indian Civil Services were exclusively manned by Europeans, In the army, no Indian was permitted to rise above the rank of a Brigadier. Thus, the employment avenues for educated Indians were limited to the lower rungs of the administration.

Yet the British need for collaborators was paramount and the post-mutiny years were spent in renewing and consolidating their links with Princes, Zamindars (landlords) and a variety of rural and urban notables and the Indian native rulers (662 in number), who became their most dependable allies.

This was also the time when the British began to fan and exploit the diverse forces of communalism, casteism and regionalism to maintain their supremacy. They also abandoned all attempts at social reform and allied themselves with the backward and obscurantist cultural, religious, and social forces.

2. PRE-CONGRESS NATIONALIST ORGANISATIONS

The intelligentsia as a whole recognized the true nature of British rule as an exploitative, alien rule and realized the desperate need for pro-Indian and developmental policies. Though Indian nationalism as an organized movement developed only during the last decades of the 19th century, its first sprouting could be seen much earlier. Some secular political organizations came up in the presidency capitals in 1850s in the hope of influencing the British Parliament during the renewal of the 185 charter. Once formed, they dominated politics for more than two decades.

The **British Indian Association** (1851) of Calcutta was an amalgamation of the **Landholders Society** (1838) and the **British Indian Society** (1843), the earliest organizations in Bengal. It owned the newspaper Hindu Patriot which adopted a strongly critical political tone. Radhakanta Deb became its first President and Devendranath Tagore the Secretary. It's sent its first petition to the British Parliament in 185, pleading for the separation of the legislature

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from the executive, inclusion of Indians in the legislative councils, increased employment of Indians in the higher services, simultaneous civil service examinations in England and India, extension of permanent settlement to other parts of India, extension of salt duty, excise duty, and stamp duties, and increased grants for education. However, the **Character Act of 1853** belied all its expectations. It therefore continued the agitation, though its proceedings were moderate and achievements few.

Along similar lines, the **Bombay Association** (1852) and the **Madras native Association** (1852) were also set up. All these associations were the handiwork of the locally influential persons and were essentially provincial or locally influential persons and were essentially provincial or local in character.

The period after 1860 witnessed a growing disenchantment of the educated Indians with the British Indian administration. They expressed itself in an increased political activity. In 1866, at the initiative of Dadabhai Naoroji, the East Indian Association was founded in London, to present the correct information on Indian to the British Public and the parliament. It voiced various Indian grievances and suggested remedial measures. It opened branches in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1869. However, by 1881, its popularity was on the decline.

The **National Indian Association** was founded in 1867 by Mary Carpenter. The **Indian Society** was established in 1873 by Anand Mohan Bose in London.

Justice Ranade and others organized the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in the 1870s. It brought out a quarterly journal to educate Indians on economic questions. The young nationalists of Bengal, S N Bannerji and Anand Mohan Bose, founded the **Indian Association** in 1876. In Madras, young men like M Viraraghavachariar, G Subramaniya Iyer, P Anand Chandru, and others formed the **Madras Mahajana Sabha** in 1884. In Bombay, militant intellectuals like K T Telang and Pheorozshah Mehta broke away from elder leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Petit on political grounds and formed the **Bombay Presidency Association** in 1885.

The Indian Association was by far the most important pre-congress nationalist organization. Its objective was to create a strong body of public opinion. To this end, it sent a petition to the House of Commons demanding India's direct representation in the British Parliament; and to integrate the Indian people on a common political programme, and to widen the base of the organization. It fixed a low membership fee for the poor people. The Bengalee, a daily newspaper founded by S N Bannerji, became its chief organ.

The very first issue it took up was the raising of the age limit for ICS examination, so as to improve the prospects of the Indian candidates. In 1878, the Government had reduced the maximum age limit for the civil service from 21 to 19. To mobilize public opinion against this, S N Bannerji toured different provinces in 1877-78. The Association also carried Lord Lytton like the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act. The Vernacular Press was a major

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instrument in hands of the intelligentsia for spreading nationalist ideas. The **Vernacular Press Act** (1878) provided for the confiscation of printing press, paper and other assets of a newspaper, if the Government believed that it was publishing seditious material and had faulted an official warning.

The **Arms Act** (1878) aimed at disarming the Indian people, made it mandatory for all Indians possessing arms to have licenses.

During 1883-84, it organized popular demonstrations of the peasants to get the Rent Bill changed in favour of the tenants. It also better working conditions for workers on the English-owned plantations. By 1884, it had 44 branches spread mostly in the towns and villages of Bengal and in many towns outside Bengal.

The Indian Association organized an all India campaign in favour of the **Ibert Bill** (1883) of Lord Ripon.

The bill sought to empower the Indian district magistrates and sessions judges to try Europeans in criminal cases. Under the existing laws, the Indian members of the ICS were not authorized to try Europeans in their courts. In the agitation undertaken by Europeans also organized a **Defense Association** against the bill with branches all over the country. The Government yielded to their pressure and the Bill was modified to include that if an European was brought before a District Magistrate or Sessions, Judge, he could claim to be tried by a jury half of whom were to be Europeans (when brought before an Indian judge).

The Indians felt amazed by the racial arrogance of the Europeans. However, this episode helped the cause of Indian nationalism, by impressing upon the Indians the necessity for a powerful political organization with an all-India character to champion their cause. The Indian Association summoned an **All India National Conference** in December 1883. This conference was attended by more than a hundred delegates from all over India. Its second sessions was held at Calcutta in December 1885. About the same time, the first session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay. As the two **with the Congress in December, 1886.**

A sign of new political awareness during these years was the birth of nearly all the major nationalist newspapers which were to dominate the Indian scene till 1918 viz. the Hindu, Tribune, Bengalee, Maharatta, The Kesari and The Amrita Bazar Partrika became an English language newspaper only in 1878. The press enabled the nationalist workers in different parts of the country to exchange news and information about each other's activities.

3. THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC) (-)

3.1 Formation of INC

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By 1885, the need for the formation of an all-India level political organization had become an objective necessity. The aim was to lay down certain basic tasks and objectives before the nationalists and to struggle for them –incessantly and together. The Indians had to be welded together for their own political and economic advancement.

But eventually, the launched at the initiative of Allan Octavian Hume succeeded on a permanent basis when, **in December 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC) was established.** A O Hume, an ex-ICS officer, dominated the INC till 1892 as its General Secretary.

According to the **Safety valve Theory**, the INC was created by British Viceroy (Differing) acting through a British ex-civilian (Hume), to act as a ‘safety valve’ against popular discontent. It argues that Hume and other English officials were afraid that educated Indians might provide leadership to the masses and organize a rebellion against the Government. This theory has, however, now been discredited. A study of Dufferin’s private papers, reveal that no one in the official circles took Hume predictions about an imminent rebellion very seriously. In fact, Viceroy Duffer in advised the Governor of Bombay to keep away from the proposed political convention of delegates.

As has been said, something like a national organization had been in the air for quite some time. Hume’s initiative succeeded because he was more acceptable to Indians as he was free from regional loyalties. Also, the early nationalists had an exaggerated idea of Hume’s influence with the Government, so they readily accepted his initiative. They did not want to arouse official hostility towards their efforts at so early a stage of their political activity.

Safety-valve Theory A fiction to portray Hume as a British patriot who wanted to save the British Empire from an impending crisis was created by a friendly biographer William Wedderburn, another ex-civil servant. The biography of Hume was published in 1913.

Bipin Chandra’s: “If Hume and other English liberals hoped to use Congress as a safety-valve, the Congress leaders hoped to use Hume as a lighting conductor.”

Gokhale: “If the founder of the Congress had not been great Englishman, the authorities would have at once found some way or the other to suppress the movement’

The INC met the first time on December 28, 1885 in the hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay. W C bannerji. An eminent Bengali lawyer, was elected its first president. It was attended by 72 delegates. The objective of the INC were declared to be the development of close relations between national workers, the dissolution of all race, creed and provincial prejudice and consolidation of national unity among them. Recording of the conclusions on

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vital Indian problems reached by educated Indians after earnest discussion and outlining the programme of work for the next year.

The second session of the INC met at Calcutta in December 1886 under the president ship of Dadabhai Naoroji. Here the National Conference merged itself with the INC. Its delegates now numbered 436 and were elected by different local organizations and groups. They consisted by mostly of lawyers, journalists, traders, industrialists, teachers and landlords. From then on, the Congress decided to meet every year in December in a different part of the country. The number of delegates attending the sessions gradually increased to 2,000 in 1889.

3.2 Prominent Leaders of INC

The first President of the Congress was W C bannerji. Some of the great presidents of the INC during its early years were Dababhai naoroji, badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Meehta, P Ananda Charlu, Surendranath Banerjee, Ramesh Chandra Dutta, Anand Mohan Bose, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Other prominent leaders of the movement in this period were Mahadev Govind ranade, madan Mohan Malaviya, G Subramaniya Iyer, C Vijayaraghavachariar, brothers Sisir Kumar and Motilal Ghosh, and Dinshaw E Wacha.

3.3 Congress-Early Demands

During the early years of its existence, the Congress passed resolutions on broadly three types of grievances-political administrative and economic. The principal political demand was for reform of legislative councils-to give them greater powers (of budget discussion and interpellation, for instance) and to make them representative. There was also a demand for the start of a self-government.

Among administrative reforms, the principle demand was for Indianisation of services through simultaneous ICS examinations in England and India. It was hoped that this would make the administration more responsive to Indian needs. Other demands were the separation of the Judiciary, extension of trial by the jury, repeal of the Arms Act, higher jobs in the army for the Indians, and the raising of an Indian volunteers force.

The economic issues that were raised were based on the **Drain of Wealth theory** propounded by Naoroji. The book was *The Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. The demands were for inquiry into India's growing poverty and famines, reduction in military expenditure and charges more funds for technical education to promote Indian industries, the end of unfair tariffs and excise duties, and extension of Permanent Settlement to other areas. He was the one to assert for the first in 1867-68 that the per capital income in India was Rs.20.

The early nationalists, called moderates, believed that their demands were so reasonable and just that the British Government could be persuaded but to them. They did not want to severe

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the British connection but to impart a national character to the British Committee of the INC was founded. In 1890, this Committee started a journal called India.

4. EARLY NATIONALIST

4.1 Contribution of Early Nationalists

They were the architects of the first all-India political national organization. They infused national consciousness, disseminated democratic conceptions, and popularized the idea of representative institution among the Indian people. They exhorted them to feel as Indians, irrespective of all provincial or communal distinctions. They passionately supported the spread of the rich democratic and scientific culture of modern Europe. They campaigned against the medieval obscurantism and authoritarian social structure inherited from the pre-British period. They established the political truth the India must be ruled in the interests of the Indians. Most of all, they made people recognize the economic content and character of the British imperialism and insisted that India's economic advance was possible through its own industrialization.

In an effort to reach all regions, they decided to rotate the Congress Sessions among different parts of the country. The president was to belong to a region other than where the session was being held. To reach out to the followers of all the religions and to remove the fears of the minorities, a rule was made in the 1888 session that no resolution was to be passed to which majority of the Hindu or Muslim delegates objected. In 1889, a minority clause was included in the resolution regarding the reform of legislative councils. According to the clause, wherever the Parsis, Christians, Muslims or Hindus were in a minority, they were to get a representation in the assembly in proportion to their population. The early nationalists were also determined to build a secular nation.

Another objective of the early nationalists was to create a **common political platform** or programme where political workers from different parts of the country could come together and conduct their political activities, educating and mobilizing the people on an all-India basis. They would thus take up those grievances and fight for those rights which the Indians had in common in relation to the rulers, e.g. civil liberties. **The Congress was not to take up the question of social reforms.**

The proceedings of the Congress sessions were conducted democratically, with the issues being decided through debates and discussions and occasionally through voting.

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4.2 Attitude of the Government

Victory Dufferin had looked with apprehension on the founding of the Indian National Congress. He noted that 'the functions of such an assembly must, of necessity, consist in criticizing the acts or policies of the Government and in formulating demands which it would be impossible to grant;'. He tried to divert the movement by suggesting to Hume that the Congress should devote itself to social rather than political affairs. Still, the British authorities did not adopt an openly hostile attitude. They hoped that the Congress would keep itself busy with academic discussions confined to a handful of the politically conscious Indians. They were also willing to accommodate the more brilliant among the nationalist leaders with seats in the legislative councils and well paid jobs in the judicial and other services.

However, it soon became apparent that the Congress and other nationalist association would not confine themselves to such a limited role. The vernacular newspapers reached out to people and the Congress began to publish popular pamphlets in Indian languages. The nationalists' message began to be preached through public meeting. The British could not tolerate this spread of political awareness among the common people, which they considered sedition. The nationalist economic critique exposed the real exploitative face of imperialism. Dufferin said that "in this way there would be generated a sincere conviction that we are all of us the enemies of all mankind in general and of India in particular."

British officials now began to openly and publicly criticize and condemn the Congress and other nationalist spokesmen. The nationalists were branded as 'disloyal babus', seditious as a 'factory of sedition' and its members as 'disappointed candidates for office and discontented lawyers who represent no one but themselves'. In 1887, Dufferin ridiculed it as representing only 'a **microscopic minority of the people**'.

Lord Curzon had decided from the beginning to treat the Congress as an 'Unclean thing...never taking any notice of it', as "in so far as it is innocent, it is superfluous and in so far as it is hostile to the Government or seditious, it is a natural danger', His administration was consistently hostile towards educated Indian aspirations as represented by the Congress. Curzon declared in 1900 that, 'the Congress is tottering to his fall and one of my great ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise'.

The British authorities pushed further the policy of Divide and Rule to counter the growing nationalist movement. George Hamilton (Secretary of State) wrote to Elgin, the viceroy in 1897; 'The solidarity, which is growing, of native opinion and races and regions in antagonism to our rule frightens me as regards the future'. They encouraged the Aligarh Muslim elite to feel that had a lot to lose from the elected councils which Hindus would be sure to dominate and from the competitive recruitment, where again the Hindus lead in

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English education, would give them an advantage. As a result, the percentage of Muslim delegates in the congress fell. The Government exploited the Hindi-Urdu controversy and the cow protection movement when was started by the Landowner, the Viceroy, in 1893 that ‘the cow movement makes all combinations of the Hindus and Mohammedans impossible and so cuts at the root of the Congress agitation for the formation of a united Indian people.’

4.3 Drawbacks of Early nationalists

One major criticism leveled against the early nationalists is that very few of the reforms for which they agitated were introduced by the British. Secondly, the moderates did not assign an important role to masses or to the mass struggle in their work. The movement was confined to the high stratum of the educated elite which was, in the given conditions, inevitable. The masses were apathetic, ignorant, and socially, culturally and politically backward. Consequently, the task of including a political consciousness among the masses and mobilizing them was seen as an extremely slow one. The absence of a mass base, in turn, led to the adoption of a politically moderate stance by the congress. Third, the political activities was concentrated in the Presidencies only. The fourth criticism of the early nationalists is of their methods and style of functioning which can be best described as of constitutional agitation and slow, orderly political progress. Barring rebellion, aiding or abetting a foreign invasion and resorting to crime, all the other forms of protest were considered as constitutional agitation by the moderates. They sought to obtain concessions from the constitutional authorities by bringing to bear on them the pressure of public opinion. Fifth, even this politics of what extremists sarcastically described as ‘mendicancy’ were tried out in a rather intermittent manner. Politics remained, for most of the leadership, a part-time affair. The Congress, for them, was not a political party but an annual three-day show. The local associations were mere coteries usually of lawyers, which met occasionally to elect themselves as delegates to the Congress for the year.

The Congress fell into doldrums in the 1890s, No effective moderate leadership emerged till the rise of a new leader, Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He rejected the title of kinghood British wanted to confer on him and refused a position in the council of secretary of State for India. Failure in India led to a shift in emphasis, to campaigning in England through the British Committee of the Congress. The period also saw a decline in the activities of local or regional bodies like the Indian Association, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Madras mahajan Sabha in the 1890s.

5. RISE OF MILITANT NATIONALISM

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British unpopularity increased due to a number of reasons. A **disastrous famine** swept over the country at the close of the century. India witnessed **bubonic plague**, which took a heavy toll of life. Political discontent among the people was further accentuated by the high handed measures of **Lord Curzon** during his viceroyalty. They included curtailment of the power of the Calcutta Corporation in 1899 (it reduced the number of elected India members), the **Universities Act** of 1904 (it brought down the number of elected Senate members; transferred the power of ultimate decision in the matters of college affiliation and school recognition to the government officials; and tried to fix minimum college fees), the **Official Secrets Act** of 1904, through which he tightened security. His police reforms brought about a significant improvement in the number, training, and salary of the police force at a considerable expenses and, finally, the **partition pf Bengal** (1905). These measures reflected the strengthening of British defences against the rising nationalist tide.

Unemployment among the educated youth considerably increased in the beginning of 20th century, especially in Bengal. They consequently tended to gravitate towards the emerging radical nationalist politics.

There were other factors which strengthened the growth of militant nationalism of India. The rise of modern Japan after 1868, and the defeat of Russia in 1905, the defeat of the Italian army at the hands of the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896, the British reverses in the Boer war, the Chinese boycott of American goods in protest against the immigration laws, and the popular revolt against the Russian Tsar. They helped foster a new self-confidence and the Indians began to shed their inferiority complex.

The potential base for political activity was expanding fast. The circulation of vernacular newspaper went up from 2,99,000 in 1885 to 8,17,000 in 1905. Some of the popular journals were those which were critical of the Congress like *Bangabasi* of Calcutta, *Kesari* and the *Kal* of Poona. The soil was becoming ripe for the rise of extremism with its principle bases in Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra.

In Bengal, the disillusionment with the Congress was voiced by Ashwini Kumar Dutt who, with his social work in the district Barisal, had built up a sizeable following for himself. Barisal was to become a strong base of the Swadeshi movement in 1905. Aurobindo Ghose in articles entitled *New Lamps for Old* published a systematic critique of Moderate politics. Bipin Chandra Pal clearly stated, 'our eyes have been turned to the starving, the naked, the patient, and long suffering 300 million of our people and in it we see a new potency. Rabindranath Tagore, already Bengal's and races and regions in antagonism to our rule frightens me as regards the future'. They encouraged the Aligarh Muslim elite to feel that they had a lot to lose from the elected councils which Hindus would be sure to dominate and from the competitive recruitment, where again the Hindus lead in English education, would give them an advantage. As a result, the percentage of Muslim delegates in the Congress fell. The Government exploited the Hindi—Urdu controversy and the cow protection movement when

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In Punjab. Lala Lajpat Rai advocated technical education and industrial self-help. He argued that the Congress should base itself on the Hindus alone, as unity with the Muslims was an illusion. Harkishan Lal and Arya Samajists (College faction) were active in Swadeshi enterprises from the 1890s.

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The man who enunciated the details of extremism was Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra. He was a pioneer in many ways. He used religious orthodoxy as method of mass contact by organising the Ganpati festival from 1894. He developed a patriotic cum historical cult as a central symbol of nationalism (the Shivaji festival which he organized from 1896 onwards). He experimented with a kind of no-rent campaign in 1896-97. Regarding the Congress politics of the time, he argued that success cannot be achieved by croaking once a year like a frog. Tilak asserted that the political goal of India should be self-government or Swaraj, rather than reforms in the administration. In a speech in 1902, he declared, 'Though downtrodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so. It is you who manage the rail road and the telegraph. it is you who make settlements and collect revenue.' He seemed to be moving towards the techniques of mass passive resistance and civil disobedience. His two newspapers, Kesari in Marathi and Mahratta in English, became the mouthpiece of the new group of nationalists.

Thus, the emerging militant leadership emphasised self-reliance and constructive work through Swadeshi industries, national schools and attempts at village improvement and organisation. It utilised the vernacular languages, the concept of self-help, and traditional popular customs and institutions like village fair, etc. to bridge the gap between the educated elite and the masses.

6. SWADESHI MOVEMENT The moderates carried on with an intensive use of conventional methods down to the last day to prevent the partition of Bengal. However, their efforts completely failed to win favour with the British and the partition was announced on July 19, 1905. The failure of such techniques helped the militant nationalists to acquire influence over the movement against the partition. They adopted radical aims for the movement, broadened its scope, and introduced militant techniques.

These new techniques were those of Swadeshi and Boycott. Swadeshi literally means 'of one's own country'. It implied that people should use goods produced within India itself as this would promote Indian enterprise and industry and generate patriotism, thus strengthening the nation. The promotion of Swadeshi was accompanied by the advocacy of 'Boycott'. The two were complementary to each other. It was realised that by organising the boycott of foreign goods, which were mainly British, Britain's economic interests would be hurt and the British Government would be forced to concede to the Indian demands.

The new techniques were accepted by established leaders like S N Banerji and others after considerable hesitation at the Town Hall meeting in Calcutta on August 7, 1905. From this meeting, the delegates dispersed to spread the movement to rest of the province.

The Congress took up the Swadeshi call at its Banaras session in 1905, presided over by G K Gokhale.

It supported the Swadeshi and the Boycott movements for Bengal.

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These twin techniques led to heightening of political activities all over India. British cloth, sugar, and other goods were boycotted. Shops selling foreign goods were picketed. In many places, public burning of foreign cloth took place, which revealed the intensity of popular feelings over the partition issue. School and college students played an important part in this movement. The traditionally home-centred women of the urban middle class too joined in processions and picketing.

The actual day of partition, October 16, 1905 was declared a day of mourning throughout Bengal and the hearths or chullahs in the houses were kept unlit. People tied rakhis on each other's wrists as a symbol of brotherhood. In Calcutta, most of the offices were kept closed and a strike was observed in some jute mills and railway workshops. The streets were full of the cries of Vande Mataram which overnight became the national song of Bengal and later, the theme song of the National Movement. Anand Mohan Bose and Surendramath Bannerji addressed huge mass meetings, where people pledged to maintain the unity of Bengal.

The character of the Movement in terms of its goals and social base expanded and the message of Swadeshi and the Boycott soon spread to the rest of the country. Lokmanya Tilak took the movement to different parts of India, especially to Poona and Bombay. Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai spread the Swadeshi message in Punjab and other parts of Northern India. Syed Haidar Raza led the movement in Delhi; Rawalpindi, Katzgra, Jammu and Multan witnessed active participation in the Swadeshi movement. Chidambaram Pillai took the movement to the Madras Presidency, while Bipin Chandra Pal electrified it with his extensive lecture tour.

However, Bihar, Orissa, and Assam kept away from a radicalism that was primarily associated with Bengal. Here, the educated Bengalis had become increasingly unpopular due to their dominant position in the services and professions. As a result, counter elite movements developed here with the spread of education, ultimately resulting in demands for a separate province of Orissa.

Extremism, or militant nationalism also failed to make much of an impact in the United Provinces, where Congress political activity had died down after an initial spurt in the late 1880s. Here, leaders still felt that considerable local gains could be made through cooperation with the provincial government which, under Mac Donnell, had begun to tilt a little towards the Hindus. Tilak's U P tour in January 1907 did cause a stir among the students, but most of the influential political leaders kept away. Only in Banaras, with its big Marathi and Bengali communities, did extremism become a formidable force.

Another region where extremism failed to make its presence felt was in the Gujarati speaking districts of the Bombay Presidency.

In Bengal, the British crackdown came soon enough, particularly on the students. The schools and colleges whose students took an active part in the Swadeshi agitation were threatened with withdrawal of grants, scholarships and affiliations. Disciplinary actions were taken against the

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students with many of them being fined, expelled, arrested, or beaten up by the police. This led to a movement for boycott of official educational institutions and the organisation of national schools. Further tension was generated by other measures of repression. The shouting of Vande Maram in public streets in East Bengal was banned, and so also the public meetings in certain areas. Press was controlled through newspaper Acts which enabled their seizure, and the Swadeshi workers were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. The police assault was frequent, with the most infamous example being that of the dispersal of the Provincial Conference at Barisal by a police lathi charge in April 1906.

The Congress during its Calcutta session in 1906 took a major step forward when Dadabhai Naoroji, in his presidential address, declared that the goal of the Indian National Congress was **self-government** like in the colonies of Canada and Australia.

Soon internal differences cropped up among the leaders in Bengal. Initially, aimed at forcing the government to call off the Bengal partition, Swadeshi had gradually become an all-embracing phenomenon and its goals had widened to attain freedom from the foreign yoke.

6.1 Moderate—Extremist Divide

These new techniques of struggle were, however, viewed differently by the moderates and extremists. The moderates believed that the methods like boycott should be used only in special circumstances and for specific purposes. They were against making them their normal methods of agitation. They actually managed to call off the educational boycott by November 16, 1905 and were keen to get the movement back to its traditional mode of mendicancy. They were totally opposed to an all-out struggle against the British rule.

The extremists were all for extending the boycott to other areas and for refusing cooperation to the government and making the task of administration impossible. They advocated a relentless boycott of the government educational institutions, justice, and executive administration, backed up by the positive development of Swadeshi industries, national schools, and arbitration courts. They called for disobeying of unjust laws, the social boycott of loyalists, and recourse to armed struggle if British repressions went 'beyond the limits of endurance' (Sri Aurobindo). Prof. Sumit Sarkar points out, 'Here we have practically the entire future programme of Gandhism minus the dogma of non-violence.' This method of agitation against the foreign rule came to be known as **passive resistance**. The annulment of partition was considered a stepping stone in the struggle for Swaraj. The matters came to a head at the 1907 Surat session of the Congress when the **party split**, with serious consequences for the Swadeshi movement.

The Government passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act in December 1908, which permitted a ban on the principal Samitis in Bengal and deportation. A majority of the leaders of the movement were soon arrested or deported. Many newspapers were banned. By mid-1908, the popular movement had all but spent itself. But while the upsurge was gone, the aroused nationalist sentiments did not disappear. The people waited for the next phase.

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6.2 Critical Appraisal

Among the several forms of struggle thrown up by the movement, it was the boycott of foreign goods which met with the greatest success. The Calcutta Collector of Customs, in September 1906, noted a 22% fall in the quantity of imported cotton goods, 44% fall in cotton yarri, 11% in salt, 55% in cigarettes, and 68% in shoes in the previous month as compared to August 1905.

There was a significant revival of handlooms, silk-weaving and other traditional artisan crafts. A number of attempts were made to promote modern industries. An association was set up in March 1904 by Jogendra Chandra Ghosh to raise funds for sending students abroad (usually to Japan) to get technical training. The Banga Lakshmi Cotton Mills was launched in August 1906. There were fairly successful ventures in porcelain (the Calcutta pottery works of 1906) chrome tanning, matches, and cigarettes including Acharya P C Ray's Bengal Chemicals factory, while many others were unable to survive for long. Lack of capital was the crucial limiting factor. It was much easier for an enterprise to make money by importing goods than by investing it in industrial enterprises. Swadeshi, thus, could never seriously threaten the British stranglehold over the crucial sectors of Bengal's economy.

Taking a cue from Tagore's Shantiniketan, the Bengal National College was set up in the vernacular medium with Aurobindo as its Principal. It was initially planned as a parallel University under the National Council of Education, set up in March 1906. It however failed to get any colleges affiliated to it. A Bengal Technical Institute was set up and, perhaps more significantly, about a dozen national schools were opened in West Bengal, Bihar, and the East Bengal districts. The Calcutta-based National Council gave out meager sums to such district or village schools and they shared in the general decline of mass-oriented movements. National education, with its negligible job prospects, however, failed to attract the bulk of the student community.

The period also saw for the first time the efforts to **politicise the labour unrest**. The strikes in foreign managed concerns, sparked off by the rising prices or racial insults, received considerable sympathy from the nationalist leadership, which was influenced by international socialist currents such as those in Germany and Russia. The nationalist leadership extended them support through the newspapers, occasional financial help, and aid in setting up trade unions. The examples of such strikes are a protest walkout from the Bum Company in Howrah in September 1905, a tram strike in Calcutta in October 1905, the printers' strike in government presses, followed by the setting up of Printers Union in October 1905, the strike in Eastern Indian Railways followed by that of Railways Men's Union, etc. Jute strikes were also frequent between 1905-08. There were really no political strikes in Bengal and the nationalist interest in labour suddenly slumped after 1908 and was renewed only around 1919-22. However, four names deserve to be mentioned as pioneer labour leaders, viz. the barristers Ashwini Kumar Banerji, Prabhat Kusum Roychoudhary, Apurbakumar Ghosh, and Premtosh Bose, the latter being the proprietor of a press.

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The emergence of Samitis (or Corps of national volunteers) was one of the major achievements of the movement in mass contact. Down to the summer of 1908, these Samitis were engaged in a number of activities like physical and moral training of members, social work during famines, epidemics, or religious festivals, preaching the Swadeshi message through journals, pamphlets, speeches, patriotic songs, plays, use of folk media like Jatras, etc. They also took up the organisation of festivals and melas, of crafts, schools, arbitration courts, and village societies and **implementation of the techniques of passive resistance.**

Apart from Calcutta, the main strength of the movement was in East Bengal. The Barisal Swadesh Bandhav of Ashwini Kumar Dutt was the most well known voluntary organisation with a genuine mass base. It was very popular with the Hindu and Muslim peasants.

However, during 1908-09, in the very first round of state repression, these Samities either disappeared or became terrorist secret societies.

Despite eloquent pleas for communal unity, numerous instances of Hindu-Muslim

fraternisation, and the presence of an extremely active and sincere group of Swadeshi Muslim agitators (Ghazanavi, Rasul, Din Mohamed, Dedar Bux, Moniruzzaman, Ismail Hussain Siraji, Abul Hussain, Abdul Gafur, Liakat Hussain, etc.), the British policy of divide-and-rule achieved considerable success. The British propaganda that the new province of East Bengal would mean more jobs for Muslims did manage to sway the upper and middle class Muslims against the Swadeshi movements. This was the period when **the All-India Muslim League was set up in 1906**, with active guidance and support of the Government. In Bengal, people like Nawab Salimullah of Dacca were propped up by the British as centres of opposition to the Swadeshi movement. Mullahs and Maulvis were pressed into service and, not surprisingly, at the height of the Swadeshi movement, communal riots broke out in East Bengal, particularly in the Districts of Mymen Singh and Comilla. A strong agrarian current underlined the Mymen Singh disturbances. The targets were Hindu Zamindars and Mahajans

The extremist forms of mobilisation which took on aggressive Hindu colours were, under the circumstances, used by the communalists to fan communal tension.

The contribution of the Swadeshi movement was most marked in the cultural sphere. The songs composed at that time by Rabindra Nath Tagore, Rajani Kant Sen, Durjendra I Ray, Mukunda Das, Syed Abu Muhammad, and others later became the moving spirit for nationalists of all hues—terrorists, Gandhian, or Communists—and are still popular. Tagore's Amar Sonar Bangla later inspired the liberation struggle of Bangladesh and was adopted as its National anthem in 1971. The Swadeshi influence could be seen in Bengali folk music, popular among the Hindu and Muslim villages (Paligeeet and Jari Gan) and it evoked collections of Indian fairy tales such as Thakumar Jhuli (Grand mother's tales)

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written by Dakshi-naranjan Mitra Majumdar. which delights Bengali children even to this day.

In art, this was the period when Rahindra Nath Tagore broke the domination of Victorian naturalism over Indian art and sought inspiration from the rich indigenous traditions of the Mughal, Rajput, and Ajanta paintings. Nandlal Bose, who left a major imprint on Indian art, was the first recipient of a scholarship offered by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, founded in 1907. In the field of science, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Pralitla Chandra Roy, and others pioneered original research which was acclaimed the world over.

The militant nationalists did not know how to go beyond a more vigorous agitation and arrange mass movements. Consequently, they too came to a political dead end by the end of 1907. This might perhaps have been the reason why they entered into squabbling with the moderates, criticizing the Congress and capturing the Congress.

7. RISE OF REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM

After the removal of the militant leadership from the political scene, their concept of slow and unostentatious development of Atma shakti (self strengthening) lost its appeal to the excited educated youth of Bengal. It meant working towards a social and economic regeneration of the villages in a bid to reach out to the rural masses. This included social reforms and campaigns against evils such as caste oppression, early marriage, the dowry system, consumption of alcohol, etc. and promotion of national education. Thus, in their mind, organising a popular mass uprising would have been an uphill and prolonged task. The youth thus, inadvertently got attracted to the creed of a more political extremism. Yugantar, echoing this feeling of disaffection wrote, 'The thirty crores of people inhabiting India must raise their sixty crores of hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force'. Thus arose yet another trend in the Swadeshi phase of the struggle for India's independence - **the rise of revolutionary terrorism.**

After 1905, several newspapers, particularly Sand/wa and Yugantar of Bengal and Kai of Maharashtra, and a few nationalist leaders secretly began to advocate revolutionary terrorism. In 1907, an unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of Lieutenant Governor Fuller of Bengal. Hemchandra Kanungo of the Anushil/an Samiti, probably the most remarkable figure among this first generation of revolutionaries, went abroad to get military training. After his return in January 1908, a combined religious school and a bomb factory was set up. Following the Kennedy murders (April 30, 1908) by Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, while the real target, the unpopular white magistrate Kingsford of Muzzafarpur, escaped unscathed, the entire group was rounded up, including Aurobindo Ghosh. Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead while Khudiram Bose was tried and hanged. Meanwhile, terrorism of a more efficient variety was developing in East Bengal, spear-headed by the much more tightly organised Dacca Anushillan by Pulin Das. The era of revolutionary terrorism had begun.

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Apart from a wealth of patriotic songs and other cultural achievements, revolutionary terrorism of Swadeshi Bengal had left behind a substantial legacy. It cast a spell on the minds of the radical, educated youth for at least a generation. The revolutionary terrorists became popular nationalist heroes. about whom folk songs were composed and sung all over the country. Their activities took two forms-4i) the assassination of oppressive officials or traitors from their own ranks and (ii) dacoities to raise funds for purchase of arms. The latter, were popularly called Swadeshi dacoities.

Revolutionary terrorism continued unabated even after the royal 'boon' of December 1911. i.e. the annulling of the partition. The tightly organised Dacca Anushillan. which now had branches throughout Bengal and even beyond it, concentrated on Swadeshi dacoities and assassinations. The Yungantar party. led by Jatindra .Vath Mukherji, was a much looser confederation of groups, which tried to build international contacts, so as to organise a military conspiracy at an opportune time. Rashbihari Bose and Sachin Sanyal knit together a far-flung secret organisation spanning centres in Punjab, Delhi. and UP. They staged a daring bomb attack on Viceroy Hardinge while he was riding an elephant in a state procession on December 23. 1912. In 1904, V D Savarkar organised the Abhinay Bharat. a secret society of revolutiona-ries, which he led from Nasik. Its member Madan I al Dhingra assassinated the India office bureaucrat. Curzon Wyllie in July 1909.

The revolutionary terrorists also established centres abroad. The need for a safe shelter, the possibility of bringing out revolutionary literature, and the search for arms took Indian revolutionaries abroad. In London, Shyamji Krishnavarma started a centre in 1905 for Indian students (India House). along with a journal (Indian Sociologist) and an Indian Home Rule Society. In 1907. his India House was taken over by the V D Savarkar group. Other centres emerged in Paris. Geneva (from where Madam Bhikaji Cama, a Parsi revolutionary who had earlier served as a private secretary to Dadabhai Naoroji.

brought out the Kande illatram), and Berlin, which was the base of Virendranath Chattopadhyay from 1909 onwards.

However, it was in British Columbia and the Pacific coast of the USA that the revolutionary movement acquired something like a mass base for the first time. Here. about 15.000 Indians. mainly Sikhs. though fairly prosperous. were racially discriminated against. The famous Ghadar movement founded by Sohan Singh Bhakra, began in 1913 in San Francisco. One of its early leaders was Lala Har Dayal from St Stephens College, Delhi. It brought out Ghczdar, a weekly in Urdu. Gurmukhi. and later in several other Indian languages. from November I. 1913.

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Besides shattering the British rule by an armed uprising, a vision of international anti-imperialist struggle also emerged. Efforts were also made to develop links with the International Socialist movement.

8. SURAT SPLIT OF 1907

The annual session of the Congress was also one of the forums where the struggle between various trends of the National Movement was fought, culminating in the Surat split of December 1907.

At the Banaras session of the Congress in December 1905, the extremist challenge to the moderates, who dominated the Congress, was still rather weak. The resolution of this session condemned the partition and repressive measures in Bengal, and referred to the Boycott as "perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left (to Bengalis) to draw the attention of the public". However, industrial conferences began to be held from December 1905 onwards, along with the Congress sessions, to promote a kind of non-militant Swadeshi.

By December 1906, Extremism had advanced considerably and forged a certain degree of intra-provincial contacts. This session marked the zenith of extremist influence over the Congress. To give Congress a more substantial form, a resolution was passed recommending the formation of District Associations for sustained and continuous political work. Four major resolutions were passed on Boycott, Swadeshi, national education, and self-government. However, Dadabhai Naoroji, the President defined the last in ambiguous terms, as 'Self-government or Swaraj like that, of the United Kingdom or the colonies'. There was to remain a considerable difference between the political systems of Britain and the colonies or dominions. The extremists' efforts to extend the resolution on boycott to cover other provinces and boycott of honorary offices as well as foreign goods was promptly repudiated by Gokhale and Malaviya.

Both sides came prepared for a decisive trial of strength at the Surat session of Congress in 1907. The extremists were convinced that the final battle for freedom had begun as the people had been aroused and it was time for the big push. They regarded moderates as a spent force. In their view, the moderates had exhausted their historical role and were a big drag on the movement, and felt that they should be pushed out of the leadership of the Congress.

On the other hand, the **moderates were determined to part company with the extremists** because, in their opinion, remaining with the extremists was fraught with danger. They felt that the might of the Government was such that any large scale anti-imperialist movement would be suppressed swiftly, leaving the Congress shattered. Thus, the moderates were determined to split.

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The rigidity of the moderate leadership was in a large measure due to their faith in British benevolence and the belief that the dream of Indians for sharing political and administrative power was soon going to come true.

The British meanwhile adopted a new policy—**the policy of carrot and stick**. The three major components of this policy were--outright repression (applicable chiefly to extremists), concessions to 'rally the moderates', and divide and rule, best typified by the device of separate electorates.

The extremists were suppressed by using the full might of the state. The moderates were offered a bait of fresh reforms in the legislative councils. In England, the Liberals were in power and the famous liberal political thinker, John Morely, was the Secretary of State. The moderates' expectations were high. They therefore agreed to cooperate with the Government and discuss the reforms even when a vigorous popular movement was going on in the country. The result was a **total split in the nationalist ranks at the Surat Session of 1907**.

The Allahabad convention (April 1908) made the split definitive by drawing up a constitution which fixed the Congress methods as 'strictly constitutional' and limited to bringing about a 'steady reform of the existing system of administration'. Most important of all, it restricted the delegates' elections to the 'recognised bodies with over three years standing.' Thus, every effort was made to deliberately exclude the extremists from future sessions.

9. INDIAN COUNCILS ACT OF 1909

The Indian Councils Act of **1909** formally introduced the principle of elections for the **first time**. It allowed somewhat greater powers for discussing budget, putting questions and sponsoring resolutions, (to members of Legislative Councils), barring the Army and foreign policy. An official majority was retained in the Imperial Legislative Council (which could have only 27 elected members out of a total of 60). The provincial Legislative Councils were to have non-official majorities. But it was an illusion because they included some nominated members. In Bengal, the only province formally given an elected majority, four among the elected members were to be returned to take care of the British commercial interests. The Government of India was given the general power of disallowing politically dangerous candidates. In addition, there was to be a **special provision for representation of the professional classes**, the landlords, the Mohammedans, and European and Indian Commerce, etc. As a result, out of the 27 elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council, 8 were reserved for the Muslim separate electorates, 6 for big landlords, and 2 for British capitalists. Electoral rules were

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also made with an invidious intent. e.g. the income qualification for muslim voters being considerably lower than that for the Hindus.

An Indian was to be appointed as a member of the Governor General's Executive Council.

Under the separate electorates. Muslims could vote exclusively for the muslim candidates in constituencies specially reserved for them. This was done to encourage the notion that the political, economic, and cultural interests of the Hindus and Muslims were distinct. This provision encouraged the growth of Muslim communalism in a big way.

The Act proved to be a failure in rallying moderates as well as in keeping politically active Hindus and Muslims apart. It was totally revised within nine years by the Montague and Chelmsford report of 1918.

A closer look at the reforms made men like Madan Mohan Malaviya extremely critical of the excessive concessions to the Muslims. The violations of civil liberties by the Government, the suppression of militant nationalists, and further extension of separate electorates to the local bodies, created unease in an important section of the old moderate leadership and by 1915-16 they were again thinking along militant lines. For the moment, however, Congress remained dull. Attendance at the Congress sessions in pre-First World War years fell off sharply.

10. SEPARATIST TRENDS IN INDIAN NATIONALIST POLITICS: THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The seeds of Muslim communalism were sown in the 1880s when **Syed Ahmed Khan sought to use it as a counterpoise to the national movement**, that had emerged under the Congress. He believed that the muslim share in administrative posts and in various professions could be increased only by professing loyalty to the British. The Muslims had turned to modern education, trade and industry late. So they needed the special protection of the British. The British were also projected as safeguard the Muslim minority's interests. The Hindus in India, because they were a majority, would have dominated Muslims and totally overruled their interests. Syed Ahmed knew that British authorities, at the time, frowned upon any attempts at the politicisation of the Indian people. Thus, instead of creating a counter communal political organisation, he asked the Muslims to shun all politics and remain politically passive.

The British authorities, quick to see the inherent advantage of communalism and the theory of official protection of the minorities, from the very beginning, actively promoted and supported communalism.

However, the attempt to keep the growing muslim intelligentsia politically passive was not wholly successful. When Badruddin Tyabji presided over the Congress session in 1887, the number of Muslim delegates to the Congress increased in the succeeding year. R M

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Sayani. A Bhimji, Mir Musharaff Husain. Hamid Ali Khan and numerous other muslim intellectuals from Bombay, Bengal. and northern India joined the Congress. Abdul Rasul and a large number of other Bengali muslim intellectuals gave support to the Swadeshi agitation against the partition of Bengal.

However, it cannot be denied that there was a certain Hindu tinge in the political work and ideas of the militant nationalists. This proved to be harmful for the National Movement as British and pro-British communal propagandists took advantage of its Hindu colouring to poison the minds of the Muslims. The result was that a large number of educated muslims remained either aloof from the rising National Movement or became hostile to it, thus falling an easy prey to the separatist outlook.

The communalists, as also their official supporters, felt that they had to abandon the policy of political passivity and enter the political arena. At the end of 1906, the All India Muslim League was founded in Dacca by a group of big zamindars, ex-bureaucrats, and upper class muslims like Aga Khan, the Nawab of Dacca and Nawab Mohsin-ul-mulk. It supported the partition of Bengal, raised the slogan of separate muslim interests, and demanded special safeguards for the Muslims in government services. Later, with the help of Lord Minto, it secured acceptance of the demand for separate electorates for the Muslims. A branch of Muslim League was set up in London in 1908 by Amir Ali.

The Muslim League devoted itself to the task of keeping the emerging intelligentsia among the muslims from joining the Congress. Its activities **were against the National Congress and the Hindus and not against the British**. It, thus, played into the hands of the British and became one of the main instruments with which the British hoped to fight the rising National Movement.

The muslim political elite got a rude shock in December 1911 with the annulment of the partition, announced by George V at the Delhi Durbar. The continuing revolutionary terrorism in Bengal worried the authorities. They felt that 'until we get rid of the partition ulcer, we shall have no peace.' Simultaneously, a transfer of the capital to Delhi was decided upon, both as a sop to the muslim sentiments and, more importantly, to insulate the Viceregal authority from provincial pressures which would ultimately lead to 'a larger measure of self-governance in the provinces'.

However, muslim opinion was not mollified but was, in fact, further alienated by Britain's refusal to help Turkey in the Italian and Balkan wars (1911-12). The Turkish ruler, at that time, was acknowledged as the Caliph or religious head of all the Muslims. Moreover, nearly all the muslim holy places were situated within the Turkish empire. The younger muslim intellectuals, the so called Young Party, got dissatisfied with the loyalist and slavish mentality of the upper class leadership of Muslim League. They captured the League in 1912. And began steering it towards greater militancy, some kind of accommodation with the nationalist hindus, and pan-Islamism. Its leaders included Wazir

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Hassan. T AK Sherwani, the radical Ali brothers (Muhammad and Shaukat), and Hasart Mohani in UP, Zafar Ali Khan in Punjab. and Fazlul Huq in Bengal.

In their social composition. they tended to be very much like the radical hindu nationalists, insofar as they were seldom titled Zamindars, occasionally had a small pittance in rents from land, and mostly had to find employment in government service or the professions. In 1912. the brilliant Congress leader M A Jinnah was invited to join the League which adopted setting up of self-government as one of its objectives. In the same year. Aga Khan resigned as the President of the League.

The militantly nationalist Ahrar Movement was founded at this time under the leadership of Maulana Mohammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hasan Imam, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Mazhar-ul-Haq. In their efforts, they got support from the section of orthodox Ulema (scholars), especially those belonging to the Deoband school. Ahothor orthodox scholar to be attracted to the national movement was the young Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was educated at the famous Al Azhar University at Cairo and propagated his rationalist and nationalist ideas in his newspaper Al Hilal, which he brought out first in 1912.

11. FIRST WORLD WAR AND FREEDOM STRUGGLE

11.1 Revolutionary Activities

For Indian revolutionaries, the war years offered a great opportunity. Troops were drained out of India (the number of white solidiers at one point of time was only 15.000). The War brought home the possibility offinancial and military help from Germany and Turkey.

In Bengal. the revolutionaries achieved a major success in August 1919 when a large consignment of 50 Mouser pistols and 46.000 rounds of ammunition was appropriated by them from the Rodda firm in Calcutta. **The number of political dacoities and murders reached its highest-12 and 7 in 1914-15, and no less than 23 and 9. respectively, in 1915 and 1916.** Most of the Bengal revolutionary groups united under Jatin Mukherji, planned the disruption of rail communications, seizure of Fort William in Calcutta (contacts had been made with the 16th Rajput Rifles stationed there). and landing of German arms (for arranging this, Naren Bhattacharji was sent to Java). The plans got mined due to poor coordination and Jatin was caught by the police near Balasore on the Orissa coast with the help of local villagers. He died a hero's death. It however, pointed to the isolation of the Bengal revolutionaries.

The Bengal Plans were part of a far-flung conspiracy or-ganised by Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal in cooperation with the returned Ghadriles in Punjab. The latter had started returning in thousands after the outbreak of the War to fight for India's freedom. The opportunity they were waiting for had arrived. They planned to overcome their major weakness. the lack of arms. by winning over the Indian soliders to their cause.

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Passions were inflamed further by the Kamagata Mani incident of September 29, 1914. A shipload of would be Sikh and Punjabi muslim immigrants from India were turned back from Vancouver by the Canadian immigration authorities. On their return, they clashed with the police at Budge-Budge near Calcutta and 22 were killed. Many of the Punjabis who returned after 1914 were quickly rounded up by the British (by 1916, 2,500 had been interned and 400 jailed, out of a total of about 8,000). The plan for a coordinated revolt on February 21, 1915, based on the mutinies by Ferozpur, Lahore, and Rawalpindi garrisons was foiled at the last minute by treachery. Rashbehari Bose fled to Japan from where he and Abani Mukherji sent arms after 1915. Sachin Sanyal was transported for life after standing trial for trying to subvert garrisons at Banaras and Danapore. At the time the Pan-Islamist Muslim revolutionary leaders like Barkatulla and Obeidullah Sindhi, along with Mahendra Pratap set up a Provisional Government of Free India at Kabul.

Though the plan for an all-India revolt misfired badly, the achievements of the organisers, particularly Ghadriles were many. **They took the revolutionary ideas to the army and the peasants.** There were some scattered mutinies, most notably at Singapore on February 15, 1915 by the Punjabi Muslim 5th light infantry and the 36th Sikh battalion, under Jamadar Chisti Khan, Jamadar Abdul Ghani, and Subedar Daud Khan. Thirty seven were executed after its suppression and forty one transported for life.

The Punjab political dacoities acquired a new social content after January 1915. In most cases, the targets were vill age moneylenders and the debt bonds which were burnt after the cash was looted.

Berlin, Kabul, and North America were the major centres abroad for sending arms and funds to revolutionaries in India during the War years, though such help was of little avail.

11.2 Lucknow Pact of 1916

In the beginning, the nationalist leaders, including Lokmanya Tilak, who had been released in June 1914, decided to support the British war efforts. It was done out of the mistaken belief that a grateful Britain would repay India by making political concessions towards self-government.

The ever-pragmatic Tilak was eager to strike a compromise with his old Congress enemies after his return. Pherozshah Mehta, however, refused to yield even while other moderates like Bhupendranath Bose of Calcutta were willing to accept any means to lift the Congress out of its political inactivity.

A major new element which helped the reunification process of the Congress from 1914 was the sudden rise to political prominence of the Theosophical leader, earlier a proponent of Fabianism as a movement also, Annie Besant. She was already 66 years of age in 1914. She began her political career in England as a proponent of Free thought, Radicalism.

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Fabianism. and Theosophy. She came to India in 1893 to work for the Theosophical Society. Since 1907, she was spreading the message of Theosophy from her headquarters in Adyar, a suburb of Madras. She had gained a large number of followers among the educated members of many communities that had experienced no cultural revival of their own. She came to feel that substantial measure of self-governance was necessary for an Indo-British friendship and that the only way of achieving this was through a nation-wide agitation and organisation modelled on the British Radical and the Irish Home Rule movements. However, she was far from being a consistent anti-Imperialist as subsequent events were to reveal. She, however had joined the Congress and was keen to arouse nationalist political activity, and to admit the extremists. Thus, an objective basis emerged during the war years for a sort of joint platform of the moderates, extremists, and the Young Party-controlled Muslim League for putting constitutional, but still quite intense, pressure on the British Government, in return for war support. In December 1915, it was decided that the Tilak group be allowed to re-enter the Congress (Pherozshah Mehta had meanwhile died). The congress and the Muslim League met simultaneously at Bombay and set up committees to draft the minimum constitutional demands through mutual consultations. At Lucknow in December 1916, a common demand was raised for representative government at the centre as well as in the provinces, and for a dominion status for India. Meanwhile, Hindu-Muslim political differences were sought to be resolved through the famous Lucknow pact by which the Congress accepted the separate electorates and a bargain was struck over the distribution of seats. The muslim leaders accepted under-representation in muslim-majority areas (only 40% of seats in Bengal, for instance), in return for over-representation in provinces like Bombay or UP (where 30% of total seats were to be assigned to them). The Lucknow session was also the first united Congress since 1907.

11.3 Home Rule League

The Congress, as constituted at that time, was purely a deliberative body, not geared for any sustained agitation. Tilak's proposal that the Congress should appoint a small and cohesive working committee to carry on its day to day affairs and be responsible for implementing the resolutions passed at the annual session, was not accepted. It would have helped transform the Congress into a real party. It was felt by many leaders that popular pressure had to be brought upon the government if any real concessions were to be extracted. War for the general populace meant heavy taxation and soaring prices of the daily necessities of life. The people as a result were ready to join any movement of protest. However, it was clear that any agitation had to be organised through the two Home Rule Leagues of Tilak and Annie Besant. The latter had announced plans for such a League in September 1915, and worked to that end through her Madras newspapers New India and Commonwealth, followed by the Young India from Bombay, started in early 1916. However, Tilak forestalled her by starting his Home Rule League in April 1916. The two Leagues avoided any friction by demarcating their area of activities. Tilak's

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League was to work in Maharashtra (excluding Bombay city), Karnataka, the central Provinces and Berar. Annie Besant's League was given the charge of rest of India. It relied heavily on Besant's old Theosophical contacts. While Tilak tried to run a fairly centralised organisation from Poona. Besant's league, also centered at Poona, maintained only loose supervision over its local branches. In mid-1917, Tilak's League claimed a membership of 14,000, while Besant's League had 27,000 members at its height of activity. The activities of the Home Rule Leagues consisted in organising discussion groups and reading rooms in cities, mass sale of pamphlets (these focused mainly on the system of government existing in India and the argument for self-rule), and lecture tours to popularise the demand for Home Rule. It was during the course of this movement that Tilak declared, 'Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it,' and 'Do not ask for crumbs. Ask for the whole bread.' He also linked the question of Swaraj with the demand for linguistic states and education in vernaculars. At a conference for the removal of untouchability, he declared, 'If God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognise him as God at all.' His speeches of the period show no traces of religious appeal. The demand for Home Rule was made on a wholly secular basis. The real significance of the Home Rule agitation, and particularly of Besant's League, lay in extending the feeling of nationalism and political awareness to new areas, new groups, something like a new generation. Except Maharashtra, the two other bases of extremism, viz. Punjab and Bengal, were relatively quiet because they were the main targets of British repression, which made any open militant agitation difficult during the War years. Besant's League found its main support from Tamil Brahmins of Madras and mofussil towns, urban pro-fessional groups in the United Provinces (Kayasthas, Kashmiri Brahmins and some Muslims), the Hindu Amil minority in Sind, and younger Gujarati industrialists, traders, and lawyers in Bombay city and Gujarat. Except Bombay and Madras, none of these areas had strongly established political traditions, whether extremist or moderate. Theosophy too found some appeal here, perhaps because other reform or revivalist movements like the Rrahmoism or Arun Samaj had not affected them much. Several young men who took to the Home Rule Movement went on to become the lead-ers of Indian politics, viz., Satya Murti in Madras, Jitendera Banerji in Calcutta, Jawaharlal Nehru and Khaliqzaman in Allahabad and Lucknow, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, the industrial-ist, tJmar Sobhani, Shankerlal Banker, and Indulal Yagnik in Bombay and Gujarat.

In August 1917, Montague, the secretary of state for India, promised a 'responsible government' to India, with the condi-tion that the nature and the timing of the advance towards it would be decided by the British Government alone. The impor-tance of the Montague's declaration was that the demand for Home Rule or self-government could no longer be treated as seditious. This declaration converted Besant into a loyal-ist almost overnight. Towards the end of 1917, Tilak became increasingly involved in a libel suit against Valentine Chirol and left for England to fight his case in September 1918. With Annie Besant unable to give a Finn lead, and Tilak away in England, the movement

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became leaderless. By the end of the First World War in 1918, the new generation of the nationalists rose to political awareness and getting impatient with the pace of change, was looking for a means of expressing itself through effective political action. The leaders of the Home Rule League who had aroused the masses were now unable to show the way forward. The stage was thus set for the entry of Gandhi. He had already made a name for himself with his leadership of the struggle of Indians in South Africa and by leading the Indian peasants and workers in Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda during 1917-18. He became the rallying point for all those who had been awakened to politics by the Home Rule Movement.

12. GANDHI AND HIS THOUGHT By the time Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in January 1915, he had already attained political maturity. Gandhi developed his philosophy and the technique of Satyagraha as an instrument for redressing the grievances of the immigrant Indian minority in South Africa. The term Satyagraha, meaning firmness in the truth or 'truth force', was devised by him to describe an approach which sought victory not by the forcible defeat of the opponent but by bringing about a change in his heart through one's own suffering or self-sacrifice. The basic Gandhian technique was put into action in South Africa from 1906. This involved training of disciplined cadres (at the Tolstoy farm and the Phoenix settlement), non-violent Satyagraha through peaceful violation of specific laws, mass courting of arrests, occasional hartals, and spectacular marches. It included a careful attention to organisation and financial details, a readiness for negotiations and compromises, at times leading to abrupt withdrawals, and the cultivation of certain Gandhian peculiarities (vegetarianism, nature therapy, experiments in sexual self-restraint, etc.). It galvanised the masses but kept their activity restricted to certain forms predetermined by the leader, in particular to the methods of non-violence. Gandhi's non-violence was a well worked out philosophy. According to him, resort to violence to enforce one's own understanding of truth (nobody attains the ultimate truth) was sinful. To him, violence was the opposite of truth. However, as a pragmatic politician, Gandhi sometimes conceded to less than complete non-violence. For instance, he campaigned for military recruitment during the First World War in the hope of winning post-war political concessions. He even asserted that violence was preferable to a cowardly surrender before injustice. As a political weapon, non-violence appealed to business groups, the rich peasantry and the well-off sections of the society because it kept the political struggle from turning into an orgy of destruction and violence. It, therefore, provided a way out for the Indian politicians before Gandhi, who had earlier tended to oscillate between the moderate mendicancy and individual terrorism, because of their social inhibitions against the uncontrolled mass movements. Under Gandhi, the doctrine of Ahimsa played an essentially unifying role, thus making possible a combined national struggle against the foreign rule.

Hind Swaraj

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• Gandhi first announced his life's mission in Hind Swaraj, which was to show the way for the moral regeneration of Indians and the potential for the emancipation of India. It was written in ten days, from 13 to 22 November 1909, on board the ship 'Kildonan Castle', on his return trip from England to South Africa. • The whole manuscript was written on the ship's stationery at a furious pace. When the right hand got tired, the left hand continued writing and 49 of the 275 pages were written by the left hand. • Gandhi told his friend Herman Hallentach the first one to know about the book's completion that he had produced 'an original work'. • It is also a work which Gandhi himself translated from Gujarati into English: no other work of his, not even his autobiography enjoys this distinction. • It has been compared to such diverse works as Rousseau's Social Contract, and the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius Loyola. • The book was addressed to a mixed audience: the expatriate Indians (greatly attracted to terrorism and political violence), the Extremists and Moderates of the Indian National Congress, the Indian people, and the British. • The assassination of Sir William Curzon-Wyllie, the AD to the Secretary of State for India by Madan Lai Dhingra before Gandhi's arrival in London shook London, the Indian Community in England, and Gandhi himself.

The social ideals of Gandhi are incorporated in Hind Swaraj (1909), where he asserted that the real enemy was not the British colonial domination but the modern industrial civilisation itself. It represented a response to the deeply alienating effects of modernisation, particularly under colonial conditions. The anti-industrial theme held some attraction for the artisans ruined by modern industries, the peasants to whom law courts were a ruinous trap and going to city hospitals usually an expensive death sentence, and to the rural or small town intelligentsia for whom education had brought few material benefits. However, it had no charm for the sophisticated urban groups which by 1930s and 1940s would increasingly turn towards capitalist or socialist solutions based on industrialisation. After his return to India, Gandhi gave a concrete shape to his message through programmes of Khadi, rural reconstruction, and Harijan welfare. The message of self-reliance and self-help of the swadeshi period thus acquired wider dimensions.

During the first year after his arrival, Gandhi did not take a public stand on any political issue on the advice of his political mentor, Gokhale. He spent the year travelling around the country, seeing things for himself and in organising his ashram in Ahmedabad, where he and his devoted band of followers from South Africa decided to lead a community life. His first major public appearance in India was at the opening of the Benaras Hindu University in February 1911, to address the donors whose contributions had led to the founding of BHU, along with Congress leaders such as Annie Besant. During the course of 1917 and early 1918, Gandhi was involved in three significant struggles, beginning with Champaran in Bihar, Ahmedabad and Kheda in Gujarat. These struggles were related to specific local issues. Champaran and Kheda involved the peasants while Ahmedabad involved industrial workers.

12.1 Champaran

In the early 19th century, European planters compelled the peasants to grow indigo on a part of their holdings

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(known as the Tinkathia System) and to sell it to the planters at prices fixed by them. Towards the end of 19th century. German synthetic dyes forced indigo out of the market, making indigo cultivation unremunerative. European planters of Champaran, though keen to release the cultivators from their obligation of cultivating indigo. tried to turn this to their advantage by securing enhancements in rent and other illegal dues as its price. Resistance had earlier surfaced in 1908. but the exploitations by planters continued as before. Hearing of Gandhi's campaigns in South Africa, several peasants of Champaran invited him to help their cause. Gandhi, accompanied by Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar-ul-Huq, J B Kriplani (a teacher by profession), and Mahadev Desai, reached Champaran in 1917 and began conducting a detailed inquiry into the conditions of the peasantry. after a local ban on his entry had been lifted by the higher authorities in face of a Satyagraha threat. The grievances of the indigo cultivators were given an all-India publicity. The commission of inquiry instituted by the Government was convinced by Gandhi that the Tinkathia System had to be abolished and the peasants compensated for the illegal enhancement of their dues. The concrete achievements of the agitation were far surpassed by their psychological impact. Gandhi was compared to Lord Rama and the planters to Rakshasas (demons). He was thought of as an holyman with miracle powers, who could end all exploitation.

12.2 Kheda

It suffered from repeated famines and plagues after 1899, making revenue payments, which were seldom reduced, difficult. During 1917-18, a poor harvest coincided with the high prices of kerosene, ironware, cloth and salt. The farm labour, employed by Pattidars (small peasant proprietors) had successfully forced them to hike up their wages. Pattidars' appeals for the remission of revenue were ignored by the Government. Enquiries by members of the Servants of Indian Society, Vithalbhai Patel and Gandhi confirmed the validity of

Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (July 1918)

The Government announced on August 20, 1917 that its policy in India was the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of a responsible Government of India as an integral part of the British Empire. And in July 1918, the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were announced. According to these reforms, the Central Legislative Council came to have two houses—the Legislative Council and the Council of State. These houses were to have a majority of elected members. The legislature, however, had no control over the Governor-General and his Executive Council, who continued to be responsible to the British Government. The provincial councils were to be enlarged and were to have elected majorities. The ministers, in charge of some portfolios in the provinces referred to transferred subjects like education, public health and local self government etc. were to be responsible to the Council. But the important portfolios remained with the governors. The system was called diarchy. The number of voters who elected members of the councils was limited as only men with property had the right to vote. All the important powers remained with the Governor-General and his Executive Council. In the provinces, the councils, however, were still

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powerless as the governor had complete control over finance and he could over rule the ministers on any ground.

13. ROWLATT ACT While trying to appease the Indians with the reforms, the Government passed the Montague Chelmsford Reforms (1918), which formed the basis of Government of India Act of 1919. These were condemned by most of the Congress leaders. but some disagreed, for instance T. B Saprú. Jayakar. and Chintamani. They left the party and formed National Liberal Federation/Association. In continuation of its carrot and stick policy, the government also passed the Rowlatt Act in early 1919 inspite of stiff opposition from all the Indian members of the Legislative Council. It authorised the Government, through a system of special courts, to detain anyone without trial for a maximum period of two years. While all the sections of Indian opinion deeply resented the Act, it was Gandhi ji who suggested a concrete form of a mass protest his first at an all Indian level. Initially, the plan was a rather modest one of volunteers courting arrest by public sale of prohibited works. It was extended by Gandhi on March 23. 1919 to include the novel and far more radical idea of an all-India Hartal on March 30 (later postponed to April 6). Gandhi used three types of political network—the Home Rule Leagues. certain pan-Islamist groups. and a Satyagraha Sabha which he himself started at Bombay on February 24—to organise the Satyagraha. As has already been pointed out, the younger and radical members of the two Home Rule Leagues were in need of a leader. Gandhi had already developed excellent relations with some muslim leaders, particularly with Abdul Bari of the Firangi Mahal Llama group at Lucknow. Faced with the defeat of Ottoman Turkey and the rumours about the harsh

peace terms being prepared by the victorious Allies, the Indian Muslims were increasingly becoming concerned about the future of the Caliph-Sultan, whom they considered as their spiritual leader. Meanwhile, the moderate section of the 'young party' who wanted to accept the Montford reforms was ousted from the Muslim League by an alliance of somewhat more radical politicians like Ansari (Ali brothers were interned) and a large group of Ulama led by Abdul Bari. They came out in favour of Satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act after a meeting with Gandhi in mid-March 1919. The Satyagraha Sabha concentrated on publishing propaganda literature and collecting signatures to a Satyagraha pledge, while Gandhi himself embarked on a whirlwind tour. The movement that emerged was very elemental. almost entirely urban. with the lower middle class groups and artisans playing a more important role than the industrial workers. There were demonstrations and hartals in most of the towns on March 30 and April 6 and these were generally accompanied by violence and disorder. Punjab. already suffering from the after-effects of severe war-time repression following the Ghadar outbreaks of 1915, forcible recruitment for the War. and the ravages of disease, reacted particularly strongly. In Amritsar and Lahore, the situation became alarming for the Government. The army was called in and Amritsar was handed over to General Dyer, who issued an order prohibiting all public meeting and assemblies.

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13. Jallianwala Bagh Incident On the Baisakhi Day of April 13, 1919 a peaceful unarmed crowd, consisting mostly of villagers who had come for a fair and were not aware of the ban on meetings, was fired upon without any warning and provocation by Dyers' troops. in Jallianwala Bagh, a park enclosed from all sides. The official estimate was 379 deaths, while the other estimates were considerably higher. The brutality at Jallianwala Bagh stunned the entire nation. The response did not come immediately, but a little later. For the moment, repression was intensified and Punjab was placed under martial law. Gandhi withdrew the movement on April 18 calling it a 'Himalayan blunder'. Since then, Gandhi became extremely wary about starting movements without adequate organisational and ideological preparation. Rabindranath Tagore, voicing the agony and anger of the nation, through a famous letter, renounced his knighthood (May 30, 1919). Gandhi returned the Kaiser-i-Hind medal given to him for his work during the Boer war. The Congress set up a non-official enquiry committee into the Punjab massacre. The Government, at the instigation of the nationalist leadership, appointed the Committee of Enquiry (consisting of four British and three Indian members) under the Chairmanship of Lord Hunter. However, to protect its officers, the Government simultaneously passed an Indemnity Act. Dyer was removed from active service by the British Government in London, but was absolved from all guilt.

14. THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-22) The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, and the martial law in Punjab belied all the generous war-time promises of the British. The reforms of 1919, with the ill-considered scheme of dyarchy, satisfied only few. The Indian Muslims were aggravated, that their apprehensions about a harsh peace treaty to be imposed on the defeated Ottoman Empire were fast becoming a reality. The Khilafat Movement gained momentum. Its three central demands were that the Turkish Caliph-Sultan must retain control over the muslim holy places, he must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith, and that Jazirat-ul-Arab (Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Palestine) must remain under muslim suzerainty. After the Ali brothers were released from their internment in early 1920, they gave a lead to the movement. Khilafat leaders were extremely eager for Hindu-Muslim unity, as they were edging towards a non-cooperation movement to protest against the government behaviour. Gandhi was the indispensable link. The turning point came and the publication of the harsh terms of the Treaty with Turkey came out on May 14, 1920. This was followed on May 28 by the Hunter Commission Majority Report on the Punjab disturbances. Gandhi bitterly described it as 'page after page of thinly disguised official white wash', more so because the Congress was fully apprised of the government brutalities by its own Enquiry Committee. The Allahabad meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee (June 1-3, 1920), which was attended by a number of nationalist Hindu leaders, under the guidance of Gandhi, announced a programme of Non-cooperation. Gandhi began pressing the Congress to adopt a similar plan to campaign around the three issues of 'Punjab wrong', the 'Khilafat wrong' and • Swaraj•. The Congress met in September at Calcutta and

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accepted Non-cooperation as its own programme. The main opposition, led by C R Das, was to the boycott of the Legislative Councils, elections to which were to be held soon. But even those who disagreed with the idea of boycott accepted the Congress discipline and withdrew from the elections. The voters, too, largely stayed away. By December 1920, when the Congress met for its annual session at Nagpur, the opposition had melted away. The elections were over, making the boycott of councils a non-issue. C R Das moved the main resolution on Non-cooperation. It was passed at the Calcutta special Congress (September 4-9, 1920), which approved a programme of surrender of titles, the triple boycott (of schools, courts and councils), the boycott of foreign goods, the promotion of national schools, arbitration courts, and Khadi, and maintenance of a Hindu-Muslim unity and strict non-violence. Gandhi promised that if the programme was fully implemented, 'Swaraj would be ushered in within the year.'

At Gandhi's insistence, crucial changes were made in the organisation of the Congress to turn it into a real people's party, viz. A regular four-arena membership to enable the poor to become members; a hierarchy of village-raiz/A-a-district or town Committees, so as to enable the Congress to reach down to the grassroots; reorganisation of PCCs on a linguistic basis so as to bring it closer to the people by using the vernacular: the number of delegates to be fixed in proportion to the population; and a small 15 member working committee to act as the real executive head to be able to guide a sustained movement round the year. They were now committed to a programme of extra-constitutional mass action. The years 1921-22 witnessed an unprecedented movement in the nation's history. Gandhi, along-with the Ali brothers, undertook a nation-wide tour, during which he addressed hundreds of meetings and met a large number of political workers. Thousands of students left government schools and colleges and joined more than 800 national schools and colleges. It was during this time that the Jamia Milia Islamia (National Muslim University) of Aligarh, the Bihar Vidyapeeth, the Kashi Vidyapeeth and the Gujarat Vidyapeeth came into existence. The Jamia Milia later shifted to Delhi. Acharya Narendra Deb, Dr Zakir Hussain, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Subhash Chandra Bose were among the many distinguished teachers at these national colleges and universities. The educational boycott was particularly successful in Bengal, with Punjab coming next. C R Das and Lala Lajpat Rai played a major role in promoting the movement in Bengal and Punjab, respectively. Other areas that participated actively were Bombay, UP, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. Madras, however, remained lukewarm. The boycott of law courts was not as successful, but it was very dramatic. Many leading lawyers of the country like C R Das, Motilal Nehru, M R Jayakar, Saifuddin Kitchlew (Punjab), Vallabhbhai Patel, C Rajagopalachari, T. Prakasam, and Asaf Ali gave up lucrative practices. Many others followed. Here also, Bengal led, in numbers, followed by Andhra Pradesh, UP, Karnataka and Punjab. The boycott of foreign cloth was very successful, huge bonfires of which were organised all over the land. Picketing of shops selling foreign cloth was also a major form of boycott. The imports of foreign cloth fell from Rs 102 crore in 1920-21 to Rs 57

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crore in 1921-22. Khadi soon became a symbol of freedom. The AICC, at its session at Vijayawada in March 1921, directed the congressmen to concentrate for the next three months on collection of funds, enrolment of members, and distribution of Charkhas. The Tilak Swarajva Fund collected over a crore of rupees within six months. Women showed great enthusiasm and freely offered their jewellery. Charkhas were popularised on a large scale and Khadi became the uniform of the National Movement. In July 1921, at the All-India Khilafat Conference held at Karachi, a new challenge was thrown to the Government when Mohammad Ali initiated a resolution declaring that no

Muslim should serve in the British Indian Army. In September, the Ali brothers were arrested for sedition. Soon, the Congress Working Committee passed a similar resolution, and on October 16, Congress Committees all over the country held meetings at which the same resolution was adopted. The Government was forced to ignore the whole incident, and to accept the blow to its prestige. The Congress now decided to raise the movement to a higher plane. It permitted the PCCs to sanction mass civil disobedience wherever they thought the people were ready for it, such as in the Midnapur district in Bengal, where a movement led by Birendranath Sasmal against the Union Board of Taxes had started, and in Chiralapirala and Pedanandipadu taluqa in Guntur district of Andhra, where a no-tax movement was in the offing. However, an important point to be made here is that the spirit of unrest and defiance of authority engendered by the Non-cooperation Movement contributed to the rise of many local movements widely different, and not conforming strictly to the programme of Non-cooperation or even to the policy of Non-violence. In Punjab, the Sikhs were leading a movement for wresting control of the gurudwaras from corrupt Mahants (priests). Akalis observed strict non-violence in the face of tremendous pressure. In Malabar in Kerala, muslim tenants created a powerful anti-zamindar movement, but it sometimes took on a communal colour. In Assam, labourers on tea plantations went on a strike. Defiance of forest laws became popular in Andhra. Peasants and tribals in some of the Rajasthan states began movements for securing better conditions of life. In UP the peasant upsurge in Avadh associated with Baba Ramchandra culminated in widespread agrarian riots in Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh, Faizabad, and Sultanpur. However, the grass-root Kisan Sabhas that had emerged in the area under Baba Ramchandra were totally swallowed by the Non-cooperation Movement, with specific peasant demands relegated to the background. In late 1921 and early 1922 in north-west Avadh the Ekka Movement started by some local Congressmen was taken over by the much more radical Madari Pasi. The basic demand here was the conversion of produce rent (batai) into cash (which was favoured by peasants due to rising prices). The movement was crushed by the police in June 1922. In November 1921, the day of the arrival of Prince of Wales in Bombay was observed as a day of hartal all over the country followed by riots in Bombay. There were police firings, with the three day turmoil ending in 59 deaths and over 400 wounded. The Prince of Wales was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. The Congress Volunteer Corps emerged as a

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powerful parallel police. By December 1921, the Government felt that things had really gone too far. and declared the Volunteer Corps illegal, and arrested all its members. By the end of 1921, all important nationalist leaders except Gandhi were behind the bars. Public meetings and assemblies were banned, newspapers gagged. and midnight raids on Congress and Khilafat offices became common.

Gandhi was under pressure from the Congress rank and file to start the phase of mass Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi in a letter asked the Government to lift the ban on civil liberties and release political prisoners or else he would be forced to go ahead with the mass civil disobedience. The Viceroy refused to oblige. Left with no choice, Gandhi announced that the mass civil disobedience would begin in the Bardoli taluqa of Surat district. But before the movement could take off, the Chauri Chaura incident took place in a Gorakhpur village in UP on February 5, 1922. It occurred when a well-organised volunteer body picketed the local bazar. protesting against the liquor sales and high food prices. The police thrashed the volunteer leader and opened fire on the crowd which had assembled later to protest before the police station. At this, the entire procession attacked the police station and set it afire. On hearing the incident, Gandhi decided to suspend the entire movement. Thus, on February 12, 1922, the Non-cooperation Movement came to an end. This abrupt suspension of the movement was resented by almost all the prominent Congress leaders, even more so by the younger people. Why did Gandhi do it? Some assert that Gandhi was protecting the Movement from likely repression and demoralisation. The mass civil disobedience would have been defeated even before it was given a fair trial. Another point of view is that Gandhi had always emphasised that he wanted to lead only a specific type of controlled mass movement and was not interested in any class struggle or social revolution and Chauri Chaura presented an opportunity to retreat with honour. Gandhi was arrested on March 10, 1922 and was sentenced to jail for six years. Gandhi made the occasion memorable by his famous court speech. 'I am here. therefore. to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime. and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen'. Soon, the Khilafat question also lost its relevance. The people of Turkey rose up under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Pasha, and in November 1922. deprived the Sultan of his political powers. Kamal Pasha abolished the Caliphate in 1924 and set-up a secular state, taking steps to modernise it. This broke the back of the Khilafat agitation in India. The Hindu-Muslim unity, which Gandhi had cultivated so assiduously, also gave way to communal riots during 1922-27.

14.1 No-Changers and Swarajists The expectations of achieving Swaraj within a year were dashed to pieces. Gandhi was behind the bars. Disillusionment and demoralisation prevailed in the Congress. Soon. however, two main groups emerged within the Congress. Ansari, Rajagopalachari. Kasturiranga Iyengar and staunch Gandhians like Vallabh-Bhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad advocated concentration on the Gandhian constructive rural work, while Motilal Nehru. Vithalbhai Patel and Hakim Ajmal Khan, supported by CR

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Das, president of the Gaya Congress (December, 1922), put forward a radical justification for the proposal of council entry. According to them, the Congress should enter the councils to obstruct their proceedings from within, thus creating a deadlock which would force the Government to concede further reforms. The Gaya session rejected council entry by 1740 votes against 890. However, Das and Motilal Nehru went ahead to set up a Swaraj Party in March 1923 to contest the coming elections in November. Gandhi was released from jail on February 5, 1924 on health grounds. The balance tilted in favour of the no-changers. However, the fear of the disastrous split of 1907 forced them towards mutual accommodation. A split would have made the Government bolder in its repressive behaviour and added to the state of political depression among the people. So, on November 6, 1924, Gandhi brought the strife between no-changers and Swarajists to an end by signing a joint statement with Das and Motilal Nehru, declaring that the Swarajists would carry on work in the councils on behalf and as an integral part of the Congress. This decision was endorsed in December at the Belgaum session of the Congress, presided over by Gandhi. He also gave the Swarajists a majority of seats in the Working Committee. Among the noteworthy achievements of Swarajists was their role in the defeat of the Public Safety Bill in 1928 and their successful exposure of the hollowness of the Reform Act of 1919. They showed the people that India was being ruled by 'lawless laws'. However, the limits of politics of obstruction from within were soon realised and the main leadership of the party finally withdrew from the Councils in 1930. Gandhi, too, had resumed his critique of council entry. He said, 'the more study the councils' work, the effect of the entry into the councils upon public life, its repercussions upon the Hindu—Muslim question, the more convinced I become not only of the futility, but the inadvisability of council entry'. Meanwhile, the no-changers carried on laborious and undemonstrative grassroots constructive work of promotion of khadi and spinning, national education, Hindu-Muslim unity, the struggle against untouchability, and the boycott of foreign cloth. This work was symbolised by the hundreds of ashrams that came up all over the country, where political cadres got practical training in khadi looms and work among the lower castes and tribal people, e.g. in Vedchi Ashram in Bardoli. These years of quiet activity led to a strengthening of the forces of nationalism, culminating in the Civil Disobedience Movement following the announcement of the all-white Simon Commission in November 1927.

14.2 Separatist Trends II The unprecedented growth of communalism was in fact the most serious negative development of the post 1922 years. There was a violent anti-Hindu outburst at Kohat in the NWFP in September 1924, leaving 155 dead. Three waves of riots in Calcutta between April and July 1926 saw 138 killed. No less than 91 communal outbreaks occurred in UP, the worst affected province between 1923-27. There were disturbances in Dacca, Patna, Rawalpindi, and Delhi. The ostensible issues were the Muslim demand for stopping music before mosques, and the Hindu pressures for a ban on cow-slaughter. The alliance between the Congress and the Khilafat leaders though

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weakened lingered on till early 1925. Mohammad Ali, who had presided over the Kakinada Congress, as late as December 1923 finally split from Gandhi in the wake of repeated communal riots. The chasm between the two communities widened. The Khilafatists had, in any case, lost their principal slogan with the abolition of Caliphate in Turkey. The post 1919 political structure was itself designed to create divisions among the Indians. The 1919 reforms had broadened the franchise but preserved the system of separate electorates. There was, thus, a built-in temptation for politicians working within the system to use sectional slogans and gather a following by distributing favours to their own religious, regional or caste groups. Another factor was the considerable spread of education in the 1920s without a corresponding growth in employment opportunities. The scramble for scarce job opportunities fed the growing communal tension. Among the lower sections of the population, economics and social tensions could easily be given a communal colour, more so now, as an appropriate ideology was very much present. Growth of communal associations and ideologies—The spread of Tabligh (propaganda) and Tanzim (organisation) movements among the Muslims from 1923 and the Arya Sarnajists 'Shuddhi and Sangathan movements started after the Moplah conversions and extended in 1923 by Shraddhanand to Western UP to win back the Hindus, worked towards consolidation of communalism. The Muslim League once again became active and was now devoid of all radical and nationalist elements. Maulanas Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali made the most dramatic shift towards adopting a communal outlook. At its Lahore session in 1924, presided over by Jinnah and the first since 1918 to meet separately from the Congress, the Muslim League raised the demand for a federation with full provincial autonomy to preserve muslim majority areas from the danger of hindu domination and called for separate electorates--a slogan that remained basic to Muslim communalism till the demand for Pakistan in 1940. The Hindu Alahasabha started at the Haridwar Kumbh mela in 1915 by Madan Mohan Malaviya was revived in 1923. It openly began to cater to the anti-muslim sentiments. 'Its proclaimed objective became: 'the maintenance, protection, and promotion of Hindu race. Hindu culture, and Hindu civilisation for the advancement of Hindu Rashtra. Another significant development was the founding of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh at Nagpur by K B Hedgewar in 1925. The Swarajists too were split by communalism. A group known as 'responsivists' offered cooperation to the government so that the so-called hindu interests may be safeguarded. This group included Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, and N C Kelkar.

The memories of the communal upsurge of mid-20s contributed greatly to the general muslim aloofness from the next round of struggle against the foreign rule in 1930-34. In this Hindu-Muslim tussle, the real winners were the British.

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14.3 Peasant Movements

For the masses, 1920s witnessed no improvement in living conditions, and possibly there was some deterioration. The Indian population curve took a sharp turn upwards after the 1921 census while the agricultural productivity stagnated everywhere except in Punjab and marginally in Madras. The 1920s was also the decade when land revenue revisions became due in large parts of Bombay and Madras under the thirty year Ryotwari Settlement.

The Congress actively supported the peasant movements in Ryotwari areas, where Government revenue enhancements provided a unifying and socially safe issue. Bardoli Satyagraha under Vallabh Bhai Patel would provide the principal inspiration for all such movements from 1928 onwards. However, the Congress failed to unequivocally take up the other demands of the peasants like the abolition of the Zamindari, or rent reduction, the share-croppers demands for a fairer division of the harvest in Bengal, Bihar and UP etc. Thus, disillusioned by the Congress, some peasant activists had started groping towards new ideologies by the mid 1920s.

15. EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISTS

Various socialist and communist groups came into existence in the 1920s. The example of the successful Russian Revolution of 1917 had aroused the interest of many people. They were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Non-cooperation Movement and with the Gandhian political ideas and programmes. On October 20, 1920, M N Roy (who had gone to Russia in 1920 to attend the second Congress of Communists International and who, along with Lenin, helped evolve its policy towards the colonies), Abani Mukherji and some Multafirs (Khilafat enthusiasts who had joined the Hifrat in 1920 and crossed over through Afghanistan into Soviet territory) like Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Shafiq, set up a Communist Party of India in Tashkent. Roy however shifted to Berlin, when his hopes of penetrating India through Afghanistan faded in 1921. From there, he started the fortnightly Vanguard of Indian Independence and later published India in Transition. Other Indian revolutionary groups abroad were meanwhile turning towards Marxism, most notably the Old Berlin Group headed by Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutt and Barkatullah. By mid 1920s an important section of the Ghadar movement in exile had also turned communist, under Rattan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Teja Singh Swatantra.

By the end of 1922, through Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani, Roy established contacts with the emerging Communist groups in India especially in Bombay (S A Dange), Calcutta (Muzaffar Ahmad), Madras (Singaravelu), and Lahore (Ghulam Hussain). In August, 1922, Dange brought out the weekly Socialist from Bombay, the first ever communist journal to be published in India. In a letter to Dange on November 2, 1922,

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Roy outlined a plan for a dual organisation—one legal and another illegal—a secret Communist nucleus working within a broad front Workers' and Peasants' Party.

The emergence of even a few tiny communist groups in India created a panic in the British Government. explained probably by the fear of another Bolshevik Revolution. In May 1924, Muzaffar Ahmad, S A Dange, Shaikat Usmani and Nalini Gupta were jailed in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. However, the setback was only temporary. The communist Party of India was founded in 1925. Of much greater significance was the setting up of a number of organisations between 1925-27. embodying the idea of a broad-front Worker's and Peasants' Party (WPP) to serve as a legal cover. The basic objective of the WPP was to work within the Congress to give it a more radical orientation. make it the 'party of the people'. and independently organise workers and peasants in class organisations to first work towards the achievement of complete independence and ultimately socialism.

The Communists started developing real links with the working class. They were quite prominent in the Kharagpur railway workshop strikes of February and September 1927. Communist influence grew rapidly among the Bombay textile workers as well, from 1926 onwards, but there was little penetration as yet into the countryside. It may have been due to sheer paucity of cadres which made dispersal into villages very difficult in the 1920s.

15.1 Industrial Unrest and the Communists

The most striking feature of 1928-29 was a massive labour upsurge (particularly in railways, cotton textiles, and jute). accompanied by considerable Communist penetration into the trade unions. There were 203 strikes and lockouts involving 506, 851 workers and the loss of 31, 647, 404 working days. Atrocious working conditions, made worse by 'rationalisation' drives and wage cuts because of the Government's refusal to give tariff protection to the industry, were the reason behind the strikes.

The Government pressed for a Public Safety Bill, which would empower it to summarily deport any one, and the Trade Disputes Act of April 1929, which imposed a system of tribunals, and sought to ban strikes 'undertaken for objects other than furtherance of trade dispute or if designed to coerce the government and/or inflict hardship on the Community'. The Congress officially opposed both the bills. The principal Government move, however, was the rounding up of 31 leaders

on March 20, all of whom were, by no means, Communists. They included Dange, Ghate, Mirajkar, Muzaffar Ahmad, P C Joshi, Joglekar, and three British Communists Philip Spratt, Ben Bradley and Hutchinson, who were helping to organise the Bengal and Bombay workers. The trial, known as the Meerut conspiracy case, began in March, 1929 and continued for four years. Heavy jail sentences were imposed in 1933. The

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communists, in fact, made good use of the opportunity to propagate their ideals through defence speeches. The entire National Movement condemned the Meerut prosecutions.

However, labour militancy was not immediately cowed down by the Meerut conspiracy case. The first general strike in the Jute mills took place in July—August 1929, under the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, controlled largely by Communists. It successfully beat back the employers' bid to extend working hours from 54 to 60 per week.

But by 1930, the labour movement as a whole began to decline. The Communists were weakened not just by Government repression, but also by, a major change in their strategy. From the end of 1928. they reversed their policy of aligning themselves with and working within the mainstream of the National Movement. This led to an isolation of the communists from the National Movement and greatly reduced their hold even over the working class. The economic situation, too, was becoming unfavourable for labour movements. With the onset of world-wide depression in 1929, unemployment increased and the prices went down, thus weakening the labours' bargaining power, while discontent among the employed was somewhat reduced.

16. SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AND JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

The middle and late 1920s gave birth to a variety of student and youth organisations, critical of both Swarajists and no-changers. They demanded more consistent anti-imperialism in the shape of the slogan of Purna Swaraj. They also stressed that political freedom would have meaning only if it was combined with social justice. Subhash Chandra Bose, immensely popular among Bengali youth, expressed such opinion and moved close to the other rising star on the Indian political horizon, Jawaharlal Nehru. For Nehru, a visit to Europe in 1926-27 proved decisive. His active participation in the Brussels Congress against colonial oppression and Imperialism gave him a vision of anti-imperialist solidarity of socialist and third-world forces. In the same year, he visited Soviet Union and was deeply impressed by the new socialist society there.

In 1928, Nehru joined hands with Subhash to organise the 'Independence for India League' to fight for the complete independence of India and a socialist revision of her economic structure.

With the announcement of the all-white Simon Commission in November 1927. the forces for resurgence and renewal began to coalesce, leading towards a new wave of anti-imperialist struggle.

17. SIMON COMMISSION AND NEHRU REPORT

The announcement of the all-white Simon Commission (November 8, 1927) to go into the question of constitutional reforms stung the Indians. All the established political groups (except the Justice party in Madras and the Punjab Unionists) decided to boycott the

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Commission. The Muslim League even split on the issue, with Mohammad Ali Jinnah carrying the majority with him in favour of a boycott. All nationalist leaders began preparing for an All-Parties' Conference to draw up an alternative constitution.

Jinnah's persuasion of number of Muslim leaders helped evolve a compromise formula, called the 'Delhi proposals' in 1927. The proposals envisaged doing away with separate electorates in favour of joint electorates with reserved seats for minorities, and a promise of one-third Muslim representation in the Central Assembly, a representation in proportion to the population in Punjab, Bengal, and three new Muslim-majority provinces (Sind, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier Province), and residual powers to provinces. A section of the Muslim League under Mohammad Shafi refused to give up separate electorates and decided to cooperate with the Commission.

Hindu communalists bitterly opposed the creation of new Muslim-majority provinces and reservation of seats for majority in Punjab and Bengal (which would ensure Muslim control over legislatures). They also demanded a strictly unitary structure with the centre retaining all residual powers.

The Nehru Report, finalised at Lucknow in 1928, was drafted mainly by Motilal Nehru and Tej Bahadur Sapru. It formulated a Dominion Status Constitution for India and provided that while there would be joint electorates everywhere, reserved seats were to be conceded only at the Centre and in provinces with a Muslim minority, but not where Muslims had a numerical majority (i.e. in Punjab and Bengal). Sind was to be detached from Bombay and made into a separate province only after India acquired a dominion status and subject to a weightage for the Hindu minority there. The political structure was to be broadly unitary. The Report recommended universal adult suffrage, equal rights for women, freedom to form unions, and dissociation of the State from religion in any form.

Jinnah rejoined the Shafi group and in March 1929 put forward his famous Fourteen Points. These repeated the demands for new provinces, one third seats at the Centre, and the Federation with complete provincial autonomy. They revived the slogan of separate electorates till such time as the other points were accepted by the Hindus.

Jinnah later traced the final 'parting of the ways' back to the Nehru Report discussion of 1928-29, and surely enough, the Muslim community kept largely aloof from the Civil Disobedience Movement, except in the North-West Frontier Province. But, there is probably considerable exaggeration here. Perhaps the situation really remained open for quite some time.

The Nehru Report is memorable as the first major Indian effort to draft a constitutional framework for the country. complete with the lists of Central and Provincial subjects and Fundamental Rights.

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The process of Constitution making raised the question of the future status of the princely states. The British had long been trying to consolidate their alliance with the princes as bulwarks against nationalism. Though the Nehru Report made no recommendation for immediate internal changes in the princely states, it did visualise a complete transfer of the paramountcy to the fundamentally Unitary and Democratic Centre envisaged by it. The first session of the All India States Peoples' Conference (Bombay, December 1927), organised by politicians with Congress leanings, demanded extension of responsible Government to the princely states. Lord Irwin set up a committee to go into the paramountcy question under Harcourt Butler. The Butler Report (March, 1929) reasserted that 'paramountcy must remain paramount', but explicitly stated that it was not automatically transferable from the crown to any future self-governing centre enjoying a dominion status. Paramountcy would be exercised by the Viceroy directly and not by the Governor-General in the Council. This was a clear attempt to take the subject of relations with the princes away from the orbit of a possible Congress dominated Central Government and had an ominous portent for the unity of the country.

The Nehru Report revealed its conservatism when in August 1928 it accepted an amendment by M M Malaviya guaranteeing 'all titles to private and personal property'. achieved with such great difficulty on a dominion status should not be abandoned in haste and a period of two years should be given to the Government for accepting this. Under pressure, the grace period was later reduced to one year. The Congress decided that if the Government did not accept a constitution based on a dominion status by the end of the year, it would not only adopt complete independence as its goal, but also launch a Civil Disobedience Movement to attain it.

18. REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM

The revolutionary terrorist movement too began to take a socialist turn. The disillusionment with the Congress leadership among certain sections of educated youth made revolutionary terrorism popular in Bengal, Punjab, and UP. A brief revival of terrorism in Bengal in 1923-24, which climaxed into the murder of an Englishman by Gopinath Saha in January 1924 (the real target was Calcutta's notorious Police Commissioner, Tegart), was quickly followed by large scale arrests. This put an effective stop to the revolutionary activity in the province till the detainees were gradually released in 1927-28. Meanwhile, Sachin Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Bengalis living in UP, organised the Hindustan Republican Association and started raising funds through dacoities. After the kakori train hold-up of August 1925, most members of the Association were arrested. However, the remaining members drew in new recruits, established links with an emerging Punjab group under a brilliant young student Bhagat Singh and constituted the famous Hindustan Socialist Republican Army in September 1928.

18.1 Hindustan Socialist Republican Army

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In Bengal, younger 'revolt groups' emerged during the period. One of them was involved in December 1929 in the Mechauabazar bomb case. However, the most formidable group was led by Surya Sen of Chittagong which brought off the most spectacular coup in the history of terrorism. This Chittagong group of revolutionaries seized the local armoury on April 18, 1930 and issued a proclamation of independence in the name of Indian Republican Army. When surrounded on Jalalabad hills on April 22, they fought a pitched battle with the police, in which 12 of them were killed. Chittagong started an intense wave of terrorism in Bengal including a spectacular raid on the Government's Secretariat in Writer's building in Calcutta on December 8. •

Thus the revolutionary terrorist tradition of Bengal still insisted on the cult of heroic self-sacrifice by a handful of youth and there was no trace of any socio-economic programme.

In sharp contrast, the HSRA was marked by an increasingly deep commitment to Marxian socialism and militant atheism. The HSRA formed a Central Committee which included Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh from Punjab, Chandrashekhhar Azad, Kundanlal and Shiv Sharma from the united provinces, and P N Ghosh from Bihar. Its actions included the murder of Saunders in Lahore in December 1928 as revenge for the assault on Lajpat Rai, bomb thrown in the Legislative Assembly by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dun on April 8, 1929; an attempt to blow up Invin's train near Delhi in December 1929; and a whole series of terrorist actions in Punjab and UP towns in 1930. The Assembly bomb blasts were meant to be purely demonstrative 'to make the deaf hear', and the occasion significantly enough, was the anti-Labour Trades Disputes Bill. While the terrorist activities themselves might appear conventionally terrorist, the HSRA and Open Youth Organisation, with the Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha under its influence, really had a much broader perspective, 'a total change of society culminating in the overthrow of both foreign and Indian Capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. One of Bhagat Singh's closest associate, Ajoy Ghosh, later became the General Secretary of the CPI. While in jail, Bhagat Singh wrote a piece entitled Why am I an Atheist, where he defened a total rejection of all religions on grOunds of human dignity and rational logic.

Shortly after the bomb throwing incident in the Assembly, all active members of the HSRA were arrested and the Lahore conspiracy case was instituted against them in 1929. The HSRA heroes attained remarkable popularity when Jatin Das died in jail on September 1929 on the 64th day of a hunger strike for improvement in the status of political prisoners. Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography later recalled the 'sudden and amazing popularity of Bhagat Singh in Punjab and north India'.

19. PEASANT MOVEMENTS

The Workers' and Peasants' Party could make little inroads into the countryside. HSRA talked about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' but remained vague on peasant issues.

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Congress attitude to the peasant demands varied sharply. On the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill. August-September 1928), the leadership failed to defend peasants' and sharecroppers' interests. It became the occasion for the formation of Krishak Praja Party under Akram Khan. Abdur Rahim. and Fazl-ulHuq in July 1929. It was not only overwhelmingly muslim in leadership but also got its social support from muslim Jotedars.

19.1 Punjab

A somewhat similar pattern was emerging in Punjab where Fazl-i-Hussain's Unionist party, predominantly muslim based, was trying to protect agriculturists from the urban hindu moneylenders. Both the Praja Party and the Unionists were oriented towards relatively prosperous farmers than the mass of cultivators, sharecroppers. or agricultural labourers. In East Punjab, with its predominantly Sikh peasantry, the Akalis were engaged in a struggle with Maharaja of Patiala during the late 1920s. It acquired wider dimensions as a peasant based

movement for civil and political rights and agrarian reforms in the East Punjab princely states. The Punjab Rivasati Praja Mandal founded in July 1928 raised demands like cancellation of the 19% hike in land revenue imposed by Maharaja of Patiala in 1926 and abolition of his reserved Shikar lands. After 1929. some of the Akalis responded to overtures of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, while its more radical peasant activities moved towards maximum, under Jagir Singh Joga and Hari Singh.

19.2 Bihar

In permanently settled Bihar. there was no coinciding of communal with agrarian class distinctions, and caste ties could at times unite medium and petty Zamindars with the upper stratum of the peasantry. Here, Swami Sahajanand. who was active in Congress politics during the Non-cooperation movement, started an ashram at Bihta (Patna district) in 1927 initially to promote the social advancement, of Bhumihars. It later began organisational work among kisans and was responsible for developing one of the biggest Kisan movements in pre-1947 British India. The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha was founded by him in November 1929.

19.3 South India

In Coastal Andhra. the Madras Government's proposal in 1927 to raise revenue rates led to a powerful agitation during 1928-29. Leaders like T Prakasam and Dandu Narayaraju in West Godavari. Konda Venkatapayya and Vennati Satyanaryana in East Godawari. and

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Unnava Lakshmi Narayana in Guntur had built up a formidable kisan base. They pressurised the Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement towards a full-scale no-revenue campaign.

In scattered pockets in many other provinces too rural bases had been slowly built up by sustained constructive village work, like Aram bagh in the Hooghly district of Bengal under Prafulla Sen. and in Gorakhpur, UP under Baba Raghav Das.

19.4 Gujarat and Maharashtra

In Bardoli in Surat district of Gujarat. Congressmen had been carrying on successful humanitarian and organisational work since 1922 among the Kalipraj (low caste untouchables) and tribal inhabitants who together constituted 50 per cent of the population of Bardoli. The dominant peasant land- holding caste of Kanbi Pattidars tilled their land with Kalipraj debt-serfs. The Kaliprajs were exhorted to abjure intoxicating drinks and high marriage expenses which led to financial ruin. Night schools were started for their education. They were assured of minimum food and clothing by the Pattidars and were renamed Ranipraj.

When the Bombay government announced a revenue hike of 22 per cent in Bardoli in 1927, even though the cotton prices had been declining, Vallabh Bhai Patel undertook to organise a no rent campaign. It was peaceful and carried out in a determined manner. Peasants refused to be cowed down by large scale attachments of cattle and land, while the Kalipraj on the whole rejected the bait of land on easy terms offered by the government officials. Patel and other local leaders made skillful use of caste associations, social boycott, religious appeals and bhajans. A repeated emphasis was placed on rural class unity and traditional mutuality between the peasants and labourers who were the 'real producers of wealth, the two main pillars of the state'. The Bardoli Satyagraha soon acquired national importance because of its Gandhian methods of rural organisation and agitation. Ahmedabad workers raised Rs 1.300 for the Satyagraha.

Finally, a settlement was reached on the basis of a judicial enquiry and return of confiscated lands. Patel planned anti-revision campaigns throughout Gujarat and Maharashtra and organised a Bombay Presidency Land League. The Bombay government on July 16, 1929 abandoned revenue revisions till the completion of current round of constitutional reforms.

20. LAHORE CONGRESS AND PURNA SWARAJ

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Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the Lahore session of the Congress in the teeth of opposition from most PCC units (10 wanted Gandhi, 5 Vallabhbhai, and only 3 Nehru as the President). Nehru was reluctant himself, but Gandhi however insisted on him.

The 'Calcutta Congress' deadline of a year was nearing its end. Matters were complicated by the Irwin offer of October 31, 1929 in which the Viceroy declared Dominion status to be the 'natural issue' of India's constitutional progress and promised a Round Table Conference after the Simon Report had been published. On November 2. Gandhi offered to accept the Viceroy's offer, subject to four conditions: the Round Table Conference should discuss the details of the Dominion status, and not the basic principle, which the British should accept immediately; the Congress must have majority representation in the Conference; and there should be an amnesty and a policy of general conciliation. Subhash Chandra Bose refused to sign this Delhi statement. Nehru did but soon developed strong doubts and wanted to resign. In any case negotiations broke down during Gandhi's meeting with Irwin on December 23 as the Viceroy flatly rejected the Congress' conditions.

The Lahore Congress under Jawaharlal's presidentship (he succeeded Motilal Nehru as the President) at last adopted the creed of Purna Swaraj instead of a Dominion Status. The national tricolour was unfurled on the banks of Ravi amidst cries of Vande Matram and Inquilab Zindabad. January 26 was fixed as the first Independence day, which was to be so celebrated everywhere, with people taking the pledge that 'it was a crime against man and God to submit any longer to British rule.' The decision to prepare for launching a Civil Disobedience campaign was taken, but the details of the action programme were left to be worked out by the AICC which, in effect, meant Gandhi. However, the door for future negotiations was still kept open. With this, the anti-imperialist movement in India entered a radically new phase.

21. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-31)

Salt Satyagraha: Gandhi's ultimatum of January 31 to Lord Irwin, contained demands in the form of 11 points, viz: 50% cut in army expenses and civil service salaries, total prohibition, release of political prisoners. reforms of the CID department, changes in the Arms Act allowing for popular control of issue of firearms licenses, lowering of Rupee-Sterling exchange ratio, textiles protection and reservation of coastal shipping for Indians, 50% reduction in land revenue, and abolition of the salt tax and State's monopoly over salt production. It was quite a come-down from the Purna Swaraj resolution, but the points helped to concretize the national demand and relate it to specific grievances. Gandhi's statement evoked no response from the Government. The only way out now was Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes.

Gandhi decided to initiate his campaign by breaking the salt laws, which bewildered Nehru. Irwin was not worried. He said, At present, the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep

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me awake at night'. However, the issue of salt linked up the ideal of Swaraj with a concrete and universal grievance of the rural poor did.

Gandhi started the Dandi March (March 12—April 6) from Sabarmati Ashram to the sea coast. He cut through the heartland of Gujarat, with his 71 Ashram members drawn from all parts of India, including Sarojini Naidu, who was the first Indian Woman to become the President of the INC, also a leading poetess who authored a collection of poems called 'Golden Threshold'; Imam Saheb, Gandhi's Comrade of the South African struggle and Manilal, Gandhi's son. The socialist activist Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay persuaded Gandhi ji not to restrict the movement to men alone. It became the first nationalist activity in which women participated in large number. It attracted enormous publicity and attention in India and abroad. Gandhi declared on March 11, after he had himself violated the Salt-Law at Dandi. Further he stated that the movement could be accompanied by a boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and, indeed, 'everyone would have a free hand', subject to the pledges of non-violence and truth. In case of his own arrest the local leaders were, however, to be obeyed. Pressure from below made a reluctant Gandhi agree to the campaign for non-payment of revenue. In mid-May, after Gandhi's arrest, the Working Committee sanctioned non-payment of revenue in provinces where Ryotwari system prevails, a no Chowkidari tea campaign in the Zamindari provinces (not no-rent significantly enough), and violation of forest laws in the central provinces.

A wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. Salt laws were broken at many places. Women took an active part.

Along with Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the aged Swarup Rani, wife of Motilal Nehru and Kamla, wife of Jawaharlal, leading the movement. In Delhi alone, 1600 women were imprisoned. Vallabh Bhai Patel was arrested on March 7 in anticipation, and Jawaharlal on April 14, 1930. There were violent police-people clashes in Karachi, Calcutta, and Madras.

In Tamil Nadu, C Raj agopalchari led a salt march from Trichurapalli to Vedaraniyam on the Tanjore coast. By the time he was arrested on April 30 he had collected enough volunteers to keep the campaign going for quite some time. In Malabar, K Kelappan, the hero of the Vaikom Satyagrah, marched from Calicut to Payannur to break the salt law. A band of satyagrahis walked all the way from Sylhet in Assam to Noakhali on the Bengal coast to make salt. In Andhra, a number of Sibirams (camps) were set up in different districts to serve as the headquarters of the Salt Satyagraha, and bands of Satyagrahis marched through villages on their way to the coastal centres to defy the laws.

In Karnataka, a huge crowd invaded the Sanikatta salt works and faced lathis and bullets. In Bengal, the old Gandhian ashrams, regenerated by the flood of volunteers from the towns continued to sustain a powerful Salt Satyagraha in Midnapore and other coastal pockets.

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The districts of Balasore, Puri, and Cuttak in Orissa remained active centre of illegal salt manufacture.

Gandhi was arrested on May 5, 1930. His place was taken up by Abbas Tayabji. to make salt at the Government depot in Dharsana. He too was arrested, and his place, in turn, was taken up by Sorojini Naidu. The leaders were arrested and volunteers were beaten up.

The popular upsurge in Peshawar. capital of the North-West Frontier Province. deserves special mention. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had started educational and social reform work among hispathan countrymen from 1912, deriving inspiration successively from the Deoband Muslim Nationalist group, the Khilafat Movement. and the modernistic reforms of Amir Amanullah (the Afghan king whose progressive and pro-Soviet politics led to his overthrow in 1928). Badshah Khan. as he was popularly called since the mid 1920s. started the first Pushto political monthly Pakhtun in May 1928. organised a volunteer brigade. Khudai Khidmatgar, having red shirts as uniform for the Pathan regional nationalist unity and a struggle against Colonialism. By 1929. Ghaffar Khan had become a fervent disciple of Gandhi after attending the Lahore Congress. The membership of the Khudai Khidmatgars shot up from 500 to 50,000 in six months. The arrest of Badshah Khan and other leaders led to a massive anti-British upsurge in Peshawar with people confronting armoured cars and defying police firing for three hours at Kissakahani Bazar. Many were killed. The Government was able to restore order in Peshawar only after 10 days. On May 4. martial law was clamped on the NWFP. This was a province with 92% muslim population. Though Ghaffar Khan's own movement was confined to the settled districts of Peshawar. Kohat. Bannu. Dera Ismail Khan. and

Hazara, there were also a series of tribal incursions in the latter part of 1930.

Gandhi's arrest led to a massive wave of protest all over India. In Bombay. the crowd that spilled out into the streets was so large that the police just withdrew. Its ranks were swelled by thousands of textile and railway workers. Cloth merchants went on a six-day hartal. There were clashes and firing in Calcutta and Delhi. But it was the industrial city of Sholapur, in Maharashtra that came out with the fiercest response. The textile workers, who dominated the city. went on a strike from May 7 and along with other residents. They burnt liquor shops and attacked police posts'. law courts. municipal buildings and the railway stations. Order could be restored through martial law only after May 16. Something like a parallel government was set up for a few days.

It is interesting to note that the working class, predominant in the Sholapur upsurge, was quite active in some other places as well. In the early days of Civil Disobedience Movement. dock labourers in Karachi. Choolai Mill workers in Madras. Calcutta transport workers, and Budge-Budge Mill-hands were involved in clashes with the police after the arrest of Nehru and Gandhi. Such working class participation occurred despite the total exclusion of their specific working class grievances from the 11 points and Congress

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strategy in general and the aloofness of communists from Civil Disobedience due to their new ultraleft line, which considered the ideology of the INC as bourgeois and reactionary. In sharp contrast to what had happened after Chauri Chaura. Gandhi made no move to call off the movement this time, in face of the violent incidents at Peshawar and Sholapur. It was understood that the way to success lay not in retracting one's steps but by pushing ahead with the non-violent mainstream. despite sporadic incidents which were realistically recognised as more or less inevitable. Civil disobedience, once begun this time cannot be stopped and must not be stopped. In this. as in several other ways. 1930 marked a definite advance in radicalism over 1921-22. The stated objective now was complete independence, not the remedying of two specific 'wrongs' and demand for a vague Swaraj. The methods from the beginning involved a deliberate violation of law and not mere Non-cooperation with foreign rule. Consequently. the number of people jailed in 1930 was at last three times the 1921-22 figure of 92. 124. Participation now involved much greater risk than in 1921. for a frightened Government adopted a policy of senseless brutality even towards absolutely peaceful satyagrahis. Apart from life and limb. the meagre property of the poor was always at stake, for. the non-payment of land revenue, or Chowkidari tax was met by confiscation of household goods, implements, and even land. Another significant feature of the movement was the participation of women and teenagers. Civil Disobedience. in fact, marked a major step forward in the emancipation of Indian women.

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