

CHAPTER II

INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

1. Early Resistance Movements

The national movement in India actually started during the second half of the 19th century. However, isolated attempts in various parts of the country for driving out the British from India had started about a century earlier. After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the real power in Northern India passed into the hands of the British. The loss of independence itself provided the motive force for the struggle for freedom and, henceforward, Indians in various parts of the country commenced their efforts to throw off the yoke of alien rule. It took over a hundred years for this struggle to gain full momentum.

There were several factors which accelerated the pace of the national movement in India. The unscrupulous methods adopted by the British traders and their deliberate attempts to destroy Indian industry and handicrafts generated hatred towards them. After the grant of *Diwāni* in 1765 by emperor *Shāh-Ālam*, the officers of the East India Company extorted revenue from the cultivators with utmost severity. This aggravated agrarian misery and discontent. Moreover, the idea of domination which is inherent in foreign rule, imposes some basic hardships on the free development of the subject nations and builds up stresses and strains which no policy, however enlightened, can palliate. A vein of sentiment against the English runs throughout even in *Siyār-ul-Mutākhkhirīn* of *Ghulām Husain Khān* which was completed in 1783, only twenty-six years after the battle of Plassey. The manifestation of this anti-foreign mood even at the beginning of British rule was not, however, unfounded and bears a relation to the civil disturbances of the early period. Very seldom, during the period from 1757 to 1857, was the country free from either civil or military disturbances and there was plenty of opposition, often from substantial sections of the common people.

The paradoxical feature of the freedom movement was that the people of Bengal—where the transference of authority to the British was effected—generally showed no hostility against the British. The effect of centuries of misrule by a medieval theocracy had sapped the vitality of the Hindus in Bengal, which explained their indifference to the foreign conquerors. The address presented by the pundits of Bengal to Warren Hastings reflected in a certain measure the sense of happiness of the Hindus. Dwarka Nath Tagore expressed his conviction that the happiness of India lay in the hands of England. The liberal character of British administration and

the way in which the Company's affairs came in for criticism in England by Edmund Burke and Richard Sheridan made a profound impression upon the upper classes and the intelligentsia among the Hindus. By 1857, the people of Bengal had grown friendly, even devoted, to their British rulers, which accounts for their passive attitude to the Government during the Revolt of 1857.

Strange as it may appear, there was open acceptance of the British rule by the Hindu intelligentsia of Bengal. Eventually, it led to the ushering in of a period of renaissance in India. Several factors produced this result. It was initiated by the fall of Muslim power and the establishment of direct administration by the East India Company in Bengal as early as 1765. An educated middle class and a vigorous press began to flourish as a concomitant factor of British rule. Bengal also had an early start in the matter of direct impact of western ideas on its intelligentsia through English education. This period synchronized with the epoch of the French Revolution and the revolutionary era that followed it in Europe. Tremendous impact was felt in all fields of social, religious and political activity. With the spread of English education, there was a distinct yearning for freedom and a desire for political reforms as a first step towards this goal. This was followed by the development of that sense of nationality and patriotism and conceptions of social justice and political rights which were imported from the West along with English education. The new urge for freedom in all fields began with Raja Rammohun Roy, (1772-1833) who introduced what is now known as the constitutional agitation to secure political rights and social reforms. The Raja had a passionate love of liberty and longed to see it restored to all the nations, particularly those of Asia. His famous memorial, drawn up in a spirit of protest against the Press Ordinance of 1823, constitutes a great landmark in the development of political ideas of the time. Several other communications, sent by Rammohun Roy to the Board of Control in 1831 sufficiently indicate the breadth of his vision and the wide field of administrative reforms which engaged the attention of the educated Hindus in the first half of the 19th century. The subjects included the fixation of a maximum rent to be paid by the cultivator, trial by jury, separation of the office of judge and magistrate, codification of law and many other subjects which anticipated the demands made by the Indian National Congress at a later time.

Growth of Political Consciousness. The agitation of the Europeans against the attempt to extend the jurisdiction of the Company's criminal courts to British nationals, who were then subject only to the Supreme Court of Calcutta, had great effect on the development of an intense political sense. The violent attitude of the European community against the so-called 'Black Acts' generated a feeling of alarm. Consequently, the need was keenly felt for a strong political association not only as a defensive measure against European challenges, but also to represent Indian

views to Parliament, specially on the eve of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1853. This resulted in the setting up of a new political association in Bengal named the British Indian Association (1851). A branch of the same organization founded in Madras developed into an independent organization and a similar political association was set up in Bombay.

The petition sent to Parliament in the name of the British Indian Association represented the grievances of Indians and suggested administrative reforms at the time of the renewal of the Charter in 1853. It reflects the extent to which political ideas had developed in India at that time. The Association asked for the establishment of a legislature of popular character and on the same footing as those of most of the colonies of Her Majesty's Government. The petitioners accordingly proposed that the legislature of British India should be constituted with 17 members, including three representatives of the people and one nominated official from each of the Presidencies. The petition also pleaded for the reduction of salaries of the higher officers, abolition of taxes, such as the salt levy and stamp duties. Occasionally, the Association also stressed the need for throwing open all offices to Indians, introduction of trial by jury, abolition of discrimination between Indians and Europeans before the law and many other such demands which anticipated those made by the Indian National Congress half a century later. Thus, the British Indian Association played a great part in the development of a sense of solidarity among Indians during the second half of the 19th century. It suggested various measures of reform and tried to rouse the interest of the masses in political questions by framing questionnaires on important topics of the day. It was served by distinguished publicists and leaders like Peary Chandra Mitra, Ram Gopal Ghose, Kisor Chand Mitra, Govinda Chandra Dutta, Dakhinranjan Mukerji and, above all, by Debendranath Tagore, the founder-Secretary of the Association. The latter stated for the first time that the Indians had not profited by their connection with Great Britain to the extent they had a right to look for. He pleaded for spread of education, relief from the East India Company's monopolies, encouragement of indigenous industries and other measures of social and political progress.

The activities of the British Indian Association may justly be regarded as a pioneering effort towards the political awakening of India in the pre-1857 period. Two broad ideas—one for a united stand by all Indians and the other for demanding political rights and administrative reforms—worked simultaneously to produce a feeling of oneness.

The freedom movement in India in the pre-1857 period was an expression of two contradictory ideas, one anti-British and the other pro-British. The latter related to the birth of nationalism and patriotism as a reaction to the devotion of the people to the principles of British administration and English education. The anti-British movement of this period was

reflected in a series of political and civil commotions, which originated from hostile reactions against the British conquests. It gained momentum with the actual experience of the evils of British rule. Though apparently contradictory, the two attitudes were but two aspects of the same movement for freedom. The many sources of affliction under British rule reinforced the ideas of political awakening stemming from the impact of western culture in the same way as the demand for social justice and political rights— notions imported from the West— offered justifications for and were illustrated in the civil disturbances of the period.

During the early 19th century, circumstances favoured the growth of the Company's rule in India. The British were advancing their power steadily, not so much by a policy of war and conquest carried out in the name of the British Crown, as by a process of slow penetration. In the early stages, they were careful not to challenge the suzerainty of the Mughal emperor nor to claim sovereignty over areas which they were virtually ruling over. The curious situation of the merchants exercising ruling power over the country and yet following the conventions of other *shābadārs* in describing themselves as servants of the Mughal emperor, offering *nazr* to him and getting *khil'at* or titles in return, tended to create confusion in the minds of the people. It was, therefore, not clear to them if any help rendered to the British in their wars and conquests would go against the interests of their country. When, however, it was realized that the British had established their grip over India, they began to react in a different way. This realization that they had been enslaved by a foreign race came gradually, first when the rule of the Company had expanded upto the Sutlej and Lord Hastings showed a tendency to disown the Mughal emperor, but more pointedly in 1835 when the Company felt strong enough to strike coins without the emperor's name. During the same year, Persian was replaced by English as the language of the court. The cumulative effect of all these changes was a sense of awareness of the political subjugation of the country. It affected the minds not only of the civil population, but also of the members of the armed forces. It is evident, therefore, that the detestation of British rule and the accompanying unrest, as testified to by the British officers themselves, was not due to any pre-planned organization or a plot or conspiracy of a few individuals or groups. It was something which flowed spontaneously from the natural reaction of the people to the open manifestation of British policies.

Some British officials found in this unrest an eager desire for emancipation from the British yoke. That it was regarded as such is evident from what Lord Amherst, Lord William Bentinck and others spoke regarding widespread hatred and detestation of British rule and of a constant danger to the English in India. As yet, however, there had not been any combination between the different disaffected elements of the country. The growing discontent of the people was further aggravated by two measures in parti-

cular, namely, the land revenue settlements of James Thomason and others and the annexation of Avadh by Dalhousie. These actions made the union of civil rebellion and military revolt inevitable. The former measure created a class of dispossessed nobles and landlords and the dissolution of the kingdom of Avadh gave a rude shock to the Indian soldiers in the Bengal Army who were recruited mostly from that area. The power of the Company had been rendered strong by the service of the sepoys and then utilized to overthrow their king. This created a rebellious mood which was so clearly in evidence in the feelings of the sepoys during the Revolt of 1857.

The history of the early rebellions shows that the discontent of the sepoys could be attributed either to an impolitic or unjust cutting of pay or an interference with the religious beliefs of the soldiers. The most singular episode of the sepoy revolt having a definite bearing on the future is the mutiny which took place at Barrackpore in 1824. The 47th Native Infantry refused to embark for Burma unless the government allowed two rupees to each soldier per month as travelling expense. They were ordered to communicate their willingness to march on pain of death. On November 2, they mustered as usual when on their refusal to obey the command, Sir Edward Paget, Commander-in-Chief, gave orders to fire. In a moment, grape shot and cannon bullets rained upon them. This military revolt was a disastrous event remotely forecasting the spirit of 1857. Barrackpore thus became the historic site where so many sepoys had died. Many other similar rebellions took place after that, exhibiting the same motivations and feelings, and showing that 'a revolt became a mere question of time and opportunity'. It will, therefore, be realized that the earlier disturbances, both civil and military, formed the background and culminated in the Revolt of 1857.

2. Revolt of 1857

In the early months of 1857, the sepoys at Barrackpore exhibited the same rebellious spirit. On March 29, the Adjutant of the 34th Native Infantry was wounded by a sepoy on the parade ground which gave the sepoy movement a new turn, but there was a lull for a considerable period. On May 10, the sepoys at Meerut rose in revolt and killed their British officers. A call was issued for a march to Delhi. The decision to 'March to Delhi' was an event of outstanding importance because it invested the movement with a political purpose. This step of turning to Delhi and proclaiming allegiance to the Mughal emperor, it appears, was a spontaneous reaction of the common soldier as it happened in the case of many other regiments similarly situated during the revolt of 1857. For nearly four months, Delhi remained the centre of the revolt. At Delhi resided

Bahadur Shah, the Mughal emperor, who gave the movement a traditional country-wide basis. The political theory of the Revolt as reflected in this particular attitude of the sepoys tended to highlight the fact that Bahadur Shah was still regarded as a source of political authority. Correspondingly, it implied that the source of the Company's authority in India lay not in the Charters of the Kings of England, nor in the Acts of the British Parliament, but in the *farmāns* of the Mughal emperor. The only legal title of the East India Company was to act as the *Diwān* or agent of the Mughal emperor. But, by and large, the trading Company was fast becoming the potential ruler of the country. The British attitude became increasingly firm with the rapid extension of the Company's territory in India. Pressure was brought to bear upon Bahadur Shah, in the form of an increased pension, to surrender his imperial title in favour of an innocuous one, 'King of Delhi', but to no effect. Next, the Company planned to end Mughal rule in Delhi and, in 1849, Dalhousie actually proposed the removal of the house of Timūr from Delhi, for it was believed that the strength of the dynasty lay in its association with the city. Eight years later, the revolt flared up. Viewed in this light, the revolt of the Indian army was not a challenge to the legitimate government of the country. The army attempted to destroy the power of the Company with the purpose of helping the emperor, the suzerain *de jure*, to resume his sway. 'What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence, for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the king of Delhi was the rightful representative'.

The most important thing about the Revolt of 1857 was that it was a conjunction of a spirit of disaffection of the earlier age and the anticipation of freedom which the initial successes of the military 'mutinies' tended to excite. The famous Azamgarh proclamation which sets forth the views of the rebels in a convincing manner for the purpose of winning over the *zamīndārs*, merchants, public servants, and pundits and fakirs to their cause, proves the adequacy of the thesis of 'Civil Disturbances' of the earlier period and links up the mutiny and civil rebellion of 1857 in the eventual composition of a revolt. The sepoys were fighting for their castes, the chiefs for their kingdoms, the landed classes for their estates, the masses for fear of conversion to Christianity and the Muslims in particular for the restoration of their old sway. Yet, all in their own way were fighting against their common enemy—the British. This fact gave the uprising of 1857 its sweep and depth unlike any of the wars the Indians fought against the English. Few circumstances are perhaps more in evidence throughout the sepoy 'mutinies' and, indeed, the broad fact which stands on official admission is that the Indian 'mutiny' was actually a rebellion. The sepoys became the spearheads, the instruments and means of an upsurge in various parts of the country.

Thus the Revolt of 1857 was more than a military and feudal insurrection. The uprising may not have conformed to the character of a nationalist movement nor, perhaps, was its course exclusively influenced by patriotic motives. Patriotism was reinforced by an appeal to religious passion before the people rose. Yet, it cannot be denied that it was the first combined attempt by many classes of people to challenge a foreign power*

3. Rising Tide of Nationalism

The failure of the outbreak of 1857 opened a new phase in India's struggle for freedom. The idea of open armed resistance against the British was now at a discount, though it was not altogether discarded as is evident from the Santhal outbreak (1855) in Bihār and the Indigo disturbances (1859-1861) in Bengal. The Wahābis too carried on a relentless struggle against the British, which could only be suppressed after the state trials of Ambāla (1864), Patna (1865), Mālda (September 1870) and Rājmahāl (October 1870). Important leaders of the movement—Yahya Ali, Ahmadullah, Amiruddin, Ibrahim Mandal, and Rafique Mandal—were tried, convicted and transported for life. Similarly, the Kūkās in the Punjab, under their Guru, Ram Singh, put up a stout resistance against the British (1872), resulting in many casualties and the deportation of their Guru to Rangoon where he died in 1885. These were, however, only stray incidents showing that violence was not dead. It was the intellectual movement which now dominated politics. The political ideas and organizations which had taken root before 1857 now flowered into a new national or political consciousness. This was brought about by the sudden revelation of the past glory of India through the works of scholars like William Jones, James Prinsep, Max Muller, James Fergusson, H.H. Wilson, R.G. Bhandarkar and Rajendralal Mitra, and through excavations and explorations carried on under the supervision of Alexander Cunningham. The preachings of the various religious associations as the Ārya Samāj, Theosophical Society and Rāma-krishna Mission also helped to foster pride in the country and its glorious past.

To these factors was added the discontent of the intelligentsia against British rule. The economic ruin of the country, caused by the selfish policy of a mercantile England, was emphasized by the chronic poverty of the people and recurrence of famines. Even when millions were dying of famine in the South, a magnificent durbar (January 1, 1877) was held at Delhi and its expenses had to be borne by the famished people of India. Another disconcerting feature was the racial arrogance of the English. Rude behaviour towards Indians, sometimes accompanied by brutal

* For a detailed account of the Great Revolt of 1857 please refer to Chapter I.

assault, striking of servants and ordinary men on the slightest provocation and turning even respectable Indians out of railway compartments, was quite common. While Englishmen were let off with very light punishment even for heinous crimes, Indians were severely punished for the slightest offences or discourtesy to Englishmen. Indians felt deeply humiliated and there was increasing bitterness of feelings between the two. The question of recruitment of Indians to the covenanted civil service was a further source of resentment to the educated classes. Repeated representations were made by Indian leaders for simultaneous examinations in India and England and raising of the age, but the Government remained obdurate. These and other causes of discontent gave rise to vigorous political agitations. As already noticed, organized political associations, such as the British Indian Association and its sister organisations were working in that direction.

Prominent among the individual leaders who advocated such advanced political views were Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee (1844-1906), Dadabhai Naorji (1825-1917), Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925), Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915), Dinshaw Edulji Wacha (1844-1936), Rajnarayan Basu (1826-1899), Anandamohan Bose (1846-1906) and Kristodas Pal (1838-1884). As early as the eighteen-fifties, Rajnarayan thought of India's independence and declared: "Our nationalism could be worth-while only when it was based on a popular sense of independence". The *Jāṭīya Melā* (national gathering) organized in Calcutta and the *Jāṭīya Sabhā* (instituted in 1870) became powerful factors in the growth of common national feeling among the educated classes. Kristodas Pal, a veteran journalist, wrote in 1874 in his famous paper *The Hindoo Patriot*: "Our attention should, therefore, be directed to Home Rule for India".

These advanced ideas led to the establishment on September 25, 1875 of a new political association, the Indian League, which was looked upon as 'the first marked sign of awakening of the people on the side of India to political life'. The Indian League was, however, soon replaced by the Indian Association (July 26, 1876) which aimed at the organization of public opinion on an all-India level and one of its main objectives was the unification of the Indian people on the basis of common political interests and aspirations, the promotion of friendly feelings between Hindus and Muslims and the inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day. It was about this time that the *Sārvajanik Sabhā* was founded in Poona (1870) with M.G. Ranade (1842-1901) as its moving spirit. This organization gave wide publicity to popular grievances against the bureaucracy. In northern India, the working of this spirit was marked by the emergence of the *Ārya Samāj*, founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) whose watchwords were 'Back to the Vedas' and 'Āryasthān for Aryans'. "The latter" Sir Valentine Chirol remarked, "has sometimes barely disguised more than a merely Platonic desire to see the British quit India."

The harsh and oppressive measures adopted by Lord Lytton (1876-1880), his Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act and the abolition of duty on imported cotton goods were bitterly resented by Indians and helped to stimulate their political activities. In 1876, when the age limit of the competitors for the Indian Civil Service examination was lowered from 21 to 19, the Indian Association at once took the opportunity to start an all-India agitation against the measure by 'uniting the provinces through a sense of common grievances and aspirations of common resolve'. Surendranath Banerjea's tours in different parts of India (1877) were rightly acclaimed as 'the first successful attempt of its kind at uniting India on a political basis'. Encouraged by the spontaneous response all over India, and taking advantage of the agitation over the Ilbert Bill and the imprisonment of Surendranath Banerjea in 1883, the Indian Association conceived the idea of an All-India National Conference which was approved by all the branches of the Association in North India as well as by the leading political organizations of Bombay and Madras. Many politically conscious individuals like Tarapada Banerji and Kristodas Pal had also suggested a meeting of the delegates from all parts of India at Calcutta. This conference met in Calcutta in December 1883 and may justly be regarded as the precursor of the Indian National Congress, being conceived on the same lines and having an identical programme.

4. Indian National Congress.

A retired civilian, Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912), son of the founder of the Radical Party in England, had addressed an open letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University (March 1, 1883) urging them to organize an association for the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India. Hume viewed with deep concern the tremendous unrest during the closing years of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty. He had special means to know about the condition of the country and wrote that failure to counteract this unrest would spell danger to British rule in India. Hume was determined to provide a safety valve for the escape of this 'great and growing force', and enlisted official favour in support of such an organization. The Governor-General, Lord Dufferin (1884-1888), told him that 'he found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people and that it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organization through which the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion'. The idea of organizing an all-India political body was also mooted at Madras at a private meeting of 17 leaders who assembled after the Theosophical Convention held there in December 1884. Hume expedited his plans and, after consultations with leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji

(1844-1906), Pherozezshah Mehta and others, decided to hold at Bombay a meeting of representatives from all parts of India. This was "expected to form the germ of a native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative Government". The first Indian National Congress which met in Bombay in 1885 under the presidentship of Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee, consisted only of 72 delegates. Henceforth the Congress met every year in some important town of India, the second and third sessions being held, respectively, at Calcutta and Madras under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji and Badruddin Tyabji. The Congress gradually developed into a powerful political organization with an all-India character. The number of delegates rose steadily and, at the fourth Congress at Allahābād (1888) there were 1,248 delegates. It focussed the political ideas of English-educated Indians and gave them a definite shape and form. It professed unswerving loyalty to the British throne and cherished unbounded faith in the liberalism and sense of justice of British statesmen. Its whole endeavour was to rouse British consciousness to the inherent justice of the Indian claims. Year after year, it pressed for examinations for the Indian Civil Service, simultaneously in India and England, the right to carry arms, grant of Imperial Military Commissions to Indians, appointment of Indians to Executive Councils, and elected representatives in a majority in the Councils. It paid much attention to economic problems and, in particular, pressed steadily for reduction of military expenditure. Though the Congress followed a policy of moderation in its earlier stages, it indirectly helped the political advancement of India in various ways. The annual gatherings of leading representatives from different parts of India gave reality to the ideal of Indian unity, developed patriotic feelings, and awakened political consciousness among the steadily increasing circle of English-educated Indians. Dadabhai Naoroji, even visited England and carried on propaganda there in the name of the Congress and on behalf of the people of India. He was able to win the sympathies of a large number of Englishmen, including William Sproston Caine, M.P. (1842-1903), William Digby (1849-1904), Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), George Yule (1829-1892), M.P., Sir Henry Cotton (1845-1915) and Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900). In July 1889, a British Committee of the Congress was established in England and a journal *India* was also brought out. In 1893, Sir William Wedderburn (1838-1918) and W.S. Caine set up an Indian Parliamentary Committee to agitate in the House of Commons for Indian political reforms. 'The growth of the infant Hercules alarmed the officialdom' and even Lord Dufferin, who had played an important role in the foundation of the Indian National Congress, felt sadly disillusioned even before he left India and referred to the educated middle class represented by the Congress as a 'microscopic minority' who had no right to speak on behalf of the people. Gladstone

had already warned his countrymen of the danger of the 'rising aspirations of this great people'. Writers like Theodore Beck (the first Principal of the Muslim Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh) suggested that the time had come to 'use once more that iron in the velvet glove and to put down this kind of agitation'. But officials thought that the best way to kill the Congress was to have countrywide demonstrations against it. There were several associations already in the field. The United Indian Patriotic Association of which Sir Syed Ahmed (1817-1898) was the secretary, and the 'British Association of Oudh' joined hands, with funds placed lavishly at their disposal. In spite of his liberal sympathies, Sir Syed would have nothing to do with the Congress and advised his co-religionists to follow his example. He regarded the Congress struggle as 'a civil war without arms. The ultimate object of the Congress was to rule the country and although they wished to do it in the name of all people of India, the Muslims would be helpless as they would be in a minority'. "The Muslim recoil from Congress nationalism", according to Professor Coupland, "was mainly Ahmad's doing." The Patriotic Association brought out pamphlets and carried on propaganda showing the 'seditious' character of the Indian National Congress. The Central National Mahommedan Association formed in Calcutta by Syed Ameer Ali (1878) and the Muhammadan Literary and Scientific Society founded in 1863 by Abdul Latif Khan refused to send delegates to the second Congress when approached by its Reception Committee. The fear of Hindu majority thus held back the Muslims from joining the Congress in large numbers, though it had such distinguished Muslims as Badruddin Tyabji and Rahamatulla Muhammad Sayani (1847-1902) as its Presidents in 1887 and 1896 respectively.

Despite bitter and unfriendly criticism, the Congress forged ahead. Its appeal to the masses at the Allahābād session (1888) brought forth a severe rejoinder from Sir Auckland Colvin (then Lt. Governor of the North-Western Provinces). Dufferin was, however, an astute statesman. Publicly he denounced the ultimate ambition of the Congress as 'a very big jump into the unknown', and declared that 'in the present condition of India there can be no real or effective representation of the people with their enormous number, their multifarious interests and their tessellated minorities.' But, at the same time, he suggested to the Home Government to take steps for liberalizing the provincial councils which 'is all that reasonable leaders even of the most advanced section of "Young India" dream of'. These recommendations ultimately led to the passing of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 which did not satisfy even the moderates. Their leader, Gopalkrishna Gokhale (1866-1915), declared: "If the officer who drafts the Rules for Bombay had been asked to sit down with the deliberate purpose of framing a scheme to defeat the object of the Act of 1892, he could not have done better".

While the Congress was thus continuing its agitation on constitutional lines, with a firm faith in the 'providential character' of British rule in India and an equally robust and sincere sentiment of loyalty and devotion to the British Crown, a new wave of nationalism was sweeping over Bengal and Mahārāshtra. The most significant feature of this nationalism was an intense love of the motherland, based on a conception of its past greatness and future potentialities. The life and precepts of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and his triumphant tour in the United States (1893) not only raised the prestige of India abroad, but also quickened the sense of national pride and patriotism among Indians. The literature produced in Bengal during the period also increased patriotic fervour and national consciousness.

Resurgent Nationalism The high priest of this new national fervour was Bankimchandra Chatterji (1838-1894), the author of *Ānandamath*. He wielded his mighty pen to ridicule the mendicant policy of the Congress which only put up an annual show for 3 days. The cry was taken up by others and sharp protests were heard against the Congress. Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) wrote a series of articles against it in the Bombay weekly *Indu Prakash* between August 1893 and March 1894 under the heading 'New Lamps for Old'. The Congress leaders at Bombay felt alarmed at the tone of these articles and pressure was put upon the editor to stop their publication. But soon there appeared a great nationalist leader in Mahārāshtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who refused to give way.

A great scholar, Tilak, however, chose to become a politician and a man of action, being prompted by the impulse of liberating his country from foreign rule. His message had a special appeal to his people who had lost their independence. The Marāṭhā country, therefore, proved a congenial soil for fostering the new spirit. Valentine Chirol rightly called him the 'Father of Indian Unrest'. Tilak made it the great object of his life to diffuse the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the masses. For this purpose, he inaugurated the Śivājī festival and transformed the traditional worship of Gaṇapati in Mahārāshtra into an altogether new form. The Sedition Committee appointed in 1918 reported that at the time of celebrations, leaflets were distributed 'urging the Marathas to rebel as Sivaji did', declaring that the danger of subjection to foreign rule penetrated the bosom of all, and urging that a religious outbreak should be made the first step towards the overthrow of the foreign power. Thus, Tilak made full use of the two great forces of religion and history to achieve his objective. Through his journals the *Kesari* (in Marāṭhī) and the *Mahratta* (in English), he called for nationalist fervour and asserted that only strong constitutional means and not the policy of mendicancy followed by the Congress would lead to the goal. In the Punjab, Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) and in Bengal, Bepinchandra Pal (1858-1932) also expressed similar views and criticized the Congress, for 'its propaganda was confined to a few English-

educated persons, carried on in English and was meant for the ears of the authorities rather than the people'. It was Tilak who, for the first time, set out before the nation, in a clear manner, the attainment of self-government or *swarāj* rather than reforms in administration as the ideal, and lastly it was Tilak who carried the gospel of self-help and political agitation to the masses. Meanwhile a severe famine struck the Deccan (1896-1897) and 'people perished like flies'. Tilak organized a corps of volunteers to help the famine-stricken people and even launched a no-tax campaign among the peasants. The bubonic plague which burst out in Poona in all its severity, further added to the hardship of the people. The forced segregation and the compulsory domiciliary visits created a feeling of panic and alarm among the people. The inquisitorial searches carried out by the Plague Committee (with the help of British soldiers) in private houses and places of worship created a widespread discontent which culminated in the murder of W.C. Rand (the Chairman of the Poona Plague Committee) and Lt. Ayerst, another British officer (June 22, 1897).

The Chapekar brothers—Damodar and Balkrishna—were tried for the murders and sentenced to death. Tilak was arrested on a charge of inciting disaffection against the Government by means of his articles in the *Kesari* and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. Tilak's arrest sent a wave of discontent and indignation throughout the country and 'even the untutored mill-hands fasted in protest' and students in colleges and schools 'wore black mark indicative of the deep sorrow they felt in their hearts.' Surendranath Banerjea gave expression to these feelings of sorrow when he declared at the Congress session of 1897: "A nation is in tears".

Tilak was undoubtedly the embodiment of the spirit of the new school of politics. He rebelled against the attitude of prayerfulness and importunity and the method of political mendicancy which characterized the Congress. He strove hard to make the movement truly national by bringing into it the mass of people. It has been rightly observed that "Tilak brought political philosophy in India from heaven to earth, from the Council Hall or the Congress *mandap* to the street and the market". While Tilak popularized politics and gave it a force and vitality it had hitherto lacked, Aurobindo Ghose spiritualized it. He reviewed the theoretical teachings of Bankimchandra and Vivekananda and brought them into the field of practical politics. Both Tilak and Lajpat Rai regarded the redemption of their motherland as the true religion, and as the only means of salvation. The difference between the old and the new school is best illustrated in their respective attitudes towards the goal of the movement. The former or the moderates, as they came to be known later on, wanted reforms in administration under the aegis of the British rule, while the extremists held that "good government is no substitute for self-government". Tilak admirably summed up the position in one sentence: "Home Rule is my

birth-right and I will have it". That this spirit had already permeated the Congress by 1897 is clear from the remarks of Frederick Grubb, a British journalist, who attended the annual session of the Congress in 1897: "Formerly it was a Congress of petitioners, now it is a Congress of men and women determined to win their freedom".

Nowhere did Tilak's methods and organization attract more attention than in Bengal which followed his example in training school boys and students in gymnastic societies for purposes of political agitation. Endeavours were even made to introduce the cult of Śivāji and to organize festivals on the lines of Gaṇapati and Śivāji festivals in Mahārāshtra. The Śivāji festival, however, did not become popular in Bengal. Here, the worship of Goddess Kālī made a stronger appeal to the English-educated middle class of the 19th century. Prominent among those who carried on the work of Tilak in its true spirit were Aurobindo Ghose and Bepinchandra Pal in Bengal and Lajpat Rai in the Punjab.

Repressive Measures. Lord Curzon came to India (1899-1905) with a strong determination to stem the rising tide of nationalism. He inflicted "in almost breathless succession one contemptuous measure after another to which the people took the strongest exception. The dominant note of his policy throughout this period was that India was and must remain a possession of England, that England's imperial grip over her should be tightened and that no political advance should be thought of". He completely officialized the Calcutta Corporation and gave it a European majority by reducing the total membership by a third. A similar policy was pursued in the Indian Universities Act when he took away the autonomy of the universities and, in the same year (1904), the Official Secrets Act extended a good deal the scope of the term 'sedition'. The climax was reached by the partition of Bengal (1905) which was considered to be a subtle attack on the growing solidarity of Indian nationalism. The official plea that the province had grown unwieldy, thus impairing administrative efficiency in the outlying eastern districts, was only part of the reason. As Lord Minto (1905-1910), who succeeded Curzon pointed out, "Partition might have been effected with much greater regard to Bengali sentiment if instead of the sacrifice of a part of the Eastern Provinces, Bihar and Orissa had been handed over respectively to the United and Central Provinces". Sir Henry Cotton was of the considered opinion that it was "part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power and to destroy the political tendencies of a patriotic spirit." The Bengalis felt 'humiliated, insulted and tricked' and resorted to a vigorous agitation to get the wrong undone. Never in the history of British India was any measure by Government opposed so vehemently or persistently and with such unanimity as the partition of Bengal. *The Statesman*, an English daily of Calcutta, wrote on August 10, 1905: "There never was a time in the history of British India, when public feeling

and public opinion were so little regarded by the supreme Government as they are by the present administration", and it warned the Government that "just as religions thrive on persecution, so there was nothing half so effectual as the systematic disregard of public opinion for fostering public political discontent." It is estimated that, between December 1903 and October 1905, about 2,000 protest meetings were held and the political associations and newspapers carried on a tearing and raging campaign against this measure. Lord Minto informed the Home authorities: "The opinion is decidedly that there has been a want of consideration for local sentiment, that people have not been consulted who ought to have been consulted and that the overbearing tone of Curzon's speeches on several occasions has tended seriously to increase the bitter feeling which exists". Curzon's obstinate refusal to pay any heed to popular views in this matter sounded the death-knell of constitutional agitation, and, amidst unprecedented scenes of enthusiasm, resolutions were passed at a huge public meeting held on August 7, 1905 at Calcutta, to boycott British goods, and adopt *swadeshi* (indigenous) goods and to spread national education. It was followed by hundreds of public meetings, picketing of shops where foreign goods were sold, clashes with police, lathi blows, imprisonment of volunteers, flogging, expulsion of students, etc.

The ineffectiveness of the Congress to change the decision of the Government enabled the group led by Tilak to make its voice felt in the deliberations of the Congress. During its session held in 1906 at Calcutta, the Congress not only endorsed their plans but for the first time in its history laid down as its goal, 'the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British colonies', which the President Dadabhai Naoroji, summed up in one word '*swarāj*'. The *swadeshi* movement spread to other parts of India and according to the confidential report of the Intelligence Branch, boycott and *swadeshi* movements assumed an all-India character even towards the end of 1905. As to its results, Surendranath Banerjea observed: "What we could not achieve in 500 meetings extending over 2 years' time, we secured by a boycott lasting for a period of 3 months." The moderates in the Congress, however, fought shy of the idea of boycott, though they accepted *swadeshi*. Gokhale, their leader, argued that the term 'boycott' had a sinister meaning as it implied a vindictive desire to injure another and should be discarded. The extremists, however, were of the opinion that the twin ideas of *swadeshi* and boycott were complementary to each other as one could not succeed without the other. The moderate party criticized both the end and the means of the extremists and characterized them as impracticable. It was the difference on these points which led to the final clash between the two wings of the Congress. The 'Boycott Resolution' passed by the Congress at Vārānasi (Benares) at the instance of the extremists was a sort of compromise and its confirmation at Calcutta was resented by the moderates who prepared themselves for a show of

strength at the venue of the next session which was changed from Nāgpur, a stronghold of the extremists, to Surat where the moderate leader Phero-zeshah Mehta had a great following. The extremists genuinely feared that the moderates were bent upon altering the resolutions on *swadeshi*, boycott, national education and *swarāj* passed at Calcutta. Tilak's efforts to get an assurance that these resolutions would not be whittled down by the moderates at Surat were of no avail. It resulted in a free fight at the Congress meeting and the police had to be called in to restore order. The moderates immediately afterwards drew up a new constitution and declared their objective to be the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British empire. The extremists were thus excluded from the party.

Strong Nationalist Reaction. While the moderates thus ruled the Congress in splendid isolation for nine years, the national aspirations goaded impatient patriotism to extremes. The policy of repression adopted by the Government, especially after the partition of Bengal, gave rise to a new party, later on known as the Revolutionary Party, whose declared object was the independence of the motherland, for the attainment of which they would not hesitate to use arms. Secret societies and physical culture centres had already been established in the latter half of the 19th century in some parts of the country, especially in Bengal and Bihār, on the model of Carbonari organizations in Italy. Most important of these was the secret organization of Vasudeo Balwant Phadke in Mahārāshtra, who gathered around him a band of Ramosis and Dhangars to wage war against the British Government. He was, however, arrested and sentenced to transportation for life and died in prison at Aden in 1883. There is also a reference to a secret society founded by the two brothers, Damodar Chapekar and Balkrishna Chapekar.

The next phase of the secret revolutionary movement was developed through the efforts of Aurobindo, who sent Jatindrānath Bandopadhyaya to Calcutta for organizing revolutionary activities in Bengal. Soon a network of these societies was set up throughout Bengal, and at some places in Orissa. Most prominent among them was the *Anusilan Samiti* or the 'Society for the Promotion of Culture and Training' which was established by Barindra Kumar Ghose (brother of Aurobindo Ghose) and his friends in 1906. The anti-partition agitation, with its insistence on enforcing a boycott of foreign goods and supplanting them entirely by *swadeshi* products, as also its enlistment of school and college students in picketing operations gave ample opportunity for the preaching of revolutionary doctrines. The rout of the Greeks by the Turks, the massacre of Christians in West Asia and the resounding victories of Japan over Russia further emboldened the nationalists. Arms were collected and bombs manufactured. Revolutionary doctrines spread rapidly among the

youth and on December 6, 1907, an attempt to blow up the train of Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, was made near Midnapore. On 23rd December, B.C. Allen, a former District Magistrate of Dacca, was shot in the back, though not fatally, at a railway station. On April 30, 1908, at Muzaffarpur in Bihār, a bomb was thrown into a carriage in which two ladies, Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, were driving. Both of them were killed. The bomb was intended for D.H. Kingsford, a judge, who had incurred the displeasure of the revolutionaries. Of the two young men arrested, Khudiram Bose was hanged while Profulla Chaki shot himself dead. The discovery of a secret manufactory of bombs and explosives in the outskirts of Calcutta in 1908 led to the trial of a number of persons in the famous Alipore Conspiracy Case. In August 1908, Kanai Lal Dutt and Satyen Bose, shot dead in jail a comrade who had turned approver. In the Dacca Conspiracy Case, Pulin Behari Das and two of his associates, Ashutoshdas Gupta and Jyotirmoy Roy figured prominently and were awarded heavy sentences. The movement continued and its most spectacular act before 1914-1918 was done in 1912 when the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was riding an elephant in a state procession through Delhi. A bomb was thrown which wounded him and killed the attendant just behind him. Amir Chand, Avadh Behari, Bal Mukand and Basanta Kumar Biswas were arrested in this connection and sentenced to death. Rash Behari Bose, said to be the brain behind the conspiracy, could not be apprehended.

The arrest and deportation of the Punjab leaders, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, in 1907, and the passing of the unpopular Punjab Colonization Bill led to riots at Lahore, Rāwalpindi and Lyallpur. Endeavours were even made to incite the troops at Ferozepore and Lyallpur to revolt. In Madras, disturbances followed after a series of public lectures by Bepinchandra Pal and Chidamabaram Pillai. In June 1911, Ashe, the District Magistrate of Tirunelveli (then Tinnevely), was shot dead by a young Brāhmaṇa, Vanchi Aiyar. The killing of Sir William Curzon Wylie by Madan Lal Dhingra (1909) was attributed to the revolutionary activities of Shyamji Krishna Verma and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Shyamji Krishna Verma's Indian Home Rule Society in London brought out the *Indian Sociologist*, a penny monthly. The seditious writings therein became the subject-matter of questions in Parliament. Madam K.R. Cama, a Parsi lady and Har Dayal were the two other revolutionaries who carried on ceaseless propaganda abroad for the liberation of India during this period (1908-1910).

There was a wave of unrest throughout the country which was fully exploited by the revolutionaries. Lord Hardinge II (1910-1916) wrote in his book, *My Indian Years*: "...during the three or four years immediately preceding the Darbar the average had been one political murder every fortnight". The extremist movement also drew its incentive and encourage-

ment from a powerful press, which included the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* of Tilak, the *Vande Mataram* patronized by Aurobindo Ghose, the *New India* of Bepinchandra Pal, the *Sandhya* of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya and the *Yugantar* of Bhupendranath Dutta (brother of Swami Vivekananda) and Barindrakumar Ghose.

For checking the 'malignant growth' of revolutionary crimes, to quote Montagu, the British Government decided on a policy of 'blended repression and concession'. The Government tried to suppress the extremists with official acts, namely, the Explosives Substances Act (1908), the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act (1907), the Press Act (1908), etc. Aurobindo Ghose was prosecuted for conspiracy to wage war against the King. Tilak was imprisoned for 6 years on a charge of sedition and deported to Mandalay. Lajpat Rai had been exiled and Bepinchandra Pal was already in jail in 1907.

Divide and Rule Policy. While the repression went on, the Government sought to conciliate the moderates, who were also getting impatient at the Government's policy, by a proposal to introduce partial self-government and thus to leave the extremists alone in the wilderness. Gokhale had also warned Minto that the whole younger generation of India was going over to the extremists' side and was attracted by doctrines preached by them of 'getting rid of British rule'. He told the Viceroy that an immediate announcement of reforms could alone save the situation. British writers on Indian affairs, like Walter Lawrence, Private Secretary to Lord Curzon, and Valentine Chirol were alarmed at the growth of the new spirit in India and warned Morley, the Secretary of State for India, that unless some steps were taken immediately, 'the Mohammedans will also throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you'. The British Government now sought to alienate the Muslims from the Hindus by the introduction of separate electorates with weightage, which was virtually a stab in the back of Indian nationalism. Some prominent Muslims were encouraged by British officials to meet the Viceroy in a delegation and to urge for representation as a separate community; Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to the Viceroy and W.A.J. Archbold, Principal, Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, being the prime movers in this intrigue. The delegation, led by the Aga Khan (1875-1958), met Lord Minto on October 1, 1906, and prayed that 'their position should be estimated not merely on their numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of their community and the service it has rendered to the Empire'. The Viceroy expressed full accord with the views and demands of the deputationists. It is noted in Lady Minto's diary (October 1906) that this act was jubilantly hailed by British officialdom as 'nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition'. December 30, 1906, saw the birth of the All India Muslim League whose objective was to 'support, wherever possi-

ble, all measures emanating from the Government and to protect the cause and advance the interests of our co-religionists throughout the country, to controvert the growing influence of the so-called Indian National Congress . . . and to enable our youngmen of education, who for want of such an association, have joined the Congress, to find scope, according to their fitness and ability, for public life.' 'Divide and Rule' henceforward became the keynote of British policy in India. As soon as the Minto-Morley Reforms (1909), with provision for separate electorates were published, the moderates felt quite disillusioned, for the reforms enunciated a doctrine of minority representation by accepting religion as the basis of determining political minority and thus created a rift in the solidarity of Indian nationalism. By strengthening the forces of communalism, they created complications in the struggle for *swarāj*.

The British Government at the same time sought to pacify the Congress by announcing revocation of the Partition of Bengal at the Delhi Durbar (1911). This Presidency, along with Bombay and Madras, was raised to the status of a Governor's province. These measures gave great satisfaction to the people of Bengal. The nationalists claimed it to be the result of their continuous struggle and argued that active agitation rather than passive acquiescence could alone make the Government see reason.

5. Surge Towards Freedom

The extremists did not reconcile themselves to the position created by the Minto-Morley Reforms. In spite of all-round repression on the part of the Government, there were widespread secret activities on the part of the revolutionaries in Bengal, who had dedicated fellow-workers in other parts of India. Some of the Indian revolutionaries tried to work for the liberation of their motherland even from outside India, particularly the members of the *Ghadar* Party organized in America by Har Dayal. On the outbreak of World War I, some of the Indian revolutionaries thought of alliance with Germany against England, and Germany also sought to utilize them against the Allies. A young Tamil named Champakraman Pillai, president of a body in Zurich, called the International Pro-India Committee, went to Berlin to work under the German Foreign Office. He started the Indian National Party which was attached to the German General Staff. It had as its members Har Dayal, Taraknath Das, Barkatullah, Chandra Kanta Chakravarty and Haramba Lal Gupta.

Considerable stir was created in the Punjab by what is known as the 'Komagata Maru incident'. *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese steamer, was chartered by Gurdit Singh, a public-spirited Sikh who had settled in Singapore along with some other Sikhs. It sailed from Hongkong on April 4, 1914. After it reached Vancouver, the local authorities refused to allow

the passengers to land 'except in a few cases, as the immigrants had not complied with the requirements of the law'. After some resistance, the *Komagata Maru* passengers had to agree to return on July 23. Meanwhile, the First World War broke out and, due to certain circumstances, the vessel had to come to India. It moored at Budge Budge near Calcutta on September 29. The passengers were to be taken to the Punjab in a special train. But 'the Sikhs refused to enter the train and tried to march to Calcutta in a body. They were forcibly turned back by the police and a riot ensued with loss of life on both sides. Both in the Punjab and in Bengal, the situation was rapidly deteriorating. The Government of India passed the Defence of India Act in 1915, which authorized the appointment of special tribunals for the trial of revolutionaries. Severe measures were taken by the Government against them. A Pan-Islamic Party, guided from Kābul by Mahendra Pratap and Barkatullah, also tried to foment revolution in the Punjab.

Though the aim of the revolutionaries was to secure the freedom of the country from British rule, their methods did not produce any tangible result. In the meantime, other factors had begun to influence the course of Indian politics. The treatment meted out to the Indians in South Africa by the government there, against which Gandhiji (1869-1948) had launched *satyāgraha*, humiliation of the Indians in other British colonies and the question of Indian emigration to the British colonies had become matters of deep concern for the Indians. Besides, there was growth of a new feeling among the educated Muslims whose outlook was considerably influenced by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 about Persia, the nationalist movements in Turkey and Persia, the war between Italy and Turkey (1911), and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913).

This new consciousness helped the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. The All India Muslim League gave up its exclusive attitude from 1913 onwards. At its annual session, held at Lucknow on March 22, 1913, it declared its aim to be 'the attainment of self-government for India along with the other communities'. Both the Congress and the Muslim League held their annual sessions at Lucknow in December 1916 and concluded the 'Lucknow Pact' by which the Congress agreed to separate electorates. Both the organizations jointly formulated a scheme of reforms known as the 'Congress-League Scheme'. The resolution for self-government demanded that India should be made 'an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing dominions'.

The year 1916 is an important landmark in the history of the national movement in India for two other reasons. From 1908 onwards, the Indian National Congress was under the influence of the moderates. Two great moderate leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, passed away in February and November, 1915, respectively. In 1916, however, the moderates and the extremists reunited to work together under

the Indian National Congress. Further, Mrs. Annie Besant (1847-1933), who had been working for some years for the moral and cultural regeneration of India which she had adopted as her motherland, joined the Indian national movement in 1914. She started a daily, *New India*, and later a weekly, *Commonweal* and organized a Home Rule League at Madras in September 1916. After his release from Mandalay prison in June 1914, Lokamanya Tilak started another Home Rule League at Poona in April 1916, and carried on vigorous propaganda through his two journals—the daily *Kesari* and the weekly *Mahratta*. The Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916 brought both the Home Rule Leagues together and they co-operated vigorously to push forward the Congress-League scheme. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) later wrote: “The atmosphere became electric and most of us young men felt exhilarated and expected big things in the near future”. The Government’s repressive measures to restrict the activities of Lokamanya Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant served to intensify the national discontent. There was a strong demand throughout the country for the release of Mrs. Annie Besant, G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia. Mrs. Besant was released in September 1917 and presided over the next session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta in December 1917.

6. Constitutional Reforms

World War I (1914-1918) had serious repercussions on India in various ways. The British war effort received from India a large and generous contribution in men, money and munitions. Acknowledging this help, Lord Birkenhead (later Secretary of State for India) observed: “Without India, the War would have been immensely prolonged, if indeed without her help it could have been brought to a victorious conclusion . . . India is an incalculable asset to the mother country”. At the same time, the War hastened the growth of national consciousness among the people. In a speech, delivered at Karachi on February 29, 1916, Mahatma Gandhi said, “A new hope has filled the hearts of the people, a hope that something is going to happen which will raise the Motherland to a higher status.” The British Government realized the need for rallying further support of India at that moment of grave peril and E.S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made the following significant announcement on August 20, 1917: “The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire”.

In the meanwhile an event of profound significance had occurred in the Champāran district of Bihār. In response to the appeal of the ryots of Champāran, who had been groaning under the oppressions of the indigo-planters, Mahatma Gandhi went there in 1917. With the assistance of some leaders of Bihār and by his selfless and undaunted crusade on behalf of the ryots, Gandhiji succeeded in persuading the Government to pass the Champāran Agrarian Act in 1917 which removed age-long abuses and acute miseries of a vast body of men. This mission of Mahatma Gandhi in Champāran was also marked by some noble experiments in the social and educational fields. At the same time, it fostered the cause of nationalism by infusing into the minds of the common people of Champāran a spirit of awakening, which is an indispensable prerequisite for a successful national struggle. "The Champaran struggle was a proof of the fact", wrote Mahatma Gandhi, "that disinterested service of the people in any sphere ultimately helps the country politically". There were agrarian troubles in other parts of India also, particularly at Kaira in Gujarāt, where the ryots organized *satyāgraha* under the advice of Mahatma Gandhi.

In return for her sacrifices during the war, India had naturally high expectations from the British Government, particularly after the Montagu declaration of August 1917. Montagu had also announced that he would proceed to India in order to consult the Viceroy and to give a hearing to all the interests concerned in India's advance towards self-government. The Montagu Mission reached India on November 10, 1917. It formulated a joint scheme of reforms, which was published on July 8, 1918, and embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report raised an angry outcry from the extremist organs. Lokamanya Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant denounced it strongly. A special session of the Congress, held at Bombay in 1918 under the presidentship of Hasan Imam, condemned the proposals as 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' and suggested some modifications as absolutely necessary to constitute a substantive step towards responsible government. It also decided to send a deputation to England 'to press the Congress views on the British democracy'. These reforms proved acceptable to the moderates, who formed an organization distinct from the Congress, known as the Indian National Liberal Federation.

Gandhiji was at first in favour of making these reforms work and the Congress decided accordingly in 1919, but certain factors soon caused considerable excitement in India. Economic troubles, due to additional taxation and rise in prices of articles of prime necessity, produced extreme hardships for the people and accentuated discontent against the rulers. Muslim sentiment in India was deeply stirred by the *Khilāfat* Movement on the question of the dismemberment of Turkey after her defeat in World War I. Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali, the two brothers, and Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad organized the *Khilāfat* Movement. India's hopes for a true responsible government were soon belied in the face of unmitigated governmental repression. The Rowlatt Bills were calculated to perpetuate the extraordinary powers given to the Government during the War for suppressing political activities in the country and punishing persons by depriving them of the ordinary rights and privileges of trial and defence provided by law. As a protest against these, Mahatma Gandhi organized a country-wide passive resistance movement.

To put down this movement, the Government began 'a reign of terror', particularly in the Punjab under its Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The blackest act was committed by the Government in connection with a meeting of the citizens of Amritsar held at the Jalliānwāla Bāgh in the afternoon of April 13, 1919. Under the orders of General R.E.H. Dyer, British troops mercilessly fired over 1,600 rounds on the unarmed and defenceless people who had no means of escape from that small park. Even according to official figures, wrung out of the Government some months later, 379 persons were killed, and 1,200 were left wounded on the field about whom, to use Dyer's own words, he 'did not consider it his job to take the slightest thought'. The Jalliānwāla Bāgh massacre was indeed a dark tragedy. Even after this the Government had no hesitation in using third-degree methods of torture on political prisoners. Martial Law was proclaimed in the Punjab within a few days and special tribunals were set up which served as veritable engines of oppression 'to carry out the arbitrary will of the autocrat'. Indiscriminate arrests, confiscations of property, floggings and whippings were freely resorted to. There were shootings, hangings and bombing from the air, while at Amritsar 'innocent men and women were made to crawl like worms on bellies'.

All these outrages naturally shocked the people of India and raised a strong wave of discontent throughout the country. As a protest against the atrocities in the Punjab, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) renounced knighthood.

7. Mass Struggle for Freedom

Under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi the Indian national movement now took a new turn and was transformed into a people's movement for liberty. As Rev. C.F. Andrews said: "Mahatma Gandhi spoke to the heart of India the *mantram*—Be free, Be slaves no more—and the heart of India responded." Mahatma Gandhi wholeheartedly supported the *Khilāfat* cause and there was a happy fraternization between the Hindus and the Muslims who became determined to fight together to achieve the country's freedom from alien control. At a special session of the Congress, held in Calcutta in September 1920 under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat

Rai, the momentous resolution on 'Non-co-operation' was passed by 1,886 votes against 884. This resolution was confirmed almost unanimously at the Nāgpur session, held in December 1920.

There had already been a quick and enthusiastic response to the programme of the Non-cooperation Movement throughout the country. It included surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation of nominated members in the local bodies, boycott of Government educational institutions, law-courts and the legislatures, boycott of foreign goods, adoption of *swadeshi* cloth on a vast scale and revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, besides non-payment of taxes. The Congress now defined its objective as the 'attainment of *swaraj* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.' The terms 'constitutional means' were replaced by the last phrase and *swarāj* was considered to be 'self-rule within the Empire, if possible, without, if necessary'. Discipline and self-sacrifice were emphasized as essential conditions of the movement and non-violence was declared to be its "integral part".

Under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, the Non-cooperation Movement made remarkable progress as a mass struggle. Students left colleges and schools in large numbers. More national educational institutions were established at different places; many lawyers gave up practice, the most distinguished among them being Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu C.R. Das; and about two-thirds of the voters did not participate in the elections held in October 1920.

While carrying out the Non-cooperation Movement, the Congress also laid stress on constructive activities. One resolution passed during its meeting, held at Bezwāda (Vijaywāda) on March 31 and April 1, 1921, asked the people to concentrate on the following three items with a view to their completion by June 30: raising the all-India Tilak *swarājya* fund to one crore of rupees; enlisting one crore of members for the Congress; and introducing twenty lakhs of *charkhās* (spinning wheels) in the cities and villages. At another meeting from July 28-30, the Congress passed a resolution for concentrating attention "upon attaining a complete boycott of foreign cloth by the 30th of September next and on manufacture of *Khadar* by stimulating hand-spinning and hand-weaving". One important feature of the movement was the burning of foreign cloth. On July 31, 1921, Mahatma Gandhi made a bonfire of foreign cloth at Bombay and the example was soon emulated in other parts of the country.

To conciliate the Indians, the British Government sent the Prince of Wales to India. He landed at Bombay on November 17, 1921, but India refused to 'welcome a representative of a system' of which she was "sick unto death". As a mark of discontent against the Government, people observed *hartāl* all over the country and when the Prince visited the provincial capitals, the streets were deserted.

There followed a mounting wave of passive resistance and civil disobedience in different parts of the country. Mahatma Gandhi still advised to 'hasten slowly', and asked the people to create a proper atmosphere for civil disobedience. But the growth of Government repression and persecution of some leaders, including the Ali brothers, added fuel to the fire. Meeting at Delhi on November 4 and 5, 1921, the All-India Congress Committee authorized 'every province on its own responsibility to undertake Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes'. Mahatma Gandhi was chosen as the supreme leader to guide the movement. Instead of at once launching a country-wide mass movement, he decided to start the experiment at Bārdoli, a small tehsil in the Surat district. He suspended even this after the outbreak of violence at Chauri Chaura, a small village near Gorakhpur in U.P. on February 5, 1922, where an infuriated mob burnt the police station and killed twenty-two police men. Mahatma Gandhi's Bārdoli decision caused some restiveness among some of his followers, but the Congress endorsed it in February 1922. In the tense situation, the Government arrested Mahatma Gandhi and took no steps to withdraw their repressive measures.

There was a new development in the Congress during its 37th annual session held at Gaya in December 1922. Some members, including Deshbandhu C.R. Das, president of that session, and Pandit Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), advocated 'council entry' to follow a plan of 'uniform, consistent and continuous obstruction for mending or ending' the new reforms by entering the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils. However, the majority was not in favour of this policy. The pro-Council group, therefore, formed the Swarāj Party early in 1923 with Deshbandhu C.R. Das as its President and Pandit Motilal Nehru as its Secretary. The new party contested the next elections. The Swarājists had at first some success, but their main objective was not fulfilled and their influence on Indian politics practically disappeared after the premature death of Deshbandhu C.R. Das in June 1925.

Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail in February 1924. In view of some disquieting factors, he wanted to retire from active politics, though his own faith in the Non-cooperation Movement was still strong. Presiding at the thirty-ninth session of the Congress, held at Belgaum on December 20, 1924, he observed: "We are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt." Thus, the Non-cooperation Movement was suspended.

In 1923-24 commenced a critical period in the history of Indian nationalism due to progressive deterioration in Hindu-Muslim relations and rise in communal tension leading to riots at some places. The power of the Muslim League increased, but the Congress followed a strictly nationalist attitude and tried to combat the canker of communalism. Many of the Congress Muslims formed themselves into a group called the Nationalist

Muslims. Communal frenzy deeply pained Mahatma Gandhi, who took to fasting for twenty-one days as 'a penance for unity'. Efforts were made to settle the communal problem by the so-called 'Unity Conferences'. The most notable of these were the one convened in September 1924, by Muhammad Ali, then President of the Congress, and the other which met at Calcutta in October 1927. Some resolutions calling for Hindu-Muslim unity were passed at these conferences but they could not cure the deep-rooted malady.

In this period of trial for the country, Mahatma Gandhi devoted himself more to constructive activities and toured different parts to preach the gospel of harmony and to effect a change of heart among the people for eradication of the various internal maladies. "I travel", he said, "because I fancy that the masses want to meet me. I certainly want to meet them. I deliver my simple message to them in a few words and they and I are satisfied. It penetrates the mass mind slowly but surely."

By 1928, there was a turn in the tide and amity was restored among the different communities and political parties in India. "There seemed to be a new impulse moving the people forward, a new stir that was equally present in the most varied groups". The Conservative Government of Stanley Baldwin in England, of which the late Lord Birkenhead was the Secretary of State for India, announced in November 1927 the appointment of a Commission of seven members. This was done earlier than provided in the Act of 1919. This Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon, was to report on the working of the constitutional reforms in India. The total exclusion of Indians from the membership of this Commission evoked a strong national opposition and it was condemned as 'a negation of the fundamental right of self-determination which is inherent in every nation'. It was boycotted with the cry of "Go back" by the Congressmen the Liberals and important sections of the Muslim community when it reached Bombay on February 3, 1928, and later visited different parts of India.

Besides boycotting the Simon Commission, the Indians sought to frame a constitution for the country. An all-parties conference appointed a committee for this purpose with Pandit Motilal Nehru as its Chairman. The report of the Nehru Committee (published in August 1928) recommended 'Dominion Status' for India. It did not advocate separate electorates, but was in favour of joint or mixed electorates with only one communal safeguard, that is, reservation of seats for the Muslims only where they were in a minority. The All-Parties Conference, meeting at Lucknow in August 1928, accepted the recommendations of the Nehru Report with some amendments. It was rejected by the Muslim League. An all-parties Muslims conference, held at Delhi on January 1, 1929, issued a manifesto of Muslim claims, which formed the basis of the fourteen demands formulated by M.A. Jinnah in the month of March that year.

The Congress at its Madras session held in December 1927, had declared complete independence to be its national goal. A section in it, represented by S. Srinivas Iyengar, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, favoured 'complete independence' as against the 'Dominion Status' of the Nehru Report. This section formed the Independence of India League in November 1928, to further its cause. There was, however, no split in the Congress. Meeting at Calcutta in December 1928, it passed a resolution which, while 'adhering to the resolution relating to complete independence passed at the Madras Congress (1927)', approved of the constitution drawn up by the Nehru Report if independence was granted on or before December 31, 1929. In the event of its non-acceptance by that date or its earlier rejection, the Congress was to organise non-violent non-cooperation by advising the country to refuse payment of taxes and in such other manner as may be decided upon.

India was influenced during these years by new socio-economic forces, which caused labour disputes and strikes in the industrial centres. There had also been recrudescence of revolutionary activities in the post-1924 period. A new revolutionary party, called the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, had become active in different parts of the country. Two of its prominent members, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, threw two bombs from the visitors' gallery on the floor of the Central Assembly on April 8, 1929 'to make a noise and create a stir, and not to injure' as the accused stated later.

The Government adopted severe measures of repression against the revolutionaries, but the Congress demands led them to make a cautious approach. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, was sagacious enough to realize that these were 'critical days' when 'matters by which men are duly touched' were at issue. So, after consultation with the Labour Cabinet of Ramsay Macdonald by a personal visit to England, the Viceroy made an announcement on October 31, 1929, that 'the natural issue of India's constitutional progress', implicit in the declaration of 1917, was 'the attainment of Dominion Status'. He also mentioned in the announcement that, after the reports of the Simon Commission and the Indian Central Committee had been published, a Round Table Conference of British statesmen and representatives of the different parties in India as also of the Indian states would be held in London to determine the constitution of India. The All-Parties Conference, which met at Delhi on November 11, 1929, issued a manifesto expressing its hope 'to be able to tender co-operation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a Dominion Constitution suitable for India's needs' on the fulfilment of certain conditions by the Government.

The Congress soon took a bolder step. At its Lahore session, held on December 29 and 31, 1929, with Jawaharlal Nehru as its President, it reiterated complete independence to be its goal. It resolved upon a com-

plete boycott of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and the Round Table Conference and authorized the All India Congress Committee whenever it deemed fit to launch upon a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary'. At midnight on December 31, Jawaharlal Nehru unfurled the 'Tricolour', the flag of Indian independence, amidst shouts of '*Inqalāb Zindabād*' (Long Live Revolution). January 26, 1930, was celebrated as the 'Independence Day', and this solemn ceremony was repeated year after year.

Prior to launching *satyāgraha* or civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi explained in a letter written to Lord Irwin on March 2, 1930, how the evils of British imperialism had ruined this country and expounded the real meaning of freedom for her teeming millions. He started the Civil Disobedience Movement by his historic march to Dānḍī, a village on the sea-coast about 322 km. from the Sābarmati *Āśrama*, to make salt there on the sea-shore in defiance of Government's salt laws. A mass movement on a large scale, with active participation of women, started in all parts of the country. There were strikes, *hartāls*, boycott of British goods and liquor shops and even violent actions, such as the Chittagong armoury raid, on April 18, 1930, under the leadership of Surya Sen. During this raid, the revolutionaries captured the police and auxiliary force armoury. They even set up a 'Provisional Independent Government of India' at Chittagong. The raid was followed by a long trail of revolutionary incidents in the district of Chittagong and outside.

The Government promulgated various ordinances prohibiting a number of activities and imposing restrictions on the press. Referring to its policy of ruthless repression, Mahatma Gandhi observed: "Even Dyerism pales into insignificance". Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on May 5, and all the other leaders of the movement were thrown into prison. Police brutality rose high and assumed various forms. Men and women were lathi-charged and mercilessly beaten. Even in the face of these atrocities, the people continued the movement with unabated vigour. Efforts of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar to bring about a compromise produced no result.

While using all methods of repression against the Civil Disobedience Movement, the British Government convened the First Round Table Conference on November 12, 1930, without any representative of the Congress, but it was adjourned *sine die* on January 19, 1931, though its work was not completed. In an announcement on that date, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, observed: "His Majesty's Government will strive to secure such an amount of agreement as will enable the new constitution to be passed through the British Parliament and to be put into operation with the active good will of the people of both countries". This was followed by a change of Government policy on India. On January 25, 1931, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, released Mahatma Gandhi.

unconditionally and also the members of the Congress Working Committee in order 'to give an opportunity for them to consider the Premier's statement at the Round Table Conference'. This was followed by the signing of an agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin on March 4, 1931. The Congress agreed to discontinue Civil Disobedience and the Government withdrew all its repressive ordinances. All the political prisoners, excepting those who were guilty of acts of violence, were released. Provision was made for the restoration of confiscated, forfeited or attached properties, except in certain circumstances, and administrative concession was to be given to prepare salt in some areas.

The Congress endorsed this 'provisional settlement' at its next annual session held at Karāchi in March 1931. It appointed Mahatma Gandhi as its sole representative at the Second Round Table Conference which sat from September 7 to December 1, 1931. After prolonged discussions, the Round Table Conference formulated a draft constitution for India. Its work was not, on the whole, satisfactory from the point of view of Indian national demand as it evaded consideration of the fundamental questions.

Mahatma Gandhi returned to India on December 28, 1931, to find that the country was again under stringent repressive measures, such as arrests, ordinances and proscriptions. Lord Willingdon had succeeded Lord Irwin as the Viceroy in April 1931, and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had come to an end. On January 1, 1932, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution for resuming the Civil Disobedience Movement and the boycott of British goods. The country was again astir, particularly after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on January 4, 1932. The Congress and its committees and other allied or sympathetic bodies, such as the *kisān sabhās* or peasant unions, youth leagues, students associations, *sevā dals* and national educational institutions, were declared unlawful. In their zeal, people had no fear of jail and many even courted arrest so that new camp jails had to be erected by the Government. Numerous coercive measures and ordinances followed.

Unfortunately, the canker of communalism proved to be a great impediment to national progress. The question of the so-called 'Depressed Classes' had complicated the situation. The publication of Ramsay Macdonald's Communal Award in August 1932, establishing separate electorates for those called the 'Depressed Classes', greatly shocked Mahatma Gandhi who began a 'fast unto death' from September 20, in disapproval of it. This caused a good deal of agony throughout the country. On September 24, the Poona Pact was signed and it almost doubled the number of seats reserved for the 'Depressed Classes'. These seats were to be filled by joint electorates out of the panel of names originally chosen by them alone. On acceptance of this Pact by the British Prime Minister, Mahatma Gandhi's fast was broken. One remarkable effect of this fast was to create

a new consciousness in the country about the removal of untouchability and uplift of the Harijans.

For certain reasons, the Civil Disobedience Movement slowly declined and it was formally suspended in May 1934. Meanwhile, complex economic factors and agrarian troubles in India had given a new outlook to the Congress. A clear expression of this fact was the resolution on 'Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme' moved at the Karāchi session of the Congress in March 1931. These factors were also responsible for the rise of the Kisan Movement and gave an impetus to the creed of socialism. In May 1934, the socialists formed a separate party within the fold of the Congress, known as the Congress Socialist Party.

The Government of India Act, 1935, brought another instalment of constitutional reforms in India. Though it fell far short of India's national aspirations, the Congress had already decided to give the reforms a trial and to contest the elections to the assemblies at the Centre and in the provinces. In May 1934, the Congress Parliamentary Board had been formed at Patna with Dr. Ansari as its President and Bhulabhai Desai as Secretary. The Congress swept the polls for the general or predominantly Hindu seats. After a deadlock over the question of the exercise of the special powers of interference by the Governor of a province and clarification of the position by the Viceroy in a statement of June 21, 1937, the Congress Working Committee decided at its Wardha meeting, held on July 7, 1937, that 'Congressmen be permitted to accept office where they may be invited thereto'. The real object of the Congress in accepting office was thus stated by the President of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru: "Acceptance of office does not mean by an iota acceptance of the slave constitution. It means fighting against the coming of Federation by all means in our power inside as well as outside the Legislatures". The Congress soon formed ministries in several provinces—Bombay, Madras, Bihār, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Orissa and, after some time, in the North-West Frontier Province. In Sind, the ministers and the majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly identified themselves with the policy of the Congress.

Unfortunately, communal discord was becoming an acute problem in Indian politics. In pursuance of its own creed, the Congress did not find it possible to agree to the formula of a coalition with the Muslim League in each province. M.A. Jinnah, who had once been an advocate of the theory of one-nation in line with the view of the Congress, now denounced the policies and activities of the Congress ministries and declared that 'the Muslims can expect neither justice nor fairplay under Congress Government'. However, his charges against the latter were never substantiated. Jinnah became the undisputed leader of the Muslim League, which claimed to be recognized as the one authoritative and representative organization of the Muslims in India. Jinnah strongly hel

that 'the democratic system of Parliamentary Government on the conception of a homogeneous nation and the method of counting heads' was not possible in India. Under his instructions, the Muslim League observed a 'Day of Deliverance' as a mark of relief after the resignation of the Congress ministries in the provinces.

Though confronted with heavy handicaps, the Congress ministries had to their credit some useful and constructive measures of educational, social and economic reforms. But these were not destined to continue long. India was soon faced with a crisis on the outbreak of World War II. It was a grave ordeal for humanity at large and raised issues which could not but influence the destiny of India in various ways. When Great Britain declared war against Germany on September 3, 1939, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, proclaimed that India also was at war with Germany and asked her to 'play a part worthy of her place among the great nations and the historic civilizations of the world'. India entirely disapproved of Fascist and Nazi ideologies and practices, but taking into consideration her tremendous responsibilities, the Congress Working Committee registered a protest against India being drawn into belligerency 'without the consent of the Indian people'. The Congress issued a statement inviting the British Government 'to declare in unequivocal terms' what their 'War Aims' were in regard to 'Democracy' and 'Imperialism' and how these aims were 'going to apply to India'. The Government were also asked to state if India was going to be treated as 'an independent nation'. In the absence of any satisfactory answer, all the Congress ministries resigned in October-November 1939, and Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935, was immediately enforced in these provinces. Under this Section, the Governor, by suspending the legislatures, began to exercise the powers of the provincial governments and the Legislatures. As the war was taking a menacing turn for the Allies, the Congress offered to co-operate in the war effort, if at least a provisional 'National Government' was constituted at the Centre and 'the right of India to complete independence' was acknowledged by Great Britain. The Government's response was a statement of the Viceroy on August 8, 1940, known afterwards as the 'August Offer'. It said that the British Government 'could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements of India's national life'. The statement held out the prospect of a representative body for framing India's constitution after the war was over. Meanwhile, the British Government, it was mentioned, would welcome the efforts of 'representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement' and they hoped that immediate effect would be given to the enlargement of the Central Executive Council by nominating additional Indian members and to the establishment of a 'War Advisory Council'

composed of representatives of British India and the Indian states.

The 'August Offer' shocked nationalist India and was wholly rejected by the Congress. "It widens the gulf", remarked Mahatma Gandhi, "between India as represented by the Congress, and England". "We want independence and not dominion or any other status", observed Jawaharlal Nehru. As a moral protest against Britain's policy towards India, the Congress started 'Individual Civil Disobedience' in October 1940, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, and it continued for over fourteen months.

Two-Nation Theory The Congress continued to be true to its ideal of a free united India. While the British Government harped on 'the issue of minorities' and some talked of the 'unbridgeable gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League', Mahatma Gandhi held that it was a domestic problem which would disappear if the British withdrew from India. At the Rāmgārh (Bihār) session of the Congress, held in March 1940, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President, emphasized the heritage of a common nationality between the Hindus and the Muslims in India and significantly remarked: "Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible". Various factors fanned communal bitterness and at its annual session, held at Lahore in March 1940, the Muslim League enunciated the theory that the Muslims 'are not a minority' but a 'nation' and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state. It wanted that, 'the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'. Indeed, the influence of the Muslim League over the Muslims in India had increased much by that time.

In the Congress, some Indian nationalists of radical views had constituted themselves into the Forward Bloc under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose. Considering that the policy of the Congress was leaning towards compromise with the Government, they organized an anti-compromise conference during the Congress session at Rāmgārh. The Congress Socialist Party also advocated radical views. In spite of some differences in their policy and methods, all such radicals demanded independence.

The constitutional deadlock continued and the declaration of Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons on September 9, 1941, that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India increased the dissatisfaction of the Indians. But the international situation was growing more and more ominous. The success of the Japanese in the Pacific, surrender of Singapore to them on February 15, 1942, and their capture of Rangoon and Mandalay on March 7 and April 29, respectively, brought the war peril to the very door of India. The air raids on Colombo, Vishā

khapatnam and Kākināda, also in the month of April, and the presence of Japanese warships in the Bay of Bengal exposed the whole of the eastern coastline of India to attack.

All this caused great anxiety and excitement throughout India, in the midst of which Winston Churchill made an announcement on March 11, 1942, that the British Cabinet had decided to send a mission to India under Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the Cabinet, for solution of deadlock with a view to rallying 'all the forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the invader'. The Cripps proposals repeated the promise for grant of Dominion Status and a constitution-making body after the war, consisting of representatives of India and Indian states. It was, however, stipulated that, during the war period and until 'the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort'. Thus, there was to be no immediate change in the Government of India, though the national leaders felt that to organize what could be a 'people's war' against the Japanese who were advancing towards India with rapid strides, complete transfer of power to Indian hands was necessary.

8. Quit India Movement

National discontent in India continued unappeased. Although restrained by coercive measures, it soon found expression in the popular revolt of 1942-43. Meeting at Bombay on August 8, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee adopted the 'Quit India' resolution, repeating with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of British power from India, and sanctioned 'a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale' under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Government took prompt steps to prevent the outbreak of the movement. In the early hours of the morning of August 9, Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested and numerous other arrests followed quickly in different parts of the country. The movement soon developed as an unprecedented mass upheaval in which the students played a heroic role. It assumed a violent shape with open outbursts of popular indignation seeking to damage communications, obstruct Government activities and assail all that stood for British imperialism. The Government resorted to ruthless repression, such as indiscriminate arrests, issue of ordinances, gagging of the Press, exaction of collective fines, employment of the military who committed atrocities, and firing on crowds even from aeroplanes. "The disturbances", stated Churchill in September, 1942, "were crushed with all the weight of the Government." L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, observed in the House of Commons early in October 1942:

“During the recent disturbances, mobs were five times machine-gunned from the air . . .”

The movement seems to have been crushed by November 1942, but this was something like the lull before the storm. The harsh measures drove the discontent underground and secret activities to uproot British authority were continued in the next year by the Āzād Dasta and some other revolutionary groups. The gospel of the new phase of the revolution was conveyed to the people by Jayaprakash Narayan at the end of December 1942, in a circular addressed by him to ‘All Fighters for Freedom’.

The movement of Subhas Chandra Bose, a selfless patriot with unflinching determination, proved to be an additional cause of anxiety to the British Government. After his escape from India in 1941, he established contacts with the Governments of Germany and Japan. On the conquest of the Malay Peninsula by the Japanese, thousands of Indian soldiers were made prisoners by them. By an understanding with the Japanese Government, Subhas Chandra Bose, hailed as Netāji, organized these Indians into an Āzād Hind Fauj or Indian National Army. He proclaimed the establishment of a ‘Provisional Government of Free India’ at Singapore and, in 1943, his soldiers, along with a Japanese army, marched upto the eastern frontier of India.

By this time, the war in the West had taken a somewhat favourable turn for the Allies, but the Eastern theatre was still full of risks and dangers. Indian affairs were extremely complicated and there was agony and anxiety in the country due to Mahatma Gandhi’s twenty-one-day fast as a moral protest against the Government’s excesses. C. Rajagopalachari proposed in a pamphlet, entitled ‘The Way Out’, a solution for the constitutional deadlock through his doctrine of ‘Back to Cripps’. He suggested giving concession to the principle of self-determination for minorities and states ‘in a plan for a free and independent constitution’. Lord Wavell, who had reached India in October 1943 as its Governor-General, also pleaded in vain for co-operation of all with the existing Government during war time.

Political Dead-lock. The communal question had become a baffling one as the Muslim League stiffened its demand for Pākistān. Against the Congress demand of ‘Quit India’, the Muslim League’s new slogan was ‘Divide and Quit’. Released from prison on May 6, 1944, Mahatma Gandhi made earnest efforts for communal harmony—which he regarded as his life’s mission—and held discussions with Jinnah. Instead of accepting his proposals, Jinnah observed in March, 1945: “Pakistan is our irrevocable and unalterable national demand . . . We shall never accept any constitution on the basis of a united India”.

Lord Wavell flew to London in March 1945. On his return to India after consultations with his Government, he made a proposal for the solution of the constitutional deadlock in June 1945, suggesting therein the reconst

tution of the Central Executive Council in such a way that all its members, except the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, should be 'leaders of Indian political life', there being 'a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus'. Members of the Congress Working Committee were released and the ban upon the party was removed. To consider the constitutional question, Lord Wavell summoned a conference at Simla on June 25, 1945, which, after a short adjournment, met again on July 14. In spite of earnest deliberations, the Conference failed in its objective as there could be no agreement regarding the interim arrangement.

The quick march of events hastened the termination of the constitutional deadlock in India. Britain was faced with the legacies of the war and, in India, the urge for national independence had become irresistible. The Labour Government, which had come to power in England in 1945, with Clement Attlee as the Prime Minister, realized the gravity of the situation and took prompt steps to solve the Indian problem. On September 19, the British Prime Minister and Lord Wavell made simultaneous statements to the effect that fresh elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures would be held during the winter of 1945-46, that the Viceroy's Executive Council would be reconstituted in consultation with the principal Indian parties immediately after the elections, and that a constitution-making body would be convened as soon as possible. The elections were held early in 1946 and resulted in a sweeping victory of the Congress for the general seats and of the Muslim League for the Muslim seats.

National enthusiasm in India received much impetus on the occasion of the trial of a number of officers of the Indian National Army which had surrendered to the British after the fall of Japan. The revolt by the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946 was a matter of grave concern for the British Government. "The temperature of India", observed Clement Attlee on March 15, 1946, "is not the temperature of 1920 or of 1930 or even of 1942. . . . I am quite certain that at the present time the tide of nationalism is running very fast in India and, indeed, all over Asia."

9. Dawn of Independence

Already on February 19, 1946, the British Prime Minister had announced that a mission of three Cabinet members—Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty—would soon visit India. The Cabinet Mission reached India in March 1946. They had a series of discussions and conferences with the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, but there was no agreement about the formation

of an interim government and the machinery for constitution-making. Thereupon, the Cabinet Mission issued a statement, on May 16, 1946, formulating in it a plan for the future government of India. According to it, there was to be a Union of India embracing both British India and the Indian States, with control over Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications and power to raise the money required for such purposes. All other subjects were to be vested in the provinces and the states but the provinces were to be free to form Groups for common action. India was to be divided into three Groups of provinces—Group 'A' consisting of Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihār and Orissa; Group 'B' of the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sind and Baluchistān, and Group 'C' comprising Bengal and Assam.

The Cabinet Mission also recommended a scheme for constitution-making, which provided that the Union Constitution was to be framed by a Constituent Assembly, the members of which were to be elected on a communal basis by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies and the representatives of the states joining the Union. The constitution of the provinces in each Group was to be drawn up by the representatives of the three Groups of provinces meeting separately. The Cabinet Mission further suggested the establishment of an interim Government having the support of the major political parties by re-constitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council 'in which all the portfolios including that of War Member' were to be held by Indian leaders enjoying full confidence of the people.

The Cabinet Mission Plan was not considered satisfactory by any section of the Indian people, but all sought to utilize it for their own interests. The Muslim League accepted it on June 6, 1946, 'inasmuch as the basis and the foundation of Pakistan' were inherent in the Mission's plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim majority provinces in Groups B and C. The Congress decided on June 25 to join the proposed Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution, but did not agree to the proposal for interim Government. The Cabinet Mission left India on June 29 and the Viceroy formed a caretaker Government of nine officials.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly held in the month of July 1946 resulted in the return of an overwhelming majority of the Congress members which Jinnah described as 'brute majority'. The Muslim League withdrew its assent to the Cabinet Mission's plan and expressed determination 'to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan' as and when necessary. This was not long delayed. On August 16, which was fixed as the day of 'Direct Action' by the Muslim League, Calcutta became the scene of an appalling carnage marked by the massacre of a large number of Hindus by a rowdy section of the Muslims and looting and burning of their houses and shops. *The Statesman* described it as the 'Great Calcutta

Killing'. Neither the League Ministry in Bengal, nor the Governor and the Viceroy of India, took adequate steps to prevent the 'bloody shambles to which the country's largest city' was reduced. Meanwhile the Viceroy was busy in trying to form the interim Government. On the Muslim League's refusal to co-operate, the interim Government of 12 members, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Vice-President, took office on September 2, 1946. At this time, communal frenzy rose to fever pitch at many places, causing most dreadful outrages. The Hindus of a number of villages in the district of Noākhāli and the adjoining district of Comilla (both in Bānglā-desh now) were subjected to atrocious tortures by the followers of the Muslim League. As a reaction against these, there were soon communal disturbances in different parts of Bihār in which the Muslims of this province suffered terribly through loss of lives and property. Jawaharlal Nehru at once flew to Bihār and Dr. Rajendra Prasad also rushed there. Their efforts and influence and some vigorous steps on the part of the Congress Ministry served to put a stop to the tragic events.

By a subtle move, the Viceroy made a change in the interim Government. After his discussions with Jinnah, he told Jawaharlal Nehru that the Muslim League had agreed to join the Constituent Assembly, and five Muslim League nominees entered the interim Government on October 26, 1946. The new Government lacked team-spirit and the attitude of the Muslim League made it 'bipartisan rather than a real coalition'. The political situation in India was becoming more and more complicated. The London talks of the Viceroy, early in December 1946, failed to effect any improvement and Jinnah's declaration that the Muslim League would not join the Constituent Assembly, and that it had never agreed to do so, made matters worse. The British Government issued a statement on December 6 declaring that "should the Constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population has not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not, of course, contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country".

The Congress was anxious that the constitution of free India should be framed 'with the goodwill of all parties concerned'. The Constituent Assembly met on December 9, 1946, the elected members of the Muslim League absenting themselves from it though representatives of different provinces and communities participated in its work. The Constituent Assembly met again in the third week of January 1947, with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its President, when it passed Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution on the declaration of objectives and appointed committees to draft several parts of the constitution. Meeting at Karāchi on January 31, 1947, the Working Committee of the Muslim League, however, repudiated the proceedings and decisions of the Constituent Assembly. At this extremely tense and uncertain situation,

the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, made a momentous declaration on February 20, 1947, stating therein the intention of the British Government for transfer of power into 'responsible Indian hands' not later than June 1948. This announcement was received with enthusiasm in all circles, except in the Muslim League. It once again started 'Direct Action', as a result of which communal riots with arson, lootings, murders and violence broke out in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province.

The irresistible force of circumstances accelerated India's march to a new status. Gifted with keen political sagacity and statesmanship of a high order, the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, who had assumed office on March 24, 1947, issued a plan on June 3, 1947, containing 'the method by which power will be transferred from British to Indian hands'. This plan suggested India's partition and expressed a desire on the part of the British Government to anticipate the date and month of June 1948 for 'transference of power' that year on a Dominion Status basis to one or two successor authorities according to the decisions taken as a result of this announcement. The plan of June 3, 1947, had certain obvious limitations. Its proposal regarding partition shattered the ideal of a united and free India, which had been cherished by her poets, philosophers and statesmen since the days of remote antiquity and had been emphasized in modern times by her scholars and patriots. This was, indeed, a heavy price which India had to pay for her freedom. The plan was accepted by the Congress leaders due to some very practical considerations. The Muslim League also agreed to it. Two Commissions, appointed by the British Government, with Sir Cyril Radcliffe as Chairman of both, arranged the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. According to the Indian Independence Act, passed by the British Parliament in July 1947, without any dissent, two independent dominions of India and Pākistān came into existence on August 15, 1947. Lord Mountbatten continued as the Governor-General of India and Jinnah became the first Governor-General of Pākistān. The first Indian Governor-General of free India was C. Rajagopalachari who took over from Lord Mountbatten.

August 15, 1947 is indeed a memorable day in the history of India as it marked her deliverance from alien domination by the mutual consent of the British nation and the Indian statesmen. "It fills one with a feeling of gladness", observed Ernest Bevin, a member of the British Cabinet "to live in this generation and see the fate of 400 million people handled by discussion, by reason, by agreement and not by gun".