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**THE WESTERN IMPACT ON  
INDIAN POLITICS**



# THE WESTERN IMPACT ON INDIAN POLITICS

( 1885 - 1919 )

SANKAR GHOSE



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*To*  
MY FATHER



## PREFACE

THE PERIOD from the birth of the Indian National Congress in the year 1885 to the end of the First World War is one of the most fascinating periods of Indian political and cultural history and the impact of the West on Indian politics during this period was profound.

The early Congressmen and "moderates" were immersed in English constitutional theories and ideas of representative government and sought to attain their objective of liberalisation of the government and Indianisation of the services by gradualist and constitutional means. They had a touching faith in the British sense of justice and a great love for things British. The image of England that the early Congressmen cherished was the England of Simon de Montfort, of Hampden, of Mill, the England which was the home of constitutional liberties and the mother of parliaments and free institutions and they fondly hoped that the victor would pave the path of freedom for the vanquished. The "moderates" believed in evolution and admired the practical Cavour more than the revolutionary Mazzini. The "moderates" shared Burke's horror of the excesses of the French revolution and believed in gradualism and in a laborious period of apprenticeship for the attainment in India of responsible government on the British model.

As a reaction to the moderate and gradualist method of political agitation and as a protest against Curzon's policies, who boldly declared in 1900 that the Congress was tottering to its fall and that his great ambition while in India was to assist it to a peaceful demise, there emerged the "extremists" who would have nothing to do with Britain or things British and who had no patience with the rate of political progress achieved by the "moderates". The "extremists" harked back to indigenous sources of Indian culture and were also influenced by Irish Sinn Fein ideas. Sinn Fein, imperfectly translated as "we ourselves", was the motto of the "extremists". The "extremists" asked their countrymen to abjure the politics of prayer and petition and they started the boycott movement for the attainment of

*Swaraj*. The “extremist” movement gave rise to such arresting and colourful personalities as Tilak, Bepin Pal, Aurobindo and Lajpat Rai as the “moderate” movement brought to the forefront such constructive leaders as Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale and Surendranath.

The “terrorists” were not satisfied with the policy of boycott or merely with Irish Sinn Fein ideas. They derived inspiration from the then Russian “terrorists” and from the history of the French Revolution and also from *Anandamath* and their weapons were the bomb and the bullet. They believed that political assassination had an educative value, that it was a kind of surgical remedy and that just as “gem cannot shine unless it is polished . . . so unless commotion takes place, the people’s power cannot shine”. During the First World War the “terrorists” even dreamt of an armed rebellion and hoped to get aid and assistance from Germany for a military insurrection in India.

The First World War and India’s part therein strengthened the desire for a “colonial” or responsible form of self-government. It was felt that it was incompatible that war should be waged in the name of liberty and that self-government should be denied to India. Towards the end of the war there developed the Home Rule movement and a vigorous political agitation for self-government led by Mrs. Annie Besant and others.

The Congress and the educated classes generally demanded representative institutions. But the landed aristocrats were neither touched nor infused by Western egalitarian or democratic ideas. The testament of faith of the early landed aristocrats was a book by one of their tribe Raja Shiva Prasad entitled *Democracy Not Suited to India*. The landed aristocrats generally resisted the introduction of Western parliamentary institutions into India and they believed that only men of good family and not of “insignificant origin” should be appointed to higher government offices and they echoed the sentiments of Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan that “none but a man of good breeding can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainments at which he may have to dine with Dukes and Earls”.

Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan had no love for English parliamentary institutions which he said could succeed only in a homogeneous country where there were no religious or racial differences. The

introduction of parliamentary democracy into India, Sir Saiyid apprehended, would result in the establishment of a government "English in name but Hindu in reality". The Anglo-Indian bureaucrats also had no faith in parliamentary democracy and their influential organ *The Pioneer Mail* wrote that parliamentary institutions and electioneering were amusements "as local to the West as excessive litigation was to the East". Many of the bureaucrats formulated proposals for the establishment of an Indian House of Lords or an Imperial Advisory Council composed mainly of Ruling Chiefs and landed aristocrats as a counterpoise to the growing influence of the Congress which was dominated by the English educated class.

Not all English-educated Indians were, however, enamoured of Western representative institutions. The cultural nationalists felt that the mere importation of Western representative institutions into India would not solve her problems and that no real progress could be attained by institutional changes alone and without a radical transformation of the character of the people. They felt that the salvation of India did not lie in imitating the West but in holding fast to Indian ideas and institutions and in purifying and elevating them. The leaders of cultural nationalism, like Aurobindo, preached that India had a special religious mission and that it was the *Yogin* who must stand behind the political leader or manifest within him and "Ramdas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour" so that India may rise. The extreme reaction against cultural nationalism is typified in the writings of Har Dayal who asked Indians to imbibe Western science and Western ideas of politics wholeheartedly and to discard Indian "spirituality" and who said that there was more wisdom in one of Tilak's political speeches than in the whole of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The Western impact was not confined to politics narrowly defined. The social institution of caste came under attack as being incompatible with the ideal of democracy or the Western idea of representative institution based on adult franchise. There were some who sought to defend caste on the ground that the substitution of the Western class system for the Indian caste system would not usher in an egalitarian society but the new emerging forces were stronger than the antiquarian caste system. Advanced Indian thinkers also felt that political freedom or

*Swaraj* was meaningless without economic *Swaraj* and that the political liberty of India would not be complete without the economic betterment of the lot of the Indian people by means of the adoption of Western industrial methods. Some questioned the virtues of modern industrialism saying that it would destroy the ancient Indian cult of economic simplicity and would give rise to economic inequality and they claimed that the spiritual leaders were better economists than Adam Smith or Marshall ; and there were others, like Ananda Coomaraswamy, who in the manner of William Morris said that modern industrialism resulted in "utilitarian ugliness", but such critics were small in number.

The problems that confronted Indian leaders and thinkers during the period under review are of direct relevance to the understanding of India today. The materials relating to the Western Impact on Indian politics are widely scattered. Such materials are to be found in the printed proceedings of the Congress, of the Indian Legislative Assemblies and the British Parliament and in numerous memoirs, diaries, published letters, tracts, pamphlets and speeches of Indian leaders, British politicians and Anglo-Indian bureaucrats and in the then contemporary newspapers and journals. For access to all these materials my thanks are due, among others, to the Librarian and staff of the British Museum, the India Office Library and India House Library.

I would also like to thank Mr. S. S. Bose who read the proofs with meticulous care and my wife who watched over the progress of the book assiduously and helped me to complete it.

*Bar Library Club,  
High Court, Calcutta,  
1st February, 1967*

SANKAR GHOSE

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE DEMAND FOR REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS BY EARLY CONGRESSMEN (1885-1892)

THE FIRST Indian National Congress met at Bombay in December 1885. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of the First Congress. Neither W. C. Bonnerji, its President, nor the seventy-two delegates who were "pressed and entreated to come"<sup>1</sup> had any conception of what the Congress would ultimately become. The early Congressmen did not envisage that later Congressmen would participate in non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements in order to terminate British rule in India and to establish *Swaraj*. The early Congressmen merely wanted to liberalise British rule but otherwise they were loyal to the British crown and British Empire.<sup>2</sup>

Early Congressmen were drawn mainly from the English-educated class. When the Congress was founded the general mass of the people in the country were either apathetic or hostile to British rule because it was a foreign rule. It was the English-educated class that was loyal to British rule.

It was natural that early Congressmen who were loud in their professions of loyalty would repeatedly claim that the Congress owed its existence to the British influence in the country.<sup>3</sup> In the Third Congress the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao went to the length of declaring that the Congress was a "triumph of British administration."<sup>4</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Second Indian National Congress*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 4, 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Bepin Pal, *The National Congress*, p. 5. P. Ananda Charlu's 1891 Congress Presidential Address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 90).

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 1. See also *The Hindoo Patriot*, January 9th, 1888. "A Congress", wrote *The Indian Mirror* on November 14th, 1888, "would not have been possible in the dominion of the Czar, under the Mogul it would have been throttled at its birth." (*The Indian Mirror* was edited by Norendranath Sen, who was an influential Congress leader.)

a far cry from the day when the Congress was to be characterised as a seditious organisation by British administrators. But even with the early Congress the British administrators had little to do and as the years rolled by the attitude of the British administrators became more and more hostile to the Congress.

The assemblage of a Congress composed of delegates from various parts of the country was possible because of the newly established network of railways which facilitated rapid and cheap travel.<sup>1</sup> No such Congress could have been convened at any time in the past either in the days of Vikram during Hindu rule or during the time of Akbar in the Muslim period, said Dadabhai Naoroji in his Presidential Address at the Second Congress.<sup>2</sup> Without the security of person and property and the maintenance of law and order which the rulers assured the country, he could not, continued Dadabhai, who later came to be known as the Grand Old Man of India, have come to the Congress without experiencing the greatest anxiety and apprehension about the safety of his kinsmen in his absence.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from a unified system of transport and communication and the maintenance of law and order, what appealed to the Congress leaders most was the Western system of education that had been established in the country.<sup>4</sup> "Western literature", wrote *The Tribune*, a nationalist newspaper of Lahore, in 1887, "has infused a new life into the dead bones of the Indian Nation... and the National Congress is the manifestation of a new life in India."<sup>5</sup> Even Surendranath Banerjea, the great moderate leader and orator, declared in his 1895 Congress Presidential Address that the Congress was the outcome of the educational policy of Macaulay.<sup>6</sup> Western education familiarised Indians with the English language which became the

<sup>1</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot*, January 9th, 1888: "The National Congress."

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "We have", wrote *The Tribune* on January 7th, 1888, "always held the view that if the English had done nothing beyond establishing the peace and tranquillity which now prevails... (in) India and disseminating a knowledge of the literature and science of the West, that alone would have justified their conquest and occupation of the country." See also *The Hindoo Patriot* December 13th, 1886, and December 19th, 1887.

<sup>5</sup> *The Tribune*, January 5th, 1887.

<sup>6</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 189.

vehicle of communication between educated Indians, irrespective of their geographical distribution. Western education not only created a common vocabulary for all educated Indians, but by submitting them to the same intellectual discipline, it also formed and moulded their general ideas about history and political philosophy. Educated India came to believe that though India had evolved a high order of civilisation in the past, having been the birthplace of great religions, the home of art, literature, and philosophy, she had not shown that great desire for free political institutions which characterised the peoples of some of the advanced European countries in modern times.<sup>1</sup>

Congressmen eagerly studied the modern history of Europe and particularly that of England. They came to admire the ideals of liberty, nationality and democracy as developed in England and certain other European countries and dreamed of realising those ideals in India.<sup>2</sup> "The National Congress", wrote *The Tribune*, "is the mighty lever which is destined to raise fallen and degraded India to the high level of the self-governing countries of Europe."<sup>3</sup>

The Congress had the double task of developing in the Indian people a genuine appreciation for free institutions and of urging upon the government the necessity of liberalising the administration. Early Congressmen were determined to follow those methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation which had proved so successful in Britain.<sup>4</sup> Progress was to be harmonised with order, freedom was to grow gradually from precedent to

<sup>1</sup> Bepin Pal, *The National Congress*, pp. 5-6. "We had", wrote *The Tribune* on January 4th, 1888, "no popular national or political life .... We have poetry, drama, fiction and all, but we have not one single volume of public speeches". See also *The Tribune*, January 5th, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> In his 1895 Congress Presidential Address Surendranath Banerjea said, "We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom .... We should be unworthy of ourselves and of our preceptors—we should, indeed, be something less than human—if, with ... our warm Oriental sensibilities roused to an unwonted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is." (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 252.) In his 1897 Congress Presidential Address, Sankaran Nair expressed a similar opinion. (*Ibid.*, pp. 320-21.)

<sup>3</sup> *The Tribune*, January 4th, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 257.

precedent, and great changes were to be effected in a bloodless manner.

The political regeneration of India was to be achieved with the help and under the protection of Britain. *The Hindoo Patriot*, the newspaper of the Bengal Zemindars and upper classes, even fondly hoped that "it is the mission of England to... make her (that is, India) fit to govern herself".<sup>1</sup> Congressmen hoped that India would ultimately "participate in full in the rights of British citizenship" and would form an integral and permanent part of the British empire which had "given the rest of the world the models of free institutions".<sup>2</sup> Some of the utterances of early Congressmen make strange reading in the light of subsequent events. The reliance of early moderate Congressmen on British ideas and British sense of justice was touching and pathetic. It is against this that Tilak, the "extremist" leader, later had to declare, "There is no empire lost by the free grant of concessions by the rulers to the ruled".<sup>3</sup>

In the very First Congress W. C. Bonnerji, the President, declared that politically-minded Indians wanted to be governed according to the ideals of government prevalent in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Congressmen wanted to introduce, slowly and gradually, Western representative institutions into India. The great words "Representative Institutions", said Surendranath Banerjea in the Third Congress, were written in characters of gold in the banner that the Congress unfurled.<sup>5</sup> "England", said Bishan Narayan Dhar exuberantly in the same Congress "has moved us from our ancient anchorage. She has cast us adrift, against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat, and we turn back to England, and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institutions by which, amid a thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."<sup>6</sup> Though

<sup>1</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot*, April 30th, 1888. See also *The Tribune*, December 28th, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Surendranath Banerjea's 1895 Congress Presidential Address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 254-5).

<sup>3</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Two Remarkable Speeches*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 4. See also *The Tribune*, January 5th, 1887.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-6. In the 1886 Congress Dadabhai Naoroji spoke of "the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into

the early Congress leaders turned to England for guidance and for the grant of representative institutions, political leaders in Britain generally did not show any inclination to give any such guidance.

Many British statesmen and thinkers did not even consider representative government as a model which should be copied by others. They regarded it "as something peculiarly British, as an inherited national privilege".<sup>1</sup> Burke advised the French people not to try to introduce the British system into their country but to make the best of their own inherited institutions.<sup>2</sup> The idea that democratic institutions were suited only to Britain was challenged by two great events—the American Revolution and the French Revolution. These two revolutions encouraged people to think that democratic institutions were not peculiar monopolies of any one particular nation but were goods whose value increased as they were more widely shared ; that democratic institutions were not things that must necessarily be inherited, but were benefits that could also be claimed as a natural right.

In 1890 Gladstone, the Liberal leader, declared that it was the mission of Britain to spread the light and message of democratic institutions throughout the world. This was a complete change from the days of Burke. "It often happens in the counsels of Providence", said Gladstone, "that each nation or some particular nation, is appointed to work out great social, political, or economical problems for the world at large. . . . In the adoption of that system (that is, the system of representative institutions) we long stood alone, but one after another great countries of the world have come in, and the nations sprung from our loins have given further countenance and currency to our example, and now the man would be deemed mad who should denounce the system of popular representation."<sup>3</sup>

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light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not people for the kings ; and this new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English institutions." (*Congress Presidential Addresses, First Series, pp. 7-8.*)

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay Muir, *National Self-Government* (London, 1919), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Pandit Malaviya in the 1890 Congress (*Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress, p. 18*). Malaviya said, "No one who was not

With these words Congressmen were in complete agreement. The image of England that the early Congressmen cherished was the England of Simon de Montfort, of Hampden, of Mill, the England which was the home of constitutional liberties, and the mother of parliaments and free institutions throughout the earth. Congressmen urged their British rulers to practise the gospel of "political Christianity" that Gladstone preached.<sup>1</sup> "Representative institutions", said Surendranath Banerjea in a lecture at the Oxford Union, "are a consecrated possession which in the counsels of Providence has been entrusted to the English people, to guard that possession, to spread it, and not to make it the property of this or that people, but the heritage of mankind at large".<sup>2</sup> Indians, being British subjects, wrote *The Indian Mirror*, an influential newspaper of the time, had every right to representative government.<sup>3</sup> Britain had conceded to Canada, Australia, and other colonies representative institutions, why then should she withhold them from India?<sup>4</sup> "What is an Englishman", asked Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the Second Congress in 1886, "without representative institutions? Why an Englishman at all, a mere sham, a base imitation, and I often wonder as I look round at our nominally English magnates how they have the face to call themselves Englishmen and yet deny us representative institutions and struggle to maintain despotic ones."<sup>5</sup> But the fact remained that the overwhelming majority of British administrators and the British community in India were opposed to the introduction of representative institutions in India.

From English textbooks Indians, claimed the early Congressmen, learned to appreciate, in theory, the value of representative institutions,<sup>6</sup> hence England, it was argued, would be subjecting India to a double injustice if she now, in practice, tried to with-

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mad or who had not become degenerated by contact with the worst phases of Oriental thought would refuse to admit the soundness of the representative principle."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *The Indian Mirror*, May 2nd, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Speech of Pandit Malaviya at the 1887 Congress. (*The Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya : His Life and Speeches*, p. 15.)

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Second Indian National Congress*, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 262 ; Dadabhai Naoroji,

hold from India the great boon of representative institutions the desire for which England herself had awakened and stimulated among Indians.<sup>1</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot* was, however, confident that whatever might be the case of Englishmen who had long resided in India, the average Englishman in Britain loved liberty and appreciated the love of liberty in others.<sup>2</sup> "The truth is," wrote *The Bengalee*, the newspaper which was an ardent supporter of the Congress movement, in a similar vein in 1889, "that an Englishman cannot but welcome any proposals for reform in this direction (that is, towards the liberalisation of the legislative councils) unless he has ceased to be an Englishman. He is by instinct and by the traditions of his race a lover of popular institutions."<sup>3</sup>

The best Englishmen had sympathised with Italy and Greece in their struggles for freedom. Though Indians were neither Italians nor Greeks they were better, argued Surendranath Banerjea, because they were British subjects.<sup>4</sup> In that capacity they were entitled to secure very great sympathy from Englishmen in their demand for greater political rights. It is against the touching faith of early moderate Congressmen in the British sense of justice that in later years the extremists were to pour scorn and ridicule.

Early Congressmen had excessive and pathetic faith in the liberal instincts of their British rulers and they persuaded themselves to believe that Britain could not enslave other nations for her own benefit.<sup>5</sup> *The Tribune* wrote that Indians lived under the rule of a race that was the most freedom-loving race in the world,<sup>6</sup> and referring to British rule Dadabhai Naoroji declared that Indians were attached "to this foreign rule with a deeper loyalty than even to our past native rule", because they believed that England would not attempt in an utterly un-English way

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"England's Honour towards India," *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, October 1892, p. 511.

<sup>1</sup> *The Tribune*, December 12th, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot*, December 24th, 1888.

<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee*, January 5th, 1889.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, pp. 26-7; *The Tribune*, December 12th, 1888; "Congress-Wallahs and Their Critics",

<sup>6</sup> *The Tribune*, January 4th, 1888.

to withhold from India the inestimable blessings of representative institutions that she had already conceded to the self-governing colonies.<sup>1</sup> "We have no doubt", wrote *The Tribune* in 1888, "that in proper time India will be governed by her own Parliament under the guiding hand of England. England can no more refuse self-government to India than deprive the English people of their Parliament."<sup>2</sup> The disillusionment came later and gave rise to the extremist party who would have nothing to do with Britain or things British. Even the moderate Dadabhai had later to write a book under the heading *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* and had to refer in bitterness and sorrow to the wrongs that Britain did to India and to the evils of political subjection.

So great and touching was the faith of Congressmen in representative institutions that in the Third Congress Surendranath Banerjea confidently asserted that it was "impossible to think of a domestic grievance or . . . complaint which would not be remedied" if the legislative councils were reformed and made more representative.<sup>3</sup> This statement gave rise to some controversy.<sup>4</sup> Critics accused Congressmen of cherishing a most extravagant faith in representative institutions and in conceiving that such institutions could cure all evils, not only political but also economic and social.

In this connection the lively debate at the Second Congress over a resolution which expressed grave concern over the poverty of India and suggested that "the introduction of Representative Institutions will prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people,"<sup>5</sup> is illuminating. Ambica Charan Mazumdar said that the connection between poverty and the absence of representative institutions appeared to him as "somewhat remote".<sup>6</sup> The "chief causes which have brought about the dire poverty of India are not all

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, p. 26. Sankaran Nair in his 1897 Congress Presidential Address expressed similar views (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 323.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune*, January 4th, 1888.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Rajah of Bhinga, *Democracy Not Suited to India*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Second Indian National Congress*, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

political",<sup>1</sup> and cannot be removed by mere political changes, declared another speaker. Various factors which contributed to the poverty of India—lack of industrialisation, backwardness of agriculture, over-population, etc.—were enumerated by different speakers.<sup>2</sup> Even Surendranath Banerjea was not satisfied with the resolution and, on behalf of the Bengal delegates, he proposed that the resolution be so amended as to state that "the wider employment of natives of India, the encouragement of indigenous trade and manufactures, are among the circumstances which, along with the introduction of representative institutions, would palliate the poverty of the masses."<sup>3</sup>

Supporters of the original resolution pointed out that it was not intended to enumerate all the circumstances which contributed to India's poverty. The Congress being a political organisation could point out that an important political reform—the introduction of more representative institutions—though it would not work any direct miracle would help the government to know more fully and therefore remove more easily the economic sufferings of the people.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of these clarifications the resolution in its unamended form was carried by a large majority.

In a pamphlet<sup>5</sup> published by some Congressmen in 1887, one Farid-Ud-Din, a lawyer, explained to one Rambaksh, a leading villager, the excellence of representative institutions but warned him not to imagine that representative institutions alone could remove all injustice and oppression.<sup>6</sup> But though Congressmen did not regard representative institutions as a cure for all evils they very greatly valued such institutions. When the Congress was founded in 1885 the notification that called it into being declared that the Congress was intended to form

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-8.

<sup>5</sup> "A conversation between Molvi Farid-Ud-Din, M.A., B.L., practising in the Zilla Court of Hakikatabad, and Rambaksh, one of the Mukadams (Chief Villager) of Kambakhtpur." The pamphlet was included in Appendix III of the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

the germ of a native parliament which would prove that Indians were not unfit for representative institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The First Congress passed a resolution urging the reform and expansion of the legislative councils by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members.<sup>2</sup> But how far was the principle of election or government by representation suited to Indian conditions? The remarks of Chislom Anstey and of Bartle Frere on this question deserve to be reproduced because Congressmen almost invariably referred to those remarks. "We are apt to forget," said Chislom Anstey in 1867 at a meeting of the East India Association in London,<sup>3</sup> "when we talk of preparing people in the East by education, and all that sort of thing, for municipal government and parliamentary government, that the East is the parent of municipalities. Local self-government, in the widest acceptation of the term, is as old as the East itself ... there is no portion of that country from west to east, from north to south, which is not swarming with municipalities ; and not only so, but like our municipalities of old, they are bound together as in a species of network, so that you have readymade to your hand the framework of a great system of representation."<sup>4</sup> "Anybody who has watched the working of native society," said Bartle Frere in 1871,<sup>5</sup> "will see that its genius is one of representation—not, ... representation by election under Reform Acts, but representation generally by castes, and trades, and professions, every class of the community being represented ; and that where there is any difficulty, anything to be laid before the Government, anything to be discussed among themselves—a fellow-citizen to be punished, or a fellow-citizen to be rewarded—there is always a public meeting of the caste, the village, or the district, and this is an expression, ... of the genius of the people as unmistakable as that which is arrived at by our Saxon method of gathering together in assemblies of different kinds to vote by tribes or hundreds or by shires."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *The Journal of the East India Association*, 1867, Vol. 1, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Pherozeshah Mehta (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 68) ; Annie Besant (*India : Bond or Free?* p. 55) and other Congressmen quoted this passage.

<sup>5</sup> Bartle Frere, *The Means of Ascertaining Public Opinion in India*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> See speech of N. G. Chandavarkar in which he referred to this passage.

In spite of what Chislom Anstey said about there existing "readymade ... the framework of a great system of representation," it cannot be ignored that many of the ancient local self-governing bodies had not survived the centralising tendencies of British rule. Already during the insecurity that followed the dissolution of the Mughul empire the self-governing village institutions had greatly decayed.<sup>1</sup> During the early years of British rule Munro in Madras and Elphinstone in Bombay tried to preserve what was left of the old judicial village *panchayets*, but their endeavours were not followed up.<sup>2</sup> The establishment of a unified system of administration, the easy facility of reference to the district law courts, the introduction of new systems of land tenure, and the development of individualistic ideas and sentiments, were some of the factors which, during British rule, were responsible for the decay of the ancient self-governing village institutions.

As early as 1867 W. C. Bonnerji, while admitting that the self-governing village communities had lost much of their ancient power, claimed that the fact that such communities once existed showed that the people possessed instincts of self-government and that it was fair to suppose, until the contrary was proved by experiment, that the people would understand the principles of representative self-government.<sup>3</sup>

The First Congress demanded not only that the legislative councils should be made more representative, but also that the budgets should be referred to the legislative councils for consideration.<sup>4</sup> The English-educated classes, who primarily composed the early Congresses, vividly remembered how the English people extolled Hampden for his refusal to pay ship-money, how at every stage of their constitutional history Englishmen showed a zealous solicitude to ensure to their representatives

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*Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, p. 377 ; Annie Besant, *India : Bond or Free?* pp. 54-5.

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhuri, and K. K. Datta, *An Advanced History of India* (London, 1946), p. 858.

<sup>2</sup> *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, ed. H. H. Dodwell (Cambridge, 1934), p. 856.

<sup>3</sup> W. C. Bonnerji, "Representative and Responsible Government for India", *The Journal of the East India Association*, 1867, Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, p. 23,

alone the full and final control of the finances of their country, and how a section of them, migrating to America, converted the principle of "no taxation, without representation" into a battle-cry for revolution.<sup>1</sup> The Congress, however, did not think that the principle of "no taxation without representation" could immediately be applied to India.<sup>2</sup> It wanted some voice in the taxes to be imposed by the government but it did not ask for full and absolute control over the finances of the country.

The First Congress further demanded that the members of the legislative councils should be empowered to interpellate the executive in regard to all branches of the administration.<sup>3</sup> In India no member of any of the existing legislative councils had any right to ask a single question of the executive on finance or on any matter of administration, domestic or foreign, but in Britain the members of the parliament enjoyed the right of interpellating the executive on any matter of public concern. In answering the questions of members, the government in Britain had the opportunity of supplying valuable information which removed much misunderstanding and cleared up many matters. In India where the government was alien and the composition of the higher governing body largely foreign, the occasions of misunderstanding between the people and the government were likely to be more frequent than in Britain. Consequently, Congressmen claimed that the right of interpellation was more important in India than even in Britain.

The reform schemes adumbrated by the Congress raised apprehensions in the minds of British administrators that the Congress desired the early establishment of full-blown parliamentary institutions in India. In a speech in 1888 Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy of India, complained that a section of the educated classes had set up the ideal of "a representative body or bodies in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who,

<sup>1</sup> See Dadabhai Naoroji's speech in the 1885 Congress (*Ibid.*, p. 26), and Eardey Norton's article "The Indian National Congress" in *Indian Politics*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Surendranath Banerjea's 1895 Congress Presidential Address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 199).

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the First Indian National Congress*, p. 23,

through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British executive into subjection to their will.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Dufferin made these remarks in order to criticise what he believed to be the aims of Congressmen. *The Indian Mirror* commented that Dufferin “attempted to mislead his audience, unintentionally but ignorantly, by saying that the Congress wanted to usurp the reigns of power.”<sup>2</sup> The idea of transferring to Indian hands the ultimate power of decision of all Indian questions was rejected by early Congressmen as beyond the range of practical politics.<sup>3</sup> They wanted, as *The Bengalee*, which supported Congress policies, pointed out, “a consultative council and not representative government.”<sup>4</sup> True, Congressmen demanded that at least half the members of the legislative councils should be elected but not all elected members were likely to vote against the government, and even if they did, Congressmen conceded that the government should have the right of vetoing all adverse votes.<sup>5</sup> “Now ... if there be one thing more than another that we have tried to make clear,” said George Yule in his 1888 Congress Presidential Address, “it is that the British Executive should continue to be paramount in the Councils.”<sup>6</sup>

W. S. Caine, a member of the British parliament who visited the 1888 session of the Congress wrote that the belief of a section of the Liberal party of Britain that a demand for home rule had arisen in India was based on a misapprehension of the real demands of the Congress and that the most ardent Congressman did not contemplate the early possibility of setting up a responsible parliament in India.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dufferin, *Speeches Delivered in India*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *The Indian Mirror*, December 6th, 1888. See also *The Tribune*, December 8th, 1888.

<sup>3</sup> See Romesh Dutt’s article “Indian Aspirations under British Rule” in *Indian Politics*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 15th, 1888. See also *The Bengalee*, December 8th, 1888 ; *The Tribune*, February 23rd, 1889 ; *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 76 ; and Eardley Norton’s article “The Indian National Congress” in *Indian Politics*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 45-6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* See also *The Tribune*, January 19th, 1889.

<sup>7</sup> W. S. Caine and the Special Correspondent of the *Newcastle Daily Leader*, “Impressions of two English Visitors”, pp. 27-8.

“Let me say on behalf of the Indian National Congress”, said Surendranath Banerjea in 1890, “that we do not wish to see installed in our midst anything like a democratic form of government. We do not think India is ripe for it yet ; nor do we want Home Rule . . . . We want something much less than an English House of Commons.”<sup>1</sup> In his Presidential Address to the Congress in 1890, Pherozeshah Mehta declared that Congressmen were not so ignorant of history as to demand the immediate and wholesale importation into India of the parliamentary institutions that Britain had evolved through the discipline of centuries.<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to the Anglo-Indian newspaper *The Pioneer*<sup>3</sup> in 1888 Theodore Beck said, “Parliament is what the promoters of this (that is, the Congress) movement have as their goal, and the assurance that the only object is a reconstitution of the legislative councils is the language of diplomacy.”<sup>4</sup> Though Beck was certainly mistaken if he believed that for the immediate present the Congress wanted anything more than the reconstitution of the legislative councils, he was undoubtedly correct in thinking that the establishment of a responsible parliament was the ultimate aim of some Congressmen. “Is English literature so barren, are English institutions so worthless,” asked *The Tribune*, “that they can be read and studied without a love for popular self-government springing up in the heart of a nation?”<sup>5</sup> The paper stated that if in the course of a fifty or a hundred years Indians become fitted to enjoy a fully parliamentary form of government then the British rulers would willingly establish such a form of government in India.<sup>6</sup>

But though parliamentary government was the ultimate poli-

<sup>1</sup> *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, p. 96. See also *The Tribune*, November 9th, 1887 ; *The Indian Spectator*, March 10th, 1889 : “The Indian Congress” ; *The Hindoo Patriot*, May 13th, 1889 : “Mr. W. S. Caine on India” ; *The Bengalee*, April 23rd, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *The Pioneer* expressed the opinions of an important section of Anglo-Indian officials. The weekly edition of *The Pioneer* was known as *The Pioneer Mail*.

<sup>4</sup> See Beck’s letter “In What Will It End?” in *The Pioneer Mail*, May 16th, 1888.

<sup>5</sup> *The Tribune*, June 2nd, 1888.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

tical goal of some early Congressmen, what they immediately wanted was not an Indian version of the British House of Commons but something on the lines of the legislative council of the Mysore State which was originally established in 1881. In a pamphlet published in 1891, Rajah, a pro-Congress British Indian subject, after being convinced by a Mysorean of the excellence of the Mysore legislative council, remarked to the Mysorean thus : "Our councils are not composed of more than ten members each ; while your assembly, you say, contains 250 members. Our members in the councils are but government nominees, whereas, you are to enjoy from the next year elective franchise . . . . Our members have not the powers of interpellation which in a sense your representatives have. Our Government has yet to take a leaf from your book and establish similar assemblies in our Empire."<sup>1</sup> The government in India should increase the number of legislative councillors and carry on legislation after consulting the councillors about the wants and grievances of the people.<sup>2</sup> If only these simple reforms were effected then the permanency of British rule in India could be assured, for though a thousand years might roll by, it would be seen that in India, Rajah fondly hoped, the British and the Indians were "commingling with each other as milk and water, and embracing each other as mother and child."<sup>3</sup>

The Congress demand for elective representative institutions was criticised by Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan,<sup>4</sup> the Muslim leader. Saiyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) is most well known for his work in founding the Mahomedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh, which became a great centre for the spread of western knowledge as also for the study of Islamic ideas.

Saiyid Ahmed was born at Delhi of a noble family. At the time of the Indian Mutiny Saiyid Ahmed served the Company's Government in a subordinate judicial post and he remained loyal to the British. Saiyid Ahmed also asked his co-religionists to be loyal to British rule. Saiyid Ahmed took no part in the Congress movement. He apprehended that the introduction

<sup>1</sup> M. V. Chari, *The Mysore Representative Assembly and the Indian National Congress : A Dialogue*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 40.

of a representative form of government, which the Congress desired, would lead to rule by the Hindus, the majority community. Though Saiyid Ahmed never thought of a separate state for Muslims, his idea that the introduction of parliamentary democracy in India would result in Hindu rule could logically lead only to the formulation of the doctrine of a separate state for the Muslims.

Theodore Beck, the Principal of the Mahomedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh, who regarded himself as a disciple of Saiyid Ahmed in matters political,<sup>1</sup> wrote that, the Indian Muslim thought resembled the old Tory School of England far more than the Radical and that Indian Muslims were not so enthusiastic about democratic institutions as was generally believed.<sup>2</sup> Further, Saiyid Ahmed did not believe that representative institutions could be established under foreign rule.<sup>3</sup> It had never been so established in all history. The principles on which an empire was based were different from the principles that sustained a representative system of government. The method of British imperial rule in India could not be democratic, it was bound to be the same as the method that was pursued by "all Kings and Asiatic Empires."<sup>4</sup> The Muslims once established an empire in India, they knew the method of running an empire, whereas the English-educated Bengalis, who were vocal in the Congress, were utterly ignorant of them because they had no such experience.<sup>5</sup> The Muslim emperors did not consult their subject-peoples when they contemplated waging war against any province and conquering it. Why then should the British rulers be required to consult the representatives of the Indian people, before they went to war against Burma?<sup>6</sup> It appears that Saiyid Ahmed apparently did not consider that because

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Beck, *Essays on Indian Topics*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. In a paper read at a meeting of the East India Association in 1888, C. W. Whish said that the Muslims were "Conservatives by nature and national bias." (*The Journal of the East India Association*, 1889, p. 33.) In a discussion that followed the reading of the paper Raj Narayan disputed this statement and pointed out that even a few years ago Saiyid Ahmed held liberal political opinions. (*Ibid.*, p. 66.)

<sup>3</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 47.

Indians paid for those military operations it was only natural that they should feel that they were entitled to have a voice in the determination of the broad outlines of the military policy of the government.<sup>1</sup>

According to Saiyid Ahmed, Indians not only had no right to interfere with the military and financial policy of the government,<sup>2</sup> they had also no right to claim that they should be appointed to those posts where matters of foreign policy and state secrets were dealt with. He said that it was a natural law that men confided more in the men of their own race than in those of others, and that Indians could not complain if Englishmen and not Indians were appointed to those posts.<sup>3</sup>

Congressmen wanted to Indianise the government services and to liberalise the legislative councils. Criticising the Congress demand for more representative institutions Saiyid Ahmed said that while representative government could succeed in a homogeneous country like Britain, where there existed a strong national feeling, in India, where the people were not homogeneous but were divided by profound religious and other differences, the introduction of representative government, pure and simple, would be productive of much evil, because as the Indian people, unlike the British people, would vote on the basis of religious and not political differences, the majority community, the Hindus, would completely dominate the Indian parliament and establish a government English in name but Hindu in reality.<sup>4</sup> He believed that if the demands of the Congress for more representative institutions were conceded in full, then the Congress, by means of elections and through the legislative councils, would peacefully gain control over the entire internal administration of the country, and that this would mean that by peaceful means alone as great a change in the importance of the different political groups and communities would be effected as was generally secured by means of a civil war. "We also like a civil war,"

<sup>1</sup> See *The Tribune*, January 25th, 1888, and *The Hindoo Patriot*, January 23rd, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, pp. 41, 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. See also Saiyid Ahmed's speech in the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1883, p. 20.

said Saiyid Ahmed, "but . . . we like it with arms . . . which is in truth the true pen for writing the decrees of sovereignty."<sup>1</sup>

Saiyid Ahmed had no doubt that if the British left India then there would ensue a civil war between the Hindus and the Muslims. "It is necessary," he said, "that one of them should conquer the other . . . . To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible."<sup>2</sup> If the Muslims were to choose between being subjects of the Hindus or of the British then Saiyid Ahmed advised the Muslims to choose the latter alternative, and he reminded them that the British like the Muslims were "people of the Book" and informed them of his extraordinary belief that "God had said that no people of other religions can be friends of Mahomedans except the Christians."<sup>3</sup>

In expressing these opinions in 1887-88 Saiyid Ahmed went back on his earlier and more liberal views which were that the interests of Hindus and Muslims were not, in essence, conflicting. Seeing that both the communities lived on the same soil, were governed by the same ruler, and suffered or benefited, more or less, equally by the same economic causes, in 1884 he had declared, "By the word nation I mean Hindus and Mahomedans."<sup>4</sup>

In his speeches in 1887-88 Saiyid Ahmed strongly advised his coreligionists not to take any part in the Congress movement.<sup>5</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot* wrote in 1888 that had the Muslims "been more thoroughly liberalised by Western culture than they are at present they would have, to a man, sympathised with the objects of the Congress."<sup>6</sup> The Hindus took to Western education long before the Muslims<sup>7</sup>; it was natural, therefore, that the

<sup>1</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, February 16th, 1884. See also the article "Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan in 1884 and 1887" by a "Bengalee Journalist" in *The Tribune*, February 1st, 1888.

<sup>5</sup> See Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot*, October 8th, 1888.

<sup>7</sup> In 1860-62 there was only one Muslim to ten Hindus in the English schools in India. (W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans: Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?* London, 1871, p. 178.) Though Muslims constituted one-fourth of the population of India, in 1870-71 only one-seventh of the students in the schools were Muslims (F. W. Thomas, *The History and Prospects of British Education in India*, Cambridge, 1891, p. 94). Even in

Congress which aspired after Western political institutions and pursued Western political methods would find its most ardent supporters among the Western-educated Hindus. But though the comparative delay in the spread of Western education among the Muslims was one of the reasons, it was not the sole reason why some Muslims did not support the Congress movement. Saiyid Ahmed, who strongly advised his community to welcome English education, was yet opposed to the Congress and argued that if ultimately a parliamentary form of government was set up in India, as many Congressmen suggested, then the interests of the Muslims would suffer.

To safeguard the interests of the Muslims and other minorities, the 1889 Congress adopted a "minority clause" to the effect that "whenever the Parsis, Christians, Muhammadans or Hindus are in a minority, the total number of Parsis, Christians, Muhammadans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far as may be possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected thereto, than the total number of Parsis, Christians, Hindus or Muhammadans, as the case may be, in such electoral jurisdiction, bears to its total population."<sup>1</sup> Though this proposal was a departure from the practice of representation in Britain where persons were elected to parliament by the majority vote of a particular constituency irrespective of the fact whether the person elected belonged to any particular community, it was defended on the ground that because India, unlike Britain, was not a politically homogeneous country one could not expect that political methods that were successful in Britain would work equally well in the different conditions of India.<sup>2</sup>

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1882 only 11 per cent of scholars receiving higher education were Muslims.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 14. Munshi Hidayet Rasul sought an amendment suggesting that the number of Hindus and Muslims in the councils should be equal. (*Ibid.*, p. 32-33.) Wahid Ali, who believed that the Muslims were the "superior race", supported the undemocratic thesis that there should be three times as many Muslims as Hindus in the councils. (*Ibid.*, p. 36.) Other Muslim delegates exhorted the delegates to regard themselves as Indians first and Hindus and Muslims afterwards. (*Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.) Ultimately the original "minority clause" was adopted.

<sup>2</sup> See speech of Eardley Norton. (*Ibid.*, p. 31.)

Saiyid Ahmed criticised Congressmen not merely for formulating reform proposals on the assumption that Indians were a nation<sup>1</sup> but also for trying to import a democratic spirit which, he maintained, was totally unsuited to Indian conditions. Congressmen argued that admission to the higher services or legislative councils should not be restricted to men of high birth but should be allowed to able men of even "insignificant origin". They said that if competitive examinations for the recruitment of the civil servants were held simultaneously in England and in India then one of its beneficial results would be that poor persons, who could not afford the expenses of going to England, would have a chance of appearing for the civil service examinations. One of the reasons why Saiyid Ahmed was opposed to the holding of simultaneous examinations in England and in India was that men of "insignificant origin" would then become civil servants. But in England, Englishmen of "insignificant origin" were recruited for the civil service and *The Indian Mirror* was quick to point out that it would be a strange and illogical position if while Englishmen of "insignificant origin" were recruited for the civil service, Indians of "insignificant origin" were excluded from it.<sup>2</sup> But Saiyid Ahmed sought to defend his position by the curious argument that because English civil servants came from a distant country Indians remained ignorant as to whether those civil servants were the sons of dukes or drapers, but that such ignorance could not be maintained about Indian civil servants and that in India men of good family would not consent to being ruled by Indians "of low rank with whose humble origin they were well acquainted."<sup>3</sup>

Saiyid Ahmed further stated that the Viceroy would be specially justified in appointing persons of good family as members of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. "None but a man of good breeding", he declared, "can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainments at which he may have to dine with Dukes and Earls."<sup>4</sup> The suggestion that those who enjoyed the accidental advantages of rank and birth should be given special preference in the matter

<sup>1</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *The Indian Mirror*, January 17th, 1888.

<sup>3</sup> Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

of appointment to the Governor-General's Legislative Council was strongly criticised in the nationalist press.<sup>1</sup> "India", wrote *The Indian Spectator*, "... does not want a government managed by the native aristocracy. It requires the fittest men it can find."<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune* drew attention to the fact that even the landed gentry of Bengal had once suggested as its nominee in the Governor-General's Legislative Council the name of that fine representative of the English-educated class, Kristo Das Pal, even though Pal was born in the "low" *teli* or oilman caste.<sup>3</sup>

Like Saiyid Ahmed, the Rajah of Bhinga, a representative of the landed aristocracy and the author of a work entitled *Democracy Not Suited to India*,<sup>4</sup> entertained conservative views on social matters. The Rajah believed that it was undesirable "to give men of inferior origin and caste, power over men immensely their superior in birth and social position," and he emphatically maintained that the territorial aristocrats wanted to preserve the social distinctions that existed between man and man in India from time immemorial.<sup>5</sup> The territorial aristocrats had no love for democracy in general or the Congress movement in particular. They were conservative and orthodox, they clung to the old established usages. But the light of orthodoxy had become dim in the minds of many Congress agitators who, the Rajah lamented, were "seeking to introduce into India the strange and complicated institutions of the far West."

In spite of the fact that the territorial aristocrats wanted to preserve the old-established and harmful caste inequalities, the Rajah claimed that the landed aristocrats represented the real interests of the people and advised the British rulers to govern India through the landed aristocrats.<sup>6</sup> A little known person by the name of R. C. Saunders, a Calcutta solicitor, suggested that by forming an Indian House of Lords it would

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Mirror*, January 17th, 1888 ; *The Hindoo Patriot*, January 23rd, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *The Indian Spectator*, January 22nd, 1888 (*The Indian Spectator* was edited by Behramji Malabari, who was an ardent social reformer).

<sup>3</sup> *The Tribune*, January 25th, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> On September 26th, 1888, *The Pioneer Mail*, which voiced the opinions of an important section of Anglo-Indian officials, very favourably reviewed this book.

<sup>5</sup> The Rajah of Bhinga, *Democracy Not Suited to India*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

be possible to rule India through the territorial aristocrats. He computed that the Indian peerage would be composed of 1,280 aristocrats. There would be 230 ruling chiefs of native states, 100 survivors of extinct dynasties and other eminent men, and 950 zemindars of British India.<sup>1</sup> The Indian peerage were to have the right of trial by their own class and they were to have a voice in legislation.<sup>2</sup> It was not clearly specified how real the power of the Indian peerage would be, but probably the Indian House of Lords was designed to be merely a consultative body and it was not intended that it should be invested with the ultimate controlling power over legislation.

Saunders suggested that some of the ambitious and relatively wealthy educated middle class Indians could be elevated to the Indian peerage in the manner that some middle class persons in Britain had been incorporated in the British nobility.<sup>3</sup> But what the educated classes wanted was not that a tiny section of their class should be elevated to peerage, but that they should, as a class, get a proper share in the administration of the country, and the creation of an Indian House of Lords would not have satisfied their aspirations.

It appears that one of the purposes that Saunders had in mind when he suggested the creation of an Indian House of Lords was that it would have provided a "proper counterpoise" to the Congress movement that was dominated by the English-educated middle class.<sup>4</sup> Saunders wanted to check the growing influence of the English-educated class which was exercising a beneficial influence on Indian political and social life and which as a class was much more enlightened than the territorial aristocrats of India. As the Rajah of Bhinga himself admitted the majority of the ancient nobility of India had not received the benefits of English education and they found it difficult to keep pace with the tide of progress.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Saunders, *A Glance at India's Aristocracy: Or should there be a House of Lords for India?* pp. 4-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> For Saunders' views see *The Journal of the East India Association*, 1889, pp. 75-7.

<sup>5</sup> See the Rajah's article "The Decay of the Landed Aristocracy in India", *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1892, p. 835.

Critics argued that even though it be conceded that the English-educated Congressmen were exercising a beneficial influence in the country, it was yet true that because they constituted a very small section of India's total population their opinions could not be taken as a guide in matters of Indian administration.<sup>1</sup> In 1888 Dufferin characterised the educated classes who were agitating for Western representative institutions, which apparently meant Congressmen, as constituting a "microscopic minority" of the population of India.<sup>2</sup> Out of the two hundred millions of people of British India not more than five or six per cent could read or write and less than one per cent had any knowledge of English.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the knowledge of most of the literates was only elementary. The number of graduates produced by the universities since 1857 was less than eight thousand. Dufferin argued that it would be unwise to hand over power to a national representative assembly at the bidding of this "microscopic minority" of the English-educated class.<sup>4</sup>

The claim of early Congressmen regarding their representative character may be briefly considered here. W. C. Bonnerji, in his Presidential Address to the First Congress, claimed for the Congress a representative character almost akin to that of the British House of Commons. The Congress delegates were not selected by formal elections from particular constituencies, but being bound to the people by a community of sentiment and interest, those delegates, he claimed represented the people, in substance, though not in form.<sup>5</sup> There can be no doubt that though the Congress delegates came from the enlightened section of the people, Bonnerji's claim about their completely representative character was premature. The vast majority of the people of India—the agriculturists—did not evince much interest in the Congress proceedings of the early years. The official record of

<sup>1</sup> On April 28th, 1892, *The Pioneer Mail* expressed the extreme opinion that because Congressmen and their sympathisers constituted a very small section of India's total population they could not at all be taken into account in the system of Indian administration.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dufferin, *Speeches Delivered in India*, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* For similar opinions see Colvin's letter to Hume. (A. O. Hume and A. Colvin, *Audi Alteram Partem*, p. 22.)

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 2.

the Second Congress admits that "the ryots and the cultivating classes were insufficiently represented."<sup>1</sup>

Budruddin Tyabji, in his Presidential Address to the Third Congress, claimed that the Congress was "a truly representative national gathering", and asserted that if the legislative councils were reformed and enlarged and made more representative than many of the Congress delegates would be formally elected to those councils.<sup>2</sup> Large public meetings had been held to elect the delegates for the Third Congress. But according to the Rajah of Bhinga those meetings were attended mainly by the English-educated town people and the vast majority of agriculturists had kept away from such meetings. True, some agriculturists attended Congress meetings but the most important information one should have about political meetings, in such a populous country like India was not, wrote the Rajah, how many people attended the meetings, but how many people did not.<sup>3</sup> Out of about two hundred million people of British India barely half a million men, according to the official report of the 1887 Congress, actually and directly took part in the public meetings for the election of Congress delegates.<sup>4</sup> The report maintained that if the issues were explained to the people then ninety per cent of the adult males of India would have supported the Congress and its principles but, on the basis of circumstances then existing, it remarked that it "cannot ... see grounds for supposing that more than ten per cent of these (that is, adult males) at the utmost, even indirectly and passively supported the Congress ... the statistics ... do not lead to the conclusion that, as yet, the Congress is by any means so 'broadbased upon the people's will' as has been supposed and asserted."<sup>5</sup>

By the time that the 1888 Congress was held Congressmen had organised numerous public meetings and distributed thousands of leaflets and pamphlets among the people. The 1888 Congress report claimed that due to this vigorous political agitation one-third of the adult male population had acquired some

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Second Indian National Congress*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> The Rajah of Bhinga, *Democracy Not Suited to India*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

knowledge about the Congress and its principles.<sup>1</sup> Three million people took a direct part in electing the 1888 Congress delegates. On this basis and by a rough method of computation the Congress report worked out that "these three million of active supporters representing fully five times this number of favourers of the movement, and constituting with their women, children, and dependents, fully 75 millions of the population" could be counted as, in some way, sympathisers of the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of these figures Congressmen declared that they did not constitute a microscopic minority of India's total population. They claimed that they were in fact the real representatives of the Indian people.

In his correspondence with Hume, Sir Auckland Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, disputed this claim and asserted that if real popular government was introduced, then India would be ruled not by the small minority of English-educated Congressmen but by the representatives of the vast majority of ignorant Indian peasants.<sup>3</sup> "The government of the English in India" he said, "was the government of a people far more advanced than those among whom it exists"; that government could wean the Indian people from their "archaic order of ideas," but there was no prospect of that happening if owing to the introduction of real representative government the ideas of the ignorant masses were allowed to influence the policy of the Indian government.<sup>4</sup> Theodore Beck thought likewise. Real representative government in India would mean the rule of the peasants and that would be the "government of ignorance and superstition."<sup>5</sup>

Congressmen did not claim representative institutions for the masses; they did not believe that the masses would at that stage of Indian political evolution be able to exercise the right of franchise in an enlightened and thoughtful manner.<sup>6</sup> "Who has

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress*, p. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> A. O. Hume and A. Colvin, *Audi Alteram Partem*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Beck, *Essays on Indian Topics*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>6</sup> See the Congress Presidential Addresses of Pherozeshah Mehta and George Yule in 1888 and 1890 respectively. (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 41-2, 76.)

ever asked", wrote *The Bengalee* in 1887, "that the peasantry should participate in the government of the country and direct the affairs of the Empire? Not even the most dreamy of our politicians have ever sought to compromise our cause by committing this outrage upon common sense."<sup>1</sup> In the same year in a pamphlet written by Congressmen it was stated that the right of franchise should not be conceded to the mass of the people, it should only be given to "the upper and middle, fairly educated class" which, it was stated, contained "a majority of fairly sensible and reasonably honest men."<sup>2</sup> Early Congressmen definitely repudiated the idea of universal suffrage<sup>3</sup> and demanded representative institutions especially "for the educated community who, by reason of their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English ideas and their familiarity with English methods of government, might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon."<sup>4</sup>

Congressmen maintained that the fact that the majority of the people were uneducated was no argument why the right of franchise should not be granted to the small English-educated minority.<sup>5</sup> They said that if in a country the number of persons capable of running a steam-engine were few then that was no reason why those few persons should be disallowed to run steam-engines until all the men of the country learned to drive such engines.<sup>6</sup> Congressmen pointed out that a House of Commons existed in Britain long before the British masses were educated,<sup>7</sup> and they recalled the wise words of Dewan C. Ranga Charlu, the founder of the Mysore Representative Assembly, who said to that

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, November 12th, 1887. See also *The Tribune*, February 8th, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> "A conversation between Molvi Farid-Ud-Din ... and Rambaksh ... ." (*Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 210.)

<sup>3</sup> A. O. Hume and A. Colvin, *Audi Alteram Partem*, p. 71. In 1888 Hume said that the actual number of Indian voters, according to a proper electoral system, would come up to one-and-a-quarter per cent of the total population of India. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>4</sup> 1895 Congress Presidential Address of Surendranath Banerjea (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 180-81).

<sup>5</sup> William Wilson Hunter, "The Present Problem of India", *The Contemporary Review*, September, 1888, p. 322.

<sup>6</sup> George Yule's 1888 Congress Presidential Address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 41-2).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, *The Tribune*, November 9th, 1887.

Assembly (1882) that if "the spread of any high degree of education among the great mass of the people were to be insisted upon as a *sine qua non*, we may have to wait for ever; meanwhile every year under an autocratic system of government will find the people less fit for representative institutions."<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of representative institutions for the educated community would have directly and immediately benefited the English-educated class. But the mere fact that the English-educated Congressmen would have benefited by the introduction of more liberal principles of government does not necessarily prove that their interest in liberalism was not genuine. In 1890 Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, had, through his Private Secretary, paid a compliment to the Congress by saying that the Congress movement represented in India "what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal party as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it."<sup>2</sup>

But, instead of recognising the Congress as a progressive force most Englishmen in India were, as H. Whitehead, a former Bishop of Madras, records, from the very beginning, hostile to the Congress.<sup>3</sup> In 1894 General Sir George Chesney characterised the Congress as a thoroughly disloyal organisation,<sup>4</sup> and Whitehead narrates that in the early years of the Congress "all talk of self-government in India was regarded by the majority of the British as disloyal."<sup>5</sup> In 1899 Sir Alfred Lyall wrote that those who desired, with the help of Britain, to elevate the moral and intellectual standard of Indian life "must see how ruinously premature it is to quarrel with the British government upon details of administration, or even upon what are called constitu-

<sup>1</sup> See M. V. Chari, *The Mysore Representative Assembly and The Indian National Congress : A Dialogue*, p. 8 ; *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See the "Introduction" of *The Indian National Congress* (Containing the Presidential Addresses ... The Congress Resolutions ... and Notable Utterances on the Movement), 1st ed., p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> H. Whitehead, *Indian Problems : In Religion Education Politics*, p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> G. Chesney, *Indian Polity : A View of the System of Administration in India* (London, 1894), p. 385. William W. Hunter wrote that "the strong class-traditions of the Anglo-Indian community unfortunately render it opposed to native political progress". (Hunter, "The Present Problem of India", *The Contemporary Review*, September, 1888, p. 331.)

<sup>5</sup> H. Whitehead, *Indian Problems : In Religion Education Politics*, p. 217.

tional questions.”<sup>1</sup> Even as early as 1888 Theodore Beck had declared that “the agitation of which the Congress is the visible head will, if unchecked, sooner or later end in a mutiny.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1889 Sir Edward Watkin, a member of the British parliament, made the unfounded allegation that Congressmen were tempted to create agitation by the offer of Russian gold.<sup>3</sup> In the same year J. M. Maclean, another member of the British parliament, suggested that the government should prohibit all Congress meetings.<sup>4</sup> He doubted the loyalty of Congressmen : “professions of loyalty from Orientals are utterly worthless”.<sup>5</sup> With great frankness he stated his position thus : “Let us have the courage to repudiate the pretence, which foreign nations laugh at, and which hardly deceives ourselves, that we keep India merely for the benefit of the people of that country and in order to train them for self-government. We keep it for the sake of the interests and the honour of England ; and the only form of government by which we can continue to hold it in subjection is that of despotism.”<sup>6</sup>

But there were other Englishmen whose views about the Congress were not as narrow and illiberal as that of Maclean. John Slagg, who was once a member of the British parliament, wrote in May 1886, that the First Congress was like the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace, for it showed that the educated Indians who had imbibed English political ideas would no longer remain satisfied with the system of government that obtained in India.<sup>7</sup> In 1888 Sir Richard Garth, who was once a Conservative member of the British parliament and was

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies : Religious and Social*, First Series (London, 1899), p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Beck’s letter “In What Will It End?”, *The Pioneer Mail*, May 16th, 1888. For the supposed seditious tendencies of early Congressmen see *The Pioneer Mail*, October 31st, 1888 : “The Spread of Sedition” and “Sedition and Its Antidote”.

<sup>3</sup> *The Voice of India*, May, 1889, p. 256. (*The Voice* contained extracts from the vernacular and English newspapers of India.)

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Maclean, “The Home Rule Movement in India”, *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April, 1889, pp. 436-7 (Maclean was once the editor of *The Bombay Gazette*).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 426, 429.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 437.

<sup>7</sup> John Slagg, “The National Indian Congress”, *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1886, p. 710. On May 29th, 1886, *The Bengalee* wrote that the views

later the Chief Justice of Bengal, testified to the fact that the Congresses were attended by "the recognised leaders of native thought and opinion,"<sup>1</sup> and in 1890 Sir Charles Dilke, after a visit to India, declared that "there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, and who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way."<sup>2</sup>

The most powerful advocate of the Congress cause in the British parliament was Charles Bradlaugh, who in reply to a Congress address in 1889 said, "I feel I should like to have the title that some have given me in sneer, and some in hearty meaning of 'Member for India'."<sup>3</sup> The 1889 Congress submitted to Bradlaugh a scheme for the reform of the legislative councils—the most important feature of which was that one-half of the members of the reconstituted Governor-General's and provincial councils should be elected—in the hope that he would draft a Bill on the basis of that reform scheme and introduce it in the British parliament.<sup>4</sup>

After Bradlaugh had introduced his Bill, Lord Cross, the Secretary of State of Lord Salisbury's Conservative government, brought forward on 21st February 1890, a Bill for the reform of the Indian legislative councils.<sup>5</sup> Some of the proposals of the official Bill were adopted from a dispatch which Dufferin had sent to Britain in 1888. In that dispatch he advocated the liberalisation of the legislative councils, but he expressly disclaimed that he had any intention of setting up in India those representative and parliamentary institutions which Britain had evolved,

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of John Slagg would, sooner or later, become the views of the House of Commons.

<sup>1</sup> R. Garth, *A Few Plain Truths About India*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Charles W. Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, Vol. II (London 1890), pp. 146-7. See also R. S. Watson, "Indian National Congress", *The Contemporary Review*, July, 1888, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Indian Affairs : Debates and Proceedings in Both Houses of Parliament*, 1889, p. 25.

patiently and gradually, through the discipline of many centuries.<sup>1</sup> The executive in India was to remain responsible to the sovereign and parliament in Britain ; it was not to be brought into subjection to the will of any legislative council in India, and no legislative council was to have a majority of elected members.<sup>2</sup> Lansdowne, who succeeded Dufferin as Governor-General, said in the Indian Legislative Council on March 16th 1893, that all the local governments in India were of the opinion that "what was desirable was to improve the present councils, rather than to attempt to put in their place bodies comprising a large number of persons, and possessing the attributes of Parliamentary assemblies of the European type."<sup>3</sup>

Dufferin as well as Lansdowne<sup>4</sup> desired to increase the powers of the legislative councils. Following Dufferin's recommendation<sup>5</sup> the 1892 Councils Act conceded to the legislative councils the right of interpellation and the right of discussing questions of finance.

Surendranath Banerjea said that only a government which felt that it had nothing to fear from publicity could have granted the right of interpellation, and he recalled that in the dark days of the Second Empire in France, when repression was the order of the day, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were deprived of this right.<sup>6</sup> He, however, pointed out that though, in the British House of Commons when an answer had been given to a question asked by a member, the member had the right of addressing further questions to the Minister on the same subject, this right of asking supplementary questions was not conceded by the 1892 Act.<sup>7</sup> This meant that even when the reply of the government spokesman was evasive, incomplete or unsatisfactory it had to be accepted without further question.

Dufferin had suggested not merely that the powers of the legislative councils should be increased, but also that their size

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. II, ed. A. C. Banerjee, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

<sup>3</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1893, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Speech on 29th March, 1889. (*The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1889, pp. 161-3.)

<sup>5</sup> A. Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Vol. II, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 195.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9.

should be expanded, and that the elective system should partially be introduced for selecting non-official members.<sup>1</sup> This last recommendation was not accepted by Cross, who, as Lansdowne records, was opposed to the elective principle "even in homœopathic doses".<sup>2</sup>

Lord Salisbury asserted that the principle of election was alien to Eastern minds, and that its application in Eastern countries, such as Turkey and Egypt, had not produced any tangible result.<sup>3</sup> He pointed out that considerable religious differences existed between the Hindus and the Muslims, and argued that whereas representative government or government by election could work successfully in a society where all those who were represented desired much the same thing, it was put to an intolerable strain when it rested upon a society which was divided into two sections, one of which was hostile to the other.<sup>4</sup> Cross believed that two of the most important reasons why English parliamentary institutions could not be introduced into India, were that the peoples of India lacked a sense of common nationality, and that the large majority of them were uneducated.<sup>5</sup>

The repudiation of the representative or the elective principle pleased the Anglo-Indian paper, *The Pioneer Mail*,<sup>6</sup> which had previously argued that the sudden introduction of English representative institutions into India would "be a blunder so great that England would deserve to lose India forthwith."<sup>7</sup> The paper was even opposed to the partial introduction of the elective principle which, it maintained, would not satisfy those classes who were "making a trade of political agitation".<sup>8</sup> On March 6th, 1890, Salisbury had also said that it would be wrong to believe that the introduction of the elective principle in small doses would be of much use, "At least", he said, "we know this of the elective principle from our experience of Europe, that whenever it has made for itself a small channel it has been able

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. II, ed. A. C. Banerjee, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne : A Biography*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Speech on 6th March, 1890 (*Hansard's Indian Debates*, 1890, pp. 84-5).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, March 5th, 1890 : "The Indian Councils Reform Bill".

<sup>7</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, January 8th, 1890 : "The Elective System in India."

<sup>8</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, March 5th, 1890.

to widen gradually, until all has been carried before it, and that is the danger of any action you may take in India.”<sup>1</sup>

Congressmen, who wanted gradually to introduce into India elective or representative institutions, were not impressed by this argument. On the contrary, they strongly protested against the repudiation of the elective principle by Salisbury and Cross.<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee* declared that no reform would be acceptable to Congressmen which did not concede this principle,<sup>3</sup> and it regretted that by refusing to admit this principle Cross's Bill fell short even of Dufferin's recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

Replying to the criticisms that representative institutions could not be applied in India, because the people were uneducated and lacked the sense of a common nationality, Congressmen said that they had not yet asked for representative institutions for the ignorant masses, and that though there existed great differences among Indians, Indians were increasingly developing a sense of common nationality because they were all “citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme Legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe, by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens.”<sup>5</sup> Answering Salisbury's criticism that the representative principle was not an Eastern idea, Pherozechah Mehta approvingly quoted the following remarks of *The Manchester Guardian* : “Salisbury's great argument is that the elective principle is not an Eastern idea. It is sufficient perhaps to say that English rule is not an Eastern idea, yet it prevails in India, and that it is by Western rather than by Eastern ideas that it is to be strengthened and made permanent.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard's Indian Debates*, 1890, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> See Hume's opinion in *The Pioneer Mail*, March 12th, 1890 : “Mr. Hume on the Councils Bill” ; *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 67-9.

<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee*, March 1st, 1890 : “Lord Cross's Bill on the Reform of the Councils”.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, February 22nd, 1890 : “Parliament and the Reform of the Councils”.

<sup>5</sup> Congress Presidential Address of P. Ananda Charlu, 1891 (*Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 5).

<sup>6</sup> H. P. Mody, *Sir Pherozechah Mehta : A Political Biography*, Vol. I, p. 257.

Congressmen said that if the principle of election was a Western idea it was too late in the day to say that it could not work in an Eastern soil, because downright elections had already been introduced in the local boards ; and as Congressmen believed that the elective system had not worked unsatisfactorily in the local boards, they urged its extension in the provincial and imperial field.<sup>1</sup>

They conceded that if the elective system was introduced, then the constituencies that would be created in India would not be as good as those which existed in Britain. In the 1890 Congress, Pandit Malaviya, however, pointed out that "no electorates that might be formed here, could be half as bad as those which existed in the Ante-Reform days in England".<sup>2</sup> The members were then returned by closed and rotten boroughs. "Mr. Sheridan was returned by a constituency of only seventy electors . . . . Mr. Pitt . . . was returned by a constituency numbering only one hundred electors."<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee* argued that there existed no reason why Indians, unlike the British people, should be required to wait for the creation of perfect constituencies before they could have the right of working even a limited measure of representative institutions.<sup>4</sup>

It was not only Congressmen who favoured the introduction of the elective principle ; Lord Northbrook on 6th March, 1890, expressed in the House of Lords his regret that Cross's Bill made no provision for choosing some non-official members by a system of election or selection.<sup>5</sup> Lord Northbrook's regret was shared by Lord Ripon<sup>6</sup> and Lord Kimberley.<sup>7</sup> Kimberley while maintaining that "the notion of a Parliamentary representation of so vast a country—almost as large as Europe—containing so large a number of different races, is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men,"<sup>8</sup> yet strongly favoured

<sup>1</sup> *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, March 23rd, 1889 : "Lord Dufferin's Scheme for Expansion of the Councils".

<sup>5</sup> *Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890*, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

the introduction of a partially elective system.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately an amendment known as the Kimberley clause was adopted which, by empowering the Governor-General in Council with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council to make regulations as to the conditions of nominating the additional members,<sup>2</sup> permitted, though it did not prescribe, the adoption of the elective principle.

Cross's Bill was not passed in 1890. In a letter to Lansdowne, on 27th June, 1890, Salisbury wrote that he did not think that the Bill would live.<sup>3</sup> He was unduly apprehensive that it would be a capital danger to the empire if the language that Gladstone was likely to use in the discussion of the Bill was taken as a watchword by political agitators in India, "To speak plainly—and asking your pardon if I wound," he wrote, "any political sympathies—I dread this question being discussed while Mr. Gladstone is still a political force."<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, the Bill was not enacted in 1890, or even, in 1891.<sup>5</sup> When the Bill was reintroduced in the beginning of 1892, controversy again centred round the question of adopting the elective principle. In the House of Commons, Maclean criticised the Kimberley clause by saying that if a Liberal government came to power, and if Lord Ripon and Lord Reay were

<sup>1</sup> Kimberley drew attention to the fact that though the government in presenting Dufferin's minute to Parliament had excluded the portion in which he had recommended the adoption of the elective principle, it was widely known that Dufferin had favoured the elective principle (*Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890*, p. 80). In a speech on 4th March, 1909 Cross said that the surreptitious publication of Dufferin's minute forced the hands of the government and compelled it to do something about it. (*Debates on Indian Affairs, House of Lords, 1909*, p. 127.)

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography*, p. 74. When on 28th March, 1892 Gladstone spoke in the House of Commons on the Indian Councils Bill, his speech was not, from the imperial point of view, in any way dangerous. He supported the elective principle, but said that though parliament should lay down the principles of Indian administration, the task of devising specific machineries for realising those principles should generally be left to the government of India. (*Indian Parliamentary Debates, 1892*, pp. 145-47.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The dropping of the Bill in 1891 was explained by the Congress President of that year as being due to the death of Bradlaugh. (*Congress Presidential Addresses, First Series*, p. 81.)

appointed Secretary of State and Governor-General respectively, then they would strain the Kimberley clause in every way in order to introduce the elective system.<sup>1</sup> While Maclean was not satisfied with the Kimberley clause because he was afraid that it might lead to the introduction of the elective principle another member, Schwann, was not satisfied with it because it did not specifically prescribe the introduction of the elective principle.<sup>2</sup> Curzon, the government spokesman, explained that the Indian Councils Bill empowered the Viceroy "to invite representative bodies in India to elect or select or delegate representatives of themselves and their opinions to be nominated" to the legislative councils.<sup>3</sup>

Though under the 1892 Councils Act these representative bodies could only recommend the names of candidates, the Government of India, as a matter of course, accepted those recommendations.<sup>4</sup> The elective system was thus adopted, *de facto* though not *de jure*, by the traditional English method of allowing convention to grow as distinguished from the method of specific legislation.

It can by no means be said that the very limited representative institutions that were established by the operation of the Act of 1892 were fashioned completely on the British model. In Britain members to the House of Commons were chosen, except in the case of university representatives, from territorial constituencies and not from particular groups or associations. But under the operation of the Act of 1892 non-official councillors, who were generally chosen from municipalities, district boards, chambers of commerce and universities, were selected as Lansdowne put it, "to represent types and classes rather than areas and numbers".<sup>5</sup>

In April 1892, *The Pioneer Mail* wrote that because the reforms proposed in the Indian Councils Bill might raise false hopes that it meant a new departure in Indian policy, future Indian

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on 28th March, 1892. (*Indian Parliamentary Debates, 1892*, pp. 157-58).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report*, (Cd. 9109), 1918, para. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1893*, p. 107. Also *Montagu-Chelmsford Report*, (Cd. 9109), 1918, paras. 69-71.

agitators would be able to "denounce the Government of India not merely for being despotic, but for dishonestly pretending to be something else". That is, the Bill was "a delusion, and therefore, more or less, a snare".<sup>1</sup>

It was true that the Act of 1892 which retained official majorities in the Governor-General's and the provincial legislative councils did not impair the authority of the government of India, but as the Act liberalised the legislative councils, even though to a very limited extent, the Congress welcomed it and also expressed the hope that the rules for the selection of the members, that were to be prepared under the Act, would be framed in the spirit of Gladstone's declaration in the House of Commons<sup>2</sup> and that there would be a real and genuine, even though a limited application, of the elective principle.<sup>3</sup> The rules, when prepared, fell far short of Congress expectations, and Congressmen complained that in framing the rules the Indian bureaucrats, who had never been sympathetic to the aspirations of the politically conscious classes,<sup>4</sup> had not given real effect to the spirit in which the Act of 1892 was conceived.<sup>5</sup>

Though Congressmen had greater faith in the liberal instincts of the British nation than in that of British officials in India, it is worth mentioning in this connection that Curzon, the Under-Secretary of State for India, did not, during the discussion of the Indian Councils Bill, refer to the Congress in very favourable terms. In the manner of Dufferin he characterised the Congress party as a microscopic minority, and asserted that the real people of India, the *ryots* or the peasants, who lived a life of "mute penury and toil", did not share the political aspirations of Congressmen.<sup>6</sup> He believed that no "system of representation ... would in the most infinitesimal degree, represent the people of India," and he informed the House of Commons that the

<sup>1</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, April 28th, 1892 : "The Franchise in India".

<sup>2</sup> Speech on 28th March, 1892. (*Indian Parliamentary Debates*, 1892, p. 149.)

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> William Wedderburn, "Russianized Officialdom in India", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January, 1893, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Ninth Indian National Congress*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on March 28th, 1892. (*Indian Parliamentary Debates*, 1892, pp. 131-32.)

time had not yet arrived for introducing into India representative institutions on the English pattern.

Speaking about representative government, Salisbury said on 6th March 1890 : "It may be—I do not desire to question it—that it is to be the ultimate destiny of India."<sup>1</sup> But this was merely a hypothetical opinion. Neither Conservatives, such as Salisbury and Curzon, nor Liberals, such as Kimberley, had any positive belief in the desirability of gradually introducing English parliamentary institutions into India. The repudiation of parliamentary government for India by many British politicians widened the gulf that separated Indian Congressmen from their British rulers.

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard's Indian Debates*, 1890, p. 84,

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE POLITICAL METHOD OF THE "MODERATES"

THE period of the establishment of British dominion in India was contemporaneous with the period of the rapid development of free and democratic institutions in Europe. British politicians were, therefore, faced with the question whether the principles that regulated the conduct of a free and democratic country should be applied to the governance of an empire. They generally agreed that India would not, at least for some time to come, be democratically governed. In 1832, before a parliamentary committee James Mill, the great advocate of representative institutions, was asked: "Do you consider in the present state of society in India, anything approaching to representation as entirely out of the question?" "I conceive wholly so", he replied.<sup>1</sup> Next year Macaulay said in the House of Commons that whereas everyone knew that the best way of securing good government in Europe was by means of representative institutions, every speculator on Indian questions had rejected the idea that it was practicable to introduce representative government into India.<sup>2</sup>

Though the possibility of immediately introducing representative government into India was unanimously rejected by British politicians in the first half of the nineteenth century, they were divided on the question whether certain free institutions, such as the free press, should be introduced into India. In 1822, Sir Thomas Munro declared that "a free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible".<sup>3</sup> Lord Elphinstone was also opposed to the idea of a free press in India. "In other countries", he wrote in 1832, "the use of the press

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 1832, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Macaulay, Speeches with his Minute on Indian Education*. Selected by G. M. Young, pp. 125-26.

<sup>3</sup> *Major-General Sir Thomas Munro: Selections from His Minutes and Other Official Writings*, ed. Alexander J. Arbuthnot, Vol. II, p. 288,

has extended along with the improvement of the government, and the intelligence of the people ; but (if India has a free press) we shall have to contend at once with the most refined theories of Europe, and with the prejudices and fanaticisms of Asia, both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed. Is it possible that a foreign government, avowedly maintained by the sword, can long keep its ground in such circumstances?"<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone agreed with Munro in thinking that a free press and a foreign rule could not exist together.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Charles Trevelyan disputed this proposition<sup>3</sup> and stated that in the absence of representative government, a free press was one of the few institutions which could express the aspirations of the people, ventilate their grievances, and operate as a continuous outward check on the conduct of the officials.<sup>4</sup> Seeing that the English-educated class was then loyal to British rule,<sup>5</sup> and believing that a free press would be considerably influenced by that class, Trevelyan came to the conclusion that a free press instead of preaching sedition, would desire the continuance of British rule. If there had been a free press in Britain during Roman rule, the "Groans of the Britons", the famous petition which implored the Roman emperor not to withdraw his army from Britain, would, argued Trevelyan, have found expression in the press.<sup>6</sup> Trevelyan persuaded himself to believe that if Britain left India in an undue haste then the "Groans of the Indians" would find expression in the Indian press.

Educated India, ever since the days of the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy, had demanded a free press. The memorials which the Raja and his five colleagues addressed to the Supreme Court in Calcutta and to the King in Council in Great Britain against the Press Ordinance of 1823 have become classics in the literature

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 1832, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter of Elphinstone dated November 17th, 1824 (T. E. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Vol. II, p. 165).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Trevelyan, *The Letters of Indophilus*, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Trevelyan, *The Letters of Indophilus*, p. 49.

of Indian liberalism and are regarded as the Areopagitica of the Indian press.<sup>1</sup>

The memorialists argued that a free press helped to remove the causes of rebellion, because through the press the people could represent their grievances against the government in order to secure their redress. In the absence of a free press popular discontent festered underground and excited rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

In Great Britain there existed considerable amount of freedom of comment and remark both on the conduct of the sovereign and on the policy of his ministers, but the former did not forfeit the respect of the people neither did the latter lose their power over the country because of open public scrutiny and criticism.<sup>3</sup> A free press was not an instrument which could only weaken the power of a government, for if the press was an instrument of attack, it was equally so a weapon of defence. In India where the most able and the most learned men were in the service of the government, the government could defend its policies more vigorously than in any other country.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in India where the vast mass of the people did not read at all, and had the greatest reverence for constituted authority, a free press, even if it was perverted and seditious, could do much less mischief than what could be caused by a seditious or perverted press in Britain where education was far more widespread.<sup>5</sup> The memorialists, however, maintained that the Indian press was not seditious.<sup>6</sup>

They urged upon the British rulers not to adopt "the political maxim so often acted upon by Asiatic Princes, that the more people are kept in darkness, their Rulers will derive the greater advantages from them".<sup>7</sup> The consistent pursuit of a policy of keeping the people in a state of ignorant subjection would have involved the suppression not only of all newspapers and periodical literatures but also of all educational institutions,

<sup>1</sup> See Margarita Barns, *The Indian Press*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Memorial to the King in Council. (*Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule*, ed. J. K. Mazumdar, p. 21.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>7</sup> *The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, ed. J. C. Ghose, Vol. I, p. 437.

but then history testified to the fact that the adoption of a policy of complete suppression did not strengthen, but rather, it weakened the foundations of empires.<sup>1</sup>

In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Governor-General, withdrew all restrictions on the freedom of the press. H. T. Prinsep, a member of the Governor-General's Council, who had some doubts about the new measure, remarked that there was wisdom in the dictum that "when you have a free press on board a man-of-war then you may think of giving one to India".<sup>2</sup> Metcalfe, however, realised that by fettering the press, discontent could not be removed, it could only be driven underground.<sup>3</sup> Further, for the spread of knowledge of the West the existence of a free press was very necessary.<sup>4</sup> Though Metcalfe believed that the spread of knowledge, through a free press, would not weaken the British empire, he yet asserted that, whatever might be the political consequences, it was the duty of the rulers to spread knowledge and not to attempt to perpetuate their rule by covering the land with darkness.<sup>5</sup>

Till 1878 the freedom of the Indian press was not interfered with except temporarily, for a year, during the Indian "Mutiny". The advantage of a free press was much appreciated by the English-educated class. One of the leading representatives of this class, Kristo Das Pal, declared that the Indians had been given a free press "unasked and unsolicited",<sup>6</sup> and he repeatedly maintained that a free press must remain an essential compliment of despotic British rule in India. He asserted that because the "tongue was always tied under Oriental government" the people had to take resort to the sword for the achievement of their rights, but that under British rule because the press was free, Indians could constitutionally represent their grievances

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule*, ed. J. K. Mazumdar, pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Margarita Barns, *The Indian Press*, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> J. W. Kaye. *The Life and Correspondence of Lord Charles Metcalfe*, Vol. II, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 650-51. See also Metcalfe's Minute of 16th May, 1835 (*Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, ed. J. W. Kaye, p. 197).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Speech on 30th January, 1880 (*Speeches and Minutes of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal*, ed. R. C. Palit, p. 317). See also *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol. VI, 1908, p. 72.

to the government in order to secure their redress.<sup>1</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot* wrote that in Russia, where people were deported to Siberia for presuming to ask for a free press, the government was a despotism tempered by assassination, but that in India, where the people enjoyed a free press, the government was a despotism tempered by public opinion.<sup>2</sup> It even declared that Indians enjoyed more freedom of speech and writing under an imperial rule than what the Russians enjoyed under their indigenous government of the Tzar.<sup>3</sup>

In 1878, by the Vernacular Press Act of Lytton, the then Governor-General, the freedom of the vernacular press was curtailed. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, the government spokesman, stated that while "the English Press had been, on the whole, loyal ... to the government ... a section of the vernacular press had been chiefly remarkable for its disloyalty".<sup>4</sup>

The educated class denied that the vernacular press was disloyal<sup>5</sup> and they protested against the enactment of this Act. The attitude of the conservative landlords towards this Act was, however, very different from that of the English educated middle class. *The Hindoo Patriot*, which was an organ of the British Indian Association, an organisation of landlords, wrote against the Act but not with much warmth or vigour.<sup>6</sup> Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, a big landlord, supported the Act in the Governor-General's Legislative Council.<sup>7</sup> The Raja of Bhinga, another landlord aristocrat, stated that the Act did not

<sup>1</sup> Speech on 28th January, 1875 (*Speeches and Minutes of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal*, p. 304).

<sup>2</sup> Leader of *The Hindoo Patriot*, February 26th, 1872. (*Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule*, ed. J. K. Mazumdar, pp. 92-94.) See also *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol. VI, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1878, p. 156. Lytton's press Act was designed to prevent, rather than to punish, sedition. It was based on a system of personal security. It was a restrictive measure, because its machinery was purely executive and the possibility of judicial intervention was expressly excluded.

<sup>5</sup> See speech of Surendranath Banerjea in *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hindoo Patriot*, March 18th, 1878: "The Liberty of the Vernacular Press".

<sup>7</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1878, p. 167.

curtail any right of moderate and rational criticism.<sup>1</sup> It was only the English-educated middle class which was strong in its opposition to the Act.<sup>2</sup>

"The only political representatives of native opinion", Lytton wrote sarcastically to Lord Salisbury in 1876, "are the Baboos, whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native press, and who really represent nothing but the social anomaly of their own position".<sup>3</sup> Salisbury, the conservative leader, characterised the literary class as "a deadly legacy from Metcalfe and Macaulay" and expressed the opinion that this class could not but oppose the government in times of peace and rebel against it in times of trouble.<sup>4</sup>

In 1879 *The Bengalee* fervently prayed for the overthrow of the Conservative Ministry and expressed the hope that if the Liberals came to power they would repeal Lytton's press Act and reverse some of his other unpopular policies.<sup>5</sup> When the Liberals came to power in 1880, Ripon succeeded Lytton as the Governor-General. Unlike Lytton, the Liberal Ripon treated the English-educated class with sympathetic understanding. He perceived that partly owing to the greater influx of Western ideas and the establishment of Western institutions, the ideas of educated Indians were being gradually transformed and that the power of public opinion was growing from day to day.<sup>6</sup> To give the growing public opinion a constitutional outlet, among other things, he repealed Lytton's restrictive press Act.

Hume, one of the founders of the Congress, believed that the Congress would provide a constitutional outlet for the growing public opinion in the country. Hume was a member of the Co-venanted Civil Service during the Indian "Mutiny". He observed that there was great economic discontent in the country and

<sup>1</sup> The Raja of Bhinga, *Democracy Not Suited to India*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> See Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Lord Salisbury dated May 11th, 1876. (*Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, ed. Lady Betty Balfour, Vol. II, p. 21.)

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Lytton dated June 9th, 1876. (*Ibid.*, p. 22.)

<sup>5</sup> *The Bengalee*, March 8th, 1879.

<sup>6</sup> See the Memorandum on Local Self-Government which Ripon addressed to the Secretary of State in 1882. (Lucien Wolf, *Life of the First Marquis of Ripon*, Vol. II, p. 92.)

that the government was out of touch with the people.<sup>1</sup> From a study of certain confidential documents [and from the information he received about the desperate attitude of the people, Hume was convinced that India, under Lytton, was on the verge of a revolutionary outbreak.<sup>2</sup> He believed that the Congress, by impressing upon the government the necessity of removing the genuine grievances of the people, would help to prevent the growth of political discontent.

Though in 1888, in a letter to Colvin, Hume described the Congress as the safest and the most constitutional outlet that could be devised for the growing discontent in the country,<sup>3</sup> it is surprising to note that originally Hume intended to make the Congress a social and not primarily a political body. Dufferin, the Governor-General, after pointing out that he found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the opinion of the people on matters of administration, because there existed no organisation in India that performed those functions which Her Majesty's Opposition discharged in England, suggested to Hume that the Congress should take up political matters.<sup>4</sup> When Hume placed his scheme and the scheme of Dufferin before nationalist leaders, the latter scheme was adopted.<sup>5</sup>

The Congress, in the beginning, did not have un-friendly relations with some government officials. It was even seriously suggested that Reay, the Governor of Bombay, should preside over the first Congress.<sup>6</sup> Many nationalists were filled with great delight when Dufferin gave a garden party to the delegates of the second Congress, met some twenty of them at a private interview, and desired to talk to the president separately.<sup>7</sup>

However, as the resolutions passed by the first two Congresses produced no visible impression on the government, Congressmen decided that in order to increase their political effectiveness

<sup>1</sup> William Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-83.

<sup>3</sup> A. Hume and A. Colvin, *Audi Alteram Partem*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> This was revealed by W. C. Bonnerji in his "Introduction" to *Indian Politics*, p. vii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

<sup>6</sup> William Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume*, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> *The Voice of India*, January 1887, p. 4. Lord Connemara, the Governor of Madras, also entertained the delegates of the third Congress at a garden party (*Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 19).

it was necessary to adopt a new method of political propaganda. In February 1887 *The Tribune* wrote that the new method of propaganda should be conceived on the lines of the Corn-Law-League agitation.<sup>1</sup> Hume narrated that when the Corn-Law-League was refused a hearing in the House of Commons, Cobden had said : "The delegates have offered to instruct the House ; the House has refused to be instructed ; and the most unexceptionable and effectual way will be by instructing the nation."<sup>2</sup> In order to instruct the nation, the Congress organised monster meetings in the towns, sent lecturers to the countryside and circulated and broadcast numerous leaflets and pamphlets. Two remarkable pamphlets, a Tamil catechism on the Indian National Congress and "A Conversation Between Molvi Farid-Ud-Din . . . and . . . Rambaksh", were issued.<sup>3</sup> These pamphlets criticised certain features of the British administration and pointed out that, to improve their lot, the people should in a constitutional manner press for the introduction of Western representative institutions into India.<sup>4</sup>

The publication of these pamphlets and the adoption of a vigorous method of political agitation from the year 1887 gave rise to some controversy. *The Pioneer Mail*, the organ of the British community in India, wrote that treasonable literature was being distributed with the implied sanction of Congress leaders, and declared that the Government of India would be within its legal and moral rights if it took necessary measures to put Hume's genius for agitation under restraint so long as Hume chose to remain in India.<sup>5</sup> Sir Roper Lethbridge<sup>6</sup> thought that the circulation of the above-mentioned pamphlets, with the *imprimatur* of the Congress,<sup>7</sup> would render it impossible for the

<sup>1</sup> *The Tribune*, February 12th, 1887 : "Instructing the Nation".

<sup>2</sup> William Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> These pamphlets were included in the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200, 208.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, January 2nd, 1889.

<sup>6</sup> Lethbridge was a member of the Bengal Education Service in the sixties and early seventies of the nineteenth century, and after the enactment of Lytton's press Act he was appointed Press Commissioner.

<sup>7</sup> Nationalists repeatedly pointed out that the pamphlets were written by individual Congressmen, and that they were not the official publications of the Congress (*The Voice of India*, December 1888, pp. 665-66).

people of England to support the Congress movement.<sup>1</sup> Sir Auckland Colvin also impugned this new method of Congress agitation. He believed that the criticisms of the British government which the two new pamphlets contained might incline the uneducated villagers to attribute all their ills to the misgovernment of the British rulers.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, the pamphlets did not preach sedition or favour the termination of British rule but merely wanted to mitigate the evils of British rule. When Rambaksh said to Molvi Farid-Ud-Din : "But surely you don't want us to join together and fight with the Sirkar. If we killed all the Europeans ... all would be anarchy"; the Molvi replied : "God forbid. This would be sin. Why should we kill the poor Europeans? Many of them are really good men, most of them mean at any rate to do right."<sup>3</sup>

Amidst universal opposition from the Congress audience, a landed aristocrat by the name of Raja Siva Prasad declared in the 1888 Congress that the government should prohibit the extensive distribution of pamphlets and leaflets which contained serious criticisms of the British administration in India. Language such as, "to what condition the nation has been reduced ... how distressed she feels ... is she alive or dead" he considered to be objectionable. This conservative Raja said that "to declare the value of the principles of democracy ; and that England owes its greatness to it, to hold up to admiration the Republican form of government in France ; to show that in the colonies even the negroes enjoy the same rights as the British-born subjects, implying thereby that the condition of the negroes is better than that of the people of India" was to use language that was inflammatory.<sup>4</sup>

Landed aristocrats such as the Raja of Bhinga argued that as Indians were not trained in the methods of criticism prevalent in an European democracy they could easily confuse any criticism of a particular governmental measure with a challenge to the very constitution of the country.<sup>5</sup> Critics of the Congress asserted

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of the East Indian Association*, 1889, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> A. Colvin and A. Hume, *Audi Alteram Partem*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>5</sup> The Raja of Bhinga, *Democracy Not Suited to India*, p. 98.

that in Britain because the people were educated they could not easily be influenced by irresponsible propaganda, but in India, where the number of people who had any education was small, there was no limit to the political credulity of the masses.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1886 Dufferin had said that the machinery of European democratic agitation could not be applied into India with impunity, and had stated that it was desirable "to forbid mass meetings and incendiary speechifying".<sup>2</sup> Theodore Morison, the associate of Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan, agreed that the machinery of European democratic agitation could not be introduced into India, because the Government of India being irremovable, the Indian critics would not be subdued by a sense of responsibility that chastened the criticism of the opposition party in Britain which knew that it might any time be called to assume power and be asked to make good its criticisms.<sup>3</sup> In Britain the government merely meant a ministry which was temporarily in power, and any attack on the government was consistent with loyalty to the constitution of the country. But in India, argued Morison, because the government meant the constitution,<sup>4</sup> criticism of the government could not easily be distinguished from disloyalty to the very constitution of the country. Arguing on these lines he maintained that the grant of the right of free criticism, by means of a free press and by open public debate, had been a great mistake on the part of the Indian government.<sup>5</sup>

Morison was not alone among the members of the British community in India in lamenting the introduction of free political institutions into India. W. S. Seton-Karr, once a High Court Judge in India, wrote in 1889 that Lytton's press Act was repealed under the mistaken notion that the principles of English Radicalism could be applied into India.<sup>6</sup> George Chesney also regretted that Lytton's press Act was repealed in deference to, what he

<sup>1</sup> Bireswar Mitter, *A View of the Indian National Congress*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Vol. II, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Morison, *Imperial Rule in India*, p. 76. (Morison was a member of the teaching staff of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College when he wrote this book.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> W. S. Seton-Karr, "The Native Press of India", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July 1889, pp. 51, 62. See also *The Pioneer Mail*, August 4th, 1889, "The Native Press".

called, a party cry raised in England.<sup>1</sup> The opinion of Lepel Griffin, the agent of the Governor-General in Central India, was still more emphatic. "Of the many mischievous acts of Mr. Gladstone", he wrote in 1889, "there is probably none that has been more productive of evil than the repeal of Lord Lytton's wholesome Press Act."<sup>2</sup> He affirmed that an institution such as the free press was only suited to enlightened, free and constitutional countries, such as England and France, and was an anomaly and danger in a despotic country like India.<sup>3</sup> In 1894 George Chesney similarly remarked that there was "no instance of any country not invested with free institutions and self-government in which the press was free", and commented that India was not yet fitted for the one and had showed itself absolutely unfit for the other.<sup>4</sup> As early as 1889 Seton-Karr had asserted that the conditions under which the native press of India lived had no parallel in European countries, and had maintained that the virulence of the native press would not have been tolerated even for a day in the Native States of India.<sup>5</sup>

The comments of *The Phoenix*, a Karachi newspaper, on Seton-Karr's remarks can be taken as representative of the opinions of Congressmen and of nationalists generally. "We have not heard", wrote the paper on August 10th, 1889, "that the Native States are the ideal of the British Government, and the analogy of the continental countries does not apply. England does not emulate Russia. The only other countries for consideration are France and Germany. In the first, the press is more than free ; in the second, the restrictions on the press are rather from choice than from compulsion and the circumstances are entirely different."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Chesney, *Indian Polity : A View of the System of Administration in India*, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Lepel Griffin, "Indian Volunteers and Indian Loyalty", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January 1889, p. 10. (Griffin was, from 1881 to 1889, the agent of the Governor-General in Central India.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, See also Lepel Griffin, "India in 1895", *The Journal of the East Indian Association*, 1895, pp. 24-26.

<sup>4</sup> George Chesney, "India : The Political Outlook", *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1894, p. 897.

<sup>5</sup> W. S. Seton-Karr, "The Native Press of India", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July 1889, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in *The Voice of India*, September 1889, p. 469. See also *The Bengalee*, August 10th, 1889, "The Cloud No Bigger than a Man's Hand".

It could be said, as Munro said in 1822, that the first duty of a free press would be to teach the people to free themselves from the yoke of a foreign rule.<sup>1</sup> The early Congressmen, however, merely wanted to mitigate the evils of British rule and sought to liberalise it by means of constitutional agitation through the press and the platform. *The Tribune* wrote that the native press served the role of a constitutional opposition.<sup>2</sup> If the press was suppressed and the opportunities of constitutional agitation were limited, then how could Indians secure from their British rulers the redress of their political grievances? The theory that even if Indians did not agitate, British rulers would, of their own free will, redress Indian grievances, could not be accepted even by the early Congressmen who had a touching faith in the British sense of justice. Further, Congressmen pointed out that the suppression of a free press could not check sedition, but could only drive it underground. "If I were disposed to foment sedition in India", declared R. C. Dutt in his 1899 Congress presidential address, "I would desire in the first place to suppress all free discussion, suppress all newspapers, and suppress all public meetings as a burglar puts out the lights of a room before he commits burglary."<sup>3</sup> Early Congressmen were, however, far from being seditious. On the contrary, they believed that for the liberalisation of Indian polity and society<sup>4</sup> it was essential that British rule should continue for some time to come.<sup>5</sup>

Is it to be wondered that, holding views of this character, early Congressmen believed that patriotism was not inconsistent with loyalty to the British empire,<sup>6</sup> and they saw the hand of Providence in the establishment of British rule? In 1905 Gokhale declared that he accepted "the British Connection, as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good".<sup>7</sup> Though the reference to "the inscrutable dispensa-

<sup>1</sup> *Major-General Sir Thomas Munro*, ed. A. J. Arbuthnot, Vol. II, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune*, December 18th, 1887, "Proposal to Gag the Native Press".

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24.

<sup>6</sup> Bepin Pal, *The National Congress*, p. 9; *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol. VI, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> *Speeches of the Honourable Mr. G. K. Gokhale*, 1st ed., p. 182.

tion of Providence” might appear ironical to a present-day nationalist, Gokhale used the expression seriously.<sup>1</sup> The mass of the people had no liking for British rule because it was a foreign rule. It was the English-educated class which was consciously loyal to British rule.

In 1887 Bepin Pal asserted that the educated classes were much more loyal than the masses.<sup>2</sup> In 1898 R.C.Dutt wrote that the English-educated classes “are loyal in their own interests, loyal in consequence of the education they have received, loyal because they can seek redress for their grievances openly and in a constitutional manner”.<sup>3</sup> Next year in his Congress presidential address he claimed that educated Indians had practically identified themselves with British rule.<sup>4</sup> Congressmen fondly hoped that Britain, instead of suppressing the educated classes, would regard them as her “natural and necessary allies”<sup>5</sup> in the task of the political regeneration of India. “To disparage the educated class”, said B.N.Dhar, “is to discredit Western civilisation and to cast an unmerited suspicion upon the real justification of British rule in India.”<sup>6</sup>

Early Congressmen believed that they would be able to secure the sympathy and cooperation of British politicians in the work of Indian political reform. Rabindranath Tagore, in his eightieth birthday, when he had lost all his earlier faith in the integrity of the Western nations in their dealings with subject races, described how, in his youth, the days and the nights of the English-educated Indians “were eloquent with the steady declamations of Burke, with Macaulay’s long-rolling sentences; discussions centred upon Shakespeare’s drama and Byron’s poetry, and, above all, upon the large-hearted Liberalism of the nineteenth century English

<sup>1</sup> Expressions similar to that of Gokhale were used by B. N. Dhar in 1911 in his Congress presidential address. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Bepin Pal, *The National Congress*, p. 9. See also Dadabhai Naoroji’s speech in 1890 in *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Dutt, “The New Sedition Law in India”, *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April, 1898, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> A. M. Bose’s 1898 Congress presidential address (*Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress*, p. 20).

<sup>6</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, p. 16.

politics...(the educated Indians) hoped that the victor would of himself pave the path of freedom for the vanquished".<sup>1</sup>

English education was responsible for creating the sentiment of loyalty<sup>2</sup> in the minds of the English-educated Congressmen. In the early years of British rule, Indians were hostile to that rule. "Our danger", wrote Metcalfe in 1835, "lies in the spirit of our subjects from one end of India to the other. We have no hold on their affections; more than that, disaffection is universal."<sup>3</sup> In 1838 Charles Trevelyan recorded that in those parts of India where English education and English ideas had not spread, the people "high and low, rich and poor, had only one idea of improving their political condition ... (that is) the sudden and absolute expulsion of the English".<sup>4</sup> Coming to Bengal, where there had grown up a small English-educated class, Trevelyan found that the educated class, far from contemplating the total expulsion of the British, discussed, in their debating societies, how best, with the help and under the guidance of the British, a national representative assembly could in the course of time, be set up in the country.<sup>5</sup> True, with the setting up of a national representative assembly British rule would come to an end, but "no effort of policy can prevent the natives from ultimately regaining their independence";<sup>6</sup> consequently, the wisest policy that the British could pursue in India was to encourage the people to prepare themselves, gradually and peacefully, in the art of democratic self-government, and to wean them away from all ideas of ending British rule violently and suddenly. Trevelyan argued that the most effectual way to stamp out sedition in India was by the gradual diffusion of Western ideas in the country.<sup>7</sup> Through Western education Indians would come to value Western political institutions, and to despise, what he called, Asiatic despotism. Trevelyan believed that though an Asiatic despotic rule could be inaugurated in India at a not very distant time, "a century would

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "A Retrospect", *Indian Writing*, August 1941, p. 187-88.

<sup>2</sup> W. W. Hunter, *The India of the Queen and Other Essays*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, ed. J. W. Kaye, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193. Charles Trevelyan, *The Letters of Indophilus*, pp. 49-50.

scarcely suffice to prepare the people for self-government on the European model".<sup>1</sup> If Indians were greatly influenced by Western political ideas then for a century, at least, the safety of British rule in India could be ensured.

The truth of Trevelyan's observations made in 1838 that the English-educated class was loyal was proved during the military rising of 1857 when this class did not join the rebels.<sup>2</sup> A decade after the Indian "Mutiny", English-educated Indians increasingly began to take an active part in politics, but they adopted the method of constitutional agitation and generally rejected the methods of revolutionary violence. Surendranath Banerjea, who in the seventies of the nineteenth century made the name of Mazzini familiar among educated Bengalis, wrote: "Upon my mind the writings of Mazzini had created a profound impression....I discarded his revolutionary teachings as unsuited to the circumstances of India and as fatal to its normal development along the lines of peaceful and orderly progress."<sup>3</sup> Though in the seventies educated Indians openly criticised various features of the British administration, they were not seditious. In 1880 Sir Richard Temple could testify to the fact that disloyalty "was checked, not fostered or encouraged by education".<sup>4</sup>

The English-educated and loyalist Congressmen asked the British government to rule India in the light of British political principles, and they criticised the government when it violated those principles. In 1897, for example, when, in connection with the plague riots of Poona, the Natu brothers were imprisoned without trial and detained in jail without charge, Congressmen stated that it was a violation of the elementary principles of British justice, and a breach in the "sense of absolute confidence in the majesty of law and the security of person".<sup>5</sup> In this connection Congressmen naturally referred to the right of Habeas Corpus which Englishmen enjoyed, and demanded that

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Charles Trevelyan, *The Letters of Indophilus*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> R. Temple, *India in 1880*, p. 136. (In India Temple had served as the head of the provincial administrations of Central Provinces, Bengal and Bombay.)

<sup>5</sup> See A. M. Bose's Congress presidential address (*Report of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress*, p. 22).

the rule of law that informed the British constitution should also inform the British administration in India.<sup>1</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji said that British rule should be based on British principles and institutions, and that it must not be "maintained by political hypocrisy and continuous subterfuge, unworthy of the British honour and name, and entirely in opposition to the wishes of the British people, and utterly in violation of Acts and Resolutions of Parliament, and of the most solemn and repeated pledges of the British nation and Sovereign".<sup>2</sup> A resolution of the House of Commons in 1893 which favoured the introduction of simultaneous examinations for the civil service in India and in England,<sup>3</sup> for which Congressmen had been agitating for a long time, was not implemented;<sup>4</sup> and Congressmen pointed out that in the matter of recruitment to the superior ranks of the civil services the British rulers had not acted in accordance with the promise given in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 to the effect that race shall be no disqualification for holding government offices. As late as 1915 only five per cent of the posts of the superior civil services were occupied by Indians.<sup>5</sup>

The early Congressmen or the "moderates" admired the British nation for its democratic character, but they pointed out that the bureaucrats in India, composed mainly of British officials, were autocratic and were hostile to the aspirations of Indians for greater self-government.<sup>6</sup> They believed that Britain was a liberal nation<sup>7</sup> but they also asserted that the interests of Indian manufacturers had been sacrificed to that of Lancashire manufacturers,<sup>8</sup> and that by using Indian troops for purely imperial

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol. VI, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> See a Resolution moved by Dadabhai on 28th December, 1897, at a conference of Indian residents in the United Kingdom (R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, p. 396).

<sup>3</sup> *India : Parliamentary Debates*, 1893, p. 374.

<sup>4</sup> L. S. S. O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service*, pp. 220-21 ; Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, pp. 453-55.

<sup>5</sup> L. S. S. O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service*, p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, p. 214 ; *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> See the presidential addresses of B. N. Dhar and S. P. Sinha to the 1911 and 1915 Congresses respectively (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, pp. 10-11, 196).

<sup>8</sup> R.C.Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, pp. vii-ix.

purposes Britain had brought dishonour to her name.<sup>1</sup> They thanked the British rulers for establishing peace and security after the disintegration that followed the break-up of the Mughal empire and for saving the country from the ravages of plundering armies; but then Dadabhai Naoroji, the “moderate” leader, argued that the British prevented Indians from plundering each other in order that the British themselves might exploit the wealth of India, and that by maintaining the security of property they found that it was possible to drain away the wealth of India with perfect security.<sup>2</sup> So little military training had been given to Indians during British rule that the moderates felt that without the help of the British internal and external security of India could not be maintained. In fact, Gokhale and S.P.Sinha said to Lord Hardinge<sup>3</sup> and Lady Minto<sup>4</sup> respectively that if the British immediately left the country then no sooner had they reached Aden than Indians would have to cable to them asking them to come back. But later Sinha in his 1915 Congress presidential address said that, if this was true, then it was the greatest condemnation of the results of British rule, and he earnestly implored the rulers to give Indians greater opportunities for military training.<sup>5</sup>

The “moderates” pointed out various defects of British rule in India, in the hope that the British parliament, in which they had a touching faith, would remove those defects. But they also asked their countrymen to realise that the rate of political progress in India depended not on the will of the British parliament, but on their own political capacity. Gokhale said that though the standards of family life that the Indians had evolved in the past were high, in the field of public life their achievements, compared with those of modern Western people, were quite inconsiderable.<sup>6</sup> He asked the nationalists to consider it as their good fortune that British bureaucrats in India who were arrayed against them were

<sup>1</sup> See Dadabhai's 1906 presidential address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp.730-31) and also Besant's 1917 presidential address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, pp.296-97).

<sup>2</sup> R.P.Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, p.496.

<sup>3</sup> *My Indian Years : The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge*, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Sinha said this on 15th May 1909 (Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 298).

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, pp.206-08.

<sup>6</sup> G. K. Gokhale, *Responsibilities of Public Life*, pp.2-3,

persons of ability and were not just worthless men.<sup>1</sup> Holding views of this nature and believing that the political capacity of Indians could only grow gradually, Gokhale did not expect any rapid political advance in India.<sup>2</sup>

Further, Gokhale and other "moderates" pointed out that it would be wrong to believe that the government would easily or quickly grant to Indians even those political rights for which they were eminently fitted.<sup>3</sup> They reminded the nationalists about the fact that in self-governing England many a cause had to be agitated for long before success was achieved.<sup>4</sup> The struggle for the emancipation of the Catholics and the repeal of the Test Acts, the fight of Bright and Cobden for the repeal of the Corn Laws, the agitation for the reform of parliament, and the movement for the enactment of improved factory laws had to be long and arduous.<sup>5</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea and G.K.Gokhale were the three great moderate leaders who laid the foundations of modern constitutional development in India.

Dadabhai was a Parsi and was born in Bombay in 1825. Dadabhai became a professor of mathematics at Elphinstone Institution at the age of twenty-seven. But at the age of thirty he left India for England to be a partner in an Indian business firm there. Being in England Dadabhai had the unique opportunity among Indian moderate leaders to present directly to the British public India's case and to appeal for the redress of the wrongs done to India. For over fifty years Dadabhai carried on an intensive agitation in England in support of India's case for greater self-government. In 1892 Dadabhai was elected to the British House of Commons as a Liberal Candidate. Dadabhai had great faith in the British parliamentary system and wanted the same to be introduced into India gradually. Dadabhai spoke out fearlessly about the "Un-British-Rule in India". He spoke of the drain of Indian wealth to Britain and, along with Ranade,

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of the Honourable G. K. Gokhale*, 1st ed., p.759.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.497.

<sup>3</sup> See Gokhale's speech on 25th July, 1904 (*Ibid.*).

<sup>4</sup> See Dadabhai Naoroji's speech in 1893 (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp.126-27).

<sup>5</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Rash Behari Ghose*, pp.20-21,

helped to develop the spirit of Indian economic nationalism. Though he resided generally in England Dadabhai frequently visited India and was thrice elected the President of the Indian National Congress. He died in 1917 after a life of ceaseless activity. Towards the end of his life he came to be known as "the Grand Old man of India".

The other great moderate leader was G.K.Gokhale (1866-1915). After graduation from Elphinstone College Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society in Poona and like other members of the Society took a vow of poverty for 20 years in order to devote his time for the education of his countrymen. Gokhale was known for his knowledge of economic affairs and was a great propagator of the doctrine of "no taxation without representation". In 1899 Gokhale was elected a member of the Legislative Council for the State of Bombay and later on he became a representative from Bombay in the Imperial Legislative Council. Gokhale's annual speeches on the imperial budget were listened to with respect even by British administrators. Gokhale's interest in social reform led him to found the Servant of India Society in Poona in 1905. The members of the Society followed a life of rigid discipline like the members of a Catholic monastic order. The Society carried on work for social reform, for the spread of education, for the elevation of the status of low caste men and for the development of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Gandhi when he came to India from South Africa was closely associated with Gokhale.

The greatest moderate leader that Bengal produced was Surendranath Banerjea. Surendranath graduated from the Calcutta University and was one of the first Indians who was admitted to the coveted Indian Civil Service, the famous "steel frame" of British rule in India. But for an alleged failure to correct a false report prepared in his name by a subordinate official he was dismissed. Surendranath went to England to plead his case but without success. Then Surendranath appeared for the Bar examination and wanted to be called to the Bar but even there he was not admitted. Surendranath realised that the wrongs done to him was symbolic of the wrongs done to his countrymen in general. Thenceforward Surendranath devoted his life to the redress of the wrongs done to India. For Surendranath's persistence and dogged determination in the cause of

Indian self-government he was called by his countrymen "Surrender-not" Banerjea. Surendranath was sentenced to imprisonment for criticising a British Judge but he gladly courted imprisonment. Surendranath was a powerful orator and he journeyed from one part of India to other to rouse the people to the consciousness of the wrongs done to them. Surendranath edited an English newspaper *The Bengalee*, which was an influential organ of the national movement. Surendranath was twice elected the president of the Indian National Congress. Surendranath, like Dadabhai and Gokhale, believed in constitutionalism. He was opposed to extremism and the extremist leaders also opposed him. So great was his devotion to constitutionalism that in 1918 when he apprehended that the Congress may reject the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms he left the Congress and founded the All India Liberal Federation.

When in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century there came into prominence a party of "extremists", who were dissatisfied with the rate of political progress that the "moderate" method of agitation had secured and who derided the "moderates" for believing that political reform could be gained merely by petitioning the British rulers about the desirability of introducing such reforms, "moderates", such as Dadabhai Naoroji, argued that Indians had not been able to realise their political aims, not because they had petitioned or agitated too much, but because they had agitated too little.<sup>1</sup> In his 1906 Congress presidential address he said: "Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history of England.... The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation.... Agitation is the civilised, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force.... Agitate over the whole length and breadth of India... if we really mean to get justice from John Bull."<sup>2</sup> Referring to this appeal *The Bengalee* asked: "Could any commandment be more solemn, sacred, or binding?"<sup>3</sup>

The "moderates" believed that by means of persistent constitutional agitation they would be able to secure from their British

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p.739.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 738-39.

<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 27th, 1906.

rulers all the political rights they wanted. They generally claimed wider political rights, not as abstract and universal natural rights, but as rights which had been pledged by British rulers to Indians in their capacity as British subjects.<sup>1</sup> "The Indian's claim to the status of a British citizen is founded", wrote *The Bengalee* in 1906, "... upon the immutable basis of Royal declarations and Parliamentary enactments which constitute the Charter of our freedom."<sup>2</sup>

The document to which the "moderates" usually referred in order to find support for their demand for wider political rights was the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. "The Proclamation", said Surendranath Banerjea in the 1897 Congress, "is our Magna Charta, our watchword, our battle-cry, the gospel of our political deliverance."<sup>3</sup> The Proclamation declared that India would be governed for the good of her people. The emphasis was on good government rather than on self-government. And yet referring to the Proclamation, in his 1886 Congress presidential address, Dadabhai Naoroji said: "In it are embodied the germs of all that we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter."<sup>4</sup> He solemnly declared that every child as soon as it lisps its mother tongue must be made to memorise the Proclamation.<sup>5</sup>

The "moderates" constantly prayed and petitioned their British rulers to govern India in the light of the principles stated in the Queen's Proclamation, and to grant Indians wider political rights. Though it appears that they had some genuine faith in the liberal instincts of the British people, it must not be supposed that "moderates", such as Surendranath, Dadabhai and Gokhale, who were great patriots, did not feel the humiliation of relying on foreign rulers for political concessions. It was because, in the early years of the Congress, the nationalist sentiment was very weak that, from a sense of sheer helplessness, they came to develop a pathetic reliance on the sense of justice of foreign rulers. This fact is clearly brought out in the controversy between Dadabhai and the British Socialist, Hyndman,

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp.719-23.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 27th, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol. VI, p.71.

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

who pointed out that it was a mistake to ask for charity, instead of demanding justice, and in a letter to Dadabhai in 1898 asked : "What do you judicious people gain by your moderation ?"<sup>1</sup> In reply Dadabhai wrote : "All that you say is true, but Indians cannot do yet what you say. ...John Bull does not understand the bark. He only understands the bite, and we cannot do this."<sup>2</sup> Hyndman continued to press Dadabhai to be less moderate. In 1900 he wrote to Dadabhai : "Yes, I saw your memorial in *India*. I consider it much too humble in tone.... I remember being with my old and honoured friend Guiseppe Mazzini. ... To us was shown in an emissary from King Victor Emmanuel. You should have seen the old man straighten up and have heard him talk. It was one power talking to, and almost down to, another.... It was the consciousness of his own capacity and the force behind him which gave Mazzini that standing."<sup>3</sup> But the forces behind Dadabhai were weak. He could not agree with Hyndman in thinking that India would rebel.<sup>4</sup> It is only after the First Great War and the coming of Gandhi in the political scene that the nationalist movement became powerful and revolutionary.

The "moderates" did not desire revolutionary political changes nor did they desire the severance of the British connection.<sup>5</sup> They wanted colonial self-government. But this was their ultimate ideal ; immediately, they demanded only a greater association of Indians in the government of the country.

The "moderates" did not press for the immediate application into India of the abstract doctrines of liberty and democracy to their logical extremes. "We know", said Surendranath Bannerjea in 1895, "that politics is a practical art, and it cannot deal with principles in the abstract".<sup>6</sup> In this he was at one with Burke, whose ideas on politics, he said, had influenced him greatly.<sup>7</sup> Burke always maintained that nothing universal

<sup>1</sup> R.P.Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, p.400.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.401.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.411.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.400.

<sup>5</sup> See Gokhale's speech on 27th March 1907 (*Speeches of the Honourable Mr. G. K. Gokhale*, p.215).

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress*, p.23.

<sup>7</sup> Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p.142.

could be rationally affirmed on any political subject,<sup>1</sup> for circumstances limited the applicability of every political principle.<sup>2</sup> He opposed “history to metaphysics and the historical tradition of England to the first principles of France”.<sup>3</sup> “We have learnt at the feet of Burke”, wrote *The Bengalee*, “that prudence and moderation are sovereign qualities in the conduct of human affairs .... Compare the history of France with that of England .... France was wedded to lofty ideas ... she taught the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity with an emphasis unequalled since the birth of Christ. But in the practical pursuit of her lofty ideals she was betrayed into excesses. ... The English people ... never troubled themselves about distant ideals and were content to work in the present and to grapple with the difficulties of the hour ... they have been singularly free from extravagance of thought and action .... By all means let us have ideals ... (but) however fascinating high ideals may be, they must be tempered by a thorough regard for our environments”.<sup>4</sup>

The “moderates”, who eagerly read Burke’s condemnation of the excesses of the French Revolution,<sup>5</sup> were the friends of constitutional evolution and the enemies of a violent revolution.<sup>6</sup> English “revolutions” were generally bloodless and many English political philosophers detested revolutions. The “moderates” shared this feeling of their English political preceptors.<sup>7</sup>

The “moderates” read about the Italian movement of independence, but they possibly admired the practical Cavour even more than the revolutionary Mazzini. During the days of the anti-partition agitation in Bengal, when the faith of the nationalists in constitutionalism was declining, *The Bengalee* asked the people

<sup>1</sup> John Morley, *Burke*, pp.168-69, and Alfred Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> John Morley, *Burke*, p.169.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Barker, *Essays on Government*, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, January 15th, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p.142; John S. Hoyland, *Gopal Krishna Gokhale: His Life and Speeches*, p.6.

<sup>6</sup> *Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea*, Vol.VI, p.327.

<sup>7</sup> “England”, said Surendranath Banerjea in 1895, “is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty” (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p.252).

to remember that "the liberation of Italy was not the work of Mazzini alone, nor even of Mazzini and Garibaldi but, to a very large extent, of another man who represented an altogether different zone of character and temperament from one or both of them, Cavour".<sup>1</sup> The "moderates" asked the people to eschew the violent methods which Mazzini had once advocated, and advised them to follow the practical methods of Cavour who wanted gradual change and was willing to use existing machinery, however defective it might be. They were aware of the various defects of British rule but, instead of trying to overthrow that rule, they were willing to cooperate with the rulers themselves in order to remove those defects.

The moderates wanted to reform the existing administration and not to replace it. The extremists who had nothing but scorn for the moderate method of political agitation wanted self-government as quickly as possible and were not particular as to the methods that were adopted for achieving the same. The extremists who were more aggressive were better suited for earning self-government for a subject nation. The moderates, who were constructive politicians, would have been more useful for developing a country that was free and self-governing.

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 24th, 1907.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE POLITICAL METHOD OF THE "EXTREMISTS"

THE "moderates" had a firm faith in the value of constitutional agitation. The "extremists" argued that whereas constitutional agitation had a value in England, it could not be greatly efficacious in India, because in India there existed no constitution similar to that which obtained in England.<sup>1</sup> In England there existed a responsible parliament through which the opinions of the people could be made to influence and control all governmental activities. Every Englishman, by the exercise of his vote, had a voice in the control of the sovereign British parliament. Irishmen, who wanted greater self-government, could also send representatives to the British parliament. Even suffragettes who had no vote could wield some influence in parliament through their male friends and relatives who had votes. But Indians had no such opportunity of wielding any influence in the British parliament. There might be in parliament Charles Bradlaugh, who called himself a member for India,<sup>2</sup> the British electorate itself might occasionally return an Indian, such as Dadabhai Naoroji, to parliament, there might be an Indian Parliamentary Committee, that took some interest in Indian affairs, which sometimes included as many as 154 members of parliament<sup>3</sup> — but in spite of all this, it could not be said that Indians had any large or effective influence in the British parliament.

The "moderates" noted with regret that Indian opinion was not adequately represented in parliament. But they found some consolation in the fact that the Liberal and Irish members of parliament sometimes supported the cause of Indian reform.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Bepin Chandra Pal Delivered at Madras*, pp.14-15; Pramatha Nath Bose, "The Congress and the New Party", *The Indian Review*, April 1907, p.253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>3</sup> William Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume*, p.94.

<sup>4</sup> See Dadabhai Naoroji's letter to Gokhale dated 26th November, 1905, in Appendix C of the *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*.

To improve the position of Indians in parliament, they suggested that India should be directly represented in the British parliament through some Indian members.<sup>1</sup> They argued that because the Indian bureaucrats were not favourably disposed to the cause of Indian reform, it was only to the British parliament that Indians could go for the redress of their grievances.<sup>2</sup> "It is, in Parliament we have to fight our last fight, and say our last word . . .", wrote Dadabhai Naoroji in a letter to G. K. Gokhale in 1905.<sup>3</sup>

The "extremists" did not believe that the British parliament would satisfy the demands of Indian reformers against the advice of the Anglo-Indian bureaucrats.<sup>4</sup> They further argued that because Indians did not have a national and sovereign parliament, as Englishmen had in Britain, Indians had no constitutional right of effecting constitutional changes by themselves. Therefore whatever political agitation they could carry on could only be called legal agitation and not constitutional agitation in the sense in which the latter term was understood in Britain.<sup>5</sup>

They asserted that the "moderates" were utterly mistaken if they believed that, in spite of the fact that Indians had no national parliament, the British parliament would willingly satisfy the legitimate political aspirations of Indians. "There is no empire lost", said Tilak on January 1907, "by a free grant of concessions by the rulers to the ruled."<sup>6</sup> In the manner of Arthur Griffith, the Irish Sinn Fein leader, the "extremists" urged the people not to rely on "any such myths as English justice or English mercy".<sup>7</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, said that it was not wise for Indians to think that merely by producing good arguments in support of the cause of Indian political reform they would

<sup>1</sup> See *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 18, 132-33. The 1905 Congress demanded the "bestowal on each of the Provinces of India the franchise to return at least two members to the British House of Commons". (*Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 34.)

<sup>2</sup> See speech of V.P. Vaidya in the *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p.225.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix C of the *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*.

<sup>4</sup> *Bal Gangadhar Tilak : His Speeches and Writings*, p.59.

<sup>5</sup> *Speeches of B.C.Pal*, p.15; Pramatha Nath Bose, "The Congress and the New Party", *The Indian Review*, April 1907, p.254.

<sup>6</sup> *Bal Gangadhar Tilak's Two Remarkable Speeches*, p.6.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (London, 1937, p.67.)

be able to induce the British rulers to grant them wider political rights.<sup>1</sup> A government was not a mechanical moral machine which unerringly and unceasingly applied moral principles to the governance of a country.<sup>2</sup> A government, whatever might be its moral pretensions, was composed of men who had their greeds and hatreds. The British officials who occupied privileged positions in the established political structure in India could not be expected to love those Indian reformers who criticised that political structure. Human nature being what it was, it was not unnatural that the ruling Englishman in India would seek to dominate the Indians.<sup>3</sup> The ruling Englishman did not make India his home or associate with Indians on a basis of equality. He was, in fact, placed in an elevated position far above the Indians.<sup>4</sup> From that position Indians looked small and insignificant, and their sentiments and emotions looked rather unreal.<sup>5</sup> Tagore believed that if only Indians knew how small and insignificant they looked in the eyes of the British, then they would immediately realise the futility of depending on the British sense of justice.

The unpopular rule of Curzon<sup>6</sup> was one of the factors which, in the first decade of the twentieth century, was responsible for weakening the faith of some nationalists in the British sense of justice. In 1904 Curzon declared that the Imperial Civil Service should as a general rule be reserved for Englishmen.<sup>7</sup> Such a dictum could not be reconciled with the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which stated that race shall be no disqualification for government employment, and which was regarded by the "moderates" as the Magna Charta of Indian freedom.<sup>8</sup> Bepin Pal, the "extremist" leader, argued that because even the Magna Charta of Indian freedom could be explained away, no nationalist

<sup>1</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, *Samuha*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60-61.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter IV below.

<sup>7</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1904*, p. 560.

<sup>8</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses, First Series*, p. 16.

could reasonably retain any faith in the sense of justice of the British rulers.<sup>1</sup>

The "moderates", too, were very much dissatisfied with the policy of Curzon (who was a Conservative), but they believed that if the Liberals came to power in Britain they would introduce certain political reforms into India.<sup>2</sup> The "extremists" were, however, afraid that in matters of Indian administration even the Liberals would adopt the policy of the Conservatives. In 1907 Tilak quoted a remark of Hume, made in 1893, to the effect that civilian officers who were Liberals in Britain, after coming in contact with Anglo-Indian men and women, generally changed their views so that by the time they left India they had all become Conservatives.<sup>3</sup> After a visit to Britain in 1905 Lala Lajpat Rai was convinced that the attitude of the Liberals towards India was not much better than that of the Conservatives.<sup>4</sup> Similarly R. G. Pradhan, writing from Britain, observed that on Indian questions the Liberals were only Liberals in name. Conservatives as well as Liberals thought of India only as a "pivot of the British Empire, as the brightest jewel in the Imperial diadem."<sup>5</sup> They were not much concerned with the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. They believed that Indians were very low in the scale of civilisation, and they were convinced that the British officials who were governing Indians were discharging their duty in a magnificent manner. Pradhan observed that though the working class in Britain were as ignorant about India as any other class, "the inherent justice and righteousness of the nationalist cause received a more sympathetic consideration from them than from any other class of people".<sup>6</sup> Lajpat Rai also thought that whatever help India could receive

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, pp.10-11.

<sup>2</sup> See speech of Gokhale in 1905 (*Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 17), and speech of Dadabhai Naoroji in 1906 (*Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, pp. 27-28).

<sup>3</sup> *B.G.Tilak's Two Remarkable Speeches*, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Lajpat Rai, "India and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, November 1905, pp.750-51. See also Lajpat Rai, "The Administration of India : Government by a Privileged Caste", *The Empire Review*, December 1908, p.363.

<sup>5</sup> R.G.Pradhan, "Indian Affairs in England", *The Indian Review*, October 1907, p.736.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

from Britain would come primarily from the democratic and socialist parties which represented the working class of Britain.<sup>1</sup> But he asked the people not to depend on outside help<sup>2</sup> or to beg for political concessions from their British rulers. He said that an Englishman hated nothing like beggary, and that a beggar deserved to be hated.<sup>3</sup>

Tilak did not believe that in her struggle for freedom Indians would secure the support of any British political party. He thought that the attitude of the British labouring class towards India would be no better than that of the Liberals or Conservatives. "On the contrary", he said, "they would treat you worse, because British labourers obtain their livelihood by sending us their goods".<sup>4</sup> Similarly G. Subramaniam Iyer, another "extremist" leader, said in August 1907, "India is governed and will continue to be governed in the interest of the British plutocracy, but it will soon begin to be governed in the interests of the British labouring classes also. The latter now show sympathy with us, but as they come to understand Indian questions more clearly, they will see that the industrial and political freedom of India was hostile to their interests."<sup>5</sup>

Tilak did not expect that any political concession would be granted to Indians by their British rulers out of purely benevolent motives. In fact, he did not believe that benevolence had any place in politics.<sup>6</sup> The "moderates" expected that the great liberal, John Morley, who became Secretary of State at the end of 1905, would govern India in a really disinterested and truly liberal way. "Some of my countrymen, I know", said Rash Behari Ghose in the 1906 Congress, "think that in relation to Indian affairs the Liberal is as illiberal as the Tory, and they may be right. But of Mr. Morley it cannot certainly be said that he

<sup>1</sup> Lajpat Rai, "Indian and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, November 1905, pp.750-51.

<sup>2</sup> Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, p.110.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p.73.

<sup>4</sup> Speech on January 1907 (*B.G.Tilak : His Writings and Speeches*, p.60). Later, during the home rule days in 1917-18, Tilak sought and secured the support of the British Labour Party for the cause of Indian political reform. (D.V. Athalye, *The Life of Lokamanya Tilak*, Poona, 1921, p.264.)

<sup>5</sup> *Subramaniam Iyer's Presidential Address at the North Arcot District Conference, August 1907*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *B.G.Tilak : His Writings and Speeches*, p.56.

has given to party or class what was meant for mankind. To him the sun-dried bureaucrat is only a bureaucrat and not the very incarnation of wisdom. . . . Morley is now engaged in digging the grave of bureaucracy ; and we can almost hear the thud of the spade and the music, yes, the music of the knell".<sup>1</sup> The "extremists" did not hear this "music of the knell".<sup>2</sup> Tilak maintained that the philosopher Morley must be different from Morley, the politician.<sup>3</sup> A philosopher could talk nobly, but a philosopher would not be allowed to hold a high political position if the actual application of his moral principles injured the material interest of the British electorate. The "moderates" believed that the British electorate could be persuaded to support the cause of Indian reform. Tilak did not think that lectures to the British public on the justice and the inherent righteousness of the Indian cause would be of any avail. If the lectures were good, the British public would say that they were good lectures, but "that man must be a fool indeed who would sacrifice his own interest on hearing a philosophical lecture".<sup>4</sup> Tilak had some respect for the intelligence though not for the moral integrity of the British public.

Both Gokhale, the "moderate" leader, and Tilak, the "extremist" leader, belonged to the Chitpavan Brahmin caste but the two men were very unlike and followed entirely different political methods. Tilak was a Sanskrit scholar and he was full of recollection of the days before British rule reached Maharashtra and was full of pride for the Indian "Mutiny" of 1857. Tilak helped to form the Deccan Education Society and Fergusson College for the spread of western education among his countrymen but though Tilak believed in the spread of western education he, unlike Gokhale, was not a propagator of social reform.

Tilak edited the Mahratta Weekly *Kesari* (The Lion) and the English newspaper *The Mahratta*, and preached militant nationalism through these newspapers. After the assassination of two British officials in Poona in 1897 Tilak was accused that he by his articles in the *Kesari* was preaching hatred of British

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Rash Behari Ghose*, pp. 10, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Subramaniam Iyer's Presidential Address at the North Arcot District Conference*, August 1907, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> *B.G.Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, p.59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60.

officials and Tilak was sentenced to imprisonment and he willingly courted imprisonment. Other extremist leaders like Bepin Pal and Aurobindo Ghose also faced imprisonment for their political activities.

Tilak sought to blend political with religious nationalism, as also did the Bengal "extremist" leaders, Aurobindo and Pal. In his newspapers Tilak asked the people to celebrate two Hindu festivals : the Ganesh Festival being the festival of the Hindu God Ganesh and the Shivaji festival honouring the Mahratta hero Shivaji. Tilak also supported the anti-cow slaughter agitation which was started by Dayananda, the Arya Samajist leader. In prison Tilak wrote his memorable commentary on the *Gita*. In his commentaries on the *Gita* Tilak emphasised the importance of *karma* or action. Tilak asked the people to abjure the politics of petitioning or begging and exhorted them to fight for their rights. For his militant nationalism the British journalist Valentine Chirole described Tilak as the "Father of Indian Unrest". His countrymen, however, called him "Lokamanya" (Honoured by the People).

The method of agitation of the "moderates" was based on faith in the British sense of justice and the moderates wanted to proceed in a constitutional way. The "extremists", who had no such faith, could not pursue that method.<sup>1</sup> The alternative method that they advocated could be summed up in one word : boycott.

In the adoption of the method of boycott the "extremists" were, to a certain extent, influenced by the policy of the Irish Sinn Feiners. The words Sinn Fein can imperfectly be translated as "we ourselves". The Sinn Fein idea of relying on oneself and not looking to the English rulers for succour or charity readily appealed to the Indian "extremists". They closely followed the history of the Sinn Fein movement, and they used to distribute, in their political meetings, pamphlets on the history of the Irish movement.<sup>2</sup>

The Irish Sinn Fein organisation was founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905. The Sinn Fein policy implied non-cooperation with the established state and a kind of declaration of *Swaraj*

<sup>1</sup> B.G.Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p.61, 64.

<sup>2</sup> *The Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Lokamanya Tilak*, ed. S.V.Bapat, p.32.

by the people. The policy of non-cooperation with an established state by a people striving to establish a different one in its place had been pursued by Francis Deak in Hungary. "Hungary", said Arthur Griffith, "won her independence by refusing to send members to the Imperial Parliament at Vienna or admit any right in that parliament to legislate for her."<sup>1</sup> He advised Irish members to withdraw from the British parliament.<sup>2</sup> He asked the Irish people to pursue a policy of absolute non-cooperation with the administration of Ireland, and to set up their own arbitration courts, taxing authorities, civil services, banks, stock exchanges, industries and educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Referring to the "extremist" party, Rash Behari Ghose, the "moderate" leader, said in his 1907 Congress presidential address: "Like the Sinn Fein party in Ireland, it has lost all faith in constitutional movements. . . . All its hopes are centred in passive resistance of a most comprehensive kind, derived, I presume, from the modern history of Hungary, the pacific boycott of all things English."<sup>4</sup> Like the Sinn Feiners the Indian "extremists" wanted to leave the government severely alone,<sup>5</sup> and they advocated a comprehensive policy of boycott. Aurobindo Ghose said: "Boycott of foreign goods is a necessary condition for the encouragement of *Swadeshi* (national) industries, boycott of government schools is a necessary condition for the growth of national education, boycott of British courts is a necessary condition for the spread of arbitration."<sup>6</sup>

Mainly as a result of the insistence of the "extremists" the 1906 Congress passed a resolution urging the people to set up educational institutions "on national lines and under national control".<sup>7</sup> Those who wanted a system of national education did not demand that Western science or Western culture should be banished from national educational institutions.<sup>8</sup> But they wanted to make education less state-controlled and more national

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Macardale, *The Irish Republic*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> See Arthur Griffith, *The Sinn Fein Policy*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p.772.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Bengalee*, December 7th, 1907.

<sup>6</sup> *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p.98.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103 ; *Reminiscences, Speeches and Writings of Sir Gooroo Dass Banerjee*, Part II, p.208.

in spirit. Arthur Griffith had said that because Irish schools were controlled by the British government the "language of Ireland, the history of Ireland, the economics of Ireland, the possibilities of Ireland, the rights of Ireland . . . found no place in their curricula".<sup>1</sup> Some Indians felt that when Griffith was speaking about Ireland he was, in some measure, "unconsciously speaking of India also".<sup>2</sup>

The "extremists" wanted to boycott not only government educational institutions, but also English goods. Economic boycott was the negative counterpart of the positive *Swadeshi* (buy Indian) movement<sup>3</sup> which existed long before the boycott movement gained currency in the country. The suggestion that the boycott of British goods would be a sure means of arousing the attention of the British public to Indian grievances<sup>4</sup> was first made by a "moderate".<sup>5</sup> Later, the "extremists" enthusiastically supported the idea of economic boycott for political purposes. Some of the "moderates" were, however, afraid that the boycott of British goods might be regarded as an anti-British movement.<sup>6</sup> The 1905 Congress expressed the academic opinion that the boycott movement that was started in Bengal was, in the circumstances, perhaps the only legitimate means left to the Bengalis of drawing the attention of the British public to their grievances.<sup>7</sup> But the 1906 Congress passed a resolution which emphatically stated that the boycott movement that was inaugurated in Bengal, to bring political pressure on the government, "was, and is, legitimate".<sup>8</sup>

Bepin Pal, the "extremist" leader from Bengal and a renowned orator, maintained that the expression "boycott movement" in the Congress resolution did not mean that the policy of boycott should be confined to Bengal alone, but it implied that it should

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Griffith, *The Sinn Fein Policy*, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> See speech of H.N. Datta at the 1906 Congress (*Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p.99).

<sup>3</sup> See speech of Surendranath Banerjea in *The Bengalee*, December 21st, 1907

<sup>4</sup> "Editorial Notes", *The Indian World*, September 1905, p.86.

<sup>5</sup> N.C. Sen Gupta, "The Boycott Movement", *The Indian Review*, May 1909, p.351.

<sup>6</sup> Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p.191.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p.81.

move from province to province.<sup>1</sup> Further, he argued, that boycott meant not merely an economic boycott of British goods, but also a political boycott of the British government. "We in Eastern Bengal and Assam", he said, "have not only tried to boycott British goods, but all honorary offices and associations with the Government."<sup>2</sup>

"Moderates", such as Gokhale and Malaviya, dissociated themselves from the remarks of Pal, and maintained that the Congress resolution had not supported a policy of total political boycott of the Indian government.<sup>3</sup> The "moderates" regarded the policy of boycott as a temporary measure adopted for the purpose of modifying the partition of Bengal.<sup>4</sup> They had no sympathy for the Sinn Fein policy of a permanent and universal boycott of all things English. In his 1907 Congress presidential address Rash Behari Ghose said that British rule could not be terminated by boycotting the administration, and maintained that even if the boycott movement was successful and the English retired from India then there would be anarchy in the country.<sup>5</sup> He argued that the only reasonable course that Indians could pursue was to cooperate with the government in every measure that was likely to hasten their political emancipation.<sup>6</sup>

The "extremists" did not believe that the British rulers would support the cause of Indian self-government. Self-government could only be secured by the people through their own inherent strength and power. It was therefore necessary to turn one's attention away from the Houses of the British Parliament and the Government Houses in Simla and Calcutta, and to derive one's strength from the three hundred millions of people who were scattered over the numberless villages of India.<sup>7</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore asserted that the people in the villages could achieve real *Swaraj*, if like the villagers of ancient India,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.87-89.

<sup>4</sup> N.C. Sen Gupta, "The Boycott Movement", *The Indian Review*, May, 1909, p. 351.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp.774-78.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, See also "The Peroration of The Hon'ble Bhupendranath Basu's Presidential Address at the Bengal Provincial Conference", *The Indian World*, May 1905, p.190.

<sup>7</sup> *Speeches of B.C.Pal*, p.17,

instead of relying on the state for help and assistance, they themselves managed most of their village activities.<sup>1</sup> But as the modern Western state performed a large number of social and economic functions, the modern Indian expected the Indian state to act likewise.<sup>2</sup> Tagore argued that it was precisely because the modern Indian looked to the state for help in all their activities that they lost their real independence. He said that in order to regain their independence the people need not agitate, in the Western fashion, by holding public meetings in the Town Halls, but that they should, without state help and assistance, manage most of their activities by starting cooperative and voluntary societies in the villages which would organise their schools, health services, roads, cooperative shops, banks, and arbitration tribunals.<sup>3</sup>

Aurobindo, Tilak and Pal asked the people not to rely too much on the foreign rulers. In fact, they asked them to cooperate with the rulers as little as possible. Aurobindo said that as "no representation, no taxation" had been the principle of the American revolutionaries, similarly "no control, no cooperation" should be the motto of the Indian nationalists.<sup>4</sup> The main thesis of Tilak, Aurobindo and Pal was that as the existence of the government of India depended on the cooperation of the people,<sup>5</sup> the government would cease to function or to exist the very day the people withdrew their cooperation from the government. If that was so, then why were Indians content to remain the willing instruments of their own oppression? Pal, who unlike the Westernised "moderates" liked to express his political ideas in the phraseology of Indian philosophical literature, argued that this riddle could be explained by the fact that the Indian people were under the spell of a *maya* (illusion) which prevented them from perceiving the reality of the Indian situation.<sup>6</sup> The Indian people had been hypnotised to believe

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Samuha*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32, 64, 69, 97-98. Similar views were later expressed by Pramatha Nath Bose in *The Illusions of New India* (pp.226-229) and in *The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme: A Constructive Criticism*, pp.17-20.

<sup>4</sup> Aurobindo Ghose's *Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> B.G.Tilak: *His Writings and Speeches*, p.65.

<sup>6</sup> *Speeches of B.C.Pal*, p.21.

that, though they were three hundred millions of people, they were weak and their rulers were strong.<sup>1</sup> They had been told that they were unfit to manage their own affairs, and that, compared with the peoples of the modern West, they were uncivilised. They cherished the illusion that Englishmen came to India for the altruistic mission of civilising Indians, and for training them in the art of Western democratic self-government. They did not know that the Englishman's mission in India was not altruistic but commercial and economic,<sup>2</sup> that the Englishman came to India to exploit the resources of the country, to spread his trade and commerce, and in order to found an empire.<sup>3</sup> When Englishmen said that they came to India on a civilising mission the Indian people, "untrained in the crooked ways of civilised diplomacy",<sup>4</sup> believed in their words, and they developed such a great faith in the liberal instincts of the British people that they came to look upon the British rulers "as more than human and little less, if less at all, than God".<sup>5</sup>

The "extremists" pointed out that British rule in India was based on weak and insecure foundations. There were only a handful of Englishmen among a people of three hundred millions. In each district of India there were not more than half-a-dozen Englishmen. Even if the number of British troops in India were increased by a hundred times they could not keep India under control, if Indians did not willingly acquiesce in British rule.<sup>6</sup> Indians, therefore, could be free by refusing to cooperate with the British rulers in the work of carrying on the administration of the country.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B.C.Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*. p.42. B.G.Tilak: *His Writings and Speeches*, p.65.

<sup>2</sup> See B. G. Tilak: *His Writings and Speeches*, p.56.

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches of B.C.Pal*, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> B.C.Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p.42.

<sup>5</sup> *Speeches of B.C.Pal*, p.12. Pal was not exaggerating when he said this. In 1897 he himself had declared: "I believe that God has placed this (British) Government over us for our salvation....I know that without the help and tuition of this Government my people shall never be able to rise to their legitimate place in the Commonwealth of civilised nations" (B.C.Pal, *The Indian National Congress*, pp.8-9).

<sup>6</sup> B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 21.

The attitude of the "extremists" towards British rule was that however much it was improved and liberalised it could never be made as beneficial to Indians as an indigenous Indian rule could be made.<sup>1</sup> They would have agreed with Arthur Griffith who said: "(In) the British Liberal as in the British Tory we see our enemy, and in those who talk of ending British misgovernment we see the helots. It is not British misgovernment, but British government in Ireland, good or bad, we stand opposed to."<sup>2</sup>

Any measure that made the British government unpopular was welcomed by the "extremists". Aurobindo told Henry W. Nevinson that he considered the partition of Bengal to be a most beneficial measure because, by arousing intense opposition among the people, that measure had stirred up and strengthened national feeling.<sup>3</sup> He lamented that the unbroken peace maintained by Britain in India had emasculated the Indians, and had reduced them "to the condition of sheep and fatted calves".<sup>4</sup> Under British rule the ordinary man devoted his energies to money-making and the thoughtful man spent his time in admiring and imitating Shelly and Swinburne.<sup>5</sup> This tendency of degeneration and of denationalisation was, he said, interrupted by "the disguised blessings of Lord Curzon's errors".<sup>6</sup>

The "moderate" Gokhale lamented that Curzon's unpopular policy had created so much discontent that many nationalists were growing up in a spirit of "Irish bitterness".<sup>7</sup> But this was exactly what the "extremists" wanted. In 1907 Bepin Pal said that Curzon was a better Viceroy than Ripon, and he made the paradoxical statement that the "Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon ... (had) been one of the most beneficent if not decidedly the most beneficent Viceroyalty that India ever had".<sup>8</sup> He meant that he preferred the policy of Curzon to that of Ripon because

<sup>1</sup> See B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Griffith, *The Sinn Fein Policy*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Henry W. Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> G. K. Gokhale, "Self-Government for India", *The Indian Review*, July, 1906, p. 528.

<sup>8</sup> *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 6,

while Ripon satisfied educated Indians with political concessions, Curzon, by his unpopular policies, made them so discontented that they demanded *Swaraj* more urgently than they had ever done before.<sup>1</sup>

Because the beneficent activities of a despotic government increased its hold over the acquiescence, if not the affection, of the people, Pal wanted to restrict the beneficent activities of the Government of India within the narrowest possible limits, that is, he wanted to make it responsible only for maintaining the internal and external security of the Indian state.<sup>2</sup> In other words, he advocated a policy of *laissez-faire*. The theory of *laissez-faire* formed an important part of the liberal theory of freedom. Borrowing a term from the phraseology of European political theory the "moderates" sometimes described themselves as liberals. Pal argued that the Indian "moderates" were not liberals, because, unlike most liberals of Western countries, they did not believe in *laissez-faire* but wanted to increase the powers and functions of the state.<sup>3</sup>

Pal wanted to restrict the activities of the Government of India, and asked the people to cooperate with the British rulers as little as possible. Did he or other "extremists" also advise the people to try to subvert British rule violently as the "terrorists" did? The "extremist" Tilak, who poured ridicule on the "moderates" by saying that their policy of three p's—pray, please and protest — would never be effective, said on June 7th, 1906: "Look to the examples of Ireland, Japan and Russia and follow their methods."<sup>4</sup> Did this mean that Tilak supported the methods of Irish or Russian terrorists? It is possible that Tilak's speeches were interpreted by some people as being a tacit justification of the methods of the "terrorists", but it does not appear that Tilak definitely and unequivocally advocated the use of violent methods.<sup>5</sup> Tilak used to say that if there

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50. Most Indian nationalists did not believe in the theory of *laissez-faire*. See Chapter IX below.

<sup>4</sup> *B. G. Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, he noted with regret that the "terrorists" used bombs (*Tilak's Masterpiece: Being a Verbatim Report of His Address to the Jury*, p. 51).

was even fifty per cent chance for the success of an armed rebellion in India he would resort to it,<sup>1</sup> but Tilak felt that there was no such chance.

Tilak, Aurobindo and Pal argued that the illiberal policy of the government was responsible for the “rank and noxious fruit of terrorism”, and they criticised the policy of the government as well as the method of the “terrorists”.<sup>2</sup> In his 1907 Congress presidential address Rash Behari Ghose, referring to the “extremist” party, said: “Like the Sinn Fein party in Ireland it has lost all faith in constitutional movements, but it must be said to its credit that it has also no faith in physical force”.<sup>3</sup>

After two English ladies were killed on 30th April, 1908, as a result of a bomb thrown by a “terrorist”, Shamsundar Chakravorty, an “extremist” leader, wrote: “Outrages of this kind have absolutely no sanction in our ancient tradition and culture. . . . Moderatism is imitation of British constitutionalism, this form of so-called extremism . . . is imitation of European anarchism, and both are absolutely foreign to the spirit of nationalism, which, though opposed by one and occasionally mistaken for the other, is bound in the long run to carve out the future of India . . . .”<sup>4</sup>

The “extremist” Pal said that in the disarmed and disorganised condition of the people of India any violent uprising could easily be checked and controlled by the government.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Aurobindo admitted that the physical strength of the country belonged largely to the established authority, and he warned the people not to come into any violent physical conflict with the authorities.<sup>6</sup> In January 1907, Tilak declared, “We are not armed, and there is no necessity of arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott.”<sup>7</sup>

Aurobindo asked the people to rely not only on the method of boycott, but also on the will of God. The “moderates” relied on the method of constitutional agitation and on the liberal

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences and Anecdotes about Lokamanya Tilak*, Vol. I, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53; *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 2; B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 772.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Srinivasa Iyengar's *Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 173-74.

<sup>5</sup> B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *B. G. Tilak: His Speeches and Writings*, p. 64.

instincts of the British rulers. Aurobindo had no such faith in the liberal instincts of the British rulers, and he knew that the nationalists had no physical strength which the foreign government of India could not crush.<sup>1</sup> He felt that in this situation a nationalist had to rely on God, who was stronger than any earthly power.<sup>2</sup> India, he believed, was bound to be free because it was God's will that she should be free.<sup>3</sup>

Aurobindo was a man of deep religious convictions. "Nationalism", he said in June 1909, "is not politics, but a religion, a creed, a faith."<sup>4</sup> Long before Aurobindo, Bankim Chattopadhyaya, the Bengali novelist, had given a religious significance to the idea of the Motherland by declaring that in the image of the benign goddess Durga could be seen the future greatness of the Motherland.<sup>5</sup> The Bengali "extremists", such as Aurobindo and Pal, popularised this idea. Pal explained that while worshipping Durga or Kali or Jagaddhatri the people really worshipped the Mother or the Motherland.<sup>6</sup> Aurobindo declared that Bankim's supreme service to the nation was that by showing to the people that the Motherland was not merely a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, but was really a great Divine and Maternal Power he raised patriotism to the dignity of religion.<sup>7</sup> An ideal of nationalism that was sanctified by religion<sup>8</sup> and was associated with the worship of ancient gods and goddesses became popular with the nationalists particularly because it appeared to be an indigenous ideal and not as something borrowed from the alien culture of Europe.

<sup>1</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, *The Present Situation in India*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-20.

<sup>3</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, *Uttarpara Speech*, pp. 12, 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> See "Amar Durgotshab" in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's *Kamalanter Daptar*, pp. 91-95 and Bankim's *The Abbey of Bliss* (translation of *Anandamath* by N. C. Sen Gupta), pp. 40-42.

<sup>6</sup> B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>7</sup> *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*, pp. 13-14. See also *Aurobindo Ghose's Letters to His wife*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> In June 1909, Aurobindo said: We speak often of the Hindu religion or the *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) . . . It is to give this religion that India is rising" (*Uttarpara Speech*, p. 7).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CURZON, THE CONGRESS AND SWARAJ

THE appointment of Curzon as Governor-General of India was announced on 11th August 1898. The Congress president of that year, while extending his welcome to Curzon, said that he could not think of an office that carried greater responsibility than that of the Viceroy of India, and remarked that a successful Viceroy needed, among other things, the gift of sympathy with those who had neither vote nor voice.<sup>1</sup> When in 1905 Curzon laid down the reins of office, Gokhale, the Congress president of that year, expressed the sense of relief that the educated classes felt at the event. He said that though, in some respects, Curzon will always be recognised as one of the greatest Englishmen that ever came to India, it could not be denied that he had not strengthened the foundations of British rule, and that, in fact, discontent was never greater in India than at the end of his Viceroyalty.<sup>2</sup> Gokhale scathingly attacked Curzon's regime and compared it with that of Aurungzeb.

In one of his early speeches in 1900 Curzon declared that "the opinion of the educated classes is one that it is not statesmanship to ignore and to despise".<sup>3</sup> He said that he did not consider official wisdom to be so absolute and transcendent as to be above criticism, and that by trying to profit by public criticism he had endeavoured to "infuse an element of the modern spirit into Indian administration".<sup>4</sup> Congressmen naturally welcomed these sentiments. But as time passed and Curzon, in spite of the strong protest of the educated classes, carried into law the Calcutta Municipal Act (1899), the Official Secrets Act (1904), the Universities Act (1904) and the measure for the partition of Bengal (1905), Congressmen became disillusioned about Curzon's attitude towards public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 687-89.

<sup>3</sup> Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

R.C.Dutt in his presidential address to the 1899 Congress lamented that the Calcutta Municipal Act which had come to pass in the first year of Curzon's administration meant the "virtual withdrawal of that boon of self-government which ... (was) the proud boast of England to have conferred on the Metropolis of India".<sup>1</sup> Congressmen opposed the Official Secrets Act on the ground that it would restrict the liberty of the Indian press. In opposing this Act in the Imperial Legislative Council Gokhale said that as, unlike the governments of Western countries, the Government of India was not directly responsible to the people, and as the criticism of the Indian press was almost the only outward check on the actions of the bureaucracy in India, it was extremely important not to restrict but to safeguard and to enlarge the freedom of the Indian press.<sup>2</sup>

The Universities Act of 1904 aroused intense opposition among the English-educated classes. The atmosphere in which the University Bill was brought forward gave rise to the suspicion that it was not merely an educational measure, but that it was a device which, by bringing Indian universities under closer state control, would effect the political purpose of checking the growth of that English-educated class which was increasingly becoming more discontented with the government.<sup>3</sup> In introducing the Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council T. Raleigh had, at the outset, asked whether English education had been a blessing or a curse.<sup>4</sup> His own answer was that by imparting to the East a knowledge of Western science and the principles of English law it had been more of a blessing than a curse. But English education, he continued, had also produced "the discontented B.A. ... and the great army of failed candidates" who were a curse to the country.<sup>5</sup> Gokhale emphasised that one of the principal objections to the system of university education was thus authoritatively stated to be the fact that it produced the discontented

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1903, pp. 280-81.

<sup>3</sup> See Speech of C. Y. Chintamani in the 1904 Congress (*Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, pp. 89-90), and B. G. Tilak: *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, 1903, p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

B.A.<sup>1</sup> Congressmen pointed out that discontent could not be checked by attempting to build Indian universities on the aristocratic model of Oxford and Cambridge, for Indians trained in Oxford or Cambridge were, at least, not less discontented than the graduates of the Indian universities. Gokhale suggested that the government could convert the discontented B.A.'s "from cold critics into active allies by steadily associating them more and more with the administration of the country".<sup>2</sup>

After the Universities Act came the measure for the partition of Bengal. Spokesmen of the government argued that this measure was necessary in order to relieve the congestion in the administration of the vast province of Bengal. To the Bengalis, and particularly to the English-educated Bengali Hindus, it was clear that the partition would break up the growing unity of Bengali life and culture and that it would weaken the strength of the nationalist forces of Bengal.<sup>3</sup> The 1904 Congress strongly criticised the proposal to divide "the Bengali nation into separate units".<sup>4</sup> As a protest against the partition of Bengal (October 1905), the nationalists supported a policy of boycotting British goods. They were disappointed when Morley described the partition as a settled fact,<sup>5</sup> but they refused to accept that the question of partition had been finally settled.<sup>6</sup> Surendranath Banerjea declared that in order to undo the partition, the Bengalis would fight with the same determination with which Irishmen, in spite of their many failures over a hundred years, had steadfastly preserved in their struggle for the attainment of complete home rule.<sup>7</sup> With the modification of the partition in 1911, the anti-partition agitation came to an end.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> R. N. Mudholkar argued that it was to effect this last purpose that the scheme of partition was designed (*Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 79).

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p. 222. It was inappropriate to describe the Bengalis as a nation, for the Bengalis were only a part of the Indian nation.

<sup>5</sup> *Indian Parliamentary Debates*, 1906, p. 312.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 21st, 1907.

Because Curzon pursued his policies in spite of the opposition of the educated classes, *The Bengalee* remarked that Curzon, who professed to consult public opinion, merely paid lip-service to it.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that even as late as 1904, in a letter to Sir Arthur Godley, Curzon had complained that the authorities in Britain did not realise the extent to which the strength of public opinion had grown in recent years, and he maintained that it would not be wise to assert either that public opinion did not exist in India or that it could be treated with general indifference.<sup>2</sup> However, in the same letter Curzon had been careful to add : "I do not, therefore, argue that public opinion here is to be kow-towed to. No one has more consistently defied it in some matters than I".<sup>3</sup>

In 1905, Curzon said, "In India it is very difficult to create... a public opinion that is really representative because there are so many different classes whose interests do not always coincide; for instance, the English and the Indians, the Hindus and the Muslims, the officials and the non-officials, the agriculturists and the industrialists".<sup>4</sup> But conflicts of opinion between different classes existed in almost every country. Rash Behari Ghose remarked on the above statement of Curzon that in England also the interests of the capitalists came frequently into conflict with those of the working man, and yet most Englishmen believed that there could be a public opinion in England which was not merely sectional.<sup>5</sup>

In a speech in February 1905 Curzon said that public opinion in India could not for a long time be the opinion of the public or the masses, because the masses were uneducated.<sup>6</sup> Congressmen admitted that the type of public opinion which existed in Britain could not exist in India because of the difference in education of the masses, but they maintained that the Indian educated classes could generally understand and interpret the opinions of the unenlightened masses of their countrymen. But, as Ronaldshay aptly puts it, in Curzon's view "there was no room for an Indian

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, November 17th, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>4</sup> *Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, pp. 496-97.

<sup>5</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Rash Behari Ghose*, p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> *Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 496.

intelligentsia aspiring to lead and speak for the masses".<sup>1</sup> It appears that Curzon believed that the rule of India should remain, for an indefinite period of time, in the hands of the British, and, naturally enough, in his farewell speech at the Byculla Club in Bombay, he spoke of an Indian whose destiny was bound up with those of the British race and whose development would continue to be a British duty.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon deprecated the talk of India for Indians alone.<sup>3</sup> In 1902 he said that the Indian as well as the Englishman must work in India in a spirit of refined and cosmopolitan patriotism.<sup>4</sup> But one of the obstacles that stood in the way of work in such a co-operative spirit was Curzon's belief that the Englishman should occupy, not only an important, but also a clearly superior position in the administrative structure of India. In 1904 he declared that the Imperial Civil Service, the highest ranks of civil employment in India, though open to Indians who could proceed to England and pass the required tests would, as a general rule, be reserved for Englishmen.<sup>5</sup> Outside this *corps d'elite* Indians, as a general rule and as far as possible, were to be employed, except in certain cases where, for example, "particular responsibility" had to be exercised, it would be necessary to maintain "a strong European admixture and sometimes even an European preponderance."<sup>6</sup> It was stated that the reason for reserving the higher ranks of civil employment for Englishmen generally was that they possessed "partly by heredity, partly by up-bringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind, and the vigour of character, which (were) ... essential for the task."<sup>7</sup> The rule of India being an English rule its tone and standard, said Curzon, must be set by the English.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 419. See also *Congress Presidential Addresses, First Series*, p. 688.

<sup>2</sup> Speech on November 16th, 1905. *Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 589.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>5</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1904*, p. 560.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

This line of thought was developed in greater detail by *The Pioneer Mail*,<sup>1</sup> the organ of the British community in India. The paper wrote that the higher civil service should remain "sturdily foreign" and "un-Indian."<sup>2</sup> The civil service could persist in the task of Europeanising India if only it was composed of Englishmen who clung tenaciously to European ideals in spite of all their contacts with Indian humanity.<sup>3</sup> An Indian could pass the civil service examination, but that only proved that he was not inferior intellectually to an Englishman, but it was necessary that a civil servant should have not only intellect but also character, which was a far more indefinable thing and which could not be tested by civil service examinations.<sup>4</sup> Character was largely formed by society and the standards of English society, the paper stated, were higher than those of Indian society. Consequently as long as the standards of English and Indian society were not equalised, the character of Indian civil servants recruited in India would remain inferior to the character of an English civil servant recruited in England.<sup>5</sup>

Any general statement about the supposed inferiority of the average level of Indian character could not be supported by any known fact. Indians had produced great administrators, such as Sir Salar Jung, Sir T. Madhava Rao, Sir Dinkar Rao and others, who, as Ministers or Diwans of Native States, had discharged their duties with high ability and integrity.<sup>6</sup> The Public Service Commission of 1886-87 testified to the fact that Indians who had gained appointments to the Indian civil service, through

<sup>1</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 25th, 1908. "The Civil Service of India", wrote H. Fielding Hall, "is a peculiarly English service ; it is efficient exactly in so far as it is English ; when Indians enter it they must be inefficient more or less . . . Government must do its work in its own way, and that is the English way. No Indian can tell what that is". (H. Fielding Hall, *The Passing of Empire*, pp. 190-94).

<sup>2</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, March 16th, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, July 14th, 1905, and March 16th, 1906. See also Meredith Townsend, *Asia and Europe*, pp. 114-17.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, March 16th, 1906. See also similar views of S. S. Thorburn in *The Journal of the East India Association*, October 1906, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> See speech of Surendranath Banerjea at the 1904 Congress (*Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p. 62), and speech of B. N. Dhar at the 1905 Congress (*Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 43).

the channel of English competition, had discharged their duties efficiently and to the satisfaction of their superiors.<sup>1</sup> From their personal knowledge of the character of their countrymen, the nationalist leaders were convinced that for every Indian, such as R. C. Dutt, who entered the civil service through the channel of English competition and who discharged his duties with ability and integrity, there were more Indians of no less ability and integrity, who could not enter the civil service, simply because civil service examinations were held only in England and not also in India.

Wise British administrators in the past, such as Munro, had advocated the wider employment of Indians in important government offices. In a minute in 1824 Munro wrote : "Let Britain be subjected by a foreign power tomorrow, let the people be excluded from all share in the government, from every office of high trust and emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their knowledge and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming, in another generation or two, a low-minded, deceitful and dishonest race."<sup>2</sup>

The policy of exclusion from offices of high trust and position had a dwarfing or stunting influence on the Indian character. "The upward impulse", said Gokhale in 1897 "which every school boy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Washington, and which may draw forth the best efforts of which he is capable, that is denied to us."<sup>3</sup>

When Curzon adumbrated the policy that the higher civil service should as a general rule be reserved for Englishmen, Gokhale pointed out that this appeared to imply that "race shall constitute in the case of all but a very few a conclusive disqualification for the higher offices of the state", and that this dictum was, therefore, inconsistent with the Queen's Proclamation of 1858<sup>4</sup> which declared : "And it is our further will,

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Public Service Commission, 1886-87, (C.-5327), 1887, para. 61.*

<sup>2</sup> *Major-General Sir Thomas Munro : Selections from His Minutes and Other Official Writings, Vol. II, p. 322. ed. Alexander Arbuthnot.*

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches of the Honourable Mr. G. K. Gokhale, 1st ed., Appendix A, p. xliii.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India :*

so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.”<sup>1</sup>

Congressmen wanted not only to Indianise the government services, but also to introduce more self-governing institutions into India. Early Congressmen, fondly believed that Britain would train India in the art of democratic self-government. But Joseph Chailley, a Frenchman, who visited India twice during Curzon's regime, records that [the generality of Englishmen, at that time, did not have any belief in the ideal of training the Indian people for self-government.<sup>2</sup> Curzon's highest ideal of Indian government was not democracy, but some form of paternal despotism. He believed that administrative reforms were necessary in India, but he did not think that it was desirable to concede political reforms to the educated classes.<sup>3</sup> He said that the salvation of India, in his time, did not lie in the field of politics,<sup>4</sup> and he had no sympathy for Congressmen who were agitating for the gradual introduction of Western representative institutions into India. How completely he failed to realise the strength as well as the justice of the demand of the educated classes for greater self-government, that found expression through the Congress movement, is clearly revealed in the opinion that he expressed on 18th November 1900 : “My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.”<sup>5</sup>

The idea that India should be ruled in a non-democratic manner was preached in an extreme form by *The Pioneer Mail*. This Anglo-Indian paper persuaded itself to believe that India

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1905 to March 1906, pp. 129-30. See also the *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, pp. 39-40, the *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, pp. 40-41, and *The Bengalee*, November 17th, 1905.

<sup>1</sup> *Royal and Other Proclamations, Announcements, etc., to the Princes and Peoples of India*, p. 4. The phrase “so far as may be” was ambiguous, and could be narrowly or liberally interpreted.

<sup>2</sup> J. Chailley, *Administrative Problems of British India*, pp. 165-66.

<sup>3</sup> See Curzon's speech on 16th November, 1905, (*Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 585), and Ronaldshay, *The Life of Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> Speech on March 30th, 1904 (*Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 143).

<sup>5</sup> Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 151.

was ruled in an absolutely just and impartial manner by the British bureaucracy,<sup>1</sup> and that the bureaucracy in India was the most benevolent and efficient bureaucracy that the world had ever seen.<sup>2</sup> The paper propounded the most extraordinary theory that under the rule of that bureaucracy the masses of the people of India enjoyed more personal security and freedom than did the people of any other part of the world.<sup>3</sup> It was natural that cherishing such an unbounded faith in the benevolence and the impartiality of the British bureaucrats the paper should propagate the curious doctrine that the happiness of the people of India could not be increased either by throwing open more appointments to Indians in the civil service or by introducing self-governing representative institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The paper asked the educated Indians not to imagine that representative institutions on the English model would work well in India,<sup>5</sup> and it warned them not to look upon the political institutions of a distant island "as a fetish and a counsel of perfection."<sup>6</sup> It declared that the complicated and cumbrous machinery of representative government, with its recurrent and wasteful expense of electioneering was an amusement as local to the West as excessive litigation was to the East,<sup>7</sup> and it lamented that the many obvious benefits of the spread, through English education, of the English language in India were counter-balanced by the dangers inherent in the use of English political phraseology in the totally different conditions of India.<sup>8</sup>

The paper could not envisage that parliamentary government would be the goal of India's political destiny, and it ridiculed those Indians who had the vision to see this goal clearly. The pressure for more self-government, it wrote pontifically, came from men who had "been touched by Western thought through

<sup>1</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, July 14th, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 6th, 1905. See somewhat similar views of Lepel Griffin and S. S. Thorburn in *The Journal of the East India Association*, October, 1906, pp. 14, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 13th, 1905, and December 15th, 1905.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 31st, 1906.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 19th, 1907.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 22nd, 1905.

<sup>7</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 13th, 1905.

<sup>8</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 22nd, 1905.

misdirected forms of Western education", and that such men did not and could not contribute anything for the real progress of India.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of the paper it was vain for educated Indians to expect that all of them could have some share in the administration of the country. Even in Europe and America many of the most energetic and intelligent educated young men had absolutely no voice in the government, for modern governments were "in fact if not in name, small cliques of aristocrats, plutocrats or oligarchs".<sup>2</sup> If this was a correct description of modern governments then it should have been the duty of every democrat not to rest content in explaining the character of modern governments, but to try to change and reform them. As for Congressmen, they believed that the government of India should be made more democratic.

*The Pioneer Mail* was opposed to this demand. In fact, it was completely out of touch with existing Indian conditions. It maintained that if the Indian masses were given the right to vote, and if they knew how to exercise that right, they would not vote in favour of "the frothy rhetoricians of the Congress", but they would as certainly vote for the existing system as the British workman voted for Balfour and Chamberlain.<sup>3</sup> Major Evans Gordon expressed similar sentiments in the House of Commons on 21st June, 1905. He believed that in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the Indian masses would prefer to see Englishmen in responsible positions, so that if a plebiscite of the Indian people were taken the number of Indians employed in administrative posts would be reduced.<sup>4</sup>

But there were other members in the House of Commons who were alive to the changing political conditions in India. T. Hart Davies pointed out that the number of Indians who had an English education had been increasing day by day so that it was impossible to go on administering Indians without giving them a wider share in the government of their country.<sup>5</sup> The same idea was

<sup>1</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, July 27th, 1906. See also Justice Beaman, "The Situation in India", *The Empire Review*, February, 1909, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 15th, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1905, p. 335.

<sup>5</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on February 26th, 1906. (*Indian Debates*, 1906, p. 38-9.)

expressed by Henry Cotton, who said that in India "something more than mere administration was wanted now".<sup>1</sup>

In 1905 Cotton said : "There are three phases of government —autocratic, representative and responsible. India is now ripe for the intermediate stage and would be content with widely enlarged representation."<sup>2</sup> Congressmen did not press for the immediate introduction of a responsible parliament into India, but they believed that the educated classes were qualified, by virtue of their education, to have a larger voice in the government of the country. Gokhale, while pointing out that the Congress had not demanded that the uneducated masses should immediately be given a voice in the government,<sup>3</sup> also asked the government not to make the fact of mass ignorance a pretext or a reason for denying the educated classes their rightful share in the administration of the country.<sup>4</sup>

Gokhale admitted that from the numerical point of view the English-educated classes were not very considerable. Out of a population of three hundred millions only a little over a million persons were literate in English. But he pointed out, as the fact was, that the influence that the educated classes exerted in the country was out of proportion to their number.<sup>5</sup> He claimed that the educated classes were the brain of the country and that they largely moulded the opinions of the ignorant multitudes.<sup>6</sup> They controlled the press — the English press in India and more particularly the vernacular press. The vernacular press affected not only the fifteen million literates in vernaculars but also millions of other people who could not read a newspaper but could understand what a newspaper said if it was read out to them.

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on February 26th, 1906. (*Indian Debates, 1906*, p. 21.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee*, November 15th, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> G. K. Gokhale, "Self-Government in India", *The Indian Review*, July 1906, p. 528. See also Gokhale's speech in *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 711.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* See also R. C. Dutt's views in *The Journal of the East India Association*, October 1906, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> G. K. Gokhale, "Self-Government for India", *The Indian Review*, July 1906, p. 526.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* For similar views see Samuel Smith, *India and Its Problems*, p. 26, (Letters written from India in the winter of 1904-5.)

Gokhale said that whatever political concessions the educated classes wanted, they wanted them only gradually, and that they were willing to pass through periods of laborious apprenticeship before each instalment of power. "For it is a reasonable proposition", he stated in his 1905 Congress Presidential Address, "that the sense of responsibility, required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West, can be acquired by an Eastern people through political training and experiment alone".<sup>1</sup> But while admitting that political advance in India could be achieved only by "reasonably cautious steps", he did not fail to protest strongly against Curzon's doctrine<sup>2</sup> that efficiency of administration alone should be the highest ideal of statesmanship in India.<sup>3</sup> He lamented that Curzon did not believe in what Gladstone used to call the principle of liberty as a factor in human progress,<sup>4</sup> and in criticising those who opposed all reform on the ground that the people were not ready for it he quoted<sup>5</sup> another wise saying of Gladstone: "It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty. This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds; but it is far safer than the counter doctrine, wait till they are fit."<sup>6</sup>

#### COLONIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT OR SWARAJ

Curzon's policy created much discontent among the educated classes. In his 1907 Congress Presidential Address Rash Behari Ghose went so far as to say that Curzon alone was responsible for the rise of the "extremist" party.<sup>7</sup> Though this was an exaggeration, there can be no doubt that Curzon's unpopular policy had, as Surendranath Banerjea declared in the 1908 Congress, deepened the nationalist sentiment in favour of self-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> See speech on March 30th, 1904 (*Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 142).

<sup>3</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General in India: 1905 to March 1906*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> John Morley, *The Life of Gladstone* (abridged edition by C. F. G. Masterman), London, 1st ed., p. 393.

<sup>7</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 756,

government.<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, however, rightly pointed out that though the misgovernment of recent years had strengthened the movement for self-government, it was not true that the educated classes desired self-government merely because "good government" was denied to them by their British rulers.<sup>2</sup> It wrote that however good a foreigner might be, his love for India could not obviously be as great as that of an Indian. Good government, therefore, could never ultimately be secured except by way of self-government.<sup>3</sup>

The movement in favour of self-government was strengthened enormously by the news of the military victory of Japan over Russia in 1905. This news, wrote *The Bengalee*, was discussed not only by the educated classes but also by the masses in the Indian bazaars,<sup>4</sup> and this victory was popularly interpreted in Asia as the victory of Asia over Europe, of the East over the West. Hyndman, the British socialist, said that if he had been an Indian and if he had felt himself a man before, he would feel it five times more so after the Japanese triumphs.<sup>5</sup> "We feel", declared *The Bengalee*, "that we are not the same people as we were before the Japanese successes".<sup>6</sup>

It wrote: "For the first time in modern history Asia has triumphed over Europe and has vindicated its equality in the knowledge of those arts which have their cradle in Europe and which have made Europe what she is."<sup>7</sup> It argued that just as the success of a few European nations had convinced the Europeans of their superiority over Asians, so the victory of Japan would dispel from the minds of the Asians their mistaken belief about the inevitable superiority of the West.<sup>8</sup> It may be recalled that in 1894 Alfred Lyall had written: "The English

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 48. In the same speech Banerjea also expressed the extreme view that Curzon was "the one man who, more than any other, by his labours contributed to the upbuilding of our national life."

<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee*, November 9th, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> See Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, "Swaraj", *The Indian World*, January 1907, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bengalee*, June 14th, 1905.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, July 7th, 1905.

<sup>6</sup> *The Bengalee*, June 14th, 1905.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, June 17th, 1905.

dominion once firmly planted in Asia is not likely to be shaken unless it is supplanted by a stronger European rival. Henceforward the struggle will be, not between Eastern and Western races, but between the great commercial and conquering nations of the West for predominance in Asia.”<sup>1</sup> Later Lyall admitted that the Japanese victories of 1905 had materially altered the political situation and prospect in Asia.<sup>2</sup> Writing some time after the Japanese victories, C. F. Andrews observed that comparing extracts from the newspapers of Teheran, Cairo and Peking he had found that the sentiments expressed therein were almost identical with those that were expressed in *The Bengalee* and *The Hindu*, and that those sentiments could be summarised “as a desire for Western institution and scientific training, ... and a race longing for freedom from European control”.<sup>3</sup>

Early in December, 1906, *The Bengalee* wrote : “Persia has self-government. China will soon have it. India after one hundred and fifty years of British rule is still without self-government”.<sup>4</sup> On 26th December, 1906, in his Congress Presidential Address, Dadabhai Naoroji said that Indians could not continue to remain subject to despotism when China in the east and Persia in the west of Asia were waking up, and when the greatest autocrat of the world, the Tzar, had granted a Duma to the Russians.<sup>5</sup> In the same speech, he declared that self-government like that of the United Kingdom or the British colonies was the political ideal of the Indians.<sup>6</sup>

As early as 1885 Henry Cotton had spoken of this ideal.<sup>7</sup> In his 1897 Congress Presidential Address Sankaran Nair had also expressed the hope that “India may one day take her place in the confederacy of the free English-speaking nations of the world”.<sup>8</sup> The ideal of colonial self-government, however, became a matter of lively political controversy only after the beginning of the twentieth century. Henry Cotton, in his 1904

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India*, p. 355, and footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee*, November 21st, 1907.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, December 19th, 1906.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> H. J. S. Cotton, *New India or India in Transition* (London, 1885), p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 323.

Congress Presidential Address, said that the Indian patriots should aspire to establish "a federation of free and separate states, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain".<sup>1</sup> Next year Gokhale, in his Congress Presidential Address, spoke in favour of the ideal of colonial self-government.<sup>2</sup> The following year, in one of its resolutions, the Congress declared itself in favour of this ideal.<sup>3</sup>

The "moderates" wanted self-government within the British empire. They were steeped in English ideas, and the notion of severing every political link with Britain was extremely repugnant to them. In 1889 a moderate Congressman wrote: "(We do) not regard the British Government as an alien Government, but look upon it as our national Government. English is our lingua franca: of English institutions we have become deeply enamoured; and, as we have been trained on lines peculiarly British, we cannot do aught but ask for privileges of British citizenship."<sup>4</sup> In 1895 Surendranath Banerjea, in his Congress Presidential Address, expressed the hope that "India may find its place in the great confederacy of free states, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England".<sup>5</sup>

By 1905 there had grown up a new and powerful party which had no special love for institutions that were peculiarly English in their origin and English in their character. *The Bande Mataram*, an "extremist" paper, which wanted *Swaraj* (self-rule) outside the British empire and not colonial self-government wrote that it had no sympathy with those who desired "to make the government of India popular without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British".<sup>6</sup> "We desire", continued the paper, "to make it autonomous and absolutely free of British control."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> "B", *Congress Sketches: A Review of the Speeches and the Speakers at the Fourth Indian National Congress*, Lucknow, 1889, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses, First Series*, p. 255.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, September 16th, 1906, contained this extract from the *Bande Mataram*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Times* declared that both the ideals of colonial self-government and of *Swaraj* were "visionary and unpractical", but it maintained that while the plan of securing colonial self-government gradually through constitutional means was compatible with genuine loyalty to the crown and the empire, the aim of getting rid of British control at the shortest possible notice in order to establish *Swaraj* was "openly and flagrant seditious."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of what *The Times* wrote Dadabhai Naoroji emphatically declared in his Congress Presidential Address in December, 1906 that "self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies" was the political ideal of Indians.<sup>2</sup> Bepin Pal went further, and declared that India could be a fully self-governing country outside, and not inside, the British empire. The ideal of self-government within the British empire appeared to him to be an impossible ideal.<sup>3</sup> It might be, he said, that colonial self-government meant that Indians would enjoy autonomy in all domestic matters but that their foreign affairs would be conducted by the British. But if the British controlled foreign affairs for India, then they would also have to look after the defence of India, and in order to meet the cost of defence they would demand an important voice in the control of the purse of the Indian nation. "What then would remain of India's domestic autonomy", asked Bepin Pal.<sup>4</sup>

The "moderates" pointed out that British colonies, such as Canada and Australia, were autonomous in domestic matters. But then the "extremists" doubted whether it would be possible for India to occupy a position in the British empire similar to that which was occupied by the Canadians or the Australians. Bepin Pal referred to the existence of colour prejudices which prevented the English from co-operating with the Indians in the same manner that they could co-operate with the Australians, and he invoked the authority of Lord Bryce in support of this statement.<sup>5</sup> Bryce maintained that "to the Teutonic peoples, and especially to the English and Anglo-Americans, the difference of colour means a great deal. It creates a feeling of separa-

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, October 16th, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 29.

tion, perhaps even of slight repulsion. Such a feeling may be deemed unreasonable or unchristian, but it seems too deeply rooted to be effaceable in any time we can foresee".<sup>1</sup> Further, the "extremists" drew attention to the fact that Indians were racially and culturally different from Englishmen, Canadians and Australians.

But the "moderates" were fond of saying that both the English and the Indians belonged to the Aryan family of nations,<sup>2</sup> and that culturally the difference between Englishmen and Indians were somewhat reduced owing to the spread of English education in India.<sup>3</sup> Further, they pointed out that the French in Canada and the Boers in South Africa had shown that peoples culturally and racially different from the British could hold self-respecting positions in the British empire.<sup>4</sup>

The prospect of remaining a member, even though a self-governing member, of the British empire did not attract the "extremists", who preferred the indigenous ideal of *Swaraj*. In the National Conference of the "extremists" in December 1907, Tilak said, "The colonial form of government was a lower ideal, was not inspiring, and would not catch the popular mind as much as autonomy."<sup>5</sup> He added that though "it might be sedition under the Penal Code to take practical steps to realise the ideal (of complete autonomy), the mere enunciation of it as a theoretical goal would be outside the criminal law".<sup>6</sup>

*The Bengalee* remarked that it would be impracticable for the Congress to accept the ideal of unqualified *Swaraj*, when any attempt to realise that ideal would bring it into direct conflict with the laws of the state.<sup>7</sup> Further, it criticised Tilak's statement that the ideal of colonial self-government was not a sufficiently inspiring ideal,<sup>8</sup> and it argued that the self-governing India

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> See speech of Surendranath Banerjea in *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, ed. C. L. Parekh, pp. 98-99.

<sup>3</sup> In his 1897 Congress Presidential Address Sankaran Nair said: "We, in fact, now live the life of the English" (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 320).

<sup>4</sup> *Speeches of the Hon. Mr. G. K. Gokhale*, 1st ed., p. 782.

<sup>5</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 28th, 1907.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, December 25th and 28th, 1907.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

of the future could combine "the love of freedom and the sentiment of nationality with a desire for international cooperation" by remaining as an autonomous unit within the British empire.<sup>1</sup>

In 1908 the Congress finally laid down in its constitution that its aim was the attainment of colonial self-government by means of constitutional methods. As the acceptance of this creed set out in the constitution was a condition for the membership of the Congress<sup>2</sup> those who repudiated the ideal of colonial self-government could not continue to be members of the Congress.

In July 1909, Gokhale stated that no man could be so fallen as not to feel the humiliation of living under a foreign rule, but he maintained that as Indians, because of their endless divisions, feeble public spirit and other national defects, were unfitted for immediate self-government, and because British rule alone stood between order and anarchy, "only mad men outside lunatic asylums could think or talk of independence".<sup>3</sup> He characterised the argument that independence could be achieved by peaceful passive resistance as ridiculous nonsense.<sup>4</sup> "Independence never had been achieved in the history of the world, and", Gokhale stated, "never would, except by force and the British would spend their last shilling and sacrifice their last man before they would suffer their rule to be over-thrown".<sup>5</sup>

It is not easy to see why Gokhale so vehemently repudiated the ideal of complete *Swaraj* or independence. In the Alipore Bomb Case (1908-09) it was freely admitted on behalf of Aurobindo Ghose, one of the accused, that he believed in the ideal of independence, and counsel for the Crown conceded that there was nothing wrong in cherishing such an ideal provided it was not sought to be achieved by violent means.<sup>6</sup> In his judg-

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, December 28th, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, Appendix B, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> See G. K. Gokhale, "The School of Coordination", *The Indian World*, July-August, 1909, pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* See also Bhupendranath Basu, "The Indian Political Outlook", *The Indian World*, January, 1908, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *The Indian World*, July-August, 1909, p. 22. See also A. C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, pp. 426-27.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Bengalee*, May 18th, 1909.

ment the English judge said, "No English worthy of the name will grudge the Indian the ideal of independence."<sup>1</sup> But as a matter of fact, there were not a few Englishmen who repudiated this ideal of independence.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Bengalee*, May 7th, 1909.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “TERRORISM”

#### THE METHOD OF THE “TERRORISTS”

IN the first decade of the twentieth century nationalists in India were divided into three classes : the “moderates”, the “extremists” and the “terrorists”.<sup>1</sup> The “moderates”, who drew their inspiration from English constitutional history, wanted to achieve a colonial form of self-government and sought to achieve it in a peaceful, gradual and constitutional manner. The “extremists” generally wanted *Swaraj* or full independence and, like the Irish Sinn Feiners, had a great faith in the efficacy of a comprehensive policy of boycott. The “terrorists” who also believed in *Swaraj*, sought to achieve their ends by the adoption of the methods of revolutionary violence which had been widely practised in Russia.

It was a common belief with the “terrorists” that the rule of a foreign Western power was destructive of Indian religion and culture, and that the violent overthrow of that rule was essential for the spiritual survival of India. During the Ganapati<sup>2</sup> festival of 1894 leaflets were circulated throughout the city of Poona which referred to the intolerable yoke of a foreign rule and urged the Hindus to rise up in arms against the alien British rule as Sivaji did against Muslim rule.<sup>3</sup> In the Sivaji festival two orthodox Chitpavan Brahmins, Damodar and Balakrishna Chapekar, asked the people to risk their lives “on the battlefield in a national war” and to “shed upon the earth the life-blood of the enemies who destroy our religion”.<sup>4</sup> In the Ganapati festival they asked : “This is called Hindustan, how is it

<sup>1</sup> The “terrorists”, who were sometimes denounced as anarchists, called themselves revolutionaries. See S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, p. 100 (*Agnidiner Katha* is a memoir of a “terrorist”).

<sup>2</sup> Hindu god of wisdom and success.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 2.

that the English rule here?"<sup>1</sup> They advised the people to kill the English.<sup>2</sup> On June 12th, 1897 one of the speakers in the Sivaji coronation festival said that if the people who participated in the French Revolution could argue that they did not commit murder but only removed the obstacles on their way, there existed no reason why the people of Maharashtra could not use the same argument.<sup>3</sup>

In 1897 when plague broke out in Poona the government used troops to search the houses of suspected cases. The local press complained that the privacy of houses has been violated. *The Sholapur Samachar* wrote : "It is really a misfortune that honour, religion and the modesty of women which was safe even under the rule of the Moguls, should be violated under the enlightened English government."<sup>4</sup> The paper went further and charged that all this was done for the purpose of retaliating the tortures once inflicted by Tantia Topi on Europeans and for punishing the people of the Deccan for taking the lead in every public agitation. Another local paper, the *Sudharak*, declared that Rand, Plague Commissioner, had shown what British tyranny was like and added : "And still we look calmly on and show not the slightest sign of resistance. What does this prove? Simply that we have no pluck, no spirit left among us, that we are an over-meeek and cowardly race of beings . . . ." Tilak's paper, the *Kesari*, wrote in a similar vein.<sup>5</sup> On 22nd June, 1897 Rand was assassinated.

"Terrorism", that first emerged in 1897, reappeared in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century. When Plehve, the Russian Minister of Interior, was assassinated, the *Kal*, a Maratha newspaper, wrote on 3rd September, 1904 that such assassinations had "an educative value" : their laudable object was "to cut off a poisonous part", they were "a kind of surgical remedy", and they were perpetrated for the good of the world".<sup>6</sup> It quoted the manifesto alleged to have been issued by the central

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 3.

<sup>4</sup> This extract is taken from *The Pioneer Mail*, July 8th, 1897 : "Current Comments."

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, July 8th, 1897.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 3.

committee of the revolutionary socialists in Russia which declared that the oppression of Plehve rendered his assassination inevitable. *The Pioneer Mail* remarked that the *Kal* was possibly the first Indian paper which had unequivocally and publicly commended political assassination.<sup>1</sup> It must be pointed out that though the *Kal* justified the method of political assassination in certain circumstances, it did not openly declare that the adoption of this method had become necessary in the particular conditions of India, and in the same article it had also remarked that Curzon's regime in India had been far less oppressive than that of Plehve's in Russia.<sup>2</sup>

After the failure of the constitutional agitation to prevent the partition of Bengal in 1905 some people argued that nothing could be achieved without the use of violence. A study of the history of Japan seemed to strengthen the argument for the use of physical force. It was because Japan was militarily strong that in 1905 she could defeat Russia, a Western power. India, similarly, could throw off the rule of a Western power by violent rather than by constitutional means. It may be added that soon after the Japanese victories a correspondent of *The Pioneer Mail* had pointed out that the Japanese victories would weaken the conviction of Indians that resistance to British authority was useless and that, therefore, it would make the foundation of British rule less secure.<sup>3</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century many ardent nationalists felt that the people must suffer, and even sacrifice their lives, in order to attain freedom. “Remember then”, wrote the *Swaraj*, a nationalist paper, “the difficulties undergone for independence in Western countries. In England .. many battles were fought for people's rights .... In these conflicts, many patriots were placed in prison for *Rajadroham* (treason). Many persons who served their country sacrificed their lives. In France there was a great revolution for independence .... Indiscriminately kings and nobles were killed ... (when) the Japanese waged (war) against the Russians ... (many) sons of

<sup>1</sup> A few extracts from the *Kal* were given in *The Pioneer Mail* of October 7th, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 7th, 1904 : “Killing No Murder.”

<sup>3</sup> “Some Notable Views of the Month”, *The Pioneer Mail*, “India and Japan”, *The Indian World*, July 1905, p. 417.

Japan gladly laid down their lives. Just as gem cannot shine unless it is polished, just as butter cannot be got unless curds are churned, so unless commotion takes place, the people's power cannot shine".<sup>1</sup> The paper, however, did not ask the people to take up arms against the rulers, it advised them to rely on the weapons of *dharma* (righteousness) and boycott.

But the use of violent methods was openly and unequivocally supported by the *Yugantar*, the organ of the Bengal "terrorists". It declared that sedition had no meaning from the Indian standpoint,<sup>2</sup> because if every Indian came into violent conflict with the laws of the state in order to overthrow an alien rule then right and justice would be on the side of the Indian people and not of the British rulers. The terrorists argued that the Indian people were "in a perpetual state of war"<sup>3</sup> with the British rulers, and that, therefore, every manner of attack on the foundations of British rule was justified.

The *Yugantar* pointed out that not much muscle was required to shoot Europeans.<sup>4</sup> Not only revolvers but bombs also were used by the "terrorists" of Bengal. "In every country", wrote the *Yugantar* on 12th August, 1907, "there are plenty of secret places where arms can be manufactured . . . . The very large number of bombs which have been and are being manufactured in Russia have all been manufactured in the secret factories of the revolutionists"<sup>5</sup> Narendranath Gossain, a "terrorist" who later turned government approver, said in court during the hearing of the Alipore Bomb Case that Barindra Ghose, the "terrorist" leader, told him : "We are sending some young boys to Japan, England, France and America to learn science". He asked : "What science?" "How to make bombs, etc.," replied Barindra."<sup>6</sup>

The *Kal* wrote that though in Russia many people sided with the government against the bomb-throwers, in India, where the

<sup>1</sup> This extract, which was cited in the *Swaraj* sedition case, is taken from *The Bengalee* of August 6th, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> See the "dying speech" of Dhingra, who assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie, (Appendix III of W. S. Blunt's "*My Diaries*").

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote of para 22.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, June 26th, 1908, "The Anarchist Trial".

people were no longer in a mood to sing the praises of British rule, very few people were likely to support an alien government against Indian bomb-throwers. It argued that if “even in such circumstances Russia got the Duma, a *fortiori* India is bound to get *Swarajya* (home rule or independence).”<sup>1</sup>

In December 1907 the *Indian Sociologist*, the organ of the revolutionary Home Rule Society started by Shyamaji Krishna-varma, wrote : “The only methods which can bring the English Government to its senses are the Russian methods”.<sup>2</sup> It pointed out that the way in which Russian methods could be applied would depend on the nature of the local conditions and circumstances in India, but it remarked that possibly, “as a general principle the Russian method will begin with Indian officials rather than European.”<sup>3</sup> But the Indian “terrorists”, who killed both European and Indian officials, started by killing European officials.

The *Yugantar* wrote that the money that was required for financing “terroristic” enterprises could be obtained by plundering post-offices, banks, government treasuries, and by robbing the luxurious rich.<sup>4</sup> The examples of Russian and Irish “terrorists” who obtained money by means of political robberies were cited to give confidence to those who felt uncertain about the virtues of political dacoity.<sup>5</sup>

The *Yugantar* referred to the fact that during the French and Russian revolutions, there were some partisans of the revolutionaries among the troops of the government, and argued that in India, where the ruling power was foreign, it might be easier to enlist the support of some of the government troops on the side of revolution.<sup>6</sup>

The “terrorists” hoped that ultimately they would be able to create a revolution in India. They, therefore, tried to obtain as much knowledge of military matters as they could. Among the books that the police seized at various searches of “terrorist” centres were the following : “*Nitro Explosives*” by Sanford, the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 29,

*Swordsman* by Alfred Hutton, *A Handbook of Modern Explosives* by Eissler, *Modern Weapons and Modern War* by J. S. Bloch, *Field Exercises*, *Rifle Exercises*, *Manual of Military Engineering*, *Infantry Training*, *Cavalry Drill*, *Machine-Gun Training*, *Quick Training for War*.<sup>1</sup>

In a document called the "General Principles", seized by the police after the search of a house at Calcutta on 2nd September, 1909, it was stated that from a study of the history of the Russian revolutionary movement one could learn that the revolutionary party should work gradually and not, at the outset, try to engage in all manner of activities. It should first organise a nucleus recruited from the educated class, that nucleus was later to spread revolutionary ideas among the masses, and ultimately when the military organisation of the party was satisfactory then it was to start an armed rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

During the first great war the "terrorists" sought to realise their last and final aim of ending British rule by means of an armed rebellion. To succeed in their aim they sought for material assistance from the Germans.<sup>3</sup> But they grossly underestimated the strength of British power in India and their plans for starting a violent revolution failed.

The "terrorists" had no clear positive political philosophy. A small minority of them believed in the anarchism of Bakunin.<sup>4</sup> Some of the "terrorists" were attracted by vague socialistic ideas and some others believed in the social ideal of Vivekananda, but the large majority of the "terrorists" had no definite political philosophy.<sup>5</sup> The "terrorists" were militant nationalists. The primary aim of the "terrorists" was not to set up a democratic form of government but to establish a government that would be under the control of Indians and not of foreigners. They thought that it was the force of circumstances that would decide who would be the head of the Indian government that would be established as a result of a successful revolution, whether he would be a successful soldier or a President as in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, paras, 109-12.

<sup>4</sup> S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, pp. 62, 102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-3.

<sup>6</sup> See report of a conversation between Khaparde, who supported "terro-

Some of the “terrorists” were men of deep religious convictions. They believed that, whatever might be the case in Western countries, religion and politics could not be separated in India. Partly from a study of the works of Vivekananda and others they were convinced that no political or social work could be done in India unless the people were led to believe that there were some religious significance in such work.<sup>1</sup> They felt that the death-defying courage that was required in a “terrorist” could only be cultivated through some form of spiritual discipline,<sup>2</sup> and in order to provide that training to the new recruits some of the leading “terrorists” sought the help of *sadhus* (religious ascetics).<sup>3</sup> The new recruits were asked to read the *Bhagavad Gita*, the writings of Vivekananda<sup>4</sup> and Bankim Chattopadhyaya’s *Anandamath*. In the *Gita* Krishna had justified “righteous war”<sup>5</sup> in certain circumstances. The “terrorists”, however, referred to the *Gita* to show that assassination for a worthy cause was not unjustified. The *Anandamath*<sup>6</sup> was also used for the same purpose. The *Santans*, (Children of the Mother or Motherland), who were the chief characters of the *Anandamath*,<sup>7</sup> considered it their religious duty to slay the enemies of the gods.<sup>8</sup> It does not appear that Bankim himself sought to justify violent or revolutionary activities in the *Anandamath*, for in the preface to its first edition he had said that the book was written to show, among other things, that the British saved Bengal from anarchy, and that the adoption of revolutionary methods could bring nothing but death and destruction. But it is necessary to add that till one comes to the end of the book one does not feel

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rism”, and Blunt (W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries*, pp. 677-78). It is interesting to note that during the great war the “terrorists” decided that if their revolutionary plans succeeded they would establish in India a federal republic on the model of the USA (S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, p. 50).

<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Upendranath Banerjee, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para. 27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *The Song of God : Bhagavad Gita*, translation by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (London 1948) p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> The *Anandamath* was translated into English by N. C. Sen Gupta as *The Abbey of Bliss*.

<sup>7</sup> N. C. Sen Gupta, *The Abbey of Bliss*, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

that the author does not sympathise with the violent activities of the *Santans*.

“TERRORISM” AND THE QUESTION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES  
AND ENGLISH EDUCATION

The Congress officially condemned the deeds of violence committed by the “terrorists”.<sup>1</sup> Describing the “terrorists” as anarchists Surendranath Banerjea said in the 1912 Congress : “Anarchism has wrecked the prospects of Russian freedom ; an emasculated Duma was the reply of the Czar to Russian anarchism.”<sup>2</sup> He declared that anarchism was not of the East and that it was absolutely foreign to the spirit of Indian culture and civilisation.<sup>3</sup> Echoing Surendranath’s sentiments Lajpat Rai asked : “Shall we in this land of the Buddha, in this land of the Vedas, in this land of mercy to animals . . . blacken our past by taking to this cult of the bomb ?”<sup>4</sup>

While condemning “terrorism” Congressmen did not fail to point out that repression and coercion alone would not check “terrorism”. *The Bengalee* drew attention to the fact that though the Russian government had tried a policy of pure repression by deporting thousands of “terrorists” to Siberia, it had not succeeded in stamping out “terrorism” altogether.<sup>5</sup> Further, the fact that “terrorism” flourished in Tzarist Russia and not in free England seemed to suggest that “terrorism” could flourish in a place where the people were denied their rights and liberties, and that it could not easily thrive in a place where the people enjoyed a large measure of political freedom.<sup>6</sup> The paper advised the government to try to remove the grievances of the people by means of generous reforms.<sup>7</sup> If the grievances of the people were first removed then the people would cooperate with the government in repressing “terrorism”. But if the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 68. See Also *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *The Bengalee*, September 30th, 1908.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *The Bengalee*, July 2nd, 1908, and January 30th, 1909.

people's grievances were not redressed, then those whom the government punished on the charge of sedition would be regarded by large sections of the people as patriots and martyrs.<sup>1</sup>

When the government of India was faced with the challenge of “terrorism” the Secretary of State for India was Morley, who had been Gladstone's chief lieutenant in his campaign for Irish home rule. Morley realised that a policy of coercion alone would no more solve the Indian problem than it had solved the Irish problem. He hoped that by granting political reforms he would be able to bring the “moderates” on the side of the government<sup>2</sup> and so provide a check to the growing influence of the “extremists” and the “terrorists.”<sup>3</sup> The government could also pursue the alternative policy of doing nothing and thereby throw the “moderates” in the arms of the “extremists” and the “terrorists” so that they could end up “by getting knocked on the head with rifles and guns”.<sup>4</sup> There were some who favoured the adoption of this alternative policy and who referred to the history of the French Revolution and the Irish nationalist movement to show that the “extremists always won in the long run”.<sup>5</sup> They argued that concessions granted to the “moderates” provided only new weapons of struggle in the hands of the “extremists”.<sup>6</sup> But Morley favoured a policy of reform, and replying to those who argued that only a policy of extreme repression was suited to Oriental countries, he said on 17th December, 1908 that he did not believe that Oriental countries invariably interpreted kindness as fear and he drew attention to the fact that the Founder of Christianity was born in an Oriental country.<sup>7</sup> On 21st October, 1907 he had declared that because the British in India were the representatives of Western, not Oriental, civilisation he could not be hurried into repression by any such assertion that Orientals did not understand patience or toleration.<sup>8</sup> In a speech to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, July 2nd, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Speech on October 21st, 1907 (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 39).

<sup>3</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> See Sir Austen Chamberlain's record of a conversation with Morley in his *Politics from Inside : An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914* (London, 1936), p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Speech in the House of Commons. (*Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 995).

<sup>8</sup> Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 39.

Indian civil servants in July 1908 he had expressed the opinion that so long as English public opinion watched the activities of the Indian government it would not be possible to enter upon a policy of pure repression.<sup>1</sup>

“If reforms do not save the Raj”, wrote Morley to Minto, “nothing else will”. On 28th May, 1908 Minto replied : “The Raj would not disappear in India as long as the British race remains what it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought, if it comes to fighting, and we shall win as we have always won.”<sup>2</sup> Minto believed that to repress sedition it was necessary to curtail, to a certain extent, the liberty of the person, the liberty of the press, and the liberty of holding political meetings, and he warned Morley that it would be dangerous for the security of the British empire in India if “out of too much inherited respect for the doctrines of the Western world quite unsuited to the East” strong repressive measures were not pursued in India.<sup>3</sup> Morley did not believe that it was possible to introduce every English political institution into India, but he yet asked Minto to realise that it was desirable that the spirit of English institutions, its ideas of law and justice, should gradually and prudently be applied in India,<sup>4</sup> and that the government could not pursue a policy of complete suppression of popular liberties on the ground that “the Nizam or the Amir would make short work of seditious writers and spouters”.<sup>5</sup>

One of the first acts of repression suggested by Minto, which Morley had to approve, was the arrest and deportation in 1907 of Lala Lajpat Rai and of Ajit Singh, after the riots at Lahore and Rawalpindi. In November 1908, after some disturbances in Bengal, nine Bengalis were similarly deported. These deportations were effected under an old Regulation of 1818, under which a man could be sent to prison and kept in prison without trial for any limit of time and without being told what was the crime that he was charged with.

*The Madras Mail*, which generally voiced the opinions of the European community of Madras, unhesitatingly supported the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, pp. 235-36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249-50.

<sup>4</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 172-73.

<sup>5</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 250.

deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh.<sup>1</sup> Congressmen, on the other hand, strongly condemned these deportations. Rash Behari Ghose, in his Congress Presidential Addresses of 1907 and 1908, denounced the Regulation of 1818, under which a man could be deported without trial, as a lawless law, a standing negation of all law.<sup>2</sup> The 1908 Congress demanded the repeal of this Regulation, and asked that the deported persons be brought to trial or else be set at liberty.<sup>3</sup> Tej Bahadur Sapru, the jurist, pointed out that in no other part of the British empire did such a law as the Regulation of 1818 exist,<sup>4</sup> and he declared that the spirit of the Regulation was against the very first principles of English jurisprudence and that it was opposed to all the traditions of the English constitution.<sup>5</sup>

The deportations were criticised in Britain by a group of Conservatives led by F. E. Smith, a future Secretary of State for India, and more especially by Liberals and Radicals. Mr. Mackarness, a member of the House of Commons, said in April 1909 that the power of deporting without trial was clearly unconstitutional if Magna Charta had any meaning.<sup>6</sup> Similarly Wedgwood, another member, asserted in July 1910 that the principle of the Regulation of 1818 “is the principle of the Bastille. It is the principle of the *letter de cachet* under Louis XIV”.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Madras Mail*, May 16th, 1907 : “Stamping Out Sedition.” See also the issue of August 1st, 1907 : “The Indian National Congress.”

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 748-49, 793.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 107. Syed Hussain Imam of Bankipore said that the Regulations were framed in the early days of British settlement in India but since that time Indians “after receiving English education and having come into contact with Western methods of thought and Western methods of life” had progressed considerably so that they wanted “more civilized laws” than the Regulation III of 1818. (*Ibid.*, p. 108).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115. J. D. Rees wrote that within the British empire a law similar to the Indian Regulation of 1818 existed in the East African Protectorate. (J. D. Rees, *The Real India*, p. 165.)

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 115. See also the article “Personal Liberty in British India” by “Civis Romanus Sum” in *The Indian World*, July 1907.

<sup>6</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1909*, p. 218. (Mackarness was member for Berkshire, Newbury.)

<sup>7</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1910*, p. 243. (Wedgwood was member for Newcastle-under-Lyme.)

There were, however, others in the parliament, such as J. D. Rees, who not only approved of the deportations but argued that the government had not used this method as much as was necessary for suppressing sedition. He referred to Aurobindo Ghose who "called upon youths not to be cowards, and said imprisonment was not as terrible as it seemed," and he added : "I hope the government will deport this man."<sup>1</sup> He said that a man who could speak like Aurobindo should be deported even though no legal proof could be found against him for any political crime he had committed. He did not deny that the power of deporting without trial was an autocratic power, but he advocated the use of that power because he persuaded himself to believe that the people of the East would not realise that their rulers had power unless the rulers used that power autocratically in grave and critical situations.<sup>2</sup>

Lady Minto wrote that the "practice of deportation had always stuck in the throat of the Secretary of State, it outraged his Liberal conscience...."<sup>3</sup> Morley had some misgivings about the wisdom of the policy of deportations. He wrote to Minto : "Radical supporters will be critical, and Tory opponents will scent an inconsistency between deporting Lajpat, and my old fighting of Balfour for locking up William O'Brien."<sup>4</sup> But he tried to defend his policy by saying that there need not be any necessary inconsistency if the policy pursued in India was not exactly the same as Irish policy because India was greatly different from Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

In a letter to Minto on May 16th, 1907, Morley said that if he did not "possess a spotless character as an anti-coercionist in Ireland", the opposition to the policy of deportation would have been much greater than it actually was.<sup>6</sup> However, as time passed, the opposition to this policy grew in strength and force. In a letter to Minto on August 12th, 1909, Morley raised the

<sup>1</sup> Speech on August 5th, 1909. (*Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons*, 1909, p. 606).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 608.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on June 6th, 1907 (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 18).

<sup>6</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 217,

question of releasing the deportees, and pointed out that F. E. Smith was uneasy about deportations, that at least a dozen Unionist members would support a move against deportation, that the orthodox rank and file Liberals did not understand indefinite detention, and that Labour men, possibly, and Irishmen, certainly, would oppose deportation.<sup>1</sup> To Minto's argument that the detention of deportees would frighten evil-doers generally, he replied on January 27th, 1910 thus : “That's the Russian argument : by packing off train-loads of suspects to Siberia we will terrify the anarchists out of their wits, and all will come all right.”<sup>2</sup> That policy had been tried in Russia, but it had not succeeded. Neither had that policy worked in Ireland. If he knew anything in the world it was, claimed Morley, the working of the Irish Coercion since 1881, and it was when Parnell was in prison and the Coercion Act was in full blast that the Dublin Invincibles were reorganised and strengthened.<sup>3</sup> At the persistent request of Morley, Minto released the Bengal deportees almost immediately after the passing of a stringent press law in 1910.

Before closing the discussion on deportations it is necessary to refer briefly to the controversy over the question of deporting Keir Hardie, the Labour leader, who visited India in 1907. In a letter to the Prime Minister on 2nd October, 1907, Morley wrote that he had come to the conclusion that if Keir Hardie had really used the language which he was reported to have used in his speeches in India then Hardie was a propagator of sedition and should be punished.<sup>4</sup> Morley was convinced that if Hardie was allowed to go unscathed then it would be impossible to continue or to justify the deportation of Lajpat Rai.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1907, Hardie had compared the *Swadeshi* with the Sinn Fein Movement and had suggested that possibly both the movements arose because the legitimate demands of the people were not satisfied.<sup>6</sup> On 27th September, Hardie, after arriving

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 327-28.

<sup>3</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 318, 327-8.

<sup>4</sup> Letters from J. Morley, *Campbell-Bannerman Papers*, Vol. XVIII. (British Museum Additional Manuscript, 41223, ff. 266-67.)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> For a brief summary of Hardie's Indian speeches see the copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated October 7th, 1907. (*Ibid.*, ff. 274-76).

in Mymensingh (now in East Pakistan), remarked that the number of police in existence in the streets reminded him of a city in a state of siege. He also observed that Russian methods of administration were similar to those existing in Mymensingh, and that some of the atrocities recently committed in India could be compared with the outrages committed by Turkey in Armenia.<sup>1</sup> He assured Indians that the British Labour Party sympathised with the political aspirations of educated Indians, and declared that on his return to England he would recommend the grant to India of self-government on lines similar to that of Canada.

Minto sent a brief summary of Hardie's Indian speeches to Morley. Minto did not consider that there was any probability that Hardie's speeches might lead to public disorder of a serious kind.<sup>2</sup> The question of deporting Keir Hardie was, therefore, dropped.

Apart from deportations there were other measures which the government adopted in order to fight "sedition" and "terrorism". In 1907, after some disturbances in the Punjab and in Eastern Bengal, the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act was passed. This Act provided that no political meeting could be held in a "proclaimed area" without the permission of the local authorities, and that the authorities could forbid the holding of any political meeting which they apprehended might tend to promote sedition. Sir Henry Adamson, the government spokesman, argued that because in India, unlike Britain, respectable law-abiding citizens had not assisted the government in prosecuting law-breakers by coming forward to testify in the courts of law against those who preached sedition in public meetings, the Indian law about holding public meetings had to be made more stringent than the English law.<sup>3</sup>

Gokhale and Rash Behari Ghose pointed out that the new measure would place very great powers in the hands of the local

<sup>1</sup> Speaking in the House of Commons on July 22nd, 1908 Hardie said that he had never made a statement of this character and that the statement was a pure concoction. (*Indian Debates, 1908*, p. 759.)

<sup>2</sup> Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State received at India House, October 6th, 1907. (Letters from J. Morley, *Campbell-Bannerman Papers*, Vol. XVIII, f. 273.)

<sup>3</sup> *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India : April 1907 to March 1908*, pp. 59-60.

authorities to forbid, in some cases, the holding of political meetings which they might mistakenly believe would tend to the promotion of sedition.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this the liberty of holding political meetings might be seriously curtailed, and this would enable “extremists”, lamented Ghose, “to adorn their perorations with references to Russian methods of government”.<sup>2</sup> Ghose, who was a celebrated jurist, referred to the fact that no law comparable to the new measure, existed “in Italy or Belgium, France or Switzerland, though the seditious agitator is not an unknown figure in Europe, which is honeycombed with secret societies of anarchists and socialists”.<sup>3</sup> He spoke of the utmost freedom of public meeting that obtained in England, and declared that it was to the liberty of holding public meetings and discussions that England owed the abolition of slavery, repeal of the Corn Law, Catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform.<sup>4</sup> The right of public discussion through public meetings was a liberty over all other liberties and an attempt to restrict that right would be, said Ghose, quoting the words of Milton, “slaying of an immortality rather than a life”.

The Seditious Meetings Act was passed on November 1st, 1907. On June 8th, 1908, the government brought forward a Bill to prevent incitements to murder and other offences in newspapers. Under this new press law the *Yugantar* was suppressed. When an attempt on an English judge’s life at Muzaffarpur resulted in the death of two English ladies the *Yugantar* wrote: “If in an attempt to destroy the enemy a woman is accidentally killed, then God can have no cause of displeasure like the English. Many a female demon must be killed ... in order to extirpate the race of *Asuras* (demons) from the breast of the earth.”<sup>5</sup> The revolutionary papers had advocated the adoption of the methods of the Russian nihilists and the use of the bomb. They had asked for the avenging of the “murder of the Motherland” by blood, the lighting of a huge sacrificial

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46, 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> This extract is taken from the report of the speech of Sir Henry Adamson. (*The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India: April 1908 to March 1909*, p. 10.)

fire to be fed not with *ghee* (clarified butter) but with blood, the blood that would propitiate the goddess Kali.<sup>1</sup> Such writings, said Henry Adamson, while introducing the 1908 Press Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council, would appear as “ridiculous bombast” to an Englishman, but it was otherwise with “impressionable and immature minds in the East”, and consequently the effect they produced on the youthful readers of the revolutionary papers “must be judged by Eastern and not by Western standards.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Minto said that such writings would have been immediately dismissed in England, habituated to constitutional agitation, with ridicule and contempt, but that that had not been the case in India ; therefore, “India is not ripe for complete freedom of the Press.”<sup>3</sup>

While discussing the 1908 press Act in the House of Lords Earl Cromer, who had supported Ripon in repealing Lytton’s press Act of 1878, recanted his former faith in the desirability of having a free Indian press. He said that a policy of complete freedom of the press had been tried in India as well as in Egypt, but the working of the press in those two countries had shown that Western ideas of the freedom of the press were unsuited to Oriental conditions.<sup>4</sup> Curzon, speaking on the same occasion, said that since Ripon repealed Lytton’s press Act, in accordance with what was called Liberal principles, the government of India “had to rely upon the indifferent protection of the penal code.”<sup>5</sup> He welcomed the new press Act, but considered it to be inadequate for various reasons, chief among which was that it was confined exclusively to incitements to murder and violence and as such it could not check the ordinary everyday incitements to sedition and attack on the British government.<sup>6</sup> Lord Lamington, a former governor of Bombay, similarly said that ordinary everyday attack on the British Government in India was far more insidious than incitements to murder, and he urged upon the government the necessity of introducing a more stringent press law.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. (Kali is the Hindu goddess of strength and destruction.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> House of Lords, June 30th, 1908. (*Indian Debates, 1908*, p. 646.)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 627.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 627-28.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 663.

The theory that the idea of a free press was a Western idea and that it could not be applied in an Eastern country was unhesitatingly rejected by Congressmen, but in his 1908 Congress Presidential Address Rash Behari Ghose said that though he believed in the freedom of the press, in the conditions then existing in the country, a measure like the 1908 press Act “was perhaps necessary”.<sup>1</sup> But the 1908 Congress expressed the earnest hope that the new press Act would have “only a temporary existence in the Indian Statute Book”.<sup>2</sup>

As was to be expected the new press Act was enthusiastically welcomed by extremely conservative Indians. *The Indian Nation*, an organ of the Bihar landlords, had long been saying that not more freedom but more restraint was necessary in India.<sup>3</sup> The paper repudiated the suggestion of some Congressmen that in India, as in Russia, police repression was largely responsible for producing secret conspiracies and bomb outrages.<sup>4</sup> It intemperately wrote that discontent in India had been produced by “villainous rhetoric” in the press, by mere “words, words, words”, such as the preaching of the ideal of independence.<sup>5</sup> It solemnly declared that as the propagation of the political philosophy of Voltaire and Rousseau had helped to produce the French Revolution, so the Indian Revolution, if it ever happened, would have resulted “largely from a political philosophy the preaching of which the Government has *not* repressed but has permitted in its most unrestricted form”.<sup>6</sup>

*The Pioneer Mail* welcomed the press Act of 1908, but it considered the Act to be inadequate. It advocated the “return to the principles of Lord Lytton’s legislation coupled with a system of licensing of universal application”.<sup>7</sup> This would have meant the virtual suppression of a free press.

On 17th December, 1908, Morley wisely spoke against the policy of suppressing a free press. He pointed out that a policy of suppression, to be consistent, must involve not only the sup-

<sup>1</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 788.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *The Indian Nation*, May 18th, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1st, 1908.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, May 11th, 1908, and June 1st, 1908.

<sup>6</sup> *The Indian Nation*, June 1st, 1908.

<sup>7</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, June 12th, 1908.

pression of the press but also the shutting down of schools and colleges that taught the doctrines of liberty,<sup>1</sup> and the enactment of an "Explosive Books Act" which would make the possession of unlicensed books on freedom, such as those of Milton, Burke, Macaulay and Bright, as completely seditious and illegal as the possession of a bomb.<sup>2</sup>

On 4th February, 1910, the Government of India brought forward a Bill for the stricter control of the Indian press. In introducing the Bill Sir Herbert Risley said that because the 1908 press Act dealt only with actual incitements to violence it could not stop those writings which vaguely or indirectly referred to the "methods of guerilla warfare as practised in Circassia, Spain, and South Africa ; Mazzini's gospel of political assassinations ; Kossuth's most violent doctrines ; the doings of Russian Nihilists : the murder of the Marquis Ito",<sup>3</sup> that is, which provided implied justification for political assassination by references to revolutions in other countries. The comprehensive section 4 of the press Bill of 1910 dealt with all writings which had a "tendency, directly or indirectly, whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise" to promote hatred, contempt or enmity against the Government of India.<sup>4</sup> Risley pointed out that though the Bill gave the Government the right to demand and to forfeit security from any newspaper it did not provide for the institution of a system of universal licensing of newspapers. "The liberty of unlicensed printing, for which Milton pleaded three centuries and a half ago, and at the time pleaded in vain, is", he said, "untouched by this Bill".<sup>5</sup>

Speaking in the Imperial Legislative Council on 8th February, 1910, Gokhale supported this Bill. While pointing out that the press in India had been, in the main, a potent instrument of progress he said that in the last five years seditious ideas of overthrowing British rule had been making headway in India, and that, because writings in a section of the press was partly responsible for producing this result, he felt that he could not

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Parl. Papers, East India* (Press Act, 1910), 1910 (Cd. 5269), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> The full text of the press Act of 1910 is given in W. R. Donogh, *The History and Law of Sedition*, pp. 262-71.

<sup>5</sup> *Parl. Papers* (Cd. 5269) 1910, p. 10.

oppose the measures that were contemplated in the Bill for putting an end to such writings.<sup>1</sup> The Congress on the other hand, passed a resolution in December 1910, asking that the press Act “be removed from the Statute Book without delay”.<sup>2</sup> Congressmen in general clearly saw that this Act would restrict the freedom of the press. From the remarks of the Chief Justice of Bengal about this Act it is clear that it would have been extremely difficult for any person to succeed in any proceeding that he might bring in court against the actions that the executive might have taken under this Act.<sup>3</sup>

Some people suggested that to combat “terrorism” it was necessary to control the system of education that prevailed in India. Speaking on 30th June, 1908, in the House of Lords, Cromer asserted that the most important cause which produced the unrest was the system of education that the British had introduced into India.<sup>4</sup> “Western education in India”, wrote Justice Beaman in February 1909, “has proved so far a failure. It has not contributed to the strength of our government ; it has ... weakened and embarrassed it”.<sup>5</sup> On 30th June, 1908, Curzon referred to the fact that in the course of a police investigation Mill’s essay *on Liberty* and Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* had been found among the personal property of one of the bomb-throwers, and he remarked that from a knowledge of this fact one could detect the remote spark which led to the ultimate conflagration.<sup>6</sup> He argued that the English system of education, which was well adapted to England that had centuries of constitutional development behind it, was profoundly ill-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India : April 1909 to March 1910*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> The Chief Justice said, “The provisions of section 4 are very comprehensive, and its language is as wide as human ingenuity could make it. . . . It is difficult to see to what lengths the operation of this section might not plausibly be extended by an ingenious mind. They would certainly extend to writings that may even command approval”. (W. R. Donogh, *The History and Law of Sedition*, Calcutta, 1917, p. 241.)

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 644.

<sup>5</sup> Justice Beaman, “The Situation in India”, *The Empire Review*, February, 1909, p. 63. See also J. D. Ree’s Speech in the House of Commons on July 22nd, 1908 (*Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 743).

<sup>6</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 617.

adapted to the different conditions of India, and that it had taught Indians "the catchwords of Western civilisation without inspiring them with its spirit or inculcating its sobriety".<sup>1</sup>

The *Pioneer Mail* argued that it was an error to prescribe the works of Burke and Mill as textbooks in Indian colleges. In his essay, "On Liberty", Mill was concerned almost exclusively with progressive Western countries, consequently it was fatuous, wrote the paper, to set it as a textbook in the universities of a backward Oriental country such as India.<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Elliott wrote in June 1907 that one of the causes of unrest in India was that schoolboys and youths at colleges were "fed on the literature of Burke and Herbert Spencer and on political dogmas such as 'no taxation without representation' made in England and unsuitable for export".<sup>3</sup> "It is not too much to say", wrote J. D. Rees,<sup>4</sup> "that in our schools pupils imbibe sedition with their daily lessons : they are fed with Rousseau, Macaulay, and the works of philosophers, which even in Oxford tend to pervert the minds of students to Socialistic and impractical dreams."<sup>5</sup> He lamented that Indians read Mill's essay "On Liberty" without Stephen's "crushing rejoinder".<sup>6</sup>

Rees drew attention to the fact that the *Indian Sociologist*, an organ of the "terrorists", gave at the head of each issue the following extract from Herbert Spencer : "Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man. Resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative. Non-resistance hurts both altruism and egoism."<sup>7</sup> He remarked that this was "the kind of pernicious

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 617.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, November 1st, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> C. A. Elliott, "The Unrest in India", *The Empire Review*, June, 1907, p. 382. (Elliott was Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1890 to 1895.)

<sup>4</sup> Rees was an Additional Member of the Governor-General's Council from 1895 to 1900.

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Rees, *The Real India* (London, 1908), p. 162. In 1906 H. F. Prevost Battersby had written that the English were manufacturing discontent in India by means of education. (H. F. P. Battersby, *India Under Royal Eyes*, p. 444.)

<sup>6</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on July 22nd, 1908. (*Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 738.) See also the speech of Sir Henry Craik (p. 747).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 737. This extract is also quoted in the article "The Free Hindusthan" by "A Loyalist" in *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January 1909, p. 131.

stuff upon which young India fastened and fed”.<sup>1</sup> Rees apparently cherished the belief that in India it was necessary to preach not the doctrine of liberty but the gospel of absolute and blind obedience to authority.

Cromer maintained that the extremely literary character of higher Western education had produced a large number of unemployed demagogues, and that owing to the insufficient attention that had been paid to the spread of elementary education among the masses, the numerous unemployed demagogues had found the best opportunity of propagating their subversive doctrines among the ignorant masses.<sup>2</sup> Lord Lamington fondly hoped that the wide diffusion of elementary education among the Indian masses would enable them to appreciate the benefits of British rule and to reject the revolutionary ideas of political agitators.<sup>3</sup> He further suggested that higher Western education should be given “at its proper cost” so that no “fictitious encouragement” was given to Indians for taking up higher education.<sup>4</sup>

Congressmen agreed with Lord Lamington, though not for exactly the same reasons, about the desirability of a wider diffusion of primary education in India as can be seen from Gokhale’s insistence in 1911 on the passage of an Elementary Education Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council, but they firmly opposed any suggestion of giving higher Western education in India “at its proper cost” which might have the tendency of checking the number of those who had the benefit of having a higher Western education. They denied that the study of the works of English political philosophers, such as Burke, Mill, and Spencer, was in any way responsible for the growth of a revolutionary party in India. Surendranath Banerjea wrote that he regarded Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* as the strongest and the most reasoned protest against revolutions of all kinds.<sup>5</sup> The study of English political history that was so devoid of violent revolutions could not tend to promote a revolutionary mentality among English-educated Indians. If nevertheless a spirit of revolutionary “terrorism” had developed in India,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Debates, 1908*, pp. 644-45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 661.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 142.

it had developed not because of the spread of English education but inspite of it.<sup>1</sup> It may be recalled that in the early years of British rule the spread of English education was partly responsible for weakening the revolutionary sentiment in the country, and for generating in the minds of the educated Indians the idea that political progress should be achieved not by overthrowing British rule, but by working for the liberalisation of that rule by means of constitutional agitation.<sup>2</sup> But though Congressmen generally believed in constitutional methods of agitation, Rash Behari Ghose, in his welcome address to the Congress of 1906, warned England that if she sought to deprive India of her just political rights then the condition of India might become like that of Ireland, or even that of Russia.<sup>3</sup> Next year, in his Congress Presidential Address, he pointed out that dissatisfaction with the administration did not amount to disaffection with the government, and he declared that it was vitally important that the legitimate political aspirations of the educated Indians, who had been fed on the works of Burke and Mill, should be satisfied by giving them a wider voice in the administration of the country.<sup>4</sup>

Minto and Morley could not always agree on the measures that would be appropriate for repressing "sedition". In 1910 Minto said, "I have often wondered whether the centralised political machinery of Great Britain ... could in a case of really dangerous emergency do anything but hamper the hands of those entrusted with the preservation of the distant territories of a mighty empire".<sup>5</sup> The doubt that Minto expressed in the above statement was not a new one. It can be recalled that in 1878 Lytton had written : "I have long believed that the permanent maintenance of a great Empire is incompatible with our present institutions. Either the Empire must go, or the institutions."<sup>6</sup>

It is doubtful whether Minto would have expressed himself as categorically as Lytton. In a letter from India to Morley on

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Nation*, July 13th, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose*, 2nd ed., Madras, pp.22-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 21st, 1910.

<sup>6</sup> *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, ed. Lady Betty Balfour, Vol. II, p. 98. Lord Sydenham also wrote : "Modern democracies cannot rule Empires." (Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, London, 1927, p. 226.)

28th May, 1908, he, however, wrote : “The modern House of Commons is absolutely incapable of understanding Indian humanity ... and is to my mind perhaps the greatest danger to the continuance of our rule in this country.”<sup>1</sup> In a subsequent letter Minto explained that he did not intend to attack parliamentary institutions as such, but he entertained a “doubt as to the competency of the British Parliament, as at present composed” (the Liberal party had a majority in parliament at the time) to deal with Indian questions.<sup>2</sup>

*The Pioneer Mail* wrote that under the influence of “the visionaries, the faddists, and the irresponsible humanitarians of the (Liberal) party” the British parliament underestimated the strength of seditious tendencies in India and hesitated for a long time to sanction the adoption of strong measures in order to repress sedition. It went so far as to write that the parliament of 1906 denounced and despised anything “that savoured of ‘Imperialism’, of what was called ‘bureaucracy’, of coercion and of legal and executive restraint” and stated that it was “one of the most emotional and untried assemblies” that Westminster had seen.<sup>3</sup>

Even the Government of India could not support the adoption of those extreme measures of repression such as the “return to the principles of Lord Lytton’s legislation coupled with a system of licensing of universal application” which *The Pioneer Mail* had suggested.<sup>4</sup> But though Minto did not entertain these extreme ideas of *The Pioneer Mail*, he yet believed that “government by the strong hand”<sup>5</sup> was necessary in the circumstances of India, and that India could not be “governed by the standards of British political requirements.”<sup>6</sup> “(A) crisis”, wrote Minto to Morley on May 28th, 1908, “. . . is . . . certain to come . . . if the Government of India is not given a free hand to rule the country they understand, and if the Members of Parliament and those who are supposed to represent the feeling of the British

<sup>1</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated 8th July, 1908 (*Ibid.*, p. 242).

<sup>3</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, November 11th, 1910.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, June 12th, 1908.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Morley dated May 28th, 1908. (Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, pp. 235, 249.)

<sup>6</sup> Letter dated October 29th, 1907 (*Ibid.*, pp. 162-63).

public continue to disseminate amongst the people of India doctrines which are totally unsuited to their surroundings.”<sup>1</sup> Curzon declared in the House of Lords on 30th June, 1908, that some members of the parliament belonging to “the extreme wing of the Radical Party” by constantly denouncing British rule and by preaching the doctrines of self-government to Indians had contributed to the causes that produced the Indian unrest.<sup>2</sup> He further maintained that the necessity of supplying answers to “fantastic and ignorant questions put in the British House of Commons” caused great trouble and difficulty to the officials in India.<sup>3</sup> If that was so, then surely Morley, the Secretary of State, would not have been unaware of it. Morley said that the task of answering questions in parliament had not taken a great amount of his time or that of his officials, and it does not appear that he accepted the proposition that the effect of asking questions in parliament on Indian affairs was fatal or deleterious.<sup>4</sup>

Many bureaucrats in India desired that the interference of the British parliament in the administration of Indian affairs should be confined within the narrowest possible limits. *The Pioneer Mail*, which expressed the opinion of an important section of the bureaucrats, remarked that the very fact that the House of Commons was deserted on an Indian Budget night was “a testimony to the good sense of the majority of the members”.<sup>5</sup> It showed that the members knew that the management of Indian affairs were in good hands, so that there was no necessity for parliamentary interference. Apparently the paper believed that though the members of parliament were very inadequately informed about Indian conditions,<sup>6</sup> they could yet reasonably

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236. In a speech in London on February 23rd, 1911, Minto said that though in respect of the inauguration of broad lines of policy the government of India must be entirely subservient to the Secretary of State, in the matter of carrying on the daily administration of the country the government of India should be given a free hand. (*Speeches by the Earl of Minto*, 1905-10, pp. 501-2.)

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 619. See also Arthur Crawford, *The Unrest in India*, p. 6 ; and *The Pioneer Mail*, December 2nd, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 619.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 633-34.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 3rd, 1909.

<sup>6</sup> The authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 admitted that discussion of Indian affairs in parliament was “often out of date and ill-informed”. *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 294.

come to the conclusion that India was governed well and not otherwise.

Morley did not believe that a democracy could not govern an empire,<sup>1</sup> and he rejected the theory that the Government of India should be given a free hand to rule India.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out that parliament being ultimately responsible for the government of India, it could not delegate its imperial power and responsibility wholesale to its “agents” in India.

On 26th July, 1911, MacCullum Scott, a member of the House of Commons, said that though both the Russian and the Indian bureaucrats were not responsible to the people, the Indian bureaucrats differed from the Russian bureaucrats in one fundamental respect, that is, they were “responsible to a great democracy across the seas”.<sup>3</sup> If that responsibility was removed then the Indian bureaucracy “would inevitably go the way of all irresponsible bureaucracies”.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the “moderates” might have thought about the system of government that obtained in Russia, about the system of government that existed in India they were clearly of the opinion that the bureaucrats would never concede Indian political demands without pressure from England, and that it would be an evil day if the bureaucrats became the sole arbiter of the destiny of Indians.<sup>5</sup> As regards the “extremists”, we have already seen, that they did not expect political justice either from the British bureaucrats of India or from the members of the British parliament, and they emphatically maintained that for securing political reforms Indians must rely on their own inherent strength and power and not on the supposed liberal instincts of their foreign rulers.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons*, 1911, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar, “The Reform Scheme and the Council Regulations”, *The Indian World*, April-May, 1911, pp. 262-63,

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90, 94-95, 100.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS

By the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century most Congressmen had ceased to expect that the British bureaucrats would support the cause of Indian reform.<sup>1</sup> Some of them, however, believed that British statesmen, and particularly those who belonged to the Liberal party, might support the political demands of Indian reformers.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the active British supporters of the Congress were Liberals and Radicals such as John Bright, Charles Bradlaugh, Allan Octavian Hume, William Wedderburn and others. Surendranath Banerjea, in his 1895 Congress Presidential Address, declared that though Indians had tried not to get involved in British party politics it was clear that most of the Congress sympathisers were Liberals and not Tories.<sup>3</sup>

From the middle of 1895 to the end of 1905 the Tories, in close alliance with the Liberal Unionists, remained in power in Britain. Many Congressmen felt that the Liberal party, which under the leadership of Gladstone had insisted on the rights of the Irish people and had supported the demand for Irish home rule, could have sympathised much more with the political aspirations of Indians than the Tories had done.<sup>4</sup> No important political reform was introduced in the period 1895 to 1905, and Curzon, who was Viceroy in the latter part of this period, did not believe that, during his time, India was ripe for political reforms.<sup>5</sup> *The Bengalee* went so far as to write that just as a Liberal Viceroy, like Ripon, could make Indians forget all the defects and shortcomings of Liberal policy towards India so a

<sup>1</sup> See Gokhale's speech on February 4th, 1907 (*Speeches of the Honourable G. K. Gokhale*, 1st ed., p. 786).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> W. Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerji and A. O. Hume, *A Call to Arms*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120-21.

Conservative Viceroy, like Curzon, could make Indians forget all the good things that the Conservative party might have, in the past, done for India.<sup>1</sup>

In 1903, W. C. Bonnerjee optimistically declared that the return to power of the Liberal party in Britain would, sooner or later, enable Indians to redress all their grievances and help them to acquire a real share in the government of the country.<sup>2</sup> Though some "moderates" expected much sympathy from the Liberal party, Hume asked Indians not to forget that the Liberals would not do justice for India, simply because it was justice, unless Indians vigorously and persistently agitated for their just political rights.<sup>3</sup>

The "moderates" argued that the Liberals would concede political reforms to Indians less reluctantly than the Conservatives. In July 1905, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta emphatically declared that it was to the Liberal party that Indian reformers should look for support.<sup>4</sup> This opinion was shared by R. N. Mudholkar who remembered that though the delegates to Britain that were appointed by the 1889 Congress had addressed many Liberal meetings, in which they were well received, they could hardly get a hearing from a Conservative audience.<sup>5</sup> Sir William Wedderburn, an old Liberal who for years had worked in Britain to advance the Congress cause, was also of the opinion that it was not from the Conservatives but from the Liberals, Labourites and Home Rulers that Congressmen could get real support for their political demands.<sup>6</sup>

When the Liberal party came to power in Britain at the end of 1905, Morley became the Secretary of State. "Large numbers of educated men in this country", said Gokhale, in December 1905, in his Congress Presidential Address, "feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles

<sup>1</sup> "India and the English Political Parties", *The Bengalee*, May 24th, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerji and A. O. Hume, *A Call to Arms*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>4</sup> "India and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, July, 1905, p. 460.

<sup>5</sup> R. N. Mudholkar, "India and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, September, 1905, pp. 607-8. Eardley Norton, "India and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, October, 1905, p. 679.

<sup>6</sup> William Wedderburn, "India and English Party Politics", *The Indian Review*, October, 1905, p. 678.

as it had never hoped or trembled before. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone, — will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he too succumb to the influences of the India Office around him and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster?"<sup>1</sup>

Though Morley wrote that the Liberal party "was least likely to quarrel with abstract catchwords in the rising Indian movement",<sup>2</sup> he himself could not share the faith of Congressmen about the desirability of gradually introducing English parliamentary institutions into India for the ultimate establishment of a colonial form of self-government. In August 1906, he frankly told Gokhale that he believed that for many a day to come Gokhale's hope that India would attain a colonial form of self-government would remain a mere dream.<sup>3</sup> On 23rd February, 1909, during the second reading of the Morley-Minto Reform Bill, he expressed the hope that the reforms might win over those Indian nationalists who desired a colonial form of self-government on the side of those who entertained no such desire, but who would be content if only they were admitted to a fair and workable cooperation in the running of the administration.<sup>4</sup> Earl Percy doubted whether Morley's reforms would serve any such purpose.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of the Morley-Minto reforms strengthened the belief of the "moderates" that, through constitutional agitation, the political institutions in India could gradually be liberalised so that ultimately a colonial form of self-government could be established. If the reforms were not introduced some of the "moderates", losing faith in constitutionalism might have joined the ranks of the "extremists", who believed in the ideal of *Swaraj* as distinct from the ideal of colonial self-government.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Speech on April 1st, 1909 (*Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1909*, pp. 121-22).

<sup>6</sup> Surendranath Banerjea's speech in the 1908 Congress shows that the proposed reforms strengthened the faith of the "moderates" in the method of constitutionalism. (*Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*,

Morley repudiated the ideal of democracy for India. He argued that Liberalism did not uphold the theory that because parliamentary self-government was good for Britain it was equally good for a backward country, such as India,<sup>1</sup> which was passing through a "transition from the fifth European century in some parts in slow, uneven stages, up to the twentieth".<sup>2</sup> He could not foresee a time when India would cease to be a "theatre of absolute and personal government".<sup>3</sup> Minto also maintained that the introduction of representative government in India "would be a Western importation unnatural to Eastern tastes".<sup>4</sup>

Congressmen were not daunted by the difficulties that stood in the way of the development of English parliamentary institutions in India, and they unhesitatingly believed that India would not take as much time as it took Britain to evolve parliamentary institutions. *The Bengalee* wrote that England by first developing parliamentary institutions had made it easier for other nations to develop such institutions.<sup>5</sup> It maintained that though there were many people in India whose mental development was at the stage of the fifth European century when Macaulay wrote, some of them had already been imbued with the spirit of twentieth century Europe. Not even a hundred years separated Macaulay's time from Morley's and "yet how momentous has been the transformation which European civilisation and European education working upon the Indian soil has brought about in India!"<sup>6</sup> *The Bengalee* argued that it was no longer possible to maintain the proposition that Oriental peoples, unlike the Occidental nations, were not fit for self-government, because towards the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth-century there had developed constitutional and democratic

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p. 48). See also Rash Behari Ghose's speech in the 1908 Congress (*Ibid.* pp. 35-37).

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Speech in the House of Commons on June 6th, 1907. (*Indian Debates*, 1907, p. 179.)

<sup>4</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> *The Bengalee*, January 6th, 1909, and August 20th, 1908.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, See also N. H. Setalvad, "India and Western Institutions", *The Hindustan Review*, September, 1908, pp. 247-48 ; S.N. Ray, "Proposed Council Reforms and Self-Government", *The Indian World*, May, 1908, p. 418.

movements in Oriental countries, such as Japan, Persia and China.<sup>1</sup>

But when many Asian countries were stirred with a new spirit for self-government Morley was not alone in putting no limitation of time on his repudiation of democracy for India. "It seems to be much better to lay it down at the outset . . ." said Earl Percy on 6th June, 1907, "that however true in the abstract it may be to say, as the Prime Minister said last year — and a most unfortunate observation I think it was — "that good government is no substitute for self-government", so far as India, at all events, is concerned, it is good government and not self-government that we have in view".<sup>2</sup> In a paper on "Self-Government for India" that Gokhale read at a meeting of the East India Association on July 1906, he approvingly quoted the above remark of Campbell-Bannerman, the British Prime Minister. In a discussion that followed the reading of the paper Theodore Morison said that the aim of British policy in India should be not merely good government but also self-government.<sup>3</sup> Many Anglo-Indian officials did not share this advanced viewpoint of Morison. S. S. Thorburn, a retired civil servant, characterised the above remark of Campbell-Bannerman as "a vote-catching observation" and he argued that self-government in India would mean government by inefficient and unenlightened people.<sup>4</sup> On October 1907, J. D. Rees asserted amidst applause, in a meeting of the East India Association, that no subject of the British Crown had the right of discussing any theory according to which Indians were to attain ultimate self-government.<sup>5</sup> "I think I may assume" he said, with confident dogmatism, "that India, which is our greatest possession, is to be retained to all time, so far as we can foresee".<sup>6</sup>

*The Bengalee* pointedly drew attention to the curious pheno-

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, July 29th and August 2nd, 1908. See also a speech of Surendranath Banerjea in the 1908 Congress (*Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 48).

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1907, pp. 191-92.

<sup>3</sup> *The Journal of the East India Association*, October, 1906, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> See discussion on J. B. Pennington's paper on "Indian Administration by an old Officer" in *The Journal of The East India Association*, October 1907, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

mena that when some of the progressive peoples of Asia were genuinely enthusiastic about the political ideals of democratic self-government evolved by the genius of England and France, some Englishmen upheld the theory of despotic and benevolent imperialism and regarded with doubt and distrust the possibility of the development of self-governing democratic institutions in India.<sup>1</sup>

Though Morley did not agree with the ultimate political aims of Congressmen, he yet believed that it was essential that political concessions or reforms should be granted to Indians.<sup>2</sup> In a speech in the House of Lords on February 23rd, 1909, Curzon said that when he was Viceroy political concessions were not in the field, but he conceded that in the last few years the whole political situation had changed, and that, therefore, he would try, as far as possible, to look at the Indian situation through Morley's spectacles.<sup>3</sup>

Morley favoured political reforms and he pointed out that after the introduction of Occidental education the establishment of a limited measure of Occidental political machinery could not be avoided.<sup>4</sup> Critics, such as J. D. Rees, declared that Occidental political institutions were demanded only by a small minority of English-educated class, and that India should be governed aristocratically and not according to English democratic ideas.<sup>5</sup> Rees suggested that the powers of the hereditary leaders of Indian society should be confirmed and increased. Colonel L. J. H. Grey warned the government against transferring any power to the English-educated and Europe-returned talkers and writers of Presidency towns, and advised it to rule

<sup>1</sup> *The Bengalee*, August 1st, August 11th, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Speech in the House of Lords, February 23rd, 1909. (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 121.)

<sup>3</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Lords, 1909*, p. 25. In the same speech, however, Curzon also said that he believed that the mass of the Indian people wanted good government and not representative government, and that they identified good government with government by Englishmen (p. 24).

<sup>4</sup> Speech in the House of Lords, February 23rd, 1909. (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 122.)

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Rees, *The Real India* (London, 1908), pp. 213, 230. See also George Adams, "Indian Reform : In which Direction?", *The Empire Review*, September, 1908, pp. 111, 116.

India with the help of the great ruling chiefs, the provincial nobility and the landed gentry.<sup>1</sup> F. H. Barrow, a retired civil servant, said that the government could give greater political power to the landholding and commercial classes, who were loyal to British rule, and that it could rely very little on the support of the English-educated professional class.<sup>2</sup> Writing on February 1909, Justice Beaman remarked that the educated Indians were mostly disloyal, and that it could well be doubted whether they could reasonably ask for any political concession or reform.<sup>3</sup>

Morley did not believe that the educated class was, on the whole, seditious or that it would be wise to resist the legitimate political aspirations of that class by saying that it constituted only a microscopic minority of India's total population. He said that though the educated section of the people was small it would be fatally idle to believe that it did not count. "This educated section", he declared on 6th June, 1907, "makes all the difference, is making and will make all the difference."<sup>4</sup> In the same strain as Morley, Montagu, Under-Secretary of State for India, said, in the House of Commons on 26th July, 1910, that it was true that unrest in India was confined to a small fraction of the people, but when the vast mass of the illiterate people had little or no ideas on politics, then the opinions of the educated classes were "the most prominent factor in the situation".<sup>5</sup> Similarly Ramsay Macdonald declared in the House of Commons on 28th April, 1910, that the problem in India was not chiefly the problem of dealing with the vast mass of ignorant peasantry who ceaselessly toiled in the fields and who had no political aspirations, it was rather the problem of dealing with that small group of educated Indians who, while they retained their fundamental Eastern characteristics, were trained in Western political ideals and sought to introduce Western political institu-

<sup>1</sup> L. J. H. Grey, *The India of the Future* (London, 1907), pp. 17-19, 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> F. H. Barrow, "Hinduism and Unrest in India", *The Empire Review*, September, 1909, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Beaman, "The Situation in India", *The Empire Review*, February, 1909, pp. 63-65.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Debates*, 1907, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1910*, p. 171.

tions into India.<sup>1</sup> Congressmen enthusiastically welcomed these remarks.<sup>2</sup>

Morley admitted that it was no longer possible to continue to govern India by a cast-iron bureaucracy<sup>3</sup> and he must have realised that the government would have to deal with the Congress movement. Minto while conceding that the government would have to make friends with the best type of Congressmen, yet asserted that there was much in the Congress movement that was absolutely disloyal.<sup>4</sup> On June 27th, 1906, he wrote that Congressmen, who could easily imitate Western political methods, had secured for their political utterances much greater importance in Britain than they ever could aspire to obtain in India.<sup>5</sup> He believed that the most important factor with which the government had to deal was "not impossible Congress ambitions".<sup>6</sup> He desired to satisfy the aspirations of big landowners and others who wanted Indians to have a greater share in the highest councils of the government but who were not enthusiastic about the Congress demand for the increase of representative government in India. On May 28th, 1906, he wrote to Morley : "I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we find a solution in the Council of Princes, or in an elaboration of that idea ; a Privy Council not only of Native Rulers, but of a few other big men . . . we should get (from them) different ideas from those of Congress."<sup>7</sup>

It was probably in pursuance of the above idea that the government of India suggested the formation of an Imperial Advisory Council to be composed of ruling chiefs and territorial magnates.<sup>8</sup> and of provincial advisory councils to be composed of substantial

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98. See also C. J. O' Donnell, "Unrest in India : The Cause and the Remedy", *The Empire Review*, October, 1908, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 809. See also R. S. Bajpai, "India under the Present Liberal Government", *The Asiatic Review*, May, 1914, p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> Morley's letter to Minto dated June 6th, 1906 (*Morley, Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 173).

<sup>4</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Morley dated February 27th, 1907 (*Ibid.*, p. 104).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Circular from the Government of India to Local Governments and Administrations, dated August 24th, 1907 (Cd. 3710), 1907, para. 5.

landholders, representatives of the smaller landholders, of industry, commerce, capital and also of the professional classes.<sup>1</sup> These advisory councils would have borne not the slightest resemblance to the English parliament. They were to be purely consultative bodies. The advisers could be consulted individually as well as collectively, and consultations as a general rule were to be private and confidential.<sup>2</sup>

The undemocratic Ruling Chiefs objected to a mixed Imperial Advisory Council on the ground that they would have to sit with the subjects of the British Government who were "necessarily of an inferior status".<sup>3</sup> Ultimately the idea of creating advisory councils were dropped.<sup>4</sup> The dropping of the idea pleased Congressmen for they could easily see that such councils would have provided a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class.<sup>5</sup>

In the reform proposals suggested by the government of India it was stated that the operation of the quasi-elective system since 1893 had resulted in an excessive representative of the professional middle classes,<sup>6</sup> and that "the requisite counterpoise to their excessive influence" could be found by the creation of an "additional electorate recruited from landed and monied classes".<sup>7</sup> Congressmen pointed out that the very fact that few landlords but many members of the professional classes had been elected to the councils showed that the professional classes had a greater representative character than the landed classes.

The amount of representation granted to the landlords by the Morley-Minto reforms was considered by Congressmen to be excessive,<sup>8</sup> and many of them also criticised the provision for

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, paras, 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Proposals of the Government of India, dated October 1st, 1908 (Cd. 4426) 1908, paras. 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 6; Dispatch of the Secretary of State, dated November 27th, 1908 (Cd. 4426) 1908, para. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 808.

<sup>6</sup> Proposals of the Government of India, October 1st, 1908 (Cd. 4426) 1908, para. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Circular of the Government of India, August 24th, 1907 (Cd. 3710) 1907, para. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress*, p. 24.

the separate representation of the landlords.<sup>1</sup> Pandit B. N. Dhar pointed out that the landlords were an extremely conservative force.<sup>2</sup> "You want in the Councils", he said, "men who are educated, . . . who have the intelligence to appreciate the ideals of British civilisation and British government, and who alone are suited by their training to help the government in moulding our institutions according to the needs of the new times. The landed magnates are at least a conservative force—not in the sense in which that phrase is applicable to the landlord class in England, which is educated, intelligent and conversant with public affairs — but a body of men who are backward in knowledge and wedded to retrospective habits of thought, and whose golden age lies behind the mists of the past."<sup>3</sup>

The Morley-Minto reforms dispensed with official majorities in the provincial legislative councils.<sup>4</sup> J. D. Rees commented that the democrats in Britain, by approving of the reforms, that provided for the creation in the provincial councils of non-official majorities, which were to be largely composed of landlords and the professional or English-educated middle class, showed that they had failed to realise the fact that the interests of the masses could only be protected by the British rulers of India and that those interests would suffer under the rule of the English-educated middle class.<sup>5</sup> Sir Bampfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal, gave expression to the same idea by saying that the reforms meant the sacrifice of philanthropy to politics.<sup>6</sup> Curzon also believed that the liberalisation of the councils effected by the Morley-Minto reforms would have some harmful consequences. "I am under the

<sup>1</sup> See a speech of Pandit Malaviya on January 24th, 1911 (*The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India : April 1910 to March 1911*, p. 136). Gokhale, however, was not opposed to the separate representation of landlords (*Ibid.*, p. 146).

<sup>2</sup> B. N. Dhar, "The Reform Scheme and the Councils Regulation", *The Indian World*, April-May, 1911, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> This was done at the suggestion of Morley. See Dispatch of the Secretary of State, dated November 27th, 1908 (Cd. 4426) 1908, para. 18.

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Rees, *Modern India*, pp. 187, 190.

<sup>6</sup> B. Fuller, "Quo Vadis? A Prospect in Indian Politics", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, April, 1909, p. 712 ; See also Fuller's *Studies of Indian Life and Sentiment*, p. 247, and *The Empire of India*, pp. 283-85,

strong opinion", he said on February 23rd, 1909, "that as government in India becomes more and more Parliamentary — as will be the inevitable result (of the reforms) — so it will become less beneficent to the poorer classes of the population".<sup>1</sup>

The above criticisms were based on the peculiar notion that the rule of the Indian professional class was likely to be more oppressive or less beneficent than the rule of the foreign bureaucrats. In any case, the Morley-Minto reforms did not transfer the government of India to the hands of the English-educated middle class. *The Madras Mail*, an Anglo-Indian paper, rightly pointed out that the abolition of official majorities in the provincial councils would not, in all probability, result in any serious danger to the administration, because, firstly, it was not likely that all the non-official members (some of whom were not elected, but were only nominated by the government)<sup>2</sup> would combine against the government, and, secondly, because the fate of measures were not finally settled in the provincial legislatures.<sup>3</sup> In the Imperial Legislative Council, as distinguished from the provincial councils, a substantial official majority was retained for Morley insisted that that was necessary for maintaining the undisputed supremacy of the British parliament over Indian affairs.<sup>4</sup>

The Morley-Minto reforms conceded to the members of the legislative councils the right of asking supplementary questions and the right of moving resolutions on all matters including the budget. A. J. Balfour stated that by asking supplementary questions Indian councillors would be able to attack and embarrass the officials. Englishmen, he continued, being brought up in the parliamentary atmosphere, did not realise how difficult it was to defend an administration against those who wanted to criticise it by the use of all the parliamentary debating dialectics.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Lords, 1909*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> B. N. Dhar, in his 1911 Congress Presidential Address, said that elective majorities should be introduced in all the provincial councils (*Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress*, p. 26).

<sup>3</sup> "Reforms in the Councils", *The Madras Weekly Mail*, December 24th, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> Dispatch of the Secretary of State, dated November 27th, 1908 (Cd. 4426) 1908, para. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Speech on April 1st, 1909 (*Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons*,

Further, criticism in India was likely to be irresponsible, because the opposition party in India, unlike the opposition party in Britain, could not be subdued by the calming reflection that one day it might come to power and then it would have to put into practice all the lofty principles on the basis of which it had criticised the previous government. Balfour could not understand the propriety of making the Indian legislative councils the mimics of all the worst and most laborious parts of British parliamentary procedure so that "some ingenious native lawyer whose delight and pleasure, and perhaps whose road to fame, and it may be to income" was to attack and embarrass the Indian administration was given an opportunity to satisfy his desires.<sup>1</sup> History has proved that Balfour's apprehensions were unfounded. "It cannot be said", remarked the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, "that the right of interrogation has been abused".<sup>2</sup>

Separate electorates for Muslims, which were demanded by many Muslim leaders, were introduced by the Morley-Minto reforms. On September 22nd, 1893, in a letter to *The Pioneer* Saiyid Ahmed Khan, the muslim leader, said that after a study of John Stuart Mill's views on representative government and after much reflection he had been convinced that representative government, which was entirely regulated by the majority of votes, could only be successful in a country which was homogeneous in point of "race, religion, social manners, customs, economical conditions and political tradition of history".<sup>3</sup> He maintained that as there existed no such homogeneity in India, the interests of all the peoples of India, and particularly that of the Muslims, would suffer if Western representative institutions were introduced.<sup>4</sup>

In 1896 when Saiyid Ahmed and Theodore Beck drew up a paper on behalf of the Muslim Anglo-Oriental Defence Association, they said that it would be useless and foolish to demand

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1909, pp. 164-66). See also Earl of Ronaldshay's *An Eastern Miscellany*, (London, 1911), p. 214.

<sup>1</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs: House of Commons, 1909*, pp. 166-67. Curzon's criticism of the grant of the right of asking supplementary questions was somewhat similar to that of Balfour's (*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29).

<sup>2</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, October 5th, 1893,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

that the elective system, which was introduced in 1893, should be abolished, for such a proposal would excite the opposition of the Hindus and would be received unfavourably in England.<sup>1</sup> They, however, asserted that as a Catholic member chosen by a Protestant constituency in Ireland would not represent the true Catholic interests so a Congressite Muslim elected by a predominantly Hindu constituency would, in no way, represent the true interests of the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> They suggested that the electors of Muslim councillors should consist of Muslims only.<sup>3</sup>

On October 1st, 1906, an important Muslim deputation presented an address to Minto.<sup>4</sup> The address stated that representative institutions of the Western type were new to India, that great care and caution was necessary to see that the introduction of such institutions did not place Muslim "national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority".<sup>5</sup> It declared that because British rulers had, in pursuance of their political instincts, given representative institutions of the European type an increasingly important place in the government of the country the Muslims could not hold aloof from such institutions, but it maintained that in order to prevent the Muslims from being reduced to an ineffective minority in the reformed councils it was necessary that the amount of Muslim representation should be determined not merely on the basis of their numerical strength in the country and that only Muslims should be allowed to choose Muslim members of the councils.<sup>6</sup>

Minto agreed that the claim that the position of the Muslims should be estimated not merely on the basis of their numerical strength but on the basis of the political importance of the Muslim community and the service it had rendered to the British empire was a just claim.<sup>7</sup> He assured the Muslims that their political rights as a community would be safeguarded in any reform plan, and he affirmed that any electoral representation which aimed at giving a merely personal enfranchisement, regardless of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Pioneer Mail*, December 24th, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The full text of the address is given in, "Mahomedans and the State", *The Pioneer Mail*, October 5th, 1906.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Speeches by the Earl of Minto*, pp. 69-70.

beliefs and traditions of the communities of India, was bound to be utterly unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup>

The reform proposals suggested by the Government of India on October 1st, 1908, were drawn on the assumption that because the peoples of India could not be compared with any homogeneous community of the West, the Western system of personal and territorial enfranchisement was not suited to India, and that representation in India could only be given on the basis of classes and interests.<sup>2</sup> The Government of India recommended that part of the representation of the Muslims should be provided through separate electorates.<sup>3</sup>

In a dispatch on November 27th, 1908, the Secretary of State had, on the other hand, tentatively suggested the creation of joint electoral colleges.<sup>4</sup> Many Congressmen welcomed this scheme and opposed the alternative scheme of creating separate electorates for Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Soon after the latter scheme was suggested on October 1st, 1906, by the Muslim deputation to Minto, *The Bengalee* had pointed out that the adoption of this scheme would "lay the axe at the root of the growing conception of a future Indian nationality".<sup>6</sup> On March 10th, 1908, R. C. Dutt wrote that the creation of electorates on the basis of creeds would teach Indians "to disunite, to vote according to religion, to nurse sectional differences, and to rekindle dying hatreds and jealousies".<sup>7</sup> By voting through separate electorates men tended to think not in terms of the nation, but of their separate creeds. The opposite result could, perhaps, have been obtained by the creation of joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Morley also agreed that the Muslims should be given "a number of seats somewhat in excess of their numerical strength." (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 126). Some "weightage" to the Muslims was given by the Morley-Minto reforms.

<sup>2</sup> See *Proposals of the Government of India* (Cd. 4426) 1908, paras. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Dispatch of the Secretary of State (Cd. 4426) 1908, paras. 12-14.

<sup>5</sup> See Malaviya's 1909 Congress Presidential Address (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 810) ; Bishan Narayan Dhar, "The Reform Scheme and the Councils Regulations", *The Indian World*, April-May, 1911, pp. 269, 274 ; *The Indian World*, February-March, 1909, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> "The Hindu-Muslim Question", *The Bengalee*, October 9th, 1909.

<sup>7</sup> *East India* (Advisory and Legislative Councils) Vol. II, Part II. Enclosure XXIX (Cd. 4436) 1908, para. 785.

The establishment of separate electorates, however, became a precedent and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms continued the system, "How can we say to them (the Muslims)", asked the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, "that we regard the decision of 1909 as mistaken, that its retention is incompatible with progress towards responsible government, that its reversal will eventually be to their benefit ; and that for these reasons we have decided to go back on it?"<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important reforms introduced by Morley and Minto was the appointment of an Indian in the Governor-General's Executive Council. On June 15th, 1906, Morley wrote to Minto that he did not think that it would be possible to appoint an Indian in the Governor-General's Council and remarked that the appointment of an Indian would frighten "that nervous personage ... the Anglo-Indian."<sup>2</sup> On July 5th, 1906, Minto wrote to Morley that though he had often been attracted to the idea of appointing an Indian to his Council, he had felt that it would be premature to make any definite proposal about it.<sup>3</sup> Early in 1907 Minto had definitely decided in favour of appointing an Indian.<sup>4</sup> But Minto's Council was opposed to the idea. On February 27th, 1907, Minto wrote : "The reasons against it stated by Members of Council are generally narrow, based almost entirely on the assumption that it is impossible to trust a Native in a position of great responsibility, and that the appointment of a Native Member is simply a concession to Congress agitation."<sup>5</sup> However, in a dispatch to the Secretary of State in April 1907, the Government of India definitely advocated the proposal of appointing an Indian member.<sup>6</sup> Though Morley supported the proposal, his Council was opposed to it.<sup>7</sup>

In March 1907, Morley casually discussed the question of appointing an Indian member to his Council with Austen Chamberlain. Partly out of racial prejudices Chamberlain was opposed to the idea. He argued that the whole British position

<sup>1</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103-4.

<sup>6</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77.

in India was based on the assumption that the British were different from the Indians, "We could not", he said, "admit equality. White men could not and ought not to submit to coloured rule . . . ." <sup>1</sup> However in August 1907, Morley took a bold step by appointing two Indians to his Council.

Though the Conservative Viceroy and the Liberal Secretary of State agreed that it was desirable to appoint an Indian in the Viceroy's Council, a strong body of opinion in England was opposed to this proposal. <sup>2</sup> On March 12th, 1909, King Edward VII wrote to Morley that he believed that such an appointment was "fraught with the greatest danger to the maintenance of the Indian empire under British rule". <sup>3</sup> In a letter on March 17th, 1909, Morley drew the attention of the King to the promise given by Queen Victoria in 1858 that race or colour should not be a bar to the appointment of any Indian to government offices. <sup>4</sup> In a marginal comment to Morley's letter the King wrote that he could not see why the name of Queen Victoria was brought in and he did not think that the Queen would have approved of the appointment of an Indian member. <sup>5</sup>

Lord MacDonnell, who had held charge of three provinces, said in the House of Lords on February 23rd, 1909, that the admission of an Indian in the Viceroy's Council would mean "the introduction of a foreign element" in the Council. He even believed that the princes of India and the majority of the Indian people would regard an Indian in the Council as a foreign element. <sup>6</sup> Curzon similarly said that Indians would not believe

<sup>1</sup> A. Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside : An Epistolary Chronicle*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> In June, 1907, Sir Charles Elliott, who had governed Bengal from 1890 to 1895, argued against the idea of appointing an Indian member. (Elliott, "The Unrest in India", *The Empire Review*, June, 1907 p. 389.)

<sup>3</sup> Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII : A Biography*, Vol. II, p. 385.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* The King argued that the Indian princes would object to the appointment of a commoner of inferior birth, that the Muslims would object if only a Hindu was appointed, that the Indian member might reveal to his countrymen important state secrets discussed in the Council, and that the appointment of an Indian would become a precedent so that future Viceroys might find it extremely difficult to avoid appointing an Indian to the Viceroy's Council. (*Ibid.*, pp. 387-88.)

<sup>6</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Lords, 1909*, p. 48. On April 1st, 1909, Minto wrote to Morley : "Sinha's appointment has been splendidly

that any of the countrymen was capable of that detachment and impartiality which, he thought, had in the past characterised the British members of the Viceroy's Council. He claimed that if a plebiscite was taken then a large majority of Indians would vote against the admission of Indians in the Viceroy's Council.<sup>1</sup> Lord Lansdowne, another ex-Viceroy, was in agreement with Curzon about the result of such a plebiscite.<sup>2</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Cromer, the great imperialist, favoured the appointment of an Indian. He rightly described India to be almost the only country where education had advanced but which was governed by non-resident foreigners, and he wisely suggested that closer association of Indians with the administration of their country was most essential.<sup>3</sup>

Congressmen enthusiastically welcomed the appointment of an Indian in the Viceroy's Council.<sup>4</sup> R. N. Mudholkar, in his 1912 Congress Presidential Address, argued that after Curzon's pronouncement in 1904 that the highest ranks of civil employment should generally be reserved for Englishmen "the admission of Indians into the Executive Government ... was very much like the introduction of a new principle."<sup>5</sup>

S. P. Sinha, the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Council, proved that there was no truth in the assertion that Indians were not qualified to hold high offices in the Government. Minto bore testimony to the able assistance he had received from Sinha, and publicly thanked him for "the absolute fairness and broad-minded patriotism" which had characterised any advice that Sinha had offered him.<sup>6</sup>

In December 1908, the Congress expressed its deep and general satisfaction with the reform proposals that were formulated in Morley's dispatch of November 27th, 1908.<sup>7</sup> In December

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received." (Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 287). On April 28th, 1909, Lady Minto wrote in her Journal: "There has been a remarkable demonstration in favour of Mr. Sinha throughout India, ..." (*Ibid.*, p. 291.)

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 1909, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 811.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Speech on October 14th, 1910 (*Speeches by the Earl of Minto*, p. 417).

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 46.

1909, the Congress, while appreciating the measure of reform introduced by the Indian Councils Act of 1909, placed on record its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of communal electorates and also expressed its regret that the Regulations framed under the Act by the Government of India were not conceived in that liberal spirit which had inspired Morley's dispatch of the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

The Regulations gave rise to much controversy. We shall refer only to the controversy that arose on the question of how much power the Government of India should have of disallowing the candidature of any person seeking election to the legislative councils. Congressmen, remembering the names of important deportees, such as Lajpat Rai and Krishna Kumar Mitra, were particularly insistent that deportees should not be disqualified. They argued that when one Michael Davitt, who had once been convicted of sedition, could be allowed to be a member of the British parliament and when John Burns, who had once been sentenced to six weeks imprisonment, could afterwards become a Cabinet Minister in Britain there existed no reason why Indian nationalist leaders whom the Government had once deported should be prevented from becoming members of the Indian legislative councils.<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee* wrote that the exclusion of deportees was in entire conflict with the spirit of English political practice, and that it was fundamentally wrong in principle because it restricted the right of the electors to choose whomsoever they pleased as their representatives in the councils.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of attaching political disqualification to deportees outraged the Liberal conscience of Morley. In a telegram to Minto on April 19th, 1909, he said that neither he nor the Liberal government could see any justification for sanctioning any Regulation under which "the fact of a man having been deported shall, after his release, be itself a ground for disqualifying him".<sup>4</sup>

But Minto asserted that whereas a released political prisoner in England, if he was elected to the House of Commons, did not endanger the security of the English constitution, the election

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Fourth Indian National Congress*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bengalee*, February 28th, 1909; Pandit Malaviya's address in the 1909 Congress (*Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, pp. 823-24).

<sup>3</sup> *The Bengalee*, February 28th, 1909.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, pp. 301-2.

of an Indian deportee, such as Lajpat Rai, would "set India in a blaze".<sup>1</sup> In a telegram to Morley on May 3rd, 1909, he stated that the election of a deportee to any of the Indian legislative councils would bring discredit to British administration and lower its prestige.<sup>2</sup>

However, already in April 1909, Hobhouse, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, announced on behalf of the British government that though the government of India would have a general power of disallowing the candidature of persons, deported or not, whose election would, in the opinion of the Government of India, be contrary to public interests, deportees as such would not be disqualified.<sup>3</sup> This was a very wide power and Congressmen took strong objection to allowing the Government of India the right to exercise this power.<sup>4</sup> This wide power offered, as Minto put it, "a law of political restraint exactly parallel to the law of personal restraint contained in the Regulations of 1818,..."<sup>5</sup> Moreley, however, cautioned Minto that this power should be very charily used, and he asked him to remember that the Government of India shall bear full parliamentary responsibility for the exercise of this power.<sup>6</sup>

Congressmen criticised various features of the Morley-Minto reforms, but yet they considered them as a step towards the development of parliamentary institutions. Surendranath Banerjea claimed that Morley would stand forth in history as the Simon de Montfort of the future parliament of India.<sup>7</sup> But Morley himself declared that he would have had nothing to do with the reforms if it could be said that they would directly or necessarily lead up to the establishment of a parliamentary

<sup>1</sup> John Buchan, *Lord Minto : A Memoir*, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1909*, p. 222. Minto, of course, protested to Morley that this announcement meant a disregard of the opinions of the Government of India. Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Malaviya's Presidential Address (*Report of the Twenty-Fourth Indian National Congress*, p. 29).

<sup>5</sup> Lady Minto, *India : Minto and Morley*, p. 304.

<sup>6</sup> Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 320.

<sup>7</sup> Speech on December 29th, 1908 (*Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 49).

form of government.<sup>1</sup> Morley, however, was not opposed to the introduction of English representative institutions into India. While advocating the reform proposals for the liberalisation of the legislative councils he had argued that after the establishment of Occidental education the introduction of a limited measure of Occidental political institutions could not be avoided.<sup>2</sup> It appears that while he was willing to give Indians some influence over the government by making the legislative councils more representative, he was not prepared to give them any power over the government by introducing responsible or parliamentary government under which the popular legislative would be able to control the executive authority. But after non-official majorities in the provincial councils were introduced by the Morley-Minto reforms it was almost inevitable that, with the development of Indian nationalism, elected majorities would have to be conceded, and it was certain that the popularly elected legislatures would have demanded the right not of influencing but of actually controlling the policies of the executive. "You want", said R. N. Mudholkar in his 1912 Congress Presidential Address, "a Parliamentary form of Government, your legislative Councils are even now Parliaments *in embryo*. It rests with your representatives to secure their full growth."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Lords, December 17th, 1908 (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 127 above.

<sup>3</sup> *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Second Series, p. 73.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE CONGRESS DEMAND FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT AND THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

THE MORLEY-MINTO reforms strengthened the desire of Congressmen for greater self-government. Their hopes for self-government were further raised as a result of a dispatch of the Government of India dated August 25th, 1911, in which it was stated that in order to meet the just demands of Indians for a greater share in the government of the country, without impairing the ultimate supremacy of the Governor-General-in-Council, which was essential for the continued maintenance of British rule, it was necessary to give the provinces a larger measure of self-government. / The Congress interpreted this dispatch to mean not only that the provinces would be less controlled by the centre, but also that there would be more popular control over provincial administrations.<sup>2</sup> Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, explained that the dispatch had merely advocated a policy of giving more power to the local governments and this, he correctly maintained, was not a new policy.<sup>3</sup> It appears that Crewe did not think that local self-government necessarily implied self-government by Indians. Referring to certain Indian statesmen who hoped that "something approaching the self-government enjoyed by those Colonies which have of late years received the name of Dominion" could be introduced into India, he remarked, "I say quite frankly that I see no future for India on those lines."<sup>4</sup> *The Pioneer Mail* was naturally happy at this authoritative declaration of "what was certainly not to be the trend of British

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India Dispatch*, August 25th, 1911 (Cd. 5979) 1911, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, pp. 18-19, 88-94. See also *The Bengalee*, July 4th, 1912 : "Paragraph 3 of the Dispatch" ; G. A. Natesan, *What India Wants*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> Speech on June 24th, 1912 (*Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Lords, 1912*, p. 210).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

policy in India.”<sup>1</sup> But *The Bengalee* was quick to point out that in spite of Crewe’s declaration Indian nationalists would persist in demanding colonial self-government and that they would ultimately attain it.<sup>2</sup>

In suggesting a scheme of political reform the 1912 Congress demanded a non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Councils and a majority of elected members in all provincial councils.<sup>3</sup> While asking for reforms how greatly and excessively the Congress was dominated by English influences can be seen from the fact that the reform scheme of the 1912 Congress contained the curious clause that “a person ignorant of English should be held ineligible for membership” of the councils.<sup>4</sup>

The great war stimulated Congress aspirations for self-government. On December 28th, 1914, Bhupendranath Basu, in his Congress Presidential Address, optimistically declared that the war in Europe would end the medieval domination of one man over many, of one nation over another; and he confidently asserted that the ideals of freedom and of liberty that were powerfully stirring the minds of European peoples could no longer be shut out of India.<sup>5</sup>

In the next Congress, S. P. Sinha, the President, said that the goal of Indian nationalists could best be described in Abraham Lincoln’s words as “government of the people, for the people, and by the people”<sup>6</sup> but he also maintained that this goal could not be immediately realised.<sup>7</sup> Borrowing an analogy from Edwin Bevan’s book, *Indian Nationalism*<sup>8</sup>, Sinha described India as a patient whose fractured limbs were in splints and bandages. India, therefore, could not dispense with the services of the British who played the part of the doctor.<sup>9</sup>

Annie Besant took objection to this analogy, “India,” she declared, “is no sick man. She is a giant who was asleep and

<sup>1</sup> “Lord Crewe and the Future of Indian Administration”, *The Pioneer Mail*, July 5th, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> “Dream of Provincial Autonomy”, *The Bengalee*, July 3rd, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress*, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> E. Bevan, *Indian Nationalism*, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress*, p. 27.

who is now awake".<sup>1</sup> Some time after the 1915 Congress Besant started a Home Rule League. Possibly it was the Irish home rule movement that suggested to her the idea of starting a similar movement in India. She chose the expression "home rule" instead of the word "self-government" because the English people were more familiar with the former expression.<sup>2</sup> She started a vigorous campaign for home rule through *The Commonwealth* whose "stirring articles and outspoken directness" was, she wrote, "new in Indian politics. It was an English political agitation."<sup>3</sup> Early in 1915 Besant also started a "Madras parliament," because she clearly realised that those who wanted democratic home rule should familiarise themselves with parliamentary procedures and must devote themselves assiduously to the study of Indian national problems. The Madras parliament was a debating society which observed, as far as possible, English parliamentary forms. The parliament had a Speaker, a Leader of the House, a Prime Minister and other Ministers.<sup>4</sup>

Besant said that in demanding home rule or self-government Indians derived much inspiration from the history of the struggle for constitutional liberties which Englishmen had waged in their own country. India, she said, was "deeply grateful for the inspiration she had breathed in from English literature, from Milton, from Burke, from Shelly, from Mill."<sup>5</sup> Indians admired England not only for her ordered freedom, but also for the sympathy she had shown for the oppressed nations of Europe when they struggled against their despotic rulers, and for the shelter she had offered to political refugees.<sup>6</sup> In a speech in London on June 11th, 1914, she told Englishmen that it would not be proper for them, who had crowded the streets of London to welcome Garibaldi after he had fought against the despotic ruler of Italy, who had given shelter to Mazzini when all the tyrants in Europe sought to seize him, and who had given shelter

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> M. S. Kamath, *The Home Rule Leagues*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> A. Besant, *U. P. Provincial Conference, Presidential Address*, April 2nd, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to *The Times*, May 29th, 1914 (A. Besant, *India and the Empire*, p. 33).

even to Stepniak, the "terrorist" from Russia, and Kropotkin, the exile and rebel, to imprison Indian patriots who fought for their country's freedom.<sup>1</sup> She pointed out that because Indian political demands were not satisfied Indians who had once a great faith in the liberal instincts of Englishmen were increasingly losing that faith.<sup>2</sup> To those who said that India's loyalty to British rule must be unconditional, Besant replied that "the price of India's loyalty is India's freedom".<sup>3</sup> She reminded Englishmen that liberty was their birthright and asked them to share their birthright with Indians.<sup>4</sup> She drew attention to the fact that Indians had supported the British war-effort, but she pointed out that India's loyalty did not mean that Indians were satisfied with the rule of the bureaucrats or that they were willing to remain for ever in a state of pupilage under their British rulers.<sup>5</sup> Besant realised that it would be easier to convince the British public of the justice of the Indian claim for self-government at a time when that public was deeply impressed by the help that India had rendered to the British war-effort, but she did not fail to make it clear that Indian nationalists should ask for home rule as a natural right and not as a reward for their war-services.<sup>6</sup>

The war-services of the Dominions had encouraged people to speculate about the readjustment of the relations of the Dominions to their mother country. After two years of the war Indian politicians found that the place that India would occupy in any scheme of post-war imperial reconstruction had not been clarified.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, in October 1916, nineteen elected members of the Indian Legislative Council drew up a memorandum in which a scheme of post-war reforms was suggested.

After stating that, at the end of the war, the world, and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Commonwealth*, May 13th, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> A. Besant, *India : Bond or Free? A World Problem*, p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Speech in London on June 11th, 1914 (A. Besant, *India and the Empire*, p. 153).

<sup>5</sup> A. Besant, *U. P. Provincial Conference, Presidential Address*, April 2nd, 1913, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> M. S. Kamath, *The Home Rule Leagues*, p. 7. See also A. Besant *U. P. Provincial Conference, Presidential Address*, April 2nd, 1915. p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "India's Place in the Empire", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), June 22nd, 1916; "The Imperial Federation Movement", *The Bengalee*, July 21st, 1916;

particularly the British empire, "which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small nationalities", would witness a great advance in the ideals of government, the signatories of the memorandum declared that, in future, the ideal of Indian government should be not merely good government but also self-government, that is, government which was responsible to the people and therefore acceptable to them.<sup>1</sup> They suggested that after the war in all the legislative councils the elected members should be in a substantial majority, and that in all the executive councils, imperial as well as provincial, half the members should be Indians who would be selected by the elected members of the legislative councils.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Sydenham, a former Governor of Bombay, criticised the above suggestions on the ground that their adoption would weaken the authority of the government of India. He declared that under no circumstances any surrender or weakening of paramount British power should be tolerated, and he asked the government to announce that the constitution of the legislative councils would remain unchanged.<sup>3</sup> He also expressed his disapproval of the formulation of "revolutionary proposals" of reform when the British empire was fighting for its very existence.<sup>4</sup>

Some people believed that Indian nationalists started a home rule movement during the war primarily because they were guided by the maxim of the Irish home rulers that "England's difficulty is the opportunity of her enemies".<sup>5</sup> Replying to the criticism that the raising of the controversial political question of home rule might embarrass the government during the war, Besant said in the 1916 Congress that by asking for self-government Indian nationalists were only following the example of the self-governing Dominions and acting on the advice of

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"India and a Reconstituted Empire", *The Bengalee*, July 23rd, 1916 ; and "Federation of the British Empire", *The Bengalee*, July 29th, 1916.

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum Submitted to His Excellency by Nineteen Elected Additional Members of the Imperial Legislative Council with regard to Post-war Reform, dated October, 1916. (Cd. 9178) 1918. Appendix II, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Sydenham, "The Danger in India", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, December, 1916, p. 1126.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1125.

<sup>5</sup> See E. Bruce Mitford, "Cause and Effect in India", *The Fortnightly Review*, July 1919, pp. 129-30.

Bonar Law, the late Colonial Secretary, who had asked the Dominions to strike while the iron was still hot. Besant asked Indians to strike before the iron was cold, because she was afraid that India's silence during the war might be construed as a sign of contentment with her existing political status, so that unless Indians clearly stated their political demands during the war nothing might be done in any post-war imperial reconstruction to raise the political status of India.<sup>1</sup>

There were some apprehensions in the minds of Congressmen that if certain schemes of post-war imperial reconstruction were realised then India would find herself in a position of subordination not only to Britain but also to all the British Dominions including the Dominion of South Africa which denied the Indian settlers their just rights.<sup>2</sup> The 1916 Congress expressed the hope that in any reconstruction of the imperial system India would "be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions".<sup>3</sup>

The 1916 Congress adopted a scheme of reform known as the Congress-League scheme. The scheme safeguarded the maintenance of British supremacy in India in matters dealing with the direction of military affairs and the foreign and political relations of India,<sup>4</sup> but with regard to internal affairs the scheme provided that the central as well as provincial executive councils were to be bound by the resolutions of their legislative councils, unless they were vetoed by the Governor-General-in-Council or Governor-in-Council, as the case may be, and, in that event, if the resolutions were again passed after an interval of not less than a year then they were to be put into effect.<sup>5</sup> According to this scheme though every Indian legislature, whether in the centre or in the provinces, was to have a substantial majority of elected members it was not to have the power to remove the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Thirty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 81. See also "India's Place in the Empire", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition) June 22nd, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Thirty-First Indian National Congress*, p. 88. See also "Mr. L. Curtis on Indian Aspirations", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), December 29th, 1916; and "India and the Reconstitution of the Empire", *The Bengalee*, July 19th, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Thirty-First Indian National Congress*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

executive.<sup>1</sup> Congressmen stated that though a form of government which contained a popular legislature and an irremovable executive was alien to English political practice, in the United States of America such a form of government had not proved altogether unsuccessful. In America as the President and his principal advisers did not belong to either house of the Congress they could not personally defend their policy in the Congress. Srinivasa Sastri argued that one advantage that the executive in India, under the Congress-League Scheme, would have over the American executive was that it would have the right of nominating one-fifth of the members of the legislative councils, who would be able to explain and defend the policy of the executive directly in the legislature.<sup>2</sup>

Some time after the formulation of the Congress-League scheme, the British Government announced on August 20th, 1917, that the goal of British policy was "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".<sup>3</sup> Surendranath Banerjea said that the British democracy had by its August announcement properly responded to the demand for self-government put forth in the Congress-League scheme of 1916, and pointed out that the ideal of self-government which the Congress had cherished from its inception and which had seemed to many as a mere phantom have now come within the range of political realisation.<sup>4</sup> Bepin Pal stated that the August announcement, which declared responsible government to be the aim of British rule, theoretically marked the end of the old aim of British policy in India which, through the Queen's Proclamation of

<sup>1</sup> But the scheme provided that, at least, one-half of the members of the executive councils were to be elected by the elected members of the legislative councils. (*Ibid.*, pp. 78, 80.)

<sup>2</sup> V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, "Responsible Government for India", *The Indian Review*, November 1917, pp. 706-7.

<sup>3</sup> The policy was announced by Montagu, the Secretary of State on August 20th, 1917. (*Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1917-18*, p. 445.)

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, pp. 90-91. See also the report of a speech by S. Banerjea on August 24th in *The Bengalee* of August 26th, 1917.

1858, had promised Indians good government rather than responsible self-government.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the August declaration that the words "responsible government" appeared for the first time in any authoritative declaration of British policy. The phrase "responsible government" had acquired a definite meaning in English political theory.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental principle of responsible government was the amenability of the executive to a legislature that was elected by the general body of the people. The German system of government under the Kaiser in which the legislature could not dismiss the executive was not therefore responsible government. Gokhale, in his "last political testament", had suggested that in any scheme of post-war constitutional reform the relations between the provincial legislature and executive councils should be roughly similar to that between the Reichstag and the Imperial Government in Germany.<sup>3</sup> This testament which was drawn up early in 1915, long before the August declaration, did not envisage responsible government in the technical sense of the term. Gokhale and many other Congressmen, however, believed that parliamentary government, more or less, on the English model would eventually have to be introduced into India.

The 1917 Congress welcomed the August declaration and asked that a parliamentary statute should immediately be enacted to give effect to the declaration.<sup>4</sup> It further demanded that the British parliament should fix an early and definite time-limit within which full responsible government would be introduced into India.<sup>5</sup>

According to the August declaration the British Government and the Government of India were to remain the judges of the time and measure of each constitutional advance.<sup>6</sup> This condi-

<sup>1</sup> Speech on November 18th, 1917. (Pal, *Responsible Government*, pp. 105-6). See also "Montagu's Speech and the Public Attitude", *The Bengalee*, August 30th, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> "Responsible government", wrote *The Bengalee*, three days after the announcement, "means Parliamentary government". See also Tilak, *The National Demand*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Gokhale's Memorandum (Cd. 9178) 1918, No. 3 of Appendix II, p. 102. See also Prithwis Chandra Ray, *Our Demand for Self-Government*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1917-18*, p. 446.

tion implied, as *The Hindu*<sup>1</sup> put it, a limitation on the right of Indians for self-determination,<sup>2</sup> and as it was almost inevitable that British rulers and Indian nationalists would differ on the question as to the time and measure of each constitutional advance, it was natural that nationalists, such as Tilak, would claim for themselves the right to decide that question.<sup>3</sup>

During the war years among the world events and movements which, along with profoundly important internal causes, strengthened the faith of Congressmen in the necessity of a rapid constitutional advance in India were the destruction of Tzarist autocracy in Russia, the discussions on the necessity of improving the status of the Dominions in any post-war imperial reconstruction, and the impassioned advocacy by President Wilson of the ideal of national self-determination.

After the destruction of the Tzarist autocracy a pamphlet called *The Lesson from Russia* was published in the Home Rule Series in which its author congratulated the Russian people on its realisation that when the Tzar was a kind of Kaiser, Prussianism could not be fought in the battlefield outside Russia until Prussianism had been defeated within Russia, and he asked the educated classes to understand fully and to explain clearly to the Indian masses the inner meaning of the liberation movement in Russia.<sup>4</sup> Indian nationalists attentively listened to Lloyd George when he said that as in the eighteenth century Frenchmen who went to America to fight for American freedom, after living in an atmosphere of freedom in America, came back to France only to fight against the autocratic French Government similarly during the great war the Russians after fighting for the freedom of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania had to come back to Russia in order to fight against the Tzarist autocracy.<sup>5</sup> Indian nation-

<sup>1</sup> *The Hindu* was one of the leading Indian-owned newspapers of Madras.

<sup>2</sup> "The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition) July 19th, 1918. See also "The Provincial Conference", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), August 9th, 1918; and "Mr. Montagu's Announcement", *The Bengalee*, August 24th, 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Tilak, *The National Demand*, pp. 9-10. See also Report on Reform Proposals Published by the Bengal Provincial Conference Committee, pp. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> *The Lesson From Russia* (Home Rule Series, No. 23), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Extracts from Lloyd George's speech was given in G. A. Natesan's article on "Self-Government for India", in *The Indian Review*, May, 1917, p. 335.

alists pointed out that the position of Indians was not very different from that of the Russians because both fought outside their country for a freedom which they did not fully enjoy within their own countries.<sup>1</sup> In April 1918, Tilak said that though India could claim home rule as a matter of right or on the ground of her fitness for it, it was essential that Britain should realise that it was necessary to grant home rule to India as a war-measure, that is, on the ground that Indians could fight wholeheartedly on the side of freedom in Europe only if they knew that the freedom for which they fought outside their country was not denied to them inside their country.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of the war many people in Britain came to realise that the people of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, who had fought on the side of liberty, would not, after the war, be satisfied merely with the readjustment of the map of Europe or with the destruction of German militarism, but that they would insist on a full recognition of their Dominion nationhood and would seek to become equal partners with Britain in a cooperative association of nations. Indian nationalists argued that Indians who had also fought in defence of freedom should be given an equal status in the British empire with the other British Dominions.<sup>3</sup>

During the war the progress of the Irish nationalist movement was closely watched by Indian home rulers. It was known that President Wilson desired a settlement of the Irish question, and it was widely believed in nationalist circles<sup>4</sup> that "the armed support of the United States was delayed until the President could reassure the American people as to the direction of English policy in Ireland".<sup>5</sup> Wilson's sympathetic interest in the solution

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Writings and Speeches of B. G. Tilak*, pp. 343-44, 352. See also "The Tilak Deputation", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition) April 19th, 1918; "The Present Situation" and "Forthcoming Conference at Delhi", April 26th, 1918; "The Delhi Conference", May 3rd, 1918; and "The Lesson of Ireland", May 24th, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> See Besant's speech in the *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 24; *The Lesson from Russia*, p. 2; and *The Bengalee*, October 17th, 1916.

<sup>4</sup> *Writings and Speeches of B. G. Tilak*, pp. 344, 352-55; "The Present Situation", "A Page of History", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), April 26th, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Mansergh, *Ireland: In the Age of Reform and Revolution* (London, 1940) pp. 237-45.

of the Irish question impressed Indian nationalists profoundly, and G. Subramaniam Iyer addressed a letter to Wilson on June 24th, 1917, stating the case in favour of home rule for India and asking his support for it.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson said that his desire was to make the world safe for democracy, and to ensure that governments were based on the consent of the governed.<sup>2</sup> He declared that, in future, every political question should be settled on the basis of the free acceptance of the settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest of any outside nation which might desire a different settlement more suited to its own selfish desires.<sup>3</sup> Lloyd George similarly said that the wishes and interests of the people of the German colonies ought to be the primary consideration in settling the character of their future administrations, and added that one of the chief aims of those administrations would be to prevent the exploitation of those colonies by European capitalists and governments.<sup>4</sup> These statements by Allied leaders were frequently quoted by by Congressmen.<sup>5</sup> Though these statements were not made with reference to India, they did undoubtedly support the principle of government by the consent of the governed which Indian nationalists professed and preached.

At a time when for various reasons, some of which have been set forth above, the hopes of Congressmen for greater self-government were raised considerably, the *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* was published (July 1918) by Montagu, the Secretary of State, and Chelmsford, the Governor-General. This Report rejected the Congress-League scheme of reform partly on the ground that under it the elected legislature, that would be responsible to the people of India, and the irremovable executive, that would retain its responsibility to the Secretary

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Dr. Subramaniam Iyer*. See Appendix (i).

<sup>2</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *Why We Are at War* (New York, 1917), pp. 16, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Speech on July 4th, 1918. See Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims : December 1916 to November 1918. (With an Introduction by G. Lowes Dickinson) London, 1919, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> Speech on January 5th, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> See S. Satyamurti's speech in the 1918 Congress (*Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress*, pp. 113-14) ; Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India*, pp. 1-3, 30, 62 ; Popular Wishes—The Determining Factor in Government", *The Bengalee*, August 21st. 1917.

of State and the British parliament, might, owing to racial and political differences, often come into conflict, and that the scheme did not provide any satisfactory method of resolving such conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Replying to the argument that the device of an irremovable executive and a popular legislature had not proved altogether unsuccessful in the United States of America, the Report pointed that under the constitution of the United States, unlike the Congress-League reform scheme, both the legislature and the executive were ultimately responsible to the people.<sup>2</sup>

It appears from the speeches of Surendranath<sup>3</sup> and of Tilak<sup>4</sup> that Congressmen wanted to make the irremovable executive a virtual agent of the popular legislature. In that case, it would perhaps have been better to have made the executive responsible to, and removable by, the popular legislature as in Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Montagu did not think that it was possible to introduce responsible government in the centre, and he knew that Indian aspirations would not be satisfied<sup>6</sup> by the grant of full responsibility only in local matters.<sup>7</sup> The Montagu-Chelmsford Report favoured the introduction of a limited measure of responsible government in provincial matters. It suggested the introduction of "dyarchy" or the division of provincial administration into two parts, "reserved" and "transferred", so that the irremovable executive would continue to retain ultimate responsibility for the administration of "reserved" subjects, while in the matter of "transferred" subjects the Governor was

<sup>1</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, paras 167 and 174. Though in a speech on December 12th, 1917, Bepin Pal said that the Congress-League scheme was designed to create deadlock and to make the administration impossible (Pal, *Responsible Government*, pp. 93-94), it does not appear that this was the general intention of Congressmen.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 166.

<sup>3</sup> He said that the elected legislature could create conditions under which the "irremovable" executive, if it supported unpopular policies, would be compelled to resign. (*Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 94.)

<sup>4</sup> Tilak, *The National Demand*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> See speech of V. S. Sastriar on November 2nd, 1915. (V. S. Sastriar, *The Case for Self-Government*, pp. 49-52.)

<sup>6</sup> Tilak, *The National Demand*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>7</sup> Speech on June 5th, 1919. (*Debates on Indian Affairs: House of Commons, 1919*, pp. 207, 212.)

normally to act on the advice of ministers chosen from, and responsible to, the majority in the provincial legislature.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion that in order gradually to introduce responsible government, it was necessary to devolve specific functions to ministers responsible to elected bodies, was reached by Lionel Curtis and some Indian officials in the course of the discussions on a paper to be submitted for circulation among the study groups connected with the "Round Table". Early in 1917, Lionel Curtis, a member of the Round Table group, publicly explained his plan of introducing partial responsible government into India.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of 1917 the outlines of his plan were adopted in a Joint Address presented to the government by a number of Indians and Europeans. The Joint Address affirmed that real provincial self-government could only flourish in homogeneous territorial units, and it suggested that the territorial jurisdiction of the provinces should be reconstituted with reference to history, race, language, religion and other relevant considerations.<sup>3</sup> The authors of the Joint Address stated that many of the provinces of India, which were almost as populous as any great European state, were too big.<sup>4</sup> They asserted that in the United States because there were not five or six giant states but forty-eight small states the people of none of the states believed that their state was big enough to form a separate sovereign state. But if the United States were composed of only five or six giant states then the people, argued the Joint Address, would have sought to establish sovereign independence for their big states, as a result of which the United States, instead of remaining what it was, the home of perpetual peace, would have become what Europe was, the theatre of perpetual conflicts.<sup>5</sup> The Joint

<sup>1</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, paras. 218-19. By the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms law, order, and finance were made "reserved" subjects while education, agriculture, public health, and local government were made "transferred" subjects in the field of provincial government.

<sup>2</sup> *Papers Relating to the Application of the Principle of Dyarchy to the Government of India* (with an introduction by L. Curtis), pp. 83-90.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31. See also T. M. Nair, "Political Reconstruction in India", *The Empire Review*, November 1918, p. 398.

<sup>4</sup> *Papers Relating to the Application of the Principle of Dyarchy to the Government of India*, pp. 328-29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320-30.

Address suggested that the formation of smaller and more homogeneous provinces or states was essential for the ultimate development of a real United States of India within the British empire.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the territorial reconstitution of the provinces was a very controversial one and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report did not recommend any such reconstitution.<sup>2</sup> But the Report, more or less, agreed with the Joint Address in suggesting that the field of government should be divided into a responsible and a non-responsible part. Unfortunately, this idea was opposed in a Majority Minute that the five heads of the provinces submitted on January 15th, 1919. The Majority Minute regretted that the Report, in accordance with English constitutional theory, had suggested the introduction of responsible government for which Indians by their history and tradition were totally unfit.<sup>3</sup>

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report had boldly affirmed that for the development of Indian nationhood it was necessary deliberately to disturb "the placid, pathetic, contentment of the masses."<sup>4</sup> R. Craddock, a signatory of the Majority Minute, believed that the peasant lived contentedly under British rule, and that it would be unwise to stir up discontent among the peasants or to replace the rule of British officials by the rule of Indian middle class lawyers.<sup>5</sup> O'Dwyer, another signatory of the Majority Minute, similarly denied that the peasant had any political aspiration, he affirmed that the peasant would not gain by the grant of political concessions, and he maintained that the prominence given to politics and politicians under the operation of the new reforms would lower the standard of administration.<sup>6</sup> The disturbance of the contentment of the people had no place,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Minute by the Lieutenant-Governors of the United Provinces, Punjab, and Burma, and the Chief Commissioners of the Central Provinces, and Assam, dated 15th January, 1919 (Cmd. 123) 1919, pp. 81-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 144. This statement was strongly criticised by Col. C. E. Yate in "India under the Emperor" (*The Nineteenth Century and After*, November 1918, p. 870), and by E. Bruce Mitford in "Cause and Effect in India" (*The Fortnightly Review*, July, 1919, p. 131).

<sup>5</sup> Reginald Craddock, *The Dilemma in India*, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It*, pp. 369-70, 373.

asserted O'Dwyer, in the old ideal of British policy in India,<sup>1</sup> which was stated in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, thus : "It is our earnest desire to . . . administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength ; in their contentment our security . . ."<sup>2</sup> Though Victoria desired the contentment of her subjects she said nothing about their "placid, pathetic contentment".

Craddock wrote that the Report was based on the assumption that "a tiny novitiate of electors out of the vast masses of illiterate India, bristling with its racial feuds ; its religious antagonisms, its castes, its social exclusions, its babel of tongues, its fierce communal controversies, would start functioning in response to a system absolutely alien to them in the same way that the experienced electors of educated England today respond to a system which the people have gradually developed for themselves in the course of many centuries".<sup>3</sup> He lamented that Montagu, whom he accused of having failed to realise the differences between Indian and English political environment, had placed more reliance on the constitutional theories formulated largely on the basis of analogies from the Dominions by the politicians of the Round Table group than on the practical advice tendered by the heads of the provinces.<sup>4</sup>

George M. Chesney in *India under Experiment* similarly attacked Montagu's reform scheme on the ground that the Western ideal of democratic self-government was altogether unsuited to Indian conditions. He maintained that the operation of representative institutions in the socially backward Eastern countries, such as China, Persia and Turkey, had proved completely unsuccessful,<sup>5</sup> and remarked that if the British public believed that the Indian people were oppressed because there did not exist in India an English form of democratic self-government then one could only conclude that a democracy was not capable

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370. For similar views see also J. A. Sharrock, "Caste as a Factor in Indian Reform", *The Asiatic Review*, July, 1919, p. 414 ; S. S. Thorburn, "India : A Democracy?", *The Asiatic Review*, January, 1919, p. 31 ; and Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, pp. 366-67.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal and Other Proclamations, Announcements etc., to the Princes and Peoples of India*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> R. Craddock, *The Dilemma in India*, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> Chesney, *India under Experiment*, p. 173.

of ruling a dependency.<sup>1</sup> He believed that the nationalists in India who had borrowed Western democratic political ideas were not really democrats. They were an eclectic aristocratic party which demanded home rule for Indians but wanted the British to maintain law and order so that they could carry on a peaceful system of government under which the masses would be taxed "for the benefit of the middle class, free education, an octopus bureaucracy, interminable litigation and the like".<sup>2</sup> After making these statements about Indian nationalists, most of which were contrary to known facts, Chesney proceeded to advise his countrymen to "dismiss for once confused politico-moral ideas as to natural rights, self-determination and what not", and to look at the Indian problem from the point of view of their national economic interest,<sup>3</sup> and thereby to realise that the establishment of a free government in India, which had broken all political connection with Britain, would be highly injurious to all British investors, producers, shippers, merchants and officials who had connections with India, and that it would really mean the beginning of a harmful revolution in the material condition of the British people.<sup>4</sup>

It will be interesting to consider the views of Curzon, who had once been the most powerful champion of the ideal of "good government" as distinguished from self-government, on the application in India of what Chesney called the "confused politico-moral ideas as to natural rights, self-determination and what not". In June 1917, in a note written for the War Cabinet Curzon said that British statesmen were thinking of making concessions to India because Allied leaders had talked freely about the ideals of democracy and national self-government, and because Britain was expected to apply those ideals in the management of her "own domestic household".<sup>5</sup> Curzon was an important member of the British Cabinet which approved and issued the announcement of August 20th, 1917. Indeed it was Curzon himself who had inserted the words "responsible government"

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170, 174.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>5</sup> Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. III, pp. 163-64.

in that announcement.<sup>1</sup> But it appears that Curzon did not realise the full significance of those words, because when Montagu and Chelmsford drew up a scheme for realising a measure of responsible government in India he expressed his disapproval of the scheme on the grounds that the scheme sought to introduce parliamentary government which Morley had repudiated in 1909 and that it sought to establish the kind of provincial autonomy which Crewe had disavowed in 1912.<sup>2</sup> Curzon ultimately supported, though not very enthusiastically, the Government of India Bill of 1919, which was drawn largely on the basis of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. On 12th December, 1919, Curzon asserted that the system of government that would be introduced under the reforms would lower the standard of administration, but he remarked that in an age in which the ideal of national self-determination was extremely popular it was natural that Indians should prefer self-government to good government.<sup>3</sup>

The European community in India generally believed that the grant of home rule would transfer the control over the administration from the hands of an efficient bureaucracy to that of an inefficient oligarchy,<sup>4</sup> and they asserted that the large majority of the Indian people did not want home rule.<sup>5</sup>

It cannot be said that as a result of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms some power was transferred from the hands of an efficient bureaucracy to that of an inefficient oligarchy, for dyarchy, as Sir Reginald Coupland correctly estimates, was not a failure in administrative or legislative achievement in the "transferred" field.<sup>6</sup> The opposition by Anglo-Indian bureaucrats to the transfer of some power in the hands of Indians was based not only on the assumption that the Western-educated Indians were

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169. See also pp. 199-200 above.

<sup>3</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Lords, 1919*, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> See *Address of the Anglo-Indian Association* (Cd. 9178) 1918, p. 24 ; *Address of the European Association* (Cd. 9178) 1918, p. 35 ; and *Address of the Calcutta Trades Association* (Cd. 9178) 1918, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> See *The European Association's Final Statement on the Reform Scheme*, (Cmd. 123) 1919, p. 156 ; *Address of the Domiciled European and Anglo-Indian Federation* (Cd. 9178) 1918, p. 20 ; and the article "The Political Situation In India", communicated by the Indo-British Association to *The Empire Review*, May, 1918, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem (1833-1935)*, pp. 69-70.

not efficient but also on the supposition that they did not represent the interests of the Indian masses. But this supposition was far from correct. Abdur Rahim, one of the members of the Royal Commission on the Public Services of India<sup>1</sup> appointed in 1912, correctly argued : "As for the representation of . . . (the) interests (of the masses), if the claim be that they are better represented by European officials or non-officials, it is difficult to conceive how such a reckless claim has come to be urged. The inability of English officials to master the spoken languages of India and their different religions, habits of life and modes of thought so completely divide them from the general Indian population that only an extremely limited few possessed with extraordinary powers of intuitional insight has ever been able to surmount the barriers . . . . With the educated Indians, on the other hand, this knowledge (of Indian life and culture) is instinctive . . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Many educated Indians sought to develop a political consciousness among the large majority of their uneducated countrymen. Montagu records that in a meeting on January 24th, 1918, the heads of the local governments expressed to him their grave concern about the spread of political agitation in the villages.<sup>3</sup> Remembering the fact that English-educated Indians were often told that India could not have self-government because the masses did not want it, Montagu could not agree that the spread of political agitation in the villages was dangerous or that it was wrong for the English-educated nationalists to teach politics to Indian villagers. He clearly saw that if the point of view of the heads of the local governments were right then the "announcement of August 20th was wrong ; the Morley-Minto reform scheme was wrong ; and India ought not to have any political institutions".<sup>4</sup>

On June 5th, 1919, Montagu declared in the House of Commons that it would be natural for the Indian civil servants to dislike any alteration of the system under which they had grown up.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Its Report was ready in 1915 but was not published until 1917.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Public Services in India* (Cd. 8382) 1917, Vol. I, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, pp. 215-16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Debates on Indian Affairs : House of Commons, 1919*, p. 214.

He rightly remarked that in India, as in Britain, political reforms could not originate with the civil servants.<sup>1</sup> Because quite a large number of bureaucrats were opposed to the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme, *The Hindu* wrote that if the reforms succeeded they would succeed not because of, but in spite of, the bureaucrats.<sup>2</sup>

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report did not satisfy most Congressmen. A small minority of old Congressmen, however, welcomed in a separate Moderates' Conference on November 1st, 1918, the broad outlines of the reforms suggested in the Report.<sup>3</sup> Surendranath Banerjea, the President of the Conference, asserted that he believed that the angle of vision of the British rulers had undergone a profound change so that it was more than ever futile to oppose the government simply for the sake of opposition.<sup>4</sup> True, the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme granted only a limited measure of responsible government, but he was confident that in the course of time the government would become more and more responsible. He was convinced that what was important in the scheme was not the paper-guarantees it gave but the spirit that imbued it, because in Britain without almost any paper-guarantee the freedom of the British people had grown continuously at an increasing rate.<sup>5</sup>

Progress on the path of reforms, that was suggested by Montagu and Chelmsford, could only be gradual, but then Banerjea argued that the early pioneers of the Congress believed that only through a period of laborious apprenticeship could Indians be trained to work a form of responsible government.<sup>6</sup> He said that a separate Moderates' Conference had to be convened because the leaders of the Congress did not recognise that the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215. Lord Meston said, "As a body, they (that is, the civil servants) are unhappy about the new constitution believing that it goes too far and too fast" ; Meston, *India at the Crossways*, p. 50. (Meston had served as the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces.)

<sup>2</sup> "The Bureaucracy and Reforms : IV-A Changed Spirit?", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), August 2nd, 1918 ; and "The White Mutiny", *The Hindu* (Weekly Edition), January 23rd, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *Resolutions of the Moderate Conference Held in Bombay, 1918* (Cmd. 123) 1919, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> *Presidential Address of Surendranath Banerjea : All-India Moderates' Conference, November 1st, 1918*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

angle of vision of the British rulers had changed.<sup>1</sup> He was, in fact, afraid that the Congress might adopt a revolutionary programme.<sup>2</sup> Banerjea, who was a reverent student of Burke,<sup>3</sup> had a great and excessive horror of revolutions. "We are the friends", he told the Moderates' Conference, "of evolution and the enemies of revolution. . . . We have witnessed the nameless horrors of revolutions in France, in Russia . . . how too often they have been followed by reaction and repression and the enthronement of despotic authority. The execution of Charles I was followed by the autocracy of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The French Revolution was the precursor of the military despotism of Napoleon Bonaparte."<sup>4</sup> Banerjea, however, did not forget to add that "reforms indefinitely postponed or inadequate in their scope . . . prepare the ground for revolution."<sup>5</sup>

The special Congress at Bombay in 1918 considered the reforms suggested by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report to be inadequate.<sup>6</sup> Expressing disagreement with the conclusion of the Report that no measure of responsible government could immediately be introduced in the centre,<sup>7</sup> it asked that in the centre apart from Foreign Affairs (excepting relations with the Colonies and the Dominions), Army, Navy, and relations with Indian Ruling Princes, which should be "reserved", all other subjects should be "transferred" subjects;<sup>8</sup> and in the provinces, apart for the first six years of the departments of Law, Police and Justice (prisons excepted), which were to be "reserved", all other departments should be "transferred".<sup>9</sup> The Congress demanded from the government a statutory guarantee that full responsible government would be established in British India within a period not exceeding 15 years.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, pp. 313-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> *Presidential Address of Surendranath Banerjea: All India Moderates' Conference*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, pp. 260-61.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 262.

When the Congress again met in December 1918 the war had ended and the victory of the Allies had been complete. This time one of the arguments by which the Congress supported the demand for self-government was that India was entitled to benefit by the principle of national self-determination which the Allied statesmen had theoretically accepted.<sup>1</sup> The Congress claimed that, like the self-governing British Dominions, India should be represented in any conference that may be held to decide the terms of peace and reconstruction by the elected representatives of the people, and it selected Tilak and two other leaders to represent India in such conferences.<sup>2</sup> After he could not secure the necessary passport to go to the Peace Conference, Tilak wrote to Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference, stating the case for Indian self-government, and arguing that a self-governing India, with her vast population and enormous resources, could "be a powerful steward of the League of Nations in the East for maintaining the peace of the world, and the stability of the British Empire against all aggressors and disturbers of peace, whether in Asia or elsewhere".<sup>3</sup> In this connection it is interesting to note that in a memorandum submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee of the U. S. A. on August 29th, 1919, by Malone, a Senator of the United States, it was urged "that the Covenant of the League of Nations be so amended as to make it obligatory upon all its signatories to immediately recognise the right of India, and other dependencies of the British Empire like Ireland and Egypt to determine their own form of government".<sup>4</sup>

Though the Congress was not fully satisfied with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, in December 1919 it asked the people so to work the reforms as to secure an early establishment of full responsible government and it thanked Montagu for his work in connection with the reforms.<sup>5</sup> But by the time that the next

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-35.

<sup>3</sup> *India in Parliament and Abroad (1919-20) : Being a Record of Proceedings on Indian Affairs in both Houses of Parliament and a Symposium of all about India and Indians in the Dominions, America and Abroad*, ed. H. N. Mitra, p. 282.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Fourth Indian National Congress*, p. 176.

Congress met at Calcutta in September 1920, the spirit of Congressmen had undergone a profound change as a result of the agitation over the Rowlatt Act, the Khilafat question and the tragedy of Amritsar.<sup>1</sup> The Calcutta Congress passed a resolution approving the adoption of a policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation with the government for the purpose of obtaining redress for the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat grievances and for the ultimate attainment of *Swaraj*.<sup>2</sup>

In the next Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, the old constitution, which asserted that the Congress should seek to realise its goal of self-government within the British empire by all constitutional means,<sup>3</sup> was changed in order to enable Congressmen to work for "the attainment of *Swaraj* by all legitimate and peaceful means".<sup>4</sup> M. A. Jinnah, who did not want India to sever the British connection, opposed this change of the constitution because he believed that the adoption of the ideal of *Swaraj* meant a declaration of complete independence.<sup>5</sup> But the Nagpur Congress did not specifically make any such declaration. M. K. Gandhi, who at that time dominated the Congress, wanted "*Swaraj* within the Empire if possible, and without if necessary".<sup>6</sup> He said that he would sever the British connection if it proved to be inconsistent with national self-respect and not otherwise.<sup>7</sup>

The policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation was considered by Congressmen to be a legitimate and peaceful method by which *Swaraj* might ultimately be secured. While sanctioning the policy of non-cooperation with the government the Calcutta Congress of 1920, approved of the boycott of the law-courts, the government educational institutions, and the

<sup>1</sup> See M. K. Gandhi's final reply to the debate on the resolution on non-cooperation in *The Hindu*, September 16th, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> See report of the "Special Congress" in *The Hindu*, September 16th, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 92-95 above.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

<sup>6</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (translated by M. Desai), p. 402.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 47.

elections to the reformed councils.<sup>1</sup> In the Nagpur Congress of 1920, the resolution on non-cooperation was reaffirmed.<sup>2</sup>

In 1920 the Congress definitely broke with the policy of the "moderates" who had a great faith in the British sense of justice and who pursued only strictly constitutional and gradualist methods. The Congress was founded in 1885 by men of moderate views, who were intensely loyal to the British crown and the British empire and who were only mildly critical of certain features of the British administration of India and who wanted to liberalise the administration. By 1905 there had developed a new school of "extremists" whose criticisms of the system of government that prevailed in India were far-reaching and serious and who advocated the adoption of the Irish Sinn Fein policy of boycotting the government. The policy of non-cooperation with the government was not, however, officially approved by the Congress till 1920 from which year the Congress increasingly became a revolutionary body.

#### *First World-War and the movement for Colonial self-government*

During the First World War, apart from the terrorists, Indian political groups did not generally oppose Britain in her war effort. The terrorists believed, as *The Sandhya*, a militant Bengali newspaper which supported the terrorists, wrote, "The country cannot prosper so long as the veriest shred of the *Feringi's*<sup>3</sup> supremacy over it is left".<sup>4</sup> During the First World War the terrorists tried to secure material assistance from the Germans in order to overthrow British rule.<sup>5</sup>

But the "moderates",<sup>6</sup> and even the "extremists", supported Britain in her war against Germany. In a letter that appeared in the *Maharatta* on 30th August, 1914, Tilak, the "extremist" leader, exhorted his countrymen to rush to the defence of Britain who had "been compelled to take up arms in defence of weaker

<sup>1</sup> See report of the "Special Congress" in *The Hindu*, September 16th, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, Appendix F. pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> An opprobrious epithet for the British.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 108-112.

<sup>6</sup> See Bhupendranath Basu's pamphlet "*Why India is Heart and Soul with Great Britain*".

states.”<sup>1</sup> In December 1914 the Congress, which was at that time a completely “moderate” body, passed a resolution declaring its “firm resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and at all costs.”<sup>2</sup> In supporting this resolution Surendranath Banerjea exuberantly said, “We are loyal because we are patriotic . . . because we feel that with the stability and permanence of British rule are bound up the best prospects of Indian advancement . . . because we feel that under the aegis of British protection we are bound, in the ordering of Providence and in the evolution of our destinies, to enter that confederacy of free states rejoicing in their indissoluble connection with England and glorying in the possession of her free institutions.”<sup>3</sup>

Nationalist leaders were not oblivious of the grave defects and failings of British rule, but many of them felt that India would not gain anything if British rule was replaced by German rule. N. C. Kelkar asked Indians not to forget that a prolonged process of exploitation of India had, on the one hand, satisfied, to a large extent, Britain’s economic hunger and, on the other, had roused and awakened her moral conscience in the matter of her economic dealings with the Indian people, and that if British rule was replaced by any other foreign rule then the prolonged process of exploitation would start all over again.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that some nationalists also believed that “the success of Germany would mean an Empire of Force”,<sup>5</sup> and that the Allies were “fighting for the emancipation of mankind.”<sup>6</sup> Ambica Charan Mazumdar wrote that democrats in India had always denounced the propagation of the theory that Germany was the chosen race and that she had a right to spread her “superior” culture throughout the world by means of force and violence.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the article “Bal Gangadhar Tilak” by Nationalist in *The Indian World*, March 1918, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> N. C. Kelkar, *The Case for Indian Home Rule*, p. 112. For similar views see also a speech of Tilak on June 1st, 1916, (Lok. Tilak’s Speeches on Home Rule, p. 80.)

<sup>5</sup> A. Basant, *India : Bond or Free? A World Problem*, p. 165. See also George S. Arundale, *The Spirit of Freedom*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> *The Presidential Address of the Hon’ble Akhil Chandra Datta* at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Chinsura on 30th March, 1918, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> A. C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, 2nd ed., p. 411 ; Lajpat Rai, *The Problem of National Education*, pp. 131-38,

He admitted that "the masses know as much of the Germans as of the man in the moon, and if German militarism were to win, they would settle down as quietly under the 'mailed fist' as they are securely ensconced behind the British Lion", but he maintained that the educated classes believed that Britain "stood in defence of Freedom's cause and the just rights of other nations."<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Mazumdar over-emphasised the ideological reasons why Indian nationalists supported the war-effort. R. G. Pradhan wrote that very few of the politically minded Indians believed that Britain went to war solely for the purpose of ensuring that the cause of freedom would ultimately triumph in the world. He explained that Indians accepted the liberal declarations of British statesmen during the war at their face value so that they could use those declarations later in order to lend force to the argument in favour of Indian freedom.<sup>2</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru narrates that though during the first great war there was no love for Germany, Indians — both "moderates" and "extremists" — learnt with satisfaction of German victories because they wanted to see their rulers humbled.<sup>3</sup> After a visit to India, Josiah C. Wedgwood wrote that though Indians wanted Britain to win, they did not wish her to win by too much because they felt that it would be extremely difficult to secure political concessions from a proud and completely triumphant Britain.<sup>4</sup>

Many Indians supported the war-effort because they believed that the easiest and straightest way by which self-government could be achieved was by participating in the defence of the British empire. In June 1918, M. K. Gandhi said that unless Indians could defend themselves without the help of Englishmen they would not be admitted as equal partners in the British empire.<sup>5</sup> He asked Indians to learn the use of arms<sup>6</sup> and to crowd the battlefields of France.<sup>7</sup> India's future was to be

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Mazumdar, pp. 411, 414.

<sup>2</sup> R. G. Pradhan, *India's Struggle for Swaraj*, pp. 123-24.

<sup>3</sup> J. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, (London, 1947) p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Wedgwood, *The Future of the Indo-British Commonwealth*, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> See Gandhi's recruiting appeal to the people of Khaira. (J. K. Mazumdar, *Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule*, pp. 185-86.)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, See also Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, tr. Mahadev Desai. Ahmedabad, 1945, pp. 359-61.

<sup>7</sup> See Gandhi's letter to V. S. S. Sastri in "India's Goal : Constructive

decided on those battlefields and not in the official buildings of Simla and Whitehall. "The gateway to our freedom" wrote Gandhi in a letter to Srinivasa Sastri, "is situated on the French soil . . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The freedom that was desired by Indian politicians or home rulers, who supported the British war-effort, was freedom within the British empire. Even Tilak who in 1907, as an "extremist" leader, had said that *Swaraj* was a higher ideal than colonial self-government,<sup>2</sup> declared, during the home rule movement, that "Indians did want English people, English institutions, English liberty and the Empire".<sup>3</sup> "The meaning of *Swarajya*", he said on 31st May 1916, "is the retention of our Emperor and the rule of the English people, and the full possession by the people of the authority to manage the remaining affairs".<sup>4</sup> Or to put it more simply: "The *Swaraj* of today is within the Empire and not independent of it."<sup>5</sup> This opinion was shared by other home rule leaders such as A. Besant<sup>6</sup>, Subramaniam Iyer<sup>7</sup> and C. R. Das.

In a speech in October 1917, C. R. Das said that Indians must remember that India was a part of the largest empire that the world had ever seen.<sup>8</sup> There had never been in history an empire which represented so many creeds, cultures, races and nationalities as did the British empire.<sup>9</sup> C. R. Das believed

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Criticisms by Leading Indians on the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme", Madras p. 134.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 94 above. Even as an "extremist" leader, however, Tilak had once said to Henry Nevinson that though there existed a small party which desired immediate independence his remote ideal was nothing more than "a confederacy of the Indian provinces, possessing colonial self-government, with all Imperial questions set apart for the central government in England". (H. W. Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, p. 72).

<sup>3</sup> Speech on 8th October, 1917. (*Lok. Tilak's Speeches on Home Rule*, p. 122).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> Speech on January 9th, 1917 (*Ibid.*, p. 113).

<sup>6</sup> A. Besant, *India and the Empire*, p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Dr. S. Subramaniam Iyer*, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> C. R. Das, *India for Indians*, (Madras, 1918), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Speech on October 11th, 1917 (*Ibid.*, p. 38).

that if the federation of all humanity was to be realised it would probably come through the federation of this vast empire.<sup>1</sup>

Bepin Pal, in his later years, came to cherish the ideal of imperial federation. From 1905 to 1908 he had emphasised the ideal of complete *Swaraj* and not the ideal of imperial federation.<sup>2</sup> He believed that in order to rouse the national consciousness of the people and to demonstrate to the British rulers the strength and force of nationalist sentiment it was essential that in the early years of the nationalist movement the former and not the latter ideal should have been emphasised.<sup>3</sup> But since 1911 he began to argue that because the nationalist sentiment of the people had already been roused it was necessary at that time, to tell the people that the ideal of exclusive national sovereignty was an incomplete ideal.<sup>4</sup> He said that the empire-idea was larger and nobler than the nation-idea.<sup>5</sup> A number of nations could gain much if they formed parts of a cooperative imperial federation than if they lived their separate national lives in isolation from one another. He, however, did not fail to make it clear that India could associate with Britain in a cooperative imperial federation only if she was given as much self-government as any other British Dominion.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> B. C. Pal, *The New Policy*, p. 21. See p. 93 above.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>5</sup> B. C. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> B. C. Pal, *The New Policy*, pp. 23-5,

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CULTURAL NATIONALISM AND WESTERN IDEAS (1885-1919)

SO FAR we have considered Indian political developments and particularly the Congress demand for self government and English representative institutions during the period from 1885 to 1919. But apart from the field of politics, narrowly defined, Indian thinkers were during the same period influenced by some of the cultural, social and economic ideas of the modern West.

#### ✓ THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

The Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was the first important religious reform movement that arose, to a certain extent, owing to contact with modern Western thought. Long before he had any knowledge of English Ram Mohan, mainly as a result of his studies in Patna, a lively centre of Islamic thought, had developed certain ideas about religious reform.<sup>1</sup> If he had never come into contact with Western thought, he might have become a religious reformer in the manner of Nanak or Kabir. In 1796 he began learning English. He also studied the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta Sutras* in Sanskrit and the Old and New Testament in the original Hebrew and Greek. He published some translations of the *Upanishads* and a book called the *Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*. He rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus but was much impressed by his ethical teachings.<sup>2</sup> He had many Christian missionary friends but he resisted the attempts of some of them to convert him to Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

Like the Christian missionaries, Ram Mohan was against polytheism and idolatry. He explained that popular polytheism

<sup>1</sup> *Ram Mohan Roy, The Man and His Work*, ed. Amal Home, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, ed. J. C. Ghose, Vol. II, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> F. Max Muller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 24.

and idolatry were completely antagonistic to the monotheistic spirit of the *Upanishads*.<sup>1</sup> The Raja wanted to preserve Hinduism by reforming it. His catholic mind, however, did not reject the new cultural values of the West. He welcomed the introduction of Western education, and asked the government of India to promote not the old Sanskrit system of learning but "a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, (and) . . . other useful sciences".<sup>2</sup>

As a reformer the Raja took a prominent part in the agitation against the burning of widows and he cooperated with the foreign rulers for forbidding this cruel practice.<sup>3</sup> The Raja narrates that originally he had only hatred for the English but later, after considerable social intercourse with them, he came to the conclusion that English rule, though foreign, would be favourable to the progress of Indians, because, among other things, it would facilitate the growth of liberal religious thought and the development of social reform movements.<sup>4</sup> Though the Raja welcomed British rule he fought like a lion to increase the political liberties of Indians and to liberalise British rule.<sup>5</sup>

As the Raja was the first great religious, social, educational and political reformer of British India Rabindranath Tagore has rightly described him as the "inaugurator of the Modern Age in India".<sup>6</sup>

Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905), who succeeded the Raja as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, introduced a high note of piety and spirituality in the life of the Samaj. Devendranath and his friend Akshay Kumar Datta, editor of the *Tatvabodhini Patrika*, did much to check the conversion of Hindus to Christian-

<sup>1</sup> See the Raja's "A Defence of Hindu Theism, in Reply to the Attack of an Advocate for Idolatry, at Madras", *The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, ed. J. C. Ghose, Vol. I, pp. 105-18.

<sup>2</sup> See the Raja's letter to Lord Amherst on English Education (*ibid.*, pp. 472-73).

<sup>3</sup> See the anti-*suttee* petition to the House of Commons. (*Ibid.*, pp. 487-88.)

<sup>4</sup> See the autobiographical letter of the Raja in Mary Carpenter's *The Last Days in England of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, p. 250.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59

<sup>6</sup> See Tagore's article on the Raja in *Ram Mohan Roy : The Man and His Work*, ed. Amal Home, p. 3.

ity.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the controversies with Christian missionaries the *Tatvabodhini Patrika* had proclaimed the *Vedas* as the basis of the faith of the Brahmo Samaj "as a set-off against the Bible of the Christians".<sup>2</sup> But later doubts having arisen about the doctrine of the infallibility of the *Vedas* Devendranath repudiated this doctrine, and asserted the right of every individual to know by direct intuition all the highest religious truths.<sup>3</sup> Devendranath's repudiation of supernatural scriptural authorities naturally appealed to the minds of those Hindus who, through their English education, had been touched by the rationalistic thought of nineteenth century Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884) was the next important leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Unlike Devendranath,<sup>5</sup> Keshub was to a certain extent influenced by Christianity. In a lecture in 1861 he enthusiastically claimed Jesus as an Asiatic<sup>6</sup> and spoke very feelingly about his "extraordinary greatness and supernatural moral heroism".<sup>7</sup> In a letter to Max Muller on 9th July 1881, Keshub, however, said that he had always disclaimed the Christian name and refused to identify himself with the Christian Church, because he could not accept the popular doctrines about the divinity of Christ.<sup>8</sup> In spite of all his admiration of Christianity Keshub remained a true Hindu, and from the year 1867 he increasingly began to adopt devotional practices which were distinctively Hindu.<sup>9</sup> Towards the close of his life he was seeking to create an advanced type of Hinduism under the name of New Dispensation which would harmonise all scriptures and prophets and dispensations<sup>10</sup> so that anyone who accepted the New Dispensation would truly be able to speak

<sup>1</sup> *The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore*, (tr. from the original Bengali by S. Tagore and Indira Devi), pp. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> Pandit S. N. Sastri, *The Brahmo Samaj: A Statement of its Religious Principles and Brief History*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore*, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> B. Pal, *Brahmo Samaj and the Battle of Swaraj*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> See P. C. Mazumdar's letter to Max Muller dated August 20th, 1881 (F. Max Muller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 152).

<sup>6</sup> Keshub Chandra Sen's Lectures in India, pp. 33-34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> F. Max Muller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 126.

<sup>9</sup> P. K. Sen, *Keshub Chandra Sen*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>10</sup> See Keshub's letter of May 16th, 1881, to Max Muller, (F. Max Muller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 117).

thus : "The Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chaitanya my heart, the Hindu Rishi my soul, and the philanthropic Howard my right hand."<sup>1</sup> Apart from preaching an eclectic faith, Keshub was passionately interested in social reform, such as elevating the status of women and in removing some of the inequalities of caste.

#### THE ARYA SAMAJ

The Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, was more conservative and aggressive than the Brahmo Samaj. Dayananda accused the Brahmos of having departed too much from ancient tradition and of imitating the Christians.<sup>2</sup> Lajpat Rai, a prominent Arya Samajist, lamented that Keshub's teaching left only a thin partition between Brahmoism and orthodox Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Lala Munshi Rama, the leader of the Gurukula section of the Arya Samaj, argued that one of the reasons why the Brahmos were not very successful in checking the spread of Christianity in India was that the Brahmos themselves were much influenced by ideas that were foreign and not indigenous.<sup>4</sup> The Arya Samaj movement which was started by Dayananda, a Gujarati, became a powerful movement in the Punjab and the United Provinces. ✓

Dayananda sought to found a religious reform movement on national and indigenous lines. He had no English education, and his ideas were derived from Indian and not Western sources. He looked forward to the day when the religion of the *Vedas* would become the religion of the whole human race.<sup>5</sup> He criticised both the proselytising religions of Islam and Christianity and sought to make Hinduism a proselytising religion.<sup>6</sup> His insistence on the superiority of the *Vedic* religion appealed to

<sup>1</sup> Lecture on January 22nd, 1881 (*Keshub Chandra Sen's Lectures in India*, p. 491).

<sup>2</sup> Dayananda Saraswati, *Light of Truth* (tr. by Dr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja) Madras, 1932, p. 432.

<sup>3</sup> Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Munshi Rama, *The Future of the Arya Samaj*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> See Dayananda's letter of 21st April, 1878, to Olcott (Bawa Chhajju Singh, *The Life and Teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati*, Part II, p. 483).

<sup>6</sup> Some Arya Samajists, *The Arya Samaj*, p. 21 ; Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 220-21.

those Hindus who were becoming resentful of the intellectual slavery to the West in which they found themselves. Lala Hansraj, who was the guiding spirit of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, pointed out that under British rule Indians were reminded of their inferiority in every sphere of life: the establishment of railways, telegraphs and factories demonstrated the superiority of Englishmen in the matter of applying science for increasing the comforts of life, the complex and unified administrative structure of British India displayed Englishmen's great power of organisation, and the perseverance, courage and patriotism of Englishmen showed the excellence of their character.<sup>1</sup> Hansraj wrote: "What wonder is then that in (the) company (of Englishmen) we feel ourselves conquered and humiliated? Just at this moment of weakness, the Missionary comes to us and whispers that the superiority of the European over the Indian is the gift of the Son of God, whom he has acknowledged as his King and Saviour, and that our countrymen can really become great if they come under His banner."<sup>2</sup> At a time when some Indians felt that they were inferior to Englishmen Dayananda asserted that at least in matters of religion and in the domain of philosophy the best modern European thought did not come up to the level of the best ancient Hindu thought, and he warned the Hindus that inhabiting the land of the *Vedas*, they had no right to sink into mere imitators of European modes of thought.<sup>3</sup> It appears that he even believed that the people of Egypt, Greece and the continent of Europe "were without a trace of learning before the spread of knowledge from India".<sup>4</sup>

Dayananda maintained that neither the *Koran* nor the Bible but only the *Vedas* contained the highest religious truths.<sup>5</sup> He persuaded himself to believe that the most recent inventions of modern science, such as steam-engines and railways, were known,

<sup>1</sup> See Hansraj's article "Swami Dayananda and His Interpretation of the Vedas" in *The Arya Samaj* by Some Arya Samajists, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 254, 257.

<sup>4</sup> Dayananda Saraswati, *Light of Truth* (tr. by C. Bharadwaja), Allahabad, 1915, p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75; Bawa Chhajju Singh, *The Teaching of the Arya Samaj*, p. 102.

at least, in their germs to the poets of the *Vedas*.<sup>1</sup> Even Lajpat Rai agreed with Dayananda in believing that the fundamental truths on which modern European science were based were known to the ancient Hindus.<sup>2</sup> But Lajpat Rai never ceased to draw attention to the fact that the actual achievements of modern Europeans in the realm of physical science were far greater than those of the ancient Hindus, and that Indians would profit much by learning modern European science.<sup>3</sup>

Dayananda was a great and courageous social reformer. He said that the hereditary caste system, based on birth and not merit, and the outrage of untouchability, had no sanction in the *Vedas*.<sup>4</sup> He attacked polytheism and idolatry as being inconsistent with the teachings of the *Vedas*.<sup>5</sup> He also opposed child-marriage and supported widow remarriage and female education.<sup>6</sup> Because Dayananda argued that he wanted these reforms in order to revive the golden age of the *Vedas*, even orthodox Hindus could accept his teachings without any fear that by so doing they would denationalise or Westernise themselves. The Arya Samaj was a crusading and reforming movement and it introduced proselytism into Hinduism.

Dayananda's teaching fostered patriotism. But he believed that compared to the Indians of his time the English had superior governing capacity.<sup>7</sup> He explained that Indians were subjected to foreign rule because of the defects of Indian social life.<sup>8</sup> He, however, explicitly stated that indigenous native rule was ideally the best form of rule<sup>9</sup> and it was implicit in all his teachings that

<sup>1</sup> F. Max Muller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 170 ; cf. Sri Aurobindo, *Bankim—Tilak—Dayananda*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, p. 257. Theosophists also entertained similar opinions. (*Brahmavidya*, ed. P. N. Sinha and H. N. Datta, pp. 7-8.)

<sup>3</sup> Lajpat Rai, "The Problem of National Education", *The Modern Review*, January 1919, pp. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Dayananda, *Light of Truth* (tr. by C. Bharadwaja), Allahabad, 1915, pp. 97-98.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203 ; B. C. Singh, *The Teaching of the Arya Samaj*, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> B. C. Singh, *The Teaching of the Arya Samaj*, pp. 286, 296.

<sup>7</sup> Munshi Rama and Rama Deva, *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors : A Vindication*, Part I, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Dayananda, *Light of Truth* (tr. by C. Bharadwaja), Allahabad, 1913, p. 320.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

if Indians could revive the purity of the Vedic times they would again be fitted for self-rule.

Valentine Chirol, who visited India in 1907-10 on behalf of *The Times* to investigate the causes of unrest, believed that the Arya Samaj was intimately associated with a political movement directed against British rule.<sup>1</sup> In reply to the charges of Chirol and of others, Munshi Rama, and Rama Deva, the editor of *The Vedic Magazine*, which was the accredited English organ of the Gurukula branch of the Arya Samaj, stated that the Arya Samaj was not working for the overthrow of British rule.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, it believed that political agitation was futile because a nation which considered millions of human beings as untouchables had no business to talk of liberty and democracy.<sup>3</sup> *The Vedic Magazine* argued that Indians were subjected to foreign rule because of their moral weaknesses and that without the necessary religious and social reforms political subjection of Indians was bound to continue, and that the expulsion of the English could only result in a change of masters for Indians.<sup>4</sup> It advised Indians to work for religious and social reform. Lala Munshi Rama even went so far as to declare that, "An Arya cannot prefer the domination of idol-worshipping Hindus or cow-slaughtering Moslems to the enlightened and tolerant rule of England".<sup>5</sup>

In spite of all that Munshi Rama and Rama Deva said, many Arya Samajists, such as Lajpat Rai, actively participated in political agitation. Munshi Rama and Rama Deva were, however, correct in stating that the Arya Samaj, as a whole, was not a political body.<sup>6</sup> The Samaj, as Annie Besant put it, was not anti-British but pro-Indian.<sup>7</sup> It stimulated the pride of Indians in their own tradition and culture. By strengthening the spirit of cultural nationalism it was bound, however, ultimately to strengthen the spirit of political nationalism.

<sup>1</sup> Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, London, 1910, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Munshi Rama and Rama Deva, *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors: A Vindication*, Part I, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> Munshi Rama, *Arya Samaj and Politics*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2; Munshi Rama and Rama Deva, *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors: A Vindication*, Part I, p. 126.

<sup>7</sup> Annie Besant, *India: A Plea for Self-Government*, p. 82.

## THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Like the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, and Colonel Olcott, an American, stimulated the spirit of cultural nationalism among Indians. Both the founders of the Theosophical Society repudiated Christianity<sup>1</sup> and were converted to Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Olcott spoke about the majesty and sufficiency of Eastern scriptures and appealed to the sentiment of patriotic loyalty of Indians to cherish and uphold the religion of their forefathers.<sup>3</sup> In a speech at Madras in 1885, Olcott declared that he would not deny that English ways, ideas and literature might be more suited to the English people than Oriental ones, but he maintained that as English boys were brought up in the English way of life so Indian boys should be brought up in the Indian and not in the Western way of life.<sup>4</sup> He declared that in the schools and colleges Indian students were not taught the religion of their ancestors or the history of their forefathers.<sup>5</sup> He pleaded for a revival of Sanskrit learning and of the ancient religion, philosophy, drama, music and literature of the Hindus.<sup>6</sup> In the face of the criticism of Christian missionaries he asserted that the religious and moral principles inculcated by Hinduism were not inferior to those of any other religion.<sup>7</sup>

The most important propagator of Theosophy in India was Annie Besant. Mrs. Besant had an interesting past. In Britain she had been a free thinker along with Charles Bradlaugh and a Fabian Socialist along with Bernard Shaw. Later she was

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Dayananda on 18th February, 1878, Olcott said that the Theosophists "have openly proclaimed themselves enemies of the Christian religion", (B. C. Singh, *The Life and Teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati*, Part II, p. 479).

<sup>2</sup> Blavatsky told Annie Besant that she joined Buddhism because she wanted to show that in her opinion "a religion of the East was rather better than the religion of the West" (Besant, *The Work of the Theosophical Society in India*, p. 10).

<sup>3</sup> A. Besant, *India : A Nation : A Plea for Indian Self-Government*, p. 84 ; and Henry Steele Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, Second Series, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Olcott, *The Peril of Indian Youth*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

converted to Theosophy by Madame Blavatsky. Mrs. Besant came to India in 1893. She said that though she was born under Western skies her true motherland was India ; she claimed that she was a Hindu in her former birth and she declared that she remained a Hindu at heart.<sup>1</sup> She sought to defend Hinduism against the attacks of Christian missionaries and against the criticism of those English-educated Hindus who after studying Huxley, Mill and Spencer had turned atheists and sceptics.<sup>2</sup> She maintained that the deep interest that Indians took in matters of religion showed that Indians in spite of all their degradation yet yearned after the things not of the body, but of the spirit.<sup>3</sup> She was confident that India would take her place in the world "as evolver of the inner man, as teacher of the possibilities of the human soul".<sup>4</sup>

Theosophists popularised the study of Oriental classics, especially the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, in Europe and America.<sup>5</sup> They also strengthened the pride of many Hindus in their ancient thought and civilisation which as J. N. Farquhar, the Christian missionary, states had for several decades been "most unjustly deprecated and unmercifully condemned by missionaries, by Europeans in general and even by some Hindus".<sup>6</sup> ✓

### RAMAKRISHNA

Another important religious movement that emerged in India in the nineteenth century was the Ramakrishna mission movement inspired by Ramakrishna (1833-86), a great Hindu saint in direct line of saints such as Chandidas and Chaitanya. In the course of his spiritual experiments Ramakrishna had tried to understand and practise not only the religious tenets of Hinduism

<sup>1</sup> A. Besant, *India : A Nation : A Plea for Indian Self-Government*, p. 86 ; D. S. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 201, 202.

<sup>2</sup> A. Besant, *The Work of the Theosophical Society in India*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Speech on 6th November, 1893, (A. Besant, *The Birth of New India*, p. 59).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

but also those of Islam and Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Ramakrishna went to Muslim and Christian mystics and lived with them for years. Ramakrishna came to the conclusion that Krishna, Allah and Jesus were but different names of the same God, and that the practice of all religions would lead to the same goal.<sup>2</sup>

To Ramakrishna God was both personal and impersonal. As a result of his own spiritual experiences he came to believe that one of the ways in which God could be realised was by worshipping Him in the human form, that is, by following some of the traditional methods of Hinduism which Christian missionaries had characterised as idolatrous and superstitious.<sup>3</sup>

Ramakrishna was a simple village saint. He was not an erudite scholar but a simple man of faith. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar wrote: "What is in common between him and me? I, an Europeanised, civilised, self-centred, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, unpolished, half-idolatrous friendless Hindu devotee? Why should I sit long hours to attend him, I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Muller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines? I who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal-minded Christian missionaries and teachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahmo Samaj — why should I be spellbound to hear him? And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same."<sup>4</sup> Those educated Hindus who had accepted the rationalistic ideas of the West with their heads but could not harmonise them with their traditional beliefs were instinctively attracted to this simple village saint who reaffirmed the truths of Hinduism in their highest and purest form. Westernised Indians who came to scoff this simple villager stayed on to pray with him.

The educated Hindus who came in contact with the humanitarian ideals of the modern West were, however, seeking a religion that promised not merely personal salvation but primarily emphasised the obligation of the individual to society and

<sup>1</sup> *Ramakrishna : Prophet of New India* (Abridged from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and translated into English with an introduction by Swami Nikhilananda), pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>4</sup> P. C. Mazumdar, *Paramahansa Ramakrishna*, pp. 1-2.

glorified the ideal of social service. So when Kristo Das Pal, a leading representative of the English-educated class, came to see Ramakrishna he said : "Sir, this cant of renunciation has almost ruined the country. It is for this reason Indians are a subject nation today. Doing good to others . . . improving the material conditions of the country—these should be our duty now. The cry of religion and renunciation would, on the contrary, only weaken us".<sup>1</sup> Ramakrishna replied : "You man of poor understanding . . . You dare to slight in these terms renunciation and piety, which our scriptures describe as the greatest of all virtues. After reading two pages of English you think you have come to know the world. . . How dare you talk of helping the world? . . . God alone looks after the world. Let a man first realize Him. Let (him) . . . be endowed with His power ; then, and then alone, may he think of doing good to others. A man should first be purged of all egotism. Then alone will the Blissful Mother ask him to work for the world."<sup>2</sup> Ramakrishna used to say that the purpose of life could not be merely doing good to others by building hospitals and establishing schools but the realisation of God and he said that once God was realised, by His will, many hospitals and schools could be built.<sup>3</sup>

### √ VIVEKANANDA

Very different from his Master Ramakrishna was his great disciple Vivekananda. Vivekananda's real name was Narendra Nath Dutta. Vivekananda (1863-1902) received English education in Calcutta and was planning to study law in England. But the coming into contact with Ramakrishna transformed Vivekananda's entire life and thought.

Vivekananda electrified the world by his address to the First Parliament of Religions at Chicago in the year 1893. After Vivekananda had pleaded for the cause of Indian spirituality in the Parliament of Religions, *The New York Herald*

<sup>1</sup> *Ramakrishna: Prophet of New India* (Abridged from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and translated into English by Swami Nikhilananda), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Srima-Kathita, Sri Sri-Ramakrishna-Kathamrita*, Part I, pp. 58-59, 148-49.

wrote that Vivekananda was "undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send Missionaries to this learned nation".<sup>1</sup> Vivekananda's tremendous success in this Congress and his militant presentation of Hindu thought strengthened the pride of Indians in their own culture and religion.

On coming back to India Vivekananda was given a hero's welcome. Vivekananda was a great *Karmayogin* and he drowned himself in ceaseless activity for the uplift of India. In America Vivekananda was called the "Cyclonic Hindu". Vivekananda died at the early age of thirty-nine. But by that time he had delivered numerous lectures and written a large number of essays and books on religions and social matters. Vivekananda founded the non-sectarian Ramakrishna Mission which engaged itself not only in religious work and education but also in diversified social reform activities.

Vivekananda placed a new emphasis on the ideal of social service. Vivekananda was greatly impressed by what he saw of the work of various organisations of the West which engaged in social service activities,<sup>2</sup> and he always advised his disciples not to seek merely their personal salvation but to engage in socially beneficent activities. In the beginning Vivekananda encountered some opposition from his disciples on the mistaken ground that the ideal of social service was Western in conception and that an Indian *sanyasi* (religious ascetic) should seek only his personal salvation.<sup>3</sup> Vivekananda declared that what was most urgently needed in India was not religion but food for the common people,<sup>4</sup> and he boldly asserted that a truly religious man must be prepared to sacrifice even his personal salvation in order to serve the common people among whom God Himself resided.<sup>5</sup>

Vivekananda was a great cultural nationalist, but yet he was convinced that it was necessary for Indians to learn what was best in the culture of the West. He used to say that one important cause of the degeneration of the Hindus was that believing

<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 645.

<sup>3</sup> D. S. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism*, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> *Bharate Vivekananda*, p. 606.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 604.

that they could do without the world,<sup>1</sup> they refused to travel to foreign countries. He asked the Hindus not to observe those harmful social laws which prohibited them from crossing the seas or going to foreign lands,<sup>2</sup> and he himself extensively travelled in Europe and in America.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of his travels Vivekananda came to the settled conclusion that while Western civilisation had sought to preserve certain material values, Indian civilisation had primarily attempted to preserve certain spiritual values. The dominant desire of the Indians in the past, he wrote, had been to realise *moksha* and the dominant desire of the Western peoples had been to practise *dharma*.<sup>4</sup> The pursuit of *dharma* made men *rajashik* or active and set them in constant search of happiness. On the other hand, the person who sought to attain *moksha* could have no desire to live a life of practical activity devoted to the search of earthly enjoyment, for he knew that earthly happiness could not be permanent and abiding, and that the soul of man could experience eternal bliss only after it had been liberated from the bondage of the mortal body and of physical nature.<sup>5</sup> Vivekananda said that though *moksha* was a higher aim than *dharma*, a person could attain *moksha* only after he had practised his *dharma*,<sup>6</sup> that is, one could renounce the world only after one had first enjoyed it.

In modern India there were some people who said that they were spiritual and that, therefore, they did not desire worldly success. But most of these people, Vivekananda pointed out, were not really spiritual ; they were merely *tamashik* or lazy and inactive.<sup>7</sup> They lacked the *sattvik* or spiritual qualities of an ideal Indian saint as well as the *rajashik* or active qualities of an ordinary European. Vivekananda thought that it would be futile for the *tamashik* modern Indians to aspire too high and to

<sup>1</sup> *Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, Second Series, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 604.

<sup>3</sup> Comparing the attitudes of Indians and Europeans, Pramatha Chaudhuri satirically wrote : "We lose our caste if we cross the oceans, and you lose yours if you do not" (Pramatha Chaudhuri, *Birbaler Halkhata*, p. 18).

<sup>4</sup> Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, p. 6. See also *Birbaler Halkhata*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Vivekananda, *Bhabbar Katha*, p. 21.

attempt to develop in India immediately a *sattvik* people.<sup>1</sup> At first Indians should rather attempt to develop the *rajashik* qualities which the Europeans had in abundance. They should try to be active and independent, self-reliant and progressive, like the Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

Vivekananda asked his countrymen to learn the methods of modern science<sup>3</sup> and the liberal ideals of social organisation from the Western peoples.<sup>4</sup> He clearly saw that though Indians enjoyed very great freedom in matters of religion, yet because they enjoyed very little freedom in social matters, they had developed a cramped and crystallised society. The English, he believed, were the instrument sent by the Lord to break the crystallised society of India, and he considered it one of the benefits of British rule that the days when the higher castes could claim exclusive privileges had gone for ever.<sup>5</sup>

Though Vivekananda freely admitted that in matters of science and technology Indians could learn much from the West, in matters of religion Indians, he claimed, could teach much to the West.<sup>6</sup> ¶“When the Oriental”, he said, “wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. And when the Occidental wants to learn about spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of Orientals to learn”.<sup>7</sup> ¶

The heart of India, said Vivekananda, was in religion.<sup>8</sup> He asserted that the fundamental interest of Englishmen was in economics, of Frenchmen in politics, and of Indians in religion.<sup>9</sup> The English resisted their kings when the kings wanted to extort money from them, the French rebelled against their kings who denied them political freedom,<sup>10</sup> and Indians opposed their

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Bharate Vivekananda*, p. 631.

<sup>4</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 592-93, 640.

<sup>6</sup> *Bharate Vivekananda*, p. 631.

<sup>7</sup> Vivekananda, *My Master*, p. 6. For similar views, see Dwijendranath Tagore, *Nana Chinta*, p. 223.

<sup>8</sup> Vivekananda, *From Colombo to Almora : Lectures*, p. 8 ; See also A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Siva*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, p. 20,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

kings when the kings attacked the religion of the people. The empire of Aurangzib was destroyed because he attacked the religion of the Hindus, but the empire of the English in India was strong, wrote Vivekananda, because they did not touch the religion of the people.<sup>1</sup> As the peoples in the West were interested in politics an European could say whether he was a Conservative or a Radical, an American could say whether he was a Republican or a Democrat, but the Indian peasant, who was interested in religion; had no knowledge of politics.<sup>2</sup> But though ignorant of politics the Indian peasant was, said Vivekananda, more well-informed on religious matters than an average European or American.<sup>3</sup> Vivekananda was convinced that Indians were destined by their history to be a religious nation, so that it would be futile for them to attempt to imitate the West in order to make politics and not religion the centre of their national life.<sup>4</sup>

But the teachings of Vivekananda, who was a great cultural nationalist, stimulated the pride of Indians in their own culture and religion and strengthened the spirit of political nationalism. It causes no surprise therefore that though Vivekananda vehemently denied that he was a political agitator or that he wanted to preach politics,<sup>5</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, who was considerably influenced by the teachings of Vivekananda, actively participated in political work in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Vivekananda believed that no enduring solution of the problems of men could be attained without a religious or spiritual transformation of the character of men. He said that though the Western peoples had shown great proficiency in industrial and commercial activities they yet failed to create happy and harmonious societies.<sup>6</sup> He maintained that so long as men remained fundamentally egoistic and desired wealth and power above all other things, the material interests of men were bound to conflict, and that men could create happy and harmonious societies only

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Vivekananda, *From Colombo to Almora : Lectures*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>5</sup> See letter dated September 27th, 1894 (*Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, Second Series, p. 20.)

<sup>6</sup> *Bharate Vivekananda*, pp. 129-30,

if they realised the great *Vedantic* truth of the unity of all individual selves because of their identity with God.<sup>1</sup> Vivekananda was convinced that there were many people in the West whose spiritual doubts were not resolved by the study of Western religions and that they were eagerly waiting to receive the truths of the *Vedanta*.<sup>2</sup>

In the nineteenth century Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, after studying a Latin translation made by a Frenchman of a not very clear Persian translation of the *Vedas*, declared that the *Vedas* were "the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom", and claimed that the *Upanishads* were the greatest discovery of the century.<sup>3</sup> "In India", he predicted, "our religions will never take root. . . . On the contrary Indian philosophy . . . will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought".<sup>4</sup>

The interest shown in Indian philosophy and religion by Schopenhauer, Deussen, Max Muller and others encouraged Vivekananda to believe that the discovery by the West of Indian religious literature would produce in Europe a revolution of thought, at least, as far-reaching and profound as that which was produced by the discovery of Greek literature.<sup>5</sup> The Indian emperor Asoka sought to conquer men not by armies but by religion and spirituality. The mission of modern India, as Vivekananda envisaged it, was the same as the ancient mission of Asoka. In the time of Asoka the lack of the means of communication and of transport effectively prevented the wide diffusion of Indian spiritual ideas throughout the world. But modern Western nations had revolutionised the means of transport and of communication and had made possible the effective diffusion of Indian spiritual ideas throughout the world. Vivekananda was grateful to Western nations for creating the material

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 75-76, 606-7.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I. (translated from German by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp), London, 1907, p. 458.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 460-61. See also Annie Besant, *The Value of the Upanishads to Young India*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Vivekananda, *From Colombo to Almora : Lectures*, p. 10. See also A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Message of the East*, pp. 1-6, 12, 19-20 ; and A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, pp. 139-40,

media which had made possible the spiritual conquest of the world by Indian thought.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Francis Younghusband,<sup>2</sup> in a speech in 1905, approvingly quoted Vivekananda's remarks that the mission of the Hindus was not to seek political greatness or military power but to spread spiritual enlightenment throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> Vivekananda's message to Indians was, "Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality".<sup>4</sup> Vivekananda believed that the philosophy of Vedanta could provide the basis of the future religion of thinking humanity.

After the death of his master Ramakrishna in 1886, Vivekananda became a wandering sanyasin spreading the message of Indian spirituality throughout the world. But it was not an other wordly religion that Vivekananda preached. The poverty and misery of the Indian masses moved Vivekananda most and he considered that a truly religious man should devote himself to the improvement of the lot of the down-trodden masses. In working for the masses and in considering that the uplift of the masses was the prime concern of the nation Vivekananda was the precursor of Gandhi.

#### AUROBINDO GHOSE

Aurobindo Ghose, like Vivekananda, believed that India had a spiritual message to give to the world, and that the aim of Indian nationalism should not be merely political but must be primarily spiritual.<sup>5</sup>

Aurobindo (1872-1950) was educated almost completely in England. Aurobindo's father was a thoroughly westernised Indian and he desired to give Aurobindo a completely western education. Aurobindo went to school in England at the age of seven and he studied in England till he was twenty.

After returning to India in 1893, Aurobindo joined the Civil

<sup>1</sup> *Bharate Vivekananda*, pp. 298, 627.

<sup>2</sup> Famous British soldier, explorer and author.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Younghusband, "Our True Relationship with India", *The Indian World*, July 1906, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 606.

<sup>5</sup> Aurobindo, *The Idea of the Karmayogin*, pp. 3-4, *Uttarpara Speech* pp. 7, 17,

Service in the enlightened princely state of Baroda. But during the partition of Bengal Aurobindo gave up his post as Vice-Principal of Baroda College and plunged into the centre of anti-partition movement, and he was the most fascinating personality that the anti-partition movement produced.

Aurobindo's articles in the *Bandemataram* went to the heart of the people. Aurobindo wanted to fuse political with religious and cultural nationalism. Aurobindo went back to the *Gita* for inspiration and guidance. The life and teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda influenced Aurobindo considerably. In Aurobindo people saw both a political crusader as also a religious leader.

Aurobindo was charged with sedition in what is known as the Alipore Bomb Case and was sentenced to imprisonment. After coming out of prison Aurobindo spoke to the people that he heard the Voice of God in prison. He said that God appeared to him in prison and placed the *Gita* in his hands and made him realise the simple truths of Hindu religion.<sup>1</sup>

Politics could not hold Aurobindo for long and he spent only four years in active politics. In 1910 Aurobindo left Bengal for the French Settlement of Pondicherry and there he devoted himself exclusively to a spiritual life and later he came to be known throughout the world as the philosopher SRI AUROBINDO.

Aurobindo was a great cultural nationalist. He said that Indians should accept what was best in the culture of the West as men who were proud of their history and tradition and not as a denationalised people who sought to westernise themselves completely.<sup>2</sup> By imitating India could never become exactly like Europe, for the histories of Europe and India being different their futures were also bound to be different. But even if India succeeded in Europeanising herself to a large extent, India would have gained little because she would have lost her cultural individuality and, in the words of the *Gita* Aurobindo declared : "Better the law of one's own being though it be badly done than an alien *dharma* (way of life) well followed".<sup>3</sup>

Aurobindo complained that in the nineteenth century many educated Indians had forgotten the message of the *Gita* and had

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Speeches*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

lived an imitative, denationalised and Westernised life.<sup>1</sup> But the resistance to the complete westernisation of the country by conservative Hindus—“*tamashik*, inert, ignorant, uncreative” though they were—prevented a complete cultural denationalisation of the Hindus.<sup>2</sup>

Spiritually India did not die because there existed men like Ramakrishna and Dayananda who prevented the Indian people from forgetting their glorious religious heritage. “Ramakrishna,” wrote Aurobindo, “was a man who lived, what many would call, the life of a mad man, a man without intellectual training, a man without any outward sign of culture or civilization, a man who lived on the alms of others, such a man as the English-educated Indian would ordinarily talk of as one useless to society”.<sup>3</sup> Yet when it was to this man that the educated people came for enlightenment it was clear that in spite of the spread of scientific and sceptical ideas from the West ancient Indian religious ideas had not died from the land.

Aurobindo, Pal<sup>4</sup> and other “extremists” maintained that not only in the realm of religion but also in the domain of politics the claim of the Indian genius to live its own life must be established. They argued that the political philosophy of the “moderates” was foreign in character and in spirit.<sup>5</sup> The “moderates” wanted to establish a colonial form of self-government. Aurobindo held that the goal of India’s political endeavour should be the attainment of full *Swaraj*, and that India should not remain “an outlying province of the British Empire or a dependent adjunct of European civilization”.<sup>6</sup> He thought that India should try to evolve her own political ideals and institutions and not try only to reproduce European political institutions. “We do not believe”, he wrote “that our political salvation can be attained by enlargement of councils, introduction of the elective principle, colonial self-government or any other formula of European politics. We do not deny the use of some of these

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Aurobindo, *The Present Situation*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> B. C. Pal, “*Alochona*”, Calcutta, 1319 B. S., pp. 213-14.

<sup>5</sup> Aurobindo, *Bankim—Tilak—Dayananda*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 7.

things as instruments, as weapons in a political struggle, but we deny their sufficiency whether as instruments or ideals".<sup>1</sup>

Aurobindo was not much interested in establishing any particular form of government or political institution. A system of government was merely a political machinery which could be worked well or ill by good or bad individuals. Aurobindo said that though some people in Europe set great store by some particular type of political machinery and hoped that the millennium could be brought about by Acts of Parliament, the Indian nationalist should concern himself not so much with political machineries as with the spirit that would operate such machineries.<sup>2</sup>

As a good body polity could not be organised by merely adopting the political forms of the West, so no good society could be formed by merely reproducing in India the social institutions of the West. Indians could mechanically imitate the social institutions of the West by substituting class for caste, by introducing inter-marriage, inter-dining and numerous other social changes, but those changes, in themselves, said Aurobindo, would not create a good society in India.<sup>3</sup>

Aurobindo thought that Europe set too much value on social institutions and devoted too little energy for the improvement of human character. To him it appeared that modern Europe almost accepted egoism and individual competitive selfishness as the foundation of its society.<sup>4</sup> He was convinced that the people of ancient India, through the joint family system, the corporate caste system, and the communal village society, had actually made some attempt, however imperfect, to build a society on a foundation of love.<sup>5</sup> He, however, pointed out that a society based on a foundation of love could only be successfully organised when every man realised in his life the essential truth of the *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Religion), the unity of all men because of their identity with God.<sup>6</sup>

The *Sanatana Dharma* accepted not only the *Veda*, *Vedanta*,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 19-20.

*Gita*, *Upanishad*, *Darshana*, *Purana*, *Tantra*, but also the *Koran* and the *Bible* as its scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Though the *Sanatana Dharma* was an universal religion, Aurobindo believed that India more than any other country had been the guardian and exemplar of the truths of the *Sanatana Dharma*.<sup>2</sup> He was convinced that God was raising the Indian people as a nation, so that they could spread the truths of the *Sanatana Dharma* throughout the world.

Aurobindo said that many Indians in the twentieth century understood that most nationalists in the nineteenth century, under the influence of European intellectual ideas, made a great mistake in not realising the spiritual mission of the Indian nation.<sup>3</sup> "It has been driven home to us by experience", he wrote, "that not in the strength of a raw unmoralised European enthusiasm shall we conquer. . . . It is the East that must conquer in India's uprising. It is the *Yogin* who must stand behind the political leader or manifest within him, Ramadas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour. The divorce of intellect and spirit, strength and purity may help a European revolution, but by a European strength we shall not conquer. The movements of the last century failed because they were too purely intellectual . . . . Nationalism also has been defective ; it has been Indian in sentiment and aspiration, European in practice and actuality. It has helped itself with the intellect . . . but it has not been sufficiently supported by inspired wisdom. It has attached itself to imagination and idealism, but has not learned to discern the deeper Truth and study the will of God".<sup>4</sup>

There was a great similarity between the ideas of Mazzini and that of Aurobindo. Both believed that faith in God was the basis of morality, that politics could not be separated from morality, and that their nations (the Italian, in case of Mazzini, and the Indian, in case of Aurobindo) had a special, moral or

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4 ; Aurobindo, *Uttarpara Speech*, pp. 7, 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> See Aurobindo, *The Present Situation*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, pp. 32-34. C. R. Das similarly said : "With me work for my country is not imitation of European politics. It is a part of my religion. . . . I find in the conception of my country the expression also of divinity" (C. R. Das, *India for Indians*, Madras, 1918, p. 8).

spiritual mission for the world.<sup>1</sup> Mazzini said that the mission of the Italians should be to prove that they were "all sons of God and brothers in Him".<sup>2</sup> Italy, he wrote, must "give a pledge of moral progress to the European world" and form "a moral priesthood among the peoples of Europe".<sup>3</sup> Aurobindo also declared that it was to spread the message of the *Sanatana Dharma* that India was rising as a nation.<sup>4</sup>

#### 'MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi, like Vivekananda and Aurobindo, believed that India had a spiritual message to give to the world.<sup>5</sup> Gandhi revolutionised Indian politics and gave it a truly Indian form and character. He introduced Satyagraha and non-cooperation movements. He taught that politics could never be divorced from morals nor ends from means. He has been the greatest political leader of modern India and has been characterised as the father of the Indian nation.

Gandhi (1861-1948) was born in Gujarat where Jain influences were strong. Vaishnava and Jain ideas left permanent imprint on Gandhi's mind.

At the age of eighteen Gandhi sailed for England for studying law. There Gandhi became a westernised Barrister. In England Gandhi was an active member of the London Vegetarian Society and was associated with the English Theosophists.

On his return to India Gandhi practised law for two years and then went to South Africa in a Court case. After the case was over Gandhi stayed on in South Africa. The racial discrimination and intolerance that Gandhi saw in South Africa stirred him into action. In South Africa Gandhi started his first experiments with Satyagraha. Gandhi defined Satyagraha

<sup>1</sup> Annie Besant agreed with Mazzini in thinking that each nation had a special mission and she asserted that the mission of India was to spread the idea of *Dharma*. (See her presidential address in the *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, p. 34.)

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, (Everyman's Edition), London, 1929, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Giuseppe Mazzini : Selected Writings*, ed. N. Gangulee, pp. 109-10.

<sup>4</sup> Aurobindo, *Uttarpara Speech*, pp. 7, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> *Mahatma Gandhi : His Life, Writings and Speeches* (With a Foreword by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu), p. 227, p. 94.

as soul force or as the power of love and non-violence. Gandhi's Satyagraha movement in South Africa ended successfully in 1914 and he returned to India in 1915.

Gandhi was a man of action and the study of the *Gita* led him to believe that a life of ceaseless activity dedicated to the service of one's fellowmen was the ideal life. Gandhi believed in peaceful resistance to wrongs and injustices. Gandhi referred to Jesus as "the Prince of Civil Resisters". Gandhi drew inspiration from Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* and from Kropotkin's essays as also from Thoreau's essays on "Civil Disobedience". Gandhi became the greatest propagator of *ahimsa* or of peaceful and non-violent resistance to wrongs and injustices.

When Gandhi came to India the political field was dominated by the "moderates" and "extremists". Gandhi brought a new method and a new approach to Indian politics. Gandhi appealed directly to the masses and suggested the method of non-co-operation with the British Government.

Gandhi's influence became most marked in Indian politics by 1920. However, here we are concerned only with Indian political thought and developments up to 1919. By 1919 Gandhiji had written *Hind Swaraj*. In this book he denounced all the instruments and institutions of Western civilisation.

The British had introduced in India railways, telegraphs and telephones, established large cities, set up modern law courts and popularised European medical science. In 1909 Gandhi wrote that the salvation of India consisted in unlearning most of the things she had learnt from the British.<sup>1</sup> Gandhi criticised modern civilisation not because it was a Western civilisation but because he believed it to be a purely materialistic civilisation. In December 1916 he said that Western nations worshipped the goddess of Mammon and measured their progress in £. s. d.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi was opposed to the modern industrial system which had stimulated the money-making propensities of mankind. He pointed out that men of high ethical stature such as Buddha, Jesus, Sankara and Ramakrishna never sought wealth or riches.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches and Writings of M. K. Gandhi* (Published by G. A. Natesan and Co. Madras, 1918), pp. 134-35.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahatma Gandhi : His Life, Writings and Speeches*, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

He even described Jesus as the greatest economist of his time, and approvingly quoted his saying that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> In a lecture on December 22, 1916, Gandhi said that he had not read the works of Adam Smith, Mill, Marshall and other eminent economists, but he argued that one could get sounder economic ideas from religious scriptures than from modern economic textbooks.<sup>2</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi was not impressed by the economic progress made by modern Western countries. He did not believe that the Western peoples by inventing new machinery and by increasing their material comforts had become more civilised or ethically more developed than Indians, who had for centuries managed with the same kind of plough and had lived in the same kind of cottages.<sup>3</sup> He was convinced that economic progress did not necessarily or directly lead to moral progress.<sup>4</sup>

In 1908 in the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi wrote : "Millions will always remain poor".<sup>5</sup> Believing that millions of people would always remain poor Gandhi maintained that ancient Indian society, which did not despise poverty, was superior to modern Western society in which most men wanted to be rich.<sup>6</sup>

Industrialism in Europe was associated with urbanisation. It was natural that Gandhi who was opposed to industrialism should lament the increasing urbanisation of India. He believed that theft, robbery, vice and prostitution would inevitably flourish in large cities, and in 1909 he declared that Bombay, Calcutta and other big cities were the real plague spots of India.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi denounced modern European medical science. He declared that medical science was "the concentrated essence of Black Magic", and that it was wrong to cure disease "through the instrumentality of the diabolical

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223-24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219, 223.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>4</sup> See a letter of Gandhi written to a friend in India in 1909. (*Speeches and Writings of M. K. Gandhi*, p. 135.)

<sup>5</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> *Mahatma Gandhi : His Life, Writings and Speeches*, pp. 95, 222-23.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92 ; and M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 49.

vivisection" that was practised by European schools of medicine.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhi asked the doctors to give up medicine and to try to mend human souls rather than human bodies.<sup>2</sup> He advised lawyers to give up law and to take up handlooms.<sup>3</sup> He requested educated Indians who lived in modern cities to return to the villages because the villages of India, which were not polluted by railways or touched by modern civilisation, preserved, he believed, all that was best in the ancient Indian civilisation which did not glorify wealth or power but set a limit to man's indulgences.<sup>4</sup>

Because here we are not concerned with Indian political thought beyond 1919, we have so far only considered the views that Gandhi held on modern industrialism up to the year 1919. But after 1919 Gandhi's views changed. In 1924 he declared that he was not opposed to machinery as such, but only against machinery when it was used for the exploitation of others.<sup>5</sup> He said that while modern Western industrialism had led to the concentration of wealth in a few hands, he wanted to distribute wealth as widely as possible by starting numerous small industries in the villages.<sup>6</sup> Provided village industries were run mainly for use and not merely for profit he did not object even to the use of modern machines in those industries.<sup>7</sup> Though generally favouring decentralised production he admitted that in certain cases large-scale centralised production could not be avoided. He, however, insisted that the centralised industries should be under strict social or state control.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 94-95 ; and *Mahatma Gandhi : His Life, Writings and Speeches*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*. It was after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last* that Gandhi was convinced that the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman was the life worth living (*An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 238). Gandhi says that the reading of *Unto This Last* brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation of his life.

<sup>4</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 48-50, 226 ; *Mahatma Gandhi : His Life, Writings and Speeches*, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>6</sup> Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The two greatest Indians of the first half of the twentieth century were Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

Rabindranath's father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, was one of the leaders of Brahmo Samaj. Rabindranath (1861-1941) was born in a very highly cultured family and many of his brothers and sisters distinguished themselves in various fields of art and philosophy. In his young days Rabindranath travelled in pilgrimages with his father in various parts of the Himalayas.

By the time he was twenty Rabindranath came to be known as a poet. Rabindranath was a most versatile and prolific writer of verses, essays and novels. In 1913 the whole of India was overwhelmed with the news that Rabindranath has been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Rabindranath and Gandhi in their different fields vindicated Indian culture in the eyes of the West.

Rabindranath founded a school called Santiniketan (Abode of Peace). Later in 1921 Rabindranath also founded a University being the Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan. The School at Santiniketan became a great centre of Indian culture where many foreign scholars and students came. Rabindranath sought to synthesise the best in the cultures of the East and West in the school that he founded.

For a time during the anti-partition agitation in Bengal Rabindranath participated in active politics. But later Rabindranath recoiled from the extremism of the anti-partition movement. Rabindranath did not believe that progress could be attained only by political agitation. Rabindranath considered that social reform activities were as important, if not more important, than political activities. Unlike certain extremist leaders who had little time for social reform Rabindranath believed that the uplift of the poor villagers, the eradication of caste differences and the reconciliation of Hindus and Muslims were matters that required immediate attention.

Rabindranath was a great internationalist and yet he remained throughout his life a truly Indian poet and teacher. In some of his earlier writings in 1902-23 Rabindranath emphasised that the cultural impact of the West had, in certain respects, diminished the spiritual force and strength of Indian life. As

a result of the contact with the West the educated youth began to love luxury and to lose the faith of their ancestors in the dignity of renunciation and the strength of poverty.<sup>1</sup> They were so overwhelmed by the pomp of a commercial civilisation that they felt utterly discontented with the simplicity of the Indian villages and began to look down upon the poor Indian villagers.<sup>2</sup>

While ambition was at the root of modern Western civilisation, the ideal of ancient Indian civilisation, wrote Tagore, was contentment.<sup>3</sup> Indian civilisation placed a limit to the ambition of everyone and, through the caste system, fixed for each man in society, great or small, the work he should do and the class to which he should belong.<sup>4</sup> It accepted that all men could not be equal<sup>5</sup> and that a very few people could be great. It asserted that in order to avoid the disappointment of the large majority of people who could not be great it was essential that each man, instead of being too ambitious, should find contentment in doing the particular kind of work, big or small, which society had assigned to him. Tagore said that because in Europe everyone wanted to be great but a very small number of people could realise their ambitions, the large majority of people lived discontented and unhappy lives.<sup>6</sup> He argued that the ancient Indian ideal which valued contentment more than ambition, self-restraint more than self-indulgence, was superior to the ideals that inspired the minds of modern Europeans.<sup>7</sup>

Though in some of his earlier writings Tagore had referred to the harmful consequences that resulted from the cultural impact of the West, in his writings as a whole, and particularly in his later writings, he emphasised the limitations of Eastern as well as Western ideas and institutions,<sup>8</sup> and argued that only

<sup>1</sup> *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, p. 368. See also Rajnarain Vasu, *Sekal O Ekal*, pp. 78-81.

<sup>2</sup> See the collection of poem's in Tagore's *Swadesh*, Calcutta, 1312 B.S., pp. 85-86.

<sup>3</sup> *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, pp. 375-76, 391-92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 373-74.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375-76. For similar views see Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, *Samaj*, p. 61 ; and *Speeches of Mr. C. R. Das*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Extremely conservative and orthodox Hindus, who were pleased with Tagore's earlier writings in which he pointed out the limitations of Western

a society which combined the best ideals of the East as well as of the West could solve the difficult problems which troubled modern humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Tagore criticised those who regarded everything Indian to be spiritual and praiseworthy and everything Western as material and unethical.<sup>2</sup> Some Hindu revivalists used to assert that while the average European was dominated by the love of personal pleasure, the average Hindu was guided by higher spiritual motives.<sup>3</sup> Tagore pointed out that the highest ideal of the Europeans was the same as that of the Hindus, and that it was not pleasure for self but happiness for all and the full development of humanity.<sup>4</sup> There were Europeans who only sought personal pleasure and who devoted their lives to rob the wealth and to destroy the happiness of the weaker peoples of the earth, but there were also in Europe great men who sought the good of all mankind. Indians could learn much from the better type of Europeans.<sup>5</sup>

Foreign cultural contacts did not destroy but rather enriched the indigenous culture of a nation.<sup>6</sup> Tagore pointed out that every modern nation knew that it must bring the treasures of its culture in the market-place of the world in order to estimate their worth and value.<sup>7</sup> The coming of the English to India did not appear to him as a meaningless accident of history, he believed that England had a mission in India, and that India would have been shorn of fullness if she had been deprived of the Western contact.<sup>8</sup> He pointed out that the greatest men

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civilisation, vehemently denounced Tagore when later he criticised some of the evil customs of Hindu society (See Amarnath Roy, *Rabiana*, pp. 52-68).

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "The Spirit of Japan", *The Modern Review*, June, 1917, pp. 612-16; Rabindranath Tagore, "The Future of India", *The Modern Review*, March, 1911, pp. 241-43.

<sup>2</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "Samajik Sahitya Samalochana", *Sadhana*, 1298-99 B. S., pp. 375-74.

<sup>3</sup> See Chandranath Vasu, *Kah Pantha*, pp. 49-53, 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "Samajik Sahitya Samalochana", *Sadhana*, 1298-99 B. S., pp. 373-75.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Samaj*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>7</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Parichaya*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>8</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "The Future of India", *The Modern Review*, March, 1911, p. 240.

of India in the modern age, such as Ram Mohan Roy, M. G. Ranade, Swami Vivekananda and others, spent their lives in the task of reconciling the West to the East.<sup>1</sup> Tagore himself believed that the ideal civilisation should combine the dynamic spirit of the West with the ancient wisdom of the East.<sup>2</sup>

Tagore said that while in the West the people were too much concerned with the external world, in India the people were too much concerned with the internal world, and that, consequently, the Western peoples suffered from the intoxication of power, and Indians suffered from the intoxication of the spirit.<sup>3</sup> In India the seekers of truth were sometimes tempted to think that the sense-world was an illusion, that the Absolute alone was real, and that, therefore, all attachments to the family, the society, and the nation, which strengthened the bondage of individual selves to an unreal and illusory world, were undesirable. With biting sarcasm Tagore pointed out the folly of believing in this other-worldly and life-denying philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

In 1891 Tagore wrote that while Europe had recognised the greatness and dignity of humanity, in India, where man was overwhelmed by powerful nature, what impressed men's minds most was not the greatness and glory of humanity but the unsubstantiality and insignificance of man and all his endeavours, so that when a great man arose in India he was not regarded as a great human being but as a god.<sup>5</sup> Such a great god-like being laid down the social laws and people had to live by the words of the great god-like man.<sup>6</sup>

Tagore was speaking only in a comparative sense for it cannot be said that the Hindus who carved Ellora hills and raised temples, who crossed the perilous seas in order to establish colonies in Ceylon, Bali and Java, and who did considerable work in developing the sciences of mathematics and medicine were

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241. For the extreme opinion that this synthesis could not be achieved except to a small and superficial extent, see P. N. Bose, "Synthesis of Hindu Civilization", *The Indian Review*, October, 1916, p. 681.

<sup>2</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "The Spirit of Japan", *The Modern Review*, June, 1917, pp. 611-16.

<sup>3</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana*, pp. 125-27.

<sup>4</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "Samajik Sahitya Samalochana", *Sadhana*, 1298-99 v.s., pp. 371-72. See also Dwijendranath Tagore, *Nana Chinta*, pp. 1-6.

<sup>5</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "Prachya Samaj", *Sadhana*, 1298-99 v.s., pp. 160-61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

completely dominated by natural forces or impressed only by the insignificance and not the greatness of human endeavour.<sup>1</sup>

In modern times, Europe's belief in reason, wrote Tagore, resulted in the marvellous development of science, and in the field of social organisation the same belief found expression in the recognition that a good society could only be built if the individuals that composed it were allowed the right of rational self-determination. It was God's will, wrote Tagore, that English education would spread in India faith in the scientific spirit and a belief in the desirability of allowing the right of individual freedom to every member of the society.<sup>2</sup>

In 1894 the periodical *Sadhana*, which was at that time edited by Rabindranath Tagore, wrote that owing to the spread of English education there had developed an independent attitude of mind among Indians, so that the educated people began to criticise some of the superstitious religious beliefs and irrational social customs that obtained in India.<sup>3</sup> But soon the English-educated people discovered that to change their whole social behaviour for the purpose of putting into practice the liberal ideas which they theoretically upheld, it required an amount of social courage which not a few of them lacked. Lacking the courage to reform social evils some educated Indians began to justify their conventional conduct by formulating theories which demonstrated, to their satisfaction, that Indian social institutions were not defective in certain respects but were excellent from all points of view and were actually the best in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Tagore argued that though Indians came into contact with Western liberal ideas in schools and colleges they could not completely accept such ideas, because outside schools and colleges they were powerfully influenced by the authoritarian ideas on which Indian society was based.<sup>5</sup> Some educated people while paying lip service to free thought actually believed in the infallibility of the sacred books of the Hindus.<sup>6</sup> They shrank from

<sup>1</sup> See in this connection Rajakrishna Mukhopadhyaya, *Nana Prabandha*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>2</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Kalantar*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Sadhana*, Magh 1301 B.S., p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>5</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Parichaya*, p. 80 ; Rabindranath Tagore, "Karmar Umedar", *Sadhana*, 1298-99 B.S., p. 217.

<sup>6</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Parichaya*, pp. 79-80.

applying to the sacred books of the Hindus the same rational, scientific and historical tests which they adopted in evaluating the worth of Western knowledge. They behaved as if the laws of reason applied only in the West and not also in India.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of the spread of English education in India many educated Indians became excessively Westernised, and they indiscriminately criticised ancient Indian culture and civilisation.<sup>2</sup> Tagore pointed out that it was partly as a reaction to the excessive Westernisation of some educated Indians that other Indians tried to defend every ancient Indian institution.<sup>3</sup> In his novel *Gora* Tagore has described the psychology of an extreme Hindu revivalist with deep insight and understanding. *Gora* believed that owing to the constant criticisms of Hindu society by Christian missionaries and also by some social reformers, such as the Brahma Samajists, many Hindus were losing all pride in their race and culture.<sup>4</sup> "We must refuse", he emphatically declared, "to allow our country to stand at the bar of a foreign court and be judged according to foreign law. Our ideas of shame or glory must not depend on minute comparisons at every step with a foreign standard. We must not feel apologetic about the country of our birth . . ."<sup>5</sup> *Gora* adopted all the practices of an orthodox Hindu. He religiously bathed in the Ganges, regularly performed ceremonial worship, and took particular care of what he touched and what he ate.<sup>6</sup> He proudly proclaimed himself to be a superstitious Hindu,<sup>7</sup> and argued that neither Christian missionaries nor Westernised Hindus could reform Hindu society because real reform could not come from foreigners and outsiders, who looked at Hindu society only with a critical eye, but it could only come from within, that is, from men who loved and respected Hindu society in spite of all its defects.<sup>8</sup> It cannot be denied that some of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> See Rajnarain Vasu, *Sekal O Ekal*.

<sup>3</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "The Future of India", *The Modern Review*, March, 1911, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Gora*, p. 19. (*Gora* was written during the period 1314 B.S. to Falgun 1316 B.S.)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

social reformers despised Hindu culture without even understanding it. In *Gora* Tagore gives us a picture of such a social reformer, Haran, who was an ardent Brahma Samajist. Though Haran had never read the *Bhagavad Gita*, he was firmly of opinion that this and also other similar books, which were favoured by the orthodox Hindus, should be banished from Brahma households.<sup>1</sup> But he had no objection to the reading of the Bible, and, in fact, among the scriptures of the world religions the Bible was his only support.<sup>2</sup> It is as a reaction to the denationalised social reformers of the type of Haran that extremely conservative Hindus of the type of *Gora* were produced and vice versa. Tagore was confident that through the conflicting movements of extreme revivalism and extreme Westernisation Indians would ultimately be able to effect a proper balance between the ideals of the East and those of the West.<sup>3</sup>

Though Tagore had a great admiration for Western culture he did not fail to notice the limitations of modern Western civilisation. He said that Western civilisation, in spite of all its achievements, was yet fundamentally based on conflict: the conflict between the individual and the state, between labour and capital, and between nation and nation.<sup>4</sup> It had built giant organisations in the field of economics and of politics. It had created a vast and complicated industrial system which, though it had increased the material comfort of Western humanity, was yet based on individual and national competitive selfishness and had given rise to a mechanical and commercial civilisation that had destroyed much of the simplicity and beauty of earlier times.<sup>5</sup> In the field of politics it had created mighty nations which had done much good by increasing the spirit of cooperation within the nation but had also done incalculable injury to the world by generating wars and conflicts in Europe, and by giving rise to aggression and exploitation in Asia and Africa.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "The Future of India", *The Modern Review*, March, 1911, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "The Spirit of Japan", *The Modern Review*, June, 1917, p. 614.

<sup>5</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Japan-Jatri*, pp. 60-63.

<sup>6</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "The Spirit of Japan", *The Modern Review*, June, 1917, p. 612; Rabindranath Tagore, *Swadesh*, Allahabad, 1921, pp. 115-19;

Tagore saw the dangers involved in the modern cult of the nation, according to which an individual even while supporting a wrong committed by his national state could feel that he was virtuous because he was patriotic.<sup>1</sup> Tagore felt that to remedy the evils of excessive nationalism it was necessary to create the spirit and the institutions on which a real world community could be based.

Tagore did not believe that any of the conflicts of modern civilisation could be solved only by mechanical changes in the social and political institutions of the world. "I do not put my faith", he said, "in any new institution but in individuals all over the world, who must think clearly, feel nobly and act rightly",<sup>2</sup> and he was firmly of opinion that the highest ideals of the East which had always emphasised the necessity of a change in the moral nature of men could, if propagated, make a great contribution in the work of elevating the character of men and thereby help to produce the only real and enduring solution of the problems that faced modern humanity.<sup>3</sup>

#### ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

"The work of Rabindranath", wrote Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, the art critic, "is essentially Indian in sentiment and form. It is at the same time modern".<sup>4</sup> Rabindranath Tagore and other leaders of the Bengali literary movement incorporated the ideas and the spirit of the West in Bengali literature<sup>5</sup> and yet their works did not in any way lose their Indian character and spirit. Coomaraswamy, an Anglo-Tamil who was born and educated in England, pointed out that the denationalised men in India

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and Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*. For similar views see also *Bankim Chandrer Granthavali*, Part I, p. 555.

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "The Nation", *The Modern Review*, July, 1917, pp. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "The Spirit of Japan", *The Modern Review*, June, 1917, pp. 612-16.

<sup>4</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore, "The Future of India", *The Modern Review*, March, 1911, p. 241; Pramatha Chaudhuri, *Birbaler Halkhata*, pp. 187-88; and Jadunath Sarkar, "Movements in Indian Literature", *The Modern Review*, August, 1919, pp. 140-44.

did not have a deep knowledge of Western culture but only an imperfect understanding of it, and that really creative people found in foreign culture "a stimulus not to imitation but to creation".<sup>1</sup>

Coomaraswamy believed that it was by the development of a national art and not merely by the attainment of political independence that India could gain her real freedom.<sup>2</sup> In 1912 he said that if Indians, who were culturally dominated by the West, immediately gained their political freedom they would not be as free as the Poles who, though politically enslaved, yet adhered to the language, tradition and culture of their country.<sup>3</sup> He maintained that it was not politicians but poets and painters, sculptors and musicians that established the status of nations.<sup>4</sup> Coomaraswamy stated that as the highest ideal of nationality was service, Indians would be judged not by what they successfully assimilated from the culture of the modern West but what they actually contributed to the culture of humanity.<sup>5</sup>

In 1909 Coomaraswamy declared that modern Indians instead of combining the best ideals of the East with those of the West were forgetting the ideals of the East and were reproducing in India all the worst features of Western civilisation.<sup>6</sup> Educated Indians preferred "flaming Brussels carpets, Tottenham Court Road furniture, Italian mosaics, German tissues, French oleographs, Austrian lustres and all kinds of cheap brocades" to the artistic products of the traditional craftsmen of India.<sup>7</sup> They liked English palaces and French villas better than houses built on the Indian pattern. Coomaraswamy lamented that while there existed in India buildings, constructed by Indian architects, which were as noble as any in the world, no Indian politician had demanded that public buildings should be constructed by Indian architects according to the best patterns of Indian archi-

<sup>1</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Message of the East*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> See a speech of Pattabhi Sitaramayya in the *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress*, p. 98.

ecture.<sup>1</sup> It was, he said, because the Indians had ceased to love the cultural traditions of India that they wanted to live in caricatured English villas and attempted to convert India into a suburb of London, Manchester or Birmingham.<sup>2</sup>

He maintained that the English-educated Indians did not even know how denationalised they had become.<sup>3</sup> "Speak to the ordinary graduate", he wrote, "of... the ideals of the *Mahabharata* — he will hasten to display his knowledge of Shakespeare; talk to him of religious philosophy — you find that he is an atheist of the crude type common in Europe a generation ago, and that he is as lacking in philosophy as the average Englishman; talk to him of Indian music — he will produce a gramophone or a harmonium, and inflict upon you one or both; talk to him of Indian dress or jewellery — he will tell you that they are uncivilised and barbaric; talk to him of Indian art — it is news to him that such a thing exists . . ."<sup>4</sup> This description was undoubtedly an exaggeration and Coomaraswamy conceded that he was describing only the extreme products of English education.

Those who derived their inspiration only from the West could produce art that was merely imitative and not genuinely creative. When the art schools were first started in the cities of Calcutta and Bombay, the models that were used there were almost exclusively Western models. Most prominent among those who painted Indian subjects on the Western style was Raja Ravi Varma. But because his work was merely imitative, it reached only a second rate standard of excellence.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of the work of E. B. Havell, the Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, and of Abanindranath Tagore, the painter, there came into existence a new school of art known as the Bengal School of Painting. Havell disposed of the collection of much of the European paintings which belonged to the Calcutta School of Art and replaced them by the best Indian paintings of the seventeenth century. But so strong was the

<sup>1</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 12.

<sup>3</sup> See the essay "Young India" in A. K. Coomaraswamy's *The Dance of Shiva*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>4</sup> See Coomaraswamy's "Education in India" in *National Education: A Symposium*, ed. H. V. Dugvekar, pp. 42-43.

<sup>5</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, p. 111.

common belief that Europe could be the only source of artistic inspiration that this change, at first, provoked the opposition of the Indian students and the nationalist press.<sup>1</sup> The Bengal School of Painting sought their inspiration from Indian sources — from the paintings in the caves of Ajanta, and from Rajput and Mughal paintings. Because the Bengal School derived their inspiration from traditional Indian sources it produced art that was real and creative.

In recent times Western artists had taken an increasing interest in Eastern art. Through Japan the West first discovered the beauty of Eastern art and then it discovered the beauty of the art of Persia and of India. Coomaraswamy was convinced that European artists would increasingly look towards the East for new sources of artistic inspiration,<sup>2</sup> and he himself did much to draw the attention of Western artists to the beauties of Indian art.

While maintaining that in future the scientific West would increasingly be influenced by Eastern artistic (and spiritual ideas)<sup>3</sup> Coomaraswamy also pointed out that contact with the scientific West had aroused among Indians a greater awareness of the material and practical world.<sup>4</sup>

#### HAR DAYAL

The necessity of learning the natural sciences of the modern West was emphasised by most Indian thinkers during the period from 1885 to 1919. No Indian thinker, however, emphasised this with more vigour and perhaps with greater dogmatism than Har Dayal, the political leader from Punjab.

Har Dayal's opinions in this matter are contained in a number of remarkable articles which he sent from America between 1912 and 1913 to *The Modern Review*. He pointed out that it was not because Europeans were religious or spiritual but because they were scientific that they had made considerable progress in the modern world. A little of science, he said, has brought greater happiness to Western humanity than all the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140 ; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Message of the East*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>4</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Message of the East*, pp. 1-2,

philosophy and the uninstructed piety of the middle ages.<sup>1</sup> It was modern medical science and not the piety and the penance, the fasting and the ringing of church bells of the middle ages, that cured human diseases. Pasteur and Kock were not so religious or ethically so great as St. Francis, St. Dominic and other moral giants which the religious middle ages produced but Pasteur and Kock, by their scientific discoveries, did more good for mankind than the men of religion had ever done.<sup>2</sup>

Har Dayal maintained that modern Indians could improve their material and cultural condition immeasurably if instead of learning the *Vedas* and the *Vedantas* they learned the natural and social sciences of the West. The real *Vedas* of the modern age were the five fundamental sciences of chemistry, physics, biology psychology and sociology.<sup>3</sup> There was no use in discussing the subtle questions of Hindu metaphysics, for in this modern age Indians would have to answer not metaphysical but political and economic questions, such as whether democracy was better than dictatorship, and whether a social service state was better than a *laissez-faire* state.<sup>4</sup> To answer such questions Indians must read the works of European thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Voltaire, Marx, Haeckel, Tolstoy, Ruskin, Comte and Spencer.<sup>5</sup> It was futile for them to go on editing and re-editing the ancient Indian scriptures. What would have happened to modern Europe, asked Har Dayal, if Frederic Harrison, Bebel, Anatole France, Haeckel, Giddings and Marshall instead of trying to solve modern social problems devoted their energies to compiling treatises on Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas?<sup>6</sup>

Har Dayal said that educated Indians should learn one or other of the European languages and not spend all their energies in the study of Sanskrit and Persian,<sup>7</sup> and that they should

<sup>1</sup> Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation", *The Modern Review*, July, 1912, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Har Dayal, "Some Phases of Contemporary Thought in India", *The Modern Review*, November, 1912, p. 474.

<sup>5</sup> Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation", *The Modern Review*, July, 1912, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Har Dayal, "India and the World Movement", *The Modern Review*, February, 1913, p. 186.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

go on pilgrimages to London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Geneva and other centres of European intellectual thought and not waste their time in going to Puri, Benares and other so-called Indian holy cities.<sup>1</sup> He lamented that instead of coming into close contact with the natural and social sciences of the West, some Indians wasted their energies in religious practices such as solitary contemplation and *samadhi* (eighth stage of *yoga*), emotional worship and religious pilgrimages. He pointed out that Indians honoured men of religion too much and respected statesmen, economists and scientists too little. He maintained that Aurobindo, the politician, was a greater man than Ramakrishna, the saint.<sup>2</sup> He believed that Ramakrishna was an incomplete man because Ramakrishna did not understand the Indian currency problem and perhaps did not know the difference between a representative and a despotic form of government.<sup>3</sup> A complete man must not only be disinterested and saintly, he must also have a sound knowledge of the natural and social sciences, which the peoples of the modern West had largely developed. India, Har Dayal maintained, did not need metaphysicians and saints, such as Ramakrishna and Rama Tirth, she needed secular and practical men such as J. C. Bose, Sayajirao Gaekwar, Tilak and Aurobindo<sup>4</sup> (Aurobindo however later became a mystic and a great religious leader). Har Dayal was so interested in secular problems and so doubtful about the value of metaphysics that he went to the length of saying that there was "more wisdom in one of Tilak's political speeches than in all the *Upanishads*".<sup>5</sup>

Har Dayal's fundamental thesis that to improve their lot Indians must learn modern natural and social sciences was unexceptionable. It was unfortunate that in supporting this thesis Har Dayal criticised metaphysics as such and characterised it as a child's toy.<sup>6</sup> He said that the sciences were the modern

<sup>1</sup> Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation", *The Modern Review*, July, 1912. In his characteristic manner Har Dayal wrote that to look upon *samadhi* or trance or the process of swooning away as the height of enlightenment was a folly reserved for Indian philosophers.

<sup>2</sup> "Mr. Har Dayal's Rejoinder", *The Modern Review*, December, 1912, p.648.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation", *The Modern Review*, July, 1912, p. 45.

*Vedas* and that metaphysics was a luxury which modern Indians could ill afford.<sup>1</sup> But metaphysics is a subject which has and will always interest human thinkers. Har Dayal asked Indians to read Plato, Aristotle and Spencer, but these thinkers were not indifferent to metaphysics. However, Har Dayal was convinced that metaphysics was the curse of India and had encompassed her ruin.<sup>2</sup>

### LALAJPAT RAI

Like Har Dayal, Lala Lajpat Rai, the Arya Samajist and nationalist leader from the Punjab, spoke strongly against the excessive religiosity of some Indians. Lajpat was a militant nationalist and he was deported for his political activities. In 1919 Lajpat expressed the view that the basis of all the national weaknesses of the Indians was that they were too much dominated by an other-worldly attitude towards life. Lajpat strongly criticised those who excessively praised the virtues of *sadhuism* or renunciation and asceticism.<sup>3</sup> Lajpat was glad that as a result of the spread of English education some Indians realised the evils of *sadhuism* more clearly than they had ever done before.<sup>4</sup> He considered that the primary duty of the modern Indian reformer was to spread the gospel of life, to make the people realise the glory of humanity and the evils of excessive idealisation of asceticism and renunciation, and for this, he was convinced, Indians should come in close contact with the secular and humanistic spirit of modern Western culture.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of his life Lajpat was also attracted to Western socialistic ideas.<sup>6</sup>

Lajpat constantly urged Indians to learn the natural and social sciences of the West. He pointed out that by learning them Indians would not become absolutely Westernised but

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. For a criticism of Har Dayal's views see H. V. Divatia's interesting note, "Mr. Har Dayal on Metaphysics", *The Modern Review*, August, 1912, pp. 199-200.

<sup>3</sup> Lajpat Rai, "National Education", *The Modern Review*, April, 1919, p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333-34.

<sup>6</sup> Lajpat Rai, *India's Will to Freedom*, pp. 23-24, 29-30, 36-37.

they would become modern up-to-date Indians, and he unhesitatingly denounced that small minority of Indians who believed that a system of national education could only be based on a complete rejection of modern Western thought.<sup>1</sup> Indians could not completely replace modern medicine and surgery by old Indian medical methods so that thousands should die in order that they might remain truly national.<sup>2</sup> In military matters, it would have been disastrous for Indians if they relied for their defence on the ancient and indigenous bows and arrows, swords and spears, and refused to learn the modern science of arms.<sup>3</sup> In economics, they would have remained ignorant if they only studied the old *Arthashastras*<sup>4</sup> and neglected the newer and fuller *Arthashastras* written by European thinkers.<sup>5</sup> In law it would have been unwise for them if they took the laws of Manu, Narada, and Apastamba as their guides and rejected all the statute-made laws of modern India which were more in harmony with the spirit of the times.<sup>6</sup> Lajpat argued that it would not be wise for Indians to refuse to learn natural and social sciences simply because in modern times those sciences had largely (though not exclusively) been developed by non-Indians.<sup>7</sup>

#### “MODERATES” AND “EXTREMISTS”

During the period from 1885 to 1919 there was a large number of Indian thinkers who realised that it was essential that Indians should learn all that was best in the culture of the West. In December 1903, Gokhale fairly expressed the attitude of nationalists of the “moderate” type towards Western culture and English education thus : “In the present circumstances of India *all* Western edu-

<sup>1</sup> Lajpat Rai, “The Problem of National Education”, *The Modern Review*, January, 1919, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Books on economics or politics.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Lajpat Rai, “The Problem of National Education”, *The Modern Review*, January, 1919, pp. 4, 6. The editor of the *Indian World* wrote that Indian educationists should “devise a system of education not on *national* but on approved *modern and European lines*” (*The Indian World*, November, 1905, p. 287.)

cation is valuable and useful . . . to my mind, the greatest work of Western education in the present state of India is not so much the encouragement of learning as the liberation of the Indian mind from the thralldom of old-world ideas, and the assimilation of all that is highest and best in the life and thought and character of the West.”<sup>1</sup> The “moderates” were strongly in favour of the spread of higher Western learning in India. In a speech at a student’s meeting at Lucknow in 1913 Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar said that “books like Lecky’s History of Rationalism and European Morals, Guizot’s History of Civilization, Maine’s Ancient Law, Spencer’s Study of Sociology, Mill’s Liberty and Representative Government, Sir Alfred Lyall’s Asiatic Studies, Morley’s Compromise, Lives of Cobden and Gladstone, . . . Bagehot’s Physics and Politics, Seeley’s Expansion of England and Lectures in Political Science, ought to form part of every undergraduate’s private studies”.<sup>2</sup> The “moderates” wanted their countrymen to learn not only the social but also the natural sciences of the West, and one of their major criticisms of the system of education that obtained in India was that it did not make sufficient provision for instruction in Western science and technology.<sup>3</sup> Even the “extremists” who were particularly interested in establishing a system of national education did not want to banish Western science and Western culture from national schools. The National Council of Education that was started in Bengal during the *Swadeshi* movement did not exclude Western knowledge. One of the main objects of the National Council was stated in its Memorandum of Association thus : “To impart education, literary and scientific as well as technical and professional, on national lines and exclusively under national control, . . . attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, history and philosophy, and designed to incorporate with the best Oriental ideals of life and thought the best assimilable ideals of the West . . . .”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of the Honourable G. K. Gokhale*, pp. 258-59.

<sup>2</sup> B. N. Dhar, *Young Men and Social Service*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>3</sup> *Speeches and Writings of Sir Dinshaw Edulji Wacha*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>4</sup> See the speech (15th August, 1906) of Sir Gooroo Dass inaugurating the National Council of Education. (*Reminiscences, Speeches and Writings of Sir Gooroo Dass Banerjee*, Part II, p. 208.)

## CHAPTER IX

### WESTERN INFLUENCE ON INDIAN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT (1885-1919)

#### CASTE AND DEMOCRACY

IN SOCIAL matters contact with Western thought helped to give rise to movements against the undemocratic institution of caste which in the past had been criticised by Indian religious reformers and religious leaders such as Buddha, Mahavira, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and others.

For an orthodox Hindu birth determined a man's caste for life. Every Hindu had a function in society but not the freedom to choose that function. Duty in this social scheme was more important than rights. Some Hindus believed that the superiority of the ancient Hindu social ideal over the modern European social ideal lay in the fact that ancient Hindu thinkers, unlike modern European thinkers, emphasised the duties that a man owed to society and not the rights that he could claim against it.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the ideal of duty that was implied in the concept of caste emphasised that an individual should live for society and not for himself. But in the exaltation of society caste denied the great truth that only by the exercise of the power of free and rational self-determination could individuals realise their moral perfection.

Caste assumed that birth once for all determined a man's capacities and powers. It denied the possibilities of education and of improvement in this life. Necessarily, therefore, it developed the theories of natural superiors and of natural inferiors.

P. N. Bose, the scholar and the author of *A History of Hindu Civilization During British Rule*, wrote that the principle of heredity on which the institution of caste was based really anticipated the modern science of eugenics.<sup>2</sup> Radhakamal Mukhopadhyaya

<sup>1</sup> Bepin Pal, *The New Spirit*, p. 160. See also *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, pp. 373-75.

<sup>2</sup> P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, p. 190. It is to be noted here that P. N. Bose was not a complete defender of the caste system. He strongly

argued that the inequalities of caste were not all artificially created by society, but rather they were natural inequalities, because they were based on the facts of birth.<sup>1</sup> Hindu society was founded on the assumption that birth was a better indication of one's qualities than education. This assumption, it was argued, could be proved to be correct on the basis of the modern science of eugenics as developed by Karl Pearson and others.<sup>2</sup>

Karl Pearson believed that no final solution of almost any social problem could be reached so long as men remained ignorant about the relative importance of nature and of nurture in settling the character of the next generation.<sup>3</sup> He said that as a result of his investigations he had come to the conclusion that environment was not one-fifth, possibly not even one-tenth, as important as heredity from the point of view of race improvement.<sup>4</sup> He criticised the advocates of social legislation in Britain who thought that better environment meant race progress.<sup>5</sup> He maintained that the policy of philanthropists and of social legislators of emphasising environment and of disregarding parentage had led to a state of affairs in which the inferior members of the community were reproducing themselves at a greater rate than the superior members.<sup>6</sup> Pearson's theory that nature was more important than nurture naturally appealed to those who defended the institution of caste in which a man's status in life was determined by birth.

Radhakamal Mukhopadhyaya wrote that Hindu society did not accept Rousseau's doctrine that all men were born equal, on the contrary, it recognised that men should have different rights because of their natural inequality.<sup>7</sup> P. N. Bose said about

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protested against some of the inequalities of the caste system, such as the provision that the Shudras, unlike the higher castes, had no right to spiritual knowledge (P. N. Bose, *Essays and Lectures*, pp. 77-78).

<sup>1</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *Bishwa-Bharat*, Part I, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> K. Pearson, *Nature and Nurture : The Problem of the Future*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> K. Pearson, *The Problem of Practical Eugenics*, p. 8 ; E. M. Elderton, *The Relative Strength of Nature and Nurture*, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> K. Pearson, *Nature and Nurture : The Problem of the Future*, p. 28 ; K. Pearson, *The Problem of Practical Eugenics*, p. 5 ; E. M. Elderton, *The Relative Strength of Nature and Nurture*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>7</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *Bishwa-Bharat*, Part I, p. 25.

Rousseau's doctrine of natural equality of men that a "doctrine less founded upon facts, or more mischievous in its influences . . . has never obtained a wider currency".<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau did not maintain that all men were born equal in every respect. He did not deny the obvious fact that men were physically or naturally unequal, that is, they differed in age, health, bodily strength and the qualities of mind and soul,<sup>2</sup> but he maintained that the inequalities that existed in society were not proportionate to the physical or natural inequalities of men. Men who were most wealthy, powerful and honoured in society were not men who deserved, due to their inherent worth and merit, such wealth, power and honour.<sup>3</sup>

Some Hindu thinkers affirmed that Hindu society accepted that all men were equal in the spiritual, though not in the material, sense.<sup>4</sup> The *Upanishad* asserted that *Brahma* existed in all men, high or low, or, as the *Bhagavad Gita* more picturesquely stated, to one who wisely saw, the Brahmin with his sanctities, the unclean dog, and the outcast gorging dog's meat were all one.<sup>5</sup> While living in society each man belonged to different castes, but in old age when the individual became a *Sanyasin* (mendicant) or reached the stage of *Vanaprastha* (the last stage of life), there existed no inequality of caste. In the stage of *Vanaprastha* all men were equal.<sup>6</sup>

Some Hindu thinkers maintained that while the achievement of spiritual equality was good, there was no particular virtue in the realisation of equality in the material conditions of life,<sup>7</sup> and that the widespread belief in the doctrine of material equality had produced harmful consequences in European countries.<sup>8</sup> Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, a great scholar and an influential Hindu social thinker, who held this view did not deny that the doctrine that everyone should have equality of opportunity

<sup>1</sup> P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Rousseau, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *Bishwa-Bharat*, Part I, p. 25 ; P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, pp. 170-71.

<sup>5</sup> *The Song Celestial or Bhagavad Gita* (tr. Edwin Arnold), p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *Bishwa-Bharat*, Part I, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> K. S. R. Sastrigal, *Our Social Problem and the Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, pp. 172-73.

had aroused among the lower classes a new consciousness of their rights and had helped to destroy many unjust social privileges which the higher classes enjoyed, but he maintained that this doctrine had also done great harm by making the people excessively ambitious.<sup>1</sup> P. N. Bose pointed out that the importation into India of the Western idea that everyone should have equality of opportunity in life had increased the aspirations and wants of ordinary Indians, and had thereby made the struggle and competition in Indian economic life more acute and intense than it had ever been before.<sup>2</sup> Defenders of the caste system argued that if society did not restrain the material ambitions of men but allowed everyone "equality of opportunity" then the few able men would become rich and powerful so that under the cover of the doctrine of equality a small minority of men would monopolise all wealth and power ; and they stated that, as a matter of fact, in some of the democratic Western countries where equality of opportunity was supposed to exist for all, only a few men were rich and powerful and the vast majority of people were poor and unhappy.<sup>3</sup> They maintained that the caste system which restrained the ambitions of men and assigned to each man a fixed place in society could make all men reasonably happy and contented.<sup>4</sup>

When caste was condemned as an undemocratic institution they pointed out that the ideal of human equality had not been fully realised even in advanced European countries. Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya drew attention to the fact that though Christian nations theoretically believed in the doctrine of the brotherhood of men, it was only in recent times that they abolished the institution of slave-trade.<sup>5</sup> In Europe the French revolutionaries sought to destroy the inequalities between men by the use of violent methods, but they could not build up a really egalitarian society. Bepin Pal said that under the inspiration of French

<sup>1</sup> B. Mukhopadhyaya, *Samajik Prabandha*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, pp. 172-73. See also Bharatchandra Chaudhuri, "Jatibhede Samyabad" ; *Vijaya* (ed. Monoranjan Guha Thakurtha), Kartick, 1320 B.S., p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Bharatchandra Chaudhuri, "Jativede Samyabad", *Vijaya*, Kartick, 1320 B.S., p. 111-16.

<sup>4</sup> K. S. R. Sastrigal, *Our Social Problem and the Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 17-18,

<sup>5</sup> B. Mukhopadhyaya, *Samajik Prabandha*, p. 92.

democratic thought Indians once believed that they could construct a democratic society by destroying caste, but later they discovered that in place of a caste system based on birth or heredity they were reproducing in India, on the Western model, a class system based on wealth.<sup>1</sup> But most social reformers in India clearly saw that the existence of social and economic inequalities in Europe was no reason for perpetuating in India the undemocratic institution of caste.

The first important reforming movement of Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj, which arose partly owing to contact with modern Western thought, attacked some of the evils of the caste system. Devendranath Tagore appointed Keshub Sen, a non-Brahmin, as the *acharya* or religious minister of the Samaj.<sup>2</sup> Keshub went further than Devendranath and demanded that no one who had not repudiated caste altogether should be appointed to the ministry of the Samaj.<sup>3</sup> He also gave his blessings to inter-caste marriages.

The Brahmo Samaj was supposed to be too much Westernised and its popularity decreased as the influence of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, who were closer to Hinduism than were the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, increased. In 1895 Vivekananda said that the ideal conception of *jati* or caste implied that each man should be allowed to do that for which he was most fitted. The development of a rigid caste system based merely on the distinctions of birth really prevented men from developing according to their nature or *jati*.<sup>4</sup> According to Vivekananda one important reason why the peoples of America and of Europe were progressive was that they were not prevented from developing according to their nature or *jati* by any rigid caste system.<sup>5</sup>

Brahmabandhava Upadhyaya, a Bengali social and political thinker, believed in the necessity of a flexible caste system, and like Vivekananda, attacked the existing rigid caste system. He said that Indians must accept the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity from Europe, and they must seek to apply those ideals

<sup>1</sup> B. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, pp. 56-59 ; B. Pal, *The World Situation and Ourselves*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> P. C. Mozumdar, *The Faith and Progress of the Brahmo Samaj*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> B. Pal, *Brahmo Samaj and the Battle of Swaraj in India*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> *Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, 2nd Series, pp. 41-43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

in their social system by breaking up the rigid caste system and by developing a real caste system based not on birth but on quality or ability.<sup>1</sup>

Dayananda Saraswati, the great founder of the Arya Samaj, who had no English education and whose ideas were derived largely from Indian and not Western sources, declared that if the Shudra was as qualified and accomplished as a genuine Brahmin then the Shudra must be treated as a Brahmin.<sup>2</sup> Annie Besant, the Theosophist leader, worked from 1893 onwards for the development of a flexible caste system, but later she began to doubt whether it was at all practicable to develop such a system.<sup>3</sup> In 1913 she realised that the caste system had outlived its utility and that it must go.<sup>4</sup>

Social reformers pointed out that the undemocratic institution of caste was not compatible with political democracy. Rabindranath Tagore stated that because western thought was dominated by politics many Indian nationalists made the mistake of thinking that merely by securing political freedom Indians could become free.<sup>5</sup> He pointed out that nationalists could not "build a political miracle of freedom upon the quicksand of social slavery".<sup>6</sup> It was out of the narrowness of sympathy that Indians had denied the inferior castes their social rights, and so long as Indian society remained unjust, there could be no justice in politics.<sup>7</sup>

Sankaran Nair, in his presidential address to the National Social Conference in 1904, said that English democratic institutions could work successfully only in those countries where the institutions of society were more or less democratic.<sup>8</sup> If Indians

<sup>1</sup> B. Upadhyaya, *Samaj*, pp. 27-28, 71-72. Bepin Pal in later life also supported the idea of reviving a flexible caste system. (B. C. Pal, "Allochona", *Vijaya*, Calcutta, 1319 B.S., pp. 214-15.)

<sup>2</sup> Dayananda Saraswati, *Light of Truth* (tr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja), Allahabad, 1915, pp. 97-98.

<sup>3</sup> Annie Besant, "United India", *The Indian Review*, October, 1913, pp. 788-89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, See also Suresh Chakravarti, "Shaktimaner Dharma", *Subuj Patra*, Magh 1324 B.S., pp. 556-60; and Ajit Kumar Chakravarti, "Mashkabari", *Bharati*, Paush 1324 B.S., p. 892.

<sup>7</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> S. C. Nair, *Two Notable Lectures*, pp. 1-2.

who were dominated by the caste system had democratic political institutions, then, though they would be able to put an end to the political privileges that the British enjoyed in India, there might yet remain the danger that the superior castes would use their political power in order to safeguard their social privileges.<sup>1</sup>

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, the famous Bengali novelist, had long ago pointed out that, for the oppressed, oppression by high-caste countrymen was not less galling than oppression by arrogant foreigners.<sup>2</sup> M. R. Jayakar, in his presidential address to the Bombay Provincial Social Conference in 1917, declared that the rule of a selfish and proud Brahmin might be as bad as the rule of an arrogant and unsympathetic European Collector.<sup>3</sup> He rightly pointed out that the tyrannical Anglo-Indian bureaucrat and the autocratic Brahmin did not differ in kind, and that a people which wanted to dispense with the rule of the former must also dispense with the rule of the latter.<sup>4</sup>

Pramathanath Chaudhuri, the great Bengali essayist, said that it was clear that those nationalists who wanted political liberty but were frightened when the principle of liberty was applied in social matters really did not believe in the doctrines of liberalism, but merely paid lip service to them.<sup>5</sup> He quoted L. T. Hobhouse's definition of liberalism: "Liberalism is the belief that society can safely be founded on . . . (the) self-determining power of personality, that it is only on this foundation that a true community can be built . . . Liberty then becomes not so much a right of the individual as a necessity of society".<sup>6</sup> Pramathanath said that though Indian nationalists believed in the right of national self-determination, some of them had no faith in the cardinal principle of liberalism, that is, the principle that every individual should have the right of national self-determination.<sup>7</sup> It was clearly inconsistent for some of the nationalist leaders

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> B. Chattopadhyaya, *Bangadarshana*, Vol. II, p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> M. R. Jayakar, *Social Reform and Social Service*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Pramatha Chaudhuri "Deshar Katha", *Sabuj Patra*, Paush, 1325 B.S., p. 553.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 560.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

to profess that they believed in the ideals of liberty and of equality and yet take up a vacillating attitude towards the Patel Bill (1918) which sought to legalise the right of inter-caste marriage. Those who did not support the Patel Bill had no right, said Pramathanath, to use the words "liberty" and "equality" in their political speeches.<sup>1</sup> While the "moderates", like Gokhale, were in favour of social reform some "extremist" leaders such as Tilak were against social reform particularly if the same was effected by legislation brought into force by the foreign rulers.<sup>2</sup>

Critics of the Hindu social system emphasised that if the high-caste educated Indians really wanted home rule or political freedom they must grant social freedom to the low-caste men.<sup>3</sup> When in 1916 many Congressmen began to demand home rule they acutely felt the incompatibility between the realisation of political liberty and the maintenance of extreme caste privileges. In 1917 the Congress passed a resolution urging the people of India to remove all disabilities that were imposed by custom upon the depressed classes.<sup>4</sup> In supporting the resolution B. J. Desai pointed out that it would be utterly inconsistent for Indians to demand the full rights of British citizenship and yet to deny some of their own countrymen the common rights of humanity.<sup>5</sup> Asaf Ali said that Indians had been crying shame upon the autocratic action of British bureaucrats but the time had come for the depressed classes to cover with shame those high-caste Indians who enjoyed unjust social privileges.<sup>6</sup>

Social reformers wanted the higher and lower castes to have equal rights in law, education, politics and in every other matter. In some ancient Hindu law books regular systems of punishments were worked out on the basis of gradations of caste.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 553, 557-58.

<sup>2</sup> D. Kerr, *Lokamanya Tilak*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> K. Srinivasa Rau, *The Crisis in India*, p. 157. See also Hem Chandra Sarkar, "The Problem of the Depressed Classes", *The Indian World*, March, 1910, p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress*, pp. 128-89.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> In *The Institutes of Vishnu* (tr. Julius Jolly, Oxford, 1900, pp. 33-34) it is stated that if a Chandala intentionally defiled a twice-born caste-man by touch then he should be put to death. But a Brahmin, said Manu (*The Ordinances of Manu*, tr. Hopkins, London, 1884, p. 238), should not be killed

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya said that it was one of the benefits of British rule that under it the Brahmin as well as the Shudra had equal status in the law courts.<sup>1</sup> Some old Sanskrit law-texts declared that the Shudras had no right to read the *Vedas*.<sup>2</sup> To impart English education among the lower classes should be, said Sankaran Nair, one of the fundamental aims of the social reformers.<sup>3</sup> He wanted the Brahmin scholars also to have an English education so that they could appreciate the ideal of the equality of men.<sup>4</sup> Most nationalist leaders, even those who belonged to the Brahmin caste favoured the policy of educating the masses. Further, Congressmen wanted that every Indian, irrespective of his caste, should enjoy the common political rights. Congressmen, who wanted to introduce Western representative institutions into India, could not and did not demand that the right of franchise should be limited to members of the higher caste, they maintained that this right should rest on no other basis than that of the equality of man with man.

There were some people who believed that because Indian society was, and would continue to be, dominated by the institution of caste it would be neither possible nor desirable to try to establish a democratic political structure. A. M. T. Jackson, of the Indian civil service, wrote that in ancient Hindu states the power of government was vested in certain sections of the community and that the modern European idea that all the people should have a voice in the government of the country found no place in ancient Hindu political thought.<sup>5</sup> He said that the generality of the Indian people who believed in traditional ideas did not desire the introduction of a democratic form of government.<sup>6</sup> George M. Chesney similarly wrote that it would be absolutely impossible for Indians, who had for centuries been

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even though he had committed every sort of crime. Kautilya, however, allowed that in extreme cases the Brahmin could be drowned Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, tr. R. Samasastry, Mysore, 1923, p. 277).

<sup>1</sup> B. Chattopadhyaya, *Bangadarshana*, Vol. II, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, Part I; *Gautama* (tr. G. Buhler), Oxford, 1879, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> S. Nair, *Two Notable Lectures*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> A. M. T. Jackson, "The Hindu Theory of Government", *The Empire Review*, September, 1907, pp. 106-10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

accustomed to the undemocratic institution of caste, to develop a sudden enthusiasm for Western democratic ideals.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Cotton believed that, because of caste, Indians were eminently fitted for an aristocratic and not a democratic form of government. Cotton had no sympathy with those who, under the inspiration of Western democratic ideas, sought to destroy caste.<sup>2</sup> The destruction of caste would mean a too violent and revolutionary break with the past.<sup>3</sup> India needed "the hierarchical leadership of caste".<sup>4</sup> Internal order could best be maintained by a "patrician aristocracy" who were traditionally accustomed to control and lead the lower classes.<sup>5</sup>

Some people believed that even if a nominally democratic form of government was introduced, parties in India, unlike those in Western democratic countries, would be formed not on the basis of political differences, but on the basis of caste. Sir Herbert Risley who apprehended the development of a caste party system said that parties formed on the basis of caste would be more organised and more efficient than any other party in the world, for the caste *panchayat* (committee of five) would be able to "secure the adoption of any conceivable ticket" by asking the trader, the priest, the washerman and the barber to boycott the recalcitrant voter.<sup>6</sup> But during the period from 1885 to 1919 the most important nationalist groups, the "moderates", the "extremists", the "terrorists", and the home rulers, were formed on the basis of political, not caste, differences.

#### MODERN INDUSTRIALISM

In economic matters, contact with Western thought helped to give rise to movements in favour of industrialism.

In 1907 in the third Indian Industrial Conference T. K. Gajjar said that without material prosperity no progress was possible and he asked Indians to learn from England, Germany, and

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Chesney, *India under Experiment*, p. 64. See also Charles Powell, "The Caste System in India", *The Empire Review*, July, 1908, p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> H. Cotton, *New India or India in Transition* (London, 1907), p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>6</sup> H. Risley, *The People of India*, p. 286 (Risley was Census Commissioner from 1899-1902),

America the methods of industrial and material progress.<sup>1</sup> Gajjar pleaded for a radical change in the outlook of Indians towards the mundane affairs of life and he urged them to establish colleges and polytechnics so that they would outnumber all the temples and mosques which were supposed to minister to the spiritual needs of the people.<sup>2</sup> In his presidential address to the fourth Indian Industrial Conference in 1908, R. N. Mudholkar said that the prevalence of an ascetic ideal of life had in the past encouraged the best Indians to despise wealth so that very few of them had devoted all their energies for the development of the industrial resources of the country. He even went to the length of saying that the decline of Indian arts and industries was as much due to the economic competition of industrially advanced Western countries and the fiscal policy pursued by the British rulers, as to the prevalence of an ascetic, non-industrial outlook towards life on the part of Indians.<sup>3</sup> But it is generally admitted that upto the end of the eighteenth century the industrial development of India was not inferior to that of the more advanced European nations.<sup>4</sup> This could not have been so if Indians were always dominated by a non-industrial outlook towards life.

Many Indian thinkers who favoured industrialism, however, warned their countrymen against imitating the West in her "feverish pursuit of wealth". The Gaekwar of Baroda said in the second Indian Industrial Conference in 1906 that he hoped that India would be able to adopt modern Western industrial methods without completely forgetting her ideals of economic simplicity.<sup>5</sup> Radhakamal Mukhopadhyaya stated that, unlike the peoples of the modern West who generally glorified wealth and believed in the multiplication of wants, in ancient India the people idealised poverty and believed in the limitation of wants.<sup>6</sup> (In ancient India the work of the accumulation and the holding of wealth was reserved primarily for the second and the third

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Third Indian Industrial Conference*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fourth Indian Industrial Conference*, pp. 20-21. See also a speech of K. H. Vakil in the *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress* and a speech of D. V. Krishna Rao in the *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Industrial Commission, 1916-18*, para 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Second Indian Industrial Conference*, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p. 466.

castes, and the highest caste, the Brahmins, were supposed to live a life of poverty.)<sup>1</sup> Annie Besant maintained that the peoples of the West could be more happy if instead of ceaselessly trying to devise new objects for the satisfaction of their ever-increasing material needs, they limited their wants, and she believed that in learning the art of simplicity the West could take valuable lessons from India.<sup>2</sup> In 1913 Bepin Pal declared that the style of living of the Western working-man was as much responsible for his economic servitude as the greed of his employer, and he argued that in order to ensure that the Western working-man gained his economic freedom it was not enough that there should be a more equitable distribution of wealth among the employer and the worker, it was also necessary that the worker should limit his wants.<sup>3</sup>

But at the time when Pal was writing, in the West, and even more so in India, the necessary and reasonable wants of the common men were not generally satisfied. In spite of all that could be said in favour of the ideal of economic simplicity most Indian thinkers had to recognise this fact.<sup>4</sup> In order to increase the national wealth they, therefore, wanted to industrialise the country, even with state aid and protection.

The British rulers of India generally believed in the theory of *laissez-faire*. According to the *laissez-faire* theory every man by acting without state help and assistance and by merely pursuing his own economic self-interest was led by an invisible hand to produce the maximum amount of national wealth.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1892 M. G. Ranade pointed out that the theory of *laissez-faire* depended on assumptions that were not valid for all times and all countries, and he drew particular attention to the fact that this theory had been challenged by new economic schools and especially by the German Historical School.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 457; A. Besant, *East and West and the Destinies of Nations*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> A. Besant, *East and West and The Destinies of Nations*, pp. 19-20; A. Besant, *East and West* (Adyar Popular Lectures No. 5), pp. 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> B. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> See *Speeches and Addresses of Sayaji Rao III, Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda*, ed. Anthony Soares, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> See Adam Smith, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (ed. Edwin Cannan), New York, 1937, pp. 423, 650-51.

<sup>6</sup> M. G. Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics*, pp. 19-20. See also Gide and Rist, *A History of Economic Doctrines* (London, 1948), p. 393.

In 1877 K. T. Telang argued that while Indians were denied the benefit of the British political theory that a people should not be taxed unless their representatives consented to such taxation there was no reason why the economic theory of *laissez-faire* which prevailed in Britain should necessarily be adopted in India.<sup>1</sup> He also pointed out that not all English economists believed that the theory of *laissez-faire* was applicable under all circumstances. John Stuart Mill conceded that in countries where the people were poor, ignorant, unenterprising, and lacked the spirit of cooperation it might be necessary and desirable that a progressive government should take an active part in the development of the national economy by building roads, works of irrigation, hospitals, schools, printing presses, etc.<sup>2</sup> Arguing on the above lines K. T. Telang maintained that in a backward country like India there could be no great industrial development without state aid and assistance, and he declared that the adoption of a policy of *laissez-faire* would prove as harmful in India as it had proved beneficial in Britain.<sup>3</sup>

From the assumption of direct rule by the Crown in 1858 till the end of the nineteenth century the Government of India persisted in pursuing the doctrinaire policy of *laissez-faire* in the industrial field. "It was thought inevitable", writes Vera Anstey, "that India should remain predominantly agricultural, whilst the government wished to avoid both the active encouragement of industries that (like the cotton mill industry) competed with powerful British interests, and increased State expenditure".<sup>4</sup> Upto the end of the nineteenth century all that the government did to assist the development of industries was to make very limited provision for imparting technical and industrial education and for disseminating industrial and commercial information.<sup>5</sup>

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Madras Government took some little step for the development of industries.

<sup>1</sup> K. T. Telang, *Select Writings and Speeches*, ed. V. V. Thakur, pp. 153-56. See also V. G. Kale, *Indian Industrial and Economic Problems*, pp. 176-77; and a speech of R. N. Mudholkar in the *Report of the Thirteenth Indian National Congress*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (People's Edition, London, 1886), pp. 570-71.

<sup>3</sup> K. T. Telang, *Select Writings and Speeches*, pp. 147-49.

<sup>4</sup> Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India* (London, 1929), p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

This participation of the Madras Government in the industrial development of the province was regarded by the local European commercial community as "a serious menace to private enterprise and an unwarrantable intervention on the part of the state in matters beyond the sphere of Government".<sup>1</sup> Morley substantially agreed with this point of view, and, in a dispatch of 29th July 1910, while conceding that state funds could be spent in order to familiarise Indians with the scientific methods of production which were prevalent in the advanced European countries, he strongly deprecated, in accordance with his doctrinaire *laissez-faire* creed,<sup>2</sup> any active participation of the government in the development of industries.<sup>3</sup> This dispatch had a "deadening effect" on the progressive industrial policy of the Madras Government.<sup>4</sup>

Upto the First Great War the Indian Government did not take any active or any important part in the development of industries. During the war it became abundantly clear that the industrial backwardness of India had greatly weakened the military strength of the British empire, and that, even from the purely British point of view, it was unwise for the government not to take steps in order to remove the industrial backwardness of India.<sup>5</sup> In 1916 the government appointed the Indian Industrial Commission which recommended that the government should take an active part in the industrial development of the country.<sup>6</sup>

Indian publicists had for a long time demanded not only state aid but also state protection for indigenous industries. Telang argued that the question whether free trade was better than protection could not be decided by considering the principles of political economy alone.<sup>7</sup> Free trade may be an economically

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, para. 107.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that when Morley asked Hardinge if he would like to succeed Minto as Viceroy of India, the only question he put to Hardinge was whether he was a free-trader. Hardinge replied in the affirmative. (*The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst*, pp. 3-4.)

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, para. 108.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. Lord Crewe, who succeeded Lord Morley as Secretary of State for India, however, said that the Madras Government put a too limited construction on Morley's dispatch (*Ibid.*, para. 108).

<sup>5</sup> See *The Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, paras. 337, 340.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> K. T. Telang, *Select Writings and Speeches*, p. 98.

sound policy but it might be better, from the point of view of national defence, to build up, by means of state protection, the basic, key and defence industries, even at the cost of some economic sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in spite of some economic loss, state protection of certain industries for building up a balanced and diversified economy might be desirable.<sup>2</sup> Telang and Ranade further pointed out that even J. S. Mill<sup>3</sup> had conceded that temporary protection of an infant industry in an undeveloped country could, in certain cases, be ultimately beneficial even from the economic point of view.<sup>4</sup>

Some Indian nationalists firmly believed that the Government of India refused to grant protection to Indian industries primarily because it sought to safeguard the interests of those British industries which exported their goods to India.<sup>5</sup> This belief was strengthened by a knowledge of the fact that in the eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth century Britain, in order to safeguard the interests of her industries, had imposed heavy protective duties against Indian goods.<sup>6</sup> Because Indians could not protect their industries due to British imperial policy, some nationalists argued that under British rule Indians suffered from economic domination even more than from political domination,<sup>7</sup> and they asserted that if they had to choose between political and economic *Swaraj* they would choose economic *Swaraj*.<sup>8</sup>

Indian publicists used to draw attention to the fact that state

<sup>1</sup> See J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 555.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 558.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 556-57.

<sup>4</sup> K. T. Telang, *Select Writings and Speeches*, pp. 179-77 ; M. G. Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics*, p. 25. See also Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, p. 62 ; and Editorial Notes in the *The Indian World*, September, 1905, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> See a speech of D. V. Krishna Rao in the *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress*, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> See R. C. Dutt, *India in the Victorian Age : An Economic Survey of the People* (London, 1904), preface, vii-ix ; D. H. Buchanan, *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India* (New York, 1934), pp. 464-65 ; Pandit M. M. Malaviya's separate note in the *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, pp. 250-52).

<sup>7</sup> See a speech of V. G. Kale in the *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress*, p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> See a speech of Padam Raj Jain in the *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress*, pp. 128-29.

aid and protection had facilitated the industrialisation of Germany and the United States of America,<sup>1</sup> that the British colonies, such as Australia and Canada, had raised protective duties even against the goods of their mother country, and that even in Britain faith in free trade had declined for Chamberlain had advocated a policy of imperial preference and Balfour had supported a policy of retaliation.<sup>2</sup> Further, the success of Japan in adopting Western industrial methods with the help of state aid and protection did much to sustain and to strengthen the nationalist belief in the desirability of industrialisation and in the necessity of state aid and protection.<sup>3</sup>

In 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford Report drew attention to the fact that the theoretical free trader hardly existed in India.<sup>4</sup> In 1919 the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament recommended that India should be granted, with certain reservations, the same fiscal freedom which Britain or the self-governing British colonies enjoyed.<sup>5</sup> In 1923 the Government of India adopted the recommendation of the Indian Fiscal Commission that a policy of "discriminating protection" should be introduced into India.<sup>6</sup>

Though most Indian economists and politicians were in favour of the industrialisation of the country even with the help of the state, not all of them liked every aspect of the modern industrial

<sup>1</sup> Speech of V. G. Kale in the *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress*, p. 94 ; *Speeches and Addresses of Sayaji Rao III Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda*, ed. Anthony Soares, p. 62 ; and M. Venkatarangaya, "Some Aspects of the Indian Economic Problem", *The Indian World*, November, 1910, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> See speeches of A. C. Mazumdar and V. V. J. Pantulu in the *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress*, pp. 81-82 ; and the views of R. C. Dutt in *The Swadeshi Movement : A Symposium* (published by G. A. Natesan, Madras), 2nd ed., p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> See the speeches of G. Subramaniam Iyer and of N. K. Ramaswami Aiyar in the *Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress*, pp. 122-25, 132 ; *Sir J. C. Bose : His Life and Speeches* (published by Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1920), p. 150 ; and a speech of Dadabhai in the *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India : April 1910 to March 1911*, p. 649.

<sup>4</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109) 1918, para. 342.

<sup>5</sup> *Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill Vol. I : Report and Proceedings of the Committee, 1919*. See p. 11 which deals with Clause 33 of the Bill.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission (1921-22)*, para. 55.

system. Rabindranath Tagore believed that Western commercial industrialism had made the cities ugly and had destroyed the beauty of the countryside.<sup>1</sup> He said that by providing very little opportunity to the workers for the exercise of their artistic abilities, modern machines had taken much of the pleasure of work away from them.<sup>2</sup> Poets like Tagore, philosophers like Radhakrishnan,<sup>3</sup> art critics like Coomaraswamy, though they were not opposed to machinery as such, agreed more or less with the opinion of William Morris that modern industrialism necessarily resulted in "utilitarian ugliness"<sup>4</sup> and that it was "founded on the art-lacking or unhappy labour of the greater part of men".<sup>5</sup>

Coomaraswamy agreed that the industrial revolution was virtually inevitable in Europe and that the broad outlines of the industrial system would have to be reproduced in India;<sup>6</sup> but he argued that while the method of large-scale factory production should be applied for the manufacture of goods which required merely a mechanical skill, it was desirable that the handicraft system of production should be retained for the production of goods which required artistic skill and which served an artistic purpose.<sup>7</sup> In the manner of William Morris<sup>8</sup> he asserted that the handicraft system of production, unlike large-scale mechanical and commercial method of production, recognised that men were more important than machines and that industry without art was always degrading.<sup>9</sup>

Radhakamal Mukhopadhyaya maintained that the preservation of many of the old cottage industries would be profitable not only from the artistic but also from the economic point of view. He conceded that in certain fields, such as mining and railways, the establishment of large-scale industries partly on the Western

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Japan-Jatri*, pp. 60-63. See also A. Besant, *The Necessity for Religious Education*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, "Karmar Umedar", *Sadhana*, Magh 1298-99 B. S., pp. 211-16.

<sup>3</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, pp. 214-18.

<sup>4</sup> W. Morris, *On Art and Socialism* (London, 1947), p. 224.

<sup>5</sup> W. Morris, *Art, Labour and Socialism*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Essays in National Idealism*, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, pp. 34-33.

<sup>8</sup> W. Morris, *Art, Labour and Socialism* (London, 1907), pp. 12-18.

<sup>9</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*, pp. 10-11, 34-35.

model could not be avoided, because in those fields any other method of production would be economically unprofitable<sup>1</sup> ; but he believed that in most other fields it was possible and desirable to preserve the traditional cottage industries. The efficiency of the ancient cottage industries could be increased by adopting the latest discoveries of Western science, such as by introducing cheap power-looms in the cottages, or by distributing electricity to the cottages from a central village electricity depot which might be jointly owned by the villagers.<sup>2</sup> Radhakamal suggested that the position of the small artisans could be strengthened if cooperative societies, which had proved successful in various Western countries, were introduced into India.<sup>3</sup>

Even in this age of large-scale industrialism it is not economically unprofitable to retain certain small-scale industries. But though certain small-scale cottage industries can be preserved, many Indian industries could only be regenerated by the adoption of modern Western industrial methods. Coomaraswamy's criticisms of Indian politicians, because they advocated the introduction of power-loom mills,<sup>4</sup> was not justified. P. N. Bose argued : "It would . . . be as reasonable to expect our weavers with the hand-loom and our smelters with the primitive furnace to compete successfully with the cotton manufacturers and iron smelters of the West under existing conditions as it would be to expect people armed with muzzle-loaders to successfully defend themselves against enemies armed with quickfiring long-range rifles."<sup>5</sup>

In *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1908, Gandhi had advised Indians to abandon completely the path of Western industrialism. He wrote : "Machinery has begun to desolate Europe, . . . Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation ; it represents a great sin".<sup>6</sup> In his later writings Gandhi explained that he was

<sup>1</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 449-50 ; see also E. B. Havell, "The Foundations of Indian Economics", *The Asiatic Review*, May, 1915, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p. 451 ; E. B. Havell, "The Foundations of Indian Economics", *The Asiatic Review*, May, 1915, p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p. 452.

<sup>4</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Essays in National Idealism*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> See a speech in 1911 (P. N. Bose, *Essays and Lectures*, pp. 83-84).

<sup>6</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 85. See also pp. 191-93 above.

not opposed to machinery as such, but that he was opposed to the modern industrial system which had led to the unjust exploitation of human beings and to the concentration of wealth in a few hands.<sup>1</sup>

Though the large majority of Indian economists and politicians rejected the views on industrialism which Gandhiji expressed in *Hind Swaraj*, they were not unaware of the defects of the modern industrial system. Bepin Pal,<sup>2</sup> Annie Besant,<sup>3</sup> Radhakamal Mukhopadhyaya,<sup>4</sup> Lajpat Rai<sup>5</sup> and others drew attention to the fact that the majority of labourers in Western countries lived under unsatisfactory economic and social conditions. P. N. Bose argued that though the increase in the national wealth of advanced Western industrial countries had improved the economic condition of the Western working-man, yet as the newly-created wealth was very inequitably distributed between the worker and the capitalist the relative poverty of the Western working-man had increased while his actual poverty had not.<sup>6</sup> This enormous inequality of wealth gave rise to a serious class conflict between the labourer and the capitalist and threatened the very foundations of Western industrial societies.<sup>7</sup>

Bepin Pal believed that in democratic countries such as Britain, France and the United States of America this class conflict might be ended peacefully and constitutionally by the adoption of some form of State Socialism, but he doubted whether this class conflict could be ended peacefully and constitutionally in countries such as Germany and Austria-Hungary where there did not exist any democratic political structure.<sup>8</sup> In Russia, where there existed no political democracy, the Bolsheviki<sup>9</sup> came to power

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from Gandhi*, ed. Nirmal Kumar Bose, pp. 57-60. See also p. 193 above.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> A. Besant, *Wake Up, India*, pp. 116-17.

<sup>4</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 333-35.

<sup>5</sup> Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India*, pp. 199-202.

<sup>6</sup> P. N. Bose, *The Illusions of New India*, pp. 254-55; P. N. Bose, *An Eastern View of Western Progress*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> R. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 334-35.

<sup>8</sup> B. C. Pal, *The World Situation and Ourselves*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>9</sup> Pal said that at first he fought shy of the word "Bolshevism", but later after a visit to Europe, where he could study the literature of Bolshevism,

by pursuing revolutionary methods. In 1919 Pal asked the rulers of India to consider whether in India, where the people were very poor and where there existed no political democracy, there might not break out a violent Bolshevik revolution if vigorous and timely measures were not taken to increase the political liberties and to improve the economic condition of the Indian masses.<sup>1</sup>

In 1913 Pal drew attention to the fact that there had arisen a powerful group of thinkers in Europe who had realised that so long as there existed grave economic inequalities the establishment of a political democracy alone would not secure the freedom of the common people<sup>2</sup>; and he pointed out that though representative government had theoretically transferred all political power from kings and aristocrats to the common masses, as a matter of fact, the real rulers in modern political democracies were the wealthy capitalists, who with the help of the educated middle classes, really controlled the democratic parliaments.<sup>3</sup>

In 1919 Lajpat Rai declared that many Indian nationalists were afraid of attacking the privileges of the territorial aristocrats and the industrial magnates, and were willing to maintain an economic system in which a small minority of people possessed the greater part of the national wealth.<sup>4</sup> He clearly saw that it was not enough to fight against the domination of foreign rulers, it was also necessary to fight against the privileges which the Indian capitalists and landlords enjoyed.<sup>5</sup> He declared that India needed leaders like Keir Hardie and Lansbury who would not be afraid to attack the privileges of the men of property and who would fight for the establishment of a real democracy in order to provide equality of opportunity for all.<sup>6</sup>

Lajpat and Pal, who criticised various features of the capitalist system, were, by no means socialists. They wanted to mitigate

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he came to realise that the aim of Bolshevism, which was a powerful and growing force in Europe, was to emancipate the working men from the rule of the capitalists. (*Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.)

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64. Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, pp. 196-98.

<sup>3</sup> B. C. Pal, *The World Situation and Ourselves*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> Lajpat Rai, *India's Will to Freedom*, pp. 23-24, 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33. Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India*, p. 203.

the evils of the capitalistic system by the development of a strong trade union movement<sup>1</sup> and by various other means.

In 1919 Lajpat wrote : "We know we cannot fly the flag of Socialism. We do not understand Socialism. We have never studied it."<sup>2</sup> In the period from 1885 to 1919 not many educated Indians had come into contact with socialist thought or had been converted to socialism.

<sup>1</sup> See B. C. Pal, *The World Situation and Ourselves*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> Lajpat Rai, *India's Will to Freedom*, pp. 36-37.

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