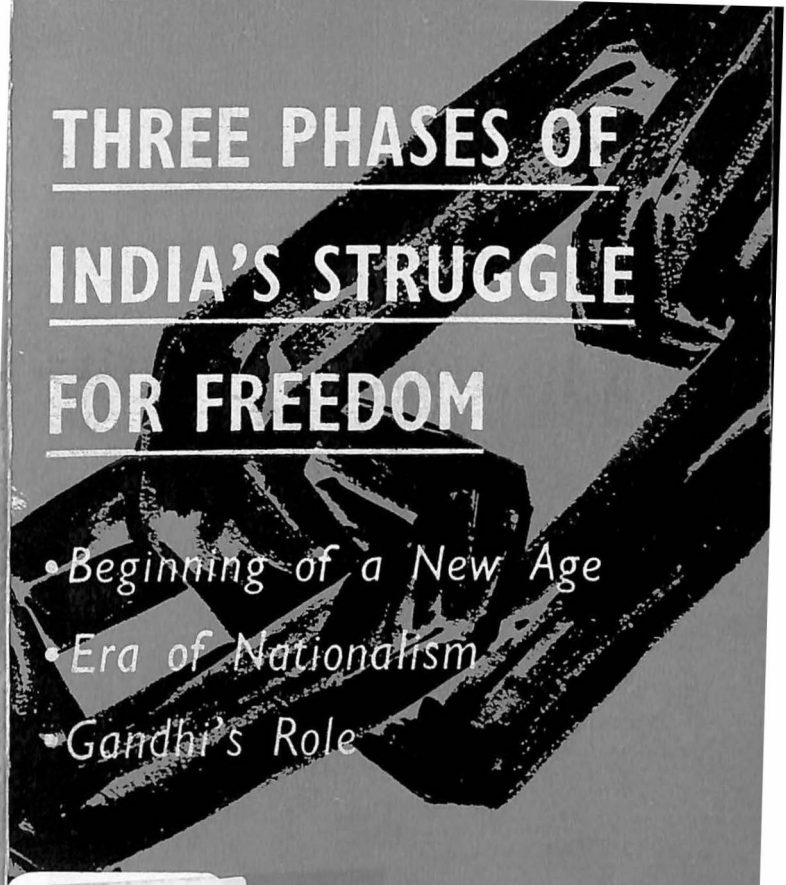
# THREE PHASES OF INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM



- Beginning of a New Age
- Era of Nationalism
- Gandhi's Role



Dr. R. C. Majumdar

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*BY*

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## *PUBLISHERS' NOTE*

DR. R. C. MAJUMDAR, the well-known historian and ex-Vice Chancellor of Dacca University, was invited by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, to inaugurate its Birla Endowment Lectures Series during the celebrations of its 23rd Foundation Week and deliver lectures on some important aspect of modern Indian history. Dr. Majumdar chose the epoch-making era of our struggle for independence.

The lectures, which were delivered in Bombay on December 12, 13 and 14, 1960, attracted an intelligent audience. As a number of requests were received to give them permanent form, they are now issued, with slight additions and alterations, in our General Series.

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## LECTURE I

# THE BEGINNING OF A NEW AGE

I PROPOSE to deal, in a course of three lectures, with three significant aspects of India's struggle for freedom. It is a topic which no Indian ever regards without interest, and few, perhaps, without prejudice. As I shall try to show, this struggle has a long history behind it, and has passed from stage to stage, and strength to strength, in a logical sequence, till the final goal was reached in our own time. Though the last phase of this struggle has attracted a great deal of attention, and much has been written on the subject, most of the publications are merely political pamphleteering and the *prasasti* (eulogy) of the great leaders, either by themselves, or by their devoted followers. An objective approach to the subject, in a truly detached and historical spirit, is a great desideratum. I have made an endeavour to indicate, in these three lectures, the general outline of such a study. How far my attempt has been successful it will be for others to judge. On my own part I start with a mind free from any obsession, prejudice or preconception of any kind. But I feel it necessary to remind my readers of the two cardinal principles of history, to which I propose to strictly adhere. These are, first, that history is no respecter of persons; and, secondly, that a historian must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

As I have said, the subject of these three lectures is India's struggle for freedom. We are so much accustomed to this phrase that we do not always seek to understand its real and inner meaning. The phrase includes three concepts: India, freedom, and struggle. Let us consider them one by one.

It will no doubt appear very strange to you if one asks, what is India? In the twentieth century, we have

been accustomed to take India to mean the whole of the country or sub-continent known by that name in Geography, as a national or political unit. As such India has a precise meaning to us. But to our ancestors, who lived under the British rule even a century and a half ago, India in this sense had no meaning and no existence. They talked of the Sikhs, Rajputs, Marathis, Hindusthanis, Bengalis, Oriyas, Tamils etc., but had no clear conception of an Indian. We learn from Bishop Heber, who widely travelled over North India in 1824, that the people in U.P. regarded the Bengalis as much a foreigner as the English. In spite of the slogan of Hindu Pad Padshahi, the Marathis had ravaged without compunction the territories of the Sikhs and Rajputs on the west, the Bengalis in the east, the Tamils and Kannadas in the south, and the Hindusthanis in the north. To a Bengali the Marathas were not only as much a foreigner as the English, but they were hated foreigners. The Marathas tried to form an alliance with the English in order to ravage Bengal. The Bengalis requited it by offering prayers and thanksgivings to God at each successive victory of the British against the Marathas and other Indian peoples. The conception of India, as a whole, was to be found only in the literary works of a past age, and still survived in theory, but it had no application to actual politics till the sixties or seventies of the 19th century.

So long as there was no conception of India, there could not have been any idea of freedom of India, far less any struggle for attaining it. But, in reality, the case was perhaps worse. For even among the smaller political units into which India was divided, there was not the same urge for freedom from British yoke. In Bengal, for example, the British rule was regarded by the Hindus as only a change of masters, and to a good one from the bad. The great leader of Bengal, Raja Rammohan Roy, publicly offered thanks to God for having delivered the country from the yoke of the tyrannical Muslim rulers and placed it under the Government of the English. Another eminent Bengali leader, Prasannakumar Tagore, proceeded even further and said that if God offered him

the choice between independence and British rule, he would ask for the latter. Indeed freedom was not only not thought of, it was not even desired. This was the prevailing spirit in Bengal. It is more difficult to speak so categorically of other provinces. But one thing is certain. Nowhere in India did the conception of national State supersede that of the dynastic State. The allegiance of the people, if any, was due to the ruler and his dynasty, but not to any regional State. There were attempts in 1857 to restore the Mughal dynasty in Delhi, the Peshwa's supremacy in Central Provinces and the rule of the Nawab family of Oudh. But there was no question of establishing a national State in any of these regions. India was, of course, altogether out of the picture.

This would give us some idea of the nature of the outbreak in 1857. Curiously enough, though eminent Indian leaders of the 19th century, including contemporaries, almost unanimously condemned it, today a large section of the Indians regard it as the first Indian or national war of independence, a phrase made popular by Savarkar's famous book. National it was certainly not. Nor was it Indian, for the arena of struggle was restricted to a portion of North India, roughly corresponding to modern U.P. and a small slice of Western Bihar. Those who have made even a cursory study of the main events, know full well that there was no war for independence, for the very simple reason that it was not necessary. As soon as the sepoys mutinied, the British Officers in U.P., both civil and military, except those in Lakhnau and Kanpur, had no power or will to resist. Some of them were killed, and the rest fled for their lives. Within a week or ten days, the fabric of British Government in U.P. tumbled down like a house of cards. So there was a political vacuum and everybody was now free, only to fight with his neighbours. Local magnates set themselves up as rulers. Zamindars and Talukdars resumed possession of their lands which had been sold by auction, powerful chiefs fought with one another to pay off old scores, the poor people forced the money-lenders to return the bonds, and lastly the rowdy ruffian elements, the Gujars, Ranghars

etc., were free to ravage the country, plundering and murdering indiscriminately both Europeans and Indians of all classes. There was thus a great deal of popular upsurge, but so far there was no fight between the Indians and the British, but only between the Indians themselves, and complete independence was achieved without any war. The situation is somewhat analogous to what took place 90 years later in 1947. The British left U.P. to herself and the almost bloodless revolution was followed by the shedding of each other's blood by the Indians themselves. But there was a great difference. In 1947, the British left India to two organized Indian nations—, but in 1857, the British officers left U.P. to a number of warring factions, and within a few months the British forces advanced to take revenge. Then, for the first time, commenced the fight between the British on one side and the scattered groups of Indians on the other. The chiefs, Talukdars, and people had to fight to the wall in order to save their ill-gotten gains and to escape the fury of British vengeance, though two or three of them now professed to fight for Oudh and its Nawab. Even then there was no organized or combined resistance, and though, in the hour of danger, there were coalitions of local chiefs here and there, in the province of U. P. alone there were numerous factions which the British could easily crush piecemeal. In any case the only war that the Indians waged against the British was not fought to achieve indepedence but to maintain it; and whatever that independence might mean, it was certainly not independence of India. Thus in the ultimate analysis, the so-called Indian or National War of Independence was neither Indian nor National, and not even a war to achieve independence of any particular region.

As a matter of fact there could be no national war of independence before the Indians were conscious of forming a nationality and imbued with a sense of patriotism or yearning for independence. These notions were absent in India until they were imported from the West along with the English education. This may hurt the self-esteem of the Indians, but it is bare truth which no one should deny. In Bengal, where English education was

more deeply rooted and widely spread at an earlier date than in other provinces, the ideas of patriotism and nationalism had grown up steadily and made themselves conspicuous during the sixties and seventies of the 19th century A.D. That the course of development was more or less the same in other parts of India, would be evident from the following passage from Tilak's writings in 1885:

"We are, at present, gradually being inspired by the spirit of patriotism. The birth of patriotism among us is due to English rule and English education..... The spirit of patriotism has not as yet permeated all classes. It is only those who have come under the influence of English education..... that have been inspired by that spirit. Patriotism is not our national quality."

Through English Education India came into contact with the Western ideas at a very opportune moment, when they were dominated by the French Revolution and the Age of Illumination, India awoke from the slumber of ages as a result of the impact. Rationalism took the place of blind faith, individualism supplanted the tyranny of dogma and traditional beliefs and authorities, and ideas of social justice and political rights shook off the lethargy and cast off the fatalism or determinism of ages. The achievements of the Europeans in arts and science, and the phenomenal progress in their society and politics, during the preceding two centuries when India sat still, infused new ideas and generated fresh vigour among men who had been hitherto content to leave everything to fate, to look back upon the past rather than the future, and turn their searchlight inwards rather than outwards over the wide world.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to describe in detail the result of the impact of the West upon the East. But one of its most precious gifts was the birth of nationalism in India. The most important factor that contributed to it was the sudden revelation of the past glory and greatness of the Hindus. The great English historian, James Mill, wrote his history of India in 1818, a book which was regarded as a standard authority in

those days. The Indians learnt from this book that the Hindus had ever been in the same abject condition in which the British found them in the eighteenth century. The Marquess of Hastings, the Governor-General, recorded the same opinion in his diary about the same time. Nor were the Indians themselves well-informed about their past history. The history of India, written by a teacher of the Fort William College in 1803, gives us a specimen of the meagre and ridiculous knowledge of ancient Indian history which the Indians possessed in those days. But all these were changed by the works of Oriental scholars like Sir William Jones, Prinsep, Bothlingk, and many others. Then came the archaeological explorations and excavations, regularly commenced in A.D. 1861 under the supervision of Alexander Cunningham. The more popular works of European scholars like Max Muller, Fergusson, Wilson and Indian scholars like Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Rajendralal Mitra and others brought home to all English-educated Indians the glory and greatness of the ancient Hindus. We can only dimly perceive today the effect of all this upon the Indians, a subject people without any status in the world, and naturally suffering from an inferiority complex, when they suddenly came to know that their ancestors were as great as the Greeks and Romans, and belonged to the same family of mankind from whom were descended all the famous nations in Europe who flourished in ancient, medieval and modern times. The name of Asoke, till then practically unknown, loomed large as having ruled over India from Hindukush to Assam and from the Himalaya to Mysore, while his writ, engraved in the same language and same script, was obeyed over the whole of India. The Indians also learnt that Buddhism, which arose in India, was the only one of the three great world-religions founded by an Aryan, and is even today followed by one-fifth of the entire human race. What Indian was there whose heart was not stirred up with deep emotion when he read the following lines, addressed to an English audience by Max Muller, the greatest oriental scholar living?

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

This common heritage of a great culture and rich historical tradition imbued the Hindus with an idea of common nationality. The revelation of India's past, supplemented by the bond of a common religion, served to bring them together, and their mutual intercourse was facilitated by the use of English as a *lingua franca* and easy means of communication through railways, steamers, cheap postage and telegraphs. Nationalism was thus founded on the bedrock of common religion, culture and historical tradition. But this gave it a Hindu character which it has retained, consciously or unconsciously, ever since. This was frankly admitted by the early nationalists in Bengal. Raj Narain Bose, the maternal grandfather of Aurobindo Ghosh of revered memory, may be regarded as the father of nationalism in Bengal. He delivered a lecture on the superiority of Hinduism in which he not only asserted the superiority of Hindu religion and culture over Christian theology and European Civilisation, but also boldly proclaimed that Hinduism, notwithstanding all its outer distinctions of caste, presented a much higher social idealism than had yet been reached by Christendom. He started a "Society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal" and issued a pamphlet outlining its objects. It was a clarion call to the Bengalis to give up everything foreign and use Bengali language, food, dress, manners, custom etc. A practical demonstra-

tion was given by one of his followers, Naba Gopal Mitra, who started the Hindu Mela. It was an annual gathering on the last day of every Bengali year, and its special features were to awaken national feelings by means of patriotic songs, poems and lectures, a detailed survey of the political, social, religious and economic condition of India, and an exhibition of indigenous arts and crafts collected from all over India. It started in 1867 and continued till 1880. Naba Gopal started an association called 'National Society' and edited a paper called 'National Paper'. The avowed object of the National Society was the promotion of unity and national feeling among the Hindus. When objection was taken to the use of the word 'national', Naba Gopal boldly argued in his paper that the Hindus certainly formed a nation by themselves. He supported his theory by the following argument.

"Nationalism is based on unity which is brought about, sustained and promoted in different peoples by different means such as love of liberty among the Greeks, Romans and the English, and the Mosaic law among the Jews. The basis of national unity in India is Hindu religion. Hindu nationality embraces all the Hindus of India irrespective of their locality or language. The Hindus are destined to be a religious nation."

Thus Naba Gopal forestalled Jinnah's theory of two nations by more than half a century. Modern Indians would be tempted to regard the Hindu nationalism of Rajnarain and Naba Gopal as mere personal idiosyncracies. But it was not really so. Consciously or unconsciously, the Hindu character was deeply imprinted on nationalism all over India. Take for example, Bal Gangadhar Tilak. When he preached nationalism in Maharashtra he mainly relied upon Shivaji *Utsav* and Ganapati festival, making a profound appeal through the twin parents of Hindu nationalism, namely religion cum culture and historical tradition. Shivaji's fight against Muslims for the sake of Hinduism was held out as the chief inspiration to nationalism. The Sikhs derived their national inspiration through the memory of Banda and Guru Govinda, who were sworn enemies of Islam and sacrificed themselves for the honour of

Sikh religion. Bepin Chandra Pal, a great national leader of the 20th century, has described in his autobiography how in his student days the national and patriotic feelings of young Bengalis were stimulated by the eloquent discourse of Surendranath Banerji on the Sikhs, and the disgraceful defeats inflicted on the Muslims by the Rajputs as depicted in the novels of Bankimchandra Chatterji. It cannot be a mere coincidence that the Bengali poets who wrote inspiring patriotic poems took their theme only from Hindu heroes. A great Bengali poet wrote a stirring poem on the occasion of the visit of Edward VII as Prince of Wales to India. Mother India describes to the British prince the past glories of her children; the achievements of the Marathas, Rajputs, and Sikhs are referred to in glowing terms, but not a word of any Muslim hero. Even Rabindranath Tagore, whom no one would possibly accuse of narrow nationalism of a sectarian character, has written the most stirring poems about Shivaji, Guru Govinda, Banda, and the Rajput heroes,—poems which have no parallel in Indian literature and could only come out of the depth of emotions evoked by a sense of common nationality; but Rabindranath's Muse was never inspired by a similar feeling for the Muslims.

But it would be wrong to suppose that the Hindus alone were guilty of imparting such a narrow sectarian character to Indian nationalism. The Muslims, who imbibed a national feeling earlier than the Hindus, thought in terms of Muslim nationalism, and we have positive evidence of it from the second quarter of the 19th century. The great movement known as Wahabism was started by Sayid Ahmad about 1820 A.D., and it rapidly spread from the North-West Frontier to the eastern borders of Bengal. The movement was started with the object of purifying Islam, but soon developed into a definite plan to establish the rule of the Muslims after driving away the Kafirs, which term included all non-Muslims, both British and Indian. The underlying religious theory was that the Muslims must not live in *dar-ul-harb* i.e. a country under a non-Muslim ruler. They must declare *jihad* or holy war against such a ruler, and either establish *dar-ul-islam*, i.e.

Muslim rule, or migrate to another country ruled by the Muslims.

Numerous Muslims joined the standard of Sayid Ahmad who appointed four Khalifas or Lieutenants under him and gave a regular military training to his followers. He established his headquarters among the sturdy Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province, but he had a regular organization through which his writ ran as far as Bengal and Hyderabad in the Deccan. The way in which money, men, and arms were steadily supplied from one end of India to the other in spite of the vigilance of the British police reads almost like a romance. Sayid Ahmad first turned his attention to the Sikhs who were then ruling over the Punjab. He led an army to convert this *dar-ul-harb* into *dar-ul-islam*. He recruited his men and equipped them with arms in British territory with the connivance, if not the encouragement, of the British. These hated and dreaded alike the Sikhs and Pathans, and naturally welcomed the fight, for they were sure to gain whichever of the combatants lost. Sayid Ahmad issued a pamphlet declaring holy war against the Sikhs whom he described as oppressors of Muslims. He had some success at first and captured Peshawar. He immediately struck coins in his own name as "the Defender of the Faith." But the hands of Ranjit Singh were strong enough. The Sikh soldiers defeated and killed Sayid Ahmad at the battle of Balakot in 1831, and the *dar-ul-islam* was crushed. But the Wahabi Movement was not an ephemeral or sudden upheaval, without any definite aim or organization, like the later outbreak of 1857. Though the leader died, the movement survived him for more than thirty years. When the British conquered the Punjab, the Wahabis turned against them and kept up a steady opposition. During the period between 1850 and 1857 the British sent as many as sixteen expeditions against them without much success. It is very significant that the Wahabis did not take any conspicuous part in the outbreak of 1857. Perhaps they had a feeling which was expressed a quarter of a century later by a Muslim chief, who said to W. S. Blunt that what he did not like about the outbreak of 1857 is that

there were too many Hindus in it. But after 1858, when all armed opposition in India had come to an end, the Wahabis resumed their propaganda. It took two forms. The first was to urge the Indian Muslims to leave their country and migrate to Sittana, the headquarters of the Wahabis, in the North-Western Frontier, in order to fight the British and conquer India. The second was to rally the Pathan tribes on the Frontier for the same purpose. The response was quite good. In 1858 a British force of 5,000 was sent against them. Several more expeditions had to be sent during the next five years. The Wahabis gave good account of themselves, and in 1863 they repulsed a British force with heavy casualties and even captured a British picket. In this desperate situation a fresh British expedition of 9,000 troops was sent. The Wahabis were defeated in several engagements and the confederacy of Pathan tribes organized by them was broken. After the military strength of the Wahabis was thus crushed in the north-west, the ringleaders in India, who kept up the organization, were hunted down and prosecuted in large number. A series of State trials inflicted heavy penalties upon them and thus the Movement was finally stamped out of India.

I have described the Wahabi Movement at some length, because it was really the first war of independence, on a big scale, fought against the British during the 19th century. As mentioned above, the Wahabis set up a regular organization with the definite object of establishing Muslim rule by driving away, first the Sikhs, and then the British who took their place in the Punjab. But it was a movement of the Muslims, for the Muslims, and by the Muslims, who regarded themselves as a nation in India. It may therefore be called Muslim National War of Independence.

As in the case of the Hindus, so also with the Muslims, the basis of the nationalism was a common religion and common historical tradition of past glory and greatness. In both cases literature fed this nationalism. While Indian vernaculars, other than Urdu, sang the glories of

ancient India, the Urdu literature was full of the reminiscence of Persia and Arabia. Dr. S. K. Chatterji observes:

"Urdu poetry, up to the fourth quarter of the 19th century, was just a reflex of Persian poetry. The Urdu poets thought and wrote in terms of Persian poetry; the references were to things and events and ideas of Persia and Arabia; they use names of all Persian flowers, all the little streams of Persia and its towns and provinces and its hills and mountains, but they never mention an Indian flower or an Indian river or mountain or town, much less an Indian hero or heroine. It was an absolute and deliberate shutting of their eyes and ears and mind to all the great things of their own country, the soil of which, according to a great Urdu poet, was *napak* or impure." In spite of a very few exceptions, here and there, these observations are generally applicable to Urdu poetry. They never ceased to remind the Muslims that they were in India but not of India. The Muslims wrote historical novels in Urdu, the best two of them dealing with the crusades and the conquest of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni in Gujarat.

It would thus appear that by the end of the third quarter of the 19th century A.D. the ideal of nationalism was well established among the Muslims, and was forging ahead among the Hindus. But this was not Indian nationalism, and should rather be called Hindu and Muslim nationalism, each making headway without coming into conflict with the other. This may be an unpalatable truth, but it is truth all the same. This is no doubt a regrettable state of things, but a little reflection will show that it was almost inevitable. On all essential points concerning religion and society,—the two most vital aspects of oriental life—the Hindus and Muslims differed almost as North and South Pole. Nearly a thousand years ago when the Muslims first came into contact with the Hindus of Northern India, the shrewd Alberuni made a few observations on the barriers which separated Muslims from Hindus. "The Hindus", he said, "differ from us in everything which other nations have in common." "They totally differ from us in religion, as we believe in nothing in which they believe, and vice versa." "They call the Muslims

*mlechchha,* i.e. impure, and forbid any social intercourse with them by way of intermarriage or interdining. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and the water of the Muslims," and so on. What Alberuni said in the eleventh century was almost equally true of the nineteenth century. The Hindus and Muslims, throughout the nine hundred years, formed two distinct communities separated by the iron bars of religious and social ideas. The difference was perpetually kept alive by the iconoclastic zeal of the Muslim rulers who found it an agreeable duty to demolish Hindu temples and break the images of Hindu Gods, from the days of Muhammad bin Quasim in 712 A.D. to those of Alivardi Khan about the middle of the 18th century A.D.

In addition to these fundamental differences in religion and culture, the historical traditions of the Hindus and Muslims stood as a great barrier between them. Every historical incident in India which reflected glory upon the Muslims brought in a painful memory of humiliation to the Hindus. Muhammad bin Quasim, Muhammad Ghori, Alauddin Khalji, and Aurangzeb were national heroes of the Muslims, and their conquests were the most notable and glorious incidents in the annals of the Muslims. The memories of these as well as the glorious achievements of the Muslims outside India formed the greatest stimulus to Muslim nationalism, and the well-known song of Iqbal enumerating the possessions of Islam all over the world, including Hindusthan, was almost a national anthem of the Muslims. But the careers of the Muslim Emperors mentioned above and the Muslim conquest of Hindusthan were most galling to the pride of the newly awakened sense of Hindu nationalism. Similarly, Rana Pratap, Shivaji, Baji Rao, Guru Govinda, Banda and Surajmall, who supplied the stimulus to Hindu nationalism, excited bitter memories in the minds of the Muslims. Coming down to everyday affairs in life, things like cow-killing and prohibition of music before mosque touched the most tender sentiments of the Hindus, and it would be worth while to make an attempt to find out how many riots broke out and heads were broken over these questions during

the last one hundred years. What is more important, each of the two communities regarded it as a point of national honour to maintain its standpoint. The Muslims felt humiliated if they could not kill a cow at any time and place they liked, and the Hindus felt it a disgrace to be compelled to stop music, even for five minutes, while passing before a mosque. These may be regarded as trivial matters, but their effect was deep and lasting, and we have recorded instances of bitter quarrel, sometimes ending in communal riots, throughout the 19th century A.D., and in a far more extensive form in the twentieth.

These differences between the Hindus and Muslims did not make much impression on public life so long as neither community had developed a national consciousness, giving rise to a sense of national honour. However paradoxical it might appear, the development of nationalism in India, along the lines indicated above, widened the gulf that separated the two communities. This point will be elaborated in the next chapter.

But while Hindu and Muslim nationalism held the field, and gained strength with each passing year, a new movement was gathering force which may be regarded as the beginning of Indian nationalism. It had its origin in the growth of political ideas and political organizations among the Hindus. Here, too, Bengal took the lead. Thanks to the English education, western political ideas and western types of political organizations made headway in Bengal during the second quarter of the 19th century A.D. I have no time to give an account of successive political organizations in Bengal, from 1836, each of which paved the way for a more democratic one, till the foundation of the British Indian Association in 1851. As its name implies, from the very beginning it realized the need of carrying on political agitation on all-India basis. A similar political association grew in imitation of it in Bombay, while in Madras a branch of the British Indian Association gradually developed into an independent organization. Both of them were known by the name of their provinces. How far, and in what direction, the political ideas developed in Bengal may be gauged from the peti-

tion which the British Indian Association sent to the British Parliament in 1852, narrating grievances and suggesting administrative reforms to be incorporated in the new Charter of 1853 which was then under discussion. They prayed that "the Legislature of British India be placed on the footing of those enjoyed by most of the colonies of Her Majesty." Among other prayers may be mentioned, reduction of the salaries of the higher officers, such as the Governor-General, Governor, member of the Executive Council, and the principal covenanted officers; and separation of the functions of the magistrates and judges. The British Indian Association stressed the demands, repeatedly made during the second quarter of the 19th century A.D., for throwing open all offices, including Indian Civil Service, without any reservation, to Indians, trial by jury, abolition of all distinctions between Indians and Europeans in the eye of the law, and the establishment of provincial and Central Legislative Councils composed of Government nominees and elected representatives of the people in equal number. It may be noted that even so early as 1852, the Government maintained that the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims were such that it would be difficult to give representation to the Indians in Council. Lord Ellenborough even suggested the creation of two chambers of legislature in India, one for the Hindus and another for the Muhammadans. It is, however, significant, that the Muslims did not themselves press for it, and did not oppose a Hindu leader who publicly protested against the idea, as they did thirty years later.

Thus by the middle of the 19th century A.D. there emerged two broad ideas as a result of the evolution of political thoughts in Bengal. The first was a united stand of all Indians on one political platform for the demand of political rights, and the second was a conception of administrative reforms leading to a sort of self-government. These two may be regarded as the beginning of what led gradually towards a political nationalism with aspirations for colonial self-government. In addition to the organized political associations like British Indian Association these ideas were preached by individuals. In 1867 W. C.

Bonnerjee, a Bengali Barrister of Calcutta, delivered, in England, a long speech on 'Representative and Responsible Government of India', and made the concrete suggestion of setting up a representative assembly and a senate in India. Six years later Ananda Mohan Bose also made a similar suggestion in a speech at Brighton. Krishtadas Pal, the veteran journalist and political leader in Bengal, wrote in 1874 in his famous paper, the *Hindoo Patriot*, that "our attention should be directed to Home Rule for India."

These advanced ideas led to the establishment of a new political association in Calcutta in 1876, called the Indian Association. Its leading spirit was Surendranath Banerji, who expressed his ideals in the following words: "We not only wanted to be members of the Bureaucracy and to leaven it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it and bringing the entire administration under complete popular domination. The demand for representative Government was definitely formulated, and it was but the legitimate product of the public activities that had preceded it." Regarding the name of the Association, Surendranath writes: "The conception of a United India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini, or, at any rate, of bringing all India upon the same common political platform had taken firm possession of the minds of the Indian leaders in Bengal. We accordingly resolved to call the new political body the Indian Association." The objects of the Association, defined in clear terms, included the two following. "(1) The unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations; and (2) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Muhammadans."

The Indian Association initiated practical steps to realize these ideas. When, in 1876, the age-limit of the competitors for the Indian Civil Service Examination was lowered from 21 to 19, the Indian Association started an all-India agitation against this measure. The Association wrote to the different provinces, and the letters and telegrams from the leaders of different regions of India, pro-

testing against the reactionary measure, were read at a public meeting in Calcutta. Encouraged by the favourable response, the Indian Association decided upon a momentous step. Surendranath Banerji was deputed to make a personal tour all over India. He left Calcutta on May 26, 1877, and visited Banaras, Allahabad, Kanpur, Lakhnau, Aligarh, Delhi, Agra, Meerut, Amritsar and Lahore. Next year he made a similar tour in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. At all these places he addressed crowded public meetings which endorsed the resolutions passed at the Calcutta public meeting. But he did something more. At Allahabad, Kanpur, Lakhnau, Meerut and Lahore he organized new political associations to act in concert with the Indian Association of Calcutta. He also made a close contact with the older political associations like the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona. As Surendranath himself put it "the underlying conception, and the true aim and purpose, of the Civil Service agitation was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India, to bring the various Indian provinces upon the same common platform, and to unite them through a sense of a common grievance and the inspiration of a common resolve." Such a task had never been attempted before. Referring to Surendranath's tour Sir Henry Cotton wrote in 1878: "The Bengali Babus now rule public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong. A quarter of a century ago, the idea of any Bengali influence in the Punjab would have been an incredible conception; yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengali lecturer in Upper India assumed the character of a triumphal progress; and at the present moment the name of Surendranath Banerji excites as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca." It may be said with truth that the brilliant political tour of Surendranath Banerji laid the foundation of what may be called the Indian Nationalism, which sought to cut across the Hindu and Muslim nationalism that had been developing side by side. To give a concrete shape to this Indian Nationalism, based on political unity, the Indian Association conceived the idea of an all-India political conference.

The idea was fully approved by all the branches of the Association in North India, as well as by the leading political organizations of Bombay and Madras. Thus the National Conference held its first session in Calcutta on December 28, 29 and 30, 1883. It was attended by about hundred delegates, both Hindus and Muslims, and the places they represented, outside Bengal, included Bombay, Madras, Lahore, Allahabad, Delhi, Cuttack, Jubbulpore, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Patna, Bhagalpur, Saugor, Meerut, Tezpur, etc. In his opening speech Surendranath said: "We have met here to talk, to deliberate, to consult, and if possible to arrive at a common programme of political action." The objects of the National Conference were not sectional, nor regional, but truly national. Two Englishmen attended the Conference. One of them, W. S. Blunt, has preserved a reminiscence of it in his famous Diary. It begins as follows: "Then at twelve, I went to the first meeting of the National Conference, a really important occasion, as there were delegates from most of the great towns, and, as Bose (Ananda Mohan) in his opening speech remarked, it was the first stage towards a National Parliament." The second session of the National Conference was held in Calcutta on December 25, 26, 27, 1885. It was more representative than the first and was convened by the three leading political associations of Calcutta, namely, the British Indian, the Indian, and the Central Muhammadan Association. Time would not permit a detailed account of the subjects discussed. It will suffice to say that the questions, that formed the chief planks on the platform of the Indian National Congress, were discussed already in the first two sessions of the National Conference. The Conference carried with acclamation a resolution that it should be held every year in different places like Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, and other great provincial capitals.

The Conference also sent a telegram to the approaching political conference at Bombay expressing sympathy with it. This Conference, which met in Bombay the day following that on which the National Conference concluded its second session, came to be known as the Indian

National Congress. How the two coalesced together is thus described by Surendranath:

"The two Conferences met about the same time, discussed similar views, and voiced the same grievances and aspirations. Henceforth those who worked with us joined the Congress and heartily co-operated with it." This is an oversimplified explanation of an intricate, if not mysterious, problem offered by the silent self-effacement of the National Conference in favour of the Indian National Congress, a new institution without any political background, and started by an ex-member of the Indian Civil Service with the avowed object of holding back the Indian intelligentsia from joining an imminent general revolutionary outbreak in India against the British Government. I have discussed the matter elsewhere and need not revert to it.

I may now sum up in one sentence what I have said above about the role of the 19th century in India's struggle for freedom. A new spirit imported from the West galvanized static India into dynamic activities which resulted in the growth of political theories and patriotism, development of an all-India political organization, and the evolution of Hindu and Muslim nationalism, each based on the common bond of religion, culture and historical tradition of past glory and greatness, as well as of an Indian nationalism, based on the unity of political interests in securing political power for the Indians. In other words, although the nineteenth century did not mark the beginning of the national struggle for freedom, it set the stage for it by creating the ideal of Indian nationalism and stimulating the spirit of patriotism and freedom.

## LECTURE II

# THE ERA OF NATIONALISM

The circumstances which led to the foundation of the Indian National Congress at Bombay in December, 1885, have been briefly described above. The second session was held in Calcutta in which Surendranath Banerji took a leading part. There is no doubt that the new political organization was impregnated with the advanced political ideas of Bengal. In any case, the Congress was henceforth regarded by many as a Bengali affair. On the eve of the third session of the Congress, to be held at Madras, Sir Syed Ahmad addressed a public meeting at Lakhnau in order to dissuade the Muslims from attending it. In course of his speech he said: "If you accept that the country should groan under the yoke of Bengali rule and its people lick the Bengali shoes, then, in the name of God ! jump into the train, sit down and be off to Madras". Three years later, in 1890, G. B. Malleson, the great historian of the Indian Mutiny, refers to the Congress as started by the noisy and cowardly Bengalis, but not countenanced by the real people of India. But whatever we might think of these aspersions, there is no doubt that the Congress gradually developed into a powerful political organization of an all-India character. It focussed the political ideas of English-educated Indians and gave them a definite shape and form. It was founded on the twin rocks of unswerving loyalty to the British sovereign and strictly constitutional agitation, which practically meant humble prayers and petitions to the Government. With the exception, probably, of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, this mendicant policy, as it was nicknamed by the critics of the Congress, produced no tangible result during the first twenty years. But the value and importance of the Congress should not be measured only by the actual grant of political reforms demanded

by it. For it indirectly helped the political advancement of India in various ways. The annual gathering of leading representative men from different parts of India gave a reality to the ideal of Indian unity, developed patriotic feelings, and awakened political consciousness among a steadily increasing circle of English-educated Indians. Besides, the discussions, often on a high level, of the more important political, economic and administrative problems of India, widely diffused very useful and accurate knowledge necessary for the political development of India, and educated public opinion on all questions concerning the welfare and progress of India.

But the Congress could not keep pace with the wave of nationalism which was sweeping over India during the last quarter of the 19th century. In Bengal, periodical literature, poems, songs, novels and dramas, produced in profusion, struck the chord of patriotism and nationalism in every heart. Bankimchandra Chatterji, the author of *Anandamath* and the *Vande Mataram* hymn, was its high priest. But it received a great stimulus from several other factors whose influence was felt all over India. The first was the triumphant career of Swami Vivekananda in U.S.A. which made a place for Hinduism in the cultural map of the modern world. The Hindu intellectuals had almost taken for granted the inferiority of their culture to that of the West, but now the representatives of the western countries applauded in one voice the hidden virtues of Hinduism. This not only restored their confidence but quickened their sense of national pride and patriotism. This sentiment was echoed in the numerous public addresses which were presented to Swami Vivekananda, from Cape Comorin to Himalaya. Vivekananda vitalised the nationalism of India by putting it on a spiritual level, and making a clarion call to the Hindus to realise the value of their spiritual heritage which it was their mission to spread to the West. He also put the nationalism on a wider basis. "Forget not", he said, "that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Be proud that thou art an Indian

Say brother, the soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good." The Swami asked the Indians to shed fear and be manly and to look upon the service of the country as the true worship of God. A saint and an ascetic have always exercised a profound influence upon Indian minds. No wonder that the prophecy of Vivekananda that India, with all her shortcomings, and in spite of the present dismal outlook, shall rise to the stature of a great nation in the modern world, went home and quickened the national impulses of the people. Dr. Pradhan has paid the following tribute to him: "Swami Vivekananda might well be called the father of modern Indian nationalism; he largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements!"[1] It is now a known fact that hundreds of young revolutionaries of Bengal were inspired by the message of Vivekananda and cheerfully embraced sufferings and death with *Vande Mataram* on their lips and Vivekananda's teachings in their heart.

In Maharashtra the message of nationalism was preached by Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh and Bhashkar Pandurang Tarkhadkar, and it got a firm hold through the writings and activities of Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar, Mahadev Govinda Ranade, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayananda, gave a great impetus to nationalism in the Punjab. It was a militant sect from the very beginning, and its chief inspiration came from its intense patriotism. Political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayananda, and his Arya Samaj aimed at the creation of an Indian nation by establishing a common religion and culture all over India. He adopted *Suddhi* or reconversion to Hinduism as one of the potent instruments for this purpose. A great impetus to nationalism was also given to the Hindus by the Theosophical Society.

The Hindu character of nationalism was a marked feature in all these developments. But the Muslim nationalism was also growing apace under the leadership of

1. R. G. Pradhan, *India's Struggle for Swaraj*, p. 60.

Sir Syed Ahmad during the last quarter of the 19th century. His main objective was to reform and modernise the Muslim society through English education and Western culture. In order to achieve it, he preached unswerving loyalty to the British Government. For, with their help alone the Muslims could hope to effect those material and intellectual advances which were necessary to place them on a footing of equality with the Hindus who had half a century's start over them. As a necessary corollary, the Muslim nationalism, fostered by Syed Ahmad, developed a strong anti-Hindu spirit, for the Hindus were anti-British, and demanded representative Government, which meant their permanent domination over the Muslims who formed only one-fourth of the total population of India.

The development of nationalism made both Hindus and Muslims gradually more and more politically self-conscious, and therefore had a profound effect on the Indian National Congress. The first challenge to its representative character came from the new type of Muslim nationalism, and will be discussed in the next chapter. The challenge from the Hindu nationalism, though of a different type, proved no less serious to its smooth and even tenor of life. The Hindu nationalists looked upon the Congress as a too effete and outmoded machinery to serve their ends. In Bengal, Bankimchandra Chatterji wielded his mighty pen to bring into ridicule the mendicant policy of the Congress which only put up an annual show for three days. The cry was taken up by others, and distinct mutterings of protests were heard against the Congress. Aurobindo Ghosh published a series of articles against it in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay, between August 1893 and March 1894, under the heading, 'New Lamps for Old.' On 28 August, 1893, he wrote: "In an era when democracy and similar big words slide so glibly from our tongues, a body like the Congress, which represents not the mass of the population, but a single and very limited class, could not honestly be called national." He added, "I say, of the Congress, then, this,—that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their

accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and wholeheartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders;—in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed."[2]

The stalwarts of the Congress at Bombay were alarmed at the tone of Aurobindo's articles, and Ranade brought pressure upon Deshpande, the Editor of the *Indu Prakash*, to stop their further publication. But though they gagged Aurobindo, soon there arose a great nationalist leader in Bombay itself who refused to be gagged. This was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had already come into conflict with the great Congress leaders of Bombay. He made it the great object of his life to diffuse the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the masses. For this purpose he inaugurated the Shivaji Festival and transformed the traditional worship of Ganapati in Maharashtra into an altogether new form. Thus he requisitioned into the national service the two great forces of religion and history.

Tilak had the great advantage of being the editor of two of the most popular newspapers in Western India, namely the Marathi *Kesari* and English *Mahratta*. Through these papers he preached the cult of nationalism. On 12 January, 1896, Tilak wrote in the *Kesari* that for twelve years the Congressmen had been shouting hoarse, but it produced no more effect on the Government than the sound of a gnat. "Let us now try", he added, "strong constitutional means."[3] The old guards of the Congress felt a strong dislike for Tilak on account of his bold utterances and extreme views, but he grew more and more popular with the nationalist leaders. Allan Octavian Hume, who founded the Indian National Congress, also sharply rebuked the Congress authorities: "You meet in Congress, you glow with a momentary enthusiasm; you speak much and eloquently and the sentiments you pro-

2. Professor Haridas Mukherjee and Professor Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, pp. 75-6.

3. D. V. Athalye, *The Life of Lokamanya Tilak*, pp. 86-7.

pound are highly creditable to you; but the Congress closes, every man of you broadly speaking goes off straightway on his own private business."[4]

This criticism directly hit at the vital weakness of the Congress. Just before the inauguration of the Congress session, Hume had issued a manifesto in which the following were emphasized.

1. Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within.

2. They who would be free, must themselves strike the blow.

3. Whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness.

The Congress never followed these ideals, but the new Nationalist School took them up in right earnest, and gradually drifted away from the policy hitherto pursued by the Congress. They were led by Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and others. They disapproved of the mendicant policy for securing reforms, and decided upon a bold assertion of rights with the strength of the mass of people. Before any exact plan or programme could be devised by the new party, the whole political atmosphere was changed by the Partition of Bengal in 1905, followed by the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement. The nationalists at last found the opportunity for which they had been waiting so long,—a cause to fight for and the method of fighting.

It is not possible here to describe in detail the twin movements, generally known as Swadeshi and Boycott. In 1905 Lord Curzon partitioned the Province of Bengal into two parts. The Bengalis felt that the whole of their future was at stake, and that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengalee-speaking population. They tried to avert this vivisection by all lawful means. Never, in the history of British India, was any measure of Government op-

4. *The Hindusthan Review*, December, 1903, p. 481.

posed so vehemently or persistently, and with such unanimity.

Between December, 1903, and October, 1905, more than 3000 public meetings were held, the attendance in each varying from 500 to 50,000 people. The political associations and newspapers made a tearing and raging campaign against the measure, and a representation signed by about 70,000 people was submitted to the Secretary of State for India. Even the *Statesman*, the English Daily of Calcutta, observed that there never was a time in the history of British India when the public feeling and public opinion were so little regarded by the Supreme Government as they were by the present administration.

Indeed it may be said that Curzon's obstinate refusal to pay any heed to the popular view in this matter sounded the death-knell to the mehod of constitutional agitation. Lord Curzon wrote in 1900: "The Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my greatest ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise." This object he achieved, though in a way, very different from what he meant. No single factor contributed so much to the peaceful demise of the Congress, as it then was, as his imperviousness to constitutional agitation. For the first time, the leaders of Bengal, of all classes and creeds, and all shades of public opinion, including Rajas and Zamindars, decided to stand firmly on their own legs in the true spirit of the nationalist section of the political leaders. What prayers and petitions failed to achieve, they decided to force the Government to concede by adopting some concrete measures. Various such measures were suggested, such as resignation in a body of all Honorary Magistrates, members of District Boards, Municipal Commissioners, and Panchayats etc. But the one suggestion which caught the popular imagination was to boycott all British goods, specially Manchester Cloth, until partition orders were withdrawn. Lalmohan Ghose went even further, and pressed for the ideology of totalitarian boycott, asking the people to renounce Government offices and sever all connection with the British. All over Bengal hundreds of public meetings were held to pass the resolu-

tion for boycotting British goods. At last there was a mammoth gathering on 7 August, 1905, in which amid unprecedented scenes of enthusiasm the resolution of boycotting British manufactures was formally moved and passed amid deafening shouts of *Vande Mataram*, which had now become the war cry. This was followed by hundreds of public meetings, pickettings of shops where foreign goods were sold, clashes with police, *lathi* blows, imprisonment of volunteers, flogging and expulsion of students, etc. On the first day of the Bengali festival called Durga Puja, known as Mahalaya day, more than 50,000 citizens of Calcutta, comprising all grades of society, assembled in the temple of the Goddess Kali at Kalighat, a southern suburb of Calcutta. Entering in batches within the precincts of the temple, they took the following solemn vow before the sacred image of the Goddess:

"Mother, I solemnly promise that to the best of my power I will never use foreign articles, that I will not purchase such articles from foreign shops which are to be had at Indian shops, that I will not employ foreigners for work which would be done by my countrymen."

A still more imposing scene was witnessed on 16 October, 1905, the day on which the partition took effect. At the suggestion of Rabindranath, the *Rakhibandhan* ceremony was adopted in which a yellow thread was tied on the wrist of each by another with the recitation of a small poem composed by the great poet. The ceremony was intended to convey the idea that no monarch's sword, however powerful, can cut asunder the bond of union implanted by providence amongst people forming one and the same race. The scene which Calcutta presented on that day defies all description. There was a complete *hartal*, and the whole city resounded with *Vande Mataram* from a huge concourse of people who took bath in the Ganges and then tied the *Rakhi* on each other's wrists. In the afternoon about 50,000 men marched with Surendranath Banerji and other leaders, all barefooted, a distance of two miles to attend a huge public meeting. This meeting emphasized the need of promoting the manu-

facture of *Swadeshi* or indigenous goods. It was pointed out that 'Boycott' and 'Swadeshi' were supplementary. The boycott of foreign goods required that their place should be supplied by goods produced in India. But this was not possible unless people deliberately eschewed foreign and purchased indigenous goods, even at a sacrifice of money and comfort. A sum of Rs. 70,000 was collected in the meeting itself for the promotion of *Swadeshi* Movement.

It may be mentioned here that neither 'Boycott' nor 'Swadeshi' was an original idea; but they got a new meaning and a new impetus in 1905, because they were adopted by fifty million people in Bengal as instruments of fighting against the British power for a common cause.

It is not possible here to describe the veritable reign of terror that prevailed in Bengal. Nor is it necessary to state in detail the economic effect of *'Boycott'* and *'Swadeshi'* on the British. There was a great slump of cotton trade in Bengal, and the Marwari Chamber of Commerce sent frantic cables to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The result of an enquiry, instituted by the *Statesman* of Calcutta, showed that in eight districts alone, the value of the foreign goods purchased in September 1904, was more than Rs. 77,000, but it had fallen below Rs. 10,000 in September 1905.

But these economic calculations soon ceased to have any meaning. Both *Boycott* and *Swadeshi* shortly outgrew their original meaning and object. The idea of economic boycott as a weapon to coerce the British to undo the partition of Bengal gradually receded into the background. It developed into an idea of non-co-operation with the British in every field with the object of securing freedom for India.

The first issue of the *Vande Mataram*, edited by Aurobindo Ghosh, appeared on 6 August, 1906, with his famous call for "Absolute autonomy, free from British control", and a detailed programme of what he called 'no-co-operation' and 'passive resistance', to which reference will be made later. Henceforth this formed the

chief plank on the platform of the Nationalists. A local grievance merged itself into the great grievance of India's bondage, and the temporary weapon devised to remedy the former became a potent instrument of fighting freedom's battle.

Due to the growing strength of nationalist sentiments, the *Swadeshi* movement had spread from Bengal to other parts of India. According to confidential Reports of the Intelligence Branch of the Government, "Boycott-Swadeshi movement assumed an all-India character even towards the end of 1905. The progress of the movement was reported from 23 districts in U.P., 15 towns in C.P., 24 towns in the Bombay Presidency, 20 districts in the Panjab, and 13 districts in the Madras Presidency."

As in Bengal, so in this extended area, the purely economic aspect of the movement was superseded by the new meaning and significance attached to it by Aurobindo. It attained a much more comprehensive character and became a concrete symbol of nationalism. This may be best explained in the words of two great Moderate leaders of the day. Surendranath Banerji said: "It is not merely an economic or a social or a political movement, but it is an all-comprehensive movement co-extensive with the entire circle of our national life, one in which are centred the many-sided activities of our growing community. It is the shibboleth of our unity and industrial and political salvation. It would have a tremendous appeal to the masses—Deccan peasant or the Bengali rustic—who are indifferent to politics." Surendranath hoped that "the *Swadeshi* would bring the masses and the classes together in our political agitation which would thereby acquire a formidable force." Swadeshism was regarded by Surendranath as of divine origin, and he claimed that this all-comprehensive movement has revolutionised the ideals and conceptions of the Bengalis. "The spirit of self-reliance is abroad, and men, working under the belief that they are humble instruments in the hands of Divine Providence, will dare all and do all."[5]

5. *Speeches*, pp. 424, 428.

But it was not the sentimentalist Bengalis alone who were carried by such emotion. Gokhale, the cool-headed unemotional Maratha and the Prince of the Moderates, observed in 1907:

"I have said more than once, but I think the idea bears repetition, that Swadeshism at its highest is not merely an industrial movement, but that it affects the whole life of the nation,—that Swadeshism at its highest is a deep, passionate, fervent, all-embracing love of the motherland, and that this love seeks to show itself, not in one sphere of activity only, but in all; it involves the whole man and it will not rest until it has raised the whole man. My own personal conviction is that in this movement we shall ultimately find the true salvation of India."[6]

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then unknown to name and fame, observed, in 1908, that "the real awakening (of India) took place after the Partition of Bengal;" he was also shrewd enough to prophesy that "that day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire." He also realised the wider significance of the agitation for the repeal of the Partition. "The demand for the abrogation of the Partition is tantamount to a demand for Home Rule", said he.... "As time passes, the nation is being forged.... Hitherto we have considered that for redress of grievances we must approach the throne, and if we get no redress, we must sit still, except that we may still petition. After the Partition, people saw that they must be capable of suffering. This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of the Partition." He explained the characteristics of the new spirit as the shedding of fear for the British or for imprisonment, and the inauguration of the *Swadeshi* Movement.[7]

Similar views were expressed in an article entitled "The Swadeshi Movement—A Natural Development" by G. Subramania Iyer, an eminent leader of Madras.

6. *Speeches*, p. 1114.
7. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 17-8.

In view of what has been said above, it was inevitable that the *Boycott-Swadeshi* movement would have the greatest repercussion on the Congress. Surendranath Banerji was the first to admit that the *Boycott* was a marvellously effective weapon in politics. "What we could not achieve in 500 meetings extending over two years' time" said he, "we secured by a boycott lasting for a period of three months." He illustrated it by narrating how the Manchester Chamber of Commerce exerted all their influence upon the Secretary of State to cancel the partition of Bengal. But the Moderates, as a party, fought shy of the idea of *Boycott* though they welcomed *Swadeshi*. Even Gokhale argued that 'boycott' had a sinister meaning—it implied a vindictive desire to injure another. He therefore recommended that we would do well to use only the word *'swadeshi'* to describe our present movement. But this typical attitude of the Moderate Party ignored the historical fact that the *boycott* was deliberately adopted by the Bengalis to injure British interests, and that the twin ideas of *Swadeshi* and *Boycott*, as explained above, were supplementary to each other, as one could not succeed without the other. It was the difference on this point that led to the final clash between the two wings of the Congress known at the time as the Moderates and the Extremists. The two, however, differed on fundamental points. The Extremists were really the product of the new spirit of nationalism that swept the country, but it was by the impact of the *Swadeshi* Movement that they emerged as a major political party in the country with a distinct ideology and programme.

In order to understand the essential difference between the Moderates and the Extremists, it is necessary to begin with the early activities of Tilak. He struck a new note in Indian politics when, during the Bombay famine of 1896, he asked the people to take their stand on their right, and boldly demand the benefits of the Famine Relief Code;—they must not be cowards and pay the Government dues by selling their lands and cattle. He told them: "Go to the Collector and tell him to give you work and food." In order to arouse the national

spirit among the masses, and to establish a close contact between them and the educated classes, he initiated Shivaji festival and Ganapati Utsav. Tilak infused a new self-assertiveness and self-confidence into the people, because he knew that the real strength behind the political demand lies in the people, and not in the resolutions which, like hardy annuals, came out of the Congress year after year.

Tilak's ideas got a profound stimulus in the *Swadeshi* Movement which created a suitable atmosphere for the awakening of the masses. Two great leaders of Bengal ably seconded his efforts. Aurobindo Ghosh put the new nationalism on the high pedestal of philosophy and religion. "What is nationalism?" he asked. "Nationalism is not a mere political programme. Nationalism is a religion that has come from God. Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live. It is an attitude of the heart, of the soul. What the intellect could not do, this mighty force of passionate conviction, born out of the very depths of the national consciousness, will be able to accomplish". Bepin Chandra Pal elucidated this idea in a more homely language as will be shown later.

The fundamental differences in ideology led to differences in the essential features of the political programme of the two parties. These differences centred round two main points, namely, the political goal and the method to achieve it. As regards the goal, Tilak summed up his idea in one sentence: "Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it." The Extremists interpreted Swaraj to mean complete autonomy without any dependence on the British rule. Aurobindo said: "There are some who fear to use the word freedom, but I always used the word because it has been the *mantra* of my life to aspire towards the freedom of my nation."[8] But Gokhale, the most gifted and eminent member of the Moderate Party, said: "Only mad men outside lunatic asylums could think or talk of independence.... We owe it to the best interests of the country to resist the propaganda with all our energy and all

8. *Modern Review*, VI, p. 187.

our resources.... There is no alternative to British rule, not only now, but for a long time to come, and any attempts to disturb it, directly or indirectly, are bound to recoil on our own heads."[9] That even an astute politician like Gokhale, whose patriotism nobody can possibly doubt, should entertain such views, merely proves how deep-rooted they were in the philosophy of the Moderate Party.

Gokhale and his party held this view on account of the backwardness of the Indians in many fields, and their lack of training in self-government. But the Extremists brushed aside all these considerations. "Political freedom," said Aurobindo, "is the life-breath of a nation; to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom is the very height of ignorance and futility."[10] B.C. Pal said: "The new spirit accepts no other teacher in the art of self-government except self-government itself. It values freedom for its own sake, and desires autonomy, immediate and unconditioned, regardless of any considerations of fitness and unfitness of the people for it: because it does not believe serfdom in any shape or form to be a school for real freedom in any country and under any conditions whatever. It holds that the struggle for freedom itself is the highest tutor of freedom which, if it can once possess the mind of a people, shapes itself the life, the character, and the social and civic institutions of the people, to its own proper ends."[11]

As regards the method, the Extremists rejected petitioning as mad and fantastic, and prescribed organized Passive Resistance as the only effective means by which the control of national life could be wrested from the grip of an alien bureaucracy. A draft resolution on Passive Resistance was published on 6th August, 1906, in the very first issue of the *Vande Mataram*, the great organ of the

9. *Speeches*, p. 1148.
10. Mukherjees, op. cit., 173-4.
11. M. A. Buch, *The Development of Contemporary Indian Political Thought*, Vol. II, pp. 90-91.

Extremist Party, edited by Aurobindo. It recommended boycott of British goods, British Courts of Justice, and schools aided and controlled by Government, and refusal to go to the executive authorities for help or advice or protection. Each of these items was accompanied by detailed reasons. The programme was further explained as follows, by Aurobindo in "An Open Letter to My Countrymen," dated 31 July, 1909. "Our methods are those of self-help and passive resistance.... The policy of passive resistance was evolved partly as the necessary complement of self-help, partly as a means of putting pressure on Government. The essence of this policy is the refusal of co-operation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislation, finance and administration. Just as "No representation, no taxation" was the watchword of American constitutional agitation in the eighteenth century, so "No control, no co-operation" should be the watchword of our lawful agitation—for constitution we have none—in the twentieth. We sum up this refusal of co-operation in the convenient word 'Boycott', refusal of co-operation in the industrial exploitation of our country, in education, in government, in judicial administration, in the details of official intercourse." The Moderate Party criticised both the ultimate goal set up by the Extremists as well as the method proposed to be pursued by them. They pointed out that all the items of Passive Resistance were more or less impracticable, and if anybody chose he could work any of them outside the Congress. Lala Lajpat Rai and others gave effective replies to these criticisms. But the discussions merely brought into relief the wide gulf that separated the Moderates and the Extremists.

In view of these fundamental differences between the two parties of the Congress, both in respect of theory and practice, it was almost inevitable that there would be a serious clash within the Congress Camp. Its history may be briefly stated. The Congress met at Banaras in December, 1905, almost immediately after the Partition of Bengal took effect. The Extremist section of the Bengal delegates desired that the Congress should give its seal of

approval upon the Boycott Movement. But the Moderate leaders were averse to it, as boycott was in conflict with their policy of petition and persuasion.

A proposal approving of Boycott led to an acrimonious discussion in the Subjects Committee and its fate hung in the balance, when the Bengal delegates hit upon a device to coerce the Moderates. The Moderates proposed to send a message of welcome to Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, during their forthcoming visit to India. But the delegates from Bengal opposed it on the ground that Bengal was in mourning, and could not receive the Prince with a smiling face. The Moderates could not think, without horror, that the resolution for such a loyal message would be opposed in the public session of the Congress. They were sure of getting it passed by a majority of votes, but the absence of unanimity would take away the grace and charm of such a message. At last both sides yielded to a considerable degree and a compromise was effected. The Bengal Delegates agreed to leave the Congress Pandal before the resolution about the message was moved, so that it might be unanimously passed. On their side the Moderates offered an indirect support to the Boycott Movement and agreed to the following Resolution:

"That this Congress records its earnest and emphatic protest against the repressive measures which have been adopted by the authorities in Bengal after the people there had been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign goods as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public to the action of the Government of India in persisting in their determination to partition Bengal, in utter disregard of the universal prayers and protests of the people."

Throughout the year 1906 there were angry discussions and mutual recriminations between the Moderates and the Extremists over their respective policies and programmes, of which some idea has been given above. The Extremists in Bengal had been joined by large groups in

the Congress belonging to other provinces, and each party prepared for a trial of strength. The Extremist Party wanted to elect Tilak as President, but they were outmanoeuvred by the Moderates, who induced Dadabhai Naoroji to accept the post. So the Congress met in Calcutta in December, 1906, in a tense atmosphere. Bengal being the strong citadel of the Extremist Party, they scored at least a partial victory in 1906. The Congress passed three Resolutions, supporting *Boycott, Swadeshi*, and National Education. By adopting them the Indian National Congress identified itself with the *Boycott* and *Swadeshi* movements of Bengal, and incorporated the Extremist Party's programme within its own. This was not liked by many Moderates, and heated controversies between the two parties went on throughout the year 1907. The controversy gave rise to the fear in the minds of the Extremists that the three resolutions passed in Calcutta would be omitted or whittled down by the Moderates at the next session of the Congress. This fear was enhanced when the venue of the Congress was shifted from Nagpur, a stronghold of the Extremists, to Surat where Pheroze Shah Mehta, the Moderate leader, had a great following. It is not necessary to describe at length the fracas that broke up the Congress Meeting at Surat, and rake up the old controversy on the subject. It is certain, however, that Tilak, on behalf of the Extremist Party, repeatedly declared, in private conversation as well as in public, that if assurances were given that the three resolutions passed in Calcutta in 1906 would again be accepted at Surat, he would not create any trouble. It is a fact that no such assurances were forthcoming, and the excuses offered for this serious lapse are unconvincing. The result was that a free fight took place in the Congress pandal, the police were called in, and the Moderate leaders, by adopting a new Constitution, excluded the Extremist Party from the Congress.

Morley had dangled before the eyes of Gokhale a splendid prospect for Reforms with an oblique hint that the Extremists alone stood in the way of granting them. It is not unreasonable to assume, though there is no posi-

tive evidence to prove it, that this hope played a large part in the purge of the Extremists from the Congress. The Reforms of 1909 for some time dazzled the Moderates. But the joy was of short duration. As soon as the Regulations with provision for the separate communal electorate were published, the Moderates were quite disillusioned. For nine years after Surat fracas, the Moderates ruled over the Congress in splendid isolation with their old ideals and programme. But the country had lost faith in them, and the Congress had very little following. The Congress held its annual session as usual, but the spring had gone out of the year.

The Nationalists also went into wilderness for the time being. Aurobindo gave up politics and retired to Pondicherry. Tilak was sent to jail for six years. Nothing illustrates the vital force of nationalism so much as the fact that, despite the absence of the two great leaders, the ideals of the Extremist Party not only survived, but made headway in the country. As soon as Tilak was released, in 1914, he was hailed as the great leader and apostle of Nationalism. A large section of the Congressmen felt that they must make peace with Tilak, but Pheroze Shah Mehta stood firmly against it. His practical shrewdness told him that peace with the Extremists meant surrender to them. Gokhale also agreed with Mehta. But death carried away both of them in 1915, and the Congress changed its Constitution in order to make it possible for the Extremists to join the Congress. The re-union took place in the Lakhnau Session of the Congress in 1916. Pheroze Shah Mehta proved right. Tilak re-entered the Congress, not as a repentant sinner, but as a conquering hero. He travelled from Bombay to Lakhnau with 200 followers, and received right royal ovation at the wayside stations. His entrance into the Congress pandal was greeted with wild outbursts of joy and enthusiasm. He came, he saw, and he conquered. Henceforth Tilak was the uncrowned king of Indian politics. The Congress proved too unwieldy a machinery for realising nationalist aspirations. Hence Mrs. Annie Besant and Tilak both independently thought of Home Rule Movement. Swaraj or in-

dependence, the goal of Nationalism, became the war-cry of the Home Rule Movement, which was carried on jointly by Besant and Tilak on the basis of a plan agreed upon between them.

The Home Rule Movement openly launched the struggle for freedom. It caught the imagination of the people and carried the whole of India along with it. Hardly two years had passed since the death of Gokhale who could not think of anybody but mad man outside a lunatic asylum demanding independence. So India must have gone mad, leaving all sanity in the safe-keeping of a handful of Moderate leaders without any following. Indeed the triumphant career of Home Rule Movement put the country in such frenzy or madness of enthusiasm that even the Government got nervous. Tilak made a direct appeal to the people in a language easily understood by them, and ushered in a mass movement of incalculable potentiality. A nationalist India had grown out of the ashes of the old policy of mendicancy, and the dream of the Nationalists or so-called Extremists was realized. Fear seized not merely the Moderates but also the British Government. Once more the old tactics was employed. Montagu, in 1918, dangled before the Moderates the prospect of substantial reforms and pointed out that only the Extremists stood in the way, exactly as Morley had done in 1907. Once more the Moderates listened to the coaxing voice of the Secretary of State and separated themselves from the Extremists. But the procedure was very different. In 1907 they drove out the Extremists from the Congress, but this time they themselves had to secede from it. There was another vital difference. Though the Extremists had to leave the Congress in 1907, they gathered sufficient strength to force a come-back in 1916. But when the Moderates walked out of the Congress in 1918, they walked out of the history of India's struggle for freedom. Henceforth they lived only in their past glory. Nothing indicates more clearly the complete triumph of nationalism than the secession of the Moderates from the Congress. Tilak lived to see the day when the British Government promised Responsible Govern-

ment in India, and took the first step to implement it. Of course the goal was yet far off, but it was no longer the question of whether but when it will be attained. It was at this juncture that Tilak, the great architect of Nationalist India, suddenly passed away in 1920. It was a bolt from the blue. India was stunned by the news, and a nation was in tears. It seemed as if the new age had passed away with him. But the fate of countries depends, not on individuals alone, but on the truth and vitality of the ideals they leave behind. So it proved in the case of India. New leaders took over the task left unfinished by Tilak, and carried to its logical end the great mass movement which he had initiated. The age of Aurobindo and Tilak was over, the age of Gandhi and Nehru was about to begin. This closes the second phase of India's struggle for freedom, and this chapter may be fittingly concluded with the following tribute paid by Mr. Buch which may serve as the epitaph of Tilak: "To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour, are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful awakening in India. Others—writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders—had seen this truth; Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics."[12]

12. Ibid., 2, p. 26.

## LECTURE III

# GANDHI'S ROLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

The period intervening between the death of Tilak and the attainment of independence is usually described as the era of Gandhi. I do not propose to discuss either the sequence and significance of events during the momentous epoch, or the different forces and movements which shaped its course. Such a task has been rendered difficult, if not impossible, by the rise of the Gandhi cult that has obscured men's vision about true history. It will be my endeavour to examine some of the fundamental issues involved in forming a proper assessment of the role played by Gandhi, so that the way may be cleared for future historians to deal with this important phase of Indian history in the right spirit. It is obviously impossible to deal with all the aspects of Gandhi's life and activities: so I shall have to concentrate my attention upon a few topics only—specially those in respect of which a reverence for Gandhi has stood in the way of ascertaining the truth. I would attempt to remove the debris and clear the deck.

Gandhi himself often laid stress on three things: the *Charka* or spinning wheel, denunciation of violence as a political method, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Of these the first need not be seriously discussed, for it is now being gradually realized that apart from sentiment it has played no significant part in the struggle for India's political or economic independence. It now survives only as a relic of Gandhi cult, and it is no use killing a dead horse.

The cult of *Ahimsa* preached by Gandhi, and the current belief that it alone has brought independence to India, have stood in the way of a proper judgment of the nature of militant nationalism, which is generally styled violent methods in politics, and the role it played in the

struggle for freedom. It is therefore necessary to trace its background.

Militant nationalism is generally referred to in official reports as terrorism. But, properly understood, it is merely the extreme branch of nationalism which has been discussed in the previous chapter. Both originated in a strong dislike of the policy of mendicancy followed by the Congress. But while nationalists relied upon passive resistance, like boycott, or other kinds of mass movement, one section of them regarded this also as inadequate for achieving the independence of India, and included violent action as a necessary part of the campaign against the British. These violent actions, carried out in secret, took various forms, according to inclination of the actors and their opportunities. One section adopted the programme of openly preaching revolution and murdering officials by pistols and bombs. There was another section who hoped for success in an armed conflict against the British, by seducing the Indian sepoys and securing military help from outside. They waited for an international conflict in Europe, and in the meantime collected arms, and imparted military training to those who were to act as the spearhead of the revolution when the favourable opportunity came. Both required money, and had to resort to political dacoities for providing necessary funds.

In Western countries perpetrators of political murders are not denounced, but regarded as heroes, and if they are caught and executed, they are looked upon as martyrs. Mathew Arnold, in a fine poem, has distinguished murder for private gain or hatred from that done for some great public cause. When, in 1906, some Russians were assassinated by the Nihilists, the *Pioneer* of Allahabad wrote: "The horror of such crimes is too great for words; and yet it has to be acknowledged, almost, that they are the only method of fighting left to a people who are at war with despotic rulers able to command great military forces, against which it is impossible for the unarmed populace to make a stand." Such commendations of political violence may be multiplied to any extent. But Englishmen followed a different standard of judgment when

Indians were concerned. Mrs. Annie Besant, for example, who denounced Aurobindo as fanatical, wrote as follows in her unregenerate days: "Violence is the recognized way in England of gaining political reforms. There would be no Home Rule Bill if landlords had not been shot—no Reform Bill of 1832 without riot and bloodshed." The revolutionaries in India justified their deeds on exactly the same grounds as were advanced by Mrs. Besant and the *Pioneer*.

It will perhaps be news to many that eminent political leaders, both in England and India, did not fail to note the value of the terrorist cult in a freedom movement. When Madan Lal Dhingra shot dead Sir Curzon Wyllie in 1909, Lloyd George expressed highest admiration of his patriotism, and Churchill shared the view.[1] So far as Indian leaders were concerned, we have now the evidence of the revolutionaries to the effect that their action was approved and encouraged by men like Aurobindo Ghosh, Surendranath Banerji, Aswini Kumar Dutta, P.C. Ray, Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Popular approval of these acts is still to be found in the folk songs about the martyrs in Bengal and other parts of India. In the face of all these it is hardly just to describe the so-called Terrorist Movement as the product of a few misguided youths. It was a great political movement, based upon European models, and sanctified by the blood, sacrifice and suffering of hundreds of Indian youths, whose love for their motherland was proved by the supreme test—the one touchstone of real love—namely readiness to die for the object of love. Their martyrdom often touched the sublime.

It is a moot point to decide how far this method contributed to the success in the struggle for freedom. To those who argued in 1908 that a few bombs would not drive away the British, Barin Ghose, the leader of the Bengali terrorists, replied: "We did not mean or expect to liberate our country by killing a few Englishmen.

1. W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries*, Part II, p. 288. Quoted by Dhananjay Keer in *Savarkar and his Times*, p. 57.

We wanted to show people how to dare and die." As a matter of fact the revolutionaries had two main objects in view. First, to awaken, by a rude shock, the inert mass of Indians from the political torpor of ages, and create a revolutionary mentality among the people; secondly, to paralyze, as far as possible, the effective work of administration, and to serve as a perpetual reminder of seething discontent of the Indians against the British rule. These objects were achieved to a large extent. Its indirect effect was also highly important. With the spread of revolutionary ideas large bands of young men—even those who did not actively participate in the revolutionary movement—were imbued with a new spirit of dedicating themselves to the service of the country at the cost of any suffering or sacrifice. Unless this background were prepared, thousands would not have rallied round Gandhi in 1920, when he had just begun his political career in India. In fact some of the ex-terrorists were his most energetic lieutenants.

Further, it is also legitimate to hold, from such evidence as we possess, that the revolutionary activities had a great effect upon the British Government, and the Reforms of 1909 and the declaration of 1917 were largely influenced by them. Lord Minto's confidential reports show how much the Government were perturbed by the underground revolutionary activities. Once he remarked that he would rather prefer an open rebellion.

Mr. W. S. Blunt wrote as follows after his interview with a prominent Englishman: "He talked about the Dhingra assassination, which seems to have at last convinced his royal friends that there is something wrong about the state of India. People talk about political assassination as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense; it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like that other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped, she apologises, not before."[2] Be it added that

2. Blunt, op. cit., 276; Keer, op. cit., p. 56.

Mr. Blunt was himself an Englishman. Today when it has been a fashion to attribute the achievement of independence to non-violent methods of Gandhi, militant nationalism has come to be looked upon as an evil in itself, and a useless evil at that. I am sure the verdict of history will be very different, and militant nationalism will be accorded its due place among the factors that contributed to our national independence. To this we shall revert later.

We may now turn to the next topic, the Muslim nationalism. Sir Syed Ahmad, the apostle of this nationalism, declared in a speech in 1883 that the Hindus and Muslims were two warring nations who could not lead a common political life. "Now suppose," he said, "that all the English were to leave India, then who would be rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations, the Mahammedan and the Hindu, could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable."[3]

The foundation of the Indian National Congress had a great reaction upon Syed Ahmad. The Congress demand for representative institutions on democratic lines and a greater share in the administration of the country was, in his opinion, a great peril to the Muslim interest. In any democratic set-up the number was bound to count in the long run, and the position of the Muslims as a perpetual minority of 25 per cent of the population was viewed with alarm.

Such was the general trend of thought which animated Syed Ahmad and was fully reflected in the Aligarh Movement inaugurated by him. By the end of the 19th century the political views and ideals of the Muslim nationalism took definite shape under the impact of this

3. Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan*, p. 31.

movement, and may be formulated in the shape of four fundamental principles as follows[4]:—

(a) The Hindus and Muslims form two separate political entities with separate outlook and conflicting interests.

(b) The grant of representative institutions based on democratic principles, and appointment to high offices by open competitive examination in India, would be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims, as they would be subject to Hindu domination which is far worse than British rule.

(c) Consequently the Muslims should regard the paramountcy of the British as the chief safeguard of their interests, and keep themselves aloof from political agitation against the Government.

(d) As the Muslim interests are quite safe in the hands of the British, the Muslims should confine their attention to cultural development, and avoid politics except in so far as it is necessary to counterbalance the mischief of Hindu political agitators.

There is no doubt that Syed Ahmad succeeded in keeping back the bulk of Muslims from the Congress. They made no secret of the reasons for their action. In 1896, Rahimatullah Sayani, a distinguished Muslim, presided over the Congress session. Haji Muhammad Ismail Khan, a friend of Syed Ahmad, suggested to the Congress President that the Congress should pass a resolution to the effect that the Hindus and Muslims should have equal number of seats in the Legislative Councils, district-boards, and municipalities. This showed where the shoe pinched. Sayani could not accept Ismail Khan's proposal. Syed Ahmad, however, endorsed it, and wrote in an article that the Muslims could join the Congress only if the Congress agreed to the proposal of Ismail Khan.

Prominent Muslims like Aga Khan and Mohsin-ul-Mulk, who had succeeded Syed Ahmad as the leader of the Aligarh Movement, drifted further apart from the

4. Ibid., 30-31.

Hindus. In 1906 Aga Khan wrote: "We had come to the conclusion, that our only hope lay along the lines of independent organization and action, and that we must secure independent political recognition from the British Government as a nation within a nation."[5] Both the objects were realized before the year was over. Lord Minto recognized them as an autonomous community, with separate political interests, by granting them weightage and separate electorate, and the Muslim League, newly founded, became a rival political organization to the Congress. The Secretary of the League very frankly said that "no political unity with the Congress is possible, because they and the Congressmen do not have common political objectives."

One of the main objectives of the Muslim League was to promote among the Muslims feelings of loyalty to the British Government. But the annulment of the Partition of Bengal and the British attitude towards the Muslim States in Europe put a severe strain on Muslim loyalty. According to Muhammad Ali, "It was a true instinct, that the Muslims chose to co-operate with the British as against the Hindus." But, he continued, "the attitude of England towards the enemies of Turkey, Persia, and Morocco had begun to alienate the sympathies of Indian Mussalmans from England ever since 1911. At home the reversal of the Partition of Bengal at the clamour of the Hindus showed the Muslims that in co-operating with the British Government they were leaning upon a broken reed." This converted the Muslims to the view that if they were in need of support and sympathy they must have a lasting and equitable settlement with the Hindus. "The Muslim League accordingly modified their aims by including, as one of their objects, to co-operate with other communities for the purpose of attaining a system of self-government suitable for India." The Indian National Congress was highly jubilant, but they ignored the fact that by accepting the modified view, they formally recognized the claim of the Muslims that

5. Aga Khan. *Memoirs*, p. 76.

they formed a separate political unit in India. The Congress put its official seal of approval on this recognition by the pact agreed to at the Lakhnau Congress. This conceded both weightage and separate electorate to the Muslims, which the Congress had all along denounced as cutting across the very ideal of Indian nationalism for which she stood. And all the while there could not be any reasonable doubt that the Muslim policy of alliance was dictated by the pan-Islamic sentiment, which counted far more with the Indian Muslims than the achievement of Indian independence.

The pan-Islamic movement gathered force at the end of the first World War. The Muslims of India regarded the treatment of Turkey as a great betrayal on the part of the British and a storm of indignation broke out among them. When prayers and deputations to the Government failed to achieve any modification of the terms of the treaty imposed upon Turkey, the Indian Muslims started a vigorous agitation to bring pressure upon Britain to change her policy towards Turkey. It was in connection with this agitation—known as the Khilafat agitation—that Gandhi came to play a leading part in Indian politics. Gandhi's handling of the Hindu-Muslim problem profoundly affected the course of struggle for independence. His anxiety for the Hindu-Muslim unity deserves all praise, but his was a sentimental approach to the problem and was not based on a realistic appreciation of the situation. He perhaps thought that by the magic of his nonviolence he would provide synthesis where none appeared possible. He does not appear to have understood the fundamental differences that separated the Muslims from the Hindus, and were too deep to be healed merely by slogans of friendship and fraternity. He failed to understand the real cause of tension between the two communities, because he did not study the problem in its true historical perspective. He shared the common views of the Hindu political leaders that the communalistic outlook of the Muslims blocked the progress of Indian nationalism which they held out as a great and noble ideal. But the Hindus forgot that while it is easy to follow a noble ideal

when it also subserves your material interest, it is more difficult to accept it when, instead, it involved sacrifice and sufferings. Independence of India would give the majority community all the power and prestige, and the minority would be at their mercy. The Muslims could not forget that not long ago they were masters of the Hindus. To be subject to the British was bad enough, but subjection to Hindu domination would be far worse. Such a mentality may be regarded as ignoble from the higher standpoint of nationality, but it is difficult to say that it is unnatural. The Hindu leaders, however, conveniently ignored this point of view altogether. Like them Gandhi also believed that most of the Muslim leaders were inspired by the lofty sentiments of nationalism. Muhammad Ali, whom he called his 'dear brother', was one of the greatest nationalist Muslims in his opinion, and for his sake alone he rejected a golden opportunity to come to terms with the British during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1921. But Muhammad Ali gave an admirable exposition of the real Muslim view in his famous article, entitled the "Communal Patriots", written in 1912:

"The Hindu communal patriot," said he, "sprang into existence with Swaraj as his war-cry. He refuses to give quarter to the Muslim unless the latter quietly shuffles off his individuality and becomes completely Hinduized. He knows, of course, the use of the words like 'India' and 'territorial nationality', and they form an important part of his vocabulary. But the Muslims weigh on his consciousness all the same, as a troublesome irrelevance; and he would thank his stars if some great exodus or even a geological cataclysm could give him riddance."

As in 1912, so again in 1918, resentment against the British for their treatment of Turkey once more drew the Indian Muslims towards the Hindus. Muhammad Ali, who had openly proclaimed that he was a Muslim first and an Indian afterwards, sought for the help and support of Gandhi in this crisis for Turkey, and Gandhi readily agreed. Whatever one might think of his decision to take the leadership in a campaign with which India had no direct concern, his approach to the Khilafat question

certainly appears to be very puzzling, not to put it more bluntly.

In his letter to the Viceroy he wrote that the safety of the British Empire depends upon the just treatment of the Khilafatist demand and of the Indians' claim to Home Rule. In other words, he attached equal importance to the independence of India and satisfaction of the claims of Indian Muslims regarding the integrity of the Khilafat in Turkey. Nay, more, he even gave priority to Muslim claim; for he invoked his *Brahmastra*, or the most potent weapon, namely Satyagraha, for the first time, not for the Home Rule of India, nor for the redress of Punjab atrocities, but for enforcing the Muslim demands, the other two items being added later, on second and third thoughts. If we remember that no other Muslim country in the world was prepared to sacrifice an iota of its national interest for the sake of Khilafat, and that Turkey herself a few years later abolished the Khilafat as a useless appendage to Turkish sovereignty, Gandhi's backing of the Muslim claim, even to the extent of giving it priority over Home Rule, baffles all rational explanation.

Gandhi is reported to have said, in his justification, that such a chance of winning over the Muslims would never come in a hundred years' time. This does little credit either to the head or heart of Gandhi. To seriously think that the policy of a European coalition towards Turkey could be modified by Satyagraha in India, implies ignorance of European politics, though some would like to call it "a rare sense of expediency sharpened by a sense of his own apostolic power." An alternative hypothesis is to suppose that Gandhi deliberately encouraged the Muslims in a fruitless and hopeless task for the sake of promoting the political interests of the Hindus. But such an attitude is unthinkable in the case of Gandhi. It has been suggested by some that "Gandhi was always capable of working himself up to a Messianic zeal, as an instrument of God; and in such cases Messianic zeal is known to be harnessed to a desire to work miracles." Miracles may happen in the world. But they do not constitute a proper

subject of historical inquiry, and should not form the basis of political judgment.

Further, to believe that any effort to help the Muslims on this occasion would for ever secure the Hindu-Muslim unity, only betrays a lack of full knowledge regarding the growth of Muslim nationalism sketched above. Gandhi was not disillusioned even by the article of his 'dear brother' Muhammad Ali, referred to above. Muhammad Ali laughed at the idea that the Muslims would make matter up with the Hindus because something happened to Muslims outside India, and very pertinently asked, "Have the questions that really divide the two communities lost their force and meaning? If not, then the problem remains exactly where it was at any time in recent Indian history." This is the realistic point of view. To think that a temporary palliative over a side-issue, having no relation with India, would solve the long-standing problem was an absurd idea, to say the least of it.

But there is a far more serious objection to Gandhi's policy. Howsoever opinions might differ as to the basic elements that constitute a nationality, there is a consensus of opinion in one respect. Different groups of people living together cannot constitute a nation unless they have common sympathy, agreement, and interest to an extent, such as does not subsist between anyone of them and any nation outside these groups. If a hundred million Muslims in India feel more vitally interested in the welfare of Turkey and other Muslim States outside India, than that of India herself, they can hardly be regarded as a unit of Indian nation. Gandhi failed to realize that the pan-Islamic movement in India, which he chose to lead, cut at the very root of Indian nationality. By his own admission that the Khilafat question was a vital one for Indian Muslims, even more vital than Home Rule for India, Gandhi himself, put a seal of approval to the oft-repeated claim of Indian Muslims that they formed a separate nation, that they were in India but not of India.

After having cut at the very root of Indian nationalism, by recognizing the Muslims, for all political purposes, as forming a separate nation, once in 1916, and again in 1919, Gandhi and his followers made a complete *volte-face* in 1937. When Jinnah, one of the few real nationalists among the Muslims at one time, suggested a coalition Ministry of the Congress and the Muslim League, the Congress assumed a lofty tone of undiluted Indian nationalism, and refused to entertain any proposal that might have the appearance of representing the Muslims as a separate political unit. The Congress virtually refused to form coalition ministry with the Muslims unless they liquidated the Muslim League and repudiated all vestiges of their claim to form a separate political entity. Nobody who had any knowledge of the background of Muslim politics could imagine for a moment that the Muslim League would commit political *Hara-kiri* at the bidding of the Congress.

It was a momentous decision, probably inspired by belated recognition of what true nationalism demands. But this sense dawned upon the Hindu leaders too late, and the decision of 1937 substantiated Muhammad Ali's charge against the Hindus, mentioned before. Gandhi fully justified the decision in an article published in the *Harijan* on 15 June, 1940. He maintained that there were only two parties in India, namely, those who support the Congress and those who do not, and then added that "between the two there is no meeting ground without the one or the other surrendering its purpose." Worse still, Gandhi declared: "It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties, before we can make any progress." Gandhi thus slammed the door of negotiations in the face of Jinnah, though he later repeatedly tried in vain to open it again. Jinnah now finally realized that the Muslims, as a separate community, had no political prospects in India. They had no chance of sharing political power with the Hindus; they must either surrender their individuality or cut themselves adrift from the Hindus. The Congress ultimatum was thus the signal for the parting of the ways which, by

inevitable stages, led to Pakistan. All proposals for amicable settlement on the basis of the partition of India were violently denounced, and Gandhi held to the last that the partition could only be effected over his dead body. But at last the doctrinaire yielded to the realist. Gandhi had evidently hoped against hope to work a miracle by his non-violence. But Jinnah's 'Direct Action' proved a more effective weapon for achieving independence than Satyagraha. Violence triumphed over non-violence.

We may next consider how far non-violent Satyagraha, which failed to impress Jinnah, triumphed over the British. According to the current view, this new technique, invented by Gandhi, drove the English, bag and baggage, from India. Let us now examine this claim in a dispassionate spirit, by examining the role played by Gandhi in the struggle for India's freedom. There are, however, two difficulties in making such a study, which must be cleared up at the very outset.

Gandhi revealed himself in two different aspects. This is indicated by the two labels attached to his name. Some describe him as the most saintly among the politicians, and others, as the most political among the saints. In other words, he had an admixture of a saint and a politician in him. It is unnecessary for our present purpose to judge which was the dominant element; for history can judge him only by his work, whether it proceeds from the head of a politician or heart of a saint. And this judgment must be based on the same standard by which all persons, high or low, are judged in history. But this simple truth is not admitted by many followers of Gandhi.

Thus Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the author of the official history of the Congress, says of Gandhi: "He saw things as if by a flash and framed his conduct by impulse. To the righteous man, these two are the supreme guides of life, not reason nor intellect."[6] This may be the view of devotees, but no historian can proceed on this basis.

6. *History of the Congress*, I. p. 378.

Mysticism has a place in religion, but not in history. I yield to none in profound reverence and respect for the saintly character of Gandhi, the nobility of his soul and the high humanitarian ideals by which he was inspired. But while writing the history of India's struggle for freedom, I can only take into consideration his actions and its effects, and form judgment on them as I would do on any other historical event.

When we come to discuss the Satyagraha movement, we are confronted with another difficulty, namely its precise connotation. Literally it means Truth-force, but Gandhi also called it Love-force. The term was coined by Gandhi in South Africa to denote the sort of struggle he carried on there, which he himself called Passive Resistance. Later, Gandhi differentiated the two, for, as he said, "Passive Resistance does not exclude the use of physical force or violence, but Satyagraha excludes violence in any shape or form." The aim of Satyagraha, we are told, is the conversion of the opponent by self-suffering. How it triumphs over the opponent is thus described: "It involves self-chosen suffering and humiliation for the resisters. If it is effective, it is so by working on the conscience of those against whom it is being used, sapping their confidence in the exclusive rightness of their case, making their physical strength impotent, and weakening their resolution by insinuating a sense of guilt for the sufferings they have a part in causing."

Before we proceed further to find out how far the ideal of Satyagraha was followed in right spirit by the Indian fighters, we may examine the case from the other side. Is there anyone who would seriously claim that Gandhi's Satyagraha produced the desired or expected effect upon the British and forced them to quit India? Would any rational man believe that Attlee, far less Churchill, or the British people were so much overwhelmed by a sense of guilt for the sufferings they caused in India, that their resolution to keep India under their control was weakened or shaken? Their physical strength, no doubt, deteriorated, but that was due to the hammering blows of Hitler, victories of Japan, and the impossibility

of placing reliance on Indian sepoys after the formation of the Indian National Army. There is no evidence that Satyagraha or self-suffering of Gandhi's followers had anything to do with it. Thus according to the accepted interpretation of Satyagraha it could not have any effect on the British decision to grant independence to India.

We have next to consider the question of Satyagraha from the Indian side. It has been repeatedly emphasized by Gandhi that non-violence forms the very basis of Satyagraha. It is not merely abstaining from violent action, but a complete transformation of life. It is thus expounded by Gandhi. "When a person claims to be non-violent, he is expected not to be angry with one who has injured him. He will not wish him harm, he will wish him well; he will cause him no physical hurt. Thus non-violence is complete innocence." Gandhi himself admitted in 1930, after more than ten years' experience, that few, if any, of his followers have understood the principles of Satyagraha or have developed necessary strength to exercise it. Anyone conversant with human nature would hardly expect anything else. But what is worse still, few even among his chief disciples or followers, really believed in the ideal of Satyagraha. We have recorded evidence that Pandit Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and many others, had no faith in the creed of non-violence, though they accepted it as a policy suitable to the circumstances. Gandhi himself knew this quite well, for he said: "If India possessed the sword, I know that India would not have listened to this gospel" of non-violence.

It is thus quite clear that whatever we might think of the virtue of Satyagraha, as a principle, it was never really put to the test. It may be doubted whether there were even four hundred real Satyagrahis out of the 400 millions of Indians. There was thus no real Satyagraha campaign in India, and, of course, no effect of it upon Britain.

On April 20, 1940, after Gandhi's last mass Satyagraha campaign was over, he wrote in the *Harijan*: "We

in India have never given non-violence the trial it deserves. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence." These words deserve most careful consideration. Gandhi himself admits that whatever success he achieved was attained, not by non-violence, pure and simple, as demanded by Satyagraha, but by a mixture of violence and non-violence. This ought to be a corrective to those who today cry hoarse over the discovery of a new technique of non-violence by which India attained independence, and which should therefore be followed by other countries of the World. As a matter of fact it is held by many that the humane way of British imperialism was mainly responsible even for the limited success of the movement.

Some devoted disciples of Gandhi openly admit that real Satyagraha was never tried in India, but argue that even the 'limited acceptance of Satyagraha', i.e. the mixed non-violence of Gandhi, was enough to lead to ultimate victory.

The phrase 'limited acceptance of Satyagraha' is not very easy to understand as an abstract expression. But what it really means is obvious. Gandhi himself referred to non-co-operation and civil resistance (evidently the same as Civil Disobedience) as the two offshoots of Satyagraha. To these movements evidently the followers of Gandhi ascribe his ultimate victory. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the validity of this claim.

The Non-co-operation Movement was formally started in 1921. There is no doubt that it had a very wide response all over the country, betokening a general mass-awakening, the extent and intensity of which was a revelation both to the people and to the Government. But the credit for this cannot go to Gandhi alone. Not even two years had passed since he had seriously entered into Indian politics and emerged as a leader. It is impossible to imagine that during this short period he could convert an inert mass into an active body all over this vast sub-continent. We must hold that the ground was prepared by the great national movement, including its militant aspect, during

the preceding sixteen years. The Swadeshi Movement, starting in Bengal but gradually spreading to distant regions, and the Home Rule Movement of Tilak and Besant, based upon mass contact, leavened the common people with a political consciousness unknown before. Gandhi admitted that the Home Rule League workers had prepared the ground in Gujarat, and the same thing was true of other places. The militant nationalism kept alive before the people the ideals of extreme sufferings and supreme self-sacrifice for the cause of the country, which political movements alone could not impart. The cumulative effect of these, and other causes such as the miseries of the people and growing discontent against the Government, prepared the ground for a vast mass upsurge such as India never saw before, at least after the outbreak of 1857. No sober historian would perhaps deny the influence of these predisposing causes, and hold that Gandhi alone, by his precepts and exertions, created this mass awakening all over this great sub-continent in less than two years' time during which he was pre-occupied by many political affairs.

On the other hand, it is impossible to minimise the importance of the role played by Gandhi. No one without his personality and saintly character would have inspired that confidence and created the will and enthusiasm which alone could galvanize the masses into action. The saint has always had a profound appeal to Indian mind. It is the great credit of Gandhi—perhaps unique in the world's history—that he could exploit the spirit of devotion and complete self-surrender, usually reserved for a spiritual *guru,* for political purposes. Dhangopal Mukherji tells us that when, in 1930, he asked the captain of the Bombay Youth League to explain why they followed Gandhiji, he replied as follows: "Gandhi is now marching as Buddha marched through India..... When you walk with him a light seems to emanate from him and fills you with its deep radiance. It is a new phenomenon, the present incarnation of Gandhi." This man blurted out the secret of Gandhi's influence over the masses. It was not the politician but the saint Gandhi, a new incarnation

of Buddha, to whom the people's faith and reverence were pledged.

While the common man was attracted by the saintly character of Gandhi, the intellectuals were drawn round him by his magnetic personality. This would be evident from the following confessions of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

"In spite of the closest association with him (Gandhi) for many years, I am not clear in my own mind about his objective. I doubt if he is clear himself. One step is enough for me, he says; and he does not try to peep into future or to have a clearly conceived end before him." Why in spite of this Nehru accepted his lead he thus explains: "How came we to associate ourselves with Gandhiji politically and to become, in many instances, his devoted followers? The question is hard to answer... Personality is an indefinable thing, a strange force that has power over the souls of men, and he possesses this in an ample measure.... He attracted people.... They did not agree with his philosophy of life, or even with many of his ideals. Often they did not understand him. But the action that he proposed was something tangible. ....Any action would have been welcome after the long tradition of inaction which our spineless politics had nurtured; brave and effective action with an ethical halo about it had an irresistible appeal.... and we went with him although we did not accept his philosophy."[7]

Pandit Nehru has put, in a nutshell, the best and most reasonable explanation of the secret of Gandhi's unique leadership. It was not his philosophy or ideals, statesmanship or political wisdom and acumen, but the magnetic personality that attracted the intellectual class, including even the highest leaders.

So it is the saintliness and personality of Gandhi that made him dominate Indian politics, and enabled him to launch the campaigns of Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience, involving mass upsurge on an unprecedented scale. The detailed account of the Non-co-operation

7. *Nehru on Gandhi*, pp. 64, 90-91; *Toward Freedom*, 186-7.

campaign of 1921 leaves no doubt that Gandhi, the saint, had succeeded, at least for the time being, in instilling into the hearts of the people of India, courage and manhood, discipline and endurance, the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of India's freedom from foreign yoke, and above all, a grim determination to achieve it at any cost. But Gandhi, the politician, hopelessly blundered. He sounded the order of retreat just when the public enthusiasm had reached the boiling point. Even his principal lieutenants like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Lajpat Rai shared the strong general resentment against Gandhi's decision, and regarded it as almost a national calamity. Judged by all rational standards, Gandhi committed a great tactical blunder, leading to deplorable consequences in the political situation of India, particularly in respect of Hindu-Muslim relations.

As regards the results of the Non-co-operation Movement, we have the benefit of an exhaustive enquiry by a Committee appointed by the Congress. It admitted that there was a partial success and partial failure. But one of the most interesting observations of this Committee deserves special notice. It is to the effect that critics who blame Gandhi for the failure of the Movement should remember that such a course was also recommended by Tilak. The Committee might have easily added the name of Aurobindo who published a detailed plan of what he called no-co-operation on almost exactly the same line later followed by Gandhi. The point to be noticed, however, is this. So long as popular opinion was not fully satisfied with the results of Non-co-operation Movement, the name of Tilak was invoked, even by the stalwarts of the Gandhi camp, as one who was also equally responsible for such a course of action. But, in later days, Gandhi's Non-co-operation Movement was given the sole credit for the attainment of independence, and no reference was made to Tilak or Aurobindo, who initiated it.

The next great movement of Gandhi, which also proved to be his last, was the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 which, with a slight break, continued nominally till 1934. In spite of the curious character of his pre-

liminary correspondence with the Viceroy, which was a puzzle even to Nehru, Gandhi's march to Dandi must be admired as a grand conception, superbly executed with a consummate skill. The Movement called forth unique examples of patient suffering on the part of a number of men who followed the instructions of Gandhi to the letter. The memorable salt-raid at Dharasana, of which a vivid picture has been given by an American eye-witness, has an epic grandeur of its own, and shows at its very best what the reverence for Gandhi, the saint, could accomplish. But Gandhi, the politician, proved as great a failure in this second campaign, as in the first. It is hard to defend his pact with Irwin on any rational ground, unless it were a tacit admission of failure and inability to continue the Civil Disobedience Movement any further. It is harder still to understand why the great Movement, which was declared by Gandhi himself to be a fight to a finish, was suddenly abandoned for the sake of the comparatively minor issue of separate electorate for the depressed classes. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru echoed the voice of the country when he said: "I felt annoyed with him (Gandhi) for choosing a side-issue for the final sacrifice..... After so much sacrifice and brave endeavour, was our movement to tail off into something insignificant? I felt angry with him at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question, and his frequent references to God in connection with it."[8]

As Gandhi himself disclaimed all responsibility for the violent outbreak in 1942, the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1933 practically brings to an end his leadership in the active struggle for freedom on the basis of limited acceptance of Satyagraha i.e. non-violent Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience. A review of the two great campaigns of Gandhi recalls to our mind the observations of C.R. Das. "The Mahatma", said he, "opens a campaign in a brilliant fashion; he works it up with unerring skill; he moves from success to success till he reaches the zenith of his campaign,—but after that he loses his nerve and begins to falter." The truth of

8. *Nehru on Gandhi*, p. 72; *Toward Freedom*, 236-9.

this remark, which was based on the 1921-22 campaign, was well illustrated by the subsequent campaigns of 1930 and 1932.[9]

What was the net result of these campaigns? It is impossible to describe them here in detail, but reference should be made to two great contributions that they made to India's struggle for freedom. In the first place, the Congress Movement had become a real mass movement, and national awakening had extended to the people at large. Secondly, the Congress was turned into a genuine revolutionary organization. These undoubtedly spelt the doom of British domination in India, sooner or later. There is, however, no basis for the claim that the Civil Disobedience Movement directly led to independence. It is opposed to both reason and facts. The campaigns of Gandhi, a mixture of violence and non-violence, came to an ignoble end about fourteen years before India achieved independence. They no doubt went a great way in creating an urge for freedom and a grim resolve to achieve it, on the part of the masses. But as the militant nationalism prepared the ground for Gandhi's success in 1921, it also materially contributed to the achievement of freedom. During the first World War the Indian Revolutionaries sought to take advantage of the German help in the shape of war materials to free the country by armed revolt. But the attempt did not succeed. During the second World War Subhas Bose followed the same method and created the I.N.A. In spite of brilliant planning and initial success the violent campaigns of Subhas Bose failed, like Gandhi's non-violent campaigns, to achieve freedom. The battle for India's freedom was also being fought against Britain, though indirectly, by Hitler in Europe and Japan in Asia. None of these three scored any direct success, but few would deny that it was the cumulative effect of all the three that brought freedom to India. In particular the revelations made by the I.N.A. trial, and the reaction it produced in India, made it quite plain to the British, already exhausted by the War, that they could no longer depend upon the loyalty of the sepoys for main-

9. Subhas Bose, *Indian Struggle* (1947), p. 103.

taining their authority in India. This had probably the greatest influence upon their final decision to quit India.

I do not propose to discuss in detail the part played by Gandhi during the second World War and the subsequent period. For it does not appear to have directly helped the advance of India towards freedom. Gandhi, however, rose to high stature as a humanitarian. He wrote to Hitler in 1941 about the soul-force discovered by him and earnestly requested him to desist from war. He wrote two open letters to the British people appealing to them that they should not fight Hitler with arms but oppose him by spiritual force, and interviewed the Viceroy to bring him round to this view. The parties addressed were as much or as little impressed as the Indian leaders were by his proposal on May 24, 1942, that the British and Allied forces should quit India, leaving him to resist the invading Japanese with stubborn non-violent non-co-operation, as well as his advice to the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, that the communal deadlock should be solved by giving Jinnah the sole authority to form a Cabinet, whose members might be all Muslims. These instances are cited to show that while Gandhi will live in history as one of the greatest apostles of peace and non-violence in a war-stricken world, the credit now given to him for his political acumen which led the Indians to the final victory, cannot command immediate assent, and needs a great deal of objective thinking.