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STUDIES IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

Number One

Edited by
B.R. NANDA
V.C. JOSHI

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This volume is the first of the series, 'Studies in Modern Indian History', sponsored by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The nine essays included in it were originally delivered as lectures; they have been revised and amplified for publication.

The contributions in the collection pertain to diverse subjects, but two main themes—the rise of Indian nationalism and economic ideas and development perspectives—can be discerned in them. The volume also includes a few studies in depth of the leadership of the Indian national movement, and a thought-provoking essay on methodology in modern Indian history.

These essays, written by distinguished scholars, are a valuable contribution to the study of important aspects of modern Indian history.

Rs. 30

To Prof. A. K. Saha

with personal regards

M. C. Joshi

2/4

To Prof. A. K. Saha

with personal regards

P. C. Joshi

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STUDIES IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

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PREFACE

One of the principal objectives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is the promotion of original research in modern Indian history with particular emphasis on the study of Indian nationalism. Since its establishment six years ago, the institution has already developed into an important centre of research for the history of India from Rammohun Roy to Jawaharlal Nehru. Apart from offering research facilities to a large community of scholars — historians and social scientists—by making available to them its rich resources including books, rare newspapers, manuscripts, private papers and oral history recordings, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has been holding seminars and lectures on different aspects of modern Indian history. This programme has enabled us to associate a number of distinguished scholars with the academic activities of this institution. The seminars have necessarily to be confined to specialists in particular themes, but the lectures, which are invariably delivered by competent scholars and are based on original research, are open to the public and have been very well received. It was felt that some at least of these lectures could usefully be made accessible to a wider audience. The present volume is the first in the series which we propose to publish under the title: 'Studies in Modern Indian History.'

All the contributions in this volume are based on lectures delivered under the auspices of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, except for the paper 'Developmental Perspectives in India: Some Reflections on Gandhi and Nehru' by P.C. Joshi, which was presented at the seminar on 'Gandhi and Nehru' held in Teen Murti House in 1969.

The papers in this volume do not pertain to a single theme; indeed they reflect the wide diversity and scope of the studies in which the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is interested, and to the promotion of which it has been making a significant contribution. Two main themes may however be discerned in this collection: rise of Indian nationalism and economic ideas and perspectives on

economic development. The contributions by Bimal Prasad, Ravinder Kumar and David Baker fall within the first group, and those by Bipan Chandra, Tarlok Singh and P.C. Joshi in the second. The first group of essays also includes a few studies of the leadership of the national movement at different stages of its development such as those on 'Nehru and Tagore' and 'C.F. Andrews'. The methodology of modern Indian history is discussed in B.M. Bhatia's paper.

We must record our gratitude to the contributors who responded not only to our invitation to deliver the lectures, but also took pains to revise the text for publication. We need hardly add that the opinions expressed by the authors are their own, and do not represent in any way the views of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The only criterion for the selection of the contributions has been their scholarly content and the competence of the individual scholars to deal with the subjects of their choice.

We hope that this volume would make a contribution to modern Indian studies and interest research scholars as well as the general public.

Dr. S.R. Bakshi of our research section has given valuable assistance in seeing this volume through the press. He has also prepared the index.

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
New Delhi.
November 1, 1972

B.R. NANDA
V.C. JOSHI

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THE ADVENT OF MASS POLITICS IN INDIA: THE ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA OF 1919

RAVINDER KUMAR

TO RAISE a problem associated with Gandhi is to rush where angels would fear to tread. This is so because of the attention which historians have already bestowed upon Gandhi, upon his style of politics and upon his influence on nationalism in India. We all know that the advent of Gandhi marked a revolutionary change in politics in the country. We also know that this change was reflected both in the values which inspired the political community and in the social background of the men and women who participated in political agitations. Apart from fleeting moments of heightened emotion or moral aberration, politics before the advent of Gandhi was a tame and respectable activity. It seldom involved defiance of the law, or violation of constitutional proprieties, and it equally seldom involved social groups other than those who had received their education through the medium of English. All this was dramatically transformed by the charismatic personality of Gandhi. Politics, under his aegis, involved frontal collisions with the British Raj and it reflected the hopes and the aspirations of the common people of India.

While such reflections about Gandhi's influence upon politics rest upon irrefutable evidence, I nevertheless believe that the questions which historians have hitherto asked themselves obscure rather than illumine the nature and the quality of this influence. To assert, for instance, that the agitations launched by Gandhi gained widespread support in the cities and in the villages conveys very little, more particularly when we bear in mind the complex structure of society in India, and the conflicting ideologies which battled for the allegiance of men's minds. Would it not be pertinent for the historian

to ask himself which social groups participated in the agitations launched by Gandhi? Would it also not be pertinent for him to inquire into the identity of these social groups, to unfathom their interests and motivations, and to ascertain why they accepted Gandhi's leadership? By raising such questions we can not only know who participated in the movements led by Gandhi, and why, but we may also gain an insight into his vision of the political community, and be in a position to assess his legacy to politics in India.

I

To answer some of the questions we have posed above, I propose to focus on the agitations launched by Gandhi between 1919 and 1921, when he first appeared on the national stage, and espoused causes which were of the most intimate concern to the entire country. I shall focus in particular on the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* of 1919, for the very good reason that I have studied this movement in considerable detail with some of my colleagues.

The background to the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* can be outlined in a few brief sentences. During the course of the first World War the British Government in India was obliged to assume extraordinary powers in order to control the terrorist movement in Bengal and other places. To legitimise these powers under conditions of peace, the Government of India introduced two Bills, in January 1919, one of which sought to amend the Penal Code, and the other to short-circuit the processes of law in question concerning revolutionary crime. Gandhi reacted to these Bills with feelings of acute horror. He looked upon them as measures which sought to subject the people to the arbitrary authority of government, and which were opposed to basic British notions of fairplay and justice. He, therefore, issued an appeal to the people of India to observe Sunday, the 6th April 1919, as a day of 'humiliation and prayer' in protest against the Rowlatt Act.

The response to Gandhi's appeal in different parts of the country throws interesting light on the extent to which he was successful in bringing about popular participation in politics. The protest against the Rowlatt Act was observed throughout the country, although it was confined to the cities and the towns. However, the depth of feeling with which the people responded to Gandhi's call,

and the events which followed the *hartal* of the 6th, varied in a most significant way from region to region. In cities like Madras and Calcutta, the *hartal* was observed in a quiet and orderly fashion, and local leaders who owed personal allegiance to Gandhi harangued substantial crowds on the iniquities of the British Government in India. In cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad, particularly the latter, the temper of the people was pitched to a higher key, and the *hartal* of the 6th led to serious friction between the authorities and the *satyagrahis*. This friction expressed itself through acts of violence and arson, and through sanguinary conflicts between the custodians of the law and crowds of demonstrators.

But it was in the cities of the North like Lahore and Amritsar that the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* evoked the most violent protest from the people, and the most brutal repression from the British Government. The *hartal* of the 6th passed off relatively peacefully in these cities. But a few indiscriminate arrests of local leaders, and a few violent encounters between the custodians of the law and crowds of excited demonstrators, rapidly transformed an innocuous movement of protest into something perilously close to rebellion. For practically a week the Government of the Punjab exercised a most precarious authority over the principal cities of the province, and its impotence was highlighted by the spontaneous growth of Soviet-like institutions, which were called 'Popular Committees' by their creators and 'Revolutionary Committees' by their detractors, and which took upon themselves during their brief existence the tasks of political negotiation and civil administration. Nothing comparable to the 'Popular Committees' of 1919 flourished in India till the events of 1942 presented an even more serious challenge to the British authority in India.

The explosive violence with which the cities of the Punjab responded to the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* probably came as a complete surprise to Gandhi. We have little reason to believe that his concepts of *satya* and *ahimsa* tied him with any special bonds of affection to the people of the Punjab; and we have equally little reason to believe that the institutions through which he organised the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* were particularly powerful in the cities of the North. Indeed, as we shall presently see, the position was actually the reverse, and if at all the historian is to explain the passion with which the cities of the North supported the Rowlatt *Satyagraha,* then he must seek an

explanation in the local politics of the Punjab, rather than in the ideals preached by Gandhi, or in the political institutions created by him.

A brief digression into the intellectual influences on Gandhi, and into the institutions through which he organised the Rowlatt *Satyagraha,* is necessary to underscore the seeming irrationality of the enthusiasm with which the Punjab supported the movement. In an essay which highlights the 'Traditional Influences on Gandhi', Professor Basham draws our attention to the extent to which Gandhian concepts like *satya* and *ahimsa* were "strongly influenced by later devotional Hinduism and Jainism, [and] by ideas of strict non-violence and vegetarianism [which] dominated the ethical systems of the middle classes... in the 19th century Gujerat."

> We suggest [Professor Basham points out] that.. Gandhi's concepts are fully in keeping with Indian tradition, and were probably developed from ideas which he absorbed in his childhood and youth fertilised and brought to fruition by his contact with the West... It is possible that if he had never read the Gospels, Tolstoy, Ruskin and such western literature, Gandhi would not have entered politics at all, or, if he had done so, would have devised techniques and policies different from those which he actually did devise. But if he had not been brought up in a middle-class Hindu-Jaina environment of the type that was to be found in 19th century Porbunder and Rajkot his techniques and policies would have been very different indeed.[1]

The Hindu-Jaina ethos of the Gujerati *bourgeoisie* which exercised so decisive an influence upon Gandhi was hardly designed to help him in establishing rapport with the people of the Punjab. Any explanation, therefore, which attributes the violence of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in the North to an identity in outlook and values between Gandhi and the people of the Punjab is unlikely to carry much conviction. Nor can the events of 1919 in cities like Lahore and Amritsar be explained on the basis of any special efforts in organisation on

1 *Vide* a paper presented by Professor A.L. Basham on "Traditional Influences on Gandhi" at a seminar on 'India in 1919' held at the Australian National University, Canberra, in 1966.

the part of Gandhi. Indeed, when we look to the institutions through which the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* was organised, we observe that the movement evoked the maximum response in precisely those parts of the country where such institutions were weak to the point of being non-existent.[2] The Home Rule Leagues of Besant and Tilak provided Gandhi with the principal means to whip up popular feeling against the Rowlatt Act. The radical members of the League, men like the brothers Dwarkadas, or Shankerlal Banker, had by the end of 1918 become critical of Besant's moderation, and they were, therefore, all too willing to accept a radical programme of direct action against the British Government. Having accepted such a radical programme, they threw into the campaign against the Rowlatt Act a well organised network of Leagues, and a well disciplined cadre of leaders. When Gandhi organised his *Satyagraha Sabhas* in March 1919, to guide the people during the course of the struggle, the men prominent in the *Sabhas* were those who had already been prominent in the Home Rule Leagues, and the *Sabhas* were able to act to any purpose only in those parts of the country where the Leagues were already well established. In the cities of the Punjab, for instance, the Home Rule Leagues had not made much headway, and Gandhi, therefore, found it quite difficult to gain influential and dedicated members for his *Satyagraha Sabha.*

II

If neither the values nor the institutions created by Gandhi in 1919 evoked any sympathetic response in the North, then we can clearly conclude that the citizens of Lahore and Amritsar participated in the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* to express local frustrations and to secure parochial interests. It is, indeed, my belief that the Rowlatt *Satyagraha,* like other agitations launched by Gandhi, provided an umbrella under which numerous classes and communities could pursue their distinct, and often contradictory, interests without doing any damage to the wider and more romantic objectives of the movement. It is also my belief that because such movements served primarily as channels for the articulation of local and sectional interests,

2 For information on the Home Rule Leagues I am indebted to Dr. Hugh Owen's paper entitled "The Organisation of the Rowlatt Satyagraha" which was also presented at the seminar on 'India in 1919' in Canberra.

they can be fully understood only when the historian turns his attention to the local movements which were subsumed under the wider movements.

To what extent do our assumptions illumine the course of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in a city like Lahore? To answer this question we shall recapitulate in brief the events associated with the heroic days of April 1919, in the capital of the Punjab. During the months of February and March the local leaders of Lahore conducted a vigorous campaign against the Rowlatt Act under the aegis of local bodies like the Lahore Association or the Provincial Congress Committee. This agitation affected the middle classes in general, and the student community in particular, with the result that the *hartal* of 6 April was a complete triumph for the *satyagrahis* in the city. But while the *hartal* of the 6th was a triumph for the *satyagrahis,* the temper of the city was subdued and restrained. The crowds which demonstrated against the Rowlatt Act acted with considerable moderation, probably because they were drawn from the respectable classes, although we should remember that the very substantial student community of Lahore had thrown its weight in favour of the movement right from the outset. The crowds of the 6th avoided any collision with the custodians of the law, although even at this stage they could not resist innocuous displays of temper, as when they obliged a petty representative of the local administration "to take off my turban, which I did, because I knew that if I did not do so there would be trouble..."[3]

All this was to be dramatically transformed in the days which followed, at least partly in response to the challenge thrown out by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who threatened the local leaders with dire consequences if they persisted in preaching disloyalty to the people. Sir Michael's challenge was immediately taken up by the local leaders, and on the occasion of *Ram Naumi,* which fell on 9 April, they appealed to the Muslims of Lahore to join the Hindus in demonstrating against the repressive laws of the British Government. The Muslims of Lahore, particularly those belonging to the poorer classes, responded with considerable enthusiasm to the appeal. The 9th of April, therefore, witnessed fraternisation between Hindus and Muslims on a scale which was

3 Evidence by Sayad Muhammad Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Lahore: *Hunter Commission Report,* Volume IV.

never to be repeated thereafter. But the crowds which demonstrated on the 9th, and which were drawn from Hindus and Muslims, from business and professional men, from students and the *petite bourgeoisie,* and finally from the artisan and the working classes, not only represented an impressive display of communal harmony, but they also revealed the extent to which the authority of the British Raj had come to be held in contempt by the people:

> Generally we know that the people give us due respect, and the mob always obeys our orders, but on that day we were altogether absolutely ignored [an Honorary Magistrate of Lahore pointed out]. On that occasion of *Ram Naumi* generally, processions were formed with the object of explaining certain historical events, and certain prayers were recited, but nothing of the kind was done in this procession. Instead of all this the attitude of the people was so rude that they did not allow any Honorary Magistrate or respectable gentleman of the town to join them ... When I went there I saw none of the city fathers were there. Instead, all the leaders who had signed the notice to protest against the Rowlatt Bills were there in place of the old leaders, and these leaders were garlanded, and they led the procession.[4]

Despite the truculent mood of the people, the 9th passed off without any bloodshed. But on the 10th, Lahore was up in arms, and a wild mood of excitement seized the city, when it learnt of Gandhi's detention, and of unlovely happenings in Amritsar, which had been triggered off by the arrest of some local leaders. Within an hour of the arrival of this news, the shopkeepers of the city declared a state of *hartal,* and excited groups of people poured out into the bazars, disorganised, leaderless, and not knowing what to do, but determined to express their indignation at Gandhi's arrest, and at the Amritsar outrages. To conjure the mood of Lahore on the 10th, I can do no better than quote the recollections of an obscure student who was caught up in these turbulent events:

> On April 10, as I was going to the bazar for shopping in the evening I saw shops being suddenly closed, and a multitude of people came crying, 'Hai Hai Rowlatt Bill', 'Black Bill', 'Gandhi

4 *Ibid.*

> Ki Jai' and so forth. I was asked by one in the crowd to put off my cap. I asked him what the matter was. He told me that Gandhiji had been imprisoned, and people were sorrowing on that account. He further inquired of me whether I was willing to participate in the general sorrow. I spontaneously expressed my willingness...
>
> I followed the multitude silently, asking many questions as to why and where the mob was going. It appeared to me that no one knew precisely where the crowd was going. Some said that they would probably go all over the city to show their sorrow, and others, that the people would probably go to the Mall to show their sorrow to the Englishmen.[5]

Since the citizens of Lahore were in an excited frame of mind, and because O'Dwyer was convinced that the crowds had assembled "with the object of invading the civil station, where there were several thousands of Europeans, the majority being women and children",[6] bloodshed was more or less inevitable. The police fired twice on the crowds of demonstrators, presumably to prevent invasions of the civil station where the Europeans lived, as a result of which a large number of Hindus and Muslims were wounded and killed. The firings of the 10th enraged an already excited populace, and completely undermined the control which the British Government exercised within the walled city of Lahore. "On the 11th... [the] city was actually out of hand",[7] a British Officer later confessed. A large congregation of 35,000 converged on the Badshahi Mosque in the heart of the city, and like the crowds of the 9th, this congregation was drawn from all classes and communities of Lahore: Hindus and Muslims, shopkeepers and professional men, students and clerks, and artisans and workers. The unity between the Hindus and the Muslims on the occasion was highlighted by the solid phalanx of local leaders, men like Harkishen Lal, Rambhuj Dutt Choudhry, Duni Chand, Pir Tajuddin, Mohsin Shah and Khalifa Shujauddin who stood around the pulpit of the Badshahi Mosque and harangued

5 Evidence by an Unknown Student: *Report of the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress,* Volume II, p. 284.

6 Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It* (London, 1925), p. 275.

7 Evidence by E.P. Broadway, Senior Superintendent of Police, Lahore: *Hunter Commission Report,* Volume IV.

the congregation on the wickedness of O'Dwyer's administration. At Rambhuj Dutt's suggestion the crowd elected by popular acclaim a Committee to represent the city in negotiations with the administration, and to attend to civic matters in the absence of the established authority.

The 'Popular Committee', which the British Government insisted upon calling the 'Revolutionary Committee', posed a serious threat to the British authority, since it was an important focus of power in Lahore during its brief existence from the 11th to the 14th. The Committee comprised of 50 members, and it met daily to review the political situation in Lahore. Its power was recognised even by O'Dwyer, since he conducted negotiations with its leading members with a view to end the *hartal* in the city. But despite the influence of its leading members, the Committee could function effectively only when it reflected the popular mood, and was guided by, instead of attempting to guide, the citizens of Lahore. Thus, when the Committee tried to negotiate a settlement with O'Dwyer on the 13th, its leading members found themselves out of favour with the people, and were even accused of trying 'to get land-grants from the Governments'.[8] The leaders of the Popular Committee did not, in fact, know how to exploit the power which popular initiative had thrust into their hands, and when O'Dwyer called in the army to restore order in Lahore, they surrendered their persons to the authorities without any protest.

III

Our brief recapitulation of the course of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Lahore brings out the extent to which all the major classes and communities in the city were drawn into the movement of protest against the Rowlatt Act. I would like to draw attention in particular to the congregation which assembled at the Badshahi Mosque on the 11th, on which occasion rich and poor and Hindus and Muslims joined hands in a most impressive demonstration of unity. That the local leaders of Lahore could persuade 35,000 souls in a city with a total population of 2,80,000, to attend a meeting held in protest against the Rowlatt Act, speaks eloquently of their success in drawing the masses into the movement.

8 Evidence by Lala Dharam Das: *Report of the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*.

But how much of this enthusiasm was due to Gandhi? And to what extent were the citizens of Lahore exploiting the opportunity offered by him to voice frustrations which were in no way related to the Rowlatt *Satyagraha*?

We must first of all concede that any attempt to displace Gandhi from his central position in the stage would do serious violence to the political temper of India in 1919. Indeed, in focussing on the reaction of the citizens of Lahore to Gandhi's detention on April 10 we have given some indication of his charismatic hold upon the popular imagination. But having made such a concession, we must also draw attention to the startling fact that few of the leaders of Lahore who participated in the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* owed personal allegiance to Gandhi, or were influenced by his ideas, or subsequently followed his lead in politics.

A majority of the Hindu leaders who led the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Lahore possessed a middle class background, and they were drawn from vigorous and enterprising castes like the Khatris, the Aroras and the Banias. These castes had special reason to be disaffected towards the British Government in 1919. Not that this had always been so. The annexation of the Punjab had, in the first instance, proved a blessing for the Khatris, the Aroras and the Banias, since it had opened to them opportunities which had not been open to them under the Sikhs. Because they were generously endowed with enterprise and acumen, the Khatris and the associated castes exploited such opportunities to the full, and soon established for themselves substantial bridgeheads in business, in the liberal professions and in the civil service. So remarkable was the progress made by these castes in the decades which followed 1849 that they looked upon the British Government with sentiments of loyalty and affection.

It is generally believed that the Land Alienation Act of 1901 was a measure designed to inhibit the progress of the middle classes, and it, therefore, encouraged them to adopt an anti-British stance. This may well have been so. But instead of putting a brake upon their progress, the Act merely encouraged the middle classes to invest their savings in urban instead of rural enterprises. The decade which followed 1901, therefore, witnessed a most remarkable growth of financial and industrial institutions in the Punjab, and men like Harkishen Lal owed their spectacular rise in the world of high finance and industry largely due to the restrictions imposed by the Alienation

Act upon the purchase of rural properties by the urban castes.

The cleavage between the middle classes and the British Government of the Punjab came about in 1913, rather than in 1901. The occasion for this cleavage was the appointment of Sir Michael O'Dwyer as the Governor of the Punjab. O'Dwyer came to Lahore with the firm conviction that the urban classes were responsible for the exploitation of the peasants, and he, therefore, looked upon the former with feelings of undisguised hostility. He also took every opportunity to remind the urban classes of their selfishness, and to impress upon them how little they deserved any share in political power. In addition to all this, O'Dwyer also involved himself in a sordid intrigue which destroyed the financial and industrial empire of Harkishen Lal in 1913, and in doing so initiated an economic recession which affected virtually every substantial Hindu family in Lahore.

Although O'Dwyer's policies concerned only prosperous businessmen or substantial men in the professions, the hostility generated by them affected a significantly wider section of the Hindu community in Lahore. This was so because of the ties of interest and sentiment generated by the institution of caste. As we have already pointed out, the middle classes of Lahore were drawn from castes like the Khatris, the Aroras and the Banias. Each one of these castes consisted of a social pyramid, with a few successful lawyers, or doctors, or civil servants, or businessmen perched at the apex, while a vast horde of petty shopkeepers, or junior civil servants, or men in the lower rungs of the professions, formed the base of the pyramid. Despite a significant gulf in wealth and status, the men who occupied the base of a caste pyramid were tied with strong bonds of loyalty to their successful caste-fellows at the apex, and shared with them their aspirations and their ambitions as well as their prejudices and their frustrations. Because of the existence of such loyalties, the relatively small number of rich and influential men whose interests were adversely affected by O'Dwyer's policies were able to infect a large proportion of the Hindus of Lahore with feelings of hostility towards the British Government.

If the rich and the poor Hindus of Lahore detested O'Dwyer's administration because of the damage it had done to their interests, the Muslims of the city, a large proportion of whom were employed in industrial establishments, or in declining crafts like weaving, were

equally hostile towards the British Government, though their hostility stemmed from an altogether different set of reasons. The sentiments of the Muslims were shaped, on the one hand, by the belief that the followers of Islam all over the world formed an indissoluble community, and on the other, by the suspicion that Great Britain was involved with other Christian Powers in an intrigue to undermine the power and glory of Islam through dismembering the Ottoman Empire.

The most striking feature of Muslim concern for the integrity of the brotherhood of Islam and the Ottoman Empire was the extent to which such a sentiment bound the rich and the poor, the orthodox and the liberal, and finally the educated and the untutored in a common bond of hostility towards the British Government. The educated Muslims of Lahore were influenced by the poetical writings of Iqbal, who disseminated new values through the medium of his verse; and by the polemical writings of Mohamed Ali, whose editorials in the *Comrade* and the *Hamdard* were avidly read by the intelligentsia all over the country. But so far as the poor Muslims were concerned, their mentor was Zafar Ali, who represented a new political style in Lahore. A shrewd journalist and a clever demagogue, Zafar Ali addressed himself to the poor Muslims through the columns of his newspaper, the *Zamindar,* whose editorials were couched in a style and dwelt upon themes that inflamed the passions instead of widening the outlook. Zafar Ali commenced his career as a demagogue by creating a sense of identity among the Muslims through the primitive expedient of heaping abuse upon the Hindus. At this stage the *Zamindar* was sold in the bazars of Lahore by vendors who described it as the *Hinduaon ka bera gharak karnewala Zamindar.*[9] Next, Zafar Ali attacked the British Government, and described as completely hypocritical British policy towards Turkey and towards the Muslim community in India. The style of the *Zamindar* can be gauged from the following extract from an editorial which expressed Muslim indignation at the demolition of a section of a mosque in Kanpur in 1913.

9 *NAI* (National Archives of India): *Vide* sketch of Zafar Ali in letter from C.A. Barron, Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, to H. Wheeler, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated 16 December 1916: Home Department, Political A Proceedings No. 127/137, March 1914.

> A sacred portion of the Cawnpore Mosque was demolished in the midst of guns and bayonets. In this way the funeral of that religious liberty, whose effigy has been shown as living and moaning for more than a century, was performed with full military honours. Similarly, the memory of that bloody 3rd of August cannot be effaced from the page of our heart, on which date the sun appeared over the horizon of Cawnpore shedding sorrowful tears over the fountains of blood, over writhing dead bodies, over the bleeding wounds of innocent children, and over aggrieved and helpless humanity, and which was the day on which the corpse of British justice . was at last laid on the banks of the Ganges. .[10]

Whatever opinion we might entertain about the quality of such polemics, its success among the poor and unsophisticated Muslims of Lahore was most striking. According to a contemporary account, "as soon as this paper, *i.e.*, the *Zamindar* was brought into the bazar, large crowds of people surrounded the news-shops, and the copies were soon sold out".[11] The popularity of the *Zamindar* is also reflected in the fact that under Zafar Ali its circulation rose from 1,200 in 1910 to 15,000 in 1913.

It took more than just the propaganda of the *Zamindar*, however, to alienate the poor Muslims of Lahore from the British Government. Indeed, Zafar Ali's phenomenal success in activating Muslim artisans and workers can be attributed in no insignificant measure to the stresses and strains to which they were exposed in earning their livelihood, and to their consequent readiness to accept a romantic body of ideas which pointed to the British Government as the single source of all their unhappiness. Cities like Lahore possessed a considerable population of artisans and workers, some of whom, like the weavers, were finding it increasingly difficult to compete with goods produced by the machine. Their misery was heightened during the years of the war, when the prices of foodgrains and other essential commodities rose by substantial margins without corresponding increases in wages. The situation became particularly acute in the opening months of

10 The *Zamindar*, 20 April 1913.

11 *NAI:* O.M.'s Report dated 28 January 1916: Home Department, Political A Proceedings No. 173, May 1916.

1919, due to the complete failure of the *kharif* crops in the winter of 1918.

On the eve of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha,* therefore, almost the entire population of Lahore was disaffected for reasons which varied from class to class, and community to community. The prosperous Hindu middle classes, for instance, felt that they had been denied a proper share in political and economic power. Their sentiments were fully shared by their poorer caste-fellows, who also suffered from acute economic distress owing to the inflationary conditions generated by the war. The Muslim artisans and workers were even more agitated than the Hindu *petite bourgeoisie,* because they had been led to believe that their religion was in danger, and because the rise in prices had drastically reduced their standard of living, which was never significantly above the level of subsistence.

In the spring of 1919, therefore, Lahore was ripe for 'rebellion'; and the movement of protest initiated by Gandhi enabled the citizens of Lahore to give expression to the accumulated tensions and frustrations of more than a decade.

IV

While the course of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Lahore represents a considerable triumph for Gandhi, precisely the reverse is true of Bombay, where the movement of protest against the Rowlatt Act failed to touch the imagination of large and significant sections of the community. The comparative failure of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Bombay appears at first blush to be somewhat of a paradox. The city was, after all, an important centre of political activity in India. It possessed a rich, cultured and influential Gujerati community which subscribed to the 'Hindu-Jaina' ethic that lay behind Gandhian ideals and Gandhian practice. Both the Home Rule League and the *Satyagraha Sabha,* the two organisations through which Gandhi controlled the agitation, were more powerful in Bombay than they were in any other city in the country. Despite all this, however, the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* never assumed the character of a mass movement in Bombay.

Why it did not do so is, I believe, susceptible to rational analysis. And if I may anticipate the results of such an analysis, I would like to emphasise that these results reinforce the conclusions we have by

implication drawn about Gandhi's conception of the political community, and his vision of political action, in our recapitulation of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Lahore.

Briefly if not very elegantly put, the Rowlatt *Satyagraha,* like other agitations launched by Gandhi, rested upon the politics of the social pyramid and the ideology of romanticism. Both these terms can be easily explained. In describing the structure of society in Lahore, we emphasised the fact that the loyalties of the individual and his sense of identity were shaped by community and religion, rather than by class and occupation. We further held that a caste could be looked upon as a social pyramid, with a few successful individuals perched at the apex, while the vast majority formed the base of the pyramid. It was also pointed out that despite differences in wealth and status, the ties of interest and sentiment between the members of a caste were so strong that they acted as cohesive social units in situations of political crisis.

Gandhi looked upon the social pyramid as the legitimate basis of political action in India. If at all, he interfered with such pyramids, then his interference was confined to challenging the established leaders within them, and substituting in their place new leaders who were sympathetic to his social ideals and his political objectives. In the case of Lahore in 1919, however, tensions within the various communities stemmed from factors which had very little to do with Gandhi. The ideal of the Pan-Islamic community, for instance, had created a serious turbulence in Muslim society, and enabled upstarts like Zafar Ali to make a bid for the leadership of the community. Similarly, the retrogressive policies of O'Dwyer alienated the middle class Hindus from the British Government and encouraged them to make an alliance with Gandhi, and to persuade their caste-fellows to participate in the movement of protest against the Rowlatt Act.

What I have described as the ideology of romanticism was a logical extension of the politics of the social pyramid. Since Gandhi accepted the distinct identity of different castes, communities and religious groups, and because he looked upon his movements as broad-based alliances between such social units, he never elaborated a concrete body of ideas as the basis of his political action. Instead, he looked upon his movements as romantic gestures of protest against specific acts, like the repressive legislation of 1919, or the moral myopia of the Hunter Commission, or the tax on salt. Finally, because Gandhi's

movements were romantic gestures of protest, they rendered possible the co-existence on the same platform of classes and communities with conflicting interests and different styles of life.

The principles and preconceptions which formed the agitations launched by Gandhi can be of considerable help to us in understanding the relative failure of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Bombay.[12] As we have already pointed out, the Gujeratis of Bombay, who were drawn mainly from the Brahman and Bania castes, and who held dominant positions both in the liberal professions and in trade and industry, constituted a natural base of support for the movement of protest against the Rowlatt Acts. This was particularly so because the Gujerati *bourgeoisie,* after having made substantial progress in the 19th century, was finding the British presence an obstacle rather than a help in the flowering of its cultural creativity, and in the expansion of its industrial and commercial activities. The frustration of the Gujerati middle classes, a frustration born of achievement and ambition rather than poverty and suffering, is all too evident in the readiness with which the young men of the community adopted, what were by contemporary standards, radical stances in politics. The Home Rule agitation in Bombay, for instance, rested largely upon Gujerati young men like the brothers Dwarkadas, or Shankerlal Banker, and the militancy of the movement reflected their mood rather than the mood of Annie Besant.

When Gandhi organised the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Bombay, he leaned heavily upon the Home Rule League, and the core of his *Satyagraha Sabha* consisted of militant members of the League. Gandhi's dependence upon the League was to prove a double-edged weapon. For while the Home Rulers had organised an intensive, and a largely successful, agitation among the middle classes and the *petite bourgeoisie* of Bombay, they had also left substantial and important sections of the city unaffected by their propaganda.

The mill-workers of Bombay, who constituted 20 per cent of the population of the city, were the most significant of the classes which were unaffected by the propaganda of the Home Rule League. These mill-workers were Marathas of low-caste from the Konkan or the Desh; and since they were first generation immigrants, their style of life

12 For an appreciation of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Bombay I have drawn heavily from Dr. Jim Masselos' paper entitled "Some Aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919" which was presented at the seminar on 'India in 1919' in Canberra.

and their values were rural rather than urban, while the unlovely conditions of their existence heightened their nostalgia for the village. A deep gulf of class, caste, language and culture separated the mill-workers from the *bourgeois* radicals of the League, and even though individuals like the brothers Dwarkadas had discovered the working class of Bombay during the influenza epidemic of 1918, they were unsuccessful in establishing rapport with it. Thus, the successful strike which the workers of Bombay waged in January 1919, was completely free of political influences, and rested exclusively upon economic issues. Indeed, the naivety of the mill-workers at this stage is vividly reflected in an encounter with the custodians of the law in the course of which they hailed the Commissioner of Police as 'Our Namadeva and our Tukarama'.[13]

Becuase Gandhi depended upon Gujerati radicals hailing from the middle classes, he was unable to make any impression upon the Maratha mill-workers of Bombay. The *hartal* of April 6, therefore, was a relatively tame affair in the city, and devolved upon a predominantly Gujerati middle class and lower middle class crowd of 10,000, which assembled at Chowpatty to hear Gandhi denounce the Rowlatt Act. Even the hooliganism of the 11th, when news of Gandhi's detention had reached Bombay, did not involve any new section of the community. The closure of shops and markets in response to the detention spilled large numbers of shopkeepers, retailers and their employees on to the streets, and their numbers gained in strength because the 11th was a Friday, and a day of rest and prayer for the Muslims. All these sections of the community congregated into mobs in the streets, and indulged in disorderly behaviour. But it is important to note that lawlessness did not spread to the working class districts like Parel or Chinchpokli, and all except two of the city's 85 mills continued working right through the agitation.

V

By adopting the politics of the social pyramid and the ideology of romanticism, Gandhi, as our brief survey of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* indicates, was remarkably successful in drawing into politics social groups which had been inactive before 1919. He was able to

13 *Vide* the *Bombay Chronicle*, 21 January 1919.

do so, first, because he did not tamper with the social loyalties of the people, and secondly, because his agitations permitted different social groups to join hands with one another without giving up their distinct, and even contradictory, interests. But if Gandhi was successful in drawing the masses into politics, he did so at a considerable price. Under his leadership, since different castes, communities and religious groups constituted the active units of a broad based alliance, these units acquired a heightened awareness of their distinct identities, and in doing so weakened those very bonds which held them together in a single political community.

We end, therefore, on a strange note of paradox: Gandhi, who did more than anyone else to fashion India into a nation, simultaneously created a style in politics which will put to a severe test the concept of national unity in India.

THE RISE OF MAHAKOSHAL: THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, INDIA 1919-39

DAVID BAKER

IN 1919 the Central Provinces and Berar was an isolated and backward province in Central India. One of the last provinces to take shape under British rule, it had an area of approximately one lakh square miles, and was governed by a Chief Commissioner from the city of Nagpur[1]. The population of the province totalled some 1.3 crores, and, like the population of most of the other provinces of British India, it was not homogeneous, but comprised two major linguistic communities—one speaking Hindi and the other Marathi. The Hindi-speaking community formed a majority of the population and was most heavily concentrated in 14 districts situated in the northern Narmada valley and the eastern division of Chhattisgarh. The Marathi-speaking community, which constituted a minority, was most heavily concentrated in eight districts south-west of the Hindi region. Four of these districts lay in the province proper, and the rest comprised the fertile division of Berar—a territory belonging to the Nizam of Hyderabad, but annexed to the Central Provinces in 1902 to provide it with a supply of much needed revenues.[2]

Between 1919 and 1939, the Central Provinces and Berar was the scene of two major political developments. First, during this period there occurred a remarkable deepening of political consciousness among sections of the population that had played little, if any, part

1 The Chief Commissioner in 1919 was Sir Benjamin Robertson.

2 The Hindi districts were Nimar, Hoshangabad, Narsimhapur, Betul, Chhindwara, Jabalpur, Sagor, Damoh, Seoni, Mandla, Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, and Balaghat. The Marathi districts of the Central Provinces were Nagpur, Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara, and of Berar, Amravati, Akola, Buldhana, and Yeotmal.

in politics before 1919. This was partly due to the reinvigoration of the Indian National Congress by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and partly to the adoption of his methods of popular contact and nationalist agitation by the political leaders of the province. The deepening of political consciousness was also assisted by the operation of the constitutional reforms of 1919 and 1935, each involving a wider section of the population than the scheme that had preceded it.

The activities of the Congress and the operation of the reforms were also responsible for the second major event in provincial politics between 1919 and 1939. This concerned the rise of the Hindi region, or Mahakoshal as it was known, to political leadership of the province, thereby displacing the Marathi region from the dominant position it had enjoyed in provincial politics since the formation of the Central Provinces in 1861.[3]

The Marathi region owed its dominant position in the politics of the Central Provinces and Berar to a number of factors. The capital city of Nagpur was situated in the heart of the region. This gave the Marathi population closer access to the government than the residents of the remote Hindi areas of the province, and a correspondingly greater opportunity to influence the decisions of the government in their favour. The Marathi region also dominated the government services of the Central Provinces and Berar. By 1919, colleges and other educational institutions had come to be concentrated in Nagpur, with the result that the residents of the Marathi region were better placed than the residents of the Hindi region to use these facilities to gain entry to the professions and government service. The Maharashtrian Brahman community, the dominant community in the Marathi region and one possessing a strong intellectual tradition, was well to the fore in using these facilities. This community, too, had been well represented in the administration of the State of Nagpur, the predecessor to the Central Provinces. And despite the change from Hindu to British rule which accompanied the decease of that State and its rebirth as the Central Provinces, the Maharashtrian Brahmans continued to dominate the services of the government

3 Mahakoshal was the name of a Hindu kingdom of the fourth century roughly contiguous with the present Madhya Pradesh. The name was revived by D.P. Mishra and others at the Political Conference of the Hindi region in Raipur in 1930 to evoke in the people memories of the former glory of their region and to spur them to create an independent state there once again.

until well into the twentieth century. A further reason for the political pre-eminence of the Marathi region lay in the growth of the cotton industry there during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This not only led to the building of railways in the region with connections to Calcutta and Bombay, but also gave rise to the growth of a number of towns that became centres of lively political activity.

These factors were responsible for the emergence of an active political elite in the Marathi region before 1919. This elite drew its members from the Maharashtrian Brahman community and from other communities enjoying a high social and economic status. The members of this elite, however, did not share the same political views, but were divided into two main groups—the loyalists and moderate nationalists on the one hand, and those who subscribed to the nationalist views of the Maharashtrian leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak on the other. By 1919 the political stock of the loyalists and moderates in the Marathi region was falling, while that of the supporters of Tilak, dedicated as they were to the overthrow of British rule in the Central Provinces and Berar and India alike, was in the ascendant.

Until 1921 at least, political activity in the Hindi region presented a marked contrast to that in the Marathi region. Physically, the Hindi region was as remote from the seat of government and from the centres of provincial politics as the Marathi region was close to them. This remoteness was rendered even more complete by the massive Satpura range that ran across the centre of the province, effectively dividing the two linguistic regions from each other and giving rise to two poorly connected road and rail systems in the plain country north and south of the range. In addition, the Hindi towns were politically inactive when compared with the Marathi towns, mainly because they lacked the population, the clubs, associations, libraries, schools and newspapers that formed the basis of the political activity in the towns of the south.[4] Even in industrial centres such as Jabalpur, or the larger rail and administrative towns of Sagor, Bilaspur and Raipur, political activity was on a very small scale.[5] And in the more typical Hindi towns—the sleepy district headquarters

4 On 1 January 1919 there were only six Hindi journals in circulation in the region. One appeared weekly, two fortnightly, two monthly, and one quarterly. The district headquarter town of Durg had no high school.

5 *Hitavada*, 13 May, 1916, p. 6; *Ibid.*, 22 September 1917, p. 8.

town—such activity was non-existent. This was particularly true of Hoshangabad, a small town situated in a district bearing the same name in the Narmada valley.

> Hoshangabad has no politics, and as such there is very little of those manifestations of life and activity which are the necessary concomitants of political existence. Consequently, when the... province is busy in organising its political life and electing delegates for the provincial conference, Hoshangabad is enjoying its wonted sleep... It cannot boast of a District Congress Committee. All politics is taboo to the local bar, and one of its members has recently made himself famous by deposing against the institutions of village panchayats before the Village Panchayats Commission.[6]

As might be expected, nationalist activity in the Hindi region before 1919 was on a very small scale. Until 1921 the political leadership of the region was largely in the hands of the *malguzars* or landlords, on whom the early British officials had settled the land, and whom they regarded as the leaders of the people after the style of [though by no means on the same grand scale as] the *taluqdars* and *zamindars* of the United Provinces. The Hindi *malguzars*, anxious to retain their rights to property, naturally accepted the role which the officials forced on them and adopted a loyalist stance.[7] Some *malguzars* participated in municipal politics, and others ventured into the first legislative council set up in the Central Provinces and Berar in 1915. The politically-minded *malguzars*, however, were few in number, and they could not bring the same pressures to bear on the provincial government as the Marathi politicians. This inability to influence the government was closely related to participation in government. And it was a striking testimony to the political insignificance of the Hindi region that during the first three years of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms the three posts in the government open to Indians were all occupied by those speaking Marathi or representatives of the Marathi region.[8]

6 *Ibid.*, 23 March 1918, p. 3.

7 MS of Sir G.M. Chitnavis of Nagpur, M.K. Padhye to Sir G.M. Chitnavis, 9 March 1907.

8 The Home Member was Sir M.V. Joshi of Berar; and the two ministers Mr. S.M. Chitnavis of Nagpur, and N.K. Kelkar of Balaghat.

Between 1919 and 1939 a dramatic reversal in the political fortunes of the Hindi and Marathi regions took place. This reversal was the product of many related forces, but it could not have taken place without the extension of political consciousness to social groups that hitherto had played little part in politics in the Hindi region. In 1919 in both regions, political activity of whatever variety was the sole concern of the upper middle and middle classes resident in the towns. These classes were invariably drawn from the socially dominant Kanya Kubja Brahman community in the Hindi region, the Maharashtrian Brahman community in the Marathi region, and from the upper non-Brahman communities throughout the province. Between 1919 and 1939, not only did these groups intensify their political activities, but at the same time new groups were drawn into the political process. Prominent among these groups were the merchant community, the non-Brahman agriculturists of the Marathi region, and the lower classes of the towns and countryside. While this downward extension of political consciousness occurred in both the Hindi and Marathi regions, it was a development of far greater significance for the former, for it created a political community that was aware of its common interests and was prepared to support those interests when they were denied or threatened. And when this readiness to defend regional interests rested on the fact that the Hindi region was larger and had a greater population than the Marathi region, its claims to leadership of the province could scarcely be withstood.

It was Gandhi himself who laid the basis for the rise of the Hindi region to power in the Central Provinces and Berar. In the revised constitution of the Congress which was accepted by the annual session of that body in Nagpur in 1920, Gandhi laid down the pattern of political leadership and organisation around which the nationalist movement in the region developed.[9] In 1920, too, as part of his campaign of non-cooperation, Gandhi presented the leaders of the Hindi region (in company with nationalists from all over India) with a scheme of agitation that drew the educated urban classes as well as the illiterate masses of the towns and countryside into action against the government. As in other parts of India, the vast majority of Hindi leaders accepted Gandhi's leadership and programmes of agitation.

9 This involved the creation of a province of the Congress in the Hindi region, with a Provincial Congress Committee and 14 District Congress Committees.

And, as elsewhere, they did so for a variety of reasons. Some moderates of long standing, for instance, supported Gandhi rather than face public opprobrium and political annihilation by opposing him. Some politicians were attracted to Gandhi by reason of his ideas; some were drawn by the force of his personality. To others, again, who were denied entry to the reformed legislature because of non-cooperation, Gandhi offered the only political alternative available at the time. But whatever the reason, the Hindi leaders tied the political fortunes of their region to Gandhi and the Congress, and in so doing they enabled political activity to develop on a large scale in the region for the first time.

It is possible to suggest ways in which the Hindi leaders provided links between Gandhi and the people of the region. Among the leaders was Seth Govind Das, a man new to politics in 1921, but one who found a ready response to Gandhian ideas in the city and district of Jabalpur, where his family had extensive industrial and landed interests and was extremely powerful on that account. Govind Das must also have found a ready hearing for these ideas among the Marwari community of the Hindi region, of which he was a leading member. Gandhi's message of non-cooperation also penetrated to district headquarter towns such as Seoni through men like D.K. Mehta, a leading lawyer in the town, who was also President of the Seoni District Congress Committee and a member of the Hindi Provincial Congress Committee. Larger towns such as Bilaspur went over to Gandhi in 1921 because Raghavendra Rao, a barrister and leading politician in the town, enrolled himself under Gandhi's banner. And once this happened, it would have been very difficult for Rao's supporters in the town not to have followed suit. In much the same way, the town and later the district of Raipur went over to Gandhi because of the influence there of Ravi Shanker Shukla. Shukla's conversion to non-cooperation was doubly beneficial to Gandhi, because in all probability it provided the latter with a base of support in the Kanya Kubja Brahman community, of which Shukla was a leading member. Thus, in the hands of these men Gandhi's programme of agitation in 1921 took concrete shape and through the spheres of influence in which they moved—the powerful family, the profession, the caste-community, the town and the district—the members of the urban middle classes and the lower classes of the town and country were mobilised for agitation against the government.

The mobilisation of the Hindi population against the government was a cumulative process. In 1919, for instance, only one hartal took place in the region in response to Gandhi's call for a nation-wide protest against the Rowlatt Act.[10] Yet by 1922, Hindi leaders had drawn the towns into the campaign of non-cooperation, and in some cases had extended the agitation to the adjacent countryside or to more distant areas such as the Satpura range. So far as the government was concerned, the greatest challenge to its authority in the Hindi region in 1921 occurred in the towns, and, as can be seen from the following report by the Commissioner of Raipur on the situation in that town, the challenge was a serious one:

> [The Commissioner] ... referred to the picketing of liquor shops, the interruption of the excise sales, the appearance of 2,000 armed men, many armed with lathis, at the railway station... and the stoning of Europeans driving through the city... Mr Clarke represented that in consequence of both the general growth of self-consciousness and the direct challenge to the authority of the government maintained by the extremists, there had been [a] noticeable disturbance of the law-abiding instincts of the people.[11]

The campaign of civil disobedience beginning nine years later continued to involve the Hindi towns, but it was waged extensively in the rural areas of the region as well. As one government official saw the situation:

> Meanwhile, the Congress leaders and other extremists, who meant real business, saw their opportunity and hastened to spread the movement into the villages by appeals to the cupidity and ignorance of the villagers and aboriginal inhabitants of the jungles. A serious situation was created. In the circumstances, government had no alternative but to accept the

10 The hartal occurred in Chhindwara, where the brothers Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali were interned.

11 Maharashtra Secretariat, Nagpur (MSN), Police Department, File 1-1, No. 642, 1922, Increase in the Special Armed Force in the Central Provinces, *Proceedings of the Conference of Commissioners held at Pachmarhi on 27 June* 1921, p. 8.

challenge or abdicate, and from this moment found itself up against mass action by ignorant dupes. At the same time strenuous attempts were made to disturb the morale of the police and to tamper with the loyalty of the troops.[12]

There were many reasons for the steady enlargement of agitation in the Hindi region between 1919 and 1933. The economic climate in 1921 was far more conducive to unrest and agitation than it had been in 1919, and the non-cooperation movement took place against a background of economic uncertainty and social distress. Poor seasons resulted in a 'failure of crops unparalleled since 1899-1900', causing a shortage of food in town and countryside. This shortage increased the price of grains, which observers noted 'pressed with unexampled severity on the urban population'.[13] In addition, the fact that most of the political leaders in 1921 were members of the urban upper middle and middle classes largely accounted for the concentration of agitation in the towns in that year.

Other factors combined to enlarge the scope of agitation during the campaign of civil disobedience in the Hindi region between 1930 and 1933. Nationalists in the region were better organised and had a larger number of supporters in 1930 than in 1921. Again, by 1932 the nationalist movement in the Hindi region was drawing some of its leaders from the lower classes a factor that undoubtedly assisted in drawing this section of the community into agitation.[14] It also seems feasible to argue that one round of agitation could stimulate another, and that on a larger scale than its predecessor. Furthermore, the charismatic name of Gandhi was certainly more widely known in the Hindi countryside in 1930 than it was in 1921, and Gandhi's lieutenants must have put this to good use in whipping up support

12 Madhya Pradesh Secretariat (MPS), Bhopal, Political and Military Department, File 302/Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930, p. 7.

13 See *The Census of India*, Vol. XI, 1921, Report, p. 9; National Archives of India (NAI), Home Political Department, July 1920, 88 Deposit, Fortnightly Report (FR), First half of February 1920, p. 14; *Report of the Administration of the Central Provinces and Berar*, 1920-21 (Nagpur, 1922), p. viii; *Ibid.*, 1921-22, p. ix; *Report on the Excise Revenues of the Central Provinces and Berar*, 1921-22 (Nagpur, 1923), p. 1.

14 Nehru Memorial Library (NML), All India Congress Committee Papers (AICC), 248, 1931, *Mahakoshal Annual Report for* 1931.

for civil disobedience. In 1930, too, as in 1921, the economic situation favoured the launching of agitation against the government. Between 1930 and 1933 poor harvests created famine conditions for huge sections of the Hindi population; while those who might normally have made money out of the shortage of grain found themselves victims of the decline in agricultural prices consequent on the general economic depression. These disasters engineered a spirit of frustration and unrest in the urban and rural areas of the Hindi region which the agitators turned to good account in launching their attack on the government.[15]

Besides challenging the authority of the government, nationalist agitation also complemented the working of the reformed constitutions of 1919 and 1935. In the Central Provinces and Berar, as in other parts of India, the political spotlight during the twenties and thirties alternated between agitation and the legislature. In this context, agitation served not only as a weapon of attack against the government, but also as a means of making contact with the people and of establishing nationalist credentials with them. That this paid dividends was evident at the elections of 1923 and 1937, when Congressmen, fresh from the triumphs of open conflict with the government, won an overwhelming proportion of seats in the provincial legislature. In 1923, it was that section of the population—the professional and landed upper middle and middle classes—who had played a leading part in the campaign of non-cooperation, who voted their representatives into the council. Similarly in 1937, it was a vastly increased electorate, comprising the landed and professional upper middle and middle classes, small property-holders, women, the merchant community, aboriginals, the depressed community and industrial workers—those who had been most affected by the campaign of civil disobedience and the movement for the uplift of the depressed classes which followed it—who voted the Congress-

15 (MPS), P. & M. 302/CDM, 1930, pp. 12, 24; NML, AICC, 248, 1931, *Mahakoshal Annual Report for* 1931; *Proceedings of the Central Provinces Legislative Council*, vol. 1, 25 February 1930, pp. 354-7; *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 12 January 1931, p. 2, NAI, Home Political Department, 36/III, 1932, An Appreciation of the Economic Situation, Enclosure in DO, H.A.F. Lindsay to J.A. Woodhead, Secretary Government of India, Commerce Department.

men into an overwhelming majority of the seats allotted to the Hindi region in the new Legislative Assembly.[16]

A third factor in the rise to power of the Hindi region was the brilliant political career of E. Raghavendra Rao of Bilaspur. Rao had made a name for himself in municipal politics in Bilaspur before the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. In 1920, he fully intended to contest the seat of Bilaspur in the new Legislative Council, but Gandhi's assumption of leadership over the Congress interrupted his plans, and, like most of his fellow-politicians in the Hindi region, Rao withdrew from the elections and participated in the campaign of non-cooperation. Rao's gifts, however, lay primarily in administration and not in agitation, and as a protagonist for the Hindi region and a leading member of the urban middle class, in 1923 Rao once more turned his eyes towards the legislature. In the same year, he led the Hindi Congressmen to victory at the elections to the Legislative Council, and became the leader of the Hindi Swarajya Party in the Council in the following year. For over a year, Rao tried to implement the party's policy of obstruction, but by 1925 he was convinced that it was impracticable and he moved to accept office in the government. Although these moves failed, Rao refused to give up his plans to enter the ministry, and after he had appealed to the Hindi electorate on this issue in 1926, the Governor, Sir Montagu Butler, invited him to become Chief Minister of the Central Provinces in the following year.

Rao's entry to office in 1927 marked the beginning of a dazzling career, the chief outcome of which was the close association of the Hindi region with the provincial government. Rao's success as a politician was undoubtedly due to his determination, his skill as a tactician, and his ability to manipulate people. But his success also owed a great deal to an extraordinary friendship with the Governor, Sir Montagu Butler.[17] It appears that Butler was not merely a personal friend of Rao, but that he was so impressed by Rao's political ability that he brought him into the government and gave

16 In 1923, the Swarajists won 43 seats in a House of 72 elected and nominated members. The Hindi Swarajists won 19 of the 23 seats allotted to their region. In 1937, Congressmen secured 70 of the 112 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Of the 51 seats allotted to Mahakoshal, Congressmen won 43.

17 See for instance NML, E. Raghavendra Rao MS, E.R. Rao to Sir Montagu Butler, 29 January 1931.

him a much freer hand in formulating policy than the Governors of the older metropolitan provinces allowed their Indian members of the government.[18] These conditions made possible a career that was unique in the history of the reformed constitution in British India between 1921 and 1935. More important, however, Rao's career made possible the transfer of power from the Marathi to the Hindi region at the level of government. This transfer of power was eloquently symbolised in Rao's own rise to power in the province. In 1927 and again in 1928, Rao became Chief Minister of the Central Provinces. He was Home Minister from 1930 until 1937, except for a short break of four months in 1936 when he became Acting Governor of the province in the absence of Butler's successor, Sir Hyde Gowan, on leave in England. Finally, in 1937, Rao became the first Premier of the united Central Provinces and Berar under the new constitution

The Hindi region benefited directly from Rao's association with the government. In him, for the first time, the region had a spokesman at the topmost level of government who had influence with the Governor and who thus played an important part in formulating government policy. In Rao, too, the Hindi region had a leader, who, through patronage and personal magnetism controlled sufficient members of the council to enable him to sponsor ministries in which the Hindi region was represented or which pursued policies that favoured the Hindi region.[19] These ministries, for instance, pursued non-Brahman policies that weakened the position of the Brahman community in the Marathi region from which most of Rao's opposition in that part of the province derived.[20] These ministries were also noted for

18 See NAI, G.S. Khaparde MS, Diary, 13 February 1929; *Hitavada,* 17 January, 1929, p. 2; NML, Rao MS, C.C. Desai to E.R. Rao, 12 September, 1936.

19 The ministries established under the patronage of Rao as Home Member were as follows: 1930-33, P.S. Deshmukh and G.P. Jaiswal; 1933-4 M.Y. Shareef and V.B. Chaobal; and 1934-6 B.G. Khaparde and K.S. Naidu.

20 Among the non-Brahman legislation passed by the Deshmukh-Jaiswal ministry was the Hindu Religious and Charitable Trusts Act, which encroached on the private management of temple assests and was vigorously opposed by the Brahman community. The Government also issued a circular in 1932 declaring that in making appointments, its policy was to "secure a fair and adequate representation of the various communities." This enabled it to follow a policy of non-Brahman recruitment. In 1932, the Government also issued a circular forbidding its servants from participating in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, which at the time was largely a Brahman organisation operating in the Marathi region.

their policy of working the Sim ratio—a formula relating to the division of the joint revenues of the Central Provinces and Berar among the two parts of the province—in favour of the Central Provinces which largely comprised the Hindi region.[21]

Furthermore, during Rao's Home Membership the government strongly endorsed views on the proposed new constitution for India that favoured the Hindi region. In so doing, it secured the endorsement of the same views by the Governments of India and Great Britain. The provincial government, for instance, strongly opposed any move by Marathi politicians to separate Berar from the Central Provinces on the grounds that Berar was not large enough to exist as an independent political unit, and that, deprived of the revenues of Berar, the Central Provinces would enter the new constitution financially dependent on the Central Government.[22] So successfully did the provincial government promote its views, that the British Government accepted them, and after persuading the Nizam of Hyderabad to waive his rights to Berar, it integrated the territory completely into the Central Provinces under the new constitution.[23] As a result, the framers of the constitution supported the pooling of the revenues of the Central Provinces and Berar without the safeguard of the Sim ratio that Berar had enjoyed under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms—an arrangement from which the Hindi region had everything to gain.[24] Rao was also a member of the government when it decided on the number and type of constituencies into which the Central Provinces and Berar was to be divided under the new constitution. The government took the view that population was to be the

21 Under the Sim Ratio, Berar was to get 40 per cent, and the Central Provinces 60 per cent of the revenues available for divisible expenditure. Berar rarely received its due, however, even before 1930. But after 1930, its share of the revenues declined from 34 per cent in 1930-1 to 30 per cent in 1931-2; 31 per cent in 1932-33; 32 per cent in 1933-4; and 31.4 per cent in 1934-5.

22 NAI, Reforms Department, 175/1/32, Question of the Administration of Berar under the new constitution, Letter from the Chief Secretary, Government of the Central Provinces, to the Government of India, 17 February 1932; *Ibid.*, 51/3/33, Non-official Evidence before the Joint Select Committee, G.P. Burton, Chief Secretary, Government of the Central Provinces to the Government of India, 2 September 1931.

23 See NAI, Reforms Department 133/33-R & KW, Question of the Administration of Berar under the new constitution, p. 22.

24 *Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform* (1933-34 session), vol. 1, part 1, Report (London, 1934), pp. 46-7.

basis of representation in the new Assembly, and it rejected Berar's claim for a weightage of seats on the basis of its contribution to the provincial revenues. As the most populous part of the province, the Hindi region thus gained a majority of seats in the legislature.[25]

Political life in the Marathi region did not of course remain static while that of the Hindi region advanced. Gandhian ideas made appreciable headway in the region after the Congress session at Nagpur in 1920, and in 1921 Marathi nationalists mounted a campaign of non-cooperation that severely tested the government's ability to control the situation. The main centre of operations was Nagpur, and of the situation in that city the Chief Secretary wrote in 1921:

> There is no gainsaying the fact that conditions have changed... A few years ago the deliberate disregard of law and order was unknown. Today, there is ample evidence to show that it counts for little and that the people are ready to resort to mob violence....The masses have now learnt their power. It has been clearly proved that we have only been able to restore order by a display of force.... I am of opinion that simultaneous trouble at different centres is likely to occur.[26]

As in the Hindi region, however, support for non-cooperation among the middle class Marathi politicians declined during 1922, and between 1923 and 1924 nationalists formed two Swaraj parties—one for the division of Nagpur and one for Berar—to obstruct the work of government in the legislature. Between 1924 and 1925, ideological differences and a conflict as to the tactics to be adopted in the legislature—whether obstruction or responsive cooperation—steadily eroded the unity of the Marathi nationalists. There were further divisions within their ranks when Swarajists from the division of Nagpur vied with those from Berar for the ministerial posts that had been vacant since 1923. These differences came to a head in Oct-

25 NAI, Reforms, KW to 82/33, 1933, *Central Provinces Delimitation Report*, pp. 71-6. Under the terms of the new Constitution Berar secured 22 general, reserved and special seats; the four Marathi districts of the Central Provinces 18 seats; and the Hindi region 49 seats. There were in addition 14 Muslim and nine special seats, the latter allotted to the Central Provinces.

26 MSN, Police Department, 1-1, 1922, Increase in the Special Armed Force in the Central Provinces, Note by K.W. Deighton, 26 May 1921.

ober 1925 when S.B. Tambe, a Brahman pleader from Amravati, accepted the post of Home Member. Within six months, the Marathi nationalists had divided into two camps—those who supported the policy of obstruction in the Council, and those who favoured the acceptance of office as a means of winning self-government for India.

This division of forces seriously weakened the Marathi Congress, and it is pertinent to ask whether it ever fully recovered from the shock. A division on the same issue had taken place in the Hindi region between Rao and other members of the Congress, but it did less damage to nationalist unity than in the Marathi region. In the Hindi region most of the important nationalists remained with the Congress, while Rao mainly received the support of lesser politicians. And when their support declined, Rao could still dominate his arena—the legislature—by winning to his side non-Hindi groups such as the Depressed Class members, the Muslims, the non-Brahmans, and the official bloc. The position was vastly different in the Marathi region. There it was the leading nationalists who rejected the notions of obstruction and non-cooperation, and who were opposed to Gandhi's leadership of the Congress.[27] As a result, from 1925 onwards, they drifted away from the Congress into bodies such as the Responsive Cooperation Party and the Hindu Mahasabha. Despite their zeal, however, these politicians were unable to win the permanent support of the people. Their ministries were temporary affairs; they were no match for Rao's strategy in the Council; their campaign of civil disobedience in 1930 failed to impress the electorate; and they were unable to persuade those responsible for framing the constitution of the need to separate Berar from the Central Provinces, or to grant the Mahasabha's demand for joint electorates in the Hindu minority provinces of Bengal and the Punjab. As a result, by 1936 the Marathi nationalists who did not belong to the Congress were almost extinct as a political force. But significantly, during the preceding ten years the division in the ranks of the Marathi nationalists had enabled the Hindi region to enlarge its area of power.

Although the non-Congress Marathi nationalists declined in importance, it was paradoxical that the Marathi region was able to make a political comeback after 1930. This comeback was based

27 Prominent Marathi nationalists who opposed official Congress policies were Dr. B.S. Moonje of Nagpur; M.S. Aney of Yeotmal; G.S. Khaparde, B.G. Khaparde and R.M. Deshmukh of Amravati.

on the compaigns of civil disobedience launched by Congressmen in the region between 1930 and 1933. After years of struggle with the Responsivists, by 1930 orthodox Congressmen had secured control of the Provincial Congress Committees in the divisions of Nagpur and Berar.[28] And from this strong position, Congressmen launched a series of attacks against the government in town and country that challenged its ability to maintain law and order. In so doing, the Congress reinstated itself as the accredited nationalist movement in the Marathi region. In 1933, the Congress improved its public standing even further when it identified with Gandhi's symbolic fasts and the tour which he undertook in the Central Provinces and Berar on behalf of the Depressed community.

The political renaissance of the Marathi region occurred at a time when the Hindi region, or Mahakoshal as it was commonly referred to in the thirties, was at the crest of its power. The Hindi Congress had won strong support from all sections of the population on the record of its agitation against the government. Moreover, Raghavendra Rao had firmly established the place of the Hindi region in the government and in the new province to be established under the constitution. Under the terms of that constitution, Mahakoshal secured a majority of seats in the new Assembly and on these grounds, it was also likely to secure the premiership of the province and a majority of places in the cabinet.

Despite the logic of its position, Mahakoshal did not immediately assume control of the government of the Central Provinces and Berar. Instead, in the first government formed by the Congress in 1937, the premiership and four of the seven places in the cabinet went to the Marathi region.[29] The Premier was Dr. N.B. Khare, a Brahman medical practitioner from Nagpur, who had assumed leadership of the Congress in the division of Nagpur following the death of its veteran leader, Moreshwar Abhyanker. Mere succession,

28 By 1928 M.V. Abhyanker had secured control of the Congress organisation in the division of Nagpur from Dr. B.S. Moonje, and in Berar by 1930, Brijlal Biyani and P.B. Gole had secured leadership of the Provincial Congress Committee from the Responsivists.

29 The Marathi region was represented by Dr. Khare, Premier and Minister for Home Affairs; P.B. Gole, Minister for Revenue; R.M. Deshmukh, Minister for Public Works; and M.Y. Shareef, Minister for Law. The Hindi region was represented by R.S. Shukla, Minister for Education; D.P. Mishra, Minister for Local Self-Government; and D.K. Mehta, Minister for Finance.

however, would not have gained the premiership for Dr. Khare, and it is unlikely that he would have secured the post had it not been for a violent struggle for power in the Hindi Congress between Ravi Shanker Shukla of Raipur on the one hand, and Seth Govind Das and D.P. Mishra of Jabalpur on the other. By 1937, Shukla had emerged as the most powerful leader of the Congress in Mahakoshal, and, suspecting that he had designs on the premiership, Govind Das and Mishra tried to prevent him from securing that post. This they did at three crucial meetings held between 1936 and 1937 to elect successively the President of the Provincial Parliamentary Board, the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and finally, the Premier of the province. On each occasion, Shukla's Hindi opponents combined with Marathi Congressmen to elect a candidate who was acceptable to both groups. This candidate was Dr. Khare, and it was on this somewhat insecure basis that he assumed the premiership of the Central Provinces and Berar in 1937.[30]

Despite the undoubted legality of Dr. Khare's position, neither a Marathi premiership nor a cabinet dominated by ministers from the Marathi region reflected the realities of provincial politics in 1937. The previous 18 years had witnessed a rise in the importance of Mahakoshal in provincial politics, including its dominance of the government under Raghavendra Rao. Then almost overnight, control of the government reverted to the Marathi region—a situation that Mahakoshal could not be expected to accept indefinitely. Nor did it. This sudden revival of Marathi leadership was responsible for a series of widely publicised constitutional crises in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1937 and 1938, culminating in what became known as the 'Khare crisis'. These crises are best seen as an attempt by the leaders of Mahakoshal to retrieve the position of power held by their region in the province before the accession of Dr. Khare to the premiership.

The first crisis took place in September 1937 when the Hindi ministers rejected the claim by the Minister for Public Works, Ramrao Deshmukh of Berar, that the cabinet consider the question of the revenues of Berar.[31] With this rejection, Deshmukh resigned

30 *Hitavada*, 22 July 1936, p. 5; *Ibid.*, 3 March 1937, p. 1; *Ibid.*, 26 March 1937, p. 12.

31 Information contained in a letter written to the author by Shri R.M. Deshmukh on 15 January 1968.

from the cabinet but Dr. Khare later persuaded him to withdraw his resignation and the crisis blew over. Despite Deshmukh's return to the cabinet, however, the Hindi ministers maintained their refusal to discuss the subject of the revenues of Berar and the attempt by Marathi representatives to guarantee Berar a percentage of the provincial revenues failed. A second more serious crisis followed in 1938 when the Hindi and Marathi ministers clashed over the case of the Muslim Minister for Law, Muhammad Shareef, who released a former Muslim official of the government from prison well before his sentence had expired.[32] There was an immediate public outcry in the Marathi region for the removal of Shareef and the Hindi ministers sprang quickly to his defence. And when the Working Committee finally put pressure on Shareef to resign from the cabinet, it was the Hindi ministers again who tried unsuccessfully to secure a reversal of the ruling.[33] Having failed in their objective to prevent Shareef's resignation the Hindi ministers turned on Dr. Khare accusing him of responsibility for what they described as 'this unfortunate culmination' and attacking him for being unduly sensitive to the criticism directed at Shareef from the Marathi region.[34]

If the Shareef affair strained the relations between the Marathi Premier and his Hindi colleagues the communal situation in Jabalpur brought them to a breaking point. In April 1938, the Hindi ministers led by Mishra declared their lack of confidence in Dr. Khare's ability to lead either the cabinet or the province. The ministers based this declaration on the Premier's supposed inability to control the communal situation in Mishra's home city of Jabalpur. Since the Congress came to power, there had been two sets of communal riots in Jabalpur—one in October 1937, and the other in March 1938. The Hindi ministers were also highly critical of Dr. Khare's acceptance of the advice tendered to him by the Police Department to hold an enquiry into the riots in Jabalpur and to institute proceedings

32 NAI, Papers deposited by N.B. Khare, 108, iii, Notes and Orders of 1 February 1938 issued by the Central Provinces and Berar Government, Judicial Department, Regarding the Petition of Mercy from Syed Zafir Husain, Register No. 238-XIV, Note by M.Y. Shareef, 6 February 1938.

33 *Bombay Chronicle*, 29 March 1938, p. 12; *Ibid.*, 31 March 1938, p. 10; *Times of India*, 28 March 1938, p. 9; *Hitavada*, 24 December 1939, p. 4; *Bombay Chronicle*, 13 April 1938, p. 1; *Maharashtra*, 1 June 1938, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 5 June 1938, p. 8.

34 *Hitavada*, 24 December 1939, p. 4.

against those found guilty.[35] To the Hindi leaders, these charges were sufficient to justify the removal of Dr. Khare from the Premiership, and in April 1938, supported temporarily by one Marathi minister, they resigned from the cabinet.[36] For the time being, however, Dr. Khare's continuance as Premier was assured as the Hindi ministers did not have the support of a majority of the Parliamentary Party. But they were able to persuade Dr. Khare to take the dispute to the Congress Working Committee, which suggested that all ministers submit to a reshuffle of their portfolios. Under pressure from the Parliamentary Party the ministers agreed to this suggestion and took steps to see that the reshuffle was completed by 1 July, 1938.[37] However, as neither the Hindi nor the Marathi ministers could agree as to who should hold the contentious Police portfolio, on July 15 Dr. Khare placed the dispute in the hands of the Congress Working Committee.[38]

Within a few days, Dr. Khare precipitated a fourth crisis by forming a new cabinet from which his Hindi colleagues were excluded altogether. Dr. Khare took this step for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his unshakeable belief in the justice of defending himself against what he regarded as moves to eject him from office. Secondly, although Dr. Khare referred the cabinet dispute to the Working Committee, he had little confidence in that body. The reasons for this are difficult to discern. It was possible that the Working Committee doubted whether Maharashtrian Brahmans could be 'good' Congressmen in view of their long history of opposition to official Congress policies. If the Working Committee did entertain any such doubts, Dr. Khare could hardly be expected to repose any confidence in it as an impartial tribunal. In addition, there was good reason to believe that Dr. Khare disliked the body because it had intervened in Congress disputes in the division of Nagpur, giving

35 See the *Central Provinces Ministerial Crisis* (Allahabad, n.d.), pp. 5-6. According to R.M. Deshmukh, police investigations traced certain friends and supporters of Mr. Mishra to have been involved in the riots.

36 The Marathi minister was P.B. Gole. Following Dr. Khare's intervention, Gole withdrew his resignation.

37 *The Central Provinces Ministerial Crisis*, p. 9; *Maharashtra*, 14 September 1938, p. 4; N.B. Khare, *My Defence* (Nagpur, n.d.) p. 8. Dr. Khare agreed to surrender his portfolios on the condition that he "would not take any step that will cause humiliation to me as Prime Minister."

38 Khare, n. 37, Appendix A, p. 4.i.

rulings which ran counter to the policies espoused by him.[39]

There were also immediate reasons why Dr. Khare bypassed the Working Committee and formed a second ministry. On July 16 he received the unwelcome news that the Committee might discontinue the Congress ministry in the Central Provinces. This came as something of a shock to Dr. Khare:

> The fear of this province being declared a non-Congress province began to haunt me. I realised that the activities of the three ministers were leading us to the brink of a precipice....[Thus] I decided to see that the Congress existed in the government, and that it did not perish. It was intolerable to me that the labours of a lifetime should be wasted in this way.[40]

Furthermore, on July 17, Dr. Khare received news from Raipur that Shukla was canvassing support for a ministry in the event of his own resignation.[41] As a result, Dr. Khare decided to strengthen his position by resigning from the Premiership and by forming a second cabinet with the support of the Parliamentary Party. This he did, and by 21 July, a new cabinet had come into being. This cabinet was undoubtedly a 'Marathi cabinet'. Three of its five members were from the Marathi region; and of the two Hindi ministers, one did not represent the majority party in the Mahakoshal Congress, and the other was a college student with little experience of administration.[42]

Within a week of its formation, Dr. Khare's second ministry had fallen and control of the government had passed to Mahakoshal. Although called on by Dr. Khare to resign, the Hindi ministers

39 One notable instance of the intervention of the Congress Parliamentary Board (a Sub-committee of the Working Committee) in Nagpur Congress politics occurred shortly before the elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1936 when the Board replaced Dr. Khare's candidate for the seat of Katol-Saoner, P.D. Harkare, who was a Brahman, with Bhikulal Chandak, a Marwari.

40 Khare, n. 37. pp. 11-12.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

42 The Marathi members of the cabinet consisted of Dr. Khare, who was again Premier with responsibility for Home Affairs; R.M. Deshmukh, Minister for Finance; and P.B. Gole, Minister for Revenue. The Hindi members were Thakur Piarelal Singh, Minister for Education; and a Harijan college student, Rameshwar Agnibhoj, Minister for Agriculture.

from the beginning stoutly refused to surrender their hold on the government. And, although dismissed by the Governor, to help them to retain that hold they sought the assistance of the Working Committee. This the Committee readily gave, because it considered that Dr. Khare had acted wrongly in solving the dispute himself rather than waiting for its verdict. The Working Committee also supported the Hindi ministers because it was anxious to solve the recurrent crises in the Central Provinces and so preserve the name of the Congress. The Committee felt it could best do this by supporting a government based on the Hindi majority in the legislature.[43] Accordingly, the Working Committee compelled Dr. Khare to resign as Premier and Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and prevented him from contesting the latter position a second time.[44] At the same time, the Committee openly supported the stand taken by the Hindi ministers and thus suggested indirectly to members of the Parliamentary Party that Dr. Khare's successor could well come from Mahakoshal.[45] A majority of members of the party also held that view, and on 27 July, 1938 they elected Ravi Shanker Shukla Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar in place of Dr. Khare. Two days later, Shukla assumed office with two other Hindi ministers, and two ministers, one of whom was a Marwari, representing the interests of the Marathi region.[46]

Throughout Shukla's term as Premier, Marathi politicians ceaselessly tried to undermine Mahakoshal's dominant position in the government. But they failed in their attempt, and Shukla's ministry remained in office until November 1939, when it resigned at the instance of the Working Committee in protest against India's entry into the War between Great Britain and Germany.

Shukla's ministry did more than round off a period of 20 years in which Mahakoshal replaced the Marathi region as the dominant unit in a composite province. It also marked the beginning of

43 *The Central Provinces Ministerial Crisis*, pp. 3-4. See also Khare, n. 37, p. 15.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 18-24.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 24. See Khare, n. 37, p. 22.

46 Representing Mahakoshal in the new cabinet were R.S. Shukla, Minister for Home Affairs; D.K. Mehta, Minister for Finance and Law; and D.P. Mishra, Minister for Local Self-Government. Representing the Marathi region were S.V. Gokhale, Minister for Revenue and Education; and the Marwari, C.J. Bharuka, Minister for Industries and Public Works.

permanent Hindi rule over the Central Provinces and Berar and its successor state. Shukla's ministry also foreshadowed the withdrawal of the Marathi region from the province and its incorporation into a larger Marathi state. This was partly realised in 1956 when Mahakoshal and the Hindi areas formerly under the control of Indian Princes were merged together to form the new state of Madhya Pradesh—the successor state to the Central Provinces, and the eight Marathi districts were incorporated into the state of Bombay. Six years later, the long process came to an end when the Gujarati areas withdrew from the state of Bombay, and the Marathi areas of western India began a new life as the state of Maharashtra. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh were then ready to take their place as distinct cultural and political units within the framework of the Indian Union.

THE ELITE APPROACH TO STUDY OF MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

B.M. BHATIA

HISTORY IS not merely a record of past events; it is a study of the forces—social, political, economic and psychological that shape the course of human progress. There is a vast diversity of experience in the social and political fields of different communities, nations and civilisations in the world. But a closer look at their history would reveal that most of this diversity is more apparent than real. The forces that influence human mind and shape the course of human action are uniform all over the world. It is to the discovery of these uniformities, that a true historian must turn[1] in order to explain the facts of history of any nation. History is a social science and not merely an art of arranging and narrating past events.

This view of the nature and purpose of historical studies is not new. Beginning with Roman and Greek historians of the remote past and coming down to the present day, one could list many outstanding names who have held that view and treated their subject in that manner. But there has been no agreement among them on the forces that shape the course of human action. Some have emphasised religion; others like Marx laid emphasis on material and economic conditions as also the social relations between various 'classes' in society. Mosca, an Italian sociologist, was probably the first to emphasise the concept of the 'ruling class' and the continuing struggle between the ruling minority and the ruled elites for acquisition and retention of political power. His *Elementi di Scienza Politica* first published in Italian and now available in English translation under the title *The Ruling Class*[2] was conceived as a treatise on Political

1 History thus viewed becomes the basis of other social sciences like Political Science, Economics and Sociology.

2 Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, edited and revised by Arthur Livingston. (New York, 1939).

Science. Actually, it turned out to be a path-breaking study in sociology. However, his concepts of 'ruling class', 'class circulation' and 'class struggle' can serve as powerful tools of analysis of the history of mankind through all ages.

According to Mosca every society could be broadly divided into two groups—the minority ruling group which he called *elite*,[3] and the rest of the mass of the population over which the minority group exercised its authority:

> Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies—from societies that are very meagrely developed and have barely attained the drawings of civilisation, down to the most powerful societies—two classes of people appear, a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolises power, and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent.[4]

The *elite* itself could be further divided into the governing elite and the rest which did not exercise political power.[5] The two groups would at times combine and offer a united front; at other times there would be an inner struggle between them, the ruling group trying to retain power and the ruled group aspiring to wrest power from the former.

Among the elites, power would thus continue to change hands from time to time. But that was not all. In the progress of societies, the process of class circulation was constantly at work. The class

3 The word *elite* was first used in the seventeenth century to describe the excellence of goods supplied or sold by merchants. Later, the term was extended to refer to superior social groups or to people holding those positions in society which are at the summit of key social structure, *i.e.*, the leading positions in the economy, government, politics, religion, mass organisations, education and professions. Since this is the leading sector in the society which forms public opinions, makes laws and holds power, the concept became a powerful tool of analysis at the hands of sociologists like Mosca and Pareto.

4 Mosca, n. 2, p. 50.

5 Pareto, Vilfredo, *The Mind and Society* (New York, 1935), Vol. II, Para 2032.

that rules at one time decays when it ceases to hold the qualities and virtues that brought it into power while others who have meanwhile developed those virtues through education, training, organisation, military prowess, etc., climb up the social ladder to become the new elite of the country. The existence of a ruling class or *elite* in every society is thus a perpetual phenomenon but the composition of the *elite* is constantly changing through the process of class circulation. Thus in society there is a constant circulation of individuals between the two strata of society, the new man—the upstart—climbing up the social ladder and joining the ruling class and the members of the upper strata through decadence of their wealth, virtues, and those qualities of character which had earlier put them in the higher class, falling in the social scale. Writes Pareto:

> The virtue of class circulation, the governing *elite* is always in a state of slow and continuous transformation. It flows like a river, never being today what it was yesterday. From time to time, sudden and violent disturbances occur... Revolutions come about through accumulations in the higher strata of society—either because of slowing down in class circulation or from other causes of decent elements no longer possessing the residue suitable for keeping them in power, and shrinking from the use of force; while meantime in the lower strata of society, elements of superior quality are coming to the fore possessing residues suitable for exercising the functions of government and willing enough to use force.[6]

This looks like Marxian concept of class struggle but in reality is not so. The doctrine of class struggle, according to Mosca, "is based on an incomplete, one-sided and biased examination of history, to the end of proving that the whole activity of civilised societies so far has been accounted for in efforts of ruling classes to keep themselves in power and to exploit power to their advantage and in efforts of lower classes to throw the Yoke".[7] History provides us with so many instances of "social events of the first importance that can in no way be crowded into the narrow frame of that picture".[8]

6 *Ibid.*, Paras 2056-57.
7 Mosca, n. 2, p. 297.
8 *Ibid.*

Marx believed that the ruling class which owned the means of production, used capital and other material means of production for the exploitation of the poor labouring classes. Mosca repudiates this claim on the ground that the division of society into the two classes of *exploiters* and the *exploited* is artificial and unreal. In this age of science and technology those who organise production perform a very useful task and cannot, therefore, be regarded as mere exploiters "even if we isolate the phenomena involved in the production of wealth from all other social phenomena as completely as economists and their socialist adversaries sometimes do".[9] The materialistic interpretation of history, Mosca asserts, contains only a 'modicum of truth' but that is, accordingly to him, 'the greatest danger' that the theory poses.[10] "In science, as in life in general, the most dangerous falsehoods are the falsehoods that are mixed with a certain amount of truth. The truth helps to mask and colour them in such a way as to make them plausible."[11] The course of history is undoubtedly influenced and affected by social forces like money, land, military prowess, religion, education, manual labour, and science and technology. A man or a group of men rules when the man or the group is able to control the social forces that, at the given moment in the given society, are essential to the possession and retention of power. Economic forces—ownership of means of production, *i.e.*, money, land and capital—form only a part of the totality of the social forces which shape the course of history. To attribute the role of shaping of the course of history exclusively to economic forces would be, according to Mosca and Pareto, a grave error.

Mosca further stresses the importance of the middle class from which the ruling *elite* is ultimately recruited. Members of the lower strata of society, in the process of class circulation, rise to the middle strata of the society from where they climb further up the top of the social and political ladder. To the political scientists as also to the historians, it is the study of this middle strata that is most significant. Writes Mosca:

> If this new perception of the importance of the ruling class is to gain a hold, we must, without denying the great importance

9 *Ibid.*, p. 299.
10 *Ibid.*, p. 439.
11 *Ibid.*, p. 439.

> of what has been done at the vertex and at the base of the pyramid, show that, except for the influence of the intermediate social strata, neither of the others could have accomplished very much of any significance or permanence, since the type to which a political organism belongs and the efficacy of its action depend primarily upon the manner in which the intermediate strata are formed and function. Once the proof is obtained, it becomes evident that the supreme heads of states have, in general, been able to leave enduring marks on history only when they have managed to take the initiative in timely reforms of ruling classes, and that the principal merit of the lower classes has always lain in their inborn capacity from producing from within themselves new elements that have been able to rule them wisely.[12]

According to this formulation, it is the middle strata of society, the middle class which should be the centre of attention in the study of the social, political and economic evolution of society. There are two essential differences in the interpretations of history by Marx and Mosca. The former confines his attention to material forces only whereas the latter gives due importance to religion, education, science, technology, military prowess and other social factors besides economic forces, in shaping the course of history. Secondly, according to the Marxian model, there are, in the last analysis, only two classes, the rulers and the ruled, the capitalists and the labourers, the exploiters and the exploited. Mosca, on the other hand, gives due importance to the middle class on the composition, character and functioning of which depend the type and efficiency of political organism that a country has at any stage of its political and economic evolution. The Marxian model may be valid in particular cases at particular stages of human history as, for example, the Nineteenth Century Europe. But its limitations, so far as its application to the case of under-developed countries like India, which have a long history of foreign rule behind them, must be clearly recognised. For these countries at least, if not for all, the *elite* approach of Mosca and Pareto to the study of history is much more meaningful than the alternative Marxian approach. The *elite* analysis has the advantage

12 *Ibid.*, p. 337.

of being applicable to all forms of economic structure—feudal, capitalist, socialist, communist, colonial or a combination of some of these forms. It is more general than the alternative Marxian analysis and its emphasis on the desire for political power and the inner struggle in the elite for acquisition and retention of that power as a stronger force than production and distribution of wealth shaping the course of history, appears to be more realistic.[13]

The *elite* model put forward by Mosca and Pareto can serve an excellent starting point for the study of political evolution of India during the British period and thereafter. The various concepts like the governing *elite,* the continuing struggle for power among the the governing and the governed *elite,* the class circulation, and the rule of minority over the majority, not only become meaningful but serve as powerful tools of analysis in the study of the national movement and the country's progress towards Independence. Many of the puzzles of the post-independence politics also fall in their proper places easily and the otherwise complex picture becomes coherent with the application of these analytical tools to the history of India over the last 200 years.

The Indian national movement was pioneered by the Indian middle class which itself was the product of the British rule and English education. It was this class which at one time cooperated with the foreign ruler not only in the administration of the country, but also in initiating and carrying out various measures of social reforms, and at other times raised the banner of revolt against foreign rule demanding self rule or independence. It was again this class which at first shared power with the foreign rulers and later became the sole recipient and beneficiary at the time of transfer of power from the British to the Indian hands. In the context of modern Indian history, therefore, the study of the middle class has a special significance. That this fact has already begun to receive recognition at the hands of historians is evident from such recent studies as B.B. Mishra's *The*

13 Marxists, of course, would reject this view because "elite and ruling class concepts are antithetical to their assumption that economic power relationships form the essential character of the society." But even they agree that economic interpretation of history is too narrow an analysis and that for proper understanding and interpretation of history, other social forces have to be taken into account. See Seymore Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (editors), *Elites in Latin America* (New York, 1967), Introduction pp. vii, viii.

Indian Middle Classes,[14] Bipan Chandra's *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India,*[15] and Anil Seal's, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism.*[16] These three studies emphasise the role that the Indian middle class played in bringing about national resurgence which ultimately culminated in freedom from foreign rule. The central theme of Tara Chand's *History of the Freedom Movement in India* is that "this class supplied the force which cracked the cake of custom [and] it provided the corps of the intelligentsia who became the spearhead of the movement for India's emancipation."[17] Sita Ram Singh in his study of *Nationalism and Social Reforms in India,*[18] finds that the same class which led the national movement for freedom provided leadership for social reforms. In fact, according to him, "Nationalism and social reforms movement went side by side, each reacting upon and influencing the nature and character of the other." For a proper understanding of the whole course of history of modern India, a study of the growth, composition, background, views, attitudes and philosophy of the 'Community Influentials' appears to be almost indispensable.

THE EVOLUTION AND GROWTH OF MIDDLE CLASS

The new middle class that emerged in India in the eighteenth century and grew in strength in the nineteenth century, was the creation of European trade, the land legislation, the British administration and the English education. The British destroyed the old social framework founded on caste, religion, custom and tradition in which the people of India had lived for centuries. The British caused a social revolution in India "by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevating in the native society" and bringing into existence "a fresh class reluctantly and sparingly educated in Calcutta... endowed

14 B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* (London, 1961).

15 Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India: Economic Policies of Indian National Leaders:* 1880-1905 (New Delhi, 1966).

16 Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London, 1968).

17 Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi, 1961), Vol. I, p. 352.

18 Sita Ram Singh, *Nationalism and Social Reforms in India,* 1885 to 1920 (Delhi, 1968), p. 339.

with requirements for the Government and imbued with European Science."[19]

Since the new middle class was urban in character its origin must be traced to the European influence which was felt in the first instance in the newly founded cities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. It was these places which first felt the impact of European trade and enterprise as also of the educational work of European missionaries. These cities were modelled on centres of trade and commerce in European countries. They were not only the earliest centres of European trade, but also in course of time became seats of government and centralised administration. Their commercial importance grew apace with their political and administrative importance. These cities were also among the earliest to receive the benefit of English education.

The opening of European trade and the establishment of English 'factories' in India created demand on the part of the European traders for Indian 'middlemen' to act as intermediaries between them and the Indian producers, merchants and financiers for the supply of Indian merchandise. These 'middlemen', called *Banyas* or *Banias* in Bengal and *Dobashes* in Madras, were small people to begin with, but the fact that they were willing to take an opportunity to imporve their material prospects and eagerly seized it when it came their way, shows that they had in them those qualities of leadership and dynamism which are essential for going up in the social ladder.

Originally of moderate means and socially insignificant, this group grew in numbers, wealth and social status after the East India Company took over the political power in Bengal. The Company came to combine in itself, to use Adam Smith's phraseology, the 'contradictory functions of a ruler and trader'.[20] As such it had to seek the assistance of native people both for running the administration of the country and to carry on the trade, or Company's investments as it came to be called at the time. The Company employed consequently a large number of *Banias* for placing orders and collecting goods from weavers who were scattered all over the interior of Bengal and who could, therefore, be approached from Calcutta only through intermediaries. The 'putting out' system spread rapidly in Bengal

19 Karl Marx 'The Future Results of the British Rule in India,' reprinted in Marx and Engles: *On Colonialism* (Moscow), p. 77.

20 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (Modern Library edition.)

and in this not only the Company and its officials made profits but some of the individual *Banias* also made fortunes. At the same time, other opportunities for making money were thrown up to those who were willing to make use of them. The financial side of trade was still largely concentrated in the hands of Indian bankers and it was not till the beginning of the nineteenth century that European style banks came to offer effective competition to indigenous bankers.[21] The Indian merchants, meanwhile, prospered not only in trade but also in finance, of both inland and foreign trade.

An independent class of merchants who formed partnership with European firms and businessmen also began to emerge in Calcutta in the early years of the nineteenth century. Names of important Bengali families were connected with some of the European enterprises in Bengal. Dwarkanath Tagore, for instance, was a director of the Union Bank along with Longneville Clarke and one of the parties to the suit brought against Mr. Sims of the same bank for frauds committed by the latter on the bank.[22] Bishambar Sain, Gurcharan Sain, Madan Mohan Bose, Kalikinkar Pollit, Brojo Nath Dhar, Aga Mirza Shirazie, Ram Rattan Bose, Bishu Nath, Moti Lal and Nillomoy Motimal were signatories to a letter addressed to T.A. Curtis, Chairman of the East Indian Steam Navigation Company, London, intimating to him their desire to become shareholders of the Company if it was floated to start steam navigation between England and India.[23] Ramchandar Dass became a partner in the firm of D.C. Allwin.[24] Other examples of Indians becoming junior partners of European commerical houses in this early period of commercial development could be similarly cited.

In Bengal, at least, land legislation and the new property rights that legislation conferred on zamindars proved even more important in giving rise to a new middle class which lived in cities on large incomes derived from their respective zamindaris in the form of rent. On 28 August 1771 the Court of Directors of the East India Company

21 As late as 1791 when the disintegration of indigenous banking had made considerable progress, Cornwallis and his Board questioned the utility of European banks which they considered to be superfluous in view of the existence of indigenous institutions which although fallen on evil days, were still a force to reckon with.

22 *Englishmen and Military Gazette*, 27 August 1840.

23 *Ibid.*; 24 August 1840.

24 *Friend of India*, 3 December 1946.

directed the President-in-Council "to stand forth as Diwan and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of revenues".[25] This was a revolutionary measure. In the words of Mill, "it was a revolution much greater than any previous conjucture—than even the change from Hindu to Mohamedan masters."[26] The East India Company assumed the ownership of all lands in Bengal and began to dispose off the zamindaris in auction and sometimes even as rewards to the servants of big officials of the Company. Thus, Kuntoo Babu who was the personal servant of Warren Hastings got a big estate in the name of his minor son, Lonant Nandi aged 10 years.[27] Thakery, another official of the Company, secured the zamindari of Sylhet in the name of his native servants, Fleetwood of Sharigar, Christie of Banjora, and Apole and Barton of Belloa. According to the Committee of the Circuit, in 1775 "not less than one third of the Company's lands in these provinces are, or have lately been held by the *Banias* of English gentlemen."[28] The sales of lands through public auction, a practice that was started in 1772 had a similar effect. The zamindaris were purchased by Calcutta *Banias* both as an investment and as a means of rising in social status by joining the landowning aristocracy. Cornwallis through his Permanent Settlement conferred proprietary rights on the zamindars. Land revenue payable to the State was fixed permanently, but not the rent that landlord could charge from the tenant. As the margin between rent and revenue widened, land became an increasingly valuable property. The merchant class purchased the zamindaris ousting the old zamindars who in any case were mere revenue farmers and not proprietors. By 1882, at least two-thirds of the agricultural land in Bengal had passed into the hands of *Banias* in Calcutta. These merchants, however, had no interest in farming. They employed very often the earlier proprietors as *putinidars* for collection on revenue. In course of time, there was a great increase in the number of rentier class through subletting and subinfeudation. The rent-receiving class came to form

25 Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Introduction, p. cc. xii.
26 James Mill, *History of India*, Vol. III, p. 365.
27 Firminger, n. 25, p. cc. xxii.
28 Minute of the Majority of the Committee of Circuit dated 15 September 1775.

the predominant element in the composition of the new middle class in Bengal.

The new class took avidly to English education. The knowledge of English gave them a superiority over others in dealing and even mixing with the English. It also opened the door to western knowledge, philosophy and technology which, to the Indian mind, seemed superior to the stagnant culture and technology of India. English education also threw open the opportunities for employment in the Company's service and administration as also in professions like law, medicine and teaching. English thus "promised to be the talisman which could open new vistas of wealth and influence of material gain, and therefore, of advancement in social status and personal dignity."[29] It was the educated middle class that came to constitute the country's cultural, social and political *elite*. The new rich urban groups of merchants and landlords were the first to take advantage of English education because they had the necessary means to pay for it. So eager were they to get English education that as early as 1816 they set up through private effort, the Hindu College at Calcutta for imparting instruction in English. By the middle of the nineteenth century this class had grown in number and significance. In his discourse read at Hare's anniversary in 1856, Kristo Paul Doss said in a rhetorical vein:

> A new race has risen on land which ere long had no name or local habitation... the new generation, strong with the armoury of Western learning, have broken down the trammels and asserted intellectual freedom, have dethroned the demon of false religion and disacknowledged the prescriptive despotism of the clergy... with their minds filled with historical knowledge, having constantly before them the art of the government that is pursued in independent countries and acquainted as they are with the principles and feelings of genuine British people, they lack not ability or time to represent to them the grievances and acts of despotism under which they labour while East India Company gives laws to the land and devises for its rule. It

29 Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi, 1967), Vol. II, p. 180.

directed the President-in-Council "to stand forth as Diwan and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of revenues".[25] This was a revolutionary measure. In the words of Mill, "it was a revolution much greater than any previous conjucture—than even the change from Hindu to Mohamedan masters."[26] The East India Company assumed the ownership of all lands in Bengal and began to dispose off the zamindaris in auction and sometimes even as rewards to the servants of big officials of the Company. Thus, Kuntoo Babu who was the personal servant of Warren Hastings got a big estate in the name of his minor son, Lonant Nandi aged 10 years.[27] Thakery, another official of the Company, secured the zamindari of Sylhet in the name of his native servants, Fleetwood of Sharigar, Christie of Banjora, and Apole and Barton of Belloa. According to the Committee of the Circuit, in 1775 "not less than one third of the Company's lands in these provinces are, or have lately been held by the *Banias* of English gentlemen."[28] The sales of lands through public auction, a practice that was started in 1772 had a similar effect. The zamindaris were purchased by Calcutta *Banias* both as an investment and as a means of rising in social status by joining the landowning aristocracy. Cornwallis through his Permanent Settlement conferred proprietary rights on the zamindars. Land revenue payable to the State was fixed permanently, but not the rent that landlord could charge from the tenant. As the margin between rent and revenue widened, land became an increasingly valuable property. The merchant class purchased the zamindaris ousting the old zamindars who in any case were mere revenue farmers and not proprietors. By 1882, at least two-thirds of the agricultural land in Bengal had passed into the hands of *Banias* in Calcutta. These merchants, however, had no interest in farming. They employed very often the earlier proprietors as *putinidars* for collection on revenue. In course of time, there was a great increase in the number of rentier class through subletting and subinfeudation. The rent-receiving class came to form

25 Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Introduction, p. cc. xii.
26 James Mill, *History of India*, Vol. III, p. 365.
27 Firminger, n. 25, p. cc. xxii.
28 Minute of the Majority of the Committee of Circuit dated 15 September 1775.

Calcutta where the middle class was predominantly Hindu.[33] Even as late as 1869 the *Friend of India* noticed that not only was there almost complete absence of Muslims in the landed and commercial classes of Bengal, but that the Muslims were being left very much behind in the educational field also.[34] In 1860, the same newspaper had said: "There were only two educational institutions of Muslims in Calcutta—the Collingah Madrassah and the Taltallah Literary Society. There were other institutions of minor importance such as Madrassah of Munshi Ajmer and Mirza Ahmad. But all these institutions were far behind the Hindu School and College." In 1861, out of a total number of 749 candidates in lower Bengal who passed the entrance examination from Calcutta University, 683 were Hindus, 41 Christians, 24 Muslims and 1 Parsi.[35]

In Bombay, on the other hand, Parsi community which formed a mere 0.4 per cent of the Presidency's population, claimed in 1881, 21.69 per cent of all college students and 13.25 per cent of all high and middle school pupils. In all the University examinations held between 1858 and 1876 they contributed 26.1 per cent of the successful candidates. Parsis were "far more advanced in educational interest than even the Brahmans."[36]

Apart from Parsis, it was neither the commercial classes nor the landed *elite* that sent their children to schools and colleges in Bombay. The predominant group getting education both in Bombay and Poona were the Brahmans who traditionally held "a monopoly of higher secular education." The object of this education was "to fit the scholar for public service... the exclusive right of the Brahman caste to higher education was a tradition sanctioned by religion and enforced by public opinion."[37] If we leave out Parsis the parental distribution of scholars attending schools and colleges in Bombay and Poona shows that sons of government servants, clerks, professional classes and small landholders went to educational institutions. "In Maharashtra where writers were few, traders poor and agrarian castes illiterate, the Brahmans had the educational field almost to

33 This difference was seen and emphasised by *Friend of India*, November 1839, p. 691.

34 *Friend of India*, 11 February 1869, p. 158.

35 *Friend of India*, 31 January 1861, p. 119.

36 *Report of the Director of Public Instruction on Education*, 1884-85, p. 121.

37 *Report of Indian Education Commission*, 1882 (Bombay) 1, p. 216.

themselves."[38] In Gujarat only, the trading castes predominated in the educational field, while in Bombay city these came next to Brahmans. In 1882, about half the Hindus (46.41 per cent) at Elphinstone College were Brahmans, 30 per cent were members of trading castes mainly Gujaratis and 14.1 per cent were Prabhus.[39]

In the Madras Presidency also, Brahmans formed the most predominant group in education. In 1883-84, while Brahmans formed only 5 per cent of the total Hindu population, the percentage of Brahman students attending colleges was 75 and those attending secondary schools 45.5. In 1890-91, out of 3,200 students attending Arts colleges in the Presidency, no less than 2,208 or 81 per cent of the total were Brahmans. Other groups included 658 non-Brahman Hindus.[40]

The commercial classes in Madras were not as flourishing as in Bombay and Calcutta. The commerical importance of Madras declined after the establishment of East India Company's rule in Bengal. The second half of the eighteenth century was, for South India, a period of disturbances, wars and political instability. By the end of the eighteenth century, when South India passed under the British control, the commercial leadership in British India had passed to Bengal. The ground thus lost by the South was never recovered when political stability returned to the region. The Industrial Revolution in the West had a serious and adverse impact on South India, whose prosperity had been based on handicrafts and small-scale industries. Moreover, Calcutta and Bombay were more conveniently situated for purposes of European trade than Madras. The result was that while Calcutta and Bombay prospered, Madras stagnated. The commercial class which was so strong in Calcutta and Bombay was comparatively small and feeble in the Madras Presidency.

The foregoing survey brings out clearly that the internal structure of middle classes varied among the three Presidencies. In Bengal the landed and commercial interests predominated. In Bombay commercial interests were the most important but educated sections came

38 Anil Seal, n. 16, p. 89.

39 *Ibid.*

40 It must be remembered that Hindus formed 91 per cent of the total population and the Hindu students formed 90 per cent of the College student population in 1891.

from humbler origins. In Madras neither landownership nor trade was as important as education in the composition of the middle class. The Indian middle class was not a homogeneous economic class representing one kind of interest. It was a social group rather than an economic class in the Marxian sense. The interests of its various components were not uniform or identical. The petition made by British India Association in 1852 concerned itself mostly with laws relating to land, Sudder Decrees and rules of practice for amendment of pleadings.[41] The Bombay Petition on the other hand demanded improvements in the civic life, better roads, more education, more employment of Indians in government service and freedom of trade.[42] In tracing the course of the national movement and evolution of Indian social, political and economic thought over the next 100 years, it would be instructive and illuminating to keep this difference in view.

URBAN ELITE AS LEADING SECTOR IN POLITICS

Sociologists and economists have come to acknowledge lately the role of the 'middle sector' in social and economic transformation of underdeveloped countries.[43] The middle sector is looked upon as the leading sector for economic development.[44] The middle sector is thought to possess greater social mobility and is less bound by the rigidities of caste, religion, custom and tradition than the other sectors of society. The political implications of this line of thought which has in view economic development of Latin American countries is that rapid economic development can be ensured in these countries if political power is more diffused, and passes into the hands of urban elites.[45] The underlying assumption is that urban elites in these countries are democratic-minded and that broadening the basis of

41 *Chronicle of British India Association,* p. 8.

42 The difference in emphasis in the Bengal and Bombay petitions was noticed by *Hindu Intelligence* in a note on Bombay Association published in its issue of 14 March 1853.

43 See for example E. Staley, *The Future of Underdeveloped Countries* (New York, 1961).

44 Lipset and Solari, n. 13, p. 64.

45 J.J. Johnson, *Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of the Middle Sectors.*

political power "means lowering the barriers of custom, caste and prejudice and the barriers of educational and economic opportunity which prevented talented individuals from working their way upward into the *'elite'* that is, into position of leadership".[46] These writers visualise the existence of *different* though overlapping elites in the major areas of social life—economic, political, educational, religious, literary, artistic and so on.

> Those who control the wealth should not also control the Government and the educational system. Those who direct the police should not also direct the farms and factories and artistic life of the country. Such a separation of powers distinguishes a healthy democratic society from that of some underdeveloped countries where privileges and power are concentrated in relatively few families.[47]

What is thus sought to be created now consciously in these countries, was done 'unconsciously' in India by the British in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[48] The British rule brought into being the middle sector of the society, the urban elites, which possessed all those characteristics which are generally attributed to these elites in other countries.[49] The middle class in India was an urban class. It was eager to receive western education, western technology and western thought. It was to a large extent the product of social mobility wrought by opportunities thrown up by the opening of European trade and English education. Its progress and growth accompanied the corresponding decline in the hold of custom, religious dogmas and priestly class on the life and actions of the people of the country. India thus provides an excellent case-study of not only the impact that urban elites are likely to make on economic development of a country, but also on the future course of history of underdeveloped countries which are undergoing that historical experience at present.

There is, of course, an important difference between the two cases.

46 E. Staley, n. 43, p. 224.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

48 Marx called British the unconscious tools of history in India for transforming the traditional static society into a modern bourgeois society.

49. See Lipset and Solari, n. 13, pp. 64-7.

The underdeveloped countries seeking rapid economic development at present are assumed to be politically free whereas India in the nineteenth century was a political dependency of Britain. What is sought in Latin American and other underdeveloped regions is diffusion of power from the upper privileged class to the middle classes. In India, on the other hand, the power had first to be wrested from a foreign country. This common desire for power proved the cementing force for the heterogeneous elements in the new middle class. B.B. Misra prefers to christen the middle sector in India as 'middle classes' and not middle class. He is right in so far as heterogeneity of various elements forming the middle sector is concerned. But for purposes of a model for study of the Indian national movement the *urban elite* can be taken as constituting a single distinct entity which may be called the middle class. There was no doubt a great diversity of interest within the middle class and ultimately when success in the common struggle for freedom was in sight, these differences came to the surface sharply. But these were, for long, submerged in the common cause of wresting political power from the foreign rulers and attaining national independence. The history of national struggle for independence in India becomes, therefore, the story of the Indian elite striving for political power. Here is a class of people representing diverse economic interests united in one common political object. This class does not represent narrow class interests in its struggle for power. It is a social and political group rather than an *economic class* in the Marxian sense. It represents national interests and is the mouthpiece of masses so far as national aspirations are concerned. It brings into focus the problems and economic plight of the toiling masses and puts the blame for their abject poverty squarely on the foreign rule. Even for dealing with a purely economic problem such as recurring famines, it suggests stoppage of drain and establishment of constitutional government of a representative character as remedies.[50] The history of national struggle for independence can be understood only in the perspective of the Indian national struggle being looked at as the middle class movement, for wresting political power from foreign rulers and not for advancement of narrow class interests. The motivation is power, not immediate economic gains.

This approach resolves many conflicts and doubts on the position

50 Resolution of the Indian National Congress, 1886.

that Indian national leadership took up on various economic questions of the time. It is said, for example, that the Indian middle class was bourgeois in outlook and that the national leadership in India championed the cause of big business, industrialists and landlords. The Indian National Congress was vociferous in its demand for reducing revenue, but was absolutely quiet on the extortionate rents that the landlords charged from their tenants.[51] Lord Curzon drew a pointed attention to this fact in his Land Revenue Policy Resolution of 1902. He complained that "the Government had not been so fortunate as to receive from their critics" co-operation in limiting the rents which the tenants paid to the landlords, while they demanded permanent fixity of the share of the Government in the amount of revenue assessed on landlord.[52] The national leaders took up tenants' case against planters in Bengal but were silent on the agrarian disturbances that occurred in the seventies in various zamindaris in Bengal. The Congress opposed land legislation in Bengal intended to give relief to tenants. The Bengal Rent Bill introduced in 1882 on the recommendations of the Famine Commission was opposed tooth and nail and its passage stalled by Indian members of the Council for three long years. It could ultimately be passed by official majority in 1885.[53] The Punjab Land Alienation Act provides another example of the opposition of the middle class to legislative protection of the small peasant. The Vernacular Press opposed similarly, labour legislation though it welcomed protection to indigenous industry.[54] If the middle class represented truly the national aspirations and national interests, how do we explain such contradictions in their policies as support for the capitalist class and opposition to the claims and rights of peasants and workers? Bipan Chandra who otherwise is convinced about the national as against class outlook of national leaders of India in their economic policies, concedes that "they (these leaders) were not above class or group and did in practice represent concrete class interests".[55] But in the same

51 It was not till 1936 that the Congress demanded "a thorough change of the land tenure and revenue systems and immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenues."

52 Land Revenue Policy Resolution, 1902, para. 9.

53 Misra, n. 14, pp. 345-48.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 356.

55 Bipan Chandra, n. 15, p. 752.

breath he says, "In fact the early Indian leaders did not and could not constitute a class. Their response at the level of economic ideas and policies as well as at other levels was that of ideologues and not that of an educated group concerned with its own narrow self-interest."[56] Here he is trying to make a distinction between the intellectual *elite* on the one hand and the commercial and landed *elite* on the other. An easier way to resolve the dilemma is perhaps to take the whole middle class as one social group whose primary concern is political power. It uses all economic arguments that help it in attacking the British rule but when the Government attacks vested interests to give relief and win support of the masses, it returns to the charge and opposes those measures in class interest.[57] In all questions, connected with the relationship of England and India, it adopts a national outlook, but on questions concerning relations between different classes of people in the country itself, it is either silent or comes out openly on the side of middle class interest.

Within the middle class itself there were great many inequalities which gave rise to tensions and competition for share in political power. The Muslims were left behind in education as well as in commercial field. This caused discontent among them which at first found its expression in Sir Syed Ahmed's efforts at providing more facilities for higher education of Muslims and later in Jinnah's demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims on the basis of his two-nation theory. The Muslim League was, like the Congress, a middle class movement led by the microscopically small Muslim section of the middle class. B.B. Misra is, therefore, right when he concludes his book on the note that "India won freedom but was divided. Both freedom and division were the work of middle classes."[58]

The rise of the Justice Party in Madras Presidency could be similarly traced to the internal rivalry between the Brahmans and non-Brahman sections of the middle class in that Presidency. The non-Brahmans were late to arrive on the scene and constituted the 'have-nots' group of the middle class. The struggle for power between the two groups has determined the course of history in recent years

56 *Ibid.*, p. 753.

57 This is, in fact, what Anil Seal is trying to say in his Competition and Collaboration thesis, See Anil Seal, n. 16, Chapter 8.

58 Misra, n. 14.

in that state. The language controversy[59] and the demand for linguistic states also reflected the unequal development and consequently unequal opportunities open to middle classes in different parts of the country and the desire of everybody to protect one's own interests against the other. It is often argued that the British power was the unifying influence and once that was withdrawn, the disintegrating tendencies made their appearance. This statement can be accepted only in the sense that these trends, after political power had been gained, were a mere reflection of the struggle for a share in political power and in the opportunities thrown up by Independence.

POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS

Mosca's thesis of power struggle between the governing and non-governing elite could also be extended to post-Independence era to explain many political movements in the country after Independence. With the emergence of Tilak on the political scene of India, freedom struggle had begun to acquire mass content though it was still led by the middle class. This trend was greatly strengthened with the arrival of Gandhi on the political scene of the country. However, the leading sector was very much enlarged by the entry of a large mass of the lower middle class into the Congress. With the entry of men like Tilak into the Congress, the complexion of this organisation had already begun to change. But after Gandhi assumed the leadership and command, the complexion underwent a complete change and the Congress found within its fold people of smaller means and humbler origin like Lala Lajpat Rai rubbing shoulders with the very rich businessmen and landlords. In fact, after 1921 the Congress appears to have undergone a quiet revolution as the big businessmen and landlords stood outside the fence giving financial support to the Congress but leaving the actual conduct of the struggle to the members of professional (lawyers mostly) and lower middle classes. The Congress organisation of 1930s was very different from that of 1885 or as a matter of fact of 1901, when its membership was confined to the topmen in business, landownership, education, administration and professions.

59 See present writer's, article 'South Opposition to Hindi More Political than Economic' in the *Statesman*, 12 February 1968.

The internal cohesion provided by the unity of purpose between different interests in the Congress organisation broke down as soon as the Congress got political power. Those who got a share in that power remained loyal to the Congress; others began to form opposition groups. There were among the Congress stalwarts some sincere ideologues who foresook temptations of office, pelf and power in deference to their ideological leanings. The Praja Socialist and Samyukt Socialist parties owed their inception to some of the top former Congressmen. The Congress, in its attempt to keep the mass support, adopted the establishment of 'socialist pattern of society' as its ultimate aim. The socialist parties attacked the Congress preaching ideals which were at complete variance with its practices and policies.

The big business continued to influence the Government policies through financing of Congress organisation. That also stood in the way of the Congress pursuing the socialist path. The Congress tended to become more and more bourgeois in its outlook and practice. The new political elite that emerged in the country as a result of Congress rule barred the door to the lower middle class to political power and position. The Jan Sangh in the Punjab and U.P. was the lower middle class reaction to the exclusion of this class from power. Similarly, public attacks on concentration of economic power and monopoly as well as on the privy purses of the former rulers of the native states forced these classes into a new political organisation, *viz.*, Swatantra. The history of Indian politics after 1947 can be written in terms of the clash of interests of different sections of the Indian elite, and struggle for power between the governing and the non-governing *elites*. Once again the competitors for power were wooing the peasant and the worker on the one hand and the intellectual on the other to win them on to their respective sides.

The fissures that appeared in the Congress organisation at the time of Presidential election after the death of Dr. Zakir Husain were also the result of the same struggle for political power. It is not the ideological differences that were splitting up the Congress organisation but a desire to control the machinery of the government by party leaders that was responsible for the split. Measures like Bank nationalisation were political weapons used by the ruling faction of the party to win support of the people for itself and discredit its rivals for power in the public eyes. These did not repre

sent any radical change or a break from the past economic policies of the Congress and the country in the post-independence period.

There is thus nothing unique about present political situation in India. The stresses and strains that Indian politics is experiencing today are the result of historical forces. These were inevitably in the context of the leadership of the national movement. They represent a transitional stage in the national life. The polarisation of forces continues. The ultimate struggle is bound to be between the 'right' and the 'left' but the outcome of this will also depend not only on the respective appeals of these ideologies to the masses and intellectuals but on the relative strength that the two ideologies can command among the *governing* and the *governed elites*.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND THE NATIONAL SYNTHESIS

TARLOK SINGH

DURING THE period of the national movement, next to Gandhi Jawaharlal Nehru was most exercised over the economic and social content of freedom. The national movement threw up many great figures, but what marked out Nehru was his concern with the problems of poverty and planned development in their larger political and economic context and the social philosophy and values which he evolved to deal with them. The years before independence can be seen in retrospect as a long period of preparation for practical action. When the opportunity came, the transition from the role of a freedom fighter to that of a gifted statesman was, therefore, easy and altogether natural.

I

During his lifetime, the leading ideas which Jawaharlal Nehru held and his social and economic outlook were expressed concretely through a series of national plans which followed one upon another. These plans provided the basis of work and thinking for millions of persons throughout the country and in all spheres of activity. This integration of an outstanding individual's philosophy with national plans whose significance penetrated far into the life of the community gave to Nehru's ideas the quality almost of a national synthesis. Without these plans, his ideas would have been judged by common tests such as might apply to other leading social thinkers or reformers. For the future, too, the strength of his ideas and their interest for posterity will depend on how far they continue to form

the basis of India's national plans and their implementation close to the people. Through history, the influence of the ideas of those who have combined thought with action, to whichever school they belonged, has depended on the nature and effectiveness of the medium through which they came to express themselves and the basic problems which their thought helped resolve. Take away the instruments of action and the reality with which the ideas were associated, the latter may still add to the sum of human wisdom, but their influence on welfare and progress will be either remote or strictly limited.

There are two features which distinguish Nehru's thought from that of contemporary students in India, whether of economics or other social sciences. Some of them had greater knowledge and learning and understanding of detail but none had his wide range, his perception and wholeness of outlook. Secondly, with none of them was there such a close identification between personal and social values and outlook. In whatever he said and did, wherever he was, Nehru was ever revealing his own mind and heart, his whole being. The forum scarcely mattered; it merely determined the way he would get to the central themes; he was not acting a part, he was himself. This is the reason why in the things that mattered most, where a man's words and action are but a mirror of his inner self, Nehru was able to get at the core of what was true and lasting, could see beyond the moment, and was invariably right and consistent on fundamentals.

Nehru's thought in matters which touched social and economic life or the ethos of democracy was not merely honest and a reflection of his personality. It was at the same time a considered response to the objective conditions, limitations and possibilities of India as a nation. It coincided with the precise needs of the time and fitted well into the historical epoch during which he lived and worked and India gained her freedom. It reflected the conditions and thought of the period immediately preceding the twenties and the thirties, but also contained within it the seeds of growth for the future.

In his own time, both Jawaharlal Nehru and the country would have gained from a more discerning consideration of his ideas. Their possible weaknesses, specially in terms of practical action, would have been recognised and provided for. Instead, they met with almost too ready an acceptance. Since his departure from the scene, they

have been questioned and doubts are beginning to be raised almost equally uncritically and often on false grounds. Of course, no man's thought is complete in itself. Some part of it is of continuing value, some directly related to the special conditions or tasks of the contemporary scene. Later, as circumstances change and new problems emerge, both his thought and action have to be supplemented, enlarged and even modified. In this sense, because of the sources on which it drew and the quality of comprehension which it possessed, while Jawaharlal Nehru's thought and the action through which it expressed itself are not a complete answer to the next phase in India, there is no better anchor to which we can hold, nor a greater assurance that the paths pursued are right and well-conceived.

II

Jawaharlal Nehru had many occasions to put across his thinking and his ideas are best conveyed as far as possible in his own words. His speeches in Parliament, specially when presenting the first three Five Year Plans and during the debates on the Industrial Policy Resolutions of 1948 and 1956, his addresses to the National Development Council at important junctures and observations made before many gatherings contain his main thoughts on how India should go forward. His basic premises and values led him to a certain social approach for the fulfilment of which planning was a necessary means. In turn, planning led him to define his priorities and his concepts of economic policy and structure. Behind his thinking on economic problems lay a pervasive belief in the possibilities of science and technology. In reviewing briefly Nehru's premises, values, outlook on society, approach to planning, and view of economic policy and structure and of the role of science, at this distance of time, it would be appropriate also to raise some doubts and questions, so that we might assess correctly the significance of his ideas on planned development and carry them more fully into the future.

It is not always easy to distinguish the premises to which an individual's thinking may be traced from the concrete expressions which it may assume. Nehru's mind and interests were extraordinarily wide-ranging and the line between his premises and his thought is

sometimes difficult to draw. The starting point would appear to be his concept of India, with her history, her geographical location as the pivot of western, southern and south-eastern Asia, with her national struggle under the spell of Gandhi's teachings and the manner of the final settlement with Britain. With all her limitations, India was yet unique, and it was her duty and her role to find an answer to fundamental problems of economic, social and political well-being which was truly her own. Nehru had an abiding faith in the people of India and felt that they had it within their power to find this answer. At the heart of this problem lay the issue of ends and means. It was a cardinal belief with him from which, in the midst of life's pulls and struggles one might fall now and again, that there was always a close and intimate relationship between the end we aim at and the means adopted to attain it. Even if the end was right but the means were wrong, he said, it would vitiate the end or divert us in a wrong direction.

These two premises led to a third. Admittedly, the tasks to be accomplished were fundamental and involved deep conflicts within the society. But they should be approached in a constructive and peaceful way and by methods of persuasion and consent. Sensitive people, Nehru observed, cannot easily put up with the vast gap between human beings, the difference between them, the lack of opportunities on the one side and the waste on the other. Therefore, the objective must be to put an end to all differences between class and class, to develop ultimately into a classless society. The tendency towards acquisitiveness had to be replaced by the spirit of cooperation. As he put it in 1952,

> Our economy and social structure have outlived their day and it has become a matter of urgent necessity for us to refashion them so that they may promote the happiness of all our people in things material and spiritual. We have to aim deliberately at a social philosophy which seeks a fundamental transformation of this structure, at a society which is not dominated by the urge for private profit and by individual greed and in which there is fair distribution of political and economic power. We must aim at a classless society, based on cooperative effort, with opportunities for all. To realise this we have to pursue peaceful methods in a democratic way.

These goals could be sought through violence and revolution or by peaceful and evolutionary methods. Jawaharlal Nehru chose the latter and adhered to them through life. This was one of his basic premises. He came to it by instinct and training as well as with deliberation. Faced by the upheavals of the first few months after Partition, he saw that stability and continuity and, above all, production, were essential. If in our attempt to get something that we like and to go forward a step in one direction, he remarked, we lose a few steps in another, then on balance we have lost, not gained. It took a long time to build, but not very long to destroy. There was more than the circumstances of the moment to support his confidence in the constructive approach. There was, first, the belief in democracy and the democratic process. These were vital to the growth of individual freedom and of the creative and the adventurous spirit of man. It was Jawaharlal Nehru's hope that political democracy would lead to economic and social democracy. He did not have to face the question, which we have now to face—what if, even in the conditions of India, economic and social disparities continue to grow rather than diminish because democracy does not have the courage and the vigour to achieve institutional changes, and vital economic and social goals continue to elude us?

The main grounds for Nehru's optimism appear to be, first, his belief that democracy would bring its own pressures; secondly, a view of the industrial process; and, thirdly, the far-reaching significance of science and technology and of new sources of power. But with all these, in his mind there was hope rather than certainty that democracy would succeed in its social objectives. He did not fail to warn that political democracy would only justify itself if it attained its human and social goals. If it did not, he said in Parliament when presenting the First Five Year Plan, it would have to yield to some other kind of economic or social structure which we might or might not like. Ultimately, he added, it is the results that decide the structure a country will adopt. If, therefore, Nehru was somewhat pragmatic, attached less value to ideology and doctrine than he might have, and sought the middle way, equally he insisted that the country and its institutions and methods were on test, and there was room neither for complacency nor for long delay. He was eager to set India on the right road, but was willing, if one thing

failed, to try another. His emphasis on the dynamics of growth included not only big changes in science and technology but also in the minds of men and by way of social forces.

III

The appeal of planning for Jawaharlal Nehru was both emotional and intellectual. The patriot and the historian in him conjured up, to use his own words, the vision of something vast—the mighty theme of a nation building and re-making itself. For him, planning embodied the processes by which cumulative forces which made the rich richer could be stopped and those which enabled the poor to get over the barrier of poverty pushed forward. He had asked himself, how this barrier could be crossed without human suffering and without infringing human freedom. Planning was at least a major part of the answer, for it helped integrate the social, economic, agricultural, industrial and other aspects of the country into a single framework of thinking.

The significance of planning was even greater. It was a means to sustain and develop national unity and to create a democracy of the masses. In India, the first essential was to maintain the unity of the country, to achieve not merely a political unity but a unity of the mind and the heart, which precludes the narrow urges that make for disunity, and breaks down barriers raised in the name of religion or State. Planning would help us in achieving an emotional awareness of our problems as a whole. It would help us to see isolated problems in villages or districts or States in their wider context. In this sense, national plans represent goals for which the people of India work together as a body, transcending every difference and diversity. These are goals to be achieved within the framework of democracy. In a democracy, Jawaharlal Nehru said, things are built on a firm foundation—even though it may take a little longer time—and built with due consideration for the individual. He felt that the limitations set by the democratic method were not final and it should be possible for a democratic set up, if properly worked, to make provision for everything we want done, and this would be its real justification.

Planning was to be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution, from which it derived its objectives. This is a thought to which

Jawaharlal Nehru attached great importance and he himself worked it both into the Resolution in 1950 constituting the Planning Commission and the Resolution on the Industrial Policy of 1956. But the Constitution was not so sacrosanct that it could not be changed even if the needs of the nation demanded it. To make change impossible would be to kill the Constitution. Life is a curve, Jawaharlal Nehru said—it is not a straight line—and the life of a nation is even more of a curve in these changing times. So, he remarked, if you are flexible in your action and constitution, then you are nearer the living curve of a nation's growth.

Nehru saw successive national plans as a continuous series, as stages in the nation's journey which knows no resting place. This was part of his approach to longterm planning. He looked upon the beginning and the end of each plan as vital dates in the country's history. His mind was ever on the future. Scarcely was work on one plan over before he asked for work to begin on the next. In each plan he watched for the major emphasis and considered numbers and quantities to be changeable within large limits. His sense of continuity enabled him to resolve the problems posed by the reappraisal of the Second Plan and the gap between requirements and resources at the formulation of the Third Plan. In November 1962, when new challenges had to be faced and within the administration some thought that much of the Third Plan would have to be scrapped, Nehru left no one in doubt. Our Plan, he said, is not something apart from our national life; it is a part of the warp and woof of it. In words, which have equal significance in the economic and social situation which we confront today, he said, "For people to say that the Plan must be largely scrapped because we have trouble and invasion to face has no meaning to me. It shows an utter misunderstanding of the situation. It is war effort that requires the Plan."

IV

Jawaharlal Nehru's social approach largely determined his outlook on economic policy and structure. For him an individual's life and philosophy were not made up of compartments but constituted a composite whole. His views on the economic and social system flowed directly from his value premises and his concept of planning. A few days after assuming office as Vice-President of the Interim

Government in September 1946, he declared that we aimed at a cooperative commonwealth in which all would be equal sharers in opportunity and in all things that give meaning and value to life. He went on to say: "The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and inequality of opportunity."

In later years, specially during the period 1954-57, in Parliament, at Avadi, and in relation to the Second Five Year Plan, Nehru developed this theme more fully and gave it the name of socialist pattern of society or socialist society, but the fundamentals remained unchanged. What was put forward at the Karachi Congress and came to be embodied in the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution was now elaborated in greater detail and almost became a political ideology.

Basically, Nehru's socialism consisted of human and social values. In terms of institutions and structures, it left perhaps too large an area fluid and flexible. He did not wish to be bound by any dogma or rigid frame. His view of land policy and the agrarian system, his support of the cooperative movement, his faith in the approach of community development and in voluntary effort go back to his human and social values. On the other hand, his views on industrial policy and the industrial structure belonged more specifically to his economic thinking and were part of his outlook on science and technology. In this sense, it can be said that his ideas on economic and social development did not amount to a complete and fully worked out system and, given the correct direction, he was willing to leave a great deal to evolve out of future experience.

Yet, what he had to urge on land policy, on cooperation and on community projects, was fundamental to the future of the country and could be lost sight of only at the cost of that future. In the crucial discussions which took place on the land policy presented in the Second Plan, he threw his weight wholly on the side of a policy for social progress. He was fully convinced of the necessity of ceilings on land holdings. At an earlier stage, he had thought mainly of the abolition of *zamindari* and of the protection of tenants, but he now saw that these were not sufficient and it was necessary to ensure both limitation of holdings and widespread ownership in land, with tenancy serving essentially as a phase of transition.

However, in consonance with his general outlook, Jawaharlal

Nehru thought of land reform perhaps less as a programme for redistribution and far more as a necessary condition for the growth of agricultural production and the rural economy. Therefore, during the Second Plan period and more specially between 1957 and 1959, he gave close attention to the problems of cooperative development. As he put it to the National Development Council in November 1958, ceilings on land holdings were essential, but they would not be useful without cooperatives. Both must go together, otherwise something would go wrong. Through the whole of that year, influenced perhaps by Acharya Vinobha Bhave's Gramdan movement, by V.T. Krishnamachari's thinking on cooperation and by reports of cooperative developments in China, Nehru gave much thought to the subject of cooperation. He saw that, despite its many merits, in one aspect the Rural Credit Survey had given a questionable lead, namely, in its emphasis on large-sized cooperatives which in practice led to distortions and errors which the Committee had not itself anticipated. The Resolution on Cooperative Policy of the National Development Council in November 1958 and the Nagpur Congress Resolution of January 1959 are important landmarks in agrarian policy. They fall into a consistent pattern and owe everything to Jawaharlal Nehru's insight and ability to discern the implications for the future of policies which, under the inducement of possible short-term benefits, were being pursued at the time at various levels of administration. His address to the Indian Cooperative Congress in April 1958, constitutes perhaps the most complete exposition of his views on cooperation and cooperative farming as voluntary movements based on consent and persuasion, and we can go back to it today with much profit.

There has been recently some lack of understanding of the significance of community development and the conditions necessary for its growth. For Jawaharlal Nehru the issue was quite simple. As he put it at the very start, community projects were of vital importance because they seek to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter the builder of his own village centre and of India in the larger sense. To the end Nehru gave unwavering support to community development and to "Panchayati Raj" which largely grew out of it and let pass no occasion for stressing its significance in the structure of India and in securing a certain balance within growing industrial economy.

V

As we move from Nehru's outlook on social and rural policy to his approach to economic and industrial policy, we are struck by his three over-riding concerns. The first was to ensure continuity of production lest, in the anxiety to pursue the aims of redistribution, production should suffer and the prize itself be lost. The second was to advance the development of science and technology and thereby to build up a strong industrial base. This was the essential appeal to him of the ideas presented by Professor P.C. Mahalanobis towards the end of 1954 and of the experience of the Soviet Union. He saw the growth of basic industries and of heavy industries, specially of steel, machine-building, power and oil in no exclusive sense, but certainly as a most important part of the economic and technical transformation of India. In this transformation, agriculture provided the foundation and there had to be a large and increasing component of small industries and village industries including *khadi,* which would provide a balance to big industry and great machines. Nehru's third concern was to find a way to counter trends inherent in an acquisitive society.

Emphasis on production led inevitably to a mixed economy in which nationalisation of existing industry had only a nominal role. Jawaharlal Nehru explained his opposition to nationalisation as a policy, as distinct from action on the merits of a case, on the ground of conserving public resources and using them most effectively on the side of new technology rather than the old. But his instinctive caution concerning maintenance of existing production also argued towards the same conclusion.

Through the support he gave to the Second and the Third Five Year Plans and more specially to steel, oil and power, to the training of scientific and technical manpower and to scientific and technological research, Nehru helped to lay the foundations of comprehensive industrial development and of self-sustained growth largely in terms of the country's own resources and capacities. For a variety of reasons, balances conceived of in theory did not work out equally well in practice and certainly not in time, and some of the assumptions in the Plans were not borne out by events. Yet, Nehru's main underlying concepts should stand scrutiny both in principle and in the longer perspective of events.

Nehru had a natural aversion to capitalism and the capitalist way. In areas assigned to the private sector, he was opposed to interference and restriction, because these came in the way of production and initiative. He would have been glad to see industries in the private sector adopt progressive policies as under the welfare capitalism of western countries and a greater role for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs and for new entrants, but he did not himself press hard for changes along these lines. He relied instead on the countervailing role of an efficient public sector in control of basic industries which would grow absolutely and relatively faster than the private sector. He thought—somewhat hopefully—that the mixed economy would be no more than a transitional stage in the movement towards a socialist economy and a socialist society.

Agricultural setbacks in recent years have induced some critics to question his priorities and to ask whether, in fact, Nehru failed to lay sufficient stress on agriculture. Undoubtedly, there were shortcomings in this as in other fields, and the response from Chief Ministers of States to his suggestion that they should themselves take over the portfolio for agriculture was less than adequate. Yet, his own approach, which he maintained at every step, was that agriculture must have an absolute priority over everything else. As he explained to Parliament in December 1952, there was no question that

> if our agricultural foundation is not strong, then the industry we seek to build will not have a strong basis either. Apart from that, if our food front cracks up, everything else will crack up, too. Therefore, we dare not weaken our food front. If our agriculture becomes strongly entrenched, as we hope it will, then it will be relatively easy for us to progress more rapidly on the industrial front...

The explanation for slow agricultural progress must be sought, not in the degree of importance which Jawaharlal Nehru gave to agriculture, but on the more practical plane of resources and inputs, efficiency in implementation and action to bring about institutional changes. It should be added also that food imports worried Jawaharlal Nehru at many stages. His promise in 1949 to end imports within a year had not come through, nor the promise in the First and the Second Plans, and more than once he expressed his sorrow at the failure.

VI

No man's work is ever fully accomplished in his own time. The statesman with power unquestioned is at best an influence, albeit a dominant influence, while he stays at the helm. His insights and values light the path, but alone he can go only a few steps ahead of the system in which he works and the quality of service which his colleagues and associates render. Ideas can point the way, but how far they will be sustained depends on practical results and achievements. In these, many elements of success and failure, of strength and weakness, play their part. Some are within the control and influence of the statesman. To that extent his responsibility is direct. Some belong to the larger social climate and environment in which he functions and on these his influence may be relatively small and lightly felt. Therefore, a tribute to the singular achievements and contribution of Nehru at the present juncture would not be complete without a few observations on how the foundations he laid could be made stronger and used to build a mansion for India such as he had wished to build. As it happens, this is a task which events since his passing have made more difficult.

Nehru's ideas could have achieved more for India than they did if the follow-up had been more complete and implementation more efficient. His own wide range of interests and the many goals he cherished may account for this in part, but by far the greater responsibility rests with those who shared the burdens of office with him, the administrations which were at their disposal, the diffusion of power which characterises a parliamentary and federal system, and the distractions and weaknesses of political parties, more specially those engendered through years of office within the Indian National Congress itself. Secondly, as an economy begins to grow and development brings new stresses, problems of economic management are inextricably linked with and become as important as those of planning. Economic management in all its aspects has been and continues to be one of the main sources of weakness both in India's administrative system and in the scheme of planning. This weakness has a direct bearing on the extent to which many of the assumptions in Nehru's thinking could be fulfilled in practice.

In considering Nehru's approach to planned development, it is essential to distinguish his basic values and concepts from more

specific priorities. The latter are related to time and circumstance, to concrete experience and assessment of the national situation from time to time. Therefore if, after fifteen years of planned development, with all its gains and shortcomings, there is need now to concentrate overwhelmingly on agriculture, or to stress the urgency of orienting development towards the expansion of employment opportunities and acceleration of education, or to bring dependence on external aid to an end as early as possible, such action would not involve departures from Nehru's teaching.

Nehru did not either claim or seek to provide a complete system. While he was right regarding the contribution of science and technology to human welfare and economic development, he might have been too optimistic about the pace at which technical advances can occur without large social and structural changes. Consequently, he could perhaps have placed greater emphasis than he did on speeding up these changes and on building up adequate social instruments, thus leaving less arduous tasks to those who have followed him. In a country so full of divisive forces, Jawaharlal Nehru might have done more to strengthen such organised, secular and national forces, as the trade union movement, the cooperative movement, organisations of landless labourers and poorer peasants and elements which will have both the determination and the resources to fight disintegration tooth and nail. He might have done more to bring all the progressive forces together into a creative working partnership. He knew that in achieving peaceful change and in working the levers of democracy, directions of policy and goodwill and strong pressures from below from groups and classes whose interests the present economic system fails to safeguard, had to operate together and all the time. His very ideals and the confidence he aroused held back these pressures and to that extent the goals he desired but could not reach have now become harder to achieve at the same time as they have gained in their urgency. He knew that market forces had to be controlled and channelled but, having opted for state trading in foodgrains, he yet permitted them and other like forces to gain sway over the policies of his own government.

Soon after taking office in 1946, he described the existing administrative structure as a ship of state, old, battered, slow-moving and unsuited to this age of swift change, which would have to be scrapped and given place to another. But he himself initiated no fundamental

change and, in his usual generous manner, even permitted willingness to conform to the prevailing fashion of thought to pass off as commitment and sense of purpose. Having roused large numbers of people to the need for joint cooperative farming undertaken willingly and by consent, later his own silence tended to encourage retreat from this objective. He was always concerned about the growth of economic and social disparities and the spread of slums, but could not move much beyond educating public opinion to the seriousness of these problems.

These and other examples of what might have been are easy to cite. In their essence, they are in the nature of tasks which Jawaharlal Nehru could not finish, as much because of his own multifarious roles as the political and administrative limitations under which he worked. To point to them is not criticism, but recognition of our present responsibilities and admission of the fact that India's freedom has yet to be consolidated, that her economic and social system has still to be built up into something just and efficient and capable of resolving the problems of the people, and that her political system must be strengthened and administrative structure recast if we are not to be overwhelmed by current drifts and challenges. These are among the elements in seeking a new national synthesis without which India will remain far short of being a nation with a sense of direction, at peace with herself and able to meet internal and external strains which press upon her. Such a synthesis has to evolve largely around Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of India and his thoughts for her future and go forward from where he left off.

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effort to make Indian economy complementary to British economy in a subservient position, *i.e.*, to make it a colonial economy, it was also the period in which the chief inner contradictions of British imperialism matured, the agrarian basis of Indian economy was firmly set on its process of decay and ruin, an indigenous industrial capitalist class emerged, and the nationalist intelligentsia took roots. In other words, if British ideas reflected one aspect of the reality, the nationalist ideas reflected the other. Neither set of ideas was merely 'ideological'; both were rooted in the same reality.

Thirdly, in both British and Indian writings, what was often involved was not economic thought or ideas but economic policies. We can, however, construct a general picture—if not a model—of their ideas of economic development by combining the basic elements of the measures for economic progress that they put forward, for both of them did put forward distinct sets of economic policies.[3] Moreover, their approaches and ideas can be contrasted and compared for both schools shared one common assumption—that economic development constituted the essence, and the chief measure, of a society's or nation's progress and that every other progress depended upon it.[4] Neither the British writers nor the nationalists put forward the view that spiritual, cultural, or political progress could compensate for, or was as important as, economic development.

Lastly, the entire discussion of the problems of economic development occurred in the context of certain views regarding the existing economic situation and the nature of economic changes, both quantitative and structural, then taking place in India. Differences on these two questions set the British and the Indians on two different rails—they developed opposing views of the barriers to economic develop-

3 We have, of course, for analytical convenience excluded the few dissidents on both sides. From the beginning there were a few British writers like Hyndman, Connell, Osborne, and Digby whose stand was similar to that of the nationalists; and there were Indians who echoed the official writing. But, then, the former were anti-imperialist and the latter merely echoed the imperialist economic outlook.

4 For the Indians, see Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 1966), 5-7, 24-5, 27. For the British, see John and Richard Strachey, *The Finances and Public Works of India*, 1869-1881 (1882), p. 429; M.E. Grant Duff, *CR* (The Contemporary Review), Feb. 1887, p. 192, and Sept. 1891, p. 328.

ment in India and of the ways and means of promoting it, that is, they developed diverging theories of economic development.

The nationalists believed that India was extremely poor, was growing poorer, was lagging behind Europe in economic development, and was in the contemporary context becoming more backward or underdeveloped. Given this lag and growing underdevelopment, radically different economic remedies than the current ones were needed. The British view was that the lag was being rapidly overcome and that the existing policies would suffice to overcome it.

Similarly, while both the British and the Indians recognised that India was undergoing rapid economic change, the nature of the change came to be severely disputed. The British writers saw the current economic transformation as modernisation of the traditional economy or as economic development. The Indians, on the other hand, saw it as a transition from traditional or 'feudal' pattern of backwardness to colonial backwardness where limited modern development, especially in the fields of trade and transport, occurs transforming the country into a raw material producing and processing as well as capital absorbing country, leading to backward agriculture, repressed industry, and foreign domination of economic life. They, thus, evolved the concept of a 'modernising' economy which was not developing, that is, the concept of a colonial economy. In this respect, they even made a basic advance in economic theory. While the British writers could see only two types of contemporary economic structure, the traditional and the modern, each being bolstered by its own sets of economic and cultural values—and this is where a great deal of present-day economic and sociological theory is still bogged down—the Indian writers could clearly see that a third type of economic structure—the colonial economy—was coming into being which was as modern as industrial capitalism, which was bolstered by its own ideology of colonialism in the realm of economic and cultural values, and which was, at the same time, as depressing in its impact on economic life as the traditional economic and social structure. They, therefore, felt it necessary to struggle, even in the realm of economic ideas, against both the traditional and the new colonial economic, social and political structures.

We are also, of course, fully aware of the fact that actual policy decisions were not the result mainly of economic ideas. They were the end-product of many pulls and pressures. In the case of official

policies the determining influences were the British private interests and the needs of the stability and perpetuation of the Empire. In the case of Indians, the interests of the rising industrial capitalist class made a powerful impact. At the same time, economic ideas had an important role to play not only in the making of policies, but, like all ideologies, even more in justifying these policies both in the eyes of the framers of the policies and before the limited public opinion that existed in Britain as well as in India. Consequently, the conflict in the realm of economic ideas between the British officials and their Indian critics was of far greater political importance than as a mere influence in the making of this or that economic policy. It became the chief form of the ideological struggle between an entrenched imperialism and an emerging and resurgent nationalism. After all, the allegedly modernising role of British rule in the economic field was the chief justification for the *Raj* offered by the imperialist rulers and spokesmen. And the anti-imperialist writers controverted this very assertion in a fundamental manner. Apart from its historical interest, this controversy is very relevant even today not only because economic imperialism is still a reality in large parts of the globe, but also because notions of its modernising role still permeate many of the historical studies belonging to the imperialist school of historiography. For example, C.H. Philips, the doyen of this school, has recently asserted that apart from "the fundamental questions whether and when to transfer political power" the British imperial mind was occupied during the period 1857–1947 with such other questions as: "Most fundamental of all, how was Britain's civilizing mission to be accomplished, in what ways were Indians' minds to be opened to new ideas, and how were the poor, ignorant millions to be raised from the dust?"[5]

I

Two aspects of the British view of Indian economy and its future growth stand out. Throughout the half century, the British writers with remarkable unanimity denied that India was economically stagnating or backward and poor. On the contrary, they asserted that India and Indians were at the time prosperous and the country was

5 Foreword to *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, 1858 *to* 1947, *Select Documents*, 1962 (1965 reprint), viii.

in the midst of a process of rapid economic development. Differences on the question related mostly to the language in which the existing state of affairs was to be described. Some writers approached the lyrical. For example, even the sober and scholarly George Campbell declared in 1882 that:

> ... in respect of public works and material improvement India has been well kept up to the level of civilised countries; in the last thirty years a transformation has been wrought by means of railways and other developments almost as complete as that which has taken place in Europe and America, dating from a somewhat earlier period.[6]

John and Richard Strachey asserted in 1882 that:

> ...A greater or more admirable work was never conceived in any country than that which has been undertaken, and in a great degree accomplished, by Englishmen in India during the last twenty-five years, and which is still going on.... (It has) increased to an extent absolutely incalculable the wealth and comfort of the people of India....[7]

Henry Sumner Maine wrote as follows regarding India's progress from 1859 to 1887:

> ... taking the standards of advance which are employed to test the progress of Western countries, there is no country in Europe which, according to those criteria, and regard being had to the point of departure, has advanced during the same period more rapidly and farther than British India... (There has occurred) a process of continuous moral and material improvement which in some particulars has attained a higher point than has yet been reached in England.[8]

6 *Ed. R.* (*The Edinburgh Review*), July 1882, p. 68. Also see his article in *QR* (*The Quarterly Review*), April 1880, pp. 491-2.

7 *The Finances and Public Works of India*, pp. 6 and 8. Also see pp. 7, 11, 324-5.

8 H.S. Maine, "India", in The Reign of Queen Victoria, (ed), Thomas Henry Ward, Vol. I (1887), pp. 486, 494, 518 and 524. R.D. Mangles, *Ed.R.*, Jan. 1864, p. 96; T. Maltby, *QR*, July 1866, pp. 207-08; "The Character of British Rule in

W.W. Hunter, who was perhaps the most critical of the imperialist writers and who expressed grave apprehension regarding the living conditions of the common people, wrote in 1880 that the figures of growth of foreign trade and industries "are so great, and the material progress which they indicate is so enormous, that they elude the grasp of the imagination."[9] Comparing India's economic growth with that of the United States, he wrote in 1887: "The progress of India during the past fifty years has been not less wonderful, and, considering the lower level from which India started, in some respects, even more rapid."[10]

Even Alfred Marshall said in 1899 that though India had not been able "to keep pace with the West, or even with Japan... when one complains of the slow progress of India, one must recollect that there is scarcely any other old civilization in the same lattitude, and with the same difficulties, that has made progress to be compared with that of India."[11]

Secondly, more than in the present the British writers of the period had confidence in the future. Nearly all of them foresaw a new era of rapid economic development—development of Indian resources, as it was then called. The view expressed over the entire range of the years was that firm foundations for economic growth had been or were being laid in the immediate past[12] and the present and rapid economic growth in the future was thus assured. In any case, there was

India," *WR (The Westminster Review)*, July 1868, p. 22; "The Future of the British Empire", *WR*, July 1870, p. 51; W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, April 1879, pp. 386-7, and July 1881, pp. 58, 63, 74; L.J. Jennings, *QR*, April 1885, p. 504; M.E. Grant Duff, *CR*, Jan. 1887, pp. 12-3; A. Lyall, *Ed.R.*, Jan. 1884, p. 9, Jan. 1889, p. 421, and Jan. 1895, p. 17; Charles W. Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain* (1890), Vol. II, p. 21; J.A. Baines, *QR*, April 1889, pp. 313-4, 321; John Strachey, *India*, 1894 ed., pp. 301, 303. Also see Bipan Chandra, pp. 28-9.

9 W.W. Hunter, *The India of the Queen and Other Essays* (London, 1903), p. 123. Also see pp. 125-6, 147.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 4. Similarly, Richard Temple, though cautious, basically adopted the optimistic view, *India in* 1880 (3rd ed. 1881), iv, pp. 93 ff., 493, 495.

11 *Official Papers* (1926), p. 289.

12 The general opinion was that the era of progress had begun only in 1850's, the previous period being one of political and administrative consolidation. See, for example, "English rule in India", *WR*, July 1861, p. 123; R.D. Mangles, *Ed.R.*, Jan. 1864, pp. 97-8; "Indian Worthies", *WR*, Jan. 1868, p. 161; W.R. Mansfield, *Ed. R*, April 1876, p. 404; J. and R. Strachey, 1 ff.; G. Campbell, *Ed. R.*, July 1882, p. 68; Maine, pp. 484-5.

a remarkable lack of pessimism. The degree of optimism, of course, varied and tended to be qualified near the end of the period. But most of the writers believed that there could be no limits to India's economic growth. Thus R.D. Mangles wrote in 1864: "At last the great driving-wheel of progress has been fairly set in motion, and it demands but scanty powers of observation to see that society is moving onward at a pace almost Anglo-Saxon in its rapidity."[13]

Most of the British writers used the concept 'development of resources' rather vaguely and it is difficult to pinpoint as to what they meant exactly by it or what constituted economic development in their view. While a few included a hazy notion of industrialisation, most of them understood by it growth of agricultural production, plantations, and foreign trade. It is easier to identify the factors which they thought would lead to rapid economic growth.

II

According to British writers, perhaps the most important prerequisite for growth that British rule had provided in India was security of life and property—law and order within the country, security from external aggression, and an impartial system of justice.[14] According to most of them India's past was one of perpetual and continuous invasions, plunder and massacre, internal strife accompanied by administrative anarchy and lawlessness, and in general a state of society in which property and 'fruits of labour' were not safe, taxation was oppressive, etc., leading to impoverishment and economic stagnation.[15]

13 *Ed. R.*, Jan. 1864, pp. 96-7. (He likened "the Sepoy Mutiny" to the French Revolution: "It did for India, by a shorter and less widely painful process of awakening, what the Revolution of 1793 did for France... this great thunderstorm... has cleared the atmosphere, and done so much to render progress and development both easy and safe." pp. 97-8) "English Rule in India," *WR*, July 1862, pp. 113, 131, 137-8; T. Maltby, *QR*, July 1866, p. 214 ff; Temple, pp. 5, 501-02; W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, July 1881, pp. 60-3, 65; J. and R. Strachey pp. 1 ff., 185, 325; G. Campbell, *Ed. R.*, July 1882, pp. 67-8; L.J. Jennings, *QR*, April 1885, p. 504, Maine, p. 486; Charles Dilke, p. 86; Hunter, p. 153.

14 This is a constant theme. See, for example, "The Character of British Rule in India," *WR*, July 1868, pp. 5-6; Hunter, pp. 99 ff., 113, 124-5; J. and R. Strachey, pp. 11, 101-02; L.J. Jennings, *QR*, April 1885, p. 504; Maine, p. 501; F.C. Channing, *Economic Review*, Jan. 1902, p. 121.

15 Hunter, pp. 100 ff., 106 ff.; J. and R. Strachey, p. 11; Maine, p. 520; L.J. Jennings, *QR*, April 1886, p. 454, J. Strachey, p. 159.

These writers, however, seldom established any direct economic correlation between law and order and economic growth. They tended to assume it as an accepted economic axiom. In fact, quite often they confused administrative improvement with economic growth. Presumably they drew their conviction from the classical economists' general view that once the government assured conditions in which an individual was guaranteed the fruits of his industry, private enterprise and competition would assure economic growth.[16] Moreover, John Stuart Mill, the most influential economic thinker of the period, had also held that "great insecurity of property, from military and fiscal rapacity" had in the past prevented the Asian people from accumulating capital (or retaining it when accumulated), from having any incentive to work hard and improve, and from trade with the towns.[17] The first condition for an 'increase of industry' in the East was,

> a better government: more complete security of property; moderate taxes, and freedom from arbitrary exaction under the name of taxes; a more permanent and more advantageous tenure of land, securing to the cultivator as far as possible the undivided benefits of the industry, skill and economy he may exert.[18]

Henry Fawcett, the only contemporary British economist to take interest in the general problems of Indian economy, gave the economic rationale of the British view in his *Manual of Political Economy*. He blamed anarchy and insecurity for hoarding[19] and high rates of interest[20] and claimed that the British rule would lead to the release of hoarded capital and its effective employment. He wrote that if in the past Indians employed labourers, they could not

16 For Adam Smith, see J.M. Letiche in *Theories of Economic Growth* (Illinois, 1960), (ed.), Bert F. Hoselitz; for Ricardo, see Donald Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (1965), pp. 60, 91.

17 *Principles of Political Economy* (ed.), W.J. Ashley, (1926 impression), pp. 121, 18, 113-14.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 701.

19 *Manual of Political Economy* (1883 ed.), p. 87.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 453.

feel certain that they would be able to retain the results of the labourers' industry. Hence we can reasonably anticipate one most beneficent result from England's rule in India; for her power, in course of time, may make every class in India feel that the rights of property are respected. *Nothing will more tend to increase the capital, and hence the wealth of the country;* for when security is given to property there is a great inducement to save, and the wealth which is saved, instead of being hoarded, will be usefully applied as capital to assist the further production of wealth.[21]

Security of person and property also promoted growth, it was believed, by attracting foreign capital.[22] And, of course, though not explicitly stated, it was understood that law and order were essential for the growth, and even existence, of foreign trade.

It may be pointed out here in parenthesis that this connection between law and order and foreign trade was made more explicitly by many writers in order to establish the need for the British to stay in India in the interests of British trade. The argument here was that while trade with the U.S.A. had continued and would continue with Australia and Canada even after British withdrawal, in India British trade would disappear with Britain's withdrawal as this step was bound to lead to administrative anarchy, civil war, etc. The interests of British trade, therefore, required that Britain rule India.[23]

III

According to the British writers, the second major factor of development in India was the growth of foreign trade. In fact, among the purely economic factors, promotion of foreign trade was seen as the chief instrument for developing India. Here, again, John Stuart Mill had provided the theoretical approach. He had laid down, in his *Principles of Political Economy,* that the Indian peasantry could produce much more than it did but had in the past lacked the stimulus

21 *Ibid.,* p. 87. Emphasis added.

22 Most of the writers cited in f.n.'s 34-9 made this point.

23 Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (1868), p. 531; Hunter, p. 97; Temple, p. 497; J.E.C. Bodley, *QR,* April 1890, p. 556; C.P. Lucas, Introduction to G.C. Lewis, *An Essay on the Government of Dependencies* (1891 ed.), liv.

to do so. It could not dispose off the surplus since, for various reasons, there did not exist a large town population. "The few wants and unaspiring spirit of the cultivators" in turn prevented them from consuming town products. Thus the vicious circle was completed. The best way of breaking this circle and initiating economic development was to promote the export of India's agricultural products like cotton, indigo, sugar and coffee. This would create a market for foodgrains within the villages and thus also promote their production. This process would create a rural market for manufactures which would not only increase import of European goods but also give incentive to manufacturing in India. The process of growth would have been initiated.[24]

Once again the British writers on India did not give the economic reasoning behind their statement that foreign trade promoted economic development but took it as a proven truth. Instead, most often, they offered the increase in foreign trade as a proof of economic growth, increase of exports proving that production was increasing and increase of imports that the purchasing power of the people was growing.[25] But some of them did echo the notion that the peasant in India did not produce as much as he could because of the inability to sell the surplus and that, therefore, exports of agricultural produce promoted production of old as well as new agricultural products.[26] A few writers also put forward the theory of comparative costs that foreign trade promoted growth by enabling India to harness its economic resources better by exporting goods which it produced best and getting in return cheaper industrial goods.[27]

It may be noted that none of the British writers on India reflected the contemporary questioning, even in Britain, of the value of free trade for an unindustrialised country like India which wanted to develop modern industries. Already J.S. Mill had in his *Principles of Political Economy* defended the imposition of protective duties

24 Mill, pp. 121-2.

25 J. and R. Strachey, pp. 312, 316-7, 324. Also see, R.D. Mangles, *Ed.R;* Jan. 1864, pp. 100-01; "The Future of the British Empire," *WR,* July 1870, pp. 50-1; T. Maltby, *QR;* July 1866, p. 207; Hunter, pp. 122 ff.; Temple, pp. 309, 311, 316; "The Relation of Silver to Gold as Coin," *WR,* Jan. 1880, p. 136; W. Lee-Warner, *QR,* July 1881, p. 61; J. Strachey, pp. 155, 304.

26 Maine, p. 521; J. Strachey, p. 146. Also see Hunter, p. 125; Temple, p. 91; Fawcett, p. 61.

27 Temple, p. 91; M.E. Grant Duff, *CR,* Jan. 1887, pp. 17-8.

if the aim was to enable a new industry to rise in a country to which it might be quite suited but where the private entrepreneur might not be willing to bear the initial expenses of free competition with imports.[28] This infant industry-protection principle was supported by Professor Henry Sidgwick, who extended it to support protection even where the aim was to prevent an undesirable change in the existing pattern of production, and Professors Alfred Marshall and F.Y. Edgeworth.[29] Moreover, many British statesmen, *e.g.*, Randolph Churchill,[30] were now attacking free trade even in Britain and arguing for 'fair trade' or some forms of retaliatory protection.[31]

The British writers on India also did not at any stage make any distinction between different patterns of economic development that might be, or were being, encouraged by different patterns of growth of foreign trade.

IV

In view of the driver's role assigned to foreign trade in pushing economic growth, it was inevitable that railways would be looked upon as the second major economic factor in the process. The British writers repeatedly pointed out that the growth both of exports and imports and therefore the development of both agriculture and industry depended on railways. The discussion of this topic had of course been virtually exhausted in the pre-1858 period and the role of railways as an active agent of economic development was by now taken for granted. John and Richard Strachey well summed up the accepted position:

> Improvement in the material conditions of the people of India ... is to be obtained only through an accumulation of wealth

28 Mill, p. 922.

29 H. Sidgwick, *The Principles of Political Economy* (1883), Book III, Chapter V; A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (8th ed., London 1925), p. 465; F.Y. Edgeworth, *Economic Journal*, 1894.

30 Robert Rhodes James, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (1959), p. 138.

31 It is of interest to note that neither this view nor Fabianism found much of an echo among British officials of the time, while Utilitarianism had earlier found such ready advocates in India. This clearly shows that ideas prevailing in Britain could influence British Indian policy makers and officials only when they subserved in some respects the structure of imperialism in India.

> accompanying a steady development of the foreign trade. The means of accomplishing this are obvious and quite within our reach.... These means lie, as this volume seeks to establish, in an intelligent extension of the great public works which the country requires, whereby will be ensured its future well-being, and the continued prosperity of its finances.[32]

No writer of the imperialist school expressed any doubt that railways might fail to generate economic development. At the same time, no one examined the relation of industrial development to railways in India or to the strategy of their construction. In fact no other aspect of the impact of railways on Indian economy except that on foreign trade and agriculture was examined.

Along with the railways most of the British writers also laid emphasis on irrigation as a means of improving agriculture.[33] We, however, miss any consciousness of the fact that irrigation was not being developed adequately in terms of either economic needs and possibilities or total financial expenditure of the government. Nor were patterns of irrigation, their linkage with patterns of agricultural growth, and the harmful consequences of certain patterns of irrigation development examined.

V

Increasingly, after 1858, the British writers placed their hopes for the development of India on the application of foreign capital. India, it was said, had plenty of land (and resources) and labour but lacked capital which was precisely to be found in abundance in Britain. The coming era of the rapid development of India after 1858 was proclaimed basically on the expectation that British capital would be invested in India on a large scale.

Once again John Stuart Mill had given the lead. He had written that among the basic deficiencies in an Asian country was lack of internal capital and, therefore, one of the basic requirements of

32 J. and R. Strachey, p. 429. Also *Ibid.*, ix, pp. 3, 7, 86, 105, 401-02; R.D. Mangles, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1864, p. 118 ff.; John Clark Marshman, *QR*, July 1868, p. 77; Fawcett, p. 61; Maine, pp. 491-2; A. Marshall, *Principles*, p. 225.

33 Hunter, pp. 98-9, 159; J. and R. Strachey, p. 105 ff.; Maine, p. 491; Temple, p. 263; J. Strachey, p. 171 ff.

growth there was "the importation of foreign capital, which renders the increase of production no longer exclusively dependent on the thrift or providence of the inhabitants themselves."[34] Professors Fawcett and Marshall reiterated that a major barrier to India's economic growth was shortage of internal capital which could be made up only by foreign capital. In fact, this was to become—and remains to this day—one of those economic dicta to question which was tantamount to revealing the bankruptcy of one's economic thinking if not one's ignorance of economics itself. Many other British writers on India expressed this view in much more exuberant terms. Thus a writer declared in the *Westminster Review* of January 1868:

> And if English capital, English intelligence, and English enterprise were applied fully to develop the untold and inexhaustible treasures of this teeming land which has been given into our hands, the imagination fails to realise the wonderful results which might be achieved.[35]

Earlier, in 1864, R.D. Mangles had said:

> Happily, all that India needs beyond the essential elements of wise legislation and general good government, for the prompt and complete development of her vast natural resources —namely, English capital, enterprise, and energy—can be supplied with equal benefit to both countries.[36]

William Lee-Warner wrote in 1881:

> The resources of the country in raw material and labour are enormous, and nothing is wanted but capital to develop new industries. As soon as English capitalists can realize the field of profitable investment which India offers, a turning-point will be reached in Indian history.[37]

34 Mill, pp. 189-90.
35 *WR*, pp. 222-3.
36 *Ed.R*, Jan. 1864, p. 98.
37 *QR*, July 1881, pp. 61, 78. Also his article in *QR*, July 1883, pp. 248, 250.

In 1887, M.E. Grant Duff described British capital investment as "the first condition necessary for improving a country which is, after all, only half-civilised."[38] And, in 1899, Lord Curzon called it "a *sine qua non* to the national advancement" of India.[39]

These writers did not see any disadvantage in the use of foreign capital; and some of them explicitly denied that the export of profits of foreign enterprises constituted drain of wealth for, they argued, the profits came out of the income which foreign capital had generated.[40]

While emphasising the developmental role of foreign capital for India, many of the writers pointed out at the same time the advantages to Britain of the availability of a highly profitable field of investment for its surplus capital. In his *Principles of Political Economy,* J.S. Mill had argued that export of capital to colonies or foreign countries raised the rate of profit inside Britain by making domestic capital scarce and by enabling the import of cheaper goods, food, and raw materials which it helped produce abroad.[41]

At the very beginning of our period, an anonymous writer in the *Westminster Review* of July 1862 dealt with the subject at length. In the article "English Rule in India," he set out to answer the question: apart from commerce "what is the most widespread national advantage which *England* may reap from her governmental connection with India?" England was, according to him, "emphatically a producer of *new capital* year by year; she greatly needs profitable investments." Low rates of interest and profit were keeping people from saving. Yet, unlike commerce, foreign investment was difficult in "any country which is under a foreign country" for there were numerous impediments and dangers. Especially there was "the dread of foreign agents and law courts and hostile governments." There also existed the difficulty of finding out what investments were safe. The problem of disposal of surplus capital had hitherto not become acute because of investments in the U.S.A. But the Civil War was likely to retard flow of British capital to that country. Here,

38 *CR,* January 1887, p. 15.

39 *Speeches,* Vol. I (1900), p. 34. Also see "English Rule in India," *WR,* July 1862, p. 138; J. and R. Strachey, pp. 404, 425; Temple, p. 106.

40 J. and R. Strachey, p. 405; Temple, p. 88; J. Strachey, pp. 159-60.

41 Mill, pp. 738-9. For fuller discussion, see pages 724-39. For similar views by Bentham, Wakefield, and Torrens, see Winch, pp. 33, 77-81, 87.

India could save the situation. Already the Indian Government had helped by enticing investments into Indian railways by the guarantee system. But the prospects for British capital in India were unlimited:

> India is a field almost unlimited, offering prodigious rewards to judicious enterprise and may for a long time take up for use all that Englishmen can lend her, as well as all that she can produce herself. From the density of her population, the profit resulting from great works is higher than can accrue in new colonies; also the nature of her climate, if only irrigation be afforded, puts her on a par with the possessors of a virgin soil.

In fact, believed the author, India was ideally fitted to be England's hinterland. The U.S. hinterland had given that country two economic benefits: "new 'homesteads' for their population—and a perpetual spring of profitable returns from any possible amount of new capital. Of these two benefits, India can give us the latter." He took this comparison further and claimed that once English capital started flowing into India, not only would India "rise into unprecedented prosperity, but it is possible that the 'proletarians' of England will have the means of vying in prosperity with the workmen of the United States."[42]

Others after him often made the same point.[43] And towards the end of our period, Lord Curzon said:

> Other channels of investment, outside of India, are gradually being filled up, not merely by British capital, but by capital of all the wealth-producing countries of the world; and if this be so, then a time must soon come when the current of British capital, extruded from the banks between which it has long been content to meander, will want to pour over into fresh channels, and will, by the law of economic gravitation, find its way into India, to which it should be additionally attracted by the security of British institutions and British laws.[44]

42 *WR*, July 1862, pp. 136-8.

43 R.D. Mangles, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1864, p. 96 ff.; "The Future of India," *WR*, July 1870, pp. 63-5; Temple, p. 496; Herbert Taylor, *CR*, March 1881, p. 476; C.P. Lucas, p. *l*.

44 *Speeches*, Vol. III (1904), p. 134.

A corollary of the view discussed above was the belief that British rule over India must be permanent, and be believed to be permanent, to attract and secure British capital. Thus, as early as 1868, John Clark Marshman wrote that "fifty-nine thousand proprietors of stock and debentures have acquired a direct interest in the prosperity of our Indian administration, and in the permanence of our rule."[45] Similarly, Richard Temple wrote in 1880 that among the reasons why "England, then, must keep India" was "because a vast amount of British capital has been sunk in the country, on the assurance of British rule being, humanly speaking, perpetual."[46] This view was quite widely expressed.[47] It may, in fact, be suggested that it was responsible for the growth of the imperialist reaction in India after the 1870's and the exhaustion of the liberal impulse of the mid-Victorian era.

In spite of their emphasis on foreign capital as an instrument of economic development, none of the British writers of the period noticed that actual British capital investment in India was rather small and, if guaranteed investments in railways and public debt were excluded, virtually negligible, or that even of this capital very little had gone into modern industries.[48] There was consequently no discussion of the economic reasons why British enterprise and capital did not move into India on a larger scale. Such a discussion might have led to the discovery of some of the real reasons for India's underdevelopment in place of the contemporary shibboleths like shortage of internal capital and lack of indigenous enterprise. After all India was ruled by Britain and was open to British capitalists who lacked neither capital nor enterprise.

45 *QR*, July 1868, p. 48.

46 *Temple*, p. 497.

47 "The Future of the British Empire," *WR*, July 1870, pp. 64-5; A.H. Haggard, *CR*, Aug. 1883, p. 267; Goldwin Smith, *CR*, April 1884, p. 526; G. Baden-Powell, *CR*, Oct. 1886, p. 499; M.E. Grant Duff, *CR*, Jan. 1887, p. 15; Maine, p. 486. Grant Duff is, in fact, quite quotable: "Unless the British Parliament pooh-poohs the suggestions which are made by many well-meaning individuals in favour of moving in the direction of Indian Home Rule, the many million pounds we have lent to India will not be worth, in the long-run, as many million pence."

48 According to Sir George Paish, British capital in India and Ceylon amounted to 365 million pounds in 1909. Of this only 2½ million were invested in commercial and industrial undertakings. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Part II, Jan. 1911, p. 180.

Similarly, there was no recognition of the fact that even the foreign-owned capital in India was not imported from Britain but was generated within India and that India was throughout this period a net exporter of capital.[49]

While emphasising the role of foreign capital, the British writers ignored the problems of the utilization of internal capital. Instead of asking what happened to internal capital, or examining the pattern of its utilization, or discussing the reasons why it was not being utilised productively, the notion—which is current to this day—was popularised that India lacked internal capital.[50] As pointed out earlier, nearly all the writers including J.S.Mill and Alfred Marshall held this view.

VI

One of the main features of the period under study was the breakdown of the existing British theories of agricultural development and agrarian relations and the failure to evolve any alternative theories or ideas. In fact, not even an attempt in that direction was made, either at the level of ideas or that of practice. Increasingly, the tendency was to live from hand to mouth. Often, the old ideas were reiterated at the theoretical level, their incapacity or inapplicability at the operational level was recognised, and *ad hoc* solutions were suggested.

The British administrators had remodelled Indian agrarian relations after 1790 on the theory that the right of land ownership or private property in land, whether in the hands of the zamindars or the ryots, combined with competition and free transferability of the right would lead to application of capital to land, *i.e.*, inputs of capital and technology; and this combination of land, labour, and capital would, along with the incentive to improve which ownership gives, lead to agricultural growth. At the same time, the land of improvident, ignorant, and lazy owners would be bought by those who were thrifty, industrious, and skilful. Thus gradually India would become the land of 'the improving landlord' and 'the efficient

49 Cf. L.H. Jenks, *The Migration of British Capital to* 1875 (London, 1927).

50 Richard Temple, though accepting the notion that Indians did not have enough capital, did try to answer the question: what happened to indigenous capital? But his analysis contained little economic reasoning. See pp. 93-7.

farmer'. The government gain would come from the security of land revenue which private ownership of land and its saleability would ensure and from the increase in revenue which agricultural growth would make possible.

Actual developments did not bear out these expectations. As a combined result of various factors—disruption of the existing industrial pattern, failure of modern industrial growth and the consequent pressure on land, lack of avenues other than landlordism and money-lending for capital investment, administrative and judicial structure, the weight of traditional agrarian structure in several areas, the high pitch and rigidity of land revenue demand, the failure of government to take positive measures of agricultural improvement like provision of cheap credit—what came into existence was a caricature of the earlier designs, backward agriculture, though with expansion in area under cultivation, and regressive agrarian relations with rack-rented tenancy and sub-infeudation increasingly coming to dominate both the zamindari and the ryotwari areas. The government made several abortive attempts to protect the ryot from oppressive landlords and extortionate money-lenders. These attempts provided occasions for the articulation of ideas on development of agriculture. These ideas were, however, still dominated by the old outlook.

So far as land revenue was concerned, the tendency was to deny that its pitch was high. Several writers also claimed that land revenue could not be a burden since it came out of the rental of land. The rigidity of land revenue was, however, often recognised as an evil.

In general, the belief prevailed that there was nothing basically wrong with Indian agriculture. There was satisfaction with the increase in area under cultivation believed to be from 50 to 100 per cent since 1820.[50a] No claims were made for technological improvements and some fears of exhaustion of the soil were expressed, but even here increase of irrigation facilities was believed to be a positive factor.[50b] But the main reason for optimism was the belief that as a result of growth in exports and the consequent commercialisation of agriculture, Indian agriculture had abandoned the 'stationary

50a Hunter, pp. 98, 116; J. and R. Strachey, p. 16; Temple, pp. 82, 105, 230; Fred J. Atkinson, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Part II, June 1902, pp. 215-20, 269.

50b See f.n. 33 above.

stage' to which Mill had assigned it and traditional Indian economy and entered the modern stage of change, modernisation, and growth.[51] In fact, it was believed that some of its troubles regarding landlord-tenant relations and transfer of land to money-lenders sprang from this modernisation and should be seen as the inevitable temporary dislocation in the transition from a lower to a higher stage.[52]

Strained zamindar-tenant relations and the spread of rural indebtedness leading to transfer of land to non-cultivating classes drew government attention to the agrarian problem throughout the period. But the focus of discussion was confined to the political and administrative dangers involved in agrarian unrest and, to some extent, to broad sympathy for the peasant as the victim of rack-renting landlords and usurious, 'blood-sucking' money-lenders. The implications of the developing pattern of agrarian relations for economic development in general and for agricultural growth in particular evaded attention. In fact, as pointed out earlier, the entire discussion around the remedial measures was carried on within the older framework of thought. No new theory of land tenures or agrarian relations was evolved. The system of zamindari and landlordism, and the mechanism of land transfers, was considered economically and politically essential and inevitable. Only transition to it, it was believed, might be made less painful. This view was, of course, consistent with the notion that Indian economy as well as agriculture were being rapidly modernised and brought into the main stream of world economic development.

Typical of the British thinking on tenancy reforms were the ideas of A.C. Lyall, who was a major confidant of Lord Dufferin during whose viceroyalty the pattern of tenancy legislation was laid, and who was later a member of India Council from 1887 to 1902. The genesis of the conflict between zamindars and tenants, he wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1884, lay in the march of modern economic forces: the progress of trade and agriculture, transition from customary rents to variable contractual rents, and changes in the conditions of supply and demand of land due to increase in population. Moreover, "since peace and security have increased the profits of land, and have guaranteed the safe investment of capital, the rich and enterprising classes are striving, as they have always

51 Hunter, p. 121 ff.; A. Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, pp. 28-9.
52 A. Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, pp. 28-9.

done elsewhere, to acquire the land in single unfettered ownership." But "this transition presses hard on the old-world cultivator" whose rent tends to rise, and leads to government's concern for his welfare. In Upper India, the government had by legislation checked "the efforts of proprietors to get rid of tenant right." The result, "*like anything that retards the rate and mitigates the effect of inevitable but unpopular changes,* has been very salutary." The government now, by its projected legislation, proposes to regulate by law the terms of contract between the landlord and the tenant. The situation is interesting for two reasons: "no attempt to define and regulate by state ordinance the proper relations" between landlords and tenants "has ever yet known to succeed"; and the situation in India is unique in so far as "*the old-fashioned landlords and ryots, often equally improvident and thriftless...are survivals of a period suddenly arrested by the political cataclysm of English rule in India: the modern landlord, the capitalist, the competition for holdings among a rising set of frugal, industrious peasants, are the new* elements brought in by the flood." Thus, the change is inevitable. But the Government of India's role in transforming India and its position in the country are such that it has to interpose to "*aid and superintend the inevitable processes of transition.*" Moreover, it is our moral duty "to endeavour to protect the weak." At the same time we should be cautious and guard against the tendency "to take too much upon ourselves, and assume responsiblity for *economical symptoms that are probably inseparable from the pains and labour of a country's new birth.*" It should also be remembered that, "legal devices for preserving landlords do not always fit in very neatly with plans for protecting tenants; and no restrictive measures of this kind are easily accommodated with the improvement of agriculture and the periodic adjustments of our land revenue." Such regulatory efforts check the influx of capital as well as hamper the efforts of revenue officers to determine the real rental of land for purposes of fixing land revenue. At the same time, "the attempt to reconcile farming classes and to alleviate the hardships of changing times is justifiable."[53]

Lyall realised that his analysis had not succeeded in reconciling the effort at tenancy legislation with the officially accepted theory of agricultural growth. And so he ends his analysis by confessing: "But the government does not appear yet to have disentangled its

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 28-34. Emphasis added.

different lines of policy with regard to the land, or to have definitely laid out its own course amid the conflict of different ends and interests."[54]

Though no other writer discussed the landlord-tenant relations at this length, the general tendency was to look upon the existing relations either as basically satisfactory, though permitting of some improvement,[55] or as incapable of radical change, even if unsatisfactory from the tenant's point of view.[56] Most of the writers merely ignored the question.

One reason why the British writers offered no radical alteration in landlord-tenant relations was their belief that zamindars and other landowning classes were an essential political base of British rule as their very existence depended on its stability.[57]

The British writers also fully recognised the harmful effects the growing rural indebtedness and the resulting rapid transfer of land into the hands of non-cultivating money-lenders were having on peasant's welfare and the political stability of the regime. But once again there occurred a clash between remedial action and the theories of the role of money-lender in the economy and of the growth of indebtedness and land transfers. The prevalent British view of the process of rise of indebtedness was something like the following:

> The government had by limiting and fixing for long periods its demand for land revenue created a surplus in the hands of the landowners (or, as sometimes expressed in Ricardian terms, left a part of the economic rent with them),[58] thus giving value to land. This combined with the right to sell or transfer land had

54 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

55 Hunter, p. 224 ff.; C.W. McMunn, *CR*, Jan. 1890, p. 82 ff. Radical steps for the protection of the actual cultivators rather than the occupancy tenant-cum-middlemen and for the buying out of 'the parasitic landlords' were sometimes made but by writers belonging to categories other than the one we are discussing here. See Florence Nightingale, *CR*, Oct. 1883, p. 596; and V. Nash, *CR*, Nov., 1900, p. 690.

56 J. Strachey, p. 333. He also adhered basically to the earlier theory of agricultural growth. See p. 262.

57 Temple, p. 115; A. Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, p. 32; Hunter, p. 24; M.E.D. Prothero, *QR*, Oct. 1895, p. 446.

58 This was contrasted with the actions of previous rulers who, it was said, used to take the entire surplus, and sometimes even more.

> enabled them to borrow on land as security. At the same time, the untaxed surplus and security of property had made land ownership attractive to money-lenders and 'capitalists'. The economic development of India had increased this unearned surplus. And since the government had refused to skim it off, the value of land had increased as also the capacity of the peasant to borrow. The rapacious, intelligent, unscrupulous and usurious money-lender had taken advantage of this situation, and, aided by the thriftlessness of the peasantry, the defective administrative and judicial system, and the rigidity of the land revenue demand, piled up the heavy burden of debt and was busy taking possession of the land.[59]

This view automatically led to two conclusions: either the government should sweep into its coffers the entire economic rent, including the unearned income, in order to save the peasant from himself; or take such strong action against the money-lenders as to virtually make illegal the practice of money-lending as well as any transfer of rural land. The first alternative, though theoretically and financially attractive and a good argument against those who blamed high land revenue demand for backwardness of agriculture, was never put forward for administrative action, obviously because of its political impracticability.

Any version of the second choice would tend to leave the peasant creditless. At this stage, another popular view entered the situation. It was believed that in spite of his many-sided villainies the village *sowcar* performed a necessary and useful function, that he was in fact indispensable to rural economy. He enabled the ryot to survive during the bad seasons, thus also saving the government the expense of providing relief, provided the ryot with capital for necessary agricultural operations, and made it possible for him to pay the land revenue on time, thus saving the government from financial embarrassment and the landowner from summary sale of his land by the government. Non-alienation of land or any similar step would by restricting credit harm the peasant himself and would

59 For detailed discussion, see W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, April 1879, pp. 380-92. Different aspects of this view are brought out in *WR*, Jan. 1880, p. 196; W. Broadfoot, *QR*, Oct. 1897, p. 558; Hunter, p. 146; Temple pp. 221-2; L. Ashburner, *WR*, Jan. 1898, p. 65; S.S. Thorburn, *Problems of Indian Poverty* (1902), p. 9 ff.

merely force him to borrow under severe conditions. It would also check all fresh application of capital to land.[60]

Nor could these writers abandon the notion that on economic grounds transfer of land was essential for agricultural growth for it would lead to growth of capitalist agriculture. As W. Lee-Warner put it:

> A process of natural and gradual decay, of debt sinking into bankruptcy, and of bankruptcy beating the fruit of eviction, may produce a healthier readjustment of rural society. It cannot be denied that the transfer of property from ignorance, improvidence, and sloth, into the hands of thrift, industry, and skill, will be beneficial. Even the evicted peasantry, who now view the process with discontent and alarm, will gain by their freedom from the wreck of their encumbered estates. As free labourers they will at least recommence a new financial and moral existence and may in process of time recover what they have lost. In any case a more healthy tone will be infused into the relations which subsist between land and capital, when the risk and waste, which attend debts contracted by men who can never repay them, are eliminated from the loan market.[61]

It was, however, felt by many that something had to be done, for the transfer of land from cultivating to non-cultivating, from 'war-like' to 'un-warlike' classes, and this was creating discontent and could prove politically disastrous leading to active revolt.[62] But in view of their economic understanding, the only steps these writers could suggest were ameliorative which would let the money-lender function but which would prevent him from being very oppressive. Such steps were regulation of interest rates, checks on the unscru-

60 W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, April 1879, pp. 390, 395; *WR*, Jan. 1880, p. 196; Temple, pp. 116-7; W. Broadfoot, *QR*, Oct. 1897, p. 559; F.C. Channing, *Economic Review*, Oct. 1900, p. 456.

61 *QR*, April 1879, p. 391. For detailed discussion, also see *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 383-4, 394-6, 401. Also see A. Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, pp. 32-3; Hunter, p. 162.

62 W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, April 1879, p. 377 ff.; A Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, p. 33; W. Broadfoot, *QR*, Oct. 1897, pp. 558-9. Also see M.E.D. Prothero, *QR*, Oct. 1895, p. 446 ff.; and L. Ashburner, *WR*, Jan. 1898, pp. 65-6.

pulousness of the *sowcar*, and reform of the judicial machinery.[63]

VII

In view of the basically optimistic view of the current economic development and of its future prospects, the British writers of the imperialist school did not pay sufficient attention to the factors which were hampering or which might hamper growth. However, some discussion of the retarding factors did take place though it was mixed up with the discussion why Indians had a low standard of living.

We have already seen that shortage of internal capital was seen as a particular weakness; but it was seen more as a past failure than a present obstacle, since foreign capital was believed to be a ready substitute, and British rule was said to be increasing national wealth. The only major barrier to growth and welfare was held to be the rapidly increasing population which might any time run ahead of land,[64] though even here there were dissidents.[65] In view of their optimistic outlook, they did not generally tend to see Indian social institutions as major obstacles to growth.[66] The three aspects criticised sometimes were: the tendency to marry early and produce a large number of children intensified population pressure;[67] the thriftlessness and the pressure to spend extravagantly on social occasions led to low capital formation;[68] and their few wants, apathy, and lack of ambition and aspiring spirit left little incentive to exert and develop or little scope for growth.[69] This lack of attention towards the correlation between social backwardness and

63 W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, April 1879, p. 396 ff.; A. Lyall, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1884, p. 33; W. Broadfoot, *QR*, Oct. 1897, pp. 558-9.

64 Hunter, pp. 4, 42, 99, 133-4, 138 ff.; 146-7, 184-5; R. Giffen, *Economic Inquiries and Studies* (1904), Vol. II, pp. 18, 20, 230, 238; Maine, p. 518 ff.; W. Knighton, *CR*, Dec. 1880, p. 896; W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, July 1881, p. 55 ff.; M.E.D. Prothero, *QR*, Oct. 1895, p. 449; "The Development of India," *WR*, March 1888, p. 348. J.D. Anderson, *WR*, April, p. 456.

65 Temple, p. 80 ff.; J. Strachey, pp. 304-05.

66 Of course they wrote at length on Indian social evils in other contexts, e.g., social uplift or thriftlessness, etc., as a cause of indebtedness.

67 Hunter, p. 146; Maine, p. 519; S. Smith, *CR*, Dec. 1880, pp. 70-1.

68 Marshall, n. 29, p. 225.

69 Temple, p. 100; "The Development of India," *WR*, March 1888, p. 348.

growth is also explained by the widespread view that the old social values and patterns of living were breaking down and social life was being rapidly modernised under the impact of railways, modern education, British administration, etc.[70]

Apart from population, the only other major obstacle to growth noted by some of the British writers was India's incapacity to raise enough revenue to adequately finance the different agents of growth. This was in turn linked with the country's poverty. India just did not produce enough surplus above subsistence. As many of them put it, India had to maintain a modern administration out of Asiatic revenues and this hardly left any funds for other improvements.[71]

Some of the British writers also held that Indian progress appeared slow and that the standard of living of its people was by absolute standards low because of the extremely low economic base from which the British had to start the hauling-up operation.[72]

In any case, the general opinion was that British administration was doing all it could and that nothing was basically wrong with the government policy or with the institutional structure that had grown in India since 1757. But if any weaknesses remained, they were on the Indian side.[73] If anything, the British *Raj* had perhaps been guilty of modernising and improving India too fast. In fact, gradually a concensus was emerging that Britain should slow down the process of modernization to suit Indian conditions.[73a]

VIII

The dominant British view of the nature of British rule in India in its economic aspects continued to be characterised by notions

70 "English Rule in India," *WR*, July 1862, p. 121; W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, July 1881, pp. 62-3; Hunter, p. 32 ff.; Temple, Chapter VII.

71 Temple, pp. 447, 450; Hunter, pp. 167, 176, 182; A. Marshall, *Official Papers*, p. 290 ff.

72 Most of the British writers on India made this point. See, for example, Hunter, p. 135 ff.; John Adye, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1880, p. 89; "The Poverty of India," *WR*, Nov. 1887, pp. 999-1001, 1004; Curzon, *Speeches*, Vol. IV, p. 37.

73 See, for example, Hunter, pp. 184-5, 191; Temple, p. 493.

73a W. Lee-Warner, *QR*, July 1881, pp. 74-5; Temple, pp. 447, 450; A. Lyall, *QR*, April 1893, p. 316, *Ed.R*, Jan. 1897, pp. 12-3, M.E.D. Protthero, *QR*, Oct. 1895, p. 440; H.G. Keene, *WR*, April 1897, pp. 358-9.

of benevolence and trusteeship. Of course, British gains from India were freely acknowledged and even stressed in the course of controversy with the anti-imperialist publicists within Britain. The gains cited most often were: (i) expanding foreign trade in general with special emphasis on India as a market for manufactures and a source of raw materials; (ii) a field for British capital; (iii) a remunerative field of employment for British youngmen especially of the middle classes; (iv) employment for British shipping; (v) use of Indian army for imperial purposes; (vi) and lastly the fact that, unlike in other colonies, all these advantages cost Britain nothing. These gains were, however, held to be a part of the coincidence and mutuality of interests between Britain and India, and were not in any way to be seen as the guiding motives of British economic policies in India.

The model and ideas of economic development discussed above were tending to break down by the end of the 19th century. The famines during the years 1896 to 1900 were merely dramatic demonstrations of this breakdown. By the 20th century it was becoming difficult to hold on to these ideas the inadequacy of whose explanatory as well as innovating power had become apparent.[74] One could now either recognise that something was wrong with the existing British model of growth and set out to build a new one, or reiterate the old model, emphasise positive achievements, discover and stress the role of such internal social weaknesses as caste, joint family, character of the people and population, and point out that economic development is a lengthy process, particularly in Asian societies. British writers in the 20th century increasingly took up the second approach, gave up the 'grand design' of India becoming a great industrial power, and in general tended to abandon both optimism and economic rationality. At the same time, they continued to emphasise that their model of development of India as a colony was not only viable but that India's development was possible only if it remained a colony and followed the model. The Indian nationalists, on the other hand, joined by many anti-imperialist writers of

74 It is, of course, true that a great deal of historical writing still holds on to these ideas and this model. This is mainly because of the total reliance on contemporary official records and writings in the name of devotion to 'facts' and of the desire to avoid 'biases' which the use of 'sociological imagination' would involve. The result is a near total surrender before the 19th century official biases.

the West, adopted the first course; and in the process created a political economy of 19th century imperialism and put forward new ideas on how to develop the underdeveloped economies.

IX[74a]

The Indian nationalist writers too started out with a positive evaluation of British impact on India. They too hoped that the establishment of a centralised administration, security of person and property, importation of Western science, technology, capital, and economic organization, construction of railways and roads, linkage with the world market, and spread of modern ideas and culture would initiate a new era of economic modernisation and progress. But they soon began to notice that reality was not conforming to their hopes. They came to believe that not only was progress in new directions slow and halting but the country was economically regressing, that is, becoming more underdeveloped. Their economic ideas developed in the course of their efforts to find an answer to the question: why was the earlier promise not being realised, and what steps had to be taken to realise it?

Two basic aspects of the nationalist outlook may be noted at the outset.

The nationalists developed an integrated approach towards the problem of economic development. They did not accept that advances in isolated sectors like transport, trade, or area under cultivation could in themselves constitute development. All these were to be seen in their relationship to the economy as a whole. Different sectors of the economy must be balanced if they were to produce a healthy effect.

Secondly, they maintained that the core of economic development lay in rapid and modern industrialisation. Not every increase of wealth was development, they said. It was the potentiality for future growth or, as they put it, 'the power of production' that counted. They of course denied that nature had designed India to be in the main an agricultural country. To the contrary, they said, India had to industrialise or go under since land was here in short supply. They also favoured industrialisation for cultural, social, and political

74a The entire Indian section of the paper is based on the author's study cited above.

reasons. Regarding the last, the argument was that modern industry was precisely the force which could help unite the diverse people of India into a single national entity having common interests.

The nationalists, therefore, insisted on examining official policies regarding trade, transport, currency and exchange, tariffs, finance, and foreign capital in their relationship to this paramount aspect of industrialisation. For example, their definition of economic backwardness or underdevelopment was that it characterised a society in which industry played a minor role in the total economic life and most of whose labour force was devoted to agriculture. Hence, they condemned the destruction of India's handicraft industries and the failure of new modern industries to rise in their place. They also believed that in spite of the absence of modern industry, the balance between industry and agriculture in India at the beginning of British rule was more favourable than in the second-half of the 19th century. Since this balance was not very different from the one prevailing in the rest of the world, and if the development of modern industries in Britain and Europe since then was taken into consideration, India had in fact regressed and become more underdeveloped or rather had now become underdeveloped. In a way, the Indian nationalists were, therefore, perhaps the first to define economic underdevelopment in a modern scientific sense, for the 19th century British economists still talked of stationary and changing societies. This approach also led the nationalists to grasp that India's underdevelopment at the end of the 19th century was of recent origin and was not a mere carry-over of the traditional past. Furthermore, they recognised that the other aspect of this underdevelopment was foreign economic domination, whereby partial modernisation of the economy was used to serve colonial purposes. As Justice Ranade put it, India was looked upon by its rulers as "a plantation, growing raw produce to be shipped by British Agents in British Ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to the Dependency of British merchants to their corresponding British firms in India and elsewhere."[75]

X

First of all, the nationalists tried to correlate British economic

75 *Essays*, p. 99.

policies in India and the factors of growth which British writers believed were leading to growth with the actual course of economic development. They also analysed the capacity of these factors to retard or advance growth.

So far as foreign trade was concerned, they denied that its growth in itself constituted economic progress or could trigger off economic development. To them, what was important was not the volume of foreign trade but its pattern—the nature of goods exchanged—and its impact on domestic income, industry and employment. Once again, they drew attention to the overwhelming bias of exports towards raw materials and of imports towards manufactured goods.

Far from being an index of prosperity or an agent of growth, increasing imports of manufactures, they believed, were injuring domestic industry. Instead of supplementing and adding to indigenous manufactures and giving birth to new wants and new industries, imports of manufactures were displacing indigenous hand-made goods and preventing the rise of modern industry. As G.S. Iyer put it: "In India international exchange did not supplement and perfect domestic exchange, it substituted for the latter and, therefore, annihilated it."[76] Increasing imports were therefore making India, and keeping it, an agrarian appendage of Britain. At the same time, the nationalists welcomed the import of machinery, metals and raw materials.

They also rejected the notion that increasing exports of raw materials were beneficial, for, in their view, they represented the increasing drain of wealth, or unilateral transfer of capital, and payment for the increasing imports. They represented ruralisation of the country and its economic exploitation. Moreover, even the direct benefits of the export of agricultural products did not reach the cultivator; they were skimmed off by the merchant, moneylender, landlord, and the government. On the other hand, the resulting rise in prices left the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers worse off.

The Indians also complained of another abnormal feature of India's foreign trade. Its control was in foreign hands and therefore its profits leaked out.

The Indians were of course not autarkists or opposed to the

76 *Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India* (1903), p. 357.

growth of foreign trade as such. They, however, demanded that this growth should be 'natural', that is, based on the economic needs of the country and on equality and mutual advantage. They wanted the needs of economic development in general and of industry in particular to determine the extent, nature, and direction of foreign trade.

The nationalists also favoured protection on the infant industry principle and on the ground that indusrty was superior to agriculture for it represented increasing returns. They did not deny the validity of the theory of comparative costs but they opposed the use of this theory and free trade based on it to freeze the existing pattern of division of labour between India and Britain. In fact, more than any other single factor, it was the tariff policy of the Government of India which convinced Indians that British policies in India were basically guided by the interests of the British capitalist class.

XI

Indian nationalists also denied that the railways automatically led to economic development. While acknowledging the other usual benefits of the railways, they noted that their construction had not led to industrial growth. Instead, they had facilitated penetration of the Indian market by foreign goods and thus tended to perpetuate and extend the existing economic backwardness. The benefits of railway construction both in terms of their impact on industry and side-effects in terms of finance and encouragement to steel and machine industry had been reaped by Britain. In terms of recent terminology, the nationalist view was that the railways served as a social overhead not for Indian but British industry and their external economies were exported back to Britain. In fact, remarked G.V. Joshi guaranteed interest on the railways should be seen as Indian subsidy to British industry. Or, in the words of Tilak, it was like "decorating another's wife."[77]

As an alternative policy, the Indians held that railway construction should be coordinated with the economic needs of India. The problem here was that of the best utilisation of scarce financial resources. Clearly, they said, India was more in need of industries and increase

77 G.V. Joshi, *Writings and Speeches* (Poona 1912), pp. 687-8; Tilak, quoted in Ram Gopal, *Lokamanya Tilak* (Bombay, 1956), p. 145.

of agricultural production than transport facilities; and, under Indian conditions, the best way to encourage the former was to do so directly and not indirectly by extending railways. Even the railways would become useful only if industries were rising and growing alongside them. They, therefore, demanded that the state aid being given to the railways should be diverted to industry and irrigation and future railway extension should be coordinated with the growth of Indian trade and industry. The nationalist position was summed up by G.V. Joshi in 1884: "Simultaneously with these facilities of transport, the state should have provided proper economic conditions of varied industrial life in the country, which alone would have enabled it to turn this advantage to national account."[78]

The nationalists also asked the question: why did the government put so much emphasis on railway construction? Their answer was that it wanted to open the Indian market to British manufactures, enable the export of raw materials and foodstuffs, promote the sale of British steel and machine products, provide a channel for investment of surplus British capital, and facilitate the movement of the armed forces.

XII

The nationalists were for long confused and divided in their attitude towards foreign capital. But gradually almost all of them with the exception of M.G. Ranade came to oppose it rather vehemently. Ranade emphasised the role of foreign capital as a supplement to scarce internal capital, and as an example and a stimulant to indigenous enterprise. Other Indians disagreed. They believed that instead of encouraging indigenous capital, foreign capital replaced and suppressed it and made its future growth more difficult. It led to further foreign domination and control of Indian life. Moreover, foreign enterprises had virtually no positive side or indirect effects for they exported most of their economic benefits. Not only were the high profits exported but a large part of the salary bill was paid to the foreign employees who in turn exported most of their income. Nearly all the technical and managerial posts were occupied by foreigners who eventually retired and left the country. So India did not receive even technical know-how as a by-product. In fact, the

78 Joshi, n. 77, p. 696.

nationalists said, there were hardly any positive effects of foreign capital investment in India so far as economic development was concerned. Their only contribution was the creation of some additional employment. But then the unskilled Indians in foreign-owned plantations, mines, etc. were paid at abysmally low rates of wages. "They simply acted", said Dadabhai Naoroji, "as mere slaves, to slave upon their own land, and their own resources in order to give away the products to the British capitalists."[79] In other words, foreign capital in Indian conditions was not developing the country but exploiting it.

Even so the nationalists confined their particular objection to foreign capital investment in trade, banking, railways, and extractive and plantation industries; they raised no objection to such investment in jute and cotton textile industries.

They also noted that foreign capital in India did not represent an addition to scarce internal capital through the import of foreign funds. It was Indian capital first drained out through trade, banking, and administrative mechanism and then returned in part as foreign capital. They noted that India had a net export surplus after all the foreign loans and investments had been accounted for in the net imports.

A corollary of their approach towards foreign capital was the refusal to accept the view that India could not be industrialised without foreign capital. On the contrary, they said, genuine economic development was possible only if Indian capitalists initiated and developed the process of industrialisation. Foreign capital was incapable of realising this task. On this point Ranade also agreed.

The nationalist writers also warned against the political consequences of foreign capital investment. Foreign capital, it was said, created vested interests which gradually wielded an increasing and dominating influence over administration. In a country which was already under foreign rule, this danger increased manifold for the investors demanded security and perpetuation of foreign rule. As G. Subramaniya Iyer's *Hindu* pointed out on 23 September 1889:

> Where foreign capital has been sunk in a country, the administration of that country becomes at once the concern of the

79 Speech at Portsmouth in *India*, 20 March 1903, p. 140.

> bond-holders... (if) the influence of foreign capitalists in the land is allowed to increase, then adieu to all chances of success of the Indian National Congress, whose voice will be drowned in the tremendous uproar of 'the empire in danger' that will surely be raised by the foreign capitalists.

But if foreign capital was required, said the nationalists, India should import only the capital and not the capitalists. They favoured loan capital as against entrepreneurial capital. While the latter reaped and carried away all the profits of enterprise and monopolized and appropriated 'the whole field', the former would be entitled only to fixed interest and even the principal could be gradually repaid.

We might in the end note that the point of view of the comprador was more or less entirely absent in the nationalist writing of the period.

XIII

Coming down to positive remedies, the two crucial factors which would, according to the nationalists, promote industrialisation and economic development were tariff protection and active state support. They were convinced that the Indian capitalist class being weak found it difficult to develop unaided, especially as it faced the uncertainties of a narrow market and an unchartered field. But they were equally convinced that it would respond positively if state support and protection were extended to it. The other side of the model, they said, was that the state in an underdeveloped country had the obligation to actively aid economic development. And the best way to help industry and agriculture was to do so directly.

Their case for tariff protection was made along the usual lines, as pointed out earlier. But the role of the state was delineated not only forcefully but even with some originality.[80] Following were some of the ways in which, they said, the state should help.

80 We may note that the Government of India's industrial policy after 1948 hardly went beyond the policy sketched by the early nationalists. Jawaharlal Nehru was no innovator in this respect, except that a programme which was described by the early nationalists as state-supported capitalism was described by him first as a mixed economy and later as the 'socialistic pattern'.

(1) Make up the lack of internal private capital through low interest loans to the entrepreneurs directly by the state or through finance corporations.
(2) Make up for the 'shyness' of the Indian capitalists by extending subsidies and by providing security to their enterprises by giving guarantees of minimum profit similar to those given to railway companies.
(3) Help mobilise scattered indigenous capital through the development of state-aided, directed, or controlled joint stock banks and other similar credit institutions.
(4) Organisation of state-run and financed agricultural credit banks.
(5) Help absorb foreign capital into Indian economy and shield indigenous capital from domination by it by importing foreign capital on its own account and then lending it to the local capitalists.
(6) Pioneer government-owned industries, when there was no hope of local capital venturing into a field. Joshi and Naoroji also suggested government operation of those industries which needed enormous foreign capital. In such circumstances, the state should borrow money abroad at low rates of interest on the security of its revenues and employ it to undertake public works, mining, industries, etc.
(7) Provide greater irrigation facilities.
(8) Purchase government and railway stores from Indian manufacturers.
(9) Collect and disseminate industrial and commercial information.
(10) Promote technical education.
(11) End the drain of capital.

XIV

Agrarian outlook of the Indian nationalists was the weakest link in the chain of their economic thinking. They had, of course, little difficulty in criticising the official land revenue policy based on a high rate of assessment, periodic reassessment, and a rigid system of collection. This policy, they believed, interfered with the full emergence

of private property in land and private investment in agriculture. The remedy lay in permanently limiting the state demand so that 'the magic of property' could operate freely in agriculture. The Indian understanding of the emerging agrarian problem did not, however, go beyond this vague generalisation, except for a few outstanding exceptions to be discussed later. Most of the Indians in fact failed to give importance to the new, emerging structure of agrarian relations, though they did express a vague humanitarian solicitude for the tenantry and the debt-ridden peasantry. At the same time an open espousal of the zamindar or landlord interests vis-a-vis the tenants was also rare.

A few Indians attacked the system of zamindari. This was true of the young Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and R.C. Dutt as well as Justice Ranade and Prithwis Chandra Ray. G.V. Joshi dealt critically with the emergence of landlordism in the Ryotwari areas. Similarly, the dominant section of the nationalists in Bengal, including the Indian Association and Surendranath Banerjea, adopted a radical pro-tenant stand during the controversy on the Bengal Tenancy Bill during the 1880's. A few Indians, for example the editors of the *Som Prakash* (24 July and 27 November 1881) and the *Indian Spectator* (2 October 1881), also demanded the abolition of the zamindari system.

A few of the Indian nationalists, and most of all Ranade, opposed the existing semi-feudal agrarian relations and advocated their complete restructuring on a capitalist footing. In this, Ranade was powerfully influenced by the Prussian land legislation. While favouring tenancy legislation as a short-term remedy to protect tenant interests, he believed that such legislation perpetuated the old pattern of agrarian relations, merely making it more complex, and sapping still further the initiative of both the zamindars and the tenants. He urged the governmnt to go in for 'radical reform' in place of mere tinkering by evolving clear-cut capitalist relations in agriculture, or, as he put it, establishing land relations based on 'individual and independent property'. His model of capitalist agriculture was two-pronged: the majority of the cultivators must be independent, small peasant proprietors, while at the top there should be a large class of capitalist farmers who would be, unlike the zamindars, complete owners of their land on the model of British landlords or the German junkers. He, therefore, advocated that the future

development of agrarian relations in India should be based on the creation of two basic agrarian classes which would live side by side: (a) a large petty peasantry which would be free of all encumbrances, whether of the state or the landlords, and which would be bolstered by a permanent and low land tax and the provision of cheap credit through agricultural banks; and (b) a large class of capitalist farmers and landlords who, being unhampered by any tenancy right, etc., would be in complete possession of their land and in a position to invest capital and utilise the latest advanced techniques of agriculture. This last class was to be brought into being by the transformation of the existing zamindars into capitalist landlords and by enabling the upper strata of the peasantry to acquire land and rise into the new status.[81]

G.V. Joshi, on the other hand, favoured small peasant farming which was to be maintained by vigorous tenancy legislation in both the ryotwari and the zamindari areas, availability of cheap credit, and a low land tax.[82]

Some of the prominent Indian nationalists also emphasised the close and vital link between the development of agriculture and the development of modern industry. The two must occur simultaneously; otherwise no effort towards mere agricultural development could succeed. The increasing pressure of population on agriculture would negate all such efforts. For example, so long as there was excessive competition for land no amount of legislation could protect the land-hungry tenants from rack-renting. Industry alone could syphon off the excess agricultural population and create conditions for agricultural development.

XV

So far as the question of the internal obstacles to economic development was concerned, the Indian nationalists once again tended to differ from the British views. They stoutly denied that the large population of India was one such obstacle. They denied that India was overpopulated or that its rate of population growth was high. Rather, what appeared to be overpopulation was the result of India's economic underdevelopment under British rule. Similarly, they sum-

81 Bipan Chandra, n. 4, 486 ff.
82 *Ibid.*, pp. 441-2.

marily dismissed the notion that the Indian people were thriftless, extravagant, or lazy.

The shortage of internal capital was seen as an obstacle to economic growth but this was not seen as an inherent characteristic of the Indian economy. There was, the Indians believed, plenty of potential capital in the country. The problem was that of its mobilisation and utilisation. At present this capital found uneconomic outlets in governmental expenditure, the 'drain' to Britain, hoarding, and uneconomic expenditure by the zamindars and princes. They also stressed the lack of modern credit institutions and the capitalist institution of joint stock enterprises.

Some of the social reformers among the nationalists emphasised the negative impact of the traditional social institutions such as the caste system and joint family, religious ideals, and customs and traditions. In particular, they bemoaned the absence of the spirit of enterprise in the land. The only remedy lay in the radical altering of the social institutions and social outlook of the people. The entire question did not, however, assume much importance in the nationalist economic thinking, writing, and agitation for reasons which I have discussed in some other place.[83]

XVI

All the time when criticising British economic policies or ideas and putting forth their own remedies, issue by issue, the nationalists asked the question: why did not the administrators recognise all this and follow correct policies? In every case, they found that one or the other British economic interest stood in the way, and that, most important of all, the interests of Indian industrial growth were invariably subordinated to the interests of British trade, industry, and capital. They gradually came to believe that British economic policies and ideas were closely related to the nature and character of British rule in India—that this rule's fundamental purpose was to make India serve dominant British economic interests, in other words, to enable economic exploitation of India.[84] As the young

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5.

84 This realisation made them take up positions as political economists. That is also why even though they controverted some of the basic propositions of the classical economists, their economic thinking was in line with the classical political economy. On the other hand, Alfred Marshall made hardly any impact on them.

intellectual, Sachidanand Sinha put it in 1903 in the *Indian People* of 27 February 1903:

> Their work of administration in Lord Curzon's testimony is only the handmaid to the task of exploitation. Trade cannot thrive without efficient administration, while the latter is not worth attending to in the absence of profits of the former. So always with the assent and often to the dictates of the Chamber of Commerce, the Government of India is carried on, and this is the 'White Man's Burden'.

The economic belief that British rule no longer promoted economic growth but was, in fact, now an obstacle in its path gradually led to the political conviction that an Indian government alone could create favourable conditions for economic growth. By 1905 the demand for self-government came to be raised by all the prominent nationalist economic writers and thinkers.

To sum up: The main theoretical contribution of the nationalist writers lay (a) in their analysis of the nature and economic mechanism of an imperialism which no longer functioned through the crude tools of plunder and tribute or mercantilism but operated through the more disguised and complex mechanism of free trade and capital investment; (b) their analytical conclusion that imperialism in its many guises was the main obstacle to economic development in India already by the end of the 19th century; and (c) in their grasping of the fact that economic development required a political system conducive to it. Their failure lay in the fact that they ignored the importance of the internal socio-economic structure, particularly the agrarian structure. Moreover, their entire economic thinking was done within the framework of a capitalist economic outlook. They never asked the question whether the Indian economy could develop along national capitalist lines even with government help in a period when it had been integrated into the world capitalist economy as a colony of British imperialism. While the former was to lead to a powerful national movement and a major economic effort after independence, the long range influence of the latter and the gradual erosion of the former view under the impact of narrow class interests was to make the Indian leadership of the post-nationalist era halt and falter in their effort and perhaps even to abandon it in the end. A significant

role in this erosion has been played by the post-independence abandonment of the theoretical outlook and method of the earlier nationalist leadership, by the uncritical acceptance by the post-independence leadership of some of the high-falutin, so-called modern economic theories which in the name of 'pure' and 'scientific' outlook drew attention away from the economic role of imperialism, the semi-feudal agrarian relations, and the close connection between state power and economic policy. But this is a line of enquiry which had perhaps be better left to the economists to pursue.

Bibliographic Note: The authorship of anonymous articles in the 19th century British periodicals is taken from the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, 1966.

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES IN INDIA: SOME REFLECTIONS ON GANDHI AND NEHRU

P.C.JOSHI

INTRODUCTORY

WHAT STRIKES any sensitive observer of the Indian scene today is the erosion of the unifying frame of reference evolved during the independence struggle and the early years of independence. The basic elements of this frame were a definite approach to the socio-economic problem and the path to be traversed for grappling with this problem. The quest for a new frame is very much on the agenda to-day, and a necessary part of this quest is a critique of the older frame which was evolved under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru.

It must be remembered that Gandhi and Nehru were the leading figures of Indian nationalism during the twentieth century. They made an outstanding contribution by imparting to the independence struggle not only a developmental consciousness, but also a developmental perspective. This perspective was a blend of brilliant diagnostic insights into the economic problem on the one hand and of fruitful suggestions for an operational strategy on the other. It can be said without much exaggeration that the thinking by Gandhi and Nehru on many-sided problems of development anticipated some aspects of discussion among social scientists on models and strategies of development in the later period. The developmental perspectives contributed by them were based on certain fundamentals which have great relevance for contemporary discussion on new perspectives. The basic elements of their approach can be identified as follows:

In the first place, both these leaders emphasised *innovation* rather than *imitation* in grappling with social and economic problems in

India. The call for mental independence implicit in their approach had great relevance in a period when the Indian elite—the product of Western education—had been swept off its feet by the Western impact. As a result it was prone to apply mechanically ideas and concepts largely valid for conditions in the West to the totally dissimilar conditions obtaining in India. While disapproving of the tendency of blind imitation of the West, Gandhi and Nehru also disapproved of the opposite tendency of blind rejection of everything Western which was displayed by the traditionalists. The right approach was embodied in Gandhi's classic statement reproduced below:

> I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any; I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.[1]

Gandhi and Nehru thus anticipated the conception of economic development as a creative enterprise based on the assimilation of the foreign experience on the one hand and deep insight into Indian problems and traditions on the other.

The second basic ingredient of the approach of Gandhi and Nehru was that they conceived of economic development as comprehensive social transformation involving both economic and non-economic dimensions. This approach anticipated the institutional theory of development propounded much later by Indian social scientists as distinguished from a narrow, technocratic conception of economic development.

The operational implication of this view of development as an all-round development was the emphasis on evolving many-sided programmes of structural change, institution-building and remoulding of values and attitudes.

As a corollary to this orientation, the idea of economic and social planning as a conscious and creative endeavour to solve the economic problem is implicit in Gandhi's approach while it constitutes a vital part of Nehru's thought-system. Another implication of the same view was the emphasis on creating social, cultural and political prerequisites of multi-class mobilisation for economic development.

1 Quoted in Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London, 1956), p. 367.

Lastly, the basic premise of the developmental approach of Gandhi and Nehru was *humanist* rather than *hedonistic*. They gave primacy to *man* and his all-round development rather than to *wealth* and its maximisation in all discussions on growth and development. Both Gandhi and Nehru were thus committed to the conception of an *optimum* rather than *maximum* rate of growth—an optimum which ensured man's emancipation from a state of material want but which also saved man from unbridled acquisitiveness, characteristic of capitalism. The humanist inspiration led both Gandhi and Nehru to search for an economic system and a pattern of economic development for India which did not accentuate exploitation of man by man, but which served as a means of curbing exploitation and promoting equity. Both Gandhi and Nehru rejected classical capitalism on the ground that it was incompatible with the interests of the overwhelming majority and with the demands of man's all round development. They did not also consider classical socialism as it had evolved in Russia to be an alternative which India could accept or emulate without reservations.

The search for a system appropriate to India's conditions and needs and compatible with value commitments indicated above was to be a continuing search for a Third Way in the light of experiences in different parts of the world and the experiments inside the country itself.

It is important to note that these fundamentals served not only as the basic framework for developmental thinking by Gandhi and Nehru. They also served as the unifying framework for Indian nationalism during the independence struggle and later during the period of national consolidation.

In this paper an attempt has been made to present in detail some aspects of the developmental perspectives which were evolved by Gandhi and Nehru. Even though proceeding from certain common premises, their respective perspectives were complementary in some respects but widely divergent in certain other respects. What were the areas of agreement and those of divergence between Gandhi and Nehru? How does one evaluate these perspectives in the light of the economic and social trends in India since 1947? What questions of Indian development underlying these perspectives are still relevant today? This paper presents the author's tentative thinking on these questions.

I

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AS INNOVATOR OF DEVELOPMENT MODELS

We begin first by focussing attention on the role of political leaders as innovators of developmental models in underdeveloped countries. The term model has been used in the sense of a 'grand view' of the inter-acting of economic, social, political and ideological factors in the process of economic development. It also implies an operational strategy of influencing these factors so as to give a conscious push to the process of economic transformation.

Economic development narrowly defined means the increase in the output of material goods and services per head of population. In the Western countries this increase was associated with vast changes in the economic structure—more significantly, with industrialisation or the shift from agriculture to non-agricultural pursuits and the conversion of traditional agriculture itself into a business enterprise.

This change in the economic structure was both preceded as well as followed by fundamental changes in the non-economic spheres which can be broadly characterised as the break-up of the mediaeval social order. The closed social system dominated by the economically sterile groups of the clergy and nobility, the authoritarian political system, the sway of religion over all types of thought processes were strong impediments to economic growth. The renaissance, the religious reformation, the commercial revolution and the political upheavals which were pioneered by the new social and economic classes of the Western societies shook up the mediaeval order at its roots and created the pre-conditions of a new order. They also paved the way for the release of productive forces and creative energies which first began in the shape of scientific and technological progress and the release of entrepreneurial initiative and later, through a confluence of several other factors, culminated in the Industrial Revolution. Economic development was, therefore, a part of a much wider social process—the process of change from a mediaeval, pre-industrial to a modern society—which was spread over several centuries. In short, economic change was the product as well as the propeller of change affecting society as a whole.

The Industrial Revolution in the West was a turning-point in

human history which left its impress on the history of other societies. The idea of economic development has since then been the central pre-occupation of the political elites of most countries. But while the goal of economic progress has emerged as a universal goal which most societies are striving to accomplish, the path to be traversed for this purpose by each society is in many respects unique for each society. The choice of the path is conditioned by the specific circumstances obtaining in each country. Thus while the idea of economic progress has acquired universal significance and while some of the crucial requirements of economic development are also universal in as much as they are dictated by the very logic and mechanics of development, the paths of development of different countries show a good deal of diversity. There was a time when the idea of economic progress was regarded as inseparable from the Western model of economic development. The emergence of non-Western models of economic revolution exploded the myth of the Western way as the only way of economic progress. Economic development is now, therefore, increasingly being associated not with a single model, but multiple models of development. In other words, each country has to discover, through trial and error, its own road to economic progress. Among the several roles which the political elite is called upon to perform in economic development in the underdeveloped countries, the most crucial one, on which the success of its other roles vitally depends, is that of the path-finder or the innovator of the model of development. The search for the model necessitates a battle of ideas and very often a political ferment. A telling example from past history is provided by the Great Industrialisation Debate and the power-struggle in the Soviet Union and from contemporary history by the current ideological and political upheaval in China.

II

DEVELOPMENT DEBATE : GANDHI'S VIEW

In India the Development Debate proceeded in the background of the nationalist struggle for independence. The context for the debate in the early period of Indian nationalism was provided by the confrontation between the dynamic West and the tradition-dominated and enslaved India. During this period the Indian

elite was broadly divided between the traditionalists and modernists. The traditionalists looked to India's past for inspiration and bemoaned the destructive effects of Western impact on Indian values and institutions. In contrast, the modernists accepted the basic superiority of modern Western culture. They were outspoken in their criticism of Indian institutions and values as barriers to progress. They made no secret of their admiration for Western institutions and values which in their view enabled the West to achieve unprecedented progress in scientific and material sphere. The modernists in this period thus identified economic and social progress with Westernisation, *i.e.*, with the Western model of development. In the economic sphere the modernist elite saw the prospect of progress only through vigorous industrialisation; even agricultural development was considered possible only *via* industrialisation. Moreover, in their opinion industrialisation was also precisely the key which would help unite the diverse peoples of India divided along the lines of caste, region and language into a great Indian nation.

The advocacy for industrialisation was also combined with a passionate appeal to the Indian people for imbibing the new spirit of the West, the spirit of capitalism and for adopting the Western way, the capitalist way of development. The propertied classes were to be the vehicle of this new spirit and, consequently, of economic progress. The traditional institutions had to give way and the State had to extend its helping hand in order to facilitate the transformation of the propertied classes into vigorous entrepreneurs. Any opposition to this course of change on egalitarian grounds was regarded by this elite as tantamount to opposing change and progress. Ranade, the foremost exponent of this view, believed that

> in all countries property whether in land or other goods, must gravitate towards that class which has more abstinence, and must slip from the hands of those who are ignorant, imprudent, and hopeless to stand on their own resources. This is a law of Providence. The utmost that Government can safely venture to do is to regulate this transfer, to temper the change so as to avoid all immediate hardships.[2]

2 Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 1966), p. 489.

From the above analysis it would be wrong to conclude that Ranade and other modernists were 'conscious' apologists of capitalism. On the contrary, they were only 'conscious' promoters of the national interest. The early phase of Indian nationalism, however, was coterminus with the ascendent phase of capitalism as an economic system in the West and the 'wealth of those nations' which appeared as the models of economic progress was identified with the capitalist path of development. Even Marx recognised the contribution of capitalism to economic progress and observed: "The industrially developed nations show to the underdeveloped countries the image of their own future."

The broadening of the social base of the national movements in the next phase gave a new content and direction to the thinking of the Indian elite. With the emergence of Gandhi in the leadership of political movement, the centre of gravity of nationalist thought shifted from the idea of economic progress to that of amelioration of the conditions of the masses. Concepts of Westernisation in general and economic progress in particular were central to the thought system of the early nationalist elite. Gandhi, on the other hand, made a distinction between material progress and moral progress. In his view, Western civilisation sacrificed moral progress at the altar of material progress; it even equated moral progress with material progress. He questioned the very basis and hence the superiority of Western civilization which in his view had accentuated the gulf between the elite and the masses, the rich and the poor and led to the suffering and misery of the masses. The obsession with material progress had also whetted the acquisitive and competitive spirit and thus led to the spiritual impoverishment of mankind.

Central to the Gandhian thought was, therefore, the rejection of Westernisation in general and the craze for material progress in particular. Gandhi understood economic development in terms of amelioration of the condition of the masses on the one hand and as subordinate to the demands of moral progress on the other. From this standpoint Gandhi tended to reject even the idea of large-scale industrialisation based on the modern machinery. He questioned the suitability of this course for India also in view of the predominantly rural character of the Indian society, the preponderance of self-employed small producers—peasants and artisans—in the occupapational structure and the existence of vast but under-employed and

unemployed manpower. Indian development, according to Gandhi, has to be envisaged, therefore, not on Western lines which had led to enormous problems and complications even in the West; it should instead be based on the principle of a balance between agriculture and small industry excluding the use of labour-saving modern technology and the maximum utilisation of the labour resources of the community. The latter pattern of development would be more effective in eliminating pauperism and in ameliorating the condition of the Indian masses; it would also save India from the dehumanising influence of an acquisitive and competitive capitalism.

Notwithstanding the critique of capitalism, Gandhi at least in the early stages was not categorical about the abolition of private property in the sphere of agriculture or industry. On the contrary, he believed in weaning away the propertied classes from the spirit of capitalism. He believed in the efficiency of the doctrine of trusteeship; in his view if men of property showed the spirit of benevolence and enlightenment as the *Samurai* of Japan had done, and if both the propertied and property-less classes realised the need of discipline and cooperation in the wider interests of the nation, private property would cease to be a source of social unrest, exploitation and tension and would become the basis of national development. In the later period of his life, however, there was a distinct change in Gandhi's ideas on the question of ownership of property. From an earlier position emphasising mere "regulation of relation between landlords and tenants,"[3] he shifted to the view that "land and all property is his who will work it."[4] The stress on 'economic equality,' on elimination of the hiatus between the rich and the poor as an inseparable part of the programme of economic development, also finds a central place in Gandhi's thought in the later period.

The other essential ingredients of Gandhian economic philosophy were the concepts of economic *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi* which had both a negative and positive content and had, therefore, very wide implications. In negative terms *Swadeshi* implied abandoning the habit and psychology of dependence on foreign countries for loans and assistance. It meant the voluntary withdrawal of support to cheap manufactures from foreign countries and the conscious encouragement to native industries and home-made goods. In positive terms

3 M.K. Gandhi, "Zamindars And Ryots", *Young India*, 18 May 1921.
4 N.K. Bose, *Selections From Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad, 1948), p. 95.

it implied the adoption of the hard road of self-reliance, of unrelenting mobilisation of the internal, material and human resources of the nation for the country's development. It also implied that the country should submit itself to the required suffering and sacrifice rather than fall for an easy way of development through foreign loans and assistance. In Gandhian terms the basis for self-reliant development can only be provided by sacrifice and austerity on a national scale.

Last but not the least important was the Gandhian insistence on the need for a new value system for the nation: the elite was to set an example before the masses of a new way of life based on the ideas of service, austerity and *karmayoga*, i.e., untiring activism without attachment to the fruits of action. In Gandhi's view no nation, least of all a nation under prolonged foreign domination, could go ahead unless the elite was fired with a sense of mission and a spirit of service, dedication and self-denial. Gandhi set the ideal of 'voluntary poverty' before the elite as the concrete expression of identification with the cause of the *Daridranarayan*. In other words, the non-material motivation had to be the motive force of any genuine programme of national development.

Thus Gandhi, the leader of the Indian elite in the second phase of Indian nationalism, contributed the key concepts of *Swadeshi*, service of the *Daridranarayan*, *Karmayoga* and voluntary poverty as the key concepts for Indian economic development.

III

DEVELOPMENT DEBATE: NEHRU'S VIEW

The thinking of the Indian elite during the subsequent phase of the national movement bears a distinct impress of important development within and outside India. Most significant among the internal developments was the orientation of the national movement in favour of the masses under Gandhi's leadership as a consequence of which mass awakening and movement had assumed a great political significance. Foremost among the external developments was the rapid progress which the Soviet Union was making through economic planning and which began to make a distinct impact on the thinking of the dynamic elements of the Indian elite. This new economic

experiment seemed to capture the sensitive among the elite specially in the thirties, in the same way as the Industrial Revolution in the West had done during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The Soviet experiment seemed to provide the key to rapid development without the social cost and consequences associated with economic growth under capitalism. The Indian elite tried to evolve a new approach to Indian development in the context of these changes. Nehru who played a leading role in this new thinking made a sharp divergence from the positions of both the early nationalists as well as those of Gandhi. In fact, he tried to provide a bridge between the thought of the early nationalists and that of Gandhi.

Nehru, like the early nationalists upheld the idea of modernisation of Indian society and industrial progress as the most important aspect of modernisation. And here he sharply differed from Gandhi whom he criticised for approaching modern problems from a mediaeval outlook. To oppose economic progress based on modern science and technology was in Nehru's view to agree not only to the perpetuation of India's poverty but also to the continuation of its present status as an agrarian appendage of the industrially developed countries of the world. The development of large-scale heavy industry was, therefore, inevitable both for waging an effective war against poverty and for providing a firm base for India's economic independence. Like the early nationalists, Nehru also emphasised the necessity of big scale industrialisation even for the modernisation of agriculture; there was no hope of an agricultural breakthrough without a big dent being made into the manpower overpressure on agriculture and without the application of modern technology to farming. Industrialisation was also advocated as a necessary condition of a dynamic social system and progressive cultural ethos. Having rejected the Gandhian critique of modern technology and industrialisation, Nehru, however, conceded a place to village industry for the transitional period in the Indian context of capital scarcity and surplus labour specially in the rural areas. Unlike the early nationalists, Nehru was not inclined to identify economic and social progress with Westernisation; he rejected the notion of the Western way as the only way of achieving economic progress. The Western model was appropriate to the conditions obtaining before the social, political and economic changes of the twentieth century. The new model which India had to evolve had to take cognizance of these changes,

Nehru with his sense of history was one of the few national leaders to grasp the significance of the new epoch for the Indian developmental problem. He did not tire of repeating that in India socio-political resurgence had preceded an economic revolution and the economic revolution had of necessity to be achieved within the framework of the values and aspirations thrown up by the social and political resurgence. He was also one of the few in the national leadership to perceive very clearly that a country like India would not be able to achieve sustained economic development by repeating the inequity-based classical course of capitalist development.[5]

Considering the formidable legacy of arrested development from the long period of colonial domination and the unprecedented advance of modern science and technology, the capitalist class is incapable of acting as the leading force in accomplishing the socio-economic transformation of colonial and semi-feudal society within the shortest span of time. As a result of the long period of colonial and 'feudal' domination resulting in general stagnation and lack of autonomous development there does not exist in a backward country like India a broad social basis for the growth of entrepreneurship. Whatever capitalist elements exist in the economy lack the vigour and the modernising zeal of early entrepreneurs of the Western industrial revolution; they are not capable of bringing about capital accumulation, resource mobilisation and social modernisation on such a scale and with a speed as required for economic transformation in the present epoch. Further, the capitalist method of accelerating development would necessarily involve large material incentives for the entrepreneurial class and burdens for the vast masses; it would, therefore, accentuate the conflict between the haves and have-nots and come into sharp conflict with the mass desire for equity. Evidently the capitalist path would not receive political support from the vast sections impatient for social justice and economic equality. The search for an alternative to the classical capitalists path of development is, therefore, sustained by basic socio-economic forces operating in India.[6]

5 Nehru's ideas are expressed with great force and lucidity in his presidential addresses to the Indian National Congress in the pre-Independence period. One of his most crucial essays was entitled "Whither India?" in 1933. See, Nehru on Socialism: *Selected Speeches and Writings* (New Delhi, 1964).

6 Consider Nehru's cryptic but meaningful observation: "Neither India nor

Recognising the mid-twentieth century compulsions for a non-classical pattern of development is, however, only one aspect of the situation; the crucial difficulty of countries like India consists in reconciling the objective of rapid development with that of equity. Thus in the context of mass poverty the overwhelming demand for equity makes it necessary to achieve development in a manner that it promotes equity; at the same time, the overwhelming socio-economic backwardness makes it necessary that equity should be realised in a manner as not to slow down the tempo and pace of development. In other words, social justice cannot transcend the economic conditions of a particular society. This means that the concept of social justice has to be adapted to the stage of economic development of a particular society. Considering this limitation, the one-sided pursuit of equity or redistributive justice unrelated to development would be tantamount to redistribution and even perpetuation of poverty. Thus both equity and growth demand that the capitalist path be abandoned in favour of a non-capitalist path. At the same time, growth required that genuine capitalist forces in the economy should be capitalised and exploited, though not as the dominant forces, in the interests of national development.

These basic ideas and principles underlined by Nehru[7] in the pre-independence period should be distinguished from the programmes and policies which were evolved under his leadership for giving a practical shape to these ideas after the achievement of independence. On the most fundamental question of policy relating to changes in the property structure it was decided to abstain from turning the fight for equity into an indiscriminate attack on all forms of private property; it was also recommended that the main attack be directed against feudal forms of property which were disfunctional for economic growth as well as inconsistent with the concept of equity. It was considered inappropriate to adopt the same policy towards private capitalist property on the ground that such a step would militate

China is now going to have a normal industrial capitalist development. We shall have *to find our own way*, to seek our own equilibrium" [Emphasis added; Source: Dorothy Norman, *Nehru: The First Sixty Years* (Bombay, 1965) Vol. II, p. 115

7 In the foregoing paragraphs an attempt has been made to summarise Nehru's ideas in the author's own language. The summary is based on a careful study of Nehru's writings.

against the imperatives of growth. At the same time to permit unbridled capitalist growth would militate against the imperative of equity. The need for guarding against the drift of development in the direction of untrammelled capitalist growth was, therefore, also emphasised. It was envisaged that the utilisation of the growth potential of capitalism should be combined with the relatively more rapid development of public and cooperative forms of property together with curbs on the tendency of private capitalist property to grow into concentration of private economic power. In the words of Oscar Lange[8] this 'national revolutionary' pattern of development is to be distinguished both from the classical capitalist as well as the socialist pattern of development. It crystallised into a 'middle path' conception of development.

The strategy for the development of Indian agriculture was also evolved in the light of this general conception of equity-based economic development. In the rural sphere the question both of equity and growth was linked with the question of resolving the conflict between the interests of the two basic classes of landlords and peasants. The ideal solution of this conflict in favour both of equity and growth lay in the total elimination of the rights of the unproductive landlord class over land and the conversion of landlord ownership into peasant ownership of land through a policy of thorough-going redistribution of land ownership. It is this programme of 'land to the peasant' which Nehru personally advocated in his presidential addresses from the platform of the Indian National Congress and his numerous speeches in the pre-independence period.[9] But he did not press for the adoption of this radical course after independence; nor did he adopt the conservative policy of encouraging the transformation of the feudal landlord class into a capitalist landlord class for agricultural development. Instead, under his leadership was adopted a middle course of restricting landlord rights in land as well as of partially fulfilling the peasant demand for land and security. It was neither to be a consistently pro-landlord nor a wholly pro-peasant course of agrarian transformation. Instead, equity was sought to be achieved and justice to be done to the peasantry by dispossessing landlords of parts of the land under their ownership and by

8 Oscar Lange, *Papers In Economics And Sociology 1930-60* (Warszawa, 1970), pp. 484-511

9 See Nehru on Socialism: *Selected Speeches and Writings* n. 5

creating facilities for full-fledged or partial transfer of rights over this land to the peasantry; the landlords were permitted to retain or resume the other part of the land below a specified limit for purposes of self-cultivation.

Any wholesale attack on landlord rights over land leading to their redistribution among the peasants was opposed on the ground that it would on the one hand lead to multiplication of small and uneconomic units of cultivation unsuitable for efficient and remunerative cultivation, and on the other to socio-political dislocation and unrest. The assumption was that those having viable units of cultivation and other resources would play the leading role in the process of agricultural development. At the same time other sections of cultivating community suffering from deficiency of resources would be enabled to participate in the process of growth with the support of the cooperative institutions in the form of supplies of inputs, credit and other facilities. Such a framework, it was expected, would be at once conducive to the realisation of the twin aims of growth and equity.

It can be seen from the foregoing exposition that Nehru incorporated some of the basic insights of Gandhi in his model of development. The mass-welfare orientation of the Nehru model was derived as much from his own socialist inspiration as from Gandhi's concern for the *Daridranarayan*. The emphasis on cottage and small-scale industry as a complement to large industry was also a concession as it were to Gandhi's economic philosophy. Nevertheless, the divergence between the two models was quite fundamental. Three fundamental points of divergence between the two models can be easily indicated. Firstly, on which social groups and forces did Nehru place the major reliance for promoting development? It is very obvious that Nehru's concern for the mass of small producers in traditional industry and agriculture was motivated more by the concern for their welfare rather than by a basic conviction about their potentiality for development. In fact, the major reliance of the Nehru model for economic development was on the large and medium owners of property in land and industry. In other words, the Nehru model was basically oriented towards broadening the base of the Indian capitalist class in towns and in the countryside, and in promoting State Capitalism as the leading force in Indian development. In contrast, Gandhi was categorical about the necessity as well as

the potentiality of the overwhelming mass of small producers as the backbone of the development effort.

In the second place, the Nehru model placed fundamental reliance on governmental administration and bureaucracy rather than on an organization of social workers recruited from the people. Gandhi, on the other hand, considered the building up of a force of dedicated social workers—'Lok Sevak Sangh'—as a basic pre-condition for mass welfare-oriented economic development. Last but not the least, the Nehru model did not provide ideological meaning and content to the developmental challenge in such terms as would be meaningful to the vast, uneducated and illiterate masses in the country. It is true that Nehru sought to link the question of development with the building up of a new social order through concepts like the 'socialistic pattern of society'. But whatever meaning and appeal these concepts may have had for the educated classes, they did not stir the imagination of the vast masses. In the Nehru model, the major reliance from the point of view of incentives was in effect placed on the material motivation rather than on the non-material and ideological motivation. In contrast, Gandhi believed in non-material motivation as the major stimulus to mass-oriented economic development.

IV

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS OF THE NEHRU ERA

What have been the effects of the Nehru model on the Indian economy and society following its implementation through the Five Year Plans? To what extent have these objectives been in conformity with the original aims and assumptions of this model? What has been its contribution towards taking the country nearer to the goal of economic independence, and of elimination of the gap between the rich and the poor within the country? Our basic proposition is that these tasks have remained unaccomplished. Without agreeing with all of Gandhi's premises and prescriptions one has to admit that many of his apprehensions and predictions have been borne out as correct and prophetic.

The strategy of State intervention and public sector development which was intended to promote broad-based development appears

to have strengthened State Capitalism and the big and medium business class in the country. State activities and public sector establishments have served as an infra-structure for the growth of a part of the private sector into a formidable concentration of private economic power. This concentration is now questioning the very idea of planned development. Large sections of the business class do not have even genuine industrial-capitalist potential; in fact this class is a hybrid of mercantile-cum-industrial-cum-financial capitalism. It is oriented towards catering to the requirements of a narrow urban and rural class which has high purchasing power; it seems incapable of leading a broad-based economic thrust which can develop or exploit the mass market within the nation. This concentration is also linked with the new but narrow class of big farmers in the countryside which has emerged and crystallised into a powerful force in recent years. In short, notwithstanding the expansion of the capitalist class and the clashes of interest between the big and medium sections of this class, the overwhelming mass of small producers—peasants, artisans and landless labourers—have remained outside the mainstream of economic development.

The other important consequence has been the lag in the development of agriculture with all its consequences for the process of industrialisation. The primacy given to the building of heavy industry without the supporting base of a dynamic agriculture has resulted in the creation of a Colossus with the feet of clay. The Soviet Union had been able to push through such a strategy because of a thoroughgoing change in agrarian and industrial organisation and the power structure which preceded planned development. It succeeded also because it started from a higher techno-economic base both in agriculture and industry and was, therefore, in a position to draw surpluses from both these sectors. It had also a mighty organisation and machinery for social mobilisation supplemented by coercion to implement this strategy. In the Indian context both these conditions were by and large absent and this strategy, therefore, produced entirely different results. It has led to continuing dependence on foreign aid, a massive debt repayment problem and other economic and political complications. This pattern of industrialisation has also failed to serve as a stimulus to agricultural growth or as a means of reducing manpower pressure on agriculture. The creation of a developing modern sub-sector in the otherwise backward rural

sector has resulted in sharp accentuation of regional and class disparities.

Let us consider the effects of the implementation of this model on the rural sector. It is now generally recognised that implementation of the legislative provisions for protecting and promoting the interests of the weaker sections of the peasantry met with only limited success. The land legislation did contribute significantly in reducing the extra-economic domination and authority of the landlords over the peasantry, in establishing the land rights of a small class of well-off tenants and in encouraging the transformation of a section of the parasitical landlords into a class of farmers. But on questions of stabilisation of the rights of the most vulnerable sections of tenants-at-will, of imposing a limit on the ownership holdings of big land-holders and of the redistribution of the surplus land among the landless, the legislative enactments proved to be almost a total failure. The wave after wave of evictions of tenants in the wake of resumption of land for so-called self-cultivation by landlords, often disguised as 'voluntary surrenders' on the part of tenants, the failure in regulating rent and providing security of tenure to the majority of tenants, and the almost total failure in enforcing ceiling on landholdings speak amply of the failure of land legislation in meeting the urgent demands of the weaker sections of the peasantry.

Considering next the developmental aspect of the strategy, it may be suggested that the partial fulfilment of the urge for equity also narrowed down the social base of the developmental effort; on the other hand, development proceeding on a narrow social base had the cumulative effect of further aggravating the problem of equity.

In the country, by and large, the social base of agricultural development plan has been provided by the emergent class of ex-landlords and upper section of the peasantry; it is this class which has large operational holdings along with the necessary organisational strength and influence over the power structure. Utilising its influence over the administrative organs of decision-making and implementation, this class has been able to appropriate the major share of the developmental aid being provided by State agencies in the form of improved seeds, fertilizers, credit, new implements and improved methods and practices of cultivation.

In contrast, the weaker sections of the peasantry consisting of tenants and cultivators of small and uneconomic units of cultivation

have neither adequate economic resources nor organisational strength and political bargaining power. They have, therefore, been able to secure assistance from State and cooperative institutions and to participate in development programmes only to a meager extent. Unequal participation in the process of development resulting in an unequal sharing of the fruits of development has contributed to further widening of class disparity, which in turn has prevented the widening of the social base of the developmental effort. Last but not the least, economic development, far from stabilising the political situation, has had the opposite effect of generating serious political instability. The deep cleavages and tensions within the political elite are to a large extent only a reflection of underlying economic cleavages and tensions.

V

CONCLUSION

In short, therefore, the actual results of the Five Year Plans based on Nehru's conception of Indian development have served to bring to light the inadequacies and internal contradictions of the Nehru model. The basic contradiction of the Nehru model lay in the fact that at the *ideological* level it was committed to a conception of development in the interests of small and property-less masses of Indian society; at the *operational* level, however, it provided largely for the participation of the big and medium property-owners in the process of economic development. Thus, Nehru was undoubtedly able to generate vast social ferment and awakening among the broadest sections of Indian society in favour of an anticapitalist, mass welfare-based and equity-oriented course of economic and social development. His failure lay in not being able to evolve an operational model and an organisational force which could transform this potentiality into a reality. In our view, it was Gandhi's merit that he had a rare and unerring perception of some of the basic inadequacies and weaknesses of Nehru's thinking in relation to the specifics of the Indian social situation and the essential requirements of Indian development. Gandhi had a better perception of the basic characteristic of the Indian situation, *viz.*, the predominance of self-employed producers—the small peasants and the artisans—in the Indian economic

structure. His basic insight that the participation of this vast force in economic development calls for a new approach and exploration outside the bounds of Western or Soviet models has been fully borne out by recent Indian experience.

The construction of an adequate *operational model*, however, awaits the transformation of this vast stratum of Indian society into an awakened social force and the emergence of a leadership truly committed to its interests and aspirations. Such a leadership alone will complete the historic task *initiated* by Gandhi and Nehru but left *unfinished* by them.

POSTSCRIPT

The discussion on my paper "Developmental Perspectives in India: Some Reflections on Gandhi and Nehru" in the Seminar on *Gandhi and Nehru* held in the Nehru Memorial Museum andLibrary in November 1969 raised a number of basic questions. I am taking up only one relating to the class character of the political movement under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. On this question a number of provocative observations were made and a host of controversial issues raised. It was suggested that my paper had failed to characterise the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru as a leadership which, objectively speaking, acted as a guardian of bourgeois interests in the national movement. Further, that this leadership helped in disguising this basic fact by presenting bourgeois interests in a universalist and non-class garb. It was also indicated that the legacy of Gandhi and Nehru was a liability rather than an asset to the workers and peasants in their struggle for a new social and economic order.

A

I concede at the very outset the hard core of truth in the above view. But I have the following main criticisms to offer against it.

(a) This view underplays the multi-class character of the national movement and the progressive aspect of the bourgeois class in this movement. Thus, while it emphasises the bourgeois character of the leadership of this movement, the possibilities for worker and peasant mobilisation in this movement even under bourgeois leadership are under-played. Further, bourgeoisie is treated in this view as a

monolith, thus overlooking the contradictions in the bourgeois class itself. The rising section in the bourgeois class in its struggle with the upperclass needs the support of the workers and the peasants. To mobilise this support it even upholds a radical ideology for workers and peasants and also a programme of change in the old order. This very process of radicalising the workers and peasants begins in the interests of the bourgeois class. But if it is sustained, it also creates the possibilities of consolidating upto a point the interests of workers and peasants within the national movement.

(b) The above view reflects a very crude understanding of the influence of the class factor on political leadership and ideology. It does not distinguish between a class and its political representatives, between the narrow horizons of the former and the long-term vision and foresight of the latter. The political representatives of a class not only articulate its sectional interests, but also make it conscious of its position and responsibilities vis-a-vis other classes. This is specially important during a period when one class is trying to oust another class or a class combination from positions of power. The very need to mobilise the support of other classes in this power struggle makes the rising class display a concern for the total society and a sensitiveness to the needs and aspirations of other classes which are absent in normal times. In this way specific historical situations offer limited possibilities for workers and peasants even under a bourgeois leadership.

(c) In short, the above view does not bring out the possibilities for workers and peasants existing within a multi-class national movement even under bourgeois leadership in certain specific situations. These possibilities, however, do not automatically improve the prospects of workers and peasants. It is for the independent leadership of workers and peasants to capitalise them. If the political movement led by Gandhi and Nehru did not adequately help workers and peasants, the fault also lay with the left leadership which failed to perceive the possibilities of furthering worker-peasant interests within this multi-class movement. In this note I have tried to explain some of these points in greater detail.

B

The first point to remember is that the ideology and practice of

Gandhi and Nehru represented a response to the major challenges confronting India during the independence struggle and the early period of national consolidation. These challenges emanated from the character of Indian society as a 'colonial society' under foreign domination on the one hand and as a 'class society' characterised by class divisions and cleavages on the other. The challenges were fundamentally three corresponding to three fundamental social contradictions. The latter were:

(i) the first between the colonising forces and their native allies on the one hand and all other anti-colonial classes of the Indian nation on the other;

(ii) the second between the upper and the intermediate classes among the 'haves' themselves; and

(iii) the third between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of the Indian society.

The first contradiction provided the possibility of a multi-class national movement for independence directed against imperialism and its native allies. This possibility to be fully capitalised required certain fundamental principles which could help unify various classes of Indian society for the common aim of overthrowing colonial rule. In other words, multi-class unity during the phase of national struggle presupposed a certain concensus on the nature of the social and economic order which would follow independence. This is to say, the principal contradiction between imperialism and the Indian nation could not be effectively tackled in isolation from the internal contradictions of the Indian society.

Nehru posed this issue with extraordinary lucidity in one of his famous essays entitled "Whither India?" written in 1933 in the following words:

> We cannot escape having to answer the question now or later, for the freedom of which class or classes in India are we specially striving? Do we place the masses, the peasantry and workers, first, or some other small class at the head of the list? Let us get the benefits of freedom to as many groups and classes as possible, but essentially whom do we stand for, and when a conflict arises whose side must we take? To say that we shall not answer that question now is itself an answer and taking of sides for it means that we stand by the existing order, the status quo.

The question which Nehru raised regarding the fundamental class orientation of the independence struggle was of pivotal significance; but his understanding of the class structure and class alignments in India was not adequate. To hold that the Indian society was divided into 'haves and have-nots' and to consider the political alignments in the national movement solely in terms of the two-fold class division was to say the least a very simplistic and partial view.[10] For, in reality, the major internal factor which played the most important role in determining the outcome of the independence struggle was not the cleavage between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' but the cleavage between the upper and the relatively less privileged classes among the 'haves' themselves.

It is one of the most paradoxical aspects of the history of class struggles in many countries that the contradictions and cleavages between the dominant and less privileged, albeit rising, classes among the 'haves' themselves are fought out at the political level in the language and political rhetoric characteristic of the conflict between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. The conflicts between different sections of the capitalist class are thus fought out under the banner of a non-capitalist, actually, socialist ideology.

It is important to note that in the given situation in India the 'have-nots' had not yet thrown up an independent leadership; and the competition for hegemony over the national movement was confined to the upper and the intermediate classes among the 'haves' themselves. The struggle for hegemony in the Indian context was the struggle for hegemony over the most numerous class in the Indian society constituted by the multi-million peasants living in the villages. In their contest for hegemony over this vast social stratum the dynamic but less privileged sections of the 'haves' needed a perspective well-demarcated from the colonialist ideology on the one hand and the status-quo-oriented outlook of the upper classes on the other. They needed a political leadership which was revolutionary enough to capture the imagination of the 'have-nots' so as to mobilise them behind the interests of the intermediate and against those of the upper

10 In his later writings we find Nehru presenting a view which was closer to the real situation. In the later period he emphasises the role of the *middle forces* in politics without, however, indicating their class basis. See, "Nationalism and the Mass Struggle in India—August 1938". Dorothy Norman, ed., *Nehru: The First Sixty Years* Vol. I, (Bombay, 1965) p. 574.

classes. At the same time this leadership need not be so revolutionary as to pose a threat to the very dominance of the 'haves' over the 'have-nots.' In other words, the contradiction between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' had to be resolved fundamentally within the limits set by the struggle for hegemony between the upper and the intermediate classes among the 'haves.' Political leaders oscillating between revolutionary fervour at the level of general ideology, and caution and restraint at the level of practice were thus required by the given class alignments. Gandhi and Nehru provided the leadership having a peculiar blending of radicalism and conservatism required by the social situation.

To bring to light the class limits within which Gandhi and Nehru functioned is to bring to light their possibilities as well as limitations. They headed a political, social and economic revolution fundamentally in the interests of the intermediate classes. That explains their failure despite radical pronouncements, in transforming the movement for national emancipation into a full-fledged movement for social and economic emancipation of the most exploited classes.

This is one side of the picture. At the same time one should not overlook the historic contribution of these leaders in drawing the oppressed classes of workers and peasants into the mainstream of the national movement and in incorporating into the national programme some, if not all, of their basic demands. Thus, under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru the workers and peasants were shaken up from their state of semi-mediaeval passivity and set on the path of socio-political enlightenment and awareness. This was a gain of great long-term significance. This was of special significance in a period when the peasants and workers had yet to throw up an independent and effective leadership and the alternative to the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru was not a superior leadership with much greater commitment to the cause of workers and peasants, but a more retrograde leadership openly hostile to their cause.

In short, Gandhi and Nehru played a dual role in the national movement. Even though serving as guardians of bourgeois interests they also played a historic role as leaders of a multi-class national movement in contributing to the great awakening among workers and peasants. More significantly, in their search for a unifying frame for Indian nationalism, they contributed a set of general principles and a developmental perspective which transcended the bounds of

narrow bourgeois interests and comprehended the interests of other classes as well. In this background the vast sympathy and concern with which Gandhi in particular approached the peasantry, helped him to project a new view of India as *peasant* India and of the Indian problem in terms of the problem of vast millions of small peasant producers inhabiting Indian villages. Here was a view which was never projected before in Indian history; and here was a leader who appeared to reflect in every feature of his personality the illiterate, half-fed and half-naked Indian peasant rising from the depths of age-old darkness and misery towards enlightenment and activity.

True, Gandhi only roused the peasant masses without either fully understanding the social roots of their misery or clearly indicating a path to be traversed by them for their emancipation. But the very identification of the Indian nation with the village-dwelling and long-suffering peasant masses which Gandhi upheld through his words and deeds for almost half a century constituted potentially a powerful social force in favour of the working peasant, and also in favour of a pro-peasant perspective of economic and social development.

Such was the dialectics of the historical situation that the "very custodian of bourgeois interests" brought sharply to the forefront the peasant problem as the fundamental problem; and he was also the first outstanding leader to indicate that this problem was insoluble within a capitalist framework. This is to say even though functioning within the limits of bourgeois interests, he tended to release social forces which could not be contained within these limits.

Gandhi here appears in an apparently contradictory role as the leader of rising Indian capitalism on the one hand and the mobiliser of social forces destined to go beyond capitalism on the other. In order to understand this paradox the historical situation must be kept in view, specially the context of the anti-imperialist movement and the compulsions of hegemony over this movement. Here was a situation in which the capitalist class had to win over the other classes primarily through its moral, ideological, political and organisational leadership.

Not yet being a ruling class it was not possible for it to employ the machinery of force and coercion or the lure of loaves and fishes of office or of material advancement. In order to emerge as the leader in this historical situation, the capitalist class, as it were, had to be responsive to the interests of other classes. In this social

context was needed a leadership rising above the narrow interests of a single class towards identification with the cause of the most oppressed and the down-trodden classes. The most pivotal in the Indian context was the support of the peasantry; and the very logic of winning over the peasants required a leader who appeared to be the very personification of the Indian peasant and to be dedicated to its interests. The logic of upholding peasant interests also appeared to lead in the direction of opposition to all systems of social and economic exploitation including the capitalist system.

It is a tribute to the maturity of the Indian capitalist class that it made full use of the potentialities of leaders like Gandhi and Nehru whose value commitments represented a sharp indictment rather than an approval of the capitalist perspective. At the same time nothing brought to light so dramatically the class limits of the national movement as the irrelevance of its unquestioned leader to the bourgeois class even before independence had been formally proclaimed but as soon as the withdrawal of the British and the transfer of power into native hands were fully assured.

The eclipse of Gandhi represented also the eclipse in practice of Gandhi's most enduring legacy to independent India, *viz.*, the conception of India as *peasant* India and of peasant uplift as the core of the developmental challenge.

That this eclipse occurred under the leadership of Nehru, the most favoured of Gandhi's disciples and the most eloquent radical in the Congress leadership, was neither an accident nor just the failure of a single person. The roots of this failure lay in the dual character of the bourgeois class—the need of this class simultaneously to activise the peasantry as a pressure group both against imperialism and the big landlords but to prevent it from becoming an organised and independent political force. Both Gandhi and Nehru worked within this class limitation, a fact which was disguised by the multi-class character of the movement in the pre-independence period but became manifest on the very eve of independence. During his last days, Gandhi perceived, as if in a flash, the real nature of the movement which he had led and which did not need him any more. He saw his peasant utopia (*Rama-rajya*) recede into total oblivion. He saw his disciples getting dazed by the lure of power and giving up the spirit of service and austerity. He saw them getting alienated from the very masses who had installed them in office. It was clear to

Gandhi that from the standpoint of the 'haves' independence or the transfer of power represented the climax of the Indian national revolution. But from the standpoint of the workers and the peasants, independence did not represent a *social* revolution but only its beginning.

Gandhi also perceived, as if in a flash, the root cause of his failure –his inability to forge a social instrument of mass emancipation. His greatness lay in the fact that through his powerful intuition he grasped some of these basic truths much better than Nehru. In appraising his life's work during his last days Gandhi adopted only one criterion: How far had his work helped the emancipation of the *Daridranarayan?* And from this standpoint, he tended to believe that his life's work had not ended but only begun. In other words, the last days of Gandhi reflect a heroic effort to understand why he failed and also to overcome, at least in thought, the class limitations within which he had functioned all his life. *From this point of view, Gandhi was not only the greatest national leader who led the country towards freedom but was also the first national leader who saw the class limits of this freedom and its unreality for the exploited masses.*

Through his last phase and his Testament Gandhi ceased to be the leader of a bourgeois-led national movement; he emerged as an enduring ally of the cause of the workers and the peasants. What about Nehru? The evaluation of Nehru raises more complex issues some of which I have taken up in the paper itself.

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THE CONGRESS SPLIT AT SURAT

BIMAL PRASAD

UNITY, AS *we have said, is a means and not an end. To agree is easy if we are willing to sacrifice our principles, but such agreement is not unity; it is sacrificing the soul of the nation so that an artificial appearance of unanimity may be preserved. No unity can be desirable which is inconsistent with growth or with the march of the people towards the realisation of their great destiny. Growth is the object, unity only one of the means, and if the means can only be had on candition of sacrificing the object, the means and not the object must be sacrificed.*

[AUROBINDO GHOSE IN THE *Bande Mataram*, 22 APRIL 1908]

Those who have gone out of us were never of us, for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us. Our paths now lie wide part, and a yawning gulf separates us. It is, however, permissible to us still to hope that these wayward wanderers, if I may say so without offence, may yet come back to us and be ours again, joining hands and hearts with us and fighting under the old banner—the banner to which we have always been true, and by which we have again solemnly pledged ourselves to stand, never again to part. But we will not, we cannot, we dare not extend the hand of fellowship to them so long as they persist in their present policy.

[RASH BEHARI GHOSE IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL CONGRESS SESSION OF 1908]

The words quoted above reveal the state of feelings in the two camps after the split at Surat in 1907, one of the landmarks in the

history of the Congress and the country. This split had not come about all of a sudden, but had been in the making since 1905, largely as a result of the new spirit in the country which had emerged in the wake of the unprecedented agitation against the partition of Bengal. "The Congress of 1904," writes the biographer of one of the early (British) leaders of the Congress, "was the culminating point of the movement directed by the founders, and by those younger leaders who shared their political faith and were content with their methods. Thereafter new and disturbing forces made themselves felt."[1] Those who spearheaded the new forces called themselves Nationalists or the New Party, but were generally described as Extremists to distinguish them from the old leaders of the Congress and their followers who were known as Moderates. Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were the chief spokesmen of the Moderates while Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose represented the Extremists. The leaders of the two groups were Gokhale and Tilak.

The basic point of divergence between the two groups related not so much to the ultimate objective of the nationalist movement as to the methods to be followed to achieve that objective. Although the Moderates talked of self-government within the British Empire and the Extremists of Swaraj, the latter did not necessarily mean a complete break from the Empire. In any case, the leaders of both the wings perhaps realised that this was a matter which could be settled later, depending on circumstances. This was very clearly explained by Tilak in his interview with H.W. Nevinson in 1907. He said:

> It is not by our purpose, but by our methods only that our party has earned the name of Extremist. Certainly, there is a very small party which talks about abolishing the British rule at once and completely. That does not concern us; it is much too far in the future. Unorganised, disarmed, and still disunited, we should not have a chance of shaking the British suzerainty. We may leave all that sort of thing to a distant time.... The immediate question for us is how we are to bring pressure on

1 S.K. Ratcliffe, *Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement* (London, 1923), pp. 138-39.

this bureaucracy....It is only in our answer to that question that we differ from the so-called Moderates.[2]

From the time this interview was first published till today several persons have doubted whether Tilak, the astute political leader had revealed his true mind while talking to the British journalist.[3] Tilak was certainly trying to sound as moderate as possible on that occasion, but there is really no basis to doubt that what he said represented his position substantially. He had practically said the same thing, though in another way, in course of a speech at Calcutta on January 4, 1907: "There were certain points on which both parties were agreed. The object both parties had at heart was the same; it was self-government.... Their object being the same, it was with regard to their methods that the difference arose."[4]

It is, of course, true that as far as the question of objective went, all the Extremist leaders did not speak in the same vein and that Lajpat Rai, Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose thought of Swaraj as something higher than just self-government within the British Empire. While it is important to remember this difference between their outlook and that of Tilak,[5] it is equally important to remember that they as well as others recognised Tilak as the chief spokesman of their group and accepted his interpretation of Swaraj as representing the stand of the group as a whole. This is clear from what Aurobindo, who undoubtedly expounded the most exalted concept of Swaraj,[6] wrote in the *Bande Mataram* on 26 April 1907 while explaining the difference between the Moderates and Extremists or Nationalists, as the latter preferred to be called. Pointing out that there were then three parties in the country, not two, he observed:

2 Henry W. Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India* (London, 1908), pp. 72-73.

3 See Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Militant Nationalism in India* (Calcutta, 1966) p. 76.

4 *Mahratha,* 13 January 1907, quoted in Nevinson, n. 2, p. 75.

5 This has been brought out quite well in two recent studies on this period: Amales Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge* (Bombay, 1967), pp. 124-26; and Daniel Argov, *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Movement* (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 124-26.

6 For Aurobindo's concept of Swaraj see Karan Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism: A Study of the Political Thought of Shri Aurobindo Ghose,* 1893-1910 (London, 1963).

> The Loyalists would be satisfied with good government by British rulers and a limited share in the administration; the Moderates desire self-government within the British Empire, but are willing to wait for it indefinitely; the Nationalists would be satisfied with nothing less than independence *whether within the Empire, if that be possible, or outside it;* they believe that the nation cannot and ought not to wait but must bestir itself immediately, if it is not to perish as a nation.[7]

The main difference between the Moderates and Extremists as to the methods was summed up in the latter's motto: "Self-Reliance, not Mendicancy." Both the Moderates and Extremists were disillusioned with the attitude of the British authorities in India. While Moderates continued to hope that by persistently appealing to those authorities in their home country they might succeed in drawing their attention to the gravity of the situation in India and persuading them to introduce the necessary measures of reform, the Extremists felt that appeals to British authorities would be of no avail. According to the latter, the only way to draw the attention of the British authorities to the urgency of the situation in India was to work among the Indian people and organise their strength by following the path charted out in the wake of the anti-partition agitation in Bengal. As Tilak told Nevinson, besides the ordinary Swadeshi movement, the Extremists wanted to encourage boycott and passive resistance. This might lead to arrest and imprisonment of a large number of people, but if that happened the purpose of the movement would be served. "To imprison even 3,000 or 4,000 of us at the same time", said Tilak, "would embarrass the bureaucracy. That is our object—to attract the attention of England to our wrongs by diverting trade and obstructing Government."[8]

II

The two groups managed to work together for some time, but the differences among them became more and more pronounced and soon the time came when they could no longer function in the

7 Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, eds., *Shri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics* (Calcutta, 1964), p. 17. Emphasis added.

8 Nevinson, n. 2, p. 74.

same organisation. When the Congress met for its twenty-first session at Varanasi in December 1905, the partition of Bengal was already an accomplished fact and the Swadeshi movement was in full swing. The atmosphere in the country was surcharged with unusual tension. Even the Moderates were full of indignation at the policies and methods pursued by Curzon. The mood of the moment was forcefully expressed by Gokhale who presided over the Congress. In the course of his address he presented a severe indictment of Curzon's administration and declared that for finding a parallel to it people would have to go back to the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb: "There we find the same attempt at a rule excessively centralised and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of duty, the same marvellous capacity for work, the same sense of loneliness, the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all round."[9] Gokhale was equally forthright in his condemnation of the partition of Bengal, describing it as a cruel wrong which had stirred the whole country to its deepest depths in a way in which nothing had stirred it before and as a complete illustration of the worst features of the then existing system of bureaucratic administration: "Its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed."[10]

On the other hand, Gokhale warmly welcomed the new spirit which had been manifested in Bengal in the wake of the anti-partition agitation. "The tremendous upheaval of popular feeling, which has taken place in Bengal in consequence of the partition", he observed, "will constitute a landmark in the history of our national progress. For the first time since British rule began, all sections of the Indian community, without distinction of caste or creed, have been moved, by a common impulse and without the stimulus of external pressure, to act together in offering resistance to a common wrong." The province, he added, had been swept over by a wave of true national consciousness and this had affected the rest of the country also. In an obvious bid to maintain unity in the nationalist ranks, the great

9 D.G. Karve and D.V. Ambekar, eds., *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Bombay, 1966), Vol. II, p. 188.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

Moderate leader for once spoke almost like his Extremist counterpart:

> A great rush and uprising of the waters such as has been recently witnessed in Bengal can nottake place without a little inundation over the banks here and there. Those little excesses are inevitable when large masses of men move spontaneously—especially when the movement is from darkness into light, from bondage towards freedom—and they must not be allowed to disconcert us too much. The most astounding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance, and for this all India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal.

Turning, however, to the technique of struggle employed in Bengal Gokhale distinguished between the Boycott and Swadeshi movements. While he justified the recourse to Boycott in the circumstances existing in Bengal in 1905, he warned that a weapon like that must be reserved only for extreme occasions:

> There are obvious risks involved in its failure and it cannot be used with sufficient effectiveness unless there is an extraordinary upheaval of popular feeling behind it. It is bound to rouse angry passions on the other side, and no true well-wisher of his country will be responsible for evoking such passions, except under an overpowering sense of necessity.

These were not the only grounds for Gokhale's reservations regarding Boycott. Apart from the fact that if it was confined only to British goods, Indians would be free to buy goods manufactured by other countries and this would not help the Swadeshi movement, Gokhale raised a more fundamental issue. "It is well to remember", he observed, "that the term 'Boycott' owing to its origin, has got unsavoury associations, and it conveys to the mind before everything else a vindictive desire to injure another. Such a desire on our part, as a normal feature of our relations with England, is, of course, out of question." He had no such reservations so far as Swadeshi was concerned. It symbolised devotion to the motherland, "an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its

actual touch lifts one out of oneself." He would like to see its message broadcast to all parts of the country: "India needs today above everything else that the gospel of this devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and to peasant, in town and in hamlet, till the service of motherland becomes with us as overmastering a passion as it is in Japan."[11]

Gokhale also considered it proper to define the goal of the Congress in unambiguous terms. This, according to him, was that "India should be governed in the interest of the Indians themselves and that, in course of time, a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the Self-Governing Colonies of the British Empire." He, however, took care to emphasise that for better or for worse, the destinies of the Indian people were linked with those of Britain. The Congress freely recognised that "whatever advance we seek must be within the Empire itself." Besides, that advance could only be gradual. At each stage of progress the Indian people would have to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before they were enabled to go to the next stage. While not agreeing with those who usually opposed all reforms on the ground that the people were not ready for them, Gokhale had no hesitation in admitting that the sense of responsibility, required for the proper working of Western political institutions, could be acquired by an Eastern people only through practical training and experience.[12] While thus emphasising the inevitability of gradualness, Gokhale ended his address with a quotation from a speech of his *guru,* Ranade, containing a moving affirmation of faith in India's noble destiny:

> With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly by all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision; happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it; happiest they,

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 194-96.
12 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

who live to see it with their eyes and to tread upon the holy soil once more.[13]

All this was well thought out and designed to prevent a split between the Moderates and the Extremists. While beginning his address Gokhale had referred to the difficult situation facing the country: "It is with rocks ahead and angry waves beating around that I am called upon to take charge of the vessel of the Congress." He had hoped that with divine guidance in the holy city of Benares "the united wisdom and patriotism of the delegates assembled will enable the Congress to emerge from the present crisis with unimpaired and even enhanced prestige and usefulness."[14] Unity among the delegates, however, was not easy to maintain in the context of the new situation in the country and the new ideas which had been born in its wake. Gokhale's address, of course, was, on the whole, found satisfactory by the Extremists. Immediately after his arrival at Benares, however, Tilak had raised the slogan: "Militancy—not Mendicancy",[15] the main instrument of this militancy being Boycott. His followers must have been irked by Gokhale's reservations regarding it. Apart from this, there were certain other aspects of that address also which, while in line with the past traditions of the Congress, must have appeared jarring to the men imbued with the new spirit. Gokhale had, for instance, considered it his first duty to offer the most loyal and dutiful welcome to the Prince and Princess of Wales who were then visiting India: "The Throne in England is above all parties —beyond all controversies. It is the permanent seat of the majesty, the honour and the beneficence of the British Empire. And in offering our homage to its illustrious occupants and their heirs and representatives, we not only perform a loyal duty, but express the gratitude of our hearts for all that is noble and high-minded in England's connection with India."[16]

When after the presidential address the Subjects Committee of the Congress assembled to consider the resolutions to be placed before the open session differences between the two wings came to the surface. The very first resolution proposed by the old leadership

13 *Ibid.*, p. 209.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 187.
15 D.V. Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak* (London, 1956), p. 112.
16 *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 9, p. 187.

extending welcome to the Prince and Princess of Wales was opposed by Lajpat Rai and Tilak. They felt that the main purpose behind the visit was to divert public attention from the agitation against the Government going on in the country at that time. Although the resolution was passed in the Subjects Committee, its opponents threatened to continue their opposition in the open session. This would have been very embarrassing indeed for the Congress leadership. Gokhale interceded with Lajpat Rai and a compromise was worked out: the opponents of the resolution would absent themselves from the open session when that resolution was taken up, but it would not be recorded in the proceedings that it was passed unanimously. Thus was passed the formal resolution of welcome to the Prince and Princess of Wales.[17]

There were differences also on more substantial matters. Tilak while welcoming Gokhale's enthusiastic reference to the anti-partition agitation in Bengal wanted separate resolutions to be passed welcoming the Boycott and Swadeshi movements and calling upon the Indian people in all parts of the country to join them, but this was not acceptable to the old leadership. There was no resolution on Swadeshi and Boycott was indirectly mentioned in the resolution dealing with repression in Bengal, thus making it clear that it was being approved of reluctantly and only in the context of the special situation then prevailing in that province. By this resolution the Congress recorded 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.[18]

The speeches on this resolution clearly brought out the difference in the viewpoints of the Moderates and Extremists. While moving

17 Lajpat Rai, *Autobiographical Writings*, ed., Vijaya Chandra Joshi (Delhi, 1965), pp. 110-11.

18 *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress* (Banares, 1906), p. 70.

it Madan Mohan Malaviya, who represented the old leadership, thought it proper to emphasise that he neither advocated the use of the weapon of Boycott in Bengal nor wanted its extension to other provinces.[19] On the other hand, Lajpat Rai while seconding this resolution ardently supported the Boycott movement and drew the attention of the delegates towards its great potentialities. Pointing out that an Englishman hated nothing like beggary he stressed that "in our utterances, in our agitations and in our fight and struggle for liberty, we ought to be more manly than we have been heretofore." The people of Bengal had to be congratulated because they had shown a manly spirit and if that spirit spread to all parts of the country, the day was not far distant when Indians would be able to secure their rights. He also for the first time talked of Passive Resistance, from the Congress platform, describing it as the method which was perfectly legitimate, perfectly constitutional and perfectly justifiable.[20] This speech created a great sensation at the Congress session. While it drew applause from one section of the delegates it was strongly disliked by another section. As Lajpat Rai recalled later: "The speech evoked repeated applause and people punctuated it with cries of 'go on, go on'. The elderly leaders sitting on both sides of the President, particularly the Bombay delegates, began to tremble and turned pale with fear. They were repeatedly asking Gokhale to stop me and and to order me to sit down..."[21]

III

All this was a presage of what was to follow. The year 1906 saw a further widening of the gulf between the two wings. Gokhale while welcoming Lord Minto, the new Viceroy, had mentioned conciliation as the immediate task of his administration and had called for cooperation with him in the performance of this task. "The difficulties of the situation", he pointed out, "are not of Lord Minto's creating, and he had a right to expect the cooperation of both the officials and the public in his endeavours to terminate a state of tension which has already produced deplorable results and which cannot

19 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
20 *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
21 Lajpat Rai, n. 17, p. 111.

be prolonged without serious detriment to the best interests of the country."[22]

Gokhale's hope that an era of conciliation and reform was at hand had been very much strengthened by the coming into power in Britain in December 1905 of the Liberal Government under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and the appointment of John Morley as Secretary of State for India. Morley was well-known for his championship of Home Rule for Ireland. Outlining a modest scheme of reforms in his presidential address, including a reform of the Legislative Councils by raising the proportion of elected members to one half, Gokhale expressed the hope that if the Congress concentrated all its energies on them, it might be found within a reasonable period of time that the result was not altogether disappointing. According to him, the time was propitious for such an effort. In India, there was bound to be "a great rebound of public opinion" after three years of repression. In Britain, for the first time since the Congress movement began, there was a Liberal Government. Besides, the new Prime Minister was a tried and trusted friend of freedom. And as for the new Secretary of State for India, Gokhale remarked:

> Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet it trembles, as it had never hoped or trembled before. He, the reverend student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone—will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of the country, or will he too succumb to the influences of the India Office around him, and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes, which his own writings have done so much to foster.[23]

Gokhale soon discovered that there was ground enough to hope and not to tremble. He proceeded to Britain in April 1906 and stayed there for four months, the main purpose of the visit being to create opinion in favour of a policy of conciliation and reform. He worked hard on turning Morley's mind in this direction and had five interviews with him. These interviews were eminently successful and the two statesmen developed a strong liking and respect for each other.

22 *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 9, p. 188.
23 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

As has been pointed out in a recent study, "if anyone deserves to share credit with Morley for initiating the reform scheme, it is Gokhale rather than Minto, although Gokhale's role was, of course, advisory."[24] After the very first interview with Gokhale, Morley wrote to Minto:

> My own impression formed long ago, and confirmed since I came to this office, is that it will mainly depend upon ourselves whether the Congress is a power for good or for evil. There it is, whether we like it or not (and personally I do not like it). Probably there are many rascals connected with the Congress. So there are in most great popular movements of the sort. All the more reason why we should not play the game of the rascals by harshness, stiffness, Fullerism and the like.[25]

Morley, of course, did not consider Gokhale as belonging to the group of 'rascals'. On the contrary, he had high hopes from the Moderate leader and thought he would exercise a moderating influence also on the radicals in the House of Commons who were expected to press for reforms in India. "Say what we will," emphasised the Secretary of State with the obvious purpose of impressing upon the conservative Viceroy the necessity for reforms, "the House of Commons is your master and mine, and we have got to keep terms with it.... You know that I will not yield an inch to them in the way of mischief —but the British radical now prominent in the House of Commons does not know mischief, and I think Gokhale does not mean to lead him that way, if the said Gokhale is rightly handled."[26]

Gokhale was rightly handled, at any rate by Morley. The two men talked quite frankly. Morley reported to the Viceroy after their meeting on August 1, 1906: "He made no secret of his ultimate hope and desire—India to be on the footing of a self-governing colony. I equally made no secret of my conviction, that for many a day to come long beyond the short span of time that may be left to us—this

24 Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India* (Berkeley, 1967), p. 133.

25 The reference here is to the methods of Sir Bampfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, who had acquired notoriety for his repressive policies.

26 Morley to Minto, May 11, 1906, Minto Papers.

was mere dream." The Secretary of State then told Gokhale:

> For reasonable reforms in your direction there is now an unexampled chance. You have a V.R. entirely friendly to them. You have a S. of S. in whom the cabinet, H. of C. and the press of both parties, and so much of the public as troubles its head about India, reposes confidence. The important and influential Civil Service will go with the Viceroy. What situation could be more hopeful? Only one thing can spoil it: Perversity and unreason in your friends. If they keep up the ferment in E. Bengal, that will only make it hard, or even impossible, for Government to move a step. *I ask you for no sort of engagement.* You must, of course, be the judge of your own duty, and I am aware that you have your own difficulties. So be it. We are quite in earnest in our resolution to make an effective move. If your speakers or your newspapers set to work to belittle what we do, to clamour for the impossible, then all will go wrong.[27]

While the interviews with Gokhale were continuing, Morley had written to Minto: "Not one whit more than you do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adopt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India. Assuredly not in your day or mine. But the *spirit* of English institutions is a different thing, and it is a thing that we cannot escape even if we wished, which I hope we don't."[28] A few days later he wrote to the Viceroy in more concrete terms:

> I wonder whether we could not now make a good start in the way of reform in the popular direction.... Why should you not now consider as practical and immediate things,—the extension of the Native element in your Legislative Council; ditto in local councils; full time for discussing Budget in your Legislative Council, instead of four or five skimpy hours; right of moving amendments. (Of course officials would remain a majority). Either do you write me a despatch, or I will write you one—by way of opening the ball.[29]

27 Morley to Minto, 2 August 1906, John Morley, *Recollections* II (New York, 1917), pp. 181-182.

28 Morley to Minto, June 1906, *Ibid.*, p. 173.

29 Morley to Minto, 15 June 1906, *Ibid.*, p. 174.

This marked the beginning of the process which ultimately resulted in the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.

Thus the prospect of reforms which Morley had dangled before Gokhale during their meetings in 1906, was not pure moonshine. The hope of these reforms, however, and the awareness of the price for them as indicated by Morley very much circumscribed and stultified Gokhale's role as a political leader in an India pervaded by the New Spirit. While a fierce struggle was going on in Bengal against the legacy of Curzonism and its bye-product, Fullerism, and the atmosphere was full of Swadeshi, Boycott and Passive Resistance, Gokhale, with all his appeals to the patriotic sentiments of the people and all his efforts to draw the attention of the Government towards their grievances and aspirations, could speak only in a muted voice. For he was genuinely convinced that Morley was sincerely working for constitutional reforms and took his warning rather seriously that the continuation of the ferment in Bengal or even a strong criticism of the Government would jeopardise them. After his last interview with Morley, Gokhale wrote to his close associate, Natesh Appaji Dravid: "I can tell you that we never had so true a friend to our aspirations in a responsible position since Lord Ripon's days and those who can realise the tremendous difficulties against which he has been struggling in his endeavour to advance our cause will understand me when I say that we are only playing into the hands of our opponents in impugning his sincerity or doubting his desire to help me." Proceeding further Gokhale implored Dravid to do what he could to prevent any ungenerous criticism of Morley in the Press and wanted influence to be brought even on Tilak for this purpose: "See Mr. Kelkar and with him see Mr. Tilak if necessary and beg them in my name to exert their influence for the sake of our common country to discourage any declaration on the part of the Indian Press just at present of want of faith in Mr. Morley."[30]

This was asking too much. Tilak had already declared in the course of a speech delivered at Calcutta on 7 June 1906: "Do not expect much from a change in government. Three Ps—pray, please and protest—will not do unless backed by solid force. Look to the examples of Ireland, Japan and Russia and follow their methods." Morley had declared that the partition of Bengal was a 'settled fact' which

30 Gokhale to Dravid, 3 August 1906, Gokhale Papers.

could not be unsettled. Referring to this, Tilak observed: "Do not rely much upon the sympathy of the rulers. Mr. Morley has given a strange illustration of his sympathy on the partition question.... If you forget your grievances by hearing words of sympathy then the cause is gone. You must make a permanent cause of grievances. Store up the grievances till they are removed. Partition grievance will be the edifice for the regeneration of India."[31] Tilak's line was thus diametrically opposed to that of Gokhale. He felt more strongly than ever before that the British authorities, however liberal or enlightened some of them might be, could not be moved by appeals to their sense of justice, but only by organising the strength of the Indian people. As he wrote in an article in July 1906:

> It is no use simply crying for rights or begging for them; we must insist upon our rights and do all that we can... It is true that people have not yet developed adequate strength to destroy British rule and to establish Swaraj; but it is possible to make administration deplorably difficult and to create conditions impossible for the British bureaucracy, by fighting for our rights with determination and tenacity and by Boycott and strikes.[32]

In fact, during Gokhale's sojourn in Britain the divergence between the Moderates and the Extremists had become so pronounced that things seemed to be moving towards a crisis. R.N. Mudholkar, a prominent member of the Moderate camp, wrote to Gokhale in September 1906:

> During your absence events have moved fast, and far into the sea of troubles is the ship of the Congress gone... I am afraid that we are now at the parting of ways with the ardents (sic) and extremists. Either they must definitely abandon the idle chimera of 'an autonomous, independent India freed from British Paramountcy' or they and the Congress Party must separate. We cannot allow them to dominate over us and lead the country into dangerous shoals and eddies.[33]

31 *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches* (Madras, 1922), edn. 3, pp. 45-46.

32 D.P. Karmarkar, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 145-146.

33 Mudholkar to Gokhale, 14 September 1906, Gokhale Papers.

The fear in the Moderate camp that the country might be heading towards such shoals and eddies increased when the Extremists proposed either Tilak or Lajpat Rai for the presidency of the next session of the Congress which was going to be held in Calcutta in December 1906. In order to prevent this contingency the Moderate leaders persuaded the venerable Dadabhai Naoroji to accept the honour. Nobody could, of course, think of opposing him. "Those who were canvassing for Tilak," wrote Surendranath Banerjea to Dadabhai Naoroji, "have given us the assurance that they will unanimously join in electing you as President and have authorised me to communicate the fact to you... you have saved us from a great crisis."[34]

The crisis had merely been staved off. Apart from the venerable personality of the president his address also was well calculated to maintain unity in Congress ranks. While a major portion of the address was devoted to proving that Indians were in fact British citizens and thus entitled to all the rights and privileges of such citizens, these rights were beautifully summed up as self-government and, for the first time in a formal Congress address, this was used as a synonym of *Swaraj*. Said Naoroji: "We do not ask for any favours. We want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be compromised in the word—'self-Government' or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies."[35] Again, while he reaffirmed the validity of the methods of work till then followed by the Congress he also commended the path shown by Bengal. Explaining the role of petitions to Parliament in agitations carried on in Britain he declared: "These petitions are not any begging for any favours any more than that the conventional 'your obedient servant' in letters makes a man an obedient servant... The fact that we have more or less failed hitherto, is not because we have petitioned too much but that we have petitioned too little."[36] At the same time, he also said: "Agitate, agitate over the whole length and breadth of India in every nook and corner—peacefully of course—if we really want to get justice from John Bull. Satisfy him that we are in earnest. The

34 Banerjea to Naoroji, 25 October 1906, R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji* (London, 1939), p. 497.

35 *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress* (Calcutta, 1907), p. 21.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

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32 D.P. Karmarkar, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 145-146.

33 Mudholkar to Gokhale, 14 September 1906, Gokhale Papers.

education—literary, scientific and technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on National lines and under National control."[41] Above all, it had strongly supported the Boycott movement in Bengal: "Resolved that having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the Partition of that Province, was, and is, legitimate."[42]

It was during the discussion on this resolution that differences between the Moderates and Extremists had come into the open. When after much heated argument in the Subjects Committee the resolution finally emerged in the form mentioned above both sides extended their support to it in the open session, but interpreted it in clearly different ways. While seconding this resolution, for instance, Bepin Chandra Pal hoped for the gradual extension of the Boycott movement to all parts of the country. He asserted:

> The only qualification that the authors of this resolution have attached to the word 'Boycott' is, that it shall move..., move from city to city (hear, hear), move from division to division, move, I hope you will allow me to add, from province to province (cheers and hear, hear)... It will move from point to point until God knows where... until every right that we want (cheers) until every liberty will be ours, until in one word, we realise the highest destiny of our people as a nation in the comity of nations.[43]

Speaking next, Gokhale considered it his duty to caution the delegates against accepting such an interpretation of the Boycott resolution. Rereading its text he declared:

> Let us be fair; we are bound by the resolutions of the Congress; we are not bound by the speeches of individuals... This question was carefully considered and it was settled that it should be confined to Bengal. We stand by Bengal in the distress and suffering

41 Resolution XI. *Ibid.*
42 Resolution VII. *Ibid.*
43 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

that Bengal has to endure; but let not Bengal drag us into paths in which we may or may not care to go.[44]

IV

There is no doubt that Gokhale's was the correct interpretation. The resolution had really been based on a compromise between the Moderate and Extremist positions. While it represented an advance on the resolution on this subject passed by the Banaras Congress by supporting the Boycott movement in Bengal in clear and unequivocal terms, it fell short of the demand of the Extremists that its scope be extended to the whole country. The significance of B.C. Pal's speech, however, is that although the Extremists had agreed to the compromise resolution at Calcutta, they were not prepared to give up the struggle to make Boycott the chief instrument of national policy in order to achieve Swaraj. It was equally clear from Gokhale's intervention that the Moderates were not prepared to allow this to happen. This became the main point at issue between the two groups during the period immediately following the Calcutta Congress. In his famous speech at Calcutta on the 'Tenets of the New Party' on 2 January 1907, Tilak presented a brilliant exposition of the dynamics of Boycott:

> We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in Boycott. We have perceived one fact, that the whole administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. The whole Government is carried on with our assistance... We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow.[45]

44 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
45 *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, n. 31, pp. 64-65.

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41 Resolution XI. *Ibid.*
42 Resolution VII. *Ibid.*
43 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

thrown away such opportunities as could be had at present of serving the public." In the end, Gokhale challenged the advocates of Passive Resistance or general boycott to practise what they were preaching by resorting to non-payment of taxes. It was the most direct and the most effective form of Passive Resistance, and it had, moreover, the merit of bringing home to each man the consequences of his own action. "If some of those who were talking of employing Passive Resistance to achieve self-government at the present stage of the country's progress would adopt that form of Passive Resistance, they would soon find out where they stood and how far they were supported."[47] That a man like Gokhale, noted for his sobriety and restraint, should have felt called upon to use such studied sarcasm in his reference to the Extremist leaders highlights the growing cleavage between the two camps.

All this was being closely watched by the British authorities who were feeling increasingly concerned with the prospect of the Extremists taking over the leadership of the Congress. Several weeks before the Calcutta session, Morley had written to Minto: "My general notion is that the Moderates are always at a disadvantage. The same forces that begin the move, continue their propulsive power. The only question is whether by doing what we can in the Moderate direction, we can draw the teeth of the Extremists."[48] Minto agreed with the importance and ugency of this task. "Tilak, as you no doubt know," he wrote in reply, "has an evil reputation, and if he and his party gained control of the Congress, knowing what we do, we could not look upon them otherwise than as irreconcilably hostile to British rule." On the other hand, Minto was very much impressed by Gokhale's letters to Sir William Wedderburn whose copies had arrived as enclosures with Morley's letter. He continued: "Gokhale's letters are very remarkable. They are evidently honest, and the admission he makes as to the weakness of his own countrymen and the strength of our rule in India has impressed me much as coming from him." He could have no objection to dealing with persons like Gokhale, but it would be a different matter if the Extremists came into power in the Congress. "I think myself," added Minto, "much can be done in India by recognising the honesty of the 'moderates' even though

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
48 Morley to Minto, 11 October 1906, Minto Papers.

we may not agree with them... Our friendly recognition of a moderate Congress might, I believe, do much good. If the extremists, such as Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal, gain the ascendancy, it will be impossible to deal with them, and the Congress itself will split up."[49]

When nothing of the kind happened at Calcutta, Minto was apparently satisfied and wrote to Morley: "There has been a stiff fight in Congress between the Extremists and Moderates resulting, as far as one can see at present, in the complete success of the latter."[50] As will be evident from the account of the Calcutta Congress given above, this was a slightly overdrawn picture. Minto's observation was based on the assessment of his secretary, Dunlop Smith, who had got a detailed report from the Maharaja of Darbhanga at whose house in Calcutta the leading figures of the Congress belonging to both sides had met to sort out their differences. Smith had, however, also added: "Darbhanga said that the feeling of the more thoughtful men is that we are now at the parting of the ways, and it very largely depends on Government whether the Congress as a whole is to be a help to, and supporter of, the Government, or is to become the slave of the Extreme section."[51]

As the time for the next Congress session, scheduled to be held at Nagpur, approached it seemed that the parting of the ways could no longer be avoided. Besides the growing differences regarding policy and programme, the choice of the next president was causing acute tension between the two groups. The Extremists were determined this time to have some one from their own ranks as president. The Moderates were equally determined not to allow this to happen. The choice lay with the members of the Reception Committee and as early as the first week of August 1907, it began to appear that unlike at Calcutta no compromise solution was possible at Nagpur. "I was at Nagpur yesterday," wrote Mudholkar to Gokhale that week, "and saw leaders of both the parties there. The situation is declared by the Moderates to be hopeless and from what was said by the Extremist members whom I saw, there is no possibility of a reconciliation."[52] Mudholkar had added that Gokhale was 'the real leader

49 Minto to Morley, 4 November 1906, *Ibid.*
50 Minto to Morley, 2 January 1907, *Ibid.*
51 *Ibid.*
52 Mudholkar to Gokhale, 2 August 1907, Gokhale Papers.

thrown away such opportunities as could be had at present of serving the public." In the end, Gokhale challenged the advocates of Passive Resistance or general boycott to practise what they were preaching by resorting to non-payment of taxes. It was the most direct and the most effective form of Passive Resistance, and it had, moreover, the merit of bringing home to each man the consequences of his own action. "If some of those who were talking of employing Passive Resistance to achieve self-government at the present stage of the country's progress would adopt that form of Passive Resistance, they would soon find out where they stood and how far they were supported."[47] That a man like Gokhale, noted for his sobriety and restraint, should have felt called upon to use such studied sarcasm in his reference to the Extremist leaders highlights the growing cleavage between the two camps.

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47 *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
48 Morley to Minto, 11 October 1906, Minto Papers.

insist on holding their own separate Congress, but they did try to see their nominee elected as president. Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh had been, eariler in the year, deported to Burma because of their role in the anti-government agitation in the Punjab. Gokhale, among others, had condemned this action and successfully brought pressure on the Government for their release. Tilak, whose name had been proposed in the previous year, kept out of the field himself but joined other Extremist leaders in proposing Lajpat Rai for presidentship. The Moderates refused to agree to this proposal and decided to elect Rash Behari Ghose, an eminent Calcutta lawyer. Lajpat Rai was persuaded by Gokhale to withdraw his candidature in the interest of harmony in Congress ranks. This was a sincere gesture of conciliation and although some of the other Extremist leaders were not happy with Lajpat Rai's withdrawal they were all prepared not to make an issue of the presidential election if the Moderates made no effort to whittle down the resolutions on Swadeshi, Swaraj, Boycott and National Education passed at Calcutta. This, however, was a big if. Encouraged by their success on the presidential issue and sure of their majority in the Congress, the Moderates were determined to have their own way also on the resolutions. This is clearly borne out by the draft resolutions circulated by the Reception Committee at Surat. "The Moderates", it has been pointed out in a recent study, "did not play their cards honestly. They had changed the venue, they had outmanoeuvred the Extremists in the selection of the president, and they now put forward vitally altered resolutions on these subjects hoping to pass them by a contrived majority."[54]

Even if one does not question the honesty of the Moderate leaders, it is difficult not to question their wisdom if they still attached any value to maintaining unity in Congress ranks. The course they were following was certainly not conducive to that end. Gokhale was right when he said on 8 January 1908, that no Reception Committee had ever in the past merely reproduced the resolutions of the previous Congress session and that the drafts prepared by it bound nobody as it was for the Subjects Committee to decide in what form they should be finally submitted to the Congress. The same cannot, however, be said about his assertion that the Calcutta resolutions, about which the Extremists

54 Tripathi, n. 5, p. 131.

were feeling agitated, were all there in the drafts "with slight verbal alterations made in one or two of them to remove ambiguity."[55] The fact was that in all the resolutions ambiguity was sought to be removed in such a way as to favour the Moderates and provoke the Extremists. And in one of them the change introduced was not verbal, but vital. Thus while the Calcutta Congress had declared the goal of the Congress to be the establishment in India of "the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies," the draft constitution of the Congress circulated at Surat declared the goal to be the attainment by India of "Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the other members of the British Empire." Regarding Swadeshi while the Calcutta Congress had called upon the Indian people "to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities, even at some sacrifice," the Surat draft merely asked for such preference "where possible". Similarly in the draft resolution on National Education the phrase "on national lines and under national control" contained in the Calcutta resolution was now dropped. The most significant modification was introduced in the resolution relating to Boycott. While the Calcutta resolution had declared "the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal" as legitimate, the Surat draft referred to "the boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal." It is obviou seven from Gokhale's statement explaining these changes that while the Extremists might have been persuaded not to make too much fuss about the first three drafts, they could not accept the fourth one. For, according to Gokhale, the change in the wording of the resolution relating to boycott "had been rendered necessary by the unfair and unjustifiable attempt made by an Extremist leader—Bepin Chandra Pal—from the Congress platform last year and by Mr. Tilak and others in the Press throughout the year, to construe the phraseology employed last year as approving a universal boycott of all forms of association with the Government."[56] This explains why the Moderates were keen to have the new wording, and also why the Extremists could never agree to it. As Nevinson puts it:

> All the difference between Moderates and Extremists—just the one point which made genuine conciliation impossible—lay

55 *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 9, pp. 245-46.
56 *Ibid.*, pp. 247-49.

> implied in that small difference of wording. 'Boycott of foreign goods' was plain; it was a necessary part of Swadeshi, whether used as a political protest or as an encouragement to Indian industries. But 'Boycott Movement' might mean the rejection of almost anything—the rejection of foreign goods, of foreign justice, foreign appointments, foreign education, foreign authority, taxation, Government itself... Here was no half-way house, no common ground for compromise. The alteration in the wording was vital.[57]

Tilak had already announced, three days before the date fixed for the commencement of the Congress session, that he and his followers would not allow it to go back on the Calcutta resolutions. While addressing a meeting of Congress delegates and others at Surat on 23 December 1907, he said, "We have not come to cause a split in the Congress. We do not want to hold a separate Congress. We want to see that the Congress does not go back. We solemnly say that we want to see the Congress moving with the times, we would not allow it to go back." Directing his words at the Moderate leaders he declared: "If you are not prepared to brave the dangers, be quiet, but don't ask us to retrograde. Pray do not come in the way of the ideals which we have received from the last two Congresses."[58] The warning implicit in this declaration was duly implemented. When all efforts to reach a compromise on the draft resolutions failed, the Extremists settled for obstructionist tactics. This could be the only meaning of their decision to challenge the election of Rash Behari Ghose as president at the Congress session when, according to a rule adopted by the Calcutta Congress, this was really a function of the Reception Committee, which had already selected him for that honour.

When the Congress delegates assembled at Surat on the afternoon on 26 December 1907, for the inauguration of the twenty-third Congress, the atmosphere was full of unusual tension and excitement. Because of delay in printing, the draft resolutions had not been circulated in advance and rumour had it that the four Calcutta resolutions were not going to be reiterated at all. The circulation of the drafts just at the time of the commencement of the Congress session failed to reassure the rank and file on this point. Tilak, to whom the

57 Nevinson, n. 2, pp. 252-53.

58 *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, n. 31, pp. 376, 379.

drafts were handed over by Gokhale himself, made it clear he would be satisfied only with the removal of all the changes and the restoration of the original wordings. The speech of the chairman of the Reception Committee, Tribhovandas Malvi, was heard in silence, but trouble began with the formalities regarding the election of the president. At first it did not seem much of a problem and Ambalal S. Desai was able to finish his speech proposing the name of Rash Behari Ghose. Then Surendranath Banerjea stood up to second that proposal. "Hardly had his immense voice uttered ten words," recalls Nevinson who was present there, "when, like the cracking of thunder that begins before lightning ceases, the tumult burst and no word more was heard." In the twinkling of an eye the venue of the Congress session presented a scene of utter disorder.

> The whole ten thousand were on their feet, shouting for order, shouting for tumult. Mr. Malvi, still half in the chair, rang his brass Benares bell, and rang in vain. Surendra Nath sprang upon the very table itself. Even a voice like his was not a whisper in the dim. Again and again he shouted, unheard as silence. He sat down, and for a moment the storm was lulled: The voices of the leaders were audible, consulting in agitated tones... Again Surendra Nath sprang on the table, and again the assembly roared with clamour. Again the Chairman rang his Benares bell, and rang in vain. In an inaudible voice like a sob he declared the sitting suspended.[59]

The session had only been suspended, not abandoned. Throughout the evening and night of 26 December and the morning of 27 December negotiations, consultations and confabulations went on, but to no avail. The gulf between the two sides could not be bridged. The dispute regarding the wording of the resolutions remained unsettled. And in the absence of such a settlement the Extremists remained as determined as ever to challenge the election of the president. The delegates again assembled for the open session on 27 December in the afternoon. The beginning was again peaceful. The proceedings were resumed from where they had been interrupted on the previous day. Surendranath Banerjea completed his speech seconding the motion for electing Rash Behari Ghose as president. Motilal Nehru

59 Nevinson, n. 2, pp. 247-48.

also said a few words supporting the motion. Malvi declared Ghose elected as president and requested him to take the chair. By then shouting and tumult had again begun. Tilak had already sent a note intimating that he would like to move an amendment to the motion regarding the election of the president. Although he had not been called upon to speak, he now proceeded to the platform. Rash Behari Ghose had, in the meanwhile, begun reading his presidential address. He could not proceed beyond the first sentence. Tilak insisted on moving his amendment. He was told that this was out of order, first by Malvi, then by Ghose but he refused to leave the platform and avowed his determination to address the delegates. In the words of Nevinson:

> With folded arms Mr. Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the steep of the platform. Behind him, Dr. Ghose mounted the table, and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations. Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Mr. Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood behind his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Mr. Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling on violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the whiteclad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.
> Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in Chaos.[60]

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 257-58.

This was the end of the Surat Congress. After fighting had gone on for some time, the police entered the pandal and cleared it of all the delegates. Next day the delegates of the two camps met again, not to deliberate together in a Congress session, but separately in their respective conventions. That of the Moderates met in the Congress pandal itself and was attended by over nine hundred delegates, including Lajpat Rai, who until recently had been identified with the Extremists. They appointed a committee to draw up a constitution for the Congress and lay down the lines on which its work was to be carried on. About three hundred delegates were present at the convention called by the Extremists. They also appointed a committee to keep a watch on the situation that had developed as a result of the split. This committee never met, but the one appointed by the Moderates met at Allahabad in April 1908 and drew up a constitution for the Congress. The first article set out the objectives of the Congress and the means for achieving them in such a way as to exclude the Extremists:

> The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These objectives are to be achieved by constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

The second article made it obligatory for every member of the Congress to signify his acceptance of these objectives in writing.[61] This was bound to be considered humiliating by the Extremists and there could be no question of their remaining in the Congress on these terms. What had begun at Surat was thus completed at Allahabad. The split in Congress ranks had come to stay, at any rate, for the time being.

61 *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress* (Madras, 1909), Appendix B.

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The major share of responsibility for this split must be borne by the Moderates although the Extremists were not absolutely free from blame. From the very beginning the former were determined not to give any quarter to the Extremists but maintain their exclusive hold over the Congress. The Moderates were against adopting any resolution which might reflect the thinking of the Extremists and thereby annoy the British, particularly John Morley, from whom they continued to have high expectations in the field of constitutional reforms. This alone can explain their opposition to have any Extremist leader as president of the Congress, the shifting of the venue of the twenty-third Congress session from Nagpur to Surat, the effort to modify the resolution regarding boycott and the refusal to have any serious dialogue with the Extremists on this point. The conclusion is inescapable that they wanted to force the latter to either modify their stand or quit the Congress. This is clearly borne out by the text of the undelivered presidential address of Rash Behari Ghose which contained these words: "The National Congress is definitely committed only to constitutional methods of agitation to which it is fast moored. If the new party does not approve of such methods and cannot work harmoniously with the old—it has no place within the pale of the Congress. Secession, therefore, is the only course open to it."[62]

On the other hand, some of the Extremists also seemed to be itching for a fight. While Tilak was for a policy of conciliation based on give and take, the same cannot be said about Aurobindo. Writing in the *Bande Mataram* dated 4 December 1907, he ridiculed the *Bangalee's* stress on unity and remarked:

> The error of the *Bengalee's* argument is that it confuses political unity, which is a necessary condition of independence, with unity of opinion and action which is an immense help, if the opinion and the action are in the right direction, but certainly not indispensable. It is not true that unity, even political unity, is identical with freedom, for a nation may be united in bondage or united in submission to a foreign and absolutist rule. We

62 *The Surat Congress* (Madras, 1908), p. 29.

> Nationalists have no desire to break the Congress or to part company with our less forward countrymen, but we have our path to follow and our work to do, and if you will not allow us a place in the assembly you call National, we will make one for ourselves out of it and around it, until one day you will find us knocking at your doors with the nation at our back and in the name of an authority even you will not dare to deny.[63]

At Surat, he seems to have played the key role in inspiring those in the Extremist ranks who did the shouting on 26 December and joined in fighting the next day. He himself wrote later: "Very few people know that it was I, (without consulting Tilak), who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress."[64]

Yet it will not be proper to give the entire credit—if at all it was a credit—for the breaking up of the Surat Congress to Aurobindo. On the fateful day, the Extremists had definitely been provoked into acting in an unseemly manner by the threats hurled by the Moderates at Tilak, while he was standing on the platform and insisting on his right to address the delegates. In this connection it is important to remember that the 'Mahratta shoe' which hit Surendranath Banerjea and Pherozeshah Mehta had actually been thrown at Tilak by a person belonging to the Moderate camp, as is clear from the Government and other reports of the time.[65] Again, it is revealing of the temper of some of the Moderate leaders that when the Surat Congress broke up in confusion Pherozeshah Mehta, the most dominant figure among them, remarked that what had happened was not a surprise to him and that it was a blessing in disguise, as the Congress would now emerge as a 'stronger and healthier body.'[66] When a few months later Bhupendranath Basu, a prominent Moderate leader of Bengal, raised the issue of reconciliation with the Extremists, he wrote in reply: "I cannot help saying that there is a great deal of mawkish sentimentality in the passionate appeals for union at all costs.

63 Mukherjee and Mukherjee, n. 7, p. 250.

64 Aurobindo Ghose, *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Pondicherry, 1953), p. 81.

65 For details see Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature* (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 213-15.

66 H.P. Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta: A Political Biography* (Bombay, 1921), II, p. 540.

For my part, I think it is most desirable that each set of distinct convictions should have their separate Congress."[67]

Tilak, in contrast, adopted a conciliatory attitude even after the break-up of the Surat Congress and looked forward to the day, when the Congress would again meet as a united body holding both the Moderates and Extremists in its ranks. Suggesing the appointment of a committee to watch the developments following the split and, if possible, make arrangements for a meeting of the Congress, he observed on 28 December 1907: "The committee to be appointed would work, not in a spirit of rivalry with the other party, but in a spirit of cooperation wherever possible." He also expressed the hope that "within a short time, by the grace of Providence, an opportunity would present itself when both the parties would again be united for the purpose not only of resisting the repressive measures of the Government, but of advancing towards the goal of self-government unfolded last year."[68] Even Aurobindo modified his somewhat aggressive attitude adopted earlier and let it be known that the Extremists were not interested in founding a separate organisation, but would like to continue in the same organisation along with the Moderates, without questioning their ascendancy over it at that time, provided it was honourably possible to do so, *i.e.*, the Extremists remained free to propagate their own line with a view to ultimately converting the majority in the Congress to it. Commenting on Article two of the proposed constitution, which would, in effect, debar the Extremists from membership of the Congress, he wrote in the *Bande Mataram,* dated 23 March 1908:

> The Congress is an expression of the life of the nation, and the will and aspiration of the nation must decide the function and object of the Congress; but that will and aspiration are not immutable; they develop, change, progress, and it is always the function of the dissentient minority to stand for that potential development and progress without which life is impossible. The exclusion of the minority by a rigid shibboleth means the perpetuation in the Congress of a state of things which may correspond for the moment to the desire of the nation, but

67 *Ibid.*, p. 549.
68 *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, n. 31, p. 389.

> may cease so to correspond in a few years. It means the conversion of a national assembly into a party caucus.[69]

Such words, however, fell on deaf ears and the Moderates went ahead with their plan to reorganise the Congress in such a way as to exclude the Extremists. In this they easily succeeded and maintained their exclusive control over the Congress from 1908 to 1915. But the Extremists had the last laugh. Baptised by the fire of suffering and sacrifice which had increasingly become their lot while the Moderates had been busy in the Morley-Minto councils, they re-entered the Congress in 1916 on the crest of a new wave of nationalist upsurge in the wake of the First World War and soon established such a dominant position in that body that in 1918 the Moderates voluntarily seceded from it. They later organised themselves into the National Liberal Federation which functioned as a small group of eminent individuals, with only a marginal role in Indian politics, while the Congress, its base constantly widening, continued to maintain its unrivalled position as the premier political organisation in the country. The secret behind this sequel to the Surat split was that while the Moderates controlled the Organisation in 1907, the Extremists had the historical forces on their side. They represented the wave of the future.

69 Mukherjee and Mukherjee, n. 7, pp. 301-02.

NEHRU AND TAGORE

R.K. DAS GUPTA

WHEN Walter Savage Landor wrote an imaginary conversation between Pericles and Sophocles many wondered if there was really any link between the great statesman and the great poet of ancient Greece to give the dialogue some historical truth. But the two were actually very much put together in the most glorious period of Attic history. Sophocles was twice a general, several times an ambassador and once a treasurer of tribute in the age of Pericles. Yet there is not a page in the dramas of Sophocles which refers to any public question of the times. Nor do we have any means of knowing how the statesman was influenced by the ideas of the poet. Nevertheless we can perceive certain virtues, clarity and fineness, for example, which are common to both. Pericles' historic funeral oration was possible only in an age which saw the tragedies of Sophocles, and the orderliness and grace which Plutarch admired in the Periclean buildings on the Acropolis also mark a Sophoclean chorus. It would have been so even if the two men were not so closely associated in their public careers. They represent a common intellectual inheritance which they also enriched by their genius.

When we mention Nehru and Tagore together we have certainly a more obvious reason to do so. They knew each other, wrote on each other and collaborated directly or indirectly in service to the nation. We are, however, yet to realize the importance of this association in an understanding of Indian life in this century. The historian and the student of politics would study Nehru in relation to Gandhi of whom he was the political disciple and political heir. And a great statesman has necessarily closer and more purposeful links with another great statesman than with a poet. They belonged to the same political organization; for over thirty years they were associated in drawing up its policies and executing them in a national

movement of which they were the two most outstanding leaders. Nehru has himself recorded in his autobiography how profound was his response to Gandhi. "I was simply bowled over by Gandhi, straight off", he said. After the Nagpur Congress in 1920, he was so deeply influenced by Gandhi's ethical ideas, that he gave up smoking for five years, for some time tried vegetarianism and began reading the *Bhagavadgita*. "Gandhi was like a powerful current of fresh air", he said in *The Discovery of India*, "that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of people's minds."

Yet a student of Nehru's life and thought will discover that there is a great deal in both that we cannot understand without disconnecting him from what is called Gandhism. And Nehru himself understood this. In the chapter entitled 'Desolation' in his autobiography he confesses that although 'Gandhiji's greatness or his services to India or the tremendous debt I personally owed to him were not in question, ... he might be hopelessly in the wrong in many matters... Gandhiji has been compared to the medieval Christian saints and much that he says seems to fit in with this." There was a spirit of modernity in Nehru which was out of tune with what he thought to be medieval in Gandhi's religious and moral outlook. So in his deep love for Bapu he found himself in an intellectual predicament, a kind of spiritual ambivalence which he never tried to conceal from others or from himself. Let us imagine a learned Christian Father of the early Middle Ages who even realising the supreme importance of the new faith, the power of its ethical and spiritual ideas in shaping the lives of the masses and in producing a new society is unable to shed his love for the light and glory of Hellenic culture. There was indeed a Hellenist in Nehru desiring a fullness of intellectual life, although he never believed that such a life was possible only in ancient Greece and was foreign to the genius of the Indian civilization. "India is far nearer in spirit and outlook to the old Greece than the nations of Europe are today", he says in *The Discovery of India*.

In this search for a complete life Nehru discovered in Tagore an inspiring exponent of the ideal. If we have so far given little attention to this relationship between the two it is due to our preoccupation with Nehru's political life alone which was influenced mostly by Gandhi and a consequent neglect of his achievement as a humanist

and an intellectual. Moreover, the circumstances of Nehru's political life did not permit a close and continuous contact with the Poet.

For one thing, Nehru knew nothing of the writings of Tagore during the seven years of his studies in England, at Harrow, Cambridge and London. When he entered Harrow in 1905, Tagore was composing patriotic songs for the volunteers who were burning Lancashire cotton goods in the streets of Calcutta as a part of the anti-Partition Movement. When Nehru was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple in June 1912, Tagore was in London where he arrived on the 16th of that month. For at least six weeks the two were in in the same city without knowing each other. Nehru attended an annual session of the Congress for the first time at Bankipur in December 1912. But it is extremely unlikely that he had either seen a copy of the English *Gitanjali* issued by the India Society in London the previous month, or heard about the *Jana-gana-mana* sung at the annual session of the Congress held in Calcutta the previous year. We can, however, assume that his acquaintance with Tagore's works began in 1913 when six volumes of his works appeared in English. But it may be an error to imagine that he was deeply moved by the poems in the English *Gitanjali* or the essays in *Sadhana*. One would rather guess that he responded more readily to the three books published in 1917, *My Reminiscences, Nationalism and Personality*. There is no reference to his readings in Tagore in his autobiography. Perhaps he read a few things by him when he won the Nobel Prize in literature in November 1913.

It is difficult to say when Nehru met Tagore for the first time. In 1917, the year of the Montagu's declaration Nehru was a full-fledged politician; he was elected Secretary of the Home Rule League in Allahabad and member of the All-India Congress Committee for the first time that year. So he must have heard of the election of Tagore as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta on 11 September that year and of his stepping down from that office in favour of Baikunthanath Sen. On the first day of the Calcutta Congress which Nehru attended Tagore read out his poem called 'India's Prayer.'

In his autobiography Nehru says that "on our way back from the Calcutta Special Congress I accompanied Gandhiji to Santiniketan on a visit to Rabindranath Tagore and his lovable elder brother *'Boro Dada.'* This "special session" of the Congress was

held in September 1920, and when Gandhi and his companions visited Santiniketan the Poet was away in Europe. Gandhi and Nehru stayed at Santiniketan for some days, but Nehru's visit was unnoticed and there is no mention of him in the *Ashram* journal for the month.

In his Tagore Centenary address delivered in Bombay on 1 January 1961, on the other hand, Nehru said that perhaps his first visit to Santiniketan was in 1921. Obviously he was recalling his visit to Santiniketan in 1920. Since in the autobiography he says that his visit to Santiniketan in 1934 in the company of his wife was his third trip to the place, it is evident that he had met the Poet only in the second of these two earlier visits. Perhaps that visit took place in September 1921 when Gandhi was in Calcutta, that is, a few months before Nehru's first imprisonment on 6 November that year.

Tagore was then a very controversial figure owing to his disapproval of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. He was nevertheless held in esteem by the Congress leaders, and this esteem was deepened by the renunciation of his Knighthood on 30 May 1919 as a protest against the Amritsar massacre. Recalling this meeting Nehru said in his Tagore Centenary address: "Greatly attracted as I was to Tagore, I still felt a little irritated that he should criticize some of the aspects of the new movement that Gandhi had started." Nehru must have already read Gandhi's replies to the criticism published in *Young India* on 1 June 1921.

In the ten years between 1921 and 1931 there was very little contact between Nehru and Tagore. Nehru served five terms of imprisonment during the period and there was little opportunity for reviving the acquaintance. But in 1931 there was an occasion to give expression to his respect for the Poet when the editor of the *Golden Book of Tagore* published that year asked him for a message. The few lines that Nehru sent from Allahabad are much more than a conventional tribute. It is an expression of a personal gratitude for something that he had obtained from his writings:

> For those who have grown up in the Tagore tradition in India it is a little difficult to measure the great influence it has exercised on them and on the country. I cannot venture to do so. But I wish to pay my deep homage to one who has been as a beacon light to all of us, ever pointing to the finer and nobler aspects of life and never allowing us to fall in the ruts which kill individuals

as well as nations. Nationalism, specially when it urges us to fight for freedom is noble and life-giving. But often it becomes a narrow creed and limits and encompasses its votaries and makes them forget the many-sidedness of life. But Rabindranath Tagore has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism and has enriched it with art and music and the magic of his words, so that it has become the full-blooded emblem of India's awakened spirit.

Obviously Nehru had by this time read Tagore's *Nationalism* (1917), *The Home and the World* (1919) and *Creative Unity* (1922). As a regular reader of the *Modern Review* to which he used to contribute articles, he was acquainted with a good deal of Tagore's works translated into English. In *The Home and the World* a character says: 'I am both afraid and ashamed to make use of hypnotic texts of patriotism' and asks an ardent patriot: 'How is it that you propose to conduct your worship of God by hating other countries in which he is equally manifest?' And in *Nationalism* Tagore said:

'The Nation has thriven long upon mutilated humanity. Men, the fairest creations of God, come out of the national manufactory in huge numbers as war-making and money making puppets, ludicrously vain of their pitiful perfection of mechanism. Human society grew more and more into a marionette show of politicians, soldiers, manufacturers and bureaucrats pulled by wire arrangements of wonderful efficiency.

On 19 January 1934, Nehru and his wife reached Santiniketan to make arrangements for their daughter's education there. Visva-Bharati arranged an impressive reception to the guests at Uttarayan where the Poet himself chanted Vedic hymns. Nehru was so touched by the hymns, that he wrote to Anil Chanda for their English version. Indira joined the Visva-Bharati as a student in July 1934, when her father was a prisoner in Alipur Central Jail in Calcutta.

A little after this third visit to Santiniketan a situation arose in which Nehru had to comment publicly on a statement by Gandhi and in this he found himself on the side of Tagore. When after the Bihar earthquake (January 1934), Nehru was in Patna to organize relief work, Gandhi said that the calamity was a retribution for the

sin of untouchability. This almost angered the Poet who in a statement later published in the *Harijan* of 16 February 1934 said:

> We feel perfectly secure in the faith that our own sins and errors however enormous, have not enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins. We who are immensely grateful to Mahatmaji for inducing by his wonder-working inspiration freedom from fear and feebleness in the minds of his countrymen, feel profoundly hurt when any words from his mouth may emphasize the elements of unreason which is a fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect.

Nehru wrote in his autobiography, "I read with great shock Gandhiji's statement to the effect that the earthquake had been a punishment for the sin of untouchability. This was a staggering remark and I welcomed and wholly agreed with Rabindranath Tagore's answer to it." The controversy brought out an important affinity between Nehru and Tagore in their rational approach to life.

From some letters included in *Glimpses of World History* it appears that Nehru had acquainted himself with a good deal of Tagore's writings at least a year before his third visit to Santiniketan in January 1934. The letter dated 1 February 1933 dealing with some famous writers begins with Goethe and the only Indian in his roll of poets is Rabindranath Tagore. But while he quotes from Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* and Goethe's *Faust*, he only mentions Tagore as a magnificent example of culture. He knew about the power of Tagore's poetry on those who read him in the original and realized that he could see but little of it through English translation. In *Glimpses of World History* he said: "There was a cultural awakening also specially in Bengal. Bengali writers made the Bengali language the richest of India's modern languages, and Bengal produced one of the greatest of our countrymen of this age, the poet Rabindranath Tagore who is happily still with us." The last letter in the *Glimpses of World History* is dated 9th August 1933 and it ends with a poem from the English *Gitanjali* and the choice of the poem shows how Nehru responded to a particular class of Tagore's poems, not to the devotional lyrics, but to the verse that expressed his deep humanity and hope for a brighter world. At the end of the letter he says: "All

of us have our choice of living in the valleys below, with their unhealthy mists and fogs, but giving a measure of bodily security; or of climbing the high mountains, with risk and danger for companions, to breathe the pure air above, and take joy in the distant views, and welcome the rising sun. I have given you many quotations and extracts from poets and others in this letter. I shall finish up with one more. It is from the *Gitanjali:* it is a poem or prayer by Rabindranath Tagore:

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
> Where knowledge is free;
> Where the world has not been broken up into narrow domestic walls;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
> Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—into that heaven of freedom, let my country awake.

About three weeks after his visit to Santiniketan, Nehru was arrested on 11 February 1934 on a charge of sedition for a speech in Calcutta. And when he was in prison his wife fell seriously ill and was sent to Europe for treatment. In October that year the Poet sent a message to the Governor of the United Provinces making a plea for the release of Nehru to enable him to meet his wife in Europe. Since the Government did not move in the matter Tagore sent a telegram to the Viceroy when the condition of Kamala Nehru became critical in August 1935. In a telegram dated 2 September 1935 the poet said: "Having alarming news of Mrs. Jawaharlal Nehru's condition, doctors desire her husband's presence by her side. In name of humanity I appeal to your Excellency to release Pandit Nehru immediately enabling him proceed Europe next air-mail." Nehru was released on 4 September.

Kamala Nehru died on 28 February 1936 and the address which the poet gave at the memorial service at Santiniketan on 8 March contains one of the finest tributes ever paid to Nehru: "Jawaharlal has undoubted right to the throne of Young India. His is a majestic

character, unflinching in his patient determination and indomitable in his courage; but what raises him far above his fellows is his unwavering adherence to moral integrity and intellectual honesty. He has kept unusually high the standard of purity in the midst of political turmoil where deceptions of all kinds, including that of one's self, run rampant. He has never fought shy of truth when it was dangerous, nor made alliance with falsehood when it would be convenient to do so. His brilliant mind has always turned away in outspoken disgust from the path of diplomacy where success is as easy as it is mean. This lofty idealism and undeviated pursuit of truth are Jawaharlal's greatest contribution in his fight for freedom.

"Today is the day of our festival of spring... on this occasion it will meet to associate the stirring of new life in the nation with that of the spring time. And Jawaharlal is the *Rituraj* representing the renewal of youth and triumphant joy, of an invincible spirit of fight and uncompromising loyalty to the cause of freedom." Nehru was deeply touched by the words when he read them in the *Visva-Bharati News* and wrote to the Poet on 1 April: "I wish to tell you, if I may, how much strengthened I feel by your blessings and by the thought that you are there to keep us, erring ones, on the straight path."

Nehru's bereavement brought him closer to the Poet who too began to watch his career more closely and keenly than ever. When the autobiography came out in 1936 the Poet read it with great interest and called it a 'great book' in a letter to the author dated 31 May 1936 and added: "I feel intensely impressed and proud of your achievements. Through all its details there runs a deep current of humanity which overpasses the tangles of facts and leads us to the person who is greater than his deeds and truer than his surroundings." Nehru valued the appreciation and in a letter to the Poet dated 10 June that year he said: "Many friends have used words of praise for my book, some have criticised it. But what you have written goes to my heart and cheers and strengthens me. With your blessings and goodwill I feel I can face a world of opposition. The burdens become lighter and the road straighter."

Nehru's next visit to the Poet, apart from a brief meeting at the Delhi railway station in March, took place in November 1936 when he was in Bengal in connection with the elections. He went to Santiniketan on 4 November accompanied by Mr. and Mrs.

Kripalani, visited a Santal village and addressed a public meeting. He had a confidential talk with the Poet about the affairs in Bengal.

Tagore invited Nehru to inaugurate the China Bhavan at Santiniketan on 1 January 1937. Nehru was too busy at the time to come to Santiniketan and sent a written speech through his daughter which was read on the occasion.

Nehru's next visit to the Poet was in January 1939, when on the 31st of that month he inaugurated the Hindi Bhavan at the Visva-Bharati.

Nehru too was keen to associate the Poet with certain public works which he thought he could do without taking himself away from the quiet life of a Poet. On 24 April 1936, he wrote to the Poet about the urgent need for an Indian Civil Liberties Union and on 8 July the same year he asked for the Poet's permission to include his name in the list of its foundation members. The Poet gave his consent in a letter dated 18 July and also agreed to the proposal of making Sarojini Naidu the first president of the Union. On 21 July Nehru wrote to the Poet again requesting him to be the honorary president of the Union adding that "there is obviously no other person in India who could better fill that place." The Poet replied "If my name gives you any help in the cause for which I have every sympathy, you should most certainly have it." There is a great deal in the correspondence between Nehru and Tagore to show that in the last years of the Poet's life the two were very close to each other in their ideas on the most important problems of the day. When Miss Rathbone addressed an open letter to Indians asking them to support Britain's war as gratitude for all that her country had done for them, the Poet issued a statement from his sick-bed on 4 June 1941 in which he said: "Miss Rathbone's letter is mainly addressed to Jawaharlal Nehru and I have no doubt that if that noble fighter for freedom's battle had not been encaged behind prison bars by her countrymen he would have made a fitting and spirited reply to her gratuitous sermon. His enforced silence makes it necessary for me to voice a protest even from my sick-bed."

In 1937 when the Congress Working Committee was considering objections to the *Bande Mataram* being officially adopted as a national anthem Nehru sought the Poet's advice. He placed before the Congress Committee Tagore's view on the song that the first two stanzas could be accepted as a national song and it was accepted.

When the poet died on 7 August 1941 Nehru was in the District Jail, Dehra Dun. In a letter to Krishna Kripalani he said:

> Instead of sorrow let us rather congratulate ourselves that we were privileged to come in contact with this great and magnificent person. Perhaps it is as well that he dies when he was still pouring our song and poem and poetry—what amazing creative vitality he had. I would have hated to see him fade away gradually. He died as he should in the fullness of his glory... I have met many big people in various parts of the world. But I have no doubt in my mind that the two biggest I have had the privilege of meeting have been Gandhi and Tagore.

In a letter to Amal Home dated 18 August the same year Nehru said about Tagore: "When the time comes I suppose I shall write about him." Actually he did not have the time to write about him more than what is to be found in *The Discovery of India* published in 1946. Giving a general estimate of the Poet he says in this work: "More than any other Indian he has helped to bring into harmony the ideal of the east and the west and broadened the bases of Indian nationalism.... Strong individualist as he was, he became an admirer of the great achievements of the Russian Revolution, specially in the spread of education, culture, health and the spirit of equality." Comparing Gandhi with Tagore, he said: "No two persons could be so different from one another in their make-up or temperaments. Tagore, the aristocratic artist-turned democrat, with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural tradition of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going through it with song and dance. Gandhi more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of the Indian peasant, represented the other ancient tradition of India, that of renunciation and asceticism. And yet Tagore was primarily the man of thought, Gandhi of concentrated and ceaseless activity. Both, in their different ways, had a world-outlook and both were at the same time wholly Indian. They seemed to represent different, but harmonious aspects of India and to complement one another."

Fifteen years later Nehru did not stress this harmony of ideas between Gandhi and Tagore. In the Introducion to the *Tagore Centenary Volume* published by our Sahitya Akademi Nehru wrote:

"Gandhi came on the public scene of India like a thunderbolt shaking us all and like a flash of lightning which illumined our minds and warmed our hearts. Tagore's influence was not so sudden or so earth-shaking for Indian humanity. And yet like the coming of the dawn in the mountains it crept on us and permeated us. Perhaps we did not fully realize at the time because of the powerful impact of Gandhi's thunderbolt." In his Tagore Centenary address delivered in Bombay on 1 January 1961, he said something even more striking "I was very much more in contact with Gandhiji and he affected me tremendously. And yet my mind was a little more in tune with Tagore although all my activities were conditioned by Gandhiji."

This inner affinity between the two minds is yet to be understood, and that understanding will give us a fresh perspective of the mind of Nehru. It is true Nehru had no direct acquaintance with the works of Tagore and it is equally true that he had no deep response to the religious lyrics of the mystic poet. But he seized something in the total achievement of Tagore as the most important exponent of the Indian Renaissance which the lovers of his devotional songs may not have properly understood. He understood Tagore as the soul of modern India, the internationalist and humanist, the inheritor of the rational and humanist ideals of Raja Rammohun Roy. Isaiah Berlin has somewhere called Tagore an intellectual leader and I am afraid there are not a few admirers of Tagore who will not understand what this means when said about a poet. Nehru realized the impact of Tagore's ideas on the modern Indian mind and called it one of the shaping influences on our life today. Reading *Glimpses of World History*, Bertrand Russell remarked that he did not believe that any politician in the western world knew so much history. This extraordinary knowledge of history gave Nehru a perspective of Tagore which is denied to less knowledgeable admirers of the Poet. In his introduction to a volume of Tagore's essays called *Towards Universal Man* Humayun Kabir has said: "In this process of increasing concern with the whole world Tagore also realized that India, if she is to make a contribution to a universal humanism, must adopt a positive and creative attitude to all problems." Nehru understood this creative side in the ideas of Tagore in so far as they related to the regeneration of India in a regenerate world. He had himself a creative mind and those who have read his prose carefully must have felt that he had

a remarkable aesthetic sensibility which he could combine with a severely rational mind.

Nehru responded to Tagore so deeply because he discovered in him something that was essential to his inner being. That such minds came together in the most creative period of modern Indian history is a cheering evidence of the unity of national being and national aspiration. Further research in the lives of these two outstanding men of the century may bring out a great deal that will speak of a poet in the statesman and a statesman in the poet. Both were indeed extraordinary in their sphere of work and neither can be understood in terms of standards generally employed in our approaches to politicians and poets. Such efforts at understanding Nehru and Tagore as collaborators in a common human task seem essential for an understanding of what we now stand for and must achieve.

In the last ten years of his life Tagore was deeply concerned about three major problems of our national life, social reconstruction, political action and international relations. What the Poet wrote or said on them during this decade seems relevant to the study of Nehru's ideas on national movement and international order. Perhaps the most convenient starting-point for such a study would be Tagore's *Letters from Russia,* a collection of letters written in Bengali during his stay in Soviet Russia in 1930, published in 1931 and now available in Dr. S. Sinha's English translation published in 1960. The book suggests comparison with Nehru's *Soviet Russia,* a collection of his articles written soon after his first visit to the USSR in 1927 and first published serially in *Hindu,* Madras. There is a good deal in the first chapter of this book, 'Fascination of Russia' which anticipates Tagore's impression of the country recorded in his *Letters from Russia.* "Russia interests us", wrote Nehru, "because it may help us to find some solution for the great problems which face the world today. It interests specially because conditions there have not been, and are not, even now, very dissimilar to conditions in India." Tagore wrote in his *Letters from Russia:* "In the course of a few short years the ignorant masses have become full-fledged human beings. I cannot help thinking of the farmers and workers of my own country."

Tagore had no programme for political action, but he was unequivocal in his rejection of terrorism as a technique of political struggle. *Char Adhyaya* his last novel published in 1934 (English

translation by Surendranath Tagore, *Four Chapters,* 1950) is certainly not a political tract against terrorism in the form of a novel. But the picture of the terrorist party led by Indranath is unmistakably a comment on the inadequacies and dangers of the movement as its author saw it in Bengal. Two years later in his address as President of Indian National Congress at Lucknow, Nehru said: "Terrorism is always a sign of political immaturity in a people, just as constitutionalism, where there is no democratic constitution, is a sign of political senility. Our national movement has long outgrown that immature stage, and even the odd individuals who have in the past indulged in terrorist acts have apparently given up that tragic and futile philosophy." The last chapter of *Four Chapters* where Indranath asks Antu to kill Ela an active member of the party fearing that she may be forced to disclose their secrets to the police is a moving episode: it also shows the inevitable tragedy and futility of the philosophy of terrorist action.

But while the Poet was opposed to terrorism he nevertheless stressed the supreme importance of an awakening of the working class in national reconstruction. What he said in his *Letters from Russia* about the common people he makes more vivid in a short play *Rather Rashi* written in 1932 and dedicated to Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. It is a revised form of *Rathyatra* published in *Prabasi* in 1923. But the revision is particularly significant due to its link with the ideas in *Letters from Russia.* In the original play the *Rath,* that is, the chariot, is important: in the revised play it is the rope which is important. When a large number of men and women have assembled to witness the chariot in motion it is discovered that it cannot be moved. The Brahmin priest cannot move it, the soldiery pulls it in vain, the merchants try and fail. In great despair the worshippers chant their sacred words, but the chariot does not move an inch. Then the *Sudras,* the men and women who are not ordinarily permitted to touch the rope come and give motion to the chariot. The Poet ends the play with these words:

ajker mato balo sabai mile–
yara etadin marechhila tara uthuk benche,
yara yuge yuge chhila khato haye tara danrak ekbar matha tule

(Let all of us proclaim today that those who were so long dead

have raised their heads; those who have been slighted through the ages must raise their heads today)

About three years before the composition of the play, Nehru said in his presidential address at the Lahore Congress: "Great as was the success of India in evolving a stable society she failed in a vital particular and because she failed in this she fell and remains fallen. India deliberately ignored this and built up her social structure on inequality and we have the tragic consequences of this in the millions of our people who till yesterday were suppressed and had little opportunity for growth."

No less striking is the similarity of their attitudes to international relations in the thirties of the century. In the late thirties of the century the Indian National Congress had to redefine its approach to a changing international situation, and it was Nehru who took a leading part in spelling out that approach. Japan's aggression against China, Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, the Spanish Civil War, the Russo-Finnish War and finally the outbreak of the Second World War asked for a clear thinking on the international scene and Nehru was particularly exercised about it because since the Brussels Conference of 1927 he was a lonely person in the Congress in respect of his international ideas.

Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations upon being invaded by Italy on 2-4 October 1935. Six months later Nehru declined an invitation from Mussolini to meet him in Rome on his way home from Europe. On 5 May 1936, he issued a statement saying: "We in India can do nothing to help Ethiopia for we also are the victims of imperialism. But we can at least send them our deep sympathy in this hour of their trial. We stand with them to-day in their sorrow as we expect to stand together when better days come." Recalling his reaction to world events in 1936, Nehru wrote in the autobiography how he thought that General Franco's revolt in Spain with "its background of German and Italian assistance would develop into a European or even a world conflict."

Tagore stated his view of the world situation in a message to the World Peace Congress organized by Romain Rolland in September 1936: "If peace is to be anything more than the mere absence of war, it must be founded on the strength of the just and not on the weariness of the weak. The groan of peace in Abyssinia is no less ghastly

than the howl of war in Spain. If then we are to strive for that true peace in which the satisfaction of one people is not built on the frustration of another, then the average peace-loving citizen of the successful nations of today must extricate himself from the obvious anomaly of wishing for peace while sharing the spoils of war, which exposes the wish to the charge of mere pretence. He must not let himself be bribed on the promise of prosperity and honour and call it patriotism. We cannot have peace until we deserve it by paying its full price, which is that the strong must cease to be greedy and the weak must learn to be bold."

Mussolini's attack on Abyssinia and Japan's aggression against North China and Mongolia exposed to the Poet the hypocrisy of those who committed the worst of crimes against man while proclaiming the higher ideals of Christianity and Buddhism. In the poem entitled 'Africa' first published in *Prabasi* in April 1937 and later included as poem No. 16 in *Patraput* published the same year the Poet said:

You wept and your cry was smothered,
your forest trails became muddy with tears and blood,
while the nailed boots of the robbers
left their indelible prints
along the history of your indignity.
And all the time across the sea,
church bells were ringing in their towns, and villages
the children were lulled in their mothers' arms
and poets sang hymns to beauty.

In the same year he composed his poem 'Buddhang sharranag gacchami' first published in *Prabasi* and later included as poem No. 17 in *Patraput* about the paradox of Japanese soldiers praying in Buddhist temples for success in war against China:

and therefore they march to the temple of Buddha,
the compassionate,
to claim his blessings,
while loud beats the drum rate-at-rat
and earth trembles.

Towards the end of the year Tagore said, what Nehru had been saying since 1935, that the strategic alliances amongst aggressive nations and colonial powers may lead to restrictions on civil liberty even in countries where it had been traditionally an unlimited liberty. In a message to the Civil Liberties Conference in London held in October 1937, he said: "When rivalry for colonial exploitation becomes still more acute, the British citizens will find it necessary to arm their government at home with extraordinary powers to defend their possessions abroad. Then they will suddenly wake up to find that they have forfeited their own liberty and drifted into fascist grip."

After the infamous Munich deal the Poet wrote to his Czech friend Professor Lesny: "It is a tragic revelation that the destiny of all those principles of humanity for which the people of the West have turned martyrs for three centuries, rest in the hands of cowardly guardians who are selling it to save their own skins. It turns one cynical to see their democratic people betraying their democratic kind when even the bullies stand by each other." The letter was published in *Hindustan Standard* on 10 November 1938. How identical was this view with Nehru's one can see from the latter's letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad dated 22 February 1940: "Following an imperialist line the Chamberlain Government was utterly reactionary and on many occasions they encouraged the Fascist and Nazi powers and crushed democracy in Europe."

In the same year Tagore wrote his two historic letters to the Japanese poet Yoni Noguchi. In the first he called Noguchi's indifference to the Japanese aggression against China "another symptom of the modern intellectuals' betrayal of humanity" and in the second he told him that "he cannot appeal to Chiang Kai-shek to give up resisting until the aggressors have first given up their aggression."

When Soviet Russia invaded Finland in November 1939 Tagore collected information for an article on the subject in Pramatha Chaudhuri's paper *Alaka* and he was so keen to see it published that in a letter dated 13 January 1940 he asked the editor to send it to *Parichaya* because *Alaka* was not appearing regularly. At the end of the article which was published in *Alaka* he said "even if Russia wins this unequal fight she will have reason to be ashamed." The Poet was so agitated over this that he abruptly ended his poem entitled 'Apaghat' composed at Kalimpong in the summer of 1940 and

included in *Sanai* (published the same year) with the lines, "A telegram has reached just now saying Finland has been battered by Soviet bombs." In the month in which Tagore wrote his article on Finland in *Alaka* Nehru wrote in *National Herald* (19 January 1940) that "the armed invasion of Finland passed these bounds, and Russia lined herself with aggressor nations and thereby was false to the traditions she had herself nourished for these many years."

This identity of approach to the most pressing international questions of the day was significant because it was due to a basic affinity between their world views and their perspectives of Indian history. There is indeed a striking similarity of ideas between Tagore's statement on 'Crisis in Civilization' issued on 14 April 1941 and the concluding pages of Nehru's *The Discovery of India* first published in 1946. And there is a great deal in Nehru's book on India which Tagore explained in his *A Vision of India's History* first published in *Visva Bharati Quarterly* in 1923 and later issued as a monograph in 1951.

Perhaps Nehru was so eloquent about Tagore's impact on modern Indian life because he realised that there was something in the Poet which was alien to his sceptical frame of mind and which was closer to the traditional Indian mentality. He knew that both Gandhi and Tagore had a spiritual base for their world-view which he could never make his own. This awareness made him interpret the work of Tagore as a modernization of India's ancient wisdom to make it relevant to the major national tasks of the age. What he said about the Poet on the occasion of the centenary of his birth is at bottom an expression of this feeling: "It was a great happiness to me when some years later after the coming of Independence, we adopted 'Jana-gana-mana' as our national anthem. I have a feeling of satisfaction that I was partly responsible for this choice, not only because it was a great national song, but also because it was a constant reminder to all of us of Rabindranath Tagore. He was in line with the *rishis*, the great sages of India, drawing from the wisdom of the ancient past and giving it a practical meaning in the present. Thus he gave India's own message in a new language in keeping with the *yugadharma* the spirit of the times." One of the happiest things in the intellectual history of modern India is that this new language of the Poet was understood by the statesman.

CHARLES FREER ANDREWS

B.R. NANDA

"ONE OF the greatest and best Englishmen", this was how Mahatma Gandhi described C.F. Andrews. "I have not known", the Mahatma wrote, "a better man or a better Christian."[1] Rabindranath Tagore, with whom Andrews lived and worked for many years, affirmed that in no man had he seen "such triumph of Christianity."[2] And Jawaharlal Nehru noted in his autobiography: "India does not possess a more devoted friend than Charlie Andrews, whose abounding love and spirit of service and overflowing friendliness it is a joy tc have."[3]

It would have been a remarkable achievement for any man to enjoy the confidence and friendship of Gokhale, Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru, and the affection of hundreds of thousands of Indians in this country and in far-off British colonies. It was all the more remarkable that the recipient was an Englishman during the very years when the Indian struggle for independence came to a head and relations between India and England were under an unprecedented strain.

This achievement was not without its price. In his early years some of his colleagues and most of his countrymen in India considered Andrews at best a crank and at worst an apostate and a traitor. His correspondence was censored, and St. Stephen's College with which he was associated acquired a taint of sedition. His name was struck off the list of the nominees for fellowships of the Panjab University by the hand of the Lieutenant Governor himself. His shapeless clothes and bare feet were a subject of amused comment by fellow-European passengers. Once while travelling to Kenya with Srinivasa Sastri,

1 *Visva-Bharati News,* Vol. VIII, No. 12, 1940, p. 90.
2 *Ibid.,* Vol. VIII, No. 10. p. 76.
3 Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1936), p 375.

he noted "an atmosphere of veiled hostility pervading the ship." "I have been", wrote Andrews, "a marked man and an object of intense dislike... It is the penalty that has to be paid and I must not grumble." In 1921 when Andrews accused the government with reference to the events at Chandpur in Bengal of siding more and more "with vested interests, with the capitalists, with the rich, with the powerful, against the poor and the oppressed", a British M.P. demanded in the House of Commons that 'this so-called gentleman' should be sent to England to be tried for sedition. Curiously enough while Andrews was in Santiniketan, especially in the early years, a whispering campaign was started against him and he was called a British spy.

Such misunderstanding and misrepresentation may be taken as the inevitable lot of a man who sets out to be a reconciler between contending races and nations. Thirty years after Andrews' death and on his birth-centenary it should be possible to assess his place in history more objectively. He emerges, not only as Mahatma Gandhi described him, as a great Englishman and a great Christian, but as a pioneer builder of bridges between embattled races and nations without which the future of mankind would be bleak indeed.

II

There was hardly any inkling until the age of thirty-three, when Andrews arrived in India, of the role that he was destined to play in this country. There were, however, influences which had shaped his formative years and fitted him for that role. His home background could not have been less favourable to sympathy with the Indian people. His father John Edwin Andrews was a true-blue Tory and an ardent admirer of the British *Raj*; one of the books which was compulsory reading for his children was *Deeds that Won the Empire*. These deeds included the successful waging of Opium Wars in China and the suppression of the Mutiny in India in 1857.

Charlie was a shy, thoughtful and serious child, excelling in his studies and winning prizes in his school. The dominant influence in his childhood was that of his mother. "It is because of this unchanging motherly influence", Andrews wrote later, "that the mother in me has grown so strong. My life seems only able to blossom into flower when I can pour out my affection upon others, as my

mother did upon us." A serious illness kept him out of vigorous outdoor games, but he learnt to amuse himself by writing articles and acquired that fluency which made him the editor of the school chronicle, and a prolific writer of letters, articles and books. Elected to Open Classical Scholarship at Pembroke College, Cambridge, he braced himself, as he put it, "in the keen and biting air of Cambridge in an age of intellectual inquiry." What marked him off from most of his contemporaries was not merely academic brilliance, but a deep religious sensitivity. His parents were devout churchgoers and some of the earliest memories of young Charlie were those of choir practices he had attended and the sermons he had heard. He was hardly nineteen, when his father suggested that he might find his vocation in the ministry of their Church—the Catholic Apostolic Church. Andrews did not, however, feel the call, and for weeks felt torn by the conflict between the duty to his father and the duty to his conscience. His anguish was brought to an end by a remarkable experience which may best be described in his own words:

> ... as I knelt to pray before retiring to rest, the strong conviction of sin and impurity came upon me without warning, with such overpowering strength that every shred of false convention was torn aside and I knew myself as I really was. The sudden agony that followed... broke in upon me like a lightning flash, leaving at first nothing but black darkness behind it. I buried my head in my hands and knelt there with God in an anguish of spirit that blotted out everything else and left me groping for the light... At last a new wonderful sense of peace and forgiveness came stealing into my life at its very centre, and the tears rushed out, bringing infinite relief.[4]

Next morning, he rose refreshed at half-past five and went to the Church where he felt "the flood of God's abounding love was poured upon me like the great ocean, wave upon wave, while I knelt with bowed head to receive it." Such an experience, which was the precursor of many others, may seem pure fantasy to some, but those who have read or heard about Christian and Hindu and Buddhist mysticism, would at once recognise the deep springs from which

4 Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews, A Narrative* (London, 1949), p. 12.

Andrews drew his spiritual sustenance. Immediately, the effect of this experience was to enable him to face estrangement from his family rather than pretend an allegiance which he did not feel to his parents' Church. He needed a broader intellectual basis for his beliefs, and a closer connnection between his beliefs and daily life; these he found in the teachings of Bishop Westcott of Durham and his Cambridge disciple, Charles Gore, who sought to apply the criteria of scientific inquiry to the Bible, and make the teachings of Christianity relevant to the social and economic problems of the day. "Remember, Andrews", Bishop Westcott exhorted him, "nothing that is truly human can be left outside the Christian faith without disturbing the very reason for its existence."

Bishop Westcott gave a practical edge to Andrews' religion. In 1897 Andrews was ordained priest at Sandhurst Cathedral. During the next two years he came face to face with poverty and degradation, drunkenness and delinquency in the slums of London. In 1899 he was elected to a Fellowship at Pembroke College, Cambridge, but he no more settled down as a teacher of theology than he had done as a priest. Thanks to Bishop Westcott, his interest in India had been roused, and he decided to join the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi and to teach at St. Stephen's College.

III

Andrews arrived in India on 20 March 1904. This day he was to observe later as his 'Indian birthday': it marked his entry into a new world of experience, and made him, as he put it, 'one of the twice-born.' One of his Cambridge contemporaries, Hibbert Ware was the principal of St. Stephen's College, but the man who was to become his most intimate friend in India was the vice-principal, Susil Kumar Rudra. "I owe to Susil Rudra", Andrews wrote many years later, "what I owe to no one else in the world, the friendship which has made India from the first not a strange land, but a familiar country."

Fortunately for Andrews his first impressions of the country and her people were not filtered through the prism of the British Establishment in India. It is a curious fact that most foreign missionaries assumed the superiority of their race and nation as much as the superiority of their religion; their faith in God ran parallel to their faith in the *Raj*. As a rule, the missionaries saw the West robed in light, and the

East clothed in darkness and were pessimistic about India, a land which seemed to them overburdened by its past and afflicted by woes which only British rule could alleviate. No wonder most of them were upholders of constituted authority and accepted the assumptions of the ruling race in a dependency.

Shocks were in store for Andrews. In 1906, while he was the officiating Chaplain at the Sanawar School for the sons and daughters of British soldiers in Simla Hills, he invited his friend Susil Rudra to spend a few days with him. This aroused so much hostility in an English colleague that Andrews realised it would not be possible for him to put up Rudra again. While this painful incident was still weighing on his mind, he happened to see a letter in the *Civil & Military Gazette,* couched in the most contemptuous language about educated Indians and Indian nationalists. Immediately he wrote a letter of protest to the editor and signed it: "C.F. Andrews, Military Chaplain, Sanawar." The publication of this letter put him out of court with English official and non-official circles in the Punjab, but it opened to him new vistas of friendship with Indian patriots. And those who were to extend their hand of friendship to him included Gokhale, Lajpat Rai, Ramananda Chatterjee, and Tej Bahadur Sapru.

Andrews' central thought at this time was the racial barrier which divided the European from the Indian and even the coloured Christian from the white Christian. There was a separate hostel for Christian students in St. Stephen's College, and non-Christians, not even non-Anglicans, had a voice in its management. There were not only separate benches in parks and separate compartments in trains for Europeans, but there were even separate burial grounds for European and Indian dead. "The one great need", Andrews told a Christian Conference in November 1906, "is sincere and wholehearted personal friendships within the Christian body, between men of different races."[5] He would not hear of a European succeeding Hibbert Ware as principal and instead threw all his weight in favour of his friend S.K. Rudra who thus became the first Indian principal of St. Stephen's College. The idea seemed revolutionary at the time; the Bishop of Lahore warned that discipline in the St. Stephen's College was likely to deteriorate if it was headed by an Indian.

5 *Ibid;* p. 66.

Andrews felt it was not enough to build bridges between Christians in India; he wanted a closer understanding between Christians and non-Christians. In a pamphlet entitled *India in Transition* published in 1910, he argued that if Christianity was to succeed in India, "it must not come forward as an antagonist and a rival to the great religious strivings of the past. It must come as a helper and fulfiller, a peacemaker and a friend. There must no longer be the desire to capture converts from Hinduism, but to come to her aid in the needful time of trouble, and to help her in the fulfilment of duties she has long neglected."[6] Soon after he had come to Delhi, Andrews had made friends with the saintly Maulvi Zaka Ullah, the scholarly Maulvi Nazir Ahmed and the gentle Hakim Ajmal Khan. He was deeply moved by the mystical outpourings of Swami Ram Tirath, and fascinated by the simplicity, energy, humour and educational methods of Mahatma Munshiram, better known as Swami Shraddhananda. An English missionary fraternizing with an Arya Samaj leader was an unusual phenomenon. In 1913 Andrews spent a few weeks at Gurukul Kangri in Hardwar and paid a great tribute to Munshiram and his work. "Here in Gurukula", he wrote in the *Modern Review* "was the new India, the sacred stream of young Indian life nearest to its pure unsullied source."

A few months earlier, in June 1912, Andrews had in the course of a visit to England met Rabindranath Tagore, who had not yet won the Nobel Prize, and was still on the threshold of his world renown. They instantly became friends. Tagore liked the spontaneity and sincerity of the young English missionary, and Andrews was thrilled by his initiation under Tagore's guidance into the mysteries of Indian religion and philosophy. Andrews did not find it easy to return to the old grooves and thought of settling down at Santiniketan where, untrammelled by dogma or allegiance to any institution, he could interpret Eastern thought to the West, and Christianity to the East. By a strange coincidence, just at the time he was on the crossroads of his career, he was to meet the man who was to provide him with the framework for his work during the next 25 years.

IV

In the closing months of 1913, the Indian struggle in South Africa

6 *Ibid;* p. 63.

under Gandhi's leadership reached a critical stage. Gokhale summoned the last reserves of his failing health and toured India to collect funds and educate public opinion on the heroic resistance of the Indian minority in South Africa. He was in constant touch with the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who scandalized the South African Government and the British Cabinet by publicly drawing attention to the atrocities committed against the Indian Satyagrahis. General Smuts and his colleagues were embarrassed and gave hints of the possibilities of a compromise; they appointed an Enquiry Commission, but Gandhi refused to have anything to do with it. Lord Hardinge deputed Sir Benjamin Robertson, a senior British member of the I.C.S. to South Africa and at the same time urged Gokhale to use his moderating influence on Gandhi.

Andrews had great admiration and respect for Gokhale ever since he had met him at the Calcutta Congress in 1906. In his very first letter to Gokhale he had written: "If at any time there is any way you can suggest in which I can help the national cause, you know how glad I shall be to do so if it is within my power."[7] The opportunity came in 1913. In response to Gokhale's appeal, Andrews not only brought out all his capital (£ 300) for the Indians in South Africa, but offered to go there. "Your wire", Gokhale told Andrews, "was like a gift of God. We need you in South Africa." Accompanied by his friend W.W. Pearson, Andrews sailed for Natal in December and landed at Durban on 1 January 1914. He had never seen Gandhi. He was introduced to a slight ascetic figure dressed in a white 'dhoti' and 'kurta' such as the indentured labourers in Natal wore. With a sudden upsurge of emotion Andrews bent down and touched Gandhi's feet. This spontaneous gesture horrified the local European community. The editor of a Durban newspaper came to see him to expostulate in person: "Really you know Mr. Andrews, really you know, we don't *do* that sort of thing in Natal, we don't do it, Mr. Andrews. I consider the action most unfortunate, *most* unfortunate." "They boil over with indignation", wrote Andrews to Tagore, "that *I an Englishman* mind you: —should have touched the feet of an Asiatic. When I remind them that Christ, St. Paul and St. John

7 C.F. Andrews to Gokhale, 24 January 1906, Gokhale Papers.

were Asiatics, they grow restive and say that things were altogether different then."[8]

Andrews' role in the negotiations was commended by Gandhi, who in a cable to Gokhale described the final settlement as a joint work of Andrews and himself. Andrews' contribution was certainly more, much more substantial than that of Sir Benjamin Robertson, the representative of the Viceroy, who proved more of a liability than an asset to the Indians.

The negotiations were long and difficult. General Smuts had his own difficulties; he had to carry his colleagues and party on the explosive issue of race. And it was not easy to make Gandhi budge from a position once he had taken it. "You know", Andrews confided to Gokhale, "how every point becomes with Gandhi a matter of principle to live or die for and it was extremely difficult to separate the chaff from the grain and to lay down what was worth fighting for and what was not."[9] The strain on Andrews must have been terrific; while these negotiations dragged on, his mother was seriously ill and died in England.

Andrews' South African adventure, besides rewarding him with Gandhi's friendship, was a highly educative experience for him. "South Africa will be a shock to your Christianity", Gokhale had warned him. The issue of the 'white race domination', as he called it, had been weighing on Andrews' mind since the first few weeks of his stay in India, but in South Africa he saw it in its most blatant form. It seemed to him, however, that the situation in South Africa was only the exaggerated symptom of a widespread malady. He became convinced that deep-seated racial hatreds could only be purged by religious insight. This is why he devoted a good deal of his time and energy during the next two decades to the problems of Indians living abroad. He visited Fiji, Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar, Guiana, South Africa, Canada, indeed every country where Indian immigrant communities were struggling for survival. To him it was not simply a question of removing needless humiliations and hardships suffered by a few hundred thousand Indians in British colonies, but a test of professed principles of the British Empire and indeed of Christianity. If the Indian subjects of the British Empire could

8 C.F. Andrews to Tagore, 6 January 1914 quoted in Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, n. 4, p. 98.

9 C.F. Andrews to Gokhale, 30 January 1914, Gokhale Papers.

not enjoy even elementary civic rights, "did the Empire make any sense?" he asked. And how could the Western nations profess Christianity and still treat Asiatics and Africans as if they were members of a sub-human species? Andrews' compassion was not however reserved for the Indian immigrants overseas. While he fought for the rights of Indian immigrants in Africa, he had the foresight to advise them not to concentrate too much on money-making, but to identify themselves with the aspirations of the African majority, and indeed to view every problem from the Africans' point of view. If the Indians in the former British colonies in Africa had heeded Andrews' advice, it is likely that they would have been spared much of the uncertainty and hardship they have suffered in recent years.

Andrews would not countenance racial discrimination even if, for once, it discriminated in favour of the Indians. In the winter of 1929-30, while touring the United States, he opposed the Copeland Bill which proposed to admit Indians to the United States on an equal footing with the Europeans on the score of their Aryan blood. "I am against it," Andrews wrote to Jehangir Petit, "it is racial in principle, and it would not help non-Aryan Southern India. I am trying instead for a quota system into which racial distinctions do not enter."[10] No one would doubt the soundness of Andrews' view today, but many Indians in America were furious at what they described as Andrews' 'idealistic humbug', and went to the length of questioning his sincerity, and accusing him of taking his views from the British Embassy in Washington.[11]

V

It is a significant fact that Andrews had taken no interest in English politics until the age of thirty-three, and even in India in his early years as a Christian Missionary and a teacher, his main preoccupation was with the promotion of better feeling between the races, rather than with direct participation in public affairs. There were moments, however, when he felt the fundamental contradiction in his own position in India as a Christian and as an Englishman. "While I have meditated," he wrote, "I have said to myself again and again in silence: 'How can you, an Englishman who love your own freedom

10 Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, n. 4, p. 245.
11 *Ibid;* p. 247.

and independence as an Englishman refuse to allow the same freedom and the very same independence to every Indian?" It was not the political, but the moral and spiritual side of the issue of Indian independence which attracted him. No one knew better than Andrews himself that he was not cut out for the role of a politician. He was happiest when he was at his desk at Santiniketan answering letters, drafting memoranda, teaching children or watching them scamper in or out of his room. "All my life through", he wrote in 1920, "I have been a scholar and a thinker and a reader of books—eager indeed at every turn to put thought to the test of action, but constitutionally unwilling and unable to take a lead in such action except on very rare occasions. Whenever such occasions have arisen, I have instinctively shrunk back as quickly as possible, because I have felt the political life to be something apart from my own."[12]

Andrews' correspondence with Gokhale during the years 1906-7 shows that, while his sympathy lay unmistakably with the nationalist cause, he was not eager to enter the fray. When Lajpat Rai was deported in 1907, Andrews wrote to Lord Minto, the Viceroy, warning him of the effects of this action on Indian opinion. Lord Minto's successor, Lord Hardinge, was more receptive to Andrews; he heard him preach at Simla, and was glad to get his frank and uninhibited views on public questions. When the war broke out in 1914 Andrews pleaded for grant of the King's Commission to Indians. "There is nothing in the world that Indian students of the noblest type feel more bitterly", he wrote to Lord Hardinge, "than this refusal to recognise their manhood."[13] Here again Andrews was not overtly taking part in politics, but fighting against racial discrimination. His visit to South Africa had also been part of the same campaign.

It was only with the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian scene that Andrews' real identification with the nationalist struggle begins. Unlike other British friends of India, such as A.O. Hume, William Wedderburn, Henry Cotton and Annie Besant, Andrews did not hold any office or preside over the Indian National Congress. He preferred to remain in the background, as a friend, philosopher and constructive critic, eager to interpret, to be useful and to

12 C.F. Andrews, *The claim for Independence within or without the British Empire* (Madras, n. d.) pp. 13-14.

13 C.F. Andrews to Lord Hardinge, 19 December 1944, Hardinge Papers.

undertake such assignments as were entrusted to him. In 1919 the news of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the martial law in the Punjab drew him to the Punjab, but he was taken off the train at Amritsar, put under military arrest and sent back to Delhi from where he went back to Santiniketan, and was with Rabindranath Tagore when he renounced his knighthood. A few months later Andrews was able to enter the Punjab and collect information for the Malaviya Committee which was to be placed before the Hunter Commission of Inquiry. What he saw and heard about the Punjab tragedy left him aghast. "It was a massacre, a butchery..." he wrote to Mahadev Desai, "I feel that if only I could take each single Englishman and show him out of my own eyes what I have seen, he would feel the same as I."[14] The events of 1919 sharpened the lines of racial cleavage. The British made themselves believe that they had narrowly escaped the horrors of another mutiny; the Indians were equally convinced that they were innocent victims of an insensitive and draconian regime. The spectacle of a Cambridge-educated English missionary hobnobbing with Indian politicians was an outrageous spectacle to his compatriots. Once he was refused entry to a Christian Church. "This House of God", they told him, "is not for rebels."[15]

Andrews urged Sir Edward Maclagan, the new Lieutenant Governor to apply the soothing balm to the Punjab. To the people of the province he counselled patience and forgiveness. Addressing a public meeting in Lahore's Bradlaugh Hall on 15 November, he urged the people "not to dwell upon vengeance, not to linger in the dark night of hate but to come out in the glorious sunshine, of God's love." The root of the mischief, he perceived, was in the unnatural relationship between the rulers and ruled and this relationship had to be transformed if goodwill was to be restored between the two countries. Andrews revealed his startling deduction from the Punjab tragedy in a letter to the Editor of the *Indian Daily News:* "Sir,—Having witnessed with my own eyes the humiliation of Indians, I can see no possible recovery of self-respect except by claiming an independence from British domination not less than that of Egypt. This requires absolute unity of moral purpose for its fulfilment, not compromise or concession."[16] He elaborated his ideas in a series of

14 C.F. Andrews to Mahadev Desai, 6 October 1919, Gandhi Papers.
15 Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, n. 4, p. 137.
16 *Ibid;* p. 155.

articles. "I am aware", he wrote, "that the idea of complete Indian independence is still regarded with suspicion even by very many Indians themselves. The outlook is too adventurous for them; it takes their breath away,—just as a boy who is a weak swimmer stands shivering on the brink before making the final plunge."[17]

Jawaharlal Nehru recalls in his autobiography that when he read Andrews' essay: "Indian Independence—The Immediate Need", he felt not only that it made out an unanswerable case for independence, but mirrored the inmost recesses of the hearts of the Indian people. "The deep urge that moved us and our half-formed desires", writes Nehru, "seemed to take clear shape in his simple and earnest language... It was wonderful that C.F. Andrews, a foreigner and one belonging to the dominant race in India, should echo that cry of our inmost being."[18]

As the non-cooperation movement gathered momentum, Andrews watched it with mingled hope and anxiety. He was glad to see the signs of a new political awakening, but he was disturbed by what seemed to him, a subtle suggestion of violence in the bonfires of foreign cloth. Indeed the whole atmosphere seemed to him charged with "a wild political excitement" rather than with that deep moral conviction he had witnessed in Gandhi's following in South Africa in 1914. The Chauri Chaura tragedy in 1922 confirmed his worst fears and his heart went out to the Mahatma when he called off civil disobedience. Andrews understood what many of Gandhi's colleagues and almost all of the opponents could not quite understand, that Gandhi was in dead earnest about non-violence and would not be diverted from it for immediate political gains. Later while he was in England, Andrews was told by the Archbishop of Canterbury that Gandhi was arrested by the British Government in March 1922 because he had given up non-violent resistance and taken to violence. "If you forsake Christianity", Andrews replied to the Archbishop, "Gandhi will forsake non-violence."[19]

It did not require a major Satyagraha campaign to stir Andrews into action. There were any number of causes which demanded his attention; the fight against opium and drug traffic, relief to victims of riots, famines, or earthquakes, mediation on behalf of workers

17 C.F. Andrews, n. 12, p. 6.
18 Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 3, p. 66.
19 Mahadev Desai, *Diary* (Hindi), (Varanasi, 1966), p. 136.

in tea plantations, jute factories and railway workshops. Once he had visitors from Rajasthan who told him about forced labour (*begar*) prevalent in some Rajasthan states. He could not sleep that night; he had another cause to champion. Exploitation in any form was repugnant to him whether it was *begar* in Simla Hills or the employment of ten-year-old boys down the manholes of Calcutta to clean the sewers.

And it is a remarkable fact that the politics and economics of this man of faith were ahead of those of many professed radicals. Detecting in Jawaharlal Nehru's writings a welcome awareness of the importance of the economic factor in nationalist politics, Andrews wrote to him suggesting concentration on definite economic objectives such as the de-linking of the rupee from sterling, immediate Indian control over land revenue and railway policy, currency, customs and banking. "I always wonder," Andrews added, "whether, in the face of the utter misery of the *ryots* in India, who are sinking lower and lower into debt and misery, the first and foremost thing to lay united stress upon is not rather that economic freedom, which will help all religious communities alike and draw them closer together, rather than this abstract political freedom which seems at once to divide us all up into separate compartments, making us disunited and eager to get the loaves and fishes."[20]

Despite his clear perception of India's political goals and methods, Andrews' participation in the nationalist struggle was indirect and behind the scenes, through letters, articles, books and meetings with officials and non-officials in India and England. Despite the continual touring and endless assignments he took upon himself it is amazing that he should have written twenty-five books, edited another five, besides numerous essays and articles on topical subjects. The two major themes in his writings are Christianity and India. Even the recitation of the titles of his books would indicate the versatility of his interests. His first book was *The Relationship of Christianity and the Conflict between Labour and Capital* published in 1896 and one of his last books in collaboration with Girija Mookerjee, was *The Rise and Growth of the Congress.* In between came, *The Renaissance in India, The Opium Evil in India, Zaka Ullah of Delhi, India and*

20 C.F. Andrews to Jawaharlal Nehru, 13 November 1933, Nehru Papers.

the Simon Report, India and Britain—A Moral Challenge, Thoughts from Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas, India and the Pacific, What I Owe to Christ and other books. Andrews' great opportunity came in 1931 when the Mahatma went to England for the Round Table Conference. He acted not only as the "door keeper-in-chief" at Kingsley Hall where Gandhi stayed, but arranged for him to meet some of the best minds in England. The Round Table Conference proved a failure, but Andrews' efforts did not entirely go in vain. As he wrote at the time: "Gandhi's unique personality gripped the best English minds, and his originality of thought set those whom he met thinking as they had never done before. They were not always in agreement with him; but they all immensely respected the greatness of soul which they found in him... England is a very small country and impressions like these go round fast indeed. No serious-minded man or woman could any longer take the view, which had been widely held before that Mahatma Gandhi was an impossible fanatic after all."

By the early thirties Andrews had lived down much of the ridicule and suspicion in England, and earned the respect, if not the agreement, of influential men in Whitehall and Fleet Street. This influence which was later skilfully exercised by his friends and disciples such as Agatha Harrison and HoraceAlexander in an increasing degree—enabled him to bestir the British ministers and thus to hasten the decision-making process which enabled Gandhi to end his fasts in 1932 and 1933. Andrews did not always agree on the merits of the fasts, but he knew how deeply the Mahatma felt on those issues and how important it was to save his life and let India breathe again.

VI

It is tempting to think of C.F. Andrews as a noble, self-effacing person, a great humanitarian rushing to trouble-spots hit by famines, earthquakes, riots or strikes, virtually functioning, if one may say so, as a one-man Red Cross squad. Admirable as this work was, Andrews' place in history really lies in the fact that he had the foresight to see, at the turn of the century, what few Europeans could see, that India was astir, that the racial gulf had to be bridged, and Indo-British relations built on a basis of equality and friendship in the interest of both countries. He drew his dynamics not from books

and manifestoes, but from deep spiritual springs which were continually renewed by observation, introspection and meditation. This 'God's Own Fool', as Edwin Montagu once graphically described him, could see farther and deeper than the 'experts' on India who had grown grey in the service of the Empire. By 1914 Andrews had outgrown the framework of the English Establishment in India of which as a Christian missionary and educationist he was expected to be a part. His encounter with Gandhi did not come a day too soon; Gandhi provided the goal and defined the method which Andrews' Christian conscience could endorse.

If Andrews needed a Gandhi, Gandhi also needed an Andrews. The basic assumption of Satyagraha was that it was possible through self-suffering to change the heart of the adversary, and that the enemy of today could be the friend of tomorrow. In the nationalist context the inference was that the British could be persuaded, through non-violent resistance, to voluntarily shed their imperial burden. This assumption seemed fantastic to most Indians and almost all Britons fifty years ago, but it was something for Gandhi's following that they saw at least one Englishman, who shared this idealism. One swallow does not make a summer; one Andrews did not change the basic alignments of contending forces in India between imperialism and nationalism. For many years Andrews was no more than a symbol, but such a symbol was an asset to a mass movement, particularly one which posed the issues on the moral plane and needed to sterilize anger and hatred as much as possible in its adherents. On his part, Andrews, deeply rooted in English culture and Christianity, never ceased to believe in or work for an Indo-British accord. From his death-bed in Calcutta in 1940 he re-affirmed his conviction that Britain's best instincts and best interests would soon drive her to a settlement with nationalist India. It was not until seven years later that the British political *elite* was reconciled to this conclusion. Meanwhile, for two decades C.F. Andrews had performed the historic function of serving, if I may quote Gandhi again, as a 'living link' between India and Britain.

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