

THE STORY OF INDIAN REVOLUTION

Compiled & Edited by
ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

PRAJNANANANDA JANA SEVA SANGHA
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CALCUTTA 9

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Dedicated to the Memory of
Our Mothers
Who suffered no less than
their sons & daughters fighting
for
Indian Revolution

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PREFACE

This book is a commemoration volume for Swami Prajnananda Saraswaty,—this being the 50th year of his exit from this world. Swami Prajnanananda Saraswaty was a sanyasi of high spiritual order and also a man of deep learning. But above all, he was a patriot and a revolutionary and he subordinated everything else to the cause of emancipation of the country. He organised a revolutionary society from his cottage at Barisal with ramifications in different districts of East Bengal. It really emerged as the militant wing of the Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of the Swadeshi movement days. Subsequently headquarters of the Barisal organisation were shifted to Calcutta. The Barisal organisation of Swami Prajnanananda became an integral part of the Jugantar revolutionary party which was a federation of different groups of revolutionaries belonging to different districts of Bengal. It was his dynamic personality which helped in organising the Barisal unit as one of the nuclei of a revolutionary organisation in different parts of Bengal and Assam. And it was his earnestness which helped in the ultimate amalgamation of the Barisal unit with the wider Jugantar organisation. I knew him more as a revolutionary than as a sanyasi and that is why I felt a fitting tribute to his memory would be a volume giving a picture of the Indian revolution.

India had to pass through the phase of secret movement and ultimately the Indian revolution attained its culmination through a mass movement unprecedented in the history of the world. Many, like me, started their revolutionary career in an activist secret movement, but ultimately merged their individual and organisational identity with the mass movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. When we joined the non-violent mass movement, we never had any occasion to repent our past contact with the secret violent movement; rather we felt the

secret movement was a preliminary phase for rousing the people to consciousness of self-assertion. A dormant nation, always under the terror and awe of a mighty foreign imperialist power, required some shock-treatment to get roused to its own sensibility and consciousness.

It should be remembered that actually the Britishers did not conquer India through their military prowess. After the decay of the Mughal empire, there was no organised government in the country. Anarchy and banditry were then the general picture of the society. Many desperate men, who originally were nothing but bandits, carved out their own territories and became rajas, maharajas, princes, nawabs or landlords. The British, coming as traders, were given many facilities which no monarch with any sense of his sovereignty or of his responsibility to the people, would have given. Even during the heyday of the Mughal Empire, the Portuguese, Dutch or British—all got many extra-territorial rights through *sanads* or permits given by the Mughal emperor or by some other native chiefs. This is only a measure of the moral standard and political sense even of the Mughal emperors and other rulers who gave the foreigners such rights. Thus they built forts of their own and recruited Indians to join their armies as sepoys. Ordinary citizens who so long enjoyed no sense of security found life within British territory safe and their property secured. British rule in India was established in an unusual way. Its end also came in an unusual way.

Though in most places British rule was welcomed by the people, yet there was always an undercurrent of resentment against this foreign domination particularly due to their overbearing and insolent attitude towards the people of the country. Economic exploitation leading to growing mass poverty and repeated famines hastened the process of disillusionment of the people. In fact within two decades of British rule in any region, economic strain was felt by the people and serious famines occurred costing millions of lives. Behind the screen of general acceptance of the British rule by the peace-loving people, there were troubles, unrest, skirmishes, risings and rebellions in different areas. In Bengal which came under the British rule in 1757, there was a famine in 1772-73 costing millions of lives; and the

Sanyasi Revolt was the natural manifestation of the discontent of the people. In some places these risings were organised by Sanyasis and/or Muslim Fakirs and Mullahs; in some places by petty chiefs and in some places by the tribals. Thus almost from the beginning of British rule, there was a continuity of risings in different parts of the country—all ruthlessly suppressed.

Then from the later part of the 19th century, a general sense of nationalism developed among the educated classes of India. The Britishers introduced English education to get cheap clerks to run their administration; but English education also brought to the educated community the idea of democracy and human rights. Even as early as the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity—as propounded by the pioneers of the French Revolution—fascinated the Indian mind. Then from the middle of the 19th century, Italian War of Liberation inspired many of our leaders; perhaps the most prominent among them was Surendranath Banerjea. He popularised the names of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour among Indian youngmen; and in imitation of the Young Italy Society, several organisations of youngmen cropped up in India. From Gauhati to Peshawar and from Lahore to Cape Comorin, Surendranath preached the idea of Indian nationhood. India had its own identity, geographical and cultural; but it had no political unity. The short-lived empire of Asoka or of Akbar did not give any sense of political oneness to the Indians. The idea of political oneness was particularly emphasised by Surendranath.

In the middle of the last century, the simmering discontent found its expression in the rising of the Sepoys in 1857. It was not just a sepoy mutiny originating from any grievance of the barracks; it had a long incubation in the hothouse of popular discontent. It was a national rising—though not based on fully shaped and developed national claims and demands.

Then in 1885 came the Indian National Congress, a docile body always eager to oblige the foreign rulers. Set up indirectly on the suggestion of the then Governor-General to serve as a safety-valve for the elite's discontent, within 15 years the Congress became a Frankenstein to the Government. Gradually, the Congress became vocal in giving expression to national aspirations.

By the end of the last century, we had one remarkable rising in Maharashtra organised by Vasudeo Balwantrao Phadke. That story has been told in this book.

With the dawn of the present century, we find in Bengal a number of societies organised mostly in Calcutta and also in other parts of Bengal whose, if not avowed, at least the hidden aim was assertion of national rights. I would not like to call those associations real revolutionary organisations. The partition of Bengal in 1905 hastened the process. Calcutta Anushilan Samiti or Atmonnati Samiti of Calcutta were originally associations for physical culture and some moral and intellectual training of youngmen with a distant and vague sense of nationalism. Aggressive splinter groups, not satisfied with this modest objective, grew out of them. Thus came the Jugantar party in Bengal. The first manifestation of its activities has been told in the chapter on Alipore Bomb Trial in this book.

The young organisers of these secret societies got their inspiration from the Young Italy of Mazzini and also from the Nihilist movement, culminating in the abortive revolt of 1905 in Russia. Gradually the ideals of the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, the Italian War of Liberation and of the Narodniks and Nihilists of Russia gave us inspiration and indications of the path to follow. France and America did not experience the phase of secret society; revolutions in those countries were practically spontaneous and did not require the gestation period of secrecy. The significant point of difference between France and U.S.A. on the one hand and India on the other was that they had some form of political power and consciousness, which India initially totally lacked.

The First World War hastened the process of revolutionary organisations; this we narrate in the chapter on Jatin Mukherjee. Indian revolutionaries abroad then entered into a pact with the German Government. The Jugantar Party in Bengal and the Gadr Party in Punjab worked according to the programme of the Berlin Committee—a committee formed by Indian revolutionaries abroad—to organise an armed rising in India. It was planned to be supported and supplemented by the mutiny of the Indian soldiers in the British army. Even then the organisers

expected the participation of the local people—if and when German arms were received. All those, who were in the conspiracy, hardly expected that they would achieve their goal—of independence or of revolution—through that attempt. But their idea was that by their self-immolation and desperate action, they would be able to revivify the stupefied sensibility of the nation and set an example for the next generation to organise the country for a final showdown with the British Government.

That task was rendered easier through the promulgation of two Acts on the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee which had been set up to examine the revolutionary conspiracies in India and to devise means to suppress it. The atrocious character of these measures prompted Gandhi to chalk out a new path and to preach a new gospel of revolution. Gandhi, who so long had full faith in the British sense of justice, lost his loyalty and confidence when the Rowlatt Bills were actually introduced in the legislature. He organised the country for a mass movement which culminated in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy gave further impetus to the mass movement; and Gandhi, a soft-spoken man—full of humility, took the lead to guide the docile masses of India to their independence which promised social justice. This phase has been told in this book in two chapters: (i) the Non-Co-operation Movement and (ii) The Gandhian Technique of Revolution.

After the suspension of Non-co-operation movement, came a phase of violent revolutionary activities mostly in Bengal and Punjab. The most outstanding of them was the Chittagong Rising in line of the Jugantar programme for the permeation of more intense sense of desperate national struggle among the younger section. The relevant stories have been told in different sections of the book.

It would be relevant to refer to another phase—the I.N.A. movement organised by Subhas Chandra Bose from outside India. While Gandhi was struggling from inside India by giving a call to the British to quit India immediately, the Indian National Army of Netaji Subhas was striking at the eastern gates of India.

But fundamentally, the Indian revolution evolved a new technique of political fight. Gandhi gave a special significance

to Indian revolution. No revolution in the world has had such wide mass support as the Indian revolution; it was really the only mass revolution so far in the world. Only recently, Bangladesh—formerly a participant and beneficiary of the Gandhian revolution—staged a mass revolution almost unprecedented. They started with a movement of non-violent non-co-operation. Defying the worst brutalities of military dictatorship, the people of Bangladesh maintained the spirit of non-co-operation with the oppressive government. The Government could not secure any co-operation from the people.

When Gandhi first (1920) adopted non-violence as his means of fight, he admitted that if India had the possibility of organising an armed rising, she would not have listened to his gospel of non-violence and peace. For the Indian masses and even for many of the important leaders of that movement, non-violent and peaceful means was a matter of expediency but not so far ~ Gandhi. He felt that time had arrived when somebody should preach the gospel of peace and non-violence as a weapon for effecting social and political change. What Buddha and Christ preached as an individual virtue, Gandhi turned into a weapon for collective action and as a method for effecting a political and social revolution.

Gandhi's non-violence is not just limited to the technique of fight, but goes far beyond that. A man entertaining hatred or jealousy against his neighbour, even though he may not do him any physical harm, indulges, according to Gandhi, in violence. He did not accept the Tolstoian theory of "Resist no evil"; rather he advocated resistance to evil even at the cost of one's life. But according to Gandhi, nobody should be considered an enemy and nobody should entertain any jealousy or greed for the possession of any wealth or property or any hatred towards anybody. The world today is full of strifes and struggles and is mad after securing material wealth and physical pleasure. Gandhi calls a halt to that craze. Today when there is a competition in developing weapons for mass destruction, a call on that line is most appropriate. If humanity is to survive, it must deny itself the perversity to kill its neighbour or what is far worse, to forge weapons for mass massacre of its neighbours. A nation, possessing

nuclear weapons or missiles or the art of organising chemical warfare capable of destroying a whole country, is a menace to humanity; and practically all the big powers of the world are now madly in that race. This is backward march of humanity to barbarism.

From that point of view Gandhi's idea of revolution is a timely call. His idea was not simply to achieve *swadhinata* or political liberty but to secure *Swaraj*, self-government for the people. Marx, working in a social and economic order wholly different from the present order, has now become more or less out-of-date—even though he richly deserves a place as the initiator of a new line of thinking. The inevitability of class struggle leading to the extermination of the bourgeoisie or all non-proletariat classes is not justified by the recent developments of history. In Gandhi's social order, class struggle is not the method for evolving a new social order; but he cannot be called an advocate of what is now known as class collaboration. What he advocates is an adjustment between different individuals and different sections of the society through mutual understanding of the social obligations and consequent sacrifices by the possessing classes. His ultimate goal was to reach a stage where there might not be any necessity of any external control; that will lead to the fading away of the state—the stage of anarchism. In respect of the ultimate goal, there is not much difference between Gandhi and Marx, both desiring the elimination of the state.

This is the ideal; whether man will ever attain that stage will depend on man. Many ideals preached by Krishna, Buddha, Christ and other seers have not been achieved by us; that has not led us to discard those ideals and those saints and seers. But it can be said that such a stage of social evolution leading to the withering away of the state as Lenin expected, can be achieved and made durable only by the Gandhian technique of working for a change in the emotional or intellectual outlook of the individual, the man—i.e. by a "change of heart" in Gandhi's language rather than by the Marxian method of external oppressive measures of class struggle. That will, at best, be a mechanical imposition by an outside authority; that won't be really a stateless society that may have any change to be durable. A really

equitable society, based on equal opportunity for all and social justice can be built up only by effecting an improvement in the nature of Man. Any other method is bound to end in clashes and conflicts. Gandhi wanted to avoid that condition worked for a better type of Man.

The dialectic process of historical development has a substance of truth in it; but it cannot be assumed that the dialectic process of social development operating from the very primitive society will just come to a stop after the establishment of a communist social order through the extermination of the class enemies. Then the dialectic process loses its meaning as a law of social evolution and becomes just a passing phase in history. Moreover the dialectic process does not mean that it will work only through class conflict and struggle. In fact, Marx may be said to have twisted the Hegelian theory to suit his political and social ideas. Dialectics can work also through co-operative or competitive contact between different sectors of the society; and thus a new antithesis can and does spring up in the society to produce a new synthesis. Gandhi's idea of social adjustment makes provision of that process. Herein lies the speciality of the Indian revolution. This book, in its humble way, has tried to explain that.

Before concluding, I must thank the writers of the different chapters of the book. They are all busy and learned men. I am really thankful to them that they have readily agreed to my request and spared their time to write their respective chapters.

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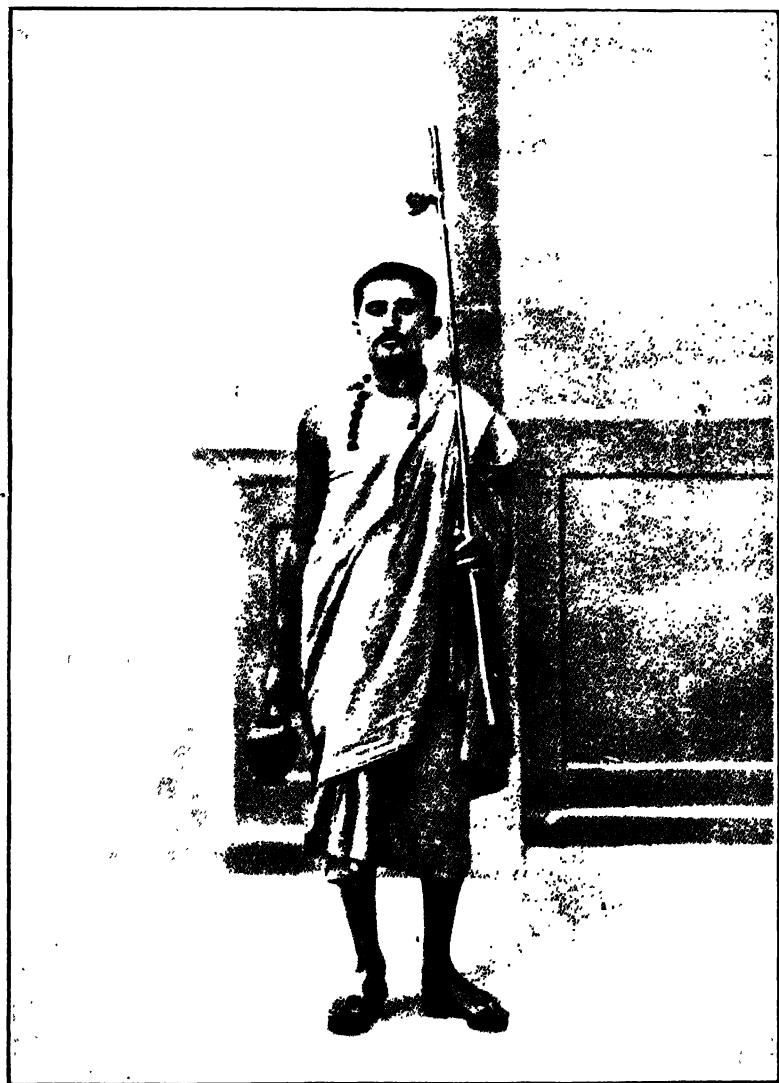
ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

OUR WRITERS

1. **TRIMBAK RAGHUNATH DEOGIRIKAR**—an old political worker, a journalist, was a member—Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, All-India Congress Committee, Working Committee of the Congress, Member—Constituent Assembly and Rajya Sabha. Has written about 12 books—including a Marathi translation of *Gitanjali* (Tagore), History of Maharashtra and India since 1818.
2. **BHUPENDRA KUMAR DATTA**—an old revolutionary and Congress worker of Bengal; was a member of the Bengal Provincial and All-India Congress Committees for many years. Was a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, Pakistan National Assembly and also of East Pakistan Legislative Assembly (till 1958); a journalist and a writer—both in Bengali and English.
3. **SACHINDRA LAL GHOSE**—a political worker and a journalist—was an assistant editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *Hindustan Standard* (Delhi edition); at present editor of *Indo-Asian Culture*. Has written a number of books on behalf of the National Book Trust, Sahitya Akademi, UNESCO etc.
4. **JATISH CHANDRA BHOWMICK**—was a revolutionary and political worker; a writer and journalist—a professor of Economics in a degree college.
5. **DR. HARI DEV SHARMA, M.A. (Delhi)**—A research officer of the Nehru Memorial Museum; has got his doctorate from Delhi University on a thesis on the Non-Co-Operation Movement.
6. **BENODE CHOUDHURY, M.A., B.L.**—was a revolutionary worker of Bengal (Jugantar Party); after partition stayed in East Bengal, was a member of the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly; was a participant in the Chittagong Rising—seriously injured in the Jalalabad fight; now engaged in social service work in Bangladesh.
7. **SATIBHUSAN SEN, M.A.**—was a political and a revolutionary

worker of Bengal and was associated with 'Surya Sen, the leader of the Chittagong group of the revolutionary party.

8. DR. AMIT KUMAR GUPTA, M.A. (Calcutta)—was a Lecturer in the Scottish Church College for about 7 years; then went to U.K., got his doctorate degree from London University on a thesis on modern Indian history; at present the research officer in the Nehru Museum.
9. ARUN CHANDRA GUHA—was a revolutionary and Congress worker of Bengal; some time General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress; was a member of Bengal Provincial and All-India Congress Committees; journalist, publisher and writer; was a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lok Sabha.



Swami Prajnanananda Saraswati

Born: 12 August 1884

Expired: 5 February 192

I

Swamy Prajnanananda Saraswaty

A Revolutionary, Saint & Savant
(A. C. G.)

This is a commemoration volume for Swamy Prajnanananda Saraswaty. Fifth February 1971 completes 50 years of his departure from this world. The reader may naturally be curious to know who this Swamy Prajnanananda was. He is not known as a great saint or *sanyasi*; he was not a public leader nor had he any reputation as a great writer; yet why this commemoration volume for such a man? It may also appear to be curious that a commemoration volume for a *sanyasi* is really a volume that gives a picture of the revolutionary movement in India.

He left his physical body 50 years ago. He was born in Barisal and his main field of activities was also Barisal; Barisal is now included in Bangladesh. India attained independence in 1947, i.e. a quarter of a century after his departure from this world. Yet after independence many institutions have been set up in his name or to commemorate his memory in different parts of West Bengal. (1) In the district of Midnapur, at Mahishadal, Satish Chandra Samanta M.P. has started an institution under the name Swamy Prajnanananda Smriti Raksha Samiti. It has a number of units in it, including a community hall and

an area library and a panchayat training college. The total assets in land and buildings of this institution would be near about Rs. 4 lakhs. Satish Chandra Samanta, who is a bachelor, has given away practically all his savings for this institution; he also had to collect money for this institution from the Government and his friends; and he has even incurred a huge loan for this institution. (2) Srimat Swamy Prajnanananda Higher Secondary School in Shalimar, Howrah, was set up by the late Jogesh Chandra Mukherjee. This institution has also its own assets in land and buildings and endowments, worth about Rs. 5 lakhs. (3) In Calcutta, the late Kiron Chandra Mukherjee started the Prajnanananda Pathagriha, a library to cater to the needs of young students. This institution has been given a plot of land by the Calcutta Corporation within the city where a building is being constructed. (4) The Prajnanananda Jana Seva Sangha, set up by Arun Chandra Guha with its head office at Calcutta, has three different centres: (i) Barajaguli—district Nadia; (ii) Ashoke Nagar—district 24-Parganas, and (iii) Gaighata—district 24-Parganas. The Barajaguli centre has one pre-basic school, one junior basic school, one community hall, one area library and one girls' higher secondary school, a girls' hostel and other social service activities. The Ashoke Nagar centre has a chest clinic, a maternity unit, an eye clinic, a family planning centre, one pre-basic nursery school and one junior basic school. At Gaighata, the Sangha has one Balwadi, one pre-basic school for children, one junior basic school and one community hall with an area library. Total assets of the Sangha including lands, buildings etc. will be worth near about Rs. 12 lakhs, if not more. At Barajaguli, there is also a Government institution called the Government Prajnanananda Basic Training College for training teachers for primary schools. It is controlled and administered by the Government.

Besides this there is another institution which was set up before independence in Barisal in East Bengal, now functioning at Calcutta, called the Prajnanananda Trust. Its main function is the publication of Swamiji's books.

This will give an idea to the reader about the importance of Swamy Prajnanananda Saraswati among a certain class of politi-

cal and social workers of Bengal. I shall try to narrate that in this short article.

Prajnanananda Saraswaty was born in a middle-class Brahmin family on 12th August 1884 at Galachipa within the district of Barisal (now in Bangladesh) where his father Sasti Charan Mukherjee was then the officer-in-charge of the police station. He was the youngest child and second son of Sasti Charan. His elder brother, Aswini Kumar Mukherjee, was an eminent scholar of those days and was a professor of history in the Dacca College—a Government institution. His pre-sanyas name was Satish Chandra Mukherjee. Satish did not stay long at Galachipa; perhaps his father also might have been transferred. Before he was 3 years old, Satish came to his native village Wazirpur with his mother Kshetra Mohini Devi. Satish was always considered a somewhat wayward boy, rather unruly in a way. He joined the primary school of his village and later the high English school—the Union Institution. From his very boyhood, traits—apparently contradictory—were noticed in his character. On the one hand he was wayward, but on the other, he possessed a devotional nature. After the sacred thread ceremony, which is obligatory for a Brahmin boy, he had to recite the sacred *Gayatri sloka*, according to the precepts of the scriptures; and this he did scrupulously. He was also fond of reciting religious and devotional *slokas*.

In the school, he was considered a meritorious boy but not very attentive to his studies. His examination results were not very brilliant but he went on fairly well till he passed the Entrance Examination in 1901. He then went to Dacca to join the Dacca College in the First Arts (F.A.) class. He had to stay with his elder brother Aswini Mukherjee who was a professor in that college. But after some time, he felt the atmosphere to be not congenial to him; somehow he could not pull on with his sister-in-law and, without completing the course, he left Dacca. His memories of the days passed in Dacca were rather very unpleasant.

For some time, he stayed at Barisal town. A fair-looking boy, without anything to do, by nature somewhat wayward and determined he got mixed up with some bad elements of the town.

One day when one of those boys tried to take undue advantage of him, he kicked him down to the ground and left Barisal for his native village again. This incident became a turning point in his life and he left the association of wicked boys. He joined the Union Institution of his village as a teacher. It should be mentioned here that in those days, cases of teachers with the academic qualification of having passed only the Entrance Examination were not rare. The standard of the Entrance Examination was somewhat lower than the present-day Higher Secondary or even the School Final Examination. I recollect that some of my teachers had not passed even the Entrance Examination and I do not remember having any teacher up to the 3rd class (8th standard of the present day) who was a graduate. I had a graduate teacher only in the 2nd class (that is, one year before the Matriculation Examination). And I do not repent having been taught by teachers who, according to present standard, would not be allowed to go anywhere near a higher secondary school.

Satish served as teacher in the school in his native village for about two years. Then came the deluge in the political life of Bengal. The partition of Bengal in October 1905 created a radical change not only in the social and political life of Bengal but also in the individual life of thousands of young men. Only those who passed through those thrilling days can say what those days meant to them individually and to the nation collectively. Satish also was profoundly stirred by this movement. While in the village, his mother was trying to get him married, which he resisted. His mother one day pleaded her old age and her helplessness as there was no other female member in the house to help her. Satish told her, "If you want a help-mate for yourself and if for that you ask me to marry, I will obey you and leave the wife to you but I shall quit the house for ever; and that will not be doing any justice to the girl." The mother realised his attitude and said, "Better not marry but stay with me." In that also, Satish could not oblige his mother.

In late 1905 he left his native village and came to Barisal to plunge into the current of the anti-Partition agitation. Within a short time he got a teacher's job in the Brojomohan Institution in Barisal which was conducted by Aswini Kumar Dutt. Aswini

Kumar had a unique personality and he was not only a political leader but also a moral and spiritual leader. Anyone coming in his contact must have felt a moral metamorphosis in him. What was latent in Satish Chandra's mind became patent and active when he came to Barisal and became associated with Aswini Kumar and his other co-workers.

The *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti* in Barisal was one of the *Samitis* set up during this period in different parts of Bengal. But it had its own speciality. Unlike other *samitis* or associations, it did not lay as much emphasis on physical culture or physical valour as it did on social and moral values. Its programme of work had a particular slant for a social revolution along with the political upsurge that was going on through the country. I give below the main items of the programme of the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti*:

- (1) Reduction of litigation by introducing arbitration.
- (2) Swadeshi and boycott, to help indigenous industry.
- (3) Temperance.
- (4) Female education, abolition of dowry, widow re-marriage.
- (5) Health.
- (6) Provision of drinking water in rural areas.
- (7) Abolition of the rigours of caste distinctions and the removal of the disabilities of the lower caste Hindus. (Some of the lower castes—Namasudras, Bagdis etc.—were denied the privilege of the service of barbers, washermen and even of priests. There was no untouchability as such in Bengal).
- (8) Physical culture of boys.

Satish Mukherjee was soon assigned an important position in the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti*. Aswini Kumar was the president and Satish Chatterjee, a professor of Chemistry in the B. M. College, its secretary and Satish Mukherjee became its assistant secretary. In connection with this work, he developed very intimate and cordial relations with Prof. Satish Chatterjee who used to entertain a deep affection for Satish Mukherjee, regarding him as his younger brother. The combination of these two men along with the guidance and idealism of Aswini Kumar Dutt

gave the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti* a special place in the political history of the then Bengal. Satish Mukherjee used to live in the cottage used by the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti* as its office. Every day, morning and evening, large numbers of young men used to gather there, receiving guidance and instruction from Satish. A number of young men changed their course of life after coming in contact with him.

I should mention here two other persons who exercised great influence over Satish Mukherjee. One was his elder sister Sarojini Devi, who became a widow at a very early age. A village girl with just a little education in Bengali, she later acquired spiritual and intellectual attainments which might be the envy of many learned ladies. Sarojini perhaps gave Satish the first inspiration for revolutionary activities; or it may be that Satish gave that idea to Sarojini. But we knew that when Satish was deeply involved in revolutionary activities, Sarojini was always standing by his side, often giving him encouragement and also advice. Sarojini later became a *sanyasini*, led a religious life and expired some years ago. In Barisal, Satish Mukherjee came in contact with another lady, the widowed sister of Satish Chatterjee, Indu Devi. She also was in full sympathy with the revolutionary movement and very often she would go ahead of her brother Satish Chatterjee. Even after having taken *sanyas*, Satish Mukherjee used to refer to Indu in respectful terms. I have mentioned the names of these two ladies particularly to remove a wrong impression among certain people of those days that Satish in his *sanyas* days was opposed to any contact with women.

In November 1908, Aswini Kumar Dutt and Prof. Satish Chandra Chatterjee were deported under Regulation III of 1818. In fact, 9 leaders of Bengal were dealt with under the Regulation on the same day. The other 7 were Shyam Sundar Chakravarty, Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, Subodh Mullick, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Sachindra Prasad Bose, Pulin Bihari Das and Bhupesh Chandra Nag. After this, the entire responsibility of the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti* fell on Satish Mukherjee. The *Samiti* had 150 branches all over the district and it held frequent meetings in different rural areas of the district. But he did not have to bear this burden for long. In January 1909, several societies or *samitis*

in both Bengals were declared illegal by the Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. *Swadesh Bandhab*, *Anushilan* (of Calcutta and of Dacca), *Sadhana* and *Suhrid* (both of Mymensingh) and *Brati* (of Faridpur) *Samitis* were banned and ordered to be closed down.

The cottage (a thatched-roof-kucha-floor house) occupied by the *Swadesh Bandhab* was searched; all its property was seized and Satish was asked to quit the house. He shifted to a friend's house temporarily and later he was given a small plot of land by a milkman (gowala) where he constructed a small hut. This house became the meeting place of young men who were interested in the social and political work of the banned *Swadesh Bandhab*. Satish had a number of books—English, Bengali, Sanskrit and Hindi; it was a small library of books suitable for the moral, political and intellectual development of the young men who used to come to him. He took his meals with Jagadish Mukherjee, the Headmaster of the B. M. School.

Jagadish, a saintly man, was a bachelor. His house comprised 4 or 5 cottages, each accommodating 3 or 4 men—teachers and students. There was an arrangement for common messing; Satish was having his meals there. Jagadish Mukherjee used to hold religious discourses every Sunday which a number of people, including high Government officials, used to attend. This house was adjacent to the plot where Satish Mukherjee built his hut. Another important person of Barisal was Pandit Kalish Chandra Vidyaratna—a teacher in the B. M. School. He was in charge of the social work and nursing bands organised by the Little Brothers of the Poor. Aswini Kumar Dutt started this organisation and used to take great interest in its social welfare work. Kalish Pandit lived near Jagadish Mukherjee's house. So the neighbourhood was congenial to Satish—but up to a point. With intensification of his political activities and consequent police watch on his movements, Satish felt that Jagadish Mukherjee did not like his taking meals in his house and Kalish Pandit also did not like young men of his nursing band to associate with Satish. So Satish stopped taking meals at Jagadish's house. With a Primus stove, he arranged to get his meals cooked in his own hut.

The Bengal Provincial Conference of 1906 held at Barisal was an important landmark in the political history of Bengal. It was held on the 13th and 14th April—the Bengali new year's time. Until then, the annual sessions of this conference were of a routine character; but for various reasons this session at Barisal became an important political event of the time. Barisal had by then already attained some fame or notoriety in the agitated politics of Bengal. I will not go into the details of the conference; but I must state the main events. By then, the Government of East Bengal and Assam had banned the shouting of *Bande-mataram*—the national cry of the people. Practically all the leaders of West and East Bengal came to attend the conference. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bipin Chandra Pal, Subodh Mullick, Aurobindo Ghose, Motilal Ghose, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Brahma-bandhab Upadhyay and all the district leaders came to Barisal. Barisal is a riverain town and even now it is without railway communication. Two steamers—one from Calcutta and the other from Dacca—though scheduled to arrive two hours apart in the evening, arrived that day at the same time according to the instruction of the Government.

The leaders and enthusiastic young men insisted that they must shout *Bandemataram* to uphold the reputation of Barisal as one of the most enthusiastic districts in the movement against Partition. Anyhow, it was agreed that there would be no shouting of *Bandemataram* on their way from the steamer ghat to the Raja Bahadur's Haveli, the usual venue of all Swadeshi meetings. Thus there was no clash in the night—but Krishna Kumar Mitra, Sachin Basu and the volunteers of the Anti-Circular Society felt aggrieved at this decision of the leaders. Anti-Circular Society was formed to directly oppose the circulars issued by the Government prohibiting the students and teachers from participating in any political activity. So they were in a more aggressive mood.

The clash came the next day, 13th April—the Bengali New Year Eve. Delegates gathered at the Raja Bahadur's Haveli to march in procession to the conference pandal, a little over a mile from that place. In the first row were volunteers with badges on their chests—with *Bandemataram* inscribed. That infuriated the police headed by the Superintendent of Police and the Assistant

S.P. They made a merciless lathi charge and even the mounted police charged on the procession. This was the first bloodshed in the movement. Surendranath Banerjea was arrested and taken to the District Magistrate's bungalow for trial; and he was sentenced to pay fines on two counts. The conference met in an agitated atmosphere. The next day, when the conference had met, the S.P. came and declared the assembly illegal. There was great excitement in the town; when all the top leaders of Bengal went to their respective places, this excitement was carried to every corner of the two Bengals.

Satish Mukherjee, then a young man of 22, had come to Barisal just a few months before the conference. We see him in public life first in this conference. He had a bundle containing copies of the printed speech of the Président and was distributing them. The Asstt. Superintendent of Police asked him to stop distributing it and hand the bundle over to him. Satish refused to oblige. There was a scuffle and Satish was overpowered and the bundle was snatched away from him. After the conference, he filed a suit. The Deputy Magistrate, before whose court the case came for hearing, did not have the courage to try the case and sent it to the District Magistrate, who had initiated all the repressive measures at Barisal before and during the conference. He dismissed the case, remarking that "this apparently is an illegal procession. The taking off the paper is a trivial incident and complainant had no right to be in illegal procession. Struck off—Section 203 Cr. P.C."

Satish then filed an appeal to the High Court which reversed the order of the D.M. and ordered a retrial. Again a Deputy Magistrate tried the case. In the judgment, he observed, "It was not perhaps quite proper for the A.D.S.P. to snatch away the pamphlets from the complainant's hands after the latter had expressed his unwillingness to give it. But the pamphlets were meant for free distribution that afternoon, although after the speech had been read. If the A.D.S.P. had waited till then, complainant would probably have willingly given him a copy. Perhaps the complainant did not expect such a treatment from a gentleman of the position of the A.D.S.P. He was not then engaged in stopping a procession under the order of any superior

authority. But it is, after all, a trivial incident and is covered by Sec. 95 I.P.C. The case is therefore dismissed under Section 203 Cr. P.C."

In Barisal town from 1906 to 1911-12, that is, for about six years, Satish led a life of intense political activity. Not only that, he lived also a life of intensive studies and deep meditation. We often wondered how he was carrying on, day after day, without any rest or proper sleep in the night. From early morning up to about 9 or 10 o'clock in the night, he was busy with the *Swadesh Bandhab Samiti's* work, or more particularly, with organisations of young men; almost always his hut was crowded with young men up to about 9 to 10 o'clock in the night. It was known that in the night he used to do meditation. For months in the mid-night, he would go from his hut more than a mile away to a village where there was an ancient temple. He would sit there in meditation for hours and would come back before dawn. This process went on month after month.

I have already stated he had not much of academic education as his college studies were interrupted at a very early stage. But we know how deep was his knowledge of Hindu philosophy, English, European philosophy and history. Ordinary Sanskrit one can read with a little knowledge of the language; but Vedic Sanskrit is a difficult thing. He read all the four Vedas in the original. We had to procure the Upnishads from a special publishing firm of Poona; these he was reading without the aid of any translation and along with the commentary of Shankar. It is well-known that Shankar's commentaries are very difficult and intricate. He read all the Puranas, eighteen in number. Ramāyana and Mahabharat were, of course, his favourite books even in his earlier years. I was then a B.A. student and borrowed Carlyle's *French Revolution* from the shelves in his cottage. He asked me what book I was taking. When I mentioned it was Carlyle's *French Revolution*, he told me, "I do not think it would be easy for you to understand it." And really I found it too stiff for me at that age. I had to return the book without finishing it but he had read that book and so gave me that caution. Carlyle's *French Revolution* and *Sartor Resurtus* are very difficult books for ordinary students; and I found it so from my own experience.

It went on like that. I do not like to enter into this phase of his life in details here. But I should only say that I have seen him in meditation with tears flowing from his eyes; I have seen him reciting Sanskrit *slokas* before an image of Vishnu and he was almost absorbed with reciting the *slokas* while offering *arati* with the bell in one hand and the *dhoopdani* in the other. I have seen him deeply engaged in studies of the Upanishads and Vedanta philosophy—almost unaware of the events happening in his presence. I have also seen him discussing political matters, giving directions in revolutionary work, looking after the revolutionary organisations often in detail. From 1906, young men started gathering round him. This was the beginning of the secret revolutionary society in Barisal which ultimately merged with the Jugantar organisation. His main guiding principle in revolutionary work was that we should not care much for party or the organisation; rather we should move with the mass movement and grow out of the movement with the specific purpose of guiding the masses and the movement in a particular line.

When Barin Ghose came to Barisal in 1906 for organising the nucleus of secret revolutionary party, he naturally approached Aswini Kumar Dutt first. Aswini Kumar told him, "For that you have to go to Satish Mukherjee." Accordingly, he met Satish and had some discussions with him and gave him a revolver. Thus a contact was established with Calcutta. The Barisal organisation ever since had not remained an isolated local organisation; it became, and developed as, a unit of Jugantar. After some time, Satish Mukherjee felt that he should not continue as a teacher of the B. M. School; the headmaster of the school, Jagadish Mukherjee, also gave him similar hints. So he resigned the teacher's job. The teacher's salary was a small one, may be Rs. 25/- or thereabout. But in those days that was quite a big amount. Satish was scrupulous enough not to spend a pie for his own purpose from any public fund. For some months, he depended on some small remittances from his home; after some time, that also ceased to arrive. Then it was mostly his admirers who arranged for his maintenance. Of course his needs were very few, he was taking vegetarian diet and that only once in the day. In the night he would take some milk mixed with either *suji* or some

other thing. Milk was then very cheap. But now we can realise that the strain of the whole day's discussion with young men, then his meditation and studies in the night and an insufficient diet month after month,—all these combined to undermine his health.

Let me now narrate his life at Banaras on different occasions. Swamiji used to go to Banaras primarily for the study of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy. During his stay at Banaras two of his devotees generally stayed with him either alternately or together. One was Radhika Jiban Sen and the other was Manomohan Ghosh. These two gentlemen are now known as Sachchidananda Giri and Swarupananda Giri respectively, both having taken *sanyas*. As far as we have been able to ascertain, he first went to Banaras about 1909. Manomohan and Radhika had been at Banaras before that on some occasions and had picked up acquaintance with Sarada Charan Maitra. When Satish Chandra Mukherjee, as he was till then known, went to Banaras, Radhika put him up with Sarada Maitra of Rangpur who had a house in the Puspadanteswar quarter of Banaras. Then within a few days, a house was rented for him at Hanuman Ghat. At this time both Monomohan and Radhika were at Banaras. This Hanuman Ghat house was practically permanently rented for Satish Mukherjee and he used to reside there almost every year for a few months.

It should be stated that in 1908, Satish Mukherjee sent Aswini Ganguly to U.P. for famine relief work. On his return from U.P., Aswini stayed at Calcutta with Satish Bose of the *Anushilan* Samity; Satish Bose knew Aswini when he had gone to Barisal. He then sent Aswini to Banaras to work along with Sachin Sanyal. After some time, Aswini did not find it congenial to work with Sachin and left Banaras. Then Satish Mukherjee sent Aswini to Banaras to form revolutionary units there. Thus a nucleus of organisation was there when Satish Mukherjee went there in 1909.

During his intermittent sojourns at Banaras, he came in contact with several learned persons, *sanyasis* and saints. Trailokya Vidyaratna, a great Sanskrit Pandit particularly of Nyaya philosophy, used to frequent the Hanuman Ghat house of Satish. He

developed great admiration and appreciation for Satish Mukherjee, though he was very much senior in age to Satish. Coming in contact with Satish, for whom politics was no less important than study and religious pursuits, this veteran pandit also started taking an interest in politics. Sarada Maitra was also interested in politics; in fact, he was a member of the Jugantar group of revolutionaries. It may be stated that Sarada was of great help to Satish in politics, study and also in his spiritual aims. Swamy Gambhirananda of Vishuddhananda Saraswaty Math was known as a learned *sanyasi*,—a man of high spiritual order. Gambhirananda Swamiji was of South Indian origin and was living in what was then known as the Madras Palli at Benaras. Swamiji used to meet him in his monastery at Madras Palli and there he came in contact with a number of South Indian monks and pandits. Pandit Gokarnanath of U.P. used to study Samkhya philosophy with him under the general guidance of Swami Gambhirananda. Kedarnath Sankhyatirtha, an orthodox Brahmin Pandit and the president of Brahman Samaj and Mahamahopadhyaya Ananda Charan Tarkachuramani frequently used to come to Satish's house.

Satish in his house started taking classes in various aspects of Hindu philosophy, particularly the Gita and the Upanishads. Some of these senior pandits also used to attend his classes. During his stay at Banaras, he would often go into ecstasy and would be completely oblivious of the environments existing then. There have been occasions when during his ecstasy, he would go on giving *upadesh* (advice) addressing one of his close followers although he was not physically present there. Prajnanananda in such stages was not conscious of who were present there before him while delivering his religious sermons. (This I have taken from the personal note given to me by Radhika Sen, i.e. Swami Sachchidananda, who was with him at that time and saw him on several occasions in that stage.)

While he was making studies in Hindu philosophy and performing religious meditations, he was not indifferent to politics. Hemendra Kishore Acharya Choudhury of Mymensingh visited him at Banaras on several occasions and discussed politics with him. Sachin Sanyal of Banaras occasionally met him. He also met

Rash Behari Bose at Banaras. He was keeping contact all along with the development of the revolutionary movement in Bengal even while he was at Banaras. The U.P. Government could not ignore him for long; they put police watchers around his house. These watchers occasionally came inside the house. Some of his admirers objected to this and wanted to tell the police watchers not to come inside. Swamiji said, "The door of a *sanyasi* is open to all—I cannot refuse entry of anybody." So the watchers continued to come inside and hear the religious discourses he held very frequently. One Jiten Banerjee was the Deputy Superintendent of the Intelligence Department at Banaras. During those days, he gained some notoriety for the over-zealous measures he introduced to keep watch over the activities of the political suspects. One day, when he was trying to enter the house, some of Swamiji's followers bolted the door from inside. So Jiten could not enter. On learning this, Swamiji went down and opened the door, telling his admirers, "I cannot refuse him entry as the house of a *sanyasi* is open to all."

Jiten Banerjee, the police officer, one day told Swamiji that, being a *sanyasi*, he should not allow those young politicals to come to his house. Prajnanananda replied, "As I cannot refuse entry to you, so I cannot refuse them entry. My house is open to all." It should be mentioned here that even while he was at Barisal, his cottage was open for all. There was an idol of Vishnu in that cottage and every morning and evening he used to offer *arati* and recite *stotras* before Lord Vishnu. As regards entry into his cottage, he did not make any discrimination on caste or creed basis. Only, he would not allow anyone to enter his house with any foot-wear on. He never observed any caste distinctions. Though he was born into a Brahmin family, his food was often cooked by his followers without any caste consideration, and that was as far back as in 1908-09. "

During this period, he was deeply absorbed in the study of Hindu philosophy as also other cultural subjects. One day, while he was staying at Banaras, he asked Manomohan Ghose to procure for him all the 18 Puranas. Sarada Maitra gave the money and Manomohan procured all the Puranas for him. After a few months, Manomohan casually asked Swamiji if he had read all

the 18 Puranas. On Swamiji's answering in the affirmative, Manomohan was surprised that several thousand pages of the 18 Puranas could have been read by him in so short a time. He wanted to test his knowledge of the Puranas, of course himself keeping the several Puranas before him. And Swamiji replied to all the questions he put from the Puranas; he even reproduced verbatim certain passages from those Puranas, so sharp was his memory. (Monomohan himself narrated this to me.)

In 1913 Swamiji left Barisal for Banaras. After some days the writer received a letter from him that he had taken *sanyas* and his *sanyas* name was Prajnanananda SaraswatY. He also mentioned the name of his guru Swami Shankarananda SaraswatY who had initiated him to *sanyas* at Gaya. It has not been possible for us to collect any further information about Swami Shankarananda SaraswatY except that he belonged to South India and that he was also the guru of Sarada Charan Maitra. Prajnanananda SaraswatY never spoke about his guru to us; but it may not be quite wrong to presume that Swami Shankarananda SaraswatY belonged to the Vishuddhananda SaraswatY order. Prajnanananda during his stay at Banaras used to visit the Vishuddhananda SaraswatY Math and became quite intimate with Swami Gambhirananda of this Math. This also was a south Indian Math. It may be mentioned here that, he took his initiation into Brahmacharya in 1911; that was at Banaras.

After taking *sanyas*, Swamiji went to Hardwar, where Manomohan Ghosh (now Swami Swarupananda) took him to Swamy Bholananda Giri. Giriji had a big Math at Hardwar. After some talks and discussion, Giriji invited him to stay for a few days in his Asram. But Prajnanananda went to Hrishikesh and stayed in the Kailash Asram for some days. There he had contacts with many *sadhus* and *sanyasis* and had religious and spiritual discourses. Then he came down to Hardwar and stayed with Swamy Bholananda for 3 or 4 days. During this period, Bholananda developed a deep regard for his learning and spiritual attainments. It may be mentioned here that Bholananda had full support for the revolutionary movement. His favourite disciple, Jatindra Nath Mukherjee, was clearly told by Giriji to go on with his revolutionary work which, he said, would be his

religion. Subsequently Bholananda used to meet Prajnanananda at Banaras whenever both of them happened to be there.

I shall now revert to the period when Swamiji was staying at Calcutta for some months in 1915 with Professor Satish Chatterjee of whom we have already made mention. Satish Chatterjee was then a professor of Chemistry in the City College and was staying on Bechu Chatterjee Street. Swamiji was not in very good health then; but I would see every day a large number of people mostly interested in politics meeting him to discuss politics. During his stay this time, he came in close contact with the revolutionary leaders of different sections of the Jugantar group at Calcutta and some of the mofussil leaders of Jugantar. This was the time of the Indo-German conspiracy. So all the sections of the Jugantar party were seriously-busy with the preparations for an armed rising with German aid. Apart from more or less open discussions with many persons, he had occasionally confidential discussions with relevant persons regarding the prospect of the armed rising. From there he went to Banaras about the middle of 1915.

It should be mentioned here that by the end of 1914, he came to know of the Indo-German conspiracy. Before leaving Barisal, he told the writer about this and asked us all to get ready for maximum sacrifice. He explained to us that according to the agreement, no German army would come;—only arms and some money would be sent. The actual rising would have to be organised by the revolutionaries with the help of local people to be mobilised by the revolutionaries.

In Banaras, he took his residence at Hanuman Ghat house. As usual a large number of people—both political and religious men—used to visit him. During his stay in Banaras, he became well-known to the public and was particularly respected both for his learning and for his religious devotion. He also mixed freely with the public. He used to go to the Dashaswamedh Ghat frequently and also to Visweswar Mandir. On the way, if he saw any one in distress, he would try to help him. On one occasion he found a *sadhu* sitting bathe-bodied during the cold night. The *sadhu* was shivering a little. Swamiji gave him his *Bahirbash* (a saffron coloured sheet covering the torso). One man used to sing

Kabir's *doha* to the accompaniment of *ektara* (musical instrument with only one string) and roam over the streets without asking anything from anybody. He would usually come to the Hanuman Ghat house of Prajnanananda, who would every day attentively hear the devotional songs of Kabir sung by that man. One chilly morning that man was barebodied and Swamiji asked him what clothes he had. The singer with complete indifference to his physical requirements signified that he had nothing and he needed nothing. Immediately Swamiji gave him the blanket which he was himself using and the man took it thankfully. Swamiji was not sure what he would put on in the night over his own body as he had no extra blanket with him. Similar occasions, occurring not infrequently, embarrassed his friends and admirers as they had to somehow find a replacement for the thing given away.

As he was becoming popular at Banaras and as the political situation in India was becoming more and more critical Government thought of arresting Swami Prajnanananda Saraswati. Around March 1916, he was arrested under the Defence of India Act and was asked to proceed to Barisal and report to the Superintendent of Police there. He was then suffering from a serious attack of Asthma. He sent information to the Superintendent of Police, Banaras, that he would like to have a few days' treatment before proceeding for Barisal. The Superintendent of Police referred him to the Civil Surgeon, who examined him and then had some discussion with him mostly regarding religion and spirituality. He was charmed by his sweet manners and deep learning. He told Swamiji that he would like to keep him at Banaras for some time and to treat him; but Prajnanananda politely declined and asked for only 7 days' stay just to get over an acute attack of asthma from which he was then suffering. The Civil Surgeon issued him a medical certificate to stay the order for 7 days.

On his arrival at Barisal, he reported to the Superintendent of Police who asked him to proceed to Wazirpur, his native village and stay in his parental house as an interneer. Swamiji declined to do this as it was against the rules of *sanyas* to live in one's parental house. The Superintendent of Police argued

with him for some time and explained to him the implication of his refusal to comply with the order. That would mean prosecution; yet he declined to go to his native village. Finding no alternative, he reported the matter to the Government and in the meantime, ordered Swamiji to be interned in the Shankar Math at Barisal till further orders were received from the Government.

Shankar Math was founded by Swami Prajnanananda Saraswaty and was the main centre of the Barisal section of the Jugantar party for their revolutionary activities. It had a small plot of land, of about an acre, just outside the town with two kutchra houses—one for the library with corrugated iron roofing and the other a small cottage with thatched roofing. The object of Shankar Math was the cultivation and culture of Vedanta philosophy of Shankaracharya if and when the political situation afforded such opportunities. The Math also had a programme of setting up rural libraries and primary schools in different areas. Swamiji told us that it was a religious and cultural institution particularly for the propagation of Vedanta philosophy and extending educational facilities in the rural areas. But he also told us categorically that whenever any necessity would be felt for revolutionary activities, either to sell it or to abolish it, there should not be any hesitation to do that. He made it clear that in a slave country there can be no real cultivation of religion, spirituality or Vedanta philosophy; the first objective before his devotees and admirers should be the attainment of independence.

Swamiji stayed at Shankar Math for over three months as the Government order for his internment in some other place did not come for some time. It was during this period that Jadugopal Mukherjee along with Nalini Kar went to Barisal; both of them had been for some time living the life of absconders, the Government having declared a reward of Rs. 5,000/- for the arrest of each of them. Moreover, after the martyrdom of Jatin Mukherjee at Balasore in September 1915, Jadugopal practically became the top man in the Jugantar party as he was entrusted by Jatin Mukherjee and others to be in charge of the Indo-German conspiracy. Day after day in the evening, walking about a mile through the public streets of Barisal, Jadugopal and Nalini Kar used to meet Swamiji in the evening and discuss various political issues

confronting the country. Hope of receiving German arms had, by then, receded far; in fact all attempts had failed and there was hardly any prospect of German arms coming.

Swamiji insisted that with or without German arms, the Bengal revolutionaries must do something to strike the imagination of the people and to leave a legacy of martyrdom for the next generation. He was vehemently pressing the idea that this opportunity of international war, in which Britain was fighting for her very existence, should not be lost by the Indian revolutionaries. With whatever resources of arms and ammunition they could muster, they must strike at any Government establishment, be it a sub-treasury, a police station or an armoury or anything else. This would mean certain death for a number of young boys but would leave an impression on the next generation. Surendra Mohan Ghose of Mymensing was sent for and he also came. Serious discussions continued for some days and calculation of arms available with the revolutionaries was also made. It was estimated that about 100 arms, including rifles, muskets, revolvers, pistols etc. might be available with the revolutionaries. The present writer was present at Barisal at this time; and in fact he took Jadugopal and Nalini Kar to Barisal from Assam via Comilla. Jadugopal then pleaded that there was yet a lingering hope of getting some arms somehow; so it might be better to postpone this programme for two or three months at the most. That was the decision made. Surendra Mohan Ghose left for Mymensingh and the present writer left for Calcutta. Jadugopal stayed at Barisal for some time. Swamiji's idea was that without such martyrdom of the revolutionaries, they could not expect any political awakening of the nation.

During this period the police watchers were highly respectful and almost in a spirit of adoration towards Swamiji. Three watchers were keeping watch over the Shankar Math in shifts. One became almost a devoted follower of Swamiji. The other two also adopted an attitude of non-interference, all simply due to the sweet manners and highly spiritual level of Swamiji. They all attended the *arati* that Swamiji used to have every evening. It must be admitted that it was only with the help of and often with the cooperation of the police watchers that it was possible

for us to take the very risky step of arranging meetings between a proclaimed absconder like Jadugopal and Swami Prajnanananda Saraswaty almost every day for weeks together.

From 1st July 1916, the Government took up the policy of wholesale arrest of all political suspects. Hundreds of young men were arrested in Calcutta and all over the districts. This was only about a fortnight after the writer's return to Calcutta. The writer was also arrested on 8th July. Due to this mass arrest of all suspects, there was practically a complete dispersal and disorganisation of the revolutionary forces; and the proposal of having some daring and direct fight with the Government forces could not materialise. And Swamiji was also transferred from Shankar Math in Barisal town to Galachipa police station in the southern portion of the district. That again happened to be the birthplace of Swami Prajnanananda as at the time of his birth his father was serving there. As that also was against the discipline of a *sanyasi*, he represented to the Government that he could not stay there. After two or three months, by the end of 1916, he was transferred to Mahisadal in the district of Midnapur.

Thus began another phase of Swami Prajnanananda Saraswaty's life. An internee under the Defence of India Act had to live under a lot of restrictions. He was not allowed to stir out of the house allotted to him or to receive any visitor, between sunset and sunrise. During daytime also, he was not to speak to any stranger, any student or any teacher. The internee had also to report himself to the police station twice daily at fixed hours; and only in some cases relaxation was made and attendance at the police station was insisted upon only once a day. The internee was also prohibited from going beyond the boundary of the village at any time. Any violation of any of these conditions would mean prosecution and conviction. One can easily visualise the difficulties of an internee, a stranger in a far-off village. While going to the police station, wading through one or two miles of village roads about 55 years ago, he would meet many people and they might ask him some questions about his name, home address, reasons for his coming there etc. The internee could not know who was a resident of that village or a stranger or a student or a teacher. So it was quite likely that

almost every day, he would violate the terms of his detention, even though unwittingly. Swamiji was a *dandi sanyasi*. Whenever he went out, he used to carry a *danda* in one hand and a *kamandalu* in another. (Danda is something like a stick—about 6 feet long and having at the top, a piece of saffron coloured cloth folded and stitched.) That made men more curious about him. It was prohibited for him, according to the discipline of a *dandi sanyasi* to touch fire or coins; so he could not cook his food himself, or carry money to purchase anything for himself. And Swamiji was given a monthly allowance of Rs. 40/-, which was to cover his own expenditure, salary of a cook and also a servant (for financial reasons, it might be a part-time servant to clean the utensils and the house). He had also to incur some expenditure on newspapers and books. Letters were all censored; yet some letters were written by the internee.

The first man to be attracted to him was Haripada Ghosal, headmaster of the Mahisadal school. One day, while going to the police station, he met Haripada, coming from the opposite direction. Haripada stopped and looked at him intently. To quote his own words, Haripada said, "I was dumb-founded. . . . I felt as if I was in a dream. I could not move and stared at him. Seeing my condition Swamiji asked, 'Are you Hari Babu?' . . . His smiling face and the sweet words perhaps helped me regain my senses. I felt I woke up from a dream. I touched his feet and said, 'Yes, that is my name. I am the headmaster of the school.'" When Haripada started walking with him, Swamiji told him not to do so, as the police might see it and put him to troubles. Till then Haripada did not know that Swamiji was an internee there. He wrote, "I wonder—he is a *dandi sanyasi* who has abandoned all earthly interests; why is he going to the police station? My mind was vacillating. There was no end to my curiosity." Then Haripada asked the Officer-in-charge of the police station why this *sanyasi* was coming to him? The O.C. told him that he was an internee; according to the directions of the Government, he was to report twice every day to the police station. The O.C., during these few days, was somewhat charmed by the manners, learning and religious temperament of Swamiji. The O.C. told Haripada, "During the War, the Government have lost

their head; they are seeing ghosts in every corner. That is why a *sanyasi*—really a learned and spiritual man like him, has been arrested and interned."

Within a short time, the O.C. became a warm admirer of Swamiji; similar was the case with the postmaster. These two persons had some direct contact with Swamiji. He had to report to the O.C. twice every day and postmaster had also to deliver to him the letters coming in a special cover from the Superintendent of Police after being duly censored by him. That provided a contact between the postmaster and the Swamiji. Then gradually a number of young men started coming to him.

Generally the rural people of Bengal are of a religious disposition and are attracted to any *sanyasi* or *sadhu*. So, many men were coming to him almost daily. It was difficult for Swami Prajnanananda to discriminate among the visitors who were residents of that village and who were not and he did not try to make the distinction, disregarding the rules. Many people came to him for some medicine, as the rural people generally had the idea that a *sanyasi* must know many medicines even for incurable diseases. Swamiji knew a bit of ayurvedic, homoeopathic and what was known then as *totka* treatment; that treatment was usually done by the grand-mother of the house for the children and which were often efficacious. To any one coming for medical relief, he used to give, according to the nature of the disease, either ayurvedic or homeopathic or *totka* medicine. When the number of patients started growing, he procured some Ayurvedic books of Charak and Susruta and also some homoeopathic books and medicines. Thus he was treating many patients.

His manners were always sweet. There was always a smile lingering on his lips; his appearance also was charming. So the number of visitors grew and many of them were surprised to note the austerity of his living. On the floor, there was a mat and on one side were the *danda* (staff) and the *kamandalu* and on the other side there were some books with only one blanket as the sole item of bedding. In Mahishadal, there was a Raj family and the high school there was established by the Raja of Mahisadal. The younger brother of the Raja became particularly attached to Swamiji; the elder brother, who held the title of Raja

Bahadur, was somewhat cautious in associating with Swamiji lest he might incur the displeasure of the Government. Every year before the Puja, the Raj family used to distribute clothes to distressed people. Within a short time, they made it a practice that the clothes would be distributed on their behalf by Swamiji.

Another name should be mentioned here: that of Satish Chandra Samanta, member of the Lok Sabha for the last 25 years. When Swamiji went there Satish was then a student in the 3rd class (eighth standard of present day). Though Satish belonged to the same village and had his own house at Mahisadal, his father had put him in the school hostel so that he had better environments for studies. One day Satish had a chanced meeting with Swamiji. Satish, then a boy of about 15, looked at the *sanyasi*—robed in saffron cloth with a *danda* in his hand. He got somewhat puzzled and stared at him with attention. Swamiji smilingly talked to him and asked him to see him.

Satish is the only child of his father who must have built so many expectations on the future attainments of his son. Satish was a fairly good student; he passed the Matriculation Examination in the first division in 1919 and also the I.Sc. in the first division in 1921 and surely he would have passed B.Sc. and M.Sc. with credit. It would have been possible for him to establish a successful career in life. But he abandoned all this after having come in contact with Prajnanananda. He has practically dedicated his life for giving shape to the mission he got from Prajnanananda. Among other persons who were intimately connected with Prajnanananda Saraswati at Mahishadal, I should mention Dharani Dhar Samanta who practically used to manage his entire household affairs. As Swamiji did not touch money, Dharani kept the money and purchased the necessary articles for him. Perhaps he came in contact with Swamiji earlier than anybody else and Dharani still now cherishes the memory of Swamiji with great devotion and worships him as his *guru*.

Contact with Haripada Ghosal opened a new chapter in Swamiji's life. Haripada himself was a learned man but he was of a gay nature, used to spend his leisure mostly in playing cards or in other light pursuits. After coming in contact with Swamiji, he changed his mode of life. The evening, which he was spending

in playing cards, was now spent with Swamiji. Almost every evening he came to Swamiji's house when they discussed many serious things. The latent hankering for learning and search for truth in Haripada found an outlet and they together discussed many philosophical and historical topics. Swamiji asked Haripada to read serious books and to write. Haripada also tried to impress on Swamiji that he should not allow his vast learning to be lost with him, but should write something so that the future generation might get the benefit of his erudition.

Swamiji was impressed by this but mentioned about the want of books at Mahisadal. It was a village; the school library and public library contained only ordinary books and light literature. If Swamiji was to write anything, he should write on Hindu philosophy and Vedanta. It was not possible to get the necessary books at Mahisadal. But most of these books were available in the Shankar Math library at Barisal. So information was sent to Barisal to send the books from Shankar Math and some books were purchased mostly from Poona and Calcutta. Arrangement was made to get the books from the Shankar Math, Barisal, and he started writing. The result was that he wrote several books which were indicative of his depth of learning. Among the books he wrote, one was named *Rajniti*, a treatise on comparative politics. The next book was the History of Vedanta Philosophy in Bengali in three volumes, of approximately 1,000 pages. And another book was *Karmatatwa*, a sort of comparative ethics and the biggest of all the three books. He also wrote a small book called *Sabalata-o-Durbalata* (Strength and Weakness). Only the *Rajniti* and *Sabalata-o-Durbalata* were published during his life time. The other books were published after his exit from this world. It should be mentioned here, in all these books, we find his depth of knowledge of both Indian and European philosophy, political science and moral science. Haripada, later on, wrote some books in Bengali—one of which was a history of the world.

So, three years of detention in Mahisadal was in a sense the most productive period of Swamiji's life. He was released from detention in May 1920. After a few days, he went to Calcutta and stayed in the Entally house of Jogesh Chandra Mukherjee, an admirer of his. Gradually other revolutionary prisoners were

also being released. The present writer was released in June, late in the evening one day. Next morning, he went to see Swamiji and stayed with him for some time. Then the writer went to Barisal, his native place. Swamiji was not in good health. Haripada and others insisted that he should go to some healthy place for recouping his health. He told them—not to worry about his mortal body—rather to take concern for the ideal. But insistent requests of his admirers made him relent and he was taken to Madhupur—a health resort in Bihar—just on the border of Bengal. The atmosphere there was that of rich lotus-eaters who had no concern or topic of discussion except their health and physical comforts. There was nothing of high living or of any high ideals. He felt the atmosphere almost suffocating. He repeatedly wrote to Haripada and Jogesh to take him from that place. So, only after a short stay, he left that place without any improvement to his health; and he did not like to stay at Calcutta also.

He liked the quiet of Mahisadal more than the busy atmosphere of Calcutta or the association of the lotus-eaters at Madhupur. Haripada Ghosal arranged with the Mahisadal Raj family to provide one of their houses for Swamiji and they gladly provided a good house for him. The Head Pandit of the school agreed to give 10 seers of rice for him every month. His other necessities, not costing much, were provided by Haripada and the local admirers of Swamiji who decided to take full charge of Swamiji without bothering his Calcutta admirers. Swamiji stayed there for about 4 months; but he got repeated attacks of malaria there.

By that time the Non-cooperation Movement was gathering strength. On 4th September in the special session of the Congress at Calcutta, the Non-cooperation resolution was passed. The present writer and some of his other colleagues of the Jugantar party, who had just then been released from jail, supported the resolution in the Calcutta Congress. Then in December 1920, in the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur, the resolution was reaffirmed; there also, some important members of the Jugantar party, recently released from jail, supported the resolution. But Swamiji had his doubts about this movement, particularly

because of its emphasis on non-violence. Some of the Jugantar workers were feeling embarrassed; they felt that without the full consent of Swamiji, it would be difficult for many of them to participate in the Non-cooperation whole-heartedly. The present writer with Manoranjan Gupta went to Mahisadal to see him. They placed before him their reading of the movement. After three days' discussion, it was decided that Swamiji would come to Calcutta, watch the movement for some days and then decide.

Swamiji's health was now awfully bad. In addition to asthma, while at Mahisadal he was having bronchial troubles along with attacks of malaria. It was necessary to send him to some healthy place for recovering his shattered health. He came to Calcutta about the middle of January 1921, and stayed with Jogesh Mukherjee at his Entally house. Non-cooperation movement was then in full swing. The city was politically surcharged with excitement. Hundreds of young students were coming out of schools and colleges and demonstrating on the streets to defy the Government orders. The whole day people were coming and meeting Swamiji in the Entally house of Jogesh Chandra Mukherjee. He was also examined by some Calcutta physicians and it was decided that he would go for a change to Bilaspur where Hiranmaya Mitra, one of our political colleagues, resided at the time. His usual dislike to go to any health resort was overcome by the insistence of that young admirer. Hironmaya Mitra of Comilla was released from detention some time ago. He went to Bilaspur to work in a quarry of the Tatas at Barduar. He was then at Calcutta and requested Swamiji to stay with him for some days as he would like to have his association. Swamiji agreed to his earnest desire.

Before he left for Barduar (Bilaspur), Swamiji told the present writer two things. All along he was very much against any member of the party getting married; but some of his very intimate followers had by then married, giving him a very rude shock. It should be remembered that we were then working in the moral atmosphere created by Swami Vivekananda when observance of *brahmacharya* and celibacy was one of the prime tenets to be observed by young men. Before leaving for Bilaspur, he told me: "I might have a second thought about marriage." In this matter

he referred to a particular friend of ours who was very close with him and who had married after his release from jail some time earlier. And the second thing he told me: "I think I shall have to revise my opinion about this movement. It appears it has great potentiality." On reaching Bilaspur, he wrote to some of us: "I have decided to join this movement whole-heartedly."

But things went in a different way. At Barduar, his health grew worse. Hiron, who took him there, was living alone, being himself a bachelor. He was alarmed at the worsening condition of Swamiji's health. So he sent a telegram to Calcutta and put Swamiji on a railway compartment with a ticket for Calcutta. When he was received at Howrah station, he was almost unconscious. He was brought to the house of Jogesh Mukherjee at Entally; next day he expired. Thus his earnest desire to join the Non-cooperation movement could not be fulfilled. But he left sufficient indication to his followers that they had his blessings in joining the movement. The writer was present at his bedside when he left his mortal frame. Before that, he was muttering some words, mostly religious and spiritual; but he also muttered some political thoughts. Once he said—"Oh, Mother—I am your unworthy son, so I have not been able to do much for your salvation." He was then only 37 years old.

The day he left his mortal frame, Bholananda Giri was unexpectedly present at Calcutta. He came to that house and stood before the body in silent, reverent mood. He performed some rites generally observed on the demise of a *sanyasi*.

Before concluding, it may be relevant to indicate the nature of his advice to his followers. He never gave *Dikhsa* or *Mantra* to all and sundry coming to him. In fact, he never initiated anyone as his *mantra sishya* beyond the circle of his revolutionary followers. As far as the writer recollects, he gave *mantra* only to 3 or 4 married persons, all of whom had full sympathy with the revolutionary movement, though not actively participating in it. One was Jogesh Mukherjee and the other was Haripada Ghosal. He would give spiritual advice or *upadesh* to anyone coming to him—irrespective of caste, creed or sex. He had many woman admirers and *Bhaktas* and never put any ban on a woman coming to him. To his revolutionary followers, he would not talk much

of spiritualism or religion—except to observe purity of character and integrity of conduct. One day he asked the writer, “What is the ideal of your life?” The writer, then a young man reading in the B.A. class, failed to realise the implication of his question. Then he himself explained, “There are two options—to do, or to be.” He told the writer—“Remember, ‘to do’—is not the main thing; ‘to be’ should be the principle of your life. I shall judge you—not by what you do or can do, but by what you are as a man.” I was rather surprised that such an advice could come from the leader of a revolutionary party—an activist party.

Another day he told the writer: “If you find the struggle for country’s emancipation is hopelessly lost and you have nothing more to do in that line, then don’t be a *grihi* (a family man). It should be your duty then to go to the rural areas and start primary schools there. That should also be your mission, if during your life time independence of the country was achieved. Even then, you should live as the *sevak* (servant) of the people, particularly the rural people.” The implication was, to impress upon his followers the necessity of developing rural areas and to spread education there. This he said in about 60 years ago.

He was very fond of some Sanskrit *slokas* and some poems of Rabindranath Tagore. One such line—“Salvation through the life of a recluse—that is not for me”—is from Tagore. Another passage of a poem which he often recited to his followers:

“To cut the bonds—that is my mission
To move along with the millions—that is my destination;
If the world goes on crying,
Shall I sit in meditation for my salvation?”

From Buddha’s life—he would quote:

“Sitting on this seat—let my body be parched,
Let my skin, bones and flesh go to perdition
I shall not stir from this seat,
Till I achieve, the much difficult enlightenment.”

Another Sanskrit *sloka* he would recite:

"Friends will curse me,
Wife and children will forsake me
People will laugh at me.
Yet I will serve Thee—again and again
Thou alone art my final salvation."

He repeatedly told his disciples—*Nayam-atma Balahinen lavya*—the weak cannot achieve salvation. He also frequently said that in a slave country there could not be any religious or spiritual pursuit.

It was such men of spiritual and moral idealism like Swami Prajnanananda and Jatin Mukherjee who gave a distinctive character to the revolutionary movement of Bengal, particularly to the Jugantar group. Nursed in that high moral and spiritual idealism, Jugantar played a really revolutionary role in the changing politics of India and particularly in Bengal. It grew out of the public movement and developed along with the public movement, at the same time helping the movement to follow the right course. Its idea was: to be with the masses and to guide them along the path of revolution.

This was indicative of the political outlook which the Jugantar party had all along followed. The party developed along with the movement and also directed the movement. Members of the Jugantar party, even while in prison in 1920, decided to join the mass-oriented movement even though they had mental reservation about non-violence. That is why they supported the Non-cooperation resolution in the Calcutta Special Session and the Nagpur Annual Session of the Congress. And after that, Congress was built up in almost all the districts of Bengal by the workers of the Jugantar party. The writer and his friends had their satisfaction that they had the blessing of Swami Prajnanananda Saraswaty to join and work for the Non-cooperation Movement—the great mass revolutionary movement.

II.

The Rebel and the Rebellion : Wasudeo Balwant Phadke

T. R. DEOGIRIKAR

Wasudeo Balwant Phadke was one of the early revolutionaries whose personality was surrounded with a nimbus of mystery and heroism. But before acquainting ourselves with his exploits, it would be worthwhile to take a rapid survey of the aftermath of the cessation of Peshwa rule in Maharashtra. As we know, India was not conquered by a single invasion of a gigantic army of British adventurers. The process of conquest was going on since 1689 when the East India Company decided to go for territorial sway. In 1757, the Battle of Plassey was fought and Bengal was practically overpowered with a loss of life of seven Englishmen who were clerks in the service of the Company. But then, the path of conquest was neither smooth nor straight. The foreigners were behaving like vultures. They were fighting amongst themselves. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British were never united in working for their objective. They were deadly enemies of each other, one desiring to drive the other out of the country and appropriating the whole booty to itself. If there had been an agreement between the French and the English in Europe, Dupleix, who had practically

established his rule in India, would have mastered this land of ours. It was not, therefore, mainly our internal rivalry and enmity, as alleged by various historians, that brought about India's ruin and made her a slave. The superiority of one foreign power, as decided on the battlefield of India, went on giving stunning blows to the disjointed, crippled and outmoded system of our military power. The last in this line was the Peshwa dominion. The Maratha empire existed only in name; the last of the Peshwas, Bajirao the Second, fled to Northern India after surrendering the Maratha capital of Satara, on the 10th February 1818. The process of conquest was completed therewith. But the end of the old era was the beginning of a new one.

After the surrender of the Maratha power, the class to be immediately affected was the disbanded army. The armymen lost their jobs and their means of livelihood. The number of such uprooted jobless must have been tremendous. They loitered in the streets of Poona, either stretching out their hands for alms or committing petty thefts in the house of the unprotected poor. Not only the fighters in the regular forces, but the civil employees were also thrown to the winds with the downfall of the Peshwa rule. The common man was, however, happy. He welcomed the change. Under the rule of the Peshwas, his life, his property, his land or other belongings had never been safe, as they had been subject to constant raids and loots by their own people. The English rulers gave them an assurance that there would be safety, security and stability in the new regime and asked the people, therefore, to cooperate with the new Government heartily and without reservations. The old regime of the Peshwas had undoubtedly deteriorated and the common man heaved a sigh of relief with the ushering in of the white man's rule. Not that there were not men of foresight, patriotic fervour and sacred memories of the times of Shivaji the Great; but as realists they saw that there was no possibility of armed resistance in the existing circumstances.

The shrewd amongst the new rulers went on inculcating in the minds of the intellectual classes that the reason why they lost their independence was their social backwardness. In a way it was true; but what that had to do with the retention or in-

ability for retention of our power? Lord William Bentinck made the custom of *suttee* a crime. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Keshav Chandra Sen greatly influenced the minds of the new English-educated class in Maharashtra. Woman was the target of social reform. She must not be allowed to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her husband; she must be allowed to remarry; her head must not be tonsured after the death of her husband; she must not be married at the early age of eight; education must not be denied to her and she should be allowed to mix freely in society. The Christian missionaries were spreading themselves in different parts of the country and were vigorously trying to convert the Hindus of the upper strata of society. But India was saved from the probability of mass conversion by the founders of the Brahma Samaj in Bengal and its branch—the Prathana Samaj in Maharashtra.

India owes a debt to Bengal in another way. The process of introspection commenced with the spiritual revolution brought about by Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His disciple Swami Vivekananda carried the message of Hinduism not only throughout India but in certain other parts of the world. Then came Aurobindo Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore. They were from Bengal but not Bengalees; they belonged to the whole world, especially to India. Maharashtra owes much to them. Even now their influence is greatly felt among the educated classes. Bengal led the way in the sphere of constitutional agitation as well. Swadeshi, boycott, national education and Swaraj constituted the potential force of that agitation. Bengal partition was a mad act of Lord Curzon. It was, however, a challenge to Bengal which took it up and succeeded in undoing the mischief that was purposely done. The revolutionary movement was fostered by the act of Lord Curzon in Bengal. Bengal is extremely sentimental. It is very proud and touchy. The Bengalee cares little for his life. It is outside the scope of this article to digress to the 1947 division of Bengal, as also the present Naxalite revolt.

In Poona, which was the immediate prey to the new rule, history took its own course. But it was closely linked with the new awakening in Bengal for the whole of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century.

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The first resistance to British rule came from the Ramoshi. It was a predatory tribe, but was fully utilised since Shivaji's times. As Wasudeo Balwant Phadke relied on this tribe, it would not be improper to take notice of them. The Ramoshi came from the Hyderabad State and migrated to Maharashtra from the Telengana region long before the advent of Shivaji. Their services were utilised for plundering the principal Muslim leaders, who invaded Maharashtra to annihilate Shivaji and his growing power. They rendered excellent service to Shivaji. They would plunder horses, camels and sometimes elephants, not to speak of jewellery and cash. Shivaji was naturally pleased with them and employed more and more Ramoshis in his campaigns against the enemy. Some of them were honest to a certain extent. Shivaji promised to give them land and certain rights. These promises were fulfilled by his grandson. But the natural instinct, of this tribe would not allow them to lead a settled life. They were always searching for some plunder, some booty, some dacoity on either the highways or jungles or big towns.

About 1730 the Ramoshis became extremely troublesome. They became a terror. They spread in all directions; and travelling became well-nigh impossible. The then Peshwa caught hold of one Pilaji Jadhavrao and made him Chief of the Ramoshis. Some order was established; but it did not last long. They would not settle at one place, though, they were employed as night watchmen to guard certain areas and rich men's houses. They loved their profession more than their duty. This state of affairs continued till after the commencement of British rule. They began to plunder the houses of the Europeans. Though they were predatory by nature, yet they had a real grievance against the rulers. The rights, the privileges and the lands that were granted to them for their services were not allowed to be

enjoyed by them. This exasperated the desperate amongst them who made them rise in petty rebellions.

Umaji Naik, the leader of the Ramoshis, who had become a legendary figure in those days, had many encounters with the police. He was convicted for robbery and kept in Thana prison for a year. After coming out of jail, he went back to his old career. The British Government found it difficult to bring him and his men under control. People believed that he had God-given powers and hence the British would never be able to arrest him. But that was all wishful thinking. He was ultimately caught and executed in 1827. All his exploits were confined to the hilly region around Poona. Umaji Naik's name is even now so popular that he is ranked with Shivaji the Great. The Poona Gazetteer says: "The singular adventures of this man, who, but for the English, might have become a second Shivaji, are worth perusal."*

After Umaji Naik's execution, the Ramoshi element was subdued, till Wasudeo Balwant Phadke tried to enlist their assistance to raise their contingent for a fight against the British.

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Wasudeo Balwant Phadke was a Chitpavan Brahmin. His grandfather was a Killedar (guardian of fort) of Karnala in Kolaba District, in the days of Peshwas. The family was called Sardar Phadke. It was rich and was highly respected in the neighbouring area. When British rule came, the Phadkes refused to surrender the fort, but they were ultimately forced to do so after a grim fight. Wasudeo was born on the 4th November, 1845, at Shirdhon, a village at the foot of this fort. His birth was celebrated with great pomp and rejoicing. He was very fair, attractive, pleasing and well-built. Even at the early age of five, he used to ride a horse with fearlessness and confidence. He disliked going to school. It was at the age of ten that his name was registered in a vernacular school at Kalyan. But the boy proved to be very clever. In those days learning English was considered a sin; but Wasudeo surreptitiously learnt English in a mission school.

* Page 38; Volume XVIII, Part III, Poona.

He then spent some years in schools at Bombay and Poona. He did not, however, appear for the Matriculation examination. At the age of 15 his education was over. It was not unusual in those days to get a son married at the age of 15, and Wasudeo was married in 1859. After his marriage he went to Bombay and got a clerical job on a salary of Rs. 20/- in G.I.P. Railway. But he gave up that and two more jobs till he came to be employed in the Military Finance Department. That was his last job. His office was situated in Poona, where history was made.

Wasudeo Balwant was an ideal family man and an ideal servant of the Government. He took to observance of religious rituals with devotion and piety. His deity was Dattatraya—the Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh trinity. He wanted to acquire supernatural powers by *tapas*—by meditation, by fasts, by study of scriptures. But that was not to be. A change in his life came suddenly. In 1870, he received news that his mother whom he loved most was seriously ill and that she ardently desired to see him. Wasudeo became restless. How could he be away from her deathbed? He scribbled an application for leave. The leave was delayed. He could not tolerate this heartless attitude of the Government. He left a note in the office about his absence and went to Shirdhon. In those days, there was no provision for transport to far-away places in the interior. When he finally reached his home, his mother had left the world. There was a delay of only two days but what difference it made! Wasudeo was terribly upset. A Government, which does not care for the filial affections, was inhuman, monstrous and must be ended, he said. He did not give up the service, however. He continued to serve; but did not care for the discipline and the rules. Neither was he dismissed from the service.

Wasudeo began to talk about revenge on the Government and gathered around him men of daring, self-respect and determination. By experience, he found, that the English-educated gentry was more drawn towards getting a job in the Government than running the risk for the liberation of the country. Out of timidity and cowardice, they began to talk in appreciative terms about the new rule. Wasudeo Balwant had to rely on those other classes which were turbulent by nature and

which would risk their lives for prospective gains through hazardous undertakings. But before approaching this class, Wasudeo Balwant tried to create an awakening amongst the people by speeches in the public meetings which he himself organised by beating of drums. How he, a Government servant, was allowed to do so is a puzzle. But he was doing it and the office was conniving at it. He started going to the villages on lecturing campaigns. His well-wishers advised him to stop this open defiance against the Government; but nothing could restrain him:

In 1873 he lost his first wife and was married for the second time. The family, which had lost all its past glory and riches, was somehow managing its household.

In 1874, Wasudeo Balwant founded the first non-governmental high school in Póona. He was quite alive to the importance of education, lack of which was coming in the way of resurgence of India's nationhood. The name of the school was 'Native Institution'. Wasudeo Balwant was its founder, secretary and treasurer. It subsequently came to be known as 'Bhave School'. This institution has progressed so well that now it has a college, three high schools, grand buildings and thousands of students.

In 1876 there was a great famine in Maharashtra. Not a drop of rain had fallen. People and cattle began to die in great numbers. Those who were able to move out migrated to other parts of the country. Wasudeo Balwant could not bear to see the sorrows and sufferings of the famine-stricken. He wept and wept in vain. Many a time he thought of retiring to an unknown place and doing penance for the removal of the distress. The Government had started famine relief work; but it was only nominal. Wasudeo Balwant distributed whatever property he had to the poor and the needy. But that was less than a drop in the ocean. Had the Government been our own, Wasudeo Balwant said, it would not have allowed people to die. The only remedy according to him was the capture of power and establishment of Swaraj, the people's raj. Was it an easy thing? But to the daring and the brave nothing is impossible, if attempts are faithfully made for the object.

In the famine of 1876, the tribes of Ramoshis and Kolis had suffered most. They had become desperate and were ready for any daring act. Wasudeo Balwant came in contact with their

group leaders, organised them, created confidence, praised the valour of their forefathers, injected in them a disaffection for British rule, and asked them to fight for the removal of slavery. He gave them training for military fighting and guerilla warfare. The Ramoshis were dare-devils. They knew the art of killing quite well. They were stout like steel and would spare none if the occasion demanded.

In Poona city itself, he organised four groups consisting of students. One group of students held secret meetings outside the schools. The second group paraded the streets, singing patriotic songs. The third group was a roving band, singing poems and prayers of saints. The fourth group consisted of active members for revolutionary activities. Each member had to take an oath with a mixture of rice flakes and curds in hands; he was to take the pledge: 'I shall respond to the call of my nation, sacrificing all at the altar of my motherland.'

It seems the Government did not take sufficient notice of these movements. Even Government servants were participating in the training that was given by Wasudeo Balwant and others in the handling of swords, spears and other weapons. This had been going on for many days at far-away places, in the jungles, at dead of night. It was generally taken as part of gymnastics. Phadke himself was a great gymnast. Most of his top followers were middle-class Brahmins. There were some ladies in his secret organisation. His wife was their leader. Wasudeo Balwant gave these members a clear idea that his object was to bring about an armed revolt against the British; some people laughed at him but he did not mind that. He used to say that his attempt was at an infantile stage. A child of a year or two is not able to lift up a jar filled with water; but as he grows old he does it easily. Wasudeo Balwant said he was making a beginning and out of that small beginning the whole country would rise in revolt.

In order to secure the blessings of saints, he approached the Akkalkot Maharaj. He placed his sword before the Maharaj, who would not touch it, but asked his servant to place it on the nearby tree. Wasudeo Balwant was disappointed but did not give up the attempt.



Twentieth February 1879 was fixed as the date for the beginning of the uprising. The hero sent away his wife at her parents'; the household was disbanded; the arms, the money, the clothing etc. were distributed amongst the insurgents for action. The fighters were organised in companies. One was led by Sardar Daulatrao Naik, the head of the Ramoshis and the other by Wasudeo Balwant himself. Both the battalions consisted in all of less than 200 men.

To be successful the rising must have a large number of fighters and for recruiting fighters money was needed. Wherefrom was money to be found? Wasudeo Balwant and his second in command decided to raid the villages. Before commencing the raid they would take the villagers into confidence. They would tell them that they were going to fight against the Britishers and for that fight money was essential. They would raid the houses of the vicious rich moneylenders, but would not touch the poor. Women and children were exempted. They wanted ornaments, jewellery and cash to be surrendered voluntarily to avoid forcible confiscation; but none surrendered these voluntarily.

The first village raided was Dhamari near Poona on the 23rd February, 1879. They got Rs. 3,000 in the raid. With that money they paid the salaries of the fighters and made purchases of arms. In all they raided 20 to 25 villages. How much money they collected is not known.

The Government agency now became alert. The police and the military began to pursue them hotly. Special officers were appointed for arresting the men in the 'army' of Wasudeo Balwant. It was really a battle of life and death for the leader and his men to escape from the clutches of the police. They went without food off and on; they had narrow escapes, had to swim the rivers, climb the mountains, jump from heights, miss their way in the dales and the ravines. It was a terrible ordeal. The villagers were, however, sure that there was nothing to fear from Wasudeo Balwant's raids. They helped him and misguided the police.

The news of the rebellion spread all over India and reached England. Sir Richard Temple was the then Governor of Bombay. He adopted stringent measures for stamping out the uprising and capturing the leader. The description of Wasudeo Balwant

appeared on the police station boards. It said he had grown a beard and had a rosary of Rudraksha round his neck and earlets in his ear. He was in simple dhoti and a garment on the upper part of the body. It must be added that Wasudeo Balwant had appointed a special officer to keep accounts and care was taken that not a pie was misused or misappropriated.

With the appearance of the public notification, Wasudeo Balwant issued his own notification which was pasted on all police stations. He warned the Government that if people's lives were not saved from starvation, the Governor and the collectors would have a price fixed on their heads.

The rebels had decided to raid the Poona treasury; but the news leaked out. One Major Henry William Daniel was appointed as special officer for breaking up the rebellion. He was a Jew, 40 years of age. He took under him a number of European officers. A prize of Rs. 4,000 was announced for the arrest of Wasudeo Balwant. But the leader of the rebellion announced Rs. 5,000 for the head of the Governor and Rs. 3,000 each for the Collector's and the Sessions Judge's heads.

The atmosphere in Maharashtra was full of all sorts of rumours. There was great tension and excitement everywhere. The police and the rebels were pursuing each other. Wasudeo Balwant's men adopted a new strategy. He was not, however, with them. They left the hill area and descended on the sea-side region called the Konkan. On the 10th May, 1879 they entered a village named Nere in Ratnagiri District and raided it. All the houses belonged to rich Brahmins. Some of them were traitors. About ten villages were pounced upon and yielded a large booty valued at more than a lakh of rupees.

On the 13th of May, 1879, two houses of the Peshwas were set on fire in Poona city. One was called Budhwarwada and the other Vishrambagwada. They stocked valuable records of Government offices and law courts. The houses were burning for days together. Though Wasudeo Balwant had no hand in it, people attributed this incendiarism to him. One Ranade did it, as it came out later. Poona city was wildly excited.

After the raids in the Konkan area, the freedom fighters again came to the ghats—the hill area. Major Daniel and his army

were on the watch. At one of the hills, there was a direct fight between Sardar Daulatrao Naik and Major Daniel. Major Daniel was on the point of being killed but he narrowly escaped and, as luck would have it, Sardar Daulatrao fell a prey to a bullet from the pistol of Major Daniel. He died fighting bravely. His followers ran helter skelter and one of the fighting wings broke down. When Wasudeo Balwant learnt about this, he was overcome with grief and said, "I relied on him for success. He died a hero's death."

The death of Daulatrao Naik ended half the rebellion. In order to understand the history of the rebellion it will be better if we keep the following dates in mind:

- 20th February, 1879 — Raids, loots etc.
- 3rd April, „ — Wasudeo Balwant left Poona and went to Ganagapur.
- 21st July, „ — Wasudeo Balwant arrested.
- 22nd October, „ — Trial started.
- 7th November, „ — Sentenced to transportation for life.
- 5th January, 1880 — Sent to Aden jail.
- 12th October, „ — Escaped from jail but was rearrested the same day.
- 17th February, 1883 — Died in Aden jail.

The Ramoshis on whom Wasudeo Balwant relied proved faithless. The loot in the villages was never brought by them in full to headquarters. Much of it was stolen or was distributed amongst themselves. How could Wasudeo Balwant justify the plunder? They came to be called a gang of dacoits. Wasudeo Balwant was disgusted with them. He used to get angry, but that had no effect on the Ramoshis. Out of disgust and disappointment he gave up the raids and returned to Poona. In Poona, he was told that the police were on the lookout for him and that it would be unsafe for him to remain in the city. On the 3rd April, 1879, he left Poona early in the morning and went to Uruli Kanchan, walking a distance of 18 miles. From there he reached Sholapur and thence Ganagapur, the sacred place of Dattatraya. He wanted peace of mind and God's blessings for his success. His health

had broken down and he was having high fever. In his autobiography he wrote, "I resolved to go and pray at the shrine of Shri Shaila Malikarjuna and, if my prayer was not heard, to destroy myself."

He reached Ganagapur on the 4th April, stayed there for three days. From there he went walking through a number of villages and reached Shri Shaila on the 14th April, 1879. His fever had left him and hence the journey. In the entry of the 20th April in his diary he wrote, "I have only seven days to live, so I think; therefore, I bow before the feet of all, you, my brethren, inhabitants of India and give up my life for you, and will remain pleading for you in the just Court of God . . . I pray to God that He may take my life as a sacrifice for your welfare; and of you all I take farewell." (Pp. 8, 9)

On the 26th April, he tried to immolate himself before the shrine, but some persons round about ran to the spot and did not allow him to die. He wrote in his autobiography that he stayed at Shri Shaila Malikarjuna from the 19th to 26th of April 1879.

He came back to Ganagapur and again started search for men and material for the rising. There was one Ismail Khan, a Jamadar of Rohillas, with whom Wasudeo Balwant entered into an agreement. He was to supply 500 Rohillas, on a monthly salary of Rs. 10 each. Agreement with these Rohillas at Anoor was his last attempt for the uprising. After this agreement, Wasudeo Balwant also made an agreement with various other leaders of dacoits. In all 900 men were to be thus gathered. That was a desperate bid of Wasudeo. After the agreements Wasudeo Balwant sent his trusted followers to bring money from Poona. But before anything could materialise, the police party reached the village near Ganagapur where Wasudeo Balwant was hiding. He left the place to dodge arrest. After that he was constantly on the run; never staying at one place for more than a night.

Major Daniel of Bombay Province and Abdul Hak, Commissioner of Police, Nizam State, along with a big retinue, were on a ceaseless search for the hero. At last they got the cue. Wasudeo Balwant with his companion Gopal Moreshwar was completely exhausted by incessant walking and running and took refuge

in a Buddha Vihar at Deoar Nadgi, in Kaladagi district. Many other persons were also resting there. At about 3 o'clock in the morning, Major Daniel swooped upon the sleeping Wasudeo Balwant and caught hold of him. There was no resistance. All the insurgents were arrested and thus ended the rebellion.

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He was taken to Poona for trial. The police gathered evidence against him and a prosecution was lodged. He was committed to sessions court for trial. He had nothing to defend. His only sorrow was that he had failed in liberating his country from foreign rule. The jury returned a verdict of 'guilty' and the judge gave him a sentence of 'transportation for life'. On the 7th November 1879 he received the sentence with a smile. There was a very big crowd, both inside and outside the court. The crowd was raising slogans of 'jai' and the people were falling at the feet of the hero and bowing to him.

An appeal was filed in the Bombay High Court, but was rejected. Many Indian papers wrote against the hard sentence and praised the hero. The Anglo-Indian Press condemned him. His father came to see him in the court and went away weeping. His wife could not come but sat before an image of God, praying for his release. Many persons in the 'army' of Wasudeo Balwant were awarded severe sentences.

Where was Wasudeo Balwant to be transported? It was originally decided to send him to the Andamans. He was taken from Yerawada jail to Thana jail for the purpose. On Poona station, a large crowd had gathered to see him off. Amongst them was a European lady, who had brought a bunch of flowers to offer him and wanted to shake hands with him. She did so. Hero worship knows no caste, colour nor country.

After putting him in Thana jail, orders were issued for his transfer not to the Andamans but to Aden by the then Governor. The *Jeheran* steamer reached Aden on the 9th of January, 1880. He was confined in a solitary cell with fetters on and was given hard labour. It was a great suffering and a greater torture. He was not a docile prisoner. He was fighting for his rights. The

water of Aden was desalinised and was used for drinking. It did not suit his health. But what could he do? One day he decided to make a desperate attempt to run away from the jail. It was on the evening of the 12th of October 1880. He had just returned to his cell from the work shed. He decided to run away that night. He removed the fetters one by one and kept them in a corner. He discarded his jail dress. Then he pulled out the doors of the cell with great force and at night carried them near the walls of the jail, and, using them as a ladder, scaled the walls and took a jump outside. He became free. He walked about 12 miles in that small territory to escape re-arrest. But that was not to be. There was great consternation inside. All the jail authorities, the Resident, the police and the military were searching for the runaway criminal. A prize of Rs. 200 was notified for his arrest. The Arabs and the Somalis took out their horses and began to run about. They wanted the prize above everything else. Ultimately they came across the victim, whom they suspected to be the wanted man. He could not reply in Arabic. Wasudeo Balwant was brought back to jail on the 13th October at about 1 P.M. He was free only for 12 hours.

He was more heavily guarded and more fetters were put on him. It was becoming impossible for him to live. In August 1882, he thought of ending his life by giving up food. He started the ordeal of starvation. Fortunately at that time there was one Maharastrian doctor, Manoharpant Barve, who was health officer in that jail. He was a Brahmin—a Chitpavan from Phaltan near Poona. He spoke lovingly to Wasudeo Balwant, gave him all facilities and prevailed upon him to give up the fast. Wasudeo agreed; but his health had become so shattered that he could hardly recover. Anaemia had been his last enemy. From the 15th of January 1883, the disease became uncontrollable, and Wasudeo Balwant was reduced to a skeleton. The doctor gave up hope. On the 17th February 1883, at 4.20 P.M. he breathed his last in the jail. Neither his wife nor his father was near him. How could they? They were not even allowed to correspond with him.

The light had gone. He was a pure soul. He did wrong to none. He devoted his life to the service of his motherland. He was overwhelmed by the sufferings, sorrows and starvation of the poor. The only remedy for the redress of their grief was the establishment of Swaraj, the people's raj. He tried for it but failed. Whether he was a pioneer in the field of action is immaterial; whether his ways were practicable and dependable is beside the point; but the spirit that animated him was commendable. The deeds are forgotten, but not the ideas behind them.

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A memorial to Wasudeo Balwant was raised some 57 years after his death. His wife died on the 11th September 1940 and the memorial pillar was put up on the 14th November 1940 at Shirdhon, his birth place. On the 15th of August 1957, a Committee was formed for raising a bigger and better memorial at his birth place, under the Chairmanship of Shri S. K. Patil, a Congress leader. The foundation-stone was laid by Shri C. D. Deshmukh on the 3rd May 1959. Shri Deshmukh belongs to Kolaba district. About Rs. 50,000 were collected by the Committee and the erection of a structure was completed in 1965. The Mandir was opened by Shri Y. B. Chavan.

At present various social activities are going on there. Tatas gave a donation of Rs. 28,000 for the activities and the Government also helps the work in its own way.

Wasudeo Balwant will remain unforgotten for his services and sacrifice for the freedom of motherland and for his valour and dedication to the cause which he considered dearest and nearest to his heart.

While he was in the Aden prison, he wrote a diary which was a sort of his autobiography. The copy of that diary was preserved and is now available.

III

The Alipore Bomb Trial (1908) *Some Less Noted Features*

BHUPENDRA KUMAR DATTA

The agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 introduced into political India three positive elements as a sort of by-products. Every one of these elements made an important contribution to the subsequent revolutionary movement. The first was the impetus it gave to the *Samiti* movement. Initially designed as physical culture clubs, the *Samitis* or associations served as suitable recruiting grounds for political and revolutionary work. The second was somewhat of a regular exodus overseas of educated youngmen for the purpose ostensibly of training in textile industry but, in quite a number of cases, really for learning the preparation of explosives and for exploring generally avenues to secure help in different forms for shaking off British slavery. The third was the cult of *Swadeshi*.

The partition of the Province against the wishes of the people caused deep resentment. Naturally a retaliatory measure was devised. It was the boycott of British goods, particularly of Manchester-made cloth. The underlying, and quite reasonable, belief was there that the boycott would substantially injure British commercial interests. The common followers of the move-

ment carried it on vigorously, in which the *Samitis* played an important role; and, in their turn, were themselves benefited by it as they sprang up everywhere mostly on local initiative. But the prime authors of the movement conceived the idea of *Swadeshi*. It was often given the narrow interpretation of merely the use of indigenous products. But according to its high priests, namely, Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal, Brahmo-bandhab Upadhyaya, Satish Chandra Mukherjee of the *Dawn* magazine and society and Aurobindo Ghosh it meant very much more, that is, the Indian way of life in general. Although these five were outspoken and consistent preachers and interpreters of the creed, we should include in the list Balgangadhar Tilak and Swami Vivekananda. A little later, Tilak stood out as its most outstanding representative in the political sphere. As for Vivekananda, he was dead some years before the partition and the movement. Besides, he was, in the main, a spiritual seeker and teacher. All the same, he was a harbinger of the message of degenerate India finding her soul and of living and asserting the Indian way of life in word, thought and deed. As such, he exercised the great influence he did over the revolutionists of the first decades of the century.

SWADESHI AND SWARAJ

Of these three factors, we are here concerned almost exclusively with the last, that is *Swadeshi*. Coming in the whirl of a political agitation, appropriate to the moment, the preachers of the *Swadeshi* idea generally laid the expected stress on its political aspect. Bipin Chandra Pal was responsible for giving it the name of "Passive resistance" to suit the understanding of the English-reading Indian of the day. Politically, it meant the assertion of India's inherent right to manage her own affairs, in accordance with her native genius, irrespective of what her foreign masters thought or did. If they interfered, Indians were to defy them.

When Dadabhai Naoroji, as President of the 1906 session of the Indian National Congress, spoke of *Swaraj* as ideal of the Congress, obviously he used the word in the restricted sense of the achievement of political rights as enjoyed by the citizens

of the Dominions then constituting the British Empire. But Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar was the first to introduce the word in our political vocabulary; he used it for complete independence. And when Tilak held up *Swaraj* as the Indian's birth-right, he meant that Indians claimed complete political independence and were free to go outside the Empire. Therein lay the fundamental difference of ideal between the Moderates and Extremists among Indian nationalists of the period. As to method also, while the Moderates placed faith in constitutional agitation, the Extremists were propagating passive resistance or assertion of national freedom by the people of India. It amounted to the building up of a parallel Government. Such was the underlying idea of the movements that Gandhi led in the twenties, thirties and more especially in 1942.

THE HUMAN EXPLOSIVE

Among the protagonists of the creed of passive resistance, Aurobindo Ghosh, since return from England to India in 1893, had been explaining, within the limitations of the law of a subjugated land, the steps towards a successful revolution. He was then in service of the feudatory state of Baroda. He conceived the immediate task of drawing the upper and lower middle classes into the freedom struggle. The end, however, he thought, could not be achieved until the masses were involved. He finally came away from Baroda to Bengal in 1906 in the wake of the anti-partition agitation. He then began elucidating, through the columns of the *Bandemataram*, the thesis of passive resistance. But his mind was already free of the illusion that the Indian people, as they were, could adopt the implied manner of national self-assertion. It could be the way only of a fully awakened nation and not of a people completely oblivious of their existence as a national entity, of their human dignity, rights and status.

From these premises he came to the conclusion that the sloth and slumber of the people must be brought to an end layer after layer. But how?—was the question of questions to him. Anyone of the present generation can hardly picture to his mind's eye the nature of the problem that then faced Aurobindo. Scarce

was the person those days to bother about his rights, about his nation, about his status of a slave under foreign domination. A desperate situation called for a desperate remedy and Aurobindo thought of a sort of a human bomb that would explode itself to strike the imagination of the people. The bang caused by the bursting of the bomb would disturb the age-long sleep and arouse questions like: What is it? Why is it? What madness has seized the man so as thus to explode himself? The questions would make it impossible to doze back into sleep again. It means something immeasurably more powerful than the loudest explosion. The latter affects the auditory nerve, the former the human soul.

There came the question of men and materials. Of men it was quality that mattered, not the number, to obtain the human explosive of his conception. Such explosive meant a youth, who would brave death unflinchingly, nay, joyfully. It needed not merely common courage as shown in a daring action where, for instance, one shoots down a man in broad daylight but shoots and runs when he perceives he has achieved his objective and thinks it is no use getting caught to face the consequences. Such conduct may serve a better purpose where the objective is to dispose of the enemy. But with Aurobindo the purpose was different. He wanted his medium not to terrorise any enemy but to awaken an inert nation.

THE GITA

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In the step by step thinking in that highly rational mind the next poser was: how to mould the medium to be fitted for the specific objective in view. The solution was found in the study of the Gita, the deep meditation of its teachings, their complete assimilation. The Gita teaches that death, that must inevitably come to all beings in creation, should be courted and cheerfully courted in serving a great mission. If death is to come in any case, why then cling piteously to life and, at the end, meet a coward's or a worm's death? The ideal mode of death is then to face death voluntarily and even with exaltation in the pursuit of a great mission. The will to meet such a death is

the basic chemical that must go into the composition of the intended human explosive. The fundamental teaching of the *Gita*, that is, work ceaselessly and unsparingly without the desire for the fruits thereof, was also an essential part of the syllabus for those who would work under the most trying of circumstances for a very, very distant goal—only dimly seen in that dark age of national existence.

With such teachings as means to make men, Aurobindo sent in 1902 Jatin Banerjee (later, Swami Niralombo) from Baroda with an introduction letter to Sarala Debi in Calcutta. She brought him into contact with P. Mitra, leader of the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti*, just then inaugurated. There Jatin introduced training with an eye to guerilla fight. But Aurobindo's brother, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, with his ardour and enthusiasm, was not to lag behind. Both Jatin and Barin began work on the human material that the *Samiti* then made available. But Mitra aimed at developing, at least for some time to come, the *Samiti* as a physical culture association with provision for some theoretical political education. He did not like to see it turned into a secret society. On the other hand, Barin was somewhat impatient and hasty and there arose some conflict between him and Jatin. It exposed them both to Mitra, who complained to Aurobindo about their activities. Aurobindo did not want the work and the *Samiti* to suffer in any way. He came to Calcutta, held a conference, formed a control board with P. Mitra as President to guide the *Samiti* and withdrew Barin.

BARIN

Things went on smoothly for some time until the unrest following upon the partition of Bengal overflowed the country. Unlike Aurobindo, Barin had no mind to live a quiet life and miss the opportunity offered by the situation in Bengal. It appears that Aurobindo did not intend Barin to take part in the revolutionary movement. Indeed, a letter of Aurobindo's written to his wife in October 1905, testifies that he wanted him to take up some service with the Baroda Government. But Barin's spirit was too restless for that. He came to Bengal, travelled

widely the districts of the very much larger Bengal of those days, recruited workers and in Calcutta started the revolutionary organ, *Jugantar*. It had some able writers including Sakhambari Ganesh Deuskar, Debabrata Bose and Upen Banerjee. But Aurobindo "himself wrote some of the opening articles" to set the guideline. Along with a selected number of colleagues, Barin also collected firearms and founded a bomb factory. Meanwhile, Barin envied the popularity among workers enjoyed by Jatin Banerjee and made his position impossible in Calcutta. Jatin waited, for some time, for help to come from Aurobindo who, as stated above, came away to Bengal in 1906. But Aurobindo was entirely of a non-interfering nature. Jatin left Bengal and shifted his activities to Upper India.

Hemchandra Das of Midnapore sold a part of his properties in order to undertake a journey to France to learn the manufacture of explosives. But Barin did not wait for his return for making bombs. Nor did he need to. His friend, Ullashkar Dutta, on his own initiative studied the subject and made experiments in an improvised laboratory at his father's quarters in the Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur, without the knowledge of others in the house. He proved quite successful. Ingeniously, he set a bomb inside a book with some spring arrangement so that it might explode as soon as the book was opened. It was intended to kill Kingsford, who had attracted people's hatred and wrath as the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta by his terroristic methods of administration, particularly in suppressing the nationalist movement and Press and finally by getting a 14-year boy, Sushil Sen, flogged 15 times in public for the crime of shouting *Bandemataram* but on a got-up charge of assaulting a police sergeant. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the boy continued shouting *Bandemataram* each time louder and louder with every stripe that caused a bleeding wound on his naked body. His heroism served to deepen the hatred for Kingsford.

CONFLICT OF IDEALS

It is on record that Barin had attempts made to kill Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the extremely unpopular Lt. Governor of

Eastern Bengal and Assam as also Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lt. Governor of Bengal. The latter he wanted to dispose of by wrecking his train by means of bombs and landmines of Ullashkar's device. Two such unsuccessful attempts were made, one at Chandannagar and the other at Narayangarh in Midnapore. Barin also attempted to bomb to death the Mayor of Chandannagar. Finally, he commissioned Prafulla Chaki and Kshudiram Bose to kill, by the same means, Kingsford who, for personal security, had in the meantime been transferred by the Government from the position of the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta to that of the Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur, then in Bengal. The bombs thrown by Prafulla and Kshudiram smashed the carriage and killed its occupants, who unfortunately were two English ladies and not Kingsford. The latter had lent them his carriage as one of them that evening felt sick at the club, which the two revolutionaries had watched previously and found Kingsford visiting every evening. After seeing the carriage wrecked by the bombs thrown, Prafulla and Kshudiram, confident of fulfilment of their mission, ran away in two different directions. But they were subsequently held by the police in two distant places. Prafulla shot himself dead and Kshudiram was later tried and executed. Both met their end heroically and proved themselves the perfect human explosives of Aurobindo's conception.

But it is doubtful if all these ventures were in other respects in accord with Aurobindo's plan of arousing national consciousness. Aurobindo, no doubt, preferred the most unpopular British administrators to be selected as the targets of his human explosive. People's hatred for such officers was calculated to conduce to a sense of joy of triumph, when the object of such hatred met a sort of condign punishment. In that respect undoubtedly Fuller, Fraser and Kingsford were quite appropriate targets—the first two, apart from being notorious as personally vindictive, were the supreme symbols of a terroristic policy of administration. About the last, being a ruthless dispenser of that policy in the heart of what was then the metropolis of India, every Indian desired some vengeance wreaked on Kingsford. But the same cannot be said of the other target of a bomb of Barin's, namely

the Mayor of Chandannagar—the only charge that was laid against him was the breaking up of a Swadeshi meeting by him a week previously. But dozens of officials in the various districts of British India were in those years indulging in nastier demonstrations of their contempt and hatred against the nationalist movement.

So much about the targets. The plans of the different actions or attempts also need to be examined from the point of view of the aim that Aurobindo contemplated. Would the aim be fulfilled if, for instance, the quite clever invention of a book bomb mentioned above succeeded in killing Kingsford? Did Aurobindo intend merely that the victim be killed by some means or the other? Would that serve the purpose so obviously in view, which was nothing else and nothing less than knocking endwise the national sloth of ages? Was the person, conceived as the human explosive, free to escape as soon as it was reasonably certain that the attempt would succeed? How far would it goad the slumbering national consciousness into awakening, supposing again, for example, any of the attempts to wreck Andrew Fraser's train at Chandannagar or Narayangarh ended in success? In fact, at the initial stage, the police arrested some coolies working on the railway line near Narayangarh and got them convicted on the allegation of having caused the explosion. The people simply ignored the incident and quite naturally did so. Even educated Indians did not suspect that revolutionists with a *purpose* and determination were behind.

Entirely different would be the reaction were Barin, Prafulla and Bibhuti Sarkar, the three invisible actors in the drama to wait for the Lt. Governor's special to stop after suffering a jolt as the result of the expected explosion of the mine laid and then with bombs and revolvers attacked Sir Andrew Fraser and his party and get killed or arrested. Such a plan of action alone would be commensurate with the ideal Aurobindo held up before the workers, who were dedicated to ushering in the New Life, the New Age—the *Jugantar*. The Muffazarpur incident also would not have produced the result that it did but for the manner in which Prafulla and Kshudiram of the *Jugantar* braved death. This brings out the sharp contrast between Aurobindo's

objective and Barin's plans. It points to the great difference between the workings of the two brothers' minds. There may also lie the secret why Aurobindo showed preference for Jatin Banerjee over his brother when he wanted an emissary to inaugurate the revolutionary movement in Bengal. It also lends some justification to the foreign ruler subsequently to describe—however perversely it may be—the grim, uncontrollable movement as a terrorist and not a revolutionary movement.

CLUE TO THE CONSPIRACY

We are, however, concerned here with the incidents that came out in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy trial as such. An extraordinary aspect of it does not appear to have received the attention that it should have. The Muzaffarpur incident occurred on the night of the 30th of April. Extensive preparations were made by the police for searches and arrests from the very next morning, that is, May 1 in Calcutta and elsewhere. Calcutta is quite at a distance from Muzaffarpur. And Prafulla was not found earlier than the morning of the 2nd when, before he could be held, he shot himself dead; Kshudiram was, of course, caught on the morning of the 1st; but police preparations were then already set on foot in Calcutta. Most of the important centres were then searched and the main accused—and persons actually involved in the conspiracy—were arrested in the early morning of the second or, it may even be said, at the dead of night of the first of May. The police activities evinced no fumbling, no hesitation, no uncertainty on the part of those who had conducted the investigation preceding the searches and arrests. How was it all possible? It meant that the police had full previous knowledge of the conspiracy and the preparations behind the Muzaffarpur incident. It was not so surprising in the twenties or thirties, when the police had introduced informers or agents provocateur inside some of the different parties and groups of revolutionaries. That was not to be expected at that initial stage. Therefore, the accused persons, who were an exceptionally intelligent lot, should have made every possible inquiry. But they appear to have almost taken it for granted that the police were

all-knowing. Some entertained, even expressed, a quite unfounded and undeserved suspicion against a co-accused of theirs who, among several others, was discharged.

Close study of some relevant documents leads to a different field of inquiry. It appears that Indian officers, of however high a rank they might be, were not in those days taken into confidence in the brain work of the British Secret Service in India. The materials seized on the spot after the attempt at Narayangarh on the 6th December, 1907 were closely examined by three British officers, Stevenson-Moore, Denham and Plowden. The materials included a sheet of the daily paper, *Bandemataram* with some picric acid marks. Apparently the sheet was used for bundling up the explosive materials carried by the revolutionists. This led the officers on to a line of investigation different from that of the Indian police, who got the coolies arrested, tried and convicted; the Europeans did not interfere, lest the suspicion aroused in the minds of the Indian police might cause any difficulty in proceeding on their own line. The Europeans meanwhile let the Indian coolies suffer. They came to their own hypothesis. They detailed an Indian officer of their own choice, Ramsadoy Mukherjee, to trace people connected at Midnapore and Kharagpore—two important stations near Narayangarh—with the *Bandemataram* and similar nationalist journals. He was also instructed to watch them and secure a suitable agent among them. Then, on handsome remuneration, this agent was to insinuate himself into the confidence of some important leader of the group and with his help to get into the know of their activities.

The Indian Inspector achieved phenomenal success in his assignment. But presumably on his own initiative, later, he achieved something more, that surprised many, including perhaps even his masters. But that will come in its proper place. In no time he did secure a man named Rakhal in the Midnapore circle, that interested itself in the nationalist papers. No one having some intimate knowledge of the older group there, could in later days believe that Rakhal, a man of such a lewd character, could be taken into confidence by anybody. But his subsequent career and service to the Inspector go to show that he was un-

doubtedly trusted and that also by one among such notables of the Midnapore group as Hemchandra Das or Jnanendranath Bose or Satyendranath Bose. And in all probability, it was no other than Hemchandra Das—intellectually perhaps the most acute among the active workers who were accused in the Alipore case. Such strange things do often happen.

Our inference follows from the following facts. The first informations that were worked upon by the police appeared to be centred round Hemchandra. Before the Narayangarh incident, in December, 1907, there was no information that any secret revolutionary society, as such, existed. Only an Inspector in October that year reported to the Director, Criminal Intelligence, one vague information from a police informer about the existence of such a society. But after the Narayangarh incident, more especially in February, March and April, 1908 frequent reports reached the Department about the movements of Hemchandra and of visitors to his Raja Nabakrishna Street residence in Calcutta. The court proceedings of the Alipore Bomb trial go further to show that these visitors' movements also began to be followed and reported upon and other addresses traced. A police watcher, who was detailed to report on Hemchandra's movements, at first kept him in sight from shops and houses on the street. Then he tried to obtain information from his servant. Subsequently, in fact, he dared approach Hemchandra and seek to hire a room in his residence itself. Hemchandra agreed, even accepted an advance, but the next day when the watcher went to occupy the room, for some reason or other he returned the money and refused to let out the room.

From this centre the watch quickly spread out to other quarters, particularly the Muraripukur Garden house. The most pursued leader later was, of course, Barin. He and his associates, including Naren Goswami, who afterwards turned approver in the case, were followed even on the evening when they went to Chandannagar to throw a bomb on the Mayor. They, were, however, missed on the way, as the officers deposed before the court.

Something about the further career of this successful police agent, though not relevant to our present story, is likely to be

of interest to the reader. The man supplied most of the basic information that led the government to start also the subsequent Midnapore conspiracy case. Ultimately the police wanted him to be an approver in this case. Perhaps Naren Goswami's fate was too fresh in his memory. He refused. The police then threatened that he would be sent up for trial and got convicted. He wanted time to consider. At the same time, on the plea of refreshing his memory, he requested his written statement to be given back to him secretly. He was then in police lock-up. For some nights the statement used to be left with him. He read the pages and on the back of each, wrote that everything said overleaf was a lie and written to escape threatened torture. His refusal to turn approver was then finally announced. The case failed. The prosecution counsel—no other than Sir S. P. Sinha (later Lord Sinha)—was so angry that he sought permission to send up the man for perjury. But the government declined. Perhaps wisely. From Raja Narendra Lal Khan of Narajole to an ordinary street hawker were the near about hundred accused in the case. And Rajnarayan Bose's Midnapore was such in those days that it would be difficult for the prosecution to secure corroborative evidence even if the man agreed to depose for the Government.

THE CONFESSIONS AND WHY

There was another feature of the case that astonished the public of those days and that will continue to astonish the readers of history in future. It was the holograph-confessional statements that Barindra Kumar Ghosh and some other accused in the case made. They included some senior members of the group like Upen Banerjee and Hrishikesh Kanjilal. Ullashkar Dutta, though junior by a few years in age, was of a different type. He was less likely to be persuaded. But he too came to be in their company. These were, in fact, some of the pioneers of the movement—a movement with which a confession is ever considered the breach of the very first article of faith—a movement, in which a sense of self-respect keeps a person unbending before the most ferocious torture and inconceivable forms of pressure and allurements. Yet such a thing, almost a miracle, did happen in a matter of a few

hours after the arrests and that without the least oppression or pressure or allurements, even without a threat or suggestion of anything like it. And it is doubtful if these ardent souls, who quite voluntarily undertook to tread a path of extreme danger and privation, suffering and sacrifice and demonstrated a heroic mould unknown to generations, would have yielded to any form of torture, pressure or allurements. Nay, it is certain, they would not, they could not. Indeed, they were the pick of the Indian people of the age.

Still, it is equally true, the impossible did happen. And how could it? Here again, the difference between Aurobindo's ideal and Barin's mode of execution has to be recalled. Earlier has been described the success of the Police Inspector, Ramsadov, deputed to engage a suitable agent in order to trace the activities of the persons behind the Narayangarh attempt at wrecking the Lt. Governor's special train. There it was also hinted that Ramsadov achieved something more. That he did, maybe on his own initiative, maybe at the instance of his British masters. When Barin and others were arrested, they only knew that two English ladies were killed at Muzaffarpur as a result of attempt of their own design. They had no reason to anticipate all its reactions or the immense stir that the manner of Prafulla's and Kshudiram's courting death caused. They could not even dream of finding Aurobindo among those arrested after the Muzaffarpur incident, or that Tilak would come out in his paper *Kesari* with an article explaining the political and philosophical significance of the bomb in the hands of a dependent, unarmed people, and thus courting a long-term imprisonment.

Ramsadov was adroit enough to take full advantage of all this lack of information and anticipation on Barin's part. Besides, having pursued, watched and studied the reports of the movements of the accused generally from start to finish, he had adequate knowledge about the position and nature of Barin. This nature, as Aurobindo says in one of his letters to his father-in-law, was somewhat erratic. Knowing all this, Ramsadov, during the usual police interrogation on the very morning of the arrests, meekly approached Barin. He put on what since became the habitual posture of all of the tribe. It was that of

an ardent lover of the country and its freedom. This posture always concluded with a curse on the belly that made them do the dirty job for the foreign tyrant. More than this prologue, Barin was impressed by Ramsadoy's actual proposal. He was all praise for Barin for the great efforts he was making to free the country but the tyrants had now got him into their clutches before his plans could come to fruition. And being at such a premature stage, their plans and actions would unfortunately remain quite unknown to the people and the threads might not be taken up by others. Now, it would be rendering a great service if the country could somehow be allowed to know all that had been done and secured and designed to accomplish. It could now be done only if the accused would agree to give out all that publicly before the court.

Impetuously Barin agreed. But his motive was quite pure and noble. He would take upon himself the inevitable sufferings that would follow, knowing that his action would prove of great service to the country. Aurobindo's human explosive carried its own means of publicity and had its own very powerful propaganda value. The bursting of the human explosive would touch the youths' soul to its very depths. Ramsadoy's cajolery made Barin see for the first time the shortcoming of his plan in this direction. He started off writing out a confessional statement. But Ramsadoy's pertinacity also must have been one of the virtues for his masters to choose him. He advised Barin to persuade some of his colleagues too to corroborate him in order that the statement might carry proper weight with the public. Upen and Ullashkar were personally devoted to him. They easily swallowed the bait. Their written statements were more for his personal benefit—as Ramsadoy put it. •

Barin, Upen and Ullashkar's written statements emboldened Ramsadoy. He came out with the name of Hemchandra Das. Barin also somewhat lost his bearings. He met Hemchandra. The latter was of a different make; his emotions were disciplined by a stern rationalism. He had already come to know of what Barin was about. He was angry, but heard him patiently and then asked him: How do you know me? I don't recall having ever met you. Ramsadoy, in plain clothes, accompanied Barin. He immediately

withdrew Barin. The tide was stemmed. Most others among the accused were not approached and did not make statements. There were, however, a few others, whose personal attachment was to Barin with his fascinating way of enthusiastic work. Some of them succumbed. Barring them, the others, from that day on, became more attached to Hemchandra; these included Kanailal Dutta, whose intimate relations hitherto were with Upen and Barin.

The police, however, designed some penalty for the obstinacy of Hemchandra. In a few days, when the accused were all placed in jail custody, the degree of segregation imposed on him was the most rigorous. While the others were placed in threes or fours in each cell, Hemchandra was totally cut off. Even the wooden door of the antecell before his lonely cell the jail authorities were to keep constantly closed, obstructing view of anything outside and of anyone passing before the cell. Aurobindo's fate in a nearby cell was a little better, although he too incurred police wrath. Effrontery seemed to know no bounds. Another Indian police Inspector was there to seek to persuade even a man of Aurobindo's moral and public stature to make a clean breast of all he did or planned. Presumptuously he opened a learned discussion and tried religious arguments, perhaps knowing Aurobindo's inclinations. Behind his characteristic taciturnity, Aurobindo enjoyed the officer's buffoonery.

And this officer was the self-same Shamsul Alam, who afterwards successfully induced Naren Goswami to denounce his comrades in open court. Both met their deserts, Goswami at the hands of Kanai and Satyen and Shamsul at those of no less adorable a martyr, Biren Dutta Gupta. But before that, the refusal to oblige Shamsul was sought to be avenged through the usual petty tactics shown in primitive prison treatment. Aurobindo also had to pass his days in jail initially in a solitary cell with this difference from Hemchandra that the wooden door before his antecell was left open allowing some sight of things and men. This segregation might, however, be viewed as a blessing in disguise for his practice of yoga. But all this was soon to end for both Hemchandra and Aurobindo. Whether due to the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of the jail or

to afford greater facilities to the traitorous career of Naren Goswami, or both accidentally synchronising, all the under-trial prisoners in the case were placed in association barracks.

Here some digression may be permitted to scan how Aurobindo's stance served the continuity of the movement, despite the conduct of its apparent initiators—a conduct which might, morally viewed, dig its grave. As the apostle of the secret revolutionary movement, Aurobindo lived a life of total self-effacement. In the active field, following the ancient Indian adage, his mind planned, his tongue did not give expression. Some of those who knew intimately and followed his spirit devoutly were leaders like Jatin Banerjee, Jatin Mukherjee and Abinash Chakravorti. The sacrifice of the martyrs no doubt was there to serve as the beacon light for the younger generation of the age. But it was these persons who really reared up the movement in Bengal and outside—among the civilian population as among the Indian soldiers in the different cantonments. It is they who sowed the seeds; others, in later decades, while reaping the fruits, condemn their forefathers, so to say, as “terrorists”. They never ceased to proclaim that they are scientific in their outlook in the analysis of historical development and yet they claim that they and their so-called mass movement are of immaculate birth.

However, the same absence of self, imbuing the activities of the kindred spirits of Aurobindo, just named, is baffling ardent research workers for the last two decades in the discharge of their duty of tracing their immense contribution to the growth of the movement in depth and breadth. They seemed to keep up the Indian tradition of leaving no recorded history. But little men in this age of neon light advertisements and cinematograph shows are taking advantage of their superior contempt for name and fame and are usurping their and their compeers' due credit in the interest of their often fictitious and parasitic parties and groups.

AUROBINDO'S IDEAL

The somewhat parenthetic paragraphs above come rather as introductory to what follows. The character shown by some

prominent accused in the case seems to have had considerable reaction on Aurobindo, as was observed by most of his co-accused, as also lawyers appearing in the case. Always of an indifferent, other-worldly attitude towards life, he appeared to be more and more withdrawing within himself. Although after release, in his prison memoirs he made great fun of the juvenile performances of Birley as trying magistrate and Norton as prosecution counsel and of some of their wrangles with the witnesses, he appeared to take little interest in the court proceedings. Yet, as indications are found in the events to be presently related, there is reasonable ground to infer that he had some deep, but neither intimate nor frequent, contact with the circle now growing around Hemchandra. The accused generally looked upon Aurobindo with awe and reverence, as was only to be expected. Even those enjoying his confidence maintained a respectful distance. But Aurobindo's actions too were more by inspiring than by ordering or instructing. He seemed detached and far-off even while inspiring.

Following the above-mentioned confessions, there were other arrests. Naren Goswami was one among them. Coming of a wealthy family, he was not, as Aurobindo observed, prepared for undergoing any suffering. When arrested he was enraged. He betrayed, as if out of vengeance against Barin, and subjectively he was ready to help the prosecution. Shamsul found little difficulty in making him turn an approver. He actually deposed in the lower court. He was then made an example of as a traitor. A unique event took place, violently disturbing the age-old placidity. Naren Goswami was shot dead by Satyen Bose and Kanai Dutta inside the prison with revolvers secretly imported.

Before proceeding, however, to examine the means of procuring the weapons, it would be useful for our purpose to review the nature of the action of the two immortal martyrs. According to Aurobindo's conception, as has been explained, the human explosive was to blast with the deliberate aim and purpose to help bring a dead people back to life. That being so, this action, taking place, so to say, before his very eyes, was perhaps the model of what he contemplated. That was the sort of self-immolation that *Jugantar*, published in 1906-08 under Auro-

bindo's inspiration, demanded. That was what Aurobindo's insistence on the study of the *Gita* sought to inculcate in the devotees.

In the present case, the victim was Naren Goswami, at the moment the most widely and intensely hated. There was the additional feature to strike imagination: a plot and firearms inside a closely guarded prison. The objective of the actors was clear and simple. It was to brave death and not merely to kill, though they did kill a man who was, to people in general, the most abominable of men. Hence, their action was purely revolutionary; there was no trace of terrorism in it. If it did terrorise the future traitor, that was a mere offshoot, as all human actions must be. But that, by no stretch of imagination, can come under the definition of terrorism. As such, this ideal has come to be hailed as the *Jugantar* ideal, defined above.

During the first decades of the century, side by side with the working of this ideal, activities of some other groups had generally the characteristic feature of following the policy of "shoot and run". It is remarkable that while, at every stage of development, the former has pursued courses calculated to expand and deepen the movement for the achievement of freedom, the other groups had—whether they admitted it or not—clearly before them the aim of a *coup d'etat*. This difference has not always been clearly understood. Hence oriental emotionalism has often led to syncretistic attempts at amalgamating a movement with groups. Confusion has thereby been worse confounded only to benefit the foreigner, with his wily imperialistic tactics. A serious attempt at bringing about the fusion of incompatibles in the late twenties resulted in a serious disturbance, that came to be known as "revolt" of workers in the various freedom-fighters' groups. The ultimate beneficiaries were the notorious imperialist, Sir John Anderson and some adventurist exotic groups. This vividly brings out how not merely some of the accused in the Alipore case but others, even in later decades, had only an inadequate appreciation of the revolutionary ideal that Aurobindo held before the workers of the *Jugantar*, that is, those who wanted to bring about the "New Age".

With greater awakening of consciousness in a continued

process of self-immolation, there was fuller efflorescence of the ideal in the early thirties. It was heralded by the *Swadhinata* of 1928-30, that followed in the footsteps of the *Jugantar* of 1906-08. Its message was: Let us not bewilder ourselves calculating, let there be free flow of the martyrs' blood if we must wipe clean the stain of serfhood. And free flow of martyrs' blood there was between 1930 and 1935—perhaps unique in world history. And there could be no mistake about following scrupulously the *Jugantar* ideal of joyfully challenging death for deepening and expanding national consciousness. There was no faltering, no attempt at fleeing even where the action failed, as palpably in the case of Bina Das. She shot at the supreme symbol of alien imperialism, the Governor of Bengal. The scene chosen was a University convocation meeting—the attempt was unsuccessful. But unquestionably she braved death. If immediate death or subsequent execution did not follow, it was not because she flinched. There were instances of escape but brave ones—as in the case of Surya Sen himself, Dinesh Majumdar, Benoy Bose—escapes that only implied a further career of heroic actions, not for a moment losing sight of the guiding star of self-immolation. All this discussion, seemingly out of place, is intended only to separate the chaff from the kernel, with a view clearly to bringing out the ideal Aurobindo held up. It has generally received only an inadequate appreciation. Ultimately, with fuller awakening of consciousness, came the insurrection of his seeking in 1942, as will be shown a little later. It was inevitably mixed up with other historical forces.

THE MODUS OPERANDI

Now as to the source of the weapons, that found their way into their apparently impossible destination. There was a side story. Barin made a plan to escape from prison. Hemchandra came to know of it and rejected it out of hand. But Barin meantime succeeded in getting a revolver in the prison in pursuance of his objective. The revolver was found too big for handling inside a jail. He returned it and asked for smaller ones. The smaller ones came but no longer to serve the same purpose

and came to friends who were no longer with Barin. Now the main story:

One of the persons later arrested as a result of the confessions was Prof. Charuchandra Roy of Dupleix College, Chandannagar. It was he who had founded the powerful Chandannagar group. The group soon divided into two sections—one later known as the Prabartak group and the other the Gondalpara group. The former was somewhat of an open organisation and with some religious trend but the latter was always a secret society. This section was led by Srish Ghosh. Srish, Kanai, Naren Banerjee, Basanta Banerjee and others of this section shared more of the rational mind of their leader, Charu Roy. The Sessions Court had to discharge Charu Roy because of extradition difficulties. He was a French citizen and the nature of the charges against him did not justify extradition.

Out of jail he was informed by Srish Ghosh that word had been sent from prison that Aurobindo had passed judgment sentencing Naren Goswami to death; Srish was asked to supply two revolvers for the purpose of executing the sentence. It was he and Basanta who took the revolvers to jail during a legitimate interview and by sleight of hand passed them to the accused on the other side of the iron grating of the jail window. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Basanta passed the revolver with him, when he found it convenient, to Upen Banerjee. The latter also came from Gondalpara. Kanai noticed Basanta handing over the revolver and while passing before Basanta, remarked, don't trust these people. Kanai used a rather harsh expression that at the time surprised Basanta. This illustrates the feeling then existing between the circles of Barin and Hem. Upen, however, quietly handed over the weapon to a proper person, without divulging it to Barin or anyone else. It appears he was already repentant. It is known that subsequently in the Andamans, he tried to cut his own throat with a razor. A friend happened to notice and saved him.

Charu Roy had the reports from Srish. Later, on acquittal, when Aurobindo came out of prison, Charuchandra charged him on two counts: Firstly, about the religious turn that, he thought, Aurobindo was seeking to give the movement. Secondly,

he asked Aurobindo—you passed death sentence on Naren Goswami, but what did you do to your brother? Had he not confessed, Naren and several others would never have been arrested. Aurobindo did not defend himself. A man of few words, Aurobindo's explanation might be that while Naren Goswami appeared as a prosecution witness, Barin did not and a public example was necessary. Besides, living the *Gita*, with every breath of his life, Aurobindo might have the inner satisfaction that while Charuchandra's observation was merely critical, his own judgment was creative. Kanai and Satyen blazed before the youths' eyes as undying ideals with their unique spirit of self-immolation. About Charuchandra's first charge, it is noteworthy that while he never raised any objection to the study of the *Gita* or religious teachings in general for boys under training, he criticised Aurobindo when, after release, he publicly said that he saw Narayan in objects before him. Charuchandra's rationalism did not admit of such results of the practice of *Yoga*. Any controversy in this respect, however, is beyond the scope of the analysis of what transpired during the celebrated trial, with which we are concerned here.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

But we have not up till now given even a short report of the Alipore case as such. Initially we considered it superfluous. We have, however, been advised that for the present generation of readers a brief narration of the relevant incidents leading to the trial as well as its proceedings may prove useful. But before that, we propose to give a skeleton outline of the history of the revolutionary period up to the departure of the alien Imperialist. This is intended as an attempt to remove lurking doubts as to the benefits accruing to the nation from the movement as a whole.

For arousing wide national consciousness, as Sri Aurobindo himself says: "...there was the action with which he started, a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection." The nation he was to work for was in such a dormant state that

while he started on the mission as early as 1902, an actual insurrection—successful but still localised—was to come only in 1930 under the leadership of Surya Sen. The idea emerged of an armed seizure of power. An India-wide insurrection ultimately took place twelve years later mixed up with the ideas, and under the leadership of Gandhi. But before both these occurrences, the revolutionists moved forward through a different experiment, also in line with the course of the evolution of the revolutionary movement Sri Aurobindo outlined. Obviously about the initial stages of the First World War, he says:

“At that time the military organisation of the great empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are: the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not yet been developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became.” Referring to the disarmed state of the nation, Sri Aurobindo said that this difficulty might be overcome with proper organisation and help from outside in a vast country like India and with the smallness of the British armies. “There was also the possibility of a general revolt in the Indian army.” During the First World War, all this potentiality was sought to be utilised under the leadership of Jatindranath Mukherjee, a man in whom Sri Aurobindo found a unique personality and whom he later described as his “right-hand man”.

JATIN MUKHERJEE

While machinery was in the course of being set up for negotiating German help for an Indian uprising during a prospective Anglo-German war, the three of Sri Aurobindo's choice met in a secret conclave in 1911 at Brindaban—Jatin Banerjee (then Swami Niralombo), Jatin Mukherjee and Rashbehari Bose. Jatin Banerjee, after leaving Bengal in 1907, set up an organisation to work in U.P. and Punjab with headquarters at Delhi and Lahore. Jatin Mukherjee had Naren Bose of *Atmonnati Samiti* and Naren Chatterjee of Howrah Shibpur sent through the *Chhatra Bhandar* of Calcutta to work among the Indian soldiers

in British Cantonments from Banaras to Peshawar. His earlier work in this direction also through Naren Chatterjee and the Shibpur and Kidderpur groups among the Jat soldiers in Fort William was the gravest charge, according to Lord Hardinge, in the Howrah Conspiracy Case of 1910 against Jatin Mukherjee and others. Rashbehari Bose in Upper India was working on materials thus supplied by Swami Niralombo among the civilian population and the two Narens among the military.

At Brindaban, Rashbehari reported to the two leaders that considering the atmosphere then prevailing that side, he thought it would be wiser to lay greater stress on a mutiny among the Indian soldiers. This was found consistent with Sri Aurobindo's strategy. The three then drew up a general line of action during the then expected war. Rashbehari thereafter dexterously proceeded on the approved line. But he was not forgetful of the necessity of breaking the placidity and apathy prevailing in that zone. He requisitioned bombs from Atul Ghosh who had some manufactured at Chandannagar. Amarendranath Chattopadhyay sent them through Basanta Biswas who, at Rashbehari's instance, threw one on the Viceroy in December 1912 during a Coronation procession. This was in Upper India what the Muzaffarpur bomb had proved in Bengal.

Before the war came in 1914, the leaders of the different groups, barring the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti*, reorganised themselves into the *Jugantar* party under the leadership of Jatindra-nath Mukherjee. A rough and ready shape was briskly given to the organisation in Calcutta and the districts. In Europe, the task of securing German aid was primarily undertaken by Biren Chattopadhyay. Hence the watchword there for *Jugantar* emissaries was "Chatto". With Champakaraman Pillai, Pandurang Khankojé and a number of others, Chattopadhyay formed the Berlin Committee. With this committee the German Foreign Office entered into a fifteen-clause treaty to provide arms, money and other forms of help for an Indian uprising. No direct connection between India and Germany during an Anglo-German conflict was considered feasible. The aid programme was, therefore, decided to be implemented through the German Embassy in U.S.A. That country already had a powerful Indian revolutionary

organisation, the *Ghadr* Party, with its headquarters at the *Jugantar Asram* at San Francisco. From there, Lala Hardayal, Pt. Ramchandra, Harnam Singh, Tarak Das, Bhupen Dutta and others maintained regular contact with the Berlin Committee. The channel of aid was to be through Hongkong, Shanghai, Manila, Bangkok, Batavia and other Pacific ports. Jadugopal Mukherjee, assisted by Naren Bhattacharya (M. N. Roy), was manipulating the leading strings in Calcutta. Energetic preparations and training were being carried on in the districts and provinces, with which Jatindranath maintained relations through Atul Ghosh and Amarendranath Chatterjee. Money and information were to be received at Harry and Sons and Sramajibi Samabaya and other centres in Calcutta. Arms were to be landed in the Sundarbans, Hatiya, Balasore and near Goa. No stone was left unturned to fulfil conditions for a general armed insurrection aided by an army mutiny all over Northern India. The vastness of the panorama of preparations is evident.

Jatin Mukherjee and most of the other revolutionary leaders were also agreed that in case German arms failed to arrive, they should be prepared for seizing some of the arms in the possession of the British Government in India and attempt whatever might be done with them. At least, a demonstration of an actual fight would give hope and strength to the inert people. But weakness of centuries could not be so suddenly overcome. Yet the attempt was worth making. The failure proved a real pillar of success as subsequent developments proved. The organisation in the country was yet too poor. Besides, the German aid programme was foiled by the betrayal of some foreign revolutionaries with whom, in the atmosphere prevailing during the earlier days in U.S., Indian revolutionaries had come into indiscreet intimacy out of an idealistic lack of prudence. Indian plans were betrayed by the Czechoslovak revolutionaries, whose interest lay in securing British and French help. No arms could reach India and clues supplied by them were followed up by the British Secret Service and a chain of findings led ultimately to the discovery of the supreme leader Jatin Mukherjee's shelter. There was a regular fight, the first of its kind in recent history. He and Chittapriya

Ray Choudhuri fell fighting. Others were hanged and transported for life. There were numerous arrests, deportations and death sentences all over the country. These, particularly in Bengal and Punjab, enraged the people in general against the British administration. Post-war excitement was, of course, there and got mixed up with the rising fury.

The difference between the hitherto prevailing level of consciousness about and enthusiasm for national rights and dignity among the middle and lower middle classes on the one hand and rising temper on the other was as between darkness and light. To add to the conflagration, a plot with the enemy during a life-and-death-struggle of the Britons upset them. They were beside themselves with anger and came out with the proposal for an insane set of laws, called the Rowlatt Laws, having indiscriminate repression in view. This proved the last straw on the age-old patience of Indians. And Gandhi rode the rising crest of the nation's anger to attempt a series of insurrections—each approximately at the end of a decade and non-violent according to his insistence. Meanwhile intervened the thirties with the remarkable phase of the revolutionists' self-immolation. And finally, the nation's will prevailed in 1942; the movement of that year was inevitably mixed up with violence. Its desperate character was bequeathed to it by the revolutionists of 1930-35, as also the idea of seizure of power. Provisional Governments were set up in isolated places. The Second World War was then on and an armed aid provided by the anti-British Japanese to the Indian prisoners of war under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose appeared on the Eastern borders of India. The consciousness itself set the wind blowing that caused the withering Imperialism to fall in the next five years. Indian Government came into being.

THE TRIAL

We now return to the origin of our story. The incidents that formed the subject matter of the Alipur Bomb trial have already been mentioned in course of the previous discussions. The last of them was the Muzaffarpur incident of April 30, 1908. Although

Bhawani Mandir was among Aurobindo's literary works, the idea was, as he himself says, Barin's. Unable to found a monastery of the sort in the hills near the Narmada, Barin set up one at an ancestral garden house of theirs at Muraripukur in Calcutta. It was intended to train workers for the cause of independence. There were *Gita* classes as well as classes in History, Politics and Religion. But it soon turned also into a combination of a bomb factory and a magazine. Shooting was also practised. How this main centre of the group, as well as others, was traced and watched by the police has been narrated before. On this day, the 2nd May, 14 of the accused in the case, including Barin, Upen, Ullashkar, were arrested at this place and ten others at many different places in Calcutta. These latter included Aurobindo, Hemchandra and Kanailal. Arms and explosives were found at the garden house as also at the residences of Hemchandra and Kanailal and at other places.

Particularly after the confessions there were more searches and arrests at Calcutta, Serampur, Bhadreswar, Khulna, Jessore, Dacca, Sylhet, Kushtia, Deoghar, Tamruk, Bankura and Banaras. Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Naren Goswami, Debabrata Bose, Charuchandra Roy, Indranath Nandi, Nikhileshwar Roy Moulik were among the persons arrested at these places. Nine of this batch were before the inquiring Magistrate in a supplementary trial. But those finally committed to the Sessions were placed in one consolidated list. Some of those arrested were discharged for lack of sufficient evidence. A mass of documents were seized along with arms and explosives—most of them at the garden house where there was a series of searches. Several times earth was dug up there, the confessions, specially of Barin, being detailed. Altogether 11 of the accused confessed before the Additional District Magistrate, who became also the inquiring Magistrate. All of them, however, retracted the confessions on the advice of lawyers except, of course, Naren Goswami.

The accused were sent up on the main charge of waging, attempting, aiding, abetting and conspiring to wage, war against the King Emperor. There were also charges of attempt to murder and collection of arms and explosives. The actual overt acts involved were the two attempts at wrecking Sir Andrew Fraser's

train near Chandannagar and Narayanganj and the attempted murder of the Mayor of Chandannagar and of Kingsford at Muzaffarpur. Barin, being born in Britain, was offered separate trial, which those days implied jury trial. But he declined the offer of such preferential treatment on such a ground. Expressly on the ground of shortening the proceedings, but really in view of the prejudiced ways of the inquiring Magistrate, the defence did not cross-examine the witnesses in the Lower Court. Only examination-in-chief was held. The approver, Naren Goswami, was examined in detail. But the defence preferred postponing his cross-examination also at this stage.

Thus the preliminary examination, which opened on the 19th May, 1908 was over in three months. After Naren Goswami had been tendered pardon and some others discharged for lack of enough evidence the following 38 persons were sent up on the 19th August, 1908 for trial by the Additional Sessions Judge of 24-Parganas District, C. P. Beachcroft, who had been, it may be interesting to add, a fellow student of Aurobindo's from his Cambridge days—(1) Barindra Kumar Ghose (Calcutta), (2) Indra (Indu?) Bhusan Roy (Khulna), (3) Ullashkar Dutta (Tippera), (4) Upendra Nath Banerjee (Chandannagar), (5) Sisir Kumar Ghosh (Jessore), (6) Nalini Kumar (Kanta?) Gupta (Faridpur), (7) Sachindra Kumar Sen (Dacca), (8) Pareesh Chandra Maulik (Jessore), (9) Kunja Lal Saha (Nadia), (10) Bejoy Kumar Nag (Khulna), (11) Narendra Nath Bakshi (Rajshahi), (12) Purna Chandra Sen (Midnapur), (13) Hemendra Nath Ghosh (Jessore), (14) Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar (Nadia), (15) Nirapado Roy (Nadia), (16) Kanai Lal Dutta (Chandannagar), (17) Hemchandra Das (Midnapur), (18) Aurobindo Ghosh (Calcutta), (19) Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya (24-Parganas), (20) Sailendra Nath Bose (24-Parganas), (21) Din Dayal Bose (24-Parganas), (22) Sudhir Kumar Sarkar (Khulna), (23) Krishna Jiban Sanyal (Maldah), (24) Hrishikesh Kanjilal (Hoogly), (25) Birendra Nath Ghose (Jessore), (26) Dharani Nath Gupta (Dacca), (27) Nagendra Nath Gupta (Dacca), (28) Asok Chandra Nandi (Tippera), (29) Susil Kumar Sen (Sylhet), (30) Birendra Chandra Sen (Sylhet), (31) Hem Chandra Sen (Sylhet), (32) Debabrata Bose (Calcutta), (33) Indra Nath Nandi (Calcutta), (34) Nikhileswar Roy Maulik (Dacca),

(35) Bejoy Chandra Bhattacharya (Burdwan), (36) Balkrishna Hari Kane (Nagpur), (37) Prabhash Chandra Dey (Calcutta) and (38) Charuchandra Roy (Chandannagar).

IN THE SESSIONS COURT

Several months passed in disposing of quite a number of legal objections raised by the defence and ultimately the Sessions' trial opened on the 12th February, 1909. Meantime, the approver, Naren Goswami, was shot dead on the 31st August, 1908 by Satyen Bose and the accused Kanai Lal Dutta. Both were hanged for it. Satyen was not originally an accused in this case. He had been undergoing imprisonment in an Arms Act case at Midnapur and, of some information, brought to the Alipur jail with a view to being implicated in this larger case. Naren Goswami having been murdered, his evidence could not be subjected to any cross-examination. As such, it had no legal validity. It has also been mentioned that Prof. Charuchandra Roy had to be discharged as no extradition could be secured. He was released on the 5th November, 1908. Thus, *minus* Kanailal and Charuchandra, altogether 36 persons were now before the Sessions court.

The well-known barrister Norton took six days in opening the case. Altogether 206 witnesses were examined and 1505 documents and different varieties of articles filed. Of the documents, the most interesting was what came to be known as the "Sweets letter". It was alleged to have been written by Barin to Aurobindo on the 27th December, 1907, when both of them were at Surat attending the Congress Session which, as is wellknown, broke up as a result of fight between the Moderates and Extremists among the Nationalists. The letter reads: "Dear Brother, Now is the time. Please try and make them meet for our conference. We must have sweets all over India readymade for emergencies. I wait here for your answer. Yours affectionately, Barindra Kumar Ghosh." His address as given in the letter was "Bengal camp, near Ajit's." While the prosecution made much of it, interpreting "Sweets" as bombs, defence counsel C. R. Das ridiculed it, tearing it to shreds as a piece of evidence, even as a genuine letter

between two brothers, living close by. While placing it in the search list of articles seized in his possession, Aurobindo totally denied any knowledge of it.

C. R. DAS

The defence produced no witnesses but a number of documents, mostly depositions of some prosecution witnesses in the lower court in order to prove discrepancies. The Crown Counsel closed evidence on March 4, 1907. The accused made no statements and left everything to their lawyers. This had been the attitude of Aurobindo at the very outset, when the police Inspector Shamsul Alam tried, in vain, to interrogate him. Norton then started arguments on the same day, that is, the 4th March and finished on the 20th. The defence lawyers then began. C. R. Das took eight days. He was not yet in the prime of his career. His celebrated defence of the accused, particularly of Aurobindo, came to be recognised as a remarkable chapter of legal history and brought out the great lawyer he intrinsically was. Sir Lawrence Jenkins, the famous Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, after he heard Das later in this very case at the appeal stage, remarked at the end of his judgment, "I desire in particular to place on record my high appreciation of the manner in which the case was presented to this Court by their leading Advocate, Mr. C. R. Das."

But it is worth while taking some space in reminding the reader of today of that classic piece, which has come to be regarded as the most noteworthy outpouring of an outstanding lawyer about an unforgettable maker of history. In defence of Aurobindo, C. R. Das said in course of his argument before the Sessions Court: "My appeal to you . . . is that a man like this (Aurobindo) who is being charged with the offences imputed to him, stands not only before the bar of this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this—that long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead

and gone his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History." Thus spoke the lawyer-poet about the poet of patriotism.

THE JUDGMENTS

The Sessions Judge pronounced judgment on May 6, 1909, convicting 19 of the accused and acquitting the rest, including Aurobindo. Of the persons convicted, Barin and Ullashkar were sentenced to death. Hemchandra, Upen, Bibhuti, Hrishikesh, Biren Sen, Sudhir Sarkar, Indra Nandi, Abinash Bhattacharya, Sailen Bose and Indu Bhushan Roy were given transportation for life. Paresh Maulik, Sisir Ghosh and Nirapado got 10 years' transportation. The properties of all these 15 accused were ordered to be forfeited. Ashok Nandi, Kane and Sushil were sentenced to 7 years' and Krishna Jiban to one year's imprisonment.

They all appealed to the High Court, where the Chief Justice and Justice Carnduff began the hearing on the 9th August, 1909. They agreed in acquitting Kane and convicting the rest. But the sentences were reduced. The Chief Justice placed Barin, Ullashkar, Upen and Hem in one group and sentenced them to life transportation. He placed Bibhuti, Hrishikesh and Indu Bhusan in the second group and gave them 10 years' transportation each, the next batch of Sudhir, Paresh and Abinash to 7 years' and Sisir and Nirapado to 5 years' imprisonment each. The Chief Justice was for acquitting Sailen, Krishna Jiban, Biren Sen, Sushil Sen and Indra Nandi. But Carnduff disagreed. So reference was made to a third Judge, Justice Harrington. He gave judgment in January 1910 and acquitted Krishna Jiban, Sushil and Indra Nandi but convicted Biren Sen and Sailen Bose to seven and five years respectively. With this judgment of the reference Judge the curtain was rung down upon the pioneering Alipur Bomb Trial of 1908 to be followed by an almost unending series of the kind during the next three decades.

IV

India House & Madan Lal Dhingra

SACHINDRA LAL GHOSH

The inception of Indian revolutionary activities in Europe, which played a major role in the revolutionary movement till the mass movement of non-violent non-cooperation, dates back to 1897 when Shyamji Krishnavarma decided to leave India and settle in England. Shyamji, born on 4 October 1857, at Mandvi in the then Native State of Cutch, came under the influence of Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, early in life. An outstanding Sanskrit scholar, he went to Oxford University first as an assistant to Prof. Monier Williams; and after five years of study, he was awarded the M.A. degree of that university. He returned to India in 1884, after having been enrolled as a barrister, and full of faith in British principles of justice and fairplay. He served as Dewan (chief minister) to a number of Native States in quick succession until he was cashiered from the Dewanship of Junagadh State by a conspiracy of British Political Service officers in 1897. Meanwhile he came in contact with Balgangadhar Tilak, to whose radical and militant nationalist outlook he was powerfully drawn. Shyamji could well have built up a lucrative legal practice in

India. But he decided to leave India in pursuit of his conviction—strengthened by the arrest and harsh trial of Tilak and the detention without trial of the Natu brothers of Poona following the killing of two Europeans military officers in 1897—that British rule in India was not at all based on principles of justice. He went out as a revolutionary to work for Indian independence from England.

Shyamji entered the political lists in 1899 with his denunciation of British imperialist aggression on the Boers of South Africa. He occupied himself in making contacts with British Socialists, Irish Republicans and other groups of resisters against colonial rule and his residence soon became the meeting ground of fighters for freedom belonging to all countries. In December 1903, he made an endowment of £1000 to Oxford University for founding a Herbert Spencer Lectureship. He followed this up next year by offering to the Congress leadership in India a proposal for founding five travelling fellowships of the total value of Rs. 2,000 each for enabling Indian graduates to complete their education in England and to qualify themselves for an independent profession. He also proposed to make an additional endowment—in memory of the late Swami Dayanand Saraswati—two fellowships to be awarded every year in 1905, 1906 and 1907, making a total of six fellowships. One of the conditions for the award of the fellowships was “that an Indian graduate holding a fellowship under this scheme shall not accept any post, office, emoluments or service under the British Government after his return to India.” Sir William Wedderburn, to whom the offer was addressed, neither placed it before the Congress nor published it in the Press. Convinced now of the subservience of the Congress to the dictates of the British bureaucracy, Shyamji launched a programme of propagating the message of Indian independence and of organising a cadre of Indian revolutionaries from among students in England and other European countries. In January 1905 he started the English monthly *The Indian Sociologist*, “an organ of freedom and of political, social and religious reform.” This was the first effort made by Indians themselves to enlighten the British public with regard to “the grievances, demands and aspirations of the people of India”.

Shyamji's second act was to organise the Indian Home Rule Society with Indian students in Britain with the following objects: (1) to secure Home Rule for India, (2) to carry on propaganda in the United Kingdom by all practical means with a view to attaining the same, and (3) to spread among the people of India a knowledge of the advantages of freedom and national unity. "The present organisations in the United Kingdom, connected with India, are practically all at the disposal of the bureaucrats (Wedderburn, Cotton and company)," he declared in *The Sociologist*. "It is, therefore, a matter of paramount importance that a new organisation on independent lines should be set on foot, for obtaining for India what is its indefeasible right, 'a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people'." The Society at once became the meeting ground of young Indians with a revolutionary bent of mind.

The 1st of July, 1905, witnessed the inauguration by Shyamji of the India House in the Highgate quarter of London "for the accommodation of the gentlemen holding the Indian Travelling Fellowships and of other Indians deemed eligible to reside." As was intended, the India House became the nursery of young Indian revolutionaries.

Shyamji was in contact with likeminded pioneers in Paris like Madame Cama and S. R. Rana, and in England with Virendranath Chattopadhyay. Residents at the India House included such future stalwarts as Hardayal and Vinayak Savarkar, holder of one of the fellowships endowed by Shyamji. His activities and more particularly his writings in *The Sociologist* attracted the severe displeasure of Tories, and in 1907, when revolutionary violence in India had made itself uneasily felt by the powers that be, *The Times* and *The National Review* mounted scurrilous attacks on him, screaming that "the perambulations of political missionaries should be stopped and the prosecution of seditious speeches and articles in the Press revived. . . ." In addition to the press campaign against Shyamji, there were angry questions in the House of Commons. "British rule defied: Occupation of England by India suggested," screamed a headline in the *London Standard*; and *The Globe* suggested that "a gentleman named Shyamji Krishnavarma may receive it in the neck for sedition."

He was persuaded by his friends, particularly by Madame Cama, S. R. Rana and others working in Paris, to leave England and settle in Paris. Shyamji left London in June 1907, saying: "We are fully convinced that no Indian, who loves political freedom and ardently desires his country's emancipation from the present oppressive alien yoke, is safe within the bounds of the British Empire. . . ."

Meanwhile the British Government's policy of repression with a heavy hand had made the Indian youth realise the impracticability of carrying on open, peaceful methods of agitation for independence. In Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab and also in the Presidency of Madras (comprising the present Tamilnad and Andhra States of the Indian Union) courageous youth were organising in secret groups. Reprisals against the rampant terrorism launched by the Government were taken by the revolutionaries. The courage and idealism of martyrs like Kshudiram Bose, Prafulla Chaki and others were like a beacon light to revolution-minded youth whether in India or abroad.

Among the frequenters to the India House, where V. D. Savarkar held the leadership in the absence of Shyamji, was a young man named Madanlal Dhingra. Not much is known about his antecedents except that he came from a well-to-do family of Amritsar and that he was a graduate of Lahore University. He was studying Engineering in London. He had been a boarder at the India House for some time after his arrival in London and had come under the influence of Savarkar. He regularly attended the discussions and debates held by Savarkar's Free India Society at the India House but rarely spoke. At one of the meetings the subject for debate was: Who is India's bitterest enemy? While some speakers held it was Lord Curzon of Kedleston some others felt Curzon was really a friend who had kicked Indians into wakefulness. Still others awarded the palm to Col. Sir William Curzon Wyllie, political aide at the India Office to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, who, it was said, was swayed by Sir William into adopting a policy of unrestrained repression in India. Madanlal unexpectedly intervened to observe that Curzon and Curzon Wyllie were but two sides of a coin and that the entire brood required to be

eliminated. He said what was needed was action and not words; India must have martyrs if our cause is to triumph.

Two incidents of 1909 seem to have determined Dhingra's future course of action. The first was a manifesto of the Polish Revolutionary Party which advocated armed rising and terrorism as the historic and the only method for the attainment of freedom by a subject people. The second was the arrest, conviction and transportation for life, on the 9th June, of Ganesh Damodar Savarkar, brother of his *guru* Vinayak, at Nasik on a charge of abetment of war against the King. He had already taken the resolve, and had mixed in the society of high officials and retired bureaucrats through membership of aristocratic clubs in London with a particular end in view. He first intended to kill Lord Curzon, the former Viceroy of India who had drawn every Indian's curses. He tried to secure an entrance to a meeting at which his lordship was due to speak, but was unable to gain admission as the meeting was open only to those holding invitation cards.

On 1 July 1909 Dhingra attended the anniversary meeting of the National Indian Association, an organisation of bureaucrats and loyalist Indians, held at the Imperial Institute of Science and Technology in the South Kensington area of London. Curzon Wyllie was seated in the place reserved for the very important guests. While speakers were protesting their unflinching loyalty to the British Crown, Madanlal leapt at Curzon Wyllie and pumped three bullets into him. As the wounded man slumped, an Indian doctor named Cawas Lalkaka tried to grapple with Madanlal and was killed by another bullet. The second man to grapple with and overpower him was also an Indian, a Madanmohan Singh who, however, did not suffer any injuries.

Madanlal was arrested and detained in Brixton prison. On a search of his person the police recovered two pistols, a dagger, some money and a few papers. Medical examination revealed a completely normal heart and pulse and no psychiatric abnormality. This was evidence presumptive that the act was not an ordinary crime committed on a sudden provocation but was a deliberate step.

In the course of his statement before the trying magistrate at Bow Street, Madanlal said:

"I admit that the other day I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths.

"In this attempt I have consulted none but my own conscience. I have conspired with none but my own duty.

"I believe that a nation held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race. I attacked by surprise. Since guns were denied to me, I drew forth my pistol and fired.

"As a Hindu, I feel that the wrong done to my country is an insult to God. Her cause is the cause of Sri Rama. Her service is the service of Sri Krishna. Poor in wealth and intellect, a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the Mother but his own blood and so I have sacrificed the same on Her altar.

"The only lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die, and the only way to teach it is by dying ourselves. Therefore, I die and glory in my martyrdom.

"This war will continue between India and England so long as the Hindu and English races last (if the present unnatural relation does not cease).

"My only prayer to God is that I may be reborn of the same Mother and I may re-die in the same sacred cause till the cause is successful and She stand free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God.

"Bande Mataram".

That Madanlal had gone on his mission fully prepared for the eventualities is borne out by his declaration in court. He had carried a statement on identical lines in his pocket and this was taken hold of by the police during the search of his person after the deed and was suppressed. The police expectedly denied having found the statement among the papers seized from him. His initial statement, therefore, was not produced during the trial; neither was his statement in court initially published in British newspapers or allowed to be sent out by Reuter—the only news agency to despatch news from Britain to Indian newspapers. It was only after the trial and one day before his execution that it was published in *The Daily News* of London through the sympathetic cooperation of an Irish night editor under the

persuasions of Indian revolutionaries. The effect it created in patriotic circles as well as a section of the British public was instantaneous.

Madanlal sturdily declined to offer defence or to plead temporary unsoundness of mind, as advised by some of his friends. On the contrary, he declared in the open court that the British had no right to rule the holy land of India just as the Germans had none to rule Britain, and that, for this very reason, Indians had legitimate justification for killing Englishmen, for the British had been defiling their sacred Motherland. He added he was amazed at the hypocrisy, duplicity and lying that characterised the British. In keeping with the letter of the law, the British Government appointed *suo moto* a counsel for defence of the accused, who did not want any. The sole point made by this counsel was to plead that none of Madanlal's relations had any connection or sympathy with Madanlal's activities.

Madanlal was sentenced to the gallows by the Sessions Court at Westminster on the 23rd July and was executed in the Pentonville Prison on the 17th August 1909.

Madanlal's last desire was that his body should be cremated according to Hindu rites and the proceeds from the sale of his effects made over to the Indian national fund. But it was not honoured; although cremation of the dead had been legalised in Britain, his body was buried in a nameless grave. Thus was British justice tempered with posthumous vindictiveness.

On the "Black Morning of the 17th August" the Indian revolutionaries in London published the following leaflet in a tribute "to the memory of our patriot, Madandal Dhingra":

"This day, the morning of the 17th August, 1909, will remain engraved in red letters in the heart of every Indian who loves his Motherland. This is the morning that our great patriot, our beloved Dhingra, is swinging to and fro with his sacred neck in the grip of execution ropes in Pentonville Prison. His high soul is rising from his earthly body, giving more spirituality to the Cause on whose altar he is sacrificed. This great patriot is no more with us in his earthly body, but in spirit he is with us, will remain with us, will guide us in the battle of the freedom of the Motherland, and his name written in the history of India

will go down to posterity. The alien oppression of his Motherland he could not bear, and he decided to help the movement, which is engaged in freeing Her, by giving his life. . . .

"I told you that the English court has no authority over me. I do not care for my life. You are all-powerful. You can do what you like. But remember that one day we shall be powerful, and then we shall do what we like"—were his words when the English judge, who must have been feeling demoralised in his inner heart, told him that his life will be taken

"And now our enemies have killed him, but let them remember that they will never, never succeed in suppressing or killing the movement.

"Moral force like gentle tides at the touch of storm sweeps away hills and lands. The act of a patriot comes like storm to the moral waves of human society and, sweeping away the barriers, leads the Cause to success."

The reaction of the British press was as could be expected. The diehards imagined revolutionary conspiracy by Indians in every European country, and Shyamji's name was inevitably mentioned as the arch-conspirator though, some time ago, he had left Britain and settled in Paris. Shyamji disclaimed any association with Madanlal Dhingra or his deed and, as reported by the Paris correspondent of *The Daily Mail* of London, he denounced the act "unreservedly", stating his disapproval of political assassinations in England or in any foreign country, while holding such deeds as thoroughly justified in India. This started a rift between him and other Indian revolutionaries in Europe which quickly widened and was never healed, although he took pains later to "frankly approve of the deed and regard its author as a martyr in the cause of Indian Independence", and to institute four scholarships to honour his name. At the same time, however, he sold the building, which was his property, in which the India House was located.

While Madanlal's daring deed drew high praise from freedom fighters of all nations suffering under a foreign yoke, British bureaucrats organised a campaign of condemnation, assisted by members of that section of Indians who regarded British rule in India as "a divine dispensation" (working particularly for

their benefit). Messages of condolence for the dead imperialist agent, expressing the senders' horror and condemnation of the deed, poured in at the India Office. These were read out at a meeting held at the Caxton Hall in London on the 5th July—while the case against Dhingra was still *sub judice*—under the presidentship of the Aga Khan to condemn the act and protest unswerving loyalty to the British Crown. Among the Indians present were two eminent political leaders, Surendra Nath Banerjea and Bipin Chandra Pal, who were on a tour of England at the time. These speakers, while disapproving the acts of violence, explained the causes and the rationale of the mounting unrest in India. Theodore Morrison brought up Madanlal's younger brother, also a student in England, for bolstering support to the condemnatory resolution. But this brother made only a one-sentence speech to convey that he had no connection with his brother Madanlal.

When finally the Aga Khan put up a resolution strongly condemning Madanlal Dhingra's act for unanimous adoption, up rose Vinayak Savarkar to oppose it. This so enraged the diehard organisers of the meeting that many of them rushed at the objector and one of them actually assaulted Savarkar, breaking his spectacles and causing bleeding cuts in his face. The brute was paid back handsomely in his own coin by Thirumal Acharia and it was with difficulty that Savarkar could restrain V. V. S. Aiyer from shooting him down on the spot. Many Indians, including Surendra Nath and Bipin Chandra, left the meeting in protest against the clastardly attack on Savarkar. The meeting broke up in confusion without passing the resolution.

Savarkar was now a marked man. The India House had been disbanded; and he wandered from place to place, including the lodgings of Bipin Chandra Pal in London, dogged by the British secret police. His position in London became impossible after the murder of Jackson, district magistrate of Nasik, on the 21st December, 1909, by Anant Laxman Kanhare, a member of Savarkar's Abhinava Bharat Sangha. This was in retaliation for the savage sentence on Ganesh Savarkar. Kanhare and his two associates, Deshpande and Karve, were expeditiously tried and hanged on the last day of the year 1909. Savarkar left England in

January, 1910, for Paris which had now become the most important centre of activities of the Indian revolutionaries in Europe.

The rift caused by Shyamji's attitude displayed in the Dhingra affair quickly left him isolated, and the revolutionaries gathered round Madame Cama and Sardarsinghji Rana. They met the need for a truly revolutionary newspaper by publishing *Bande Mataram*, a monthly nominally issued from Geneva in Switzerland, under the brilliant editorship of Hardayal on September 10, 1909. "We issue this journal with the object of continuing, commemorating and consolidating the good work that was inaugurated by that redoubtable champion of Indian freedom, *Bande Mataram* of Calcutta. . . . The glorious campaign against foreign oppression which was initiated by our brave and wise leaders in Bengal through the medium of *Bande Mataram* shall be carried on with equal courage and consistency by us at present,"—the first editorial article announced. From Berlin was published *Madan Talwar* (Madan's Sword) under Virendranath Chattopadhyay's editorship; the paper derived its name from Madanlal Dhingra and is said to have been promoted by Madame Cama. It "openly advocated physical force, both individually and collectively, against British rule and its instruments" (to quote from *The Gaelic American* of December 25, 1909). The many-pronged activities emanating from Paris led, in a few years' time, to great events and far-reaching consequences in the story of India's struggle for freedom.

Jatindra Nath Mukherjee

The Path Finder

PROF. JATISH CHANDRA BHOWMICK

Jatindra Nath Mukherjee is an extraordinary figure in the revolutionary history of India. During the first flash of the revolutionary movement in Bengal culminating in the Muzaffarpur bomb throw and Manicktala search and the consequent Alipore Bomb case, Jatindranath did not figure at all—not prominently, at any rate. But even then, he was organising and keeping contact with the revolutionary groups. We first saw him in the 1906 deliberations in the house of Subodh Mallick where Aurobindo met the representatives of different districts to chalk out the programme of work. Jatin did not take any part but was simply taken there by his uncle Lalit Mohan Chatterjee who represented the Nadia district. After that we do not find him in any revolutionary activity, though he was in different ways and places initiating it.

When Barin Ghosh, Ullashkar Dutt, Hem Das and Bhupendra Nath Dutt were engaged in the Manicktala garden in the manufacture of bombs and collection of arms, Jatin was not in that chapter. He was then an employee of the Government of Bengal. It was known that Barin did not like Jatin to frequent that house.

It was also rumoured that at that time Jatin had contact with Aurobindo who advised him to keep aloof from the Manicktala garden. Perhaps Aurobindo had realised that the first attempt of Barin and his colleagues would not go very far; it might be nipped in the bud, even before the preparations had been complete. Perhaps Aurobindo wanted someone to take up the work more seriously and systematically; and perhaps for that he chose Jatin as the coming man.

Born in 1879 in Nadia District, he lost his father at an early age and was brought up under the care of his maternal uncle, Basanta Kumar Chatterjee. After finishing his school education in Krishnagar, Jatin came to Calcutta for his college education. But he had too much of a revolutionary urge to be able to spare time and energy for academic studies. While in the college, he joined a wrestling club. Here he came into contact and became intimate, with a son of the well-known patriotic writer, Jogendra-nath Vidyabhusan. At Vidyabhusan's house, in 1903, he was introduced to Aurobindo and other prominent revolutionists of the day. Thereafter, with a view to devoting heart and soul to revolutionary work, he wanted early economic freedom, gave up his academic career, learnt stenography and after a spell of private employment, joined Government service where he continued till 1910 when he was arrested in the Howrah Conspiracy case. But during this time also, i.e. while he was in Government service, he was building up a nucleus of revolutionary workers, not yet to be called an organisation. His idea perhaps was that if he could get some picked men in different places, devoted to the cause, then an organisation would automatically grow up. Moreover, throughout his career, he did not care so much for organisational solidarity as for ideas and movements through responsible and devoted workers.

After the Manicktala garden raid and the Alipore conspiracy case, the whole revolutionary organisation became disrupted. Mofussil links were lost; even in Calcutta stray groups remained somewhat isolated. A vacuum was created in the revolutionary movement of Bengal. There was only one group, called the Chhatra Bhandar group, which was moving quite seriously. It appears to be a public institution with Aurobindo as its inspirer.

For the rest, it was an autonomous centre run by Nikhileshwar Ray Maullick, Indranath Nandy and Kartic Dutta. Jatin was behind the group even before the Manicktala arrests. This Chhatra Bhandar group really paved the path for the revolutionary movement in Bengal and was the beginning of the Jugantar group.

It may be of some interest to trace the origin of Jugantar as there is some confusion on this issue. The Calcutta Anushilan Samiti, founded about 3 years before the partition of Bengal, functioned as a public organisation devoted mostly to physical culture and study of history and politics. It would not be quite correct to call it a revolutionary organisation. No such indication is to be found in the programme of the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti. Jatin Banerjee was sent by Aurobindo in 1902 from Baroda with the definite idea of developing a revolutionary secret society. Jatin's house, in fact, became the headquarters of the Anushilan Samiti. The policy followed by him had apparently an armed insurrection in view. Thus within a short time, he was found to be too hot for P. Mitra, the President, and Satish Bose, the Secretary of the Samiti. Barin and others, who had been working within Calcutta Anushilan Samiti, found its programme too stale for them and started the paper *Jugantar* to preach the gospel of armed revolution. While the paper was doing so under the editorship of Bhupendra Nath Dutt, other workers were engaged in the Manicktala garden in making bombs and collecting arms. All these they were doing without the knowledge or consent of P. Mitra and Satish Bose. The group did not take any name; it was simply working with the definite purpose of doing something outstanding in the line of revolutionary activities.

When after their arrest, the Chhatra Bhandar group and Jatin Mukherjee took up the reins of work, even then they did not take the name of Jugantar to designate their group or party. It may be pertinent for our readers to ask why they did not take any name. Perhaps the reply would be that those pioneers were not eager to set up a rigid organisation but to set examples of self-immolation for furthering the revolutionary urge among the youth of the country. So a name was not of any practical utility

for them. But people in referring to them used to call them the Jugantar men after the weekly organ, *Jugantar*, suppressed in 1908.

When during the First World War, several groups combined under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee, they traced their origin to the Manicktala group with the mouthpiece, *Jugantar*. So they started occasionally publishing secret pamphlets, both in Bengali and English, under the name "Jugantar". These secret leaflets were circulated among the workers in different districts and provinces, and this created an organisational sense under the name of Jugantar. The police also began to use the name, Jugantar Party. The workers liked it because of its tradition and its connotation. The word, though spelt as Jugantar, should etymologically be spelt as 'Yugantar'—meaning the end of an era. Revolution means a new round in the wheel of time—a new era; so the word 'Jugantar' may be deemed to be synonymous with revolution.

Let us now revert to Jatin Mukherjee. When the arrests following the Manicktala garden raid practically finished the organisation built up by Barin, it was not unnatural for the people to think that this was the end of the revolutionary movement which those few desperate and reckless young men had tried to initiate against the mighty British raj. But they were surprised that in one month's time there was a daring armed attempt on the life of Sir Andrew Fraser, Lt.-Governor of Bengal. The Manicktala arrests were made on the 2nd May and this attempt on the life of Fraser was made on the 2nd June 1908. Jiten Rai Choudhury, a young man of about 20, shot at the Governor at a public meeting held in the Overtoun Hall at Calcutta. Jiten was not successful in his attempt but his heroic attitude at his trial and the boldness of his action stirred the gloomy anticipations of the people. Jiten faced trial with a bold indifference to the court proceedings. This action was organised by the Chhatra Bhandar group, Nikhileshwar Ray Maullick and others. But Jatin Mukherjee was in the know of the thing. Then came the murder of Nandalal Banerjee on 9th November 1908 in the city of Calcutta. Nandalal had tried to arrest Prafulla Chaki after the Muzaffarpur bomb throw. Prafulla escaped arrest by shooting himself dead on the railway platform. But the revolutionaries did not forget Nandalal

and he was killed. Behind this action also was the Chhatra Bhandar group.

After this, there were two other overt acts behind which also were Jatin Mukherjee and the Chhatra Bhandar. The first was the murder of Ashutosh Biswas, the Government counsel who conducted the Alipore Bomb Case. The action took place in the Alipore Court in broad daylight. It was done by Charu Chandra Bose on the 10th February 1909. One of the hands of the young boy was crippled; yet he undertook this mission and faced the gallows bravely. When he went for this daring act, he knew that he was facing certain arrest and consequent physical torture and death; and he faced all these unperturbed. At the trial, he straightway declared: "I say, I have done what I considered my sacred duty. After that, where is the need for any trial? Hang me outright . . ." Then came the murder of Samsul Alam, Deputy Superintendent of Police who investigated the Alipore bomb case. He was murdered on 24.1.1910 by Biren Dutta Gupta in the High Court in broad daylight. This action was undertaken almost directly under the instruction of Jatin Mukherjee. Biren was selected by Atul Ghosh but was approved by Jatin Mukherjee. Government somehow suspected Jatin of complicity in this case and arrested him on 27th January, i.e. 3 days after the act. But as no evidence against him could be found, he was discharged on the 30th but was immediately re-arrested and sent to Howrah jail to be tried in the Howrah Conspiracy case.

Before proceeding to this case further, we should narrate Jatin's activities during the previous few years. By then he had collected a band of devoted workers around him, including Atul Krishna Ghosh, Nalini Kanta Kar, Suresh Chandra Mazumdar (subsequently of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*), Nani Gopal Sen Gupta of Howrah, Kshitish Sanyal, Amarendra Kanjilal and Bibhuti Deb Roy of Jessore and several others in different places. Jatin by then had also acquired some reputation for his physical prowess particularly for two incidents. In 1906 in Nadia district, in a jungle he had to face a Royal Bengal tiger. He had no weapon with him except a dagger or *kukri*; he killed that tiger, although severely mauled by that ferocious animal. For the injuries he suffered he was treated by Dr. Suresh Sarbadhikary, a leading

surgeon of Calcutta. One knee was so badly damaged that in the surgeon's opinion it might require amputation. But Jatin beseeched: pray do anything but amputate. The surgeon undertook a major operation—but not an amputation. Even such an operation the surgeon had to carry out, taking quite some time without general anaesthesia at the patient's insistence. It must be remembered here that the system of local anaesthesia was not then as developed as it is today. It was with particular interest that Dr. Sarbadhikary treated this extraordinarily brave patient and cured him. This incident carried Jatin's name to many a home in Bengal.

On another occasion, he had to contend with four European soldiers at Santahar Railway Station on his journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling. In summer his official duty took him to Darjeeling. He fought these four European soldiers alone and taught them a good lesson for insulting him simply for the offence of being an Indian. They instituted a case against him but the case was subsequently withdrawn. The European Association and its organ, *The Englishman*, advised the withdrawal. Perhaps the European soldiers, Capt. Murphy and Lt. Somerville, also had a second thought. A case against a single native beating up four British soldiers would redound to the credit neither of the British people nor of the soldiery. The Magistrate, while allowing the withdrawal of the case, advised Jatin to be a little more cautious in future. But Jatin's reply was a firm assertion of his determination to do the same either in self-defence or for the sake of national honour. *

About this time, particularly after the Samitis were banned following the Manicktala finds, apart from the Chhatra Bhandar group, another person appreciated Jatin's leadership and in a way helped to build up a liaison of all other groups with Jatin. This was Abinash Chakravarty who had contacts with Aurobindo, Subodh Mallick and other leaders of the movement from the earliest stage. We are not sure whether he had any indication from Aurobindo about Jatin Mukherjee. But he asked all the stray groups and individuals to rally round Jatin Mukherjee who alone could furnish revolutionary leadership at this juncture. Thus even while a Government employee, Jatin

became almost the recognised leader of the revolutionary groups working in Calcutta and different parts of West Bengal.

Let us now go back to the Howrah case, which is an important chapter in Jatin's life and also in the history of the revolutionary movement in Bengal. In that case Jatin was alleged to be the leader of the conspiracy and the Government's instruction was that the case should be built up around his activities. There were 46 accused in the case of whom 7 were discharged while framing the charge. We find: "The Counsel for the Crown in his address divided the accused in the following groups: (1) Sibpur group, (2) Kurchi group, (3) Kidderpore group, (4) Changripota group, (5) Mazilpur group, (6) Haludbari group, (7) Krishnagar group, (8) Nator group, (9) Jaugacha group, (10) Jugantar group, (11) Chhatra Bhandar group, and (12) Rajshahi (Rampur Boalia) group." (Rowlatt Committee Report). This will indicate, but just indicate, the wide ramifications of the conspiracy and of the revolutionary workers who had rallied round Jatin Mukherjee during the two years 1908 to 1910. These groups belonged to different districts and different areas far removed from one another. In this case Jatin's maternal uncle Lalit Chatterjee also was an accused.

It was a long drawn-out case continuing for over 13 months. In spite of the fact that there were two approvers in the case, the Government failed to prove the charge of a conspiracy. In fact, the two approvers were faked conspirators put up by the police as participants in the conspiracy. When the case was going on, Jatin was suddenly transferred on the 9th February, 1910 to Alipore Central Jail. Biren Dutta Gupta who murdered Samsul Alam faced the trial defiantly. According to practice, when he refused to appoint any defence counsel, the Government appointed a counsel to defend his case. He became annoyed and asked the counsel (N. C. Sen) not to bother about his defence. He was condemned to death and he accepted the verdict of the Judge boldly and defiantly. He was a young boy, physically tortured at the time of his arrest, and during his detention in jail before the trial he was subjected to various forms of third degree methods. One day a police officer is said to have shown him copy of a newspaper which said that all patriotic Indians,

including prominent revolutionaries, in one voice condemned his action as that of a mean coward. The young boy was roused to indignation and burst out, "I do not care for anybody's opinion as long as I have the affection and confidence of one and only one person." It was not difficult for the police first to guess and then to get from him the name of that one person, who was none else than Jatindranath Mukherjee. Jatin was taken to Alipore Jail to be put in front of Biren in the expectation that Biren would implicate Jatin with the act he had committed. But on seeing Jatin, the young boy burst into tears and begged his apology for disclosing his name. Jatin, a man full of affection and humane sensibilities, consoled the boy and expressed his full affection and confidence in him. Next day, Biren mounted the gallows bravely, shouting "Bandemataram!"

Jatin was again brought to Howrah Jail to face the charge of conspiracy. One of the charges in the case was tampering with the loyalty of the soldiers in Fort William in Calcutta. It was true that he had asked the Chhatra Bhandar group to contact the Indian soldiers in Fort William. Contact was made through Naren Chatterjee of Sibpur (Howrah) with the Jat Regiment stationed in the Fort but the soldiers found it inconvenient to go to Sibpur across the Ganga to meet Naren Chatterjee. Jatin asked the Chhatra Bhandar to keep contact with the soldiers through the Kidderpore group of Sarat Mitra and his two brothers. According to Hardinge papers, now in the Cambridge University Archives, the Governor-General regretted that his advice to concentrate on this one charge exclusively and on "one criminal"—Jatindranath Mukherjee was not accepted by the administration. It is significant that even in the first decade of this century Jatin had the idea of having an armed rising with the help of revolutionary workers actively supported by a mutiny of Indian soldiers. Naren Chatterjee and Naren Bose used to keep contact with Indian soldiers in different cantonments such as Banaras, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi, Meerut, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Both Naren Bose and Naren Chatterjee were declared absconders in the Howrah Conspiracy case.

The case against Jatin did not stand. It was tried by a Special Tribunal composed of the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court

and Justice Brett and Justice Digambar Chatterjee but no case could be established against the accused and particularly against Jatin Mukherjee. He was acquitted by the Special Tribunal on 21st February, 1911 even before the end of the trial. All the accused in the case, which continued up to May 1911, were discharged; some of them were convicted for dacoity in a separate case.

After release from Jail, Jatin found himself a dismissed employee of the Government. He started the business of a contractor with a big contract in Jessore district in connection with the Jessore-Jhenidah light railway scheme. That gave him the opportunity of earning some money as also of touring many areas and re-organising the revolutionary group. For two years he devoted himself to the task of restoring the lost links with different groups. Chhatra Bhandar, which furnished some links in 1908, had at this time been disbanded. But another better known institution now took its place. It was Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya's Sramajibi Samabaya. Launched during the Swadeshi days, it had already been functioning as the secret headquarters of the inter-provincial activities of the Jugantar Party. It, in fact, supplied the active link between Jatin in Bengal and Rashbehari in Upper India. Later, it also became one of the centres for foreign connection.

After release he went out on a pilgrimage and met Swami Bholananda Giri, from whom he had received initiation earlier. Bholananda Giri was an eminent sanyasi of those days. He had a large number of disciples particularly in Bengal and in other parts also, and had a monastery at Hardwar. Jatin's life story would remain incomplete unless we know of his high spiritual ideals and how Bholananda received him. Jatin did not hide anything from his Guru; he told him of his revolutionary activities. Bholananda, far from discouraging him, rather gave him all encouragement in his mission. Jatin was one of the favourite disciples of Swami Bholananda, and he used to wear a *rudraksha* around his neck like all the disciples of Swami Bholananda. We have heard stories of Bholananda caressing that killer of a tiger and revolutionary hero as if he were a child to him. From Hardwar he came to Brindaban. There he met Swami Niralamba who was known as Jatindranath Banerjee in his pre-sanyas days.

In fact, Jatin Banerjee is said to have done the pioneering work in building up the revolutionary movement in Bengal; and Jatin Mukherjee gave that movement a definite shape and direction. Rashbehari also was called to Brindaban; he had previous contact with the Manicktala group. It is reported that on some letters of Rashbehari being found in the course of the search of the Manicktala garden, he was advised to leave Bengal. Accordingly he came to Dehradun ostensibly as a private tutor in the house of Raja P. N. Tagore. While subsequently serving in the Dehradun Forest Research Institute, Rashbehari used to keep contact with Bengal through Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya of Sramajibi Samabaya and Srish Ghosh of Chandannagar. During his discussion with Niralamba and Rashbehari, Jatin Mukherjee practically chalked out his future course of action and the line on which to conduct the revolutionary movement in India during the anticipated Anglo-German War.

During his stay in Howrah Jail, Naren Bhattacharya, one of the co-accused in that case, developed deep regard for Jatin Mukherjee. Naren, Hari Kumar Chakravarti and Satcowri Banerjee, belonging to the Changripota group of 24 Parganas, had heard about Jatin Mukherjee from Phani Chakravarti, one of their colleagues, who was at Darjeeling. During his short contact at Darjeeling with Jatin, Phani became a warm admirer of Jatin Mukherjee. Naren Bhattacharya came out of Howrah Jail fully convinced that Jatin alone could furnish a proper leadership. Naren subsequently became famous as M. N. Roy. Naren or M. N. Roy has mentioned Jatin in his memoirs. After narrating that he had heard so many things about Jatin, he became eager to meet him. Then, he said, "The next day I was taken to the unusual Dada and I was caught for good. Later on, I realised what attracted me: it was his personality. Since then, I have had the privilege of meeting outstanding personalities of our times. These are great men, Jatinda was a good man and I still have to find a better." In another place of his memoirs he said, "In the meantime I had come to realise that I admired Jatinda because he personified, perhaps without himself knowing it, the best of mankind. He was our Dada and the Commander-in-Chief also." After release, Naren told every-

body that they must all rally round Jatin. In earlier years Jatin had picked up contact with the Atmonnati group of Bipin Ganguly.

Then came the Damodar floods in August 1913. It was an almost unprecedented disaster. Large areas of Midnapur, Burdwan and Hooghly districts were devastated. The quantum of Government relief was very nominal. It was mostly the private relief operations organised by public men that actually helped the distressed people. Revolutionary workers from many districts of Bengal joined in that relief work. Jatin Mukherjee, Amar Chatterjee, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Makhn Sen, Atul Ghosh, Manoranjan Gupta and many others from different districts participated in the relief organisation. They were most helpful, sincere and devoted in their service; but behind the facade of relief operations, they formed an organisation for the coming revolutionary work. It may be said that it was during the Damodar flood relief work that the actual base was laid for the formation of the party which came to be formally known as the Jugantar party. And it was Jatin who took the initiative in this. It was primarily his suggestion that during this relief work, they should build up intimate personal contacts with workers of different districts so that such contacts could later help in having an all-Bengal organisational link.

Before Jatin had been discharged from the Howrah case, information had come from abroad that Germany was preparing for war against Britain. The famous German General von Bernhardi wrote a book named "Germany and the Next War" in which he gave a clear indication as to the policy Germany should follow regarding the Indian revolutionists during the coming war between Germany and Britain. From as early as 1907-08 or even earlier revolutionary workers were going abroad ostensibly for higher studies but actually for building up contacts with foreign countries which might be of some help in the coming revolution. Some of the earliest to go were Madame Cama, Shyamji Krishnavarma, Savarkar, Taraknath Das, Viren Chattopadhyay and Hardayal. By about the beginning of 1914, Indian revolutionaries both abroad and in India were expecting a war between Britain and Germany in the near future. Jatin urged

upon his colleagues to prepare for that eventuality. The war came in September 1914, opening up to the Indian revolutionaries a chance to try for an armed rising. M. N. Roy has stated, Jatin was chosen as the Commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army to be formed.

By that time, the party also had been more or less organised, consisting of the Calcutta group connected with Jatin Mukherjee and Bipin Ganguly, the Barisal group of Swami Prajnanananda Saraswati, the Mymensingh group of Hemendra Kishore Acharya, the Faridpur group of Purna Das and the North Bengal group of Jatin Roy etc. Immediately after the war had started, Viren Chattopadhyay and others entered into a pact with the German Government which agreed to help the Indian revolutionaries for an armed rising. It was decided that Germany would send arms and some money, and the Indian revolutionaries would organise an armed rising of the local people under the leadership of the workers of the Jugantar party in Bengal and the Ghadr party in Punjab, helped by a mutiny of a number of Indian regiments. We know various attempts to send arms to India were foiled by the Government; this was primarily due to the fact that the entire conspiracy leaked out in U.S.A. which was a neutral country till April 1917. When Indian revolutionaries were working in U.S.A. they came in contact with some Czechoslovak revolutionary exiles there. The Czechs also had a secret service working in U.S.A. Indian revolutionaries were not very careful in their dealing with fellow revolutionaries who were exiles from other countries. The interests of the Czechs and Indians were inherently in conflict; the Indians wanted freedom from Britain with German help, but the Czechs' mission was to secure British and French aid in their struggle against Austria—an ally of Germany. The Czech secret service agency stumbled upon some facts of an Indo-German conspiracy and passed them on to the French Embassy. That helped the British in forestalling any arms reaching India. Some money came, of course small amounts, through Harry & Sons, a small business concern of Hari Kumar Chakravarty. According to the Rowlatt Committee about Rs. 33,000/- actually reached the Bengal revolutionaries though Germany had sent Rs. 43,000/-.

Earlier, when information of the Indo-German pact had reached India, Jatin felt an occasion had at last come for the realisation of his long-cherished idea of organising an armed revolt. German arms would enable the revolutionary young men to organise a people's army whose leadership would be supplied by the dedicated party cadre. Money was a pressing necessity. It took some time for the German money to arrive. During this period Jatin permitted a number of taxi-cab dacoities in Calcutta and also murders of some important police officers. All these acts were bold in conception and quick in execution. While he was underground in a house on Pathuriaghata Street, a police spy known to Jatin was one day seen in that house and was instantly killed. It was found necessary to have Jatin moved immediately not only from that house but also from Calcutta. His colleagues sent him to Orissa where he took his residence in a small village in the Kaptipada area of Mayurbhunj, then a native State.

Jatin went to Orissa—not, of course, primarily for his own security. According to the arrangements made, German arms were to arrive on the Bay of Bengal coast at two or three places—Raimangal, Hattia and a point in Orissa. Raimangal and Hattia were on the Bengal side of the Bay; the revolutionaries made arrangements for receiving and properly distributing the arms reaching Bengal side. There was no local revolutionary unit in Orissa, that is why a subsidiary office of Harry & Sons was opened at Balasore; and Jatin's departure for Balasore was mainly for the purpose of receipt and proper utilisation of the arms delivered on the Orissa coast. From Chittagong hills up to Chhotanagpur, several revolutionary posts were put up in different places taking into account their strategic importance. From Chhotanagpur to Orissa was not a long distance; and so Jatin took his residence on the Orissa coast so that when the arms arrived there, he might organise a rising with the help of the local people, particularly the tribals.

When the police raided Harry & Sons, they found the address of one of their agency firms in Balasore—Universal Emporium. A police party headed by Denham, Tegart and Bird went to Balasore. They made a thorough search of the Universal

Emporium, where they found a slip of paper in which the name of the village Kaptipada was mentioned. Immediately a police party aided by some military personnel marched towards that village. There came the climax of Jatindranath's leadership and personality. On 6th September, the village people informed him of the arrival of some Europeans in the small forest rest house at Kaptipada across a shallow rivulet. He had with him four young colleagues—Chittapriya, Manoranjan, Jatish and Niren. They asked him to leave the place; if he had preferred that, he might in all probability have escaped. If he had thrown away the Mauser pistols and allowed himself to be arrested, then also he would simply have been detained under Regulation III of 1818 as there was no specific charge against him. But he was determined to give a direct fight to the British forces and did not like simply to save his skin.

For three days, he, along with his four companions, moved from place to place—often facing the pursuers. At last Jatin and his companions took their final stand at Chasakhand behind an ant-hill not far from the bank of the Burrabalong river on the 9th September 1915. They took their position with three Mauser pistols and one revolver. On the other side, there was a large posse of police and military officers, all armed with rifles and other long-range weapons. The unequal fight continued for about 90 minutes when the revolutionaries' ammunition ran out. By that time Chittapriya was dead, Jatin was mortally wounded; others also were wounded, though not very seriously. Beside the Bengal police from Calcutta, the local police and the Mayurbhunj force, the Government had on their side also some Indian armymen drawn from the Army Proof Range on the Balasore coast. Sergeant Rutherford of the Proof Department, District Magistrate Kilby, Mayurbhunj officers and a number of officers from Calcutta were heading the Government party. When ammunition ran out, the pistols of the revolutionaries became silent; and two of them came out from the shelter of the ant-hill. The Government forces crawled along the paddy field towards the revolutionaries. Chittapriya had already died and Jatin, seriously wounded, was profusely bleeding. All of them were arrested; two of them were taken to the Balasore hospital and two

to the lock-up. The surgeon bandaged Jatin's wounds in the hospital but in the night, it was reported, he tore open the bandage over the wounds. There was further bleeding and early next morning Jatin breathed his last. Thus ended the saga of the greatest revolutionary of that period. He lived a glorious and valiant life, but he courted a more glorious and more valiant death.

What was the special feature in his character which made him the leader of a party whose different units were so long working in a disjointed manner in their own respective spheres? Jatin never posed as a leader; that is why he was chosen as the leader by all the revolutionary groups of Bengal except the Dacca Anushilan Samiti which did not join the Indo-German conspiracy. A man of the stature of M. N. Roy was charmed by Jatin's personality and in spite of all his association in later life with many eminent persons of the world, including the leaders of the Russian Revolution, he retained the highest admiration for Jatin. Jatin was sharp in intellect and quick in taking decision; but it is not claimed that he had an intellect superior to others'. At least that was not the virtue which made others gather round him. His personal modesty coupled with a strong determined character, his broad mind and broad outlook, his spirit of self-abnegation—all these made him the unquestioned leader of the Bengal revolutionaries who combined to organise an armed rising during the First World War. Above all he was a spritual man and a man of high ideals with a supreme humane spirit and an affectionate heart. He did not like individual terrorism, but he had to occasionally encourage individual actions when the supreme consideration of mass awakening insistently pointed to the need of such actions.. He did not like committing dacoity on innocent people for money but circumstances sometimes compelled him to allow it. These were the compulsions of necessity but his eyes were set on a far distant goal—the goal of an armed insurrection. He knew that as Barin's earlier attempt could not proceed far, his attempt also might not bring about a successful revolution. But he also knew that only by courting death could these revolutionaries revivify the dormant life of the nation.

Left to himself in a free society, he would have devoted his

time to other pursuits, including the spiritual, but that was not to be, because he placed the cause of Indian revolution above everything else. His death left a legacy which the future generation of Bengal revolutionaries nourished, nurtured and tried to develop through successive stages of the national movement. M. N. Roy said, "By the end of the year (1914), the news reached us in India that the Indian revolutionary Committee in Berlin had obtained from the German Government the promise of arms and money required to declare the war of independence. The news spread like wildfire, to affect the Indian soldiers of the British army also. Revolution was round the corner, although we had the vaguest possible idea about the things to come; in any case, independence was within reach. The imagined imminence of the attainment of the common goal induced several secret revolutionary organisations to compose their traditional feuds. Clandestine conferences led to the formation of the General Staff of the coming revolution, with Jatin Mukherji as the Commander-in-Chief." So he was the Commander-in-Chief chosen by different revolutionary groups of Bengal to conduct a revolution which, of course, did not come to fruition.

His personality was felt and appreciated by all who came close to him. After the Manicktala garden arrests, the revolutionary workers were, so to say, groping in the darkness. It was Jatin who found the path for them. When the stream of revolution seemed to be lost in the wilderness he, like Bhagirath of olden days, carved the channel for a flow-down. Even European officers appreciated his courage and his dedicated spirit. It is reported that in the Balasore hospital a high police officer asked him—"Mukherjee, can I do anything for you?" With dignity, he replied, "Thanks—all will be finished soon." The Rowlatt Committee report referred to him as "a notable individual". Not only was he notable—he was also noble in every sense of the word.

The Non-co-operation Movement

HARI DEV SHARMA

After the end of the First World War, when peace was returning to Europe, India was having the birth pangs of a non-violent revolution. The post-war India was affected by many factors. Though politically more conscious, economically she was depressed. The British Government seemed unwilling to introduce liberal constitutional reforms. What angered India most was the enactment of the Rowlatt Act. The agitation against the Act was unprecedented in volume and temper. The policy of the Government towards the agitation was anything but sympathetic. This probably widened the rift between the nationalist India and the British Government. Surendranath Banerjea was right when he described the Rowlatt Act as the "parent of the Non-co-operation movement".¹

Gandhi was opposed to the Rowlatt Bills. He was then in very weak health; doctors and friends advised him to take rest. His opposition to the Bills was so strong that he ignored their advice and toured the country to organise Satyagraha against them. On the 30th March, and 6th April, 1919, there were shootings on unarmed Satyagrahis. The culmination came in the Punjab on

the 13th April at Amritsar. The Jalianwala Bagh massacre and the subsequent martial law oppressions and atrocities on the people of the Punjab roused the indignation of the whole of India. Gandhi was terribly shaken at the happenings.

Despite the Rowlatt Act and the subsequent Punjab atrocities, the Indian National Congress decided in its Amritsar session held in December 1919 to work the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Gandhi was largely responsible for influencing the decision of the Congress in favour of the Reforms—Lokmanya Tilak and C. R. Das were opposed to them. He was still hopeful that the British would do justice to the sufferers in the Punjab.² But it is an irony of history that Gandhi, who had been for co-operation with the Government, became a crusader of non-co-operation within a few months.

The year 1920 saw India more disaffected than ever before. Gandhi's faith in the British Government was rudely shaken. He expected no justice from it. The report of the Hunter Committee published in May, 1920, and the debates in the House of Lords defending and lauding Dyer's conduct at Amritsar inflamed the Indian sentiments. Lord Hunter, the president of the Committee, betrayed an "intolerant attitude... towards any difference of opinion"³ among the members. He accused the Indian members of the Committee of wanting to "drive the British out of the country".⁴ "After this", stated Setalvad, "though under the same roof, we, the Indian members, ceased to talk to Lord Hunter".⁵ It was, therefore, natural that the report drafted by Hunter had an adverse effect on Indian sentiments. To Gandhi it appeared as a "thinly disguised official whitewash".⁶

Another major event which played an important part in making the Congress launch the Non-co-operation movement was the Khilafat issue. The Khilafat was a religious institution of the *sunni* Muslims. They considered it the "Vice-regency of the Prophet... ordained by Divine Law for the perpetuation of Islam and the continued observance of its laws and rules".⁷ The Indian Muslims looked upon the Sultan of Turkey as the defender of their faith and warden of their holy places.

At the outbreak of the War when the Indian Muslims found Turkey arrayed against Britain they felt uneasy. For them, it

was a "problem in loyalties".⁸ The British sensed the Muslim dilemma. To assure them of the safety of the Khalifa and the Khilafat, the Government issued proclamations and made statements.⁹ The most important statement was made by Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister of England, on the 5th January, 1918. It ran as follows: "Nor are we fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary or to deprive Turkey of its Capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race."¹⁰ The Indian Muslims laid great store by the British Prime Minister's assurance. It helped to augment recruitment among them.¹¹ They formed a sizable portion of the Indian Army.¹² Out of the three hundred and sixty thousand recruits in the Punjab one-half were Muslims.¹³

After the War, the Allied powers—England, France, Italy and even Greece—tried to grab as much Turkish territory as possible. Practically, the whole of Thrace except a small belt round Constantinople, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria and other Arab territories were taken out of the Turkish Empire. By the Treaty of Sevres, Britain repudiated the pledge given to the Indian Muslims during the War and the Sultan of Turkey became virtually a prisoner in his palace under the control of the army of occupation. Mesopotamia (now Iraq), and Palestine and the Hedjaz (including Mecca and Medina) were taken over by Britain, and Syria by France as Mandate territories of the League of Nations. Ultimately, at the insistence of Venizelos, Greece was allowed to occupy Anatolia—the real homeland of the Turks. When Greek soldiers landed at Smyrna, the Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha resisted that aggression and the Treaty of Sevres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.¹⁴ But that is a different story.

Gandhi and other leaders of the Indian national movement supported the Muslim demand regarding the Khilafat for various reasons. First, it was a breach of the solemn pledge given by the British Premier to the Indian Muslims; secondly, it helped the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity; thirdly, many non-Muslim Indian nationalists viewed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as envisaged in the peace terms and the assumption of mandatory powers by England and France in Mesopotamia and Syria as

potential danger to the Indian freedom movement; fourthly, it "furthered the anti-imperialist struggle", and lastly, many felt that as fellow-citizens, it was the duty of non-Muslim Indians to help the Muslims in their hour of difficulty.¹⁴

After the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs, the Indians ceased to be enamoured of the Reforms Act of 1919. The people of the Punjab told C. F. Andrews to his face: "Take away your d-d reforms! We don't want them and we won't have them. Answer us this—are we to be treated like serfs"?¹⁵ Andrews failed to provide an answer to the question.

Non-co-operation was first suggested by Gandhi as a remedy for the Khilafat wrongs at the Khilafat Conference held in Delhi on the 23rd November, 1919.¹⁶ The redress of the Punjab wrongs was, of course, there. Without entering into details, its fundamental principle as enunciated by him, can be put thus: "It is an inalienable right of the people to withhold co-operation."¹⁷ He also placed before the Conference broad items of the non-co-operation programme such as renunciation of titles, honours and government service.¹⁸ For the time being, the idea of non-co-operation was lost in the proceedings of the Conference.¹⁹ But the events in 1920 brought the idea of non-co-operation to the fore. The Viceroy's reply to the Khilafat deputation on the 19th January, 1920, disappointed the Indian Muslims. The Khilafatists thought of sending a deputation to London. According to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the matter was discussed for six long hours in the drawing-room of Hakim Ajmal Khan. Nothing came out of the discussion; thereafter, the matter was referred to a sub-committee consisting of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Azad, to go into the question of alternative methods if the constitutional methods failed to achieve the object. They again discussed the matter with Gandhi at the residence of Susil Rudra, Principal of St. Stephen's College, Delhi. Gandhiji placed his non-co-operation programme before Azad and Ajmal Khan; it was here that the Non-co-operation movement was "conceived".²⁰

Soon after this Maulana Azad placed the non-co-operation programme before the public at the Khilafat Conference held at Meerut on the 22nd January, 1920.²¹ Subsequently he referred

to it in his presidential address to the Bengal Khilafat Conference held in February, 1920, in Calcutta.²²

But Gandhi issued his first manifesto on non-co-operation on the 10th March, 1920. He stated: "Non-co-operation is . . . the only remedy left open to us".²³ Explaining his basis of non-co-operation, he wrote:

Now a word as to what may be done if the demands are not granted. The barbarous method is warfare, open or secret. This must be ruled out if only because it is impracticable. If I could but persuade everyone that it is always bad, we should gain all lawful ends much quicker. The power that an individual or nation, forswearing violence, generates is a power that is irresistible. But my argument today against violence is based on pure expedience i.e., its utter futility.²⁴

On the 7th July, 1920, the Non-co-operation Committee appointed by the Khilafat Conference at its meeting at Allahabad held in June, 1920, announced its programme.^{24a} It was in this programme that the boycott of schools, colleges and law courts first figured.²⁵ The Committee also included the boycott of councils and surrender of titles, honours and honorary offices and appealed to the public that "Swadeshi must be pushed forward without waiting for the 1st August, for it is an eternal rule of conduct not to be interrupted even when the settlement arrives".²⁶ A complete hartal was to be observed by the people on the 1st August, 1920²⁷—the day fixed for the inauguration of the Non-co-operation movement.

Gandhi, as previously planned, inaugurated the Non-co-operation movement on the 2nd August, 1920 by returning his Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal, Zulu War medal, Boer War medal with a letter to the Viceroy. The letter briefly stated his reasons for returning the medals and starting the Non-co-operation movement. He wrote:

Valuable as these honours have been to me, I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Mussalman countrymen have to labour under a wrong done to their religious sentiments. . . . The attitude of the Imperial and and your Excellency's Government on the Punjab question

has given me (an) additional cause for grave dissatisfaction. . . . I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government.²⁸

The provincial Congress Committees were unanimous in accepting the principle of non-co-operation, but they differed about the details of the programme.²⁹ Even before the special Congress had met in Calcutta in September, 1920, the Gujarat and the Bihar Political Conferences, under the presidentship of Abbas Tyabji and Rajendra Prasad respectively, had passed resolutions supporting the non-co-operation.³⁰

The special session of the Congress began in Calcutta on September 4, 1920, to consider Gandhi's non-co-operation programme. C. R. Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malaviya, M. A. Jinnah and Lajpat Rai were opposed to his non-co-operation programme. "I was absolutely at sea", wrote Gandhi, "as to who would support the resolution and who would oppose it. . . . I only saw an imposing phalanx of veteran warriors assembled for the fray at Calcutta."³¹

Before Gandhi's resolution on non-co-operation was discussed in the open session, the Subjects Committee deliberated on it. It met on the premises of the Indian Association. About three hundred members attended it.³² The discussion lasted for six hours.³³ Gandhi met with the "most terrific and formidable opposition that he had ever faced before, in his political career."³⁴ The debate was all through orderly though at times "the speeches were strong and enlivened here and there by sharp passage-at-arms among the opponents".³⁵

The substantive motion before the Subjects Committee was the resolution drafted by the Reception Committee and thirty amendments.³⁶ The principal amendments were moved by Gandhi, C. R. Das and Bipin Chandra Pal.³⁷ Gandhi's amendment was his resolution on non-co-operation; C. R. Das's was on the lines of the Reception Committee resolution; and that of Bipin Chandra Pal was practically a supersession of Gandhi's resolution. In the Subjects Committee, Gandhi was at his best. According to an eye-witness account:

He was heard with rapt attention—amidst pindrop silence. The smooth flow of his easy eloquence was a treat. His

beaming eyes, the mellowness of his voice and the earnestness with which he evidently spoke, made a very profound impression. He spoke so dispassionately and with such absolute fairness that it seemed a judge was giving his charge to the jury.³⁸

Gandhi was very serious about his resolution. Neither "friendly appeals" nor "hostile threats"^{38a} could move him from his position. His speech was so lucid and convincing that he "practically demolished" the entire case of eminent leaders like C. R. Das, B. C. Pal, M. A. Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mrs. Annie Besant and others. It decided the fate not only of the Congress but also of the country.³⁹

Bipin Chandra Pal's amendment was first put to vote and declared lost by 124 to 140 votes.⁴⁰ He was not satisfied with the counting and he demanded a re-poll. Again his amendment was lost by 135 to 161 votes.⁴¹ Then a poll was taken on Gandhi's amendment which was carried by 148 to 133 votes.⁴²

The resolution he placed before the Subjects Committee envisaged non-co-operation because of the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs; it did not appeal to C. Vijayaraghavachariar. He told Gandhi: "If non-co-operation was to be declared, why should it be with reference to particular wrongs? The absence of Swaraj was the biggest wrong that the country was labouring under; it should be against that that non-co-operation should be directed."⁴³ Motilal Nehru also wanted the demand for Swaraj to be included in the resolution. Gandhi readily accepted it.⁴⁴

Another amendment Gandhi accepted was the boycott of British goods which was included at the instance of C. Vijayaraghavachariar.⁴⁵ But Gandhi was not quite happy about it.⁴⁶ The word "gradual" was added with regard to the boycott of schools, colleges and law courts.⁴⁷ This made Gandhi's resolution moderate.

Gandhi moved this amended resolution in the open session with humility and yet with firmness. He said, "I stand before you in fear of God and a sense of duty".⁴⁸

The resolution said that both the Indian and the Imperial Governments had signally failed in doing justice to the Muslims of India, and that the Prime Minister had deliberately broken

his pledge given to them in regard to the Khilafat. Both the Governments had "grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them". They had exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer who "proved himself, directly or indirectly, responsible for most of the official crimes, and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration". The debates in the House of Commons and House of Lords had betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab, and the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matters of the Khilafat and the Punjab.

The only way "to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya". The Congress felt that there was no other alternative left open for the people of India except non-co-operation till all the said wrongs were righted and Swaraj was established.

The following steps were suggested to achieve these objectives:

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- (b) refusal to attend Government levees, Durbars and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour;
- (c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of National schools and colleges in the various provinces;
- (d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid, for the settlement of private disputes;
- (e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;
- (f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the reformed councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;

(g) the boycott of foreign goods.

Non-co-operation was also conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation could make progress. It was also suggested that Swadeshi in piecegoods, and, hand-spinning and hand-weaving should be encouraged.⁴⁹

Gandhi made a very spirited speech in the open session. His whole argument for non-co-operation ran as follows:

Mussalmans cannot remain as honourable men and follow their Prophet if they do not vindicate their honour at any cost. The Punjab has been cruelly, brutally treated, and inasmuch as, one man in the Punjab was made to crawl on his belly, the whole of India crawled on her belly, and if we are worthy sons and daughters of India, we should be pledged to remove these wrongs. But we have not been able to bend the Government to our will. We cannot rest satisfied with a mere expression of angry feeling.... If the Congress cannot wring justice from unwilling hands, how can it vindicate its existence and its honour?^{49a}.... Immediately the conquered country realised instinctively that any gift which might come to it is not for the benefit of the conquered, but for the benefit of the conqueror, that moment it should reject every form of voluntary assistance to it.⁵⁰

The sharpest differences arose over the boycott of Legislative Councils. Gandhi believed that Swaraj could not come through them. But on the other hand C. R. Das spearheaded the group which was opposed to their boycott. He wanted to use them for the benefit of the country. The difference between the viewpoints of Gandhi and Das may appear wide but this was not really so. Basically, it was a difference of tactics. "Mr. C. R. Das" wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, "led the opposition not because he disapproved of the spirit behind the resolution, for he was prepared to go as far or even further, but chiefly because he objected to the boycott of the new legislatures".⁵¹ In an editorial, the *Bombay Chronicle* commented as follows: "The fight was not between non-co-operators in principle and non-co-operators with a programme. It was more or less a conflict between rival programmes. The principle of non-co-operation was accepted by

one and all".⁵² Never in its life had the "Congress witnessed such determined opposition as was offered to the non-co-operation resolution".⁵³ But Gandhi carried the day by a clear majority of 982 votes.⁵⁴ Lajpat Rai personally superintended the count which lasted for six hours.⁵⁵

In November, and December, 1920, elections were held under the new Reforms. The elections demonstrated the influence the Congress had over the people. Even those who opposed Gandhi at Calcutta and had filed their nomination papers, withdrew their names from the contest. C. R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haque, N. C. Kelkar, Gopabandhu Das, and many others retired from the contest in obedience to the Congress decision at Calcutta.⁵⁶ In some constituencies no candidate offered himself for election. At some places the elections were simply a sham affair—with only one candidate in the field. On an average about 20 to 25 per cent voters exercised their franchise. Government used their influence all over the country to create some enthusiasm over the elections but they failed miserably. In fact a large percentage of voters—in some constituencies about 90 to 95 per cent—expressed their sympathy with the Congress programme of boycott of Councils and abstained from voting. At some polling booths, no voter turned up to exercise his franchise.⁵⁷

Gandhi had to cross one more hurdle. The Congress had yet to deliberate finally on non-co-operation. After the Calcutta special session, Gandhi did not rest. He visited places which had little or no political activity and infused enthusiasm there.⁵⁸ Thus he inculcated the spirit of non-co-operation over the greater part of the country by December 1920.

The defeat at Calcutta did not deter those who were opposed to Gandhi's non-co-operation resolution. They now pinned their hope on the regular session of the Congress which was to be held at Nagpur. According to B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "C. R. Das brought a contingent of about 250 delegates from East Bengal and Assam, bore their expenses to and fro, and spent Rs. 36,000 from his pocket to undo what was done in Calcutta".⁵⁹ But at Nagpur, Das, instead of opposing the resolution on Non-co-operation, actually moved it in the open session.⁶⁰ Lajpat Rai also

supported it.⁶¹ The eleventh hour change in Das's attitude was unexpected. Prithwis Chandra Ray, a friend and biographer of C. R. Das, ascribed the change in Das's attitude towards non-co-operation resolution to a secret Gandhi-Das Pact.⁶² But this is perhaps not true. There seems to have been a conference between Gandhi and Das at Nagpur. Das insisted on the removal of the clause regarding the boycott of Councils to which Gandhi had no objection because the elections to the Councils were already over. The retention of the clause was superfluous if not totally useless. C. R. Das narrated the story as follows:

It was at my instance that the clause with regard to the boycott of Councils was removed because at the time of Nagpur session, the elections were practically over. I insisted on the removal of the clause, because otherwise, I said, I could not support the resolution. And lower down in the same resolution you will find a clause put in again at my instance and on my insistence. But Mahatma Gandhi inserted a clause to the effect that the representatives who had been elected should be asked to resign. I objected to it on the ground that if it is in pursuance of the policy of boycott of Councils, I could not agree to it, the words . . . were added to that clause to meet my objection, namely the request to resign was put on the principles of democracy.⁶³

The support of C. R. Das and Lajpat Rai assured the smooth passage of the non-co-operation resolution. Sitaramayya rightly points out:

The support that Gandhi obtained at Nagpur was undoubtedly greater than what he had in Calcutta. . . : The stool of the N.C.O. (at Calcutta) was resting on but one leg. At Nagpur, it stood on all its four legs with perfect equipoise. Gandhi and Nehru, Das and Lalaji were all for it.⁶⁴

The resolution passed at Nagpur reaffirmed the Calcutta resolution including the boycott of educational institutions, law courts, foreign goods—including cloth. Great emphasis was put on hand-spinning and hand-weaving. The resolution further wished every section and every single man and woman in the country to make utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to

the national movement. A band of national workers under the name of Indian National Service was to be organised, and to finance such a national service, a fund called the All-India Tilak Swaraj Fund was to be raised.⁶⁵

The resolution congratulated the people on the progress made by them in working the programme of non-cooperation specially with regard to the boycott of Councils by the voters. It further said that since the Councils elected under the prevailing circumstances.

do not represent the country, and (Congress) trusts that those who have allowed themselves to be elected in spite of the deliberate abstention from the polls of an overwhelming majority of their constituents, will see their way to resign their seats in the Councils, and that if they retain their seats in spite of the declared wish of their respective constituencies in direct negation of the principle of democracy, the electors will studiously refrain from asking for any political service from such Councillors.

The resolution expected that policemen and soldiers would refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfilment of orders of their officers.

The resolution emphasised the policy of non-violence in word and deed among the people themselves, as in respect of Government, and that "the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of non-co-operation". And, finally the people were asked

to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violence and non-co-operation with the Government and, inasmuch as the movement of non-co-operation can only succeed by complete co-operation amongst the people themselves, this Congress calls upon public associations to advance Hindu-Muslim unity and the Hindu delegates of this Congress call upon the leading Hindus to settle all disputes between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, wherever they may be existing and to make a special effort to rid Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability and respectfully urges the religious heads to help the growing desire

to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes.⁶⁶

By another resolution moved by Gandhi, Congress creed was changed to "the attainment of Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means". So long its creed was the attainment of self-government as prevalent in the Dominions by all lawful means. The change in the means was significant as it allowed direct defiance of Government laws and orders. Gandhi was more after the substance than the form. Therefore, he did not say anything about British connection in so many words but he was not particular about the continuation of British connection with India just as he was not particular about breaking it.

He explained his position when he moved the resolution at Nagpur for a change in the Congress creed.

What I say is that it is derogatory to national dignity to think of permanence of British connection at any cost. . . . I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end British connection at all costs unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India, we do not want to destroy it. But if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then it is our bounden duty to destroy it.⁶⁷

Gandhi carried the day at Nagpur and was now the undisputed leader of the Congress. The chief legacy of the Nagpur Congress was that the people realised their future lay in their own hands, and not in the hands of the British. Sitaramayya has recorded:

Col. Wedgewood who was at the Subjects Committee at Nagpur and obtained permission to speak, gravely warned the Congress against the cult of Non-co-operation. 'You will make it difficult for your friends in England to take up your cause', said he, 'You will be hampered in your work. The Police will be after you. The lawyers sign a pledge that they would be loyal to the Crown and cannot therefore work for Non-co-operation. You are going into the wilderness. You must pursue a constructive programme'. In this strain did he go on for a quarter of an hour with transparent sincerity and unmistakable friendliness. Hardly had he resumed his seat when up rose a voice in reply, and,

in five minutes, answered his objections: 'We have no friends outside India; let there be no mistake about that. Our salvation lies in our hands. We must make or mar our future.'⁶⁸

The Nagpur Congress at last set its seal to the programme of non-co-operation. The unity that prevailed at Nagpur enthused the people. The year 1921 opened with a new spirit of freedom and fearlessness. Political workers lived in a "kind of intoxication".⁶⁹ The feeling of "oppression and frustration was completely gone".⁷⁰ This made them fearless; they did not bother about the consequences of their activities. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "We said what we felt and shouted it out from the house-tops. What did we care for the consequences? Prison? We looked forward to it".⁷¹ The spirit of fearlessness on the part of the leaders percolated to the masses. Gandhi said that his hopes were more on masses. This was the first time when a mass movement was initiated in India. There was a new aggressive spirit abroad, and the spirit of self-reliance and fearlessness was evident everywhere; the "great prop of British rule in India—prestige—was visibly wilting".⁷² The destruction of the prestige of the British rule in India marked the beginning of its end. The events in 1921 made a vigorous onslaught on it.

There were so many institutions and devices to keep the people in awe, fear and in obligation to the Government. There was a general feeling that the British Raj was God-ordained and none could challenge its authority. Gandhi gave a mortal blow to this myth. Even moderates on whom the Government had depended so much, showed signs of desperation and even of defiance. Even members of the Viceroy Executive Council were not immune from that contamination. Sir Sankaran Nair resigned from the Viceroy's Council. The following conversation at the last meeting between Sankaran Nair and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, throws light on the position of Indian members in the highest office open to them in those days:

Chelmsford: Have you anyone to suggest as your successor?

Sankaran Nair: (pointing to his peon). That man there, Ram Parshad.

Chelmsford: What?

Sankaran Nair: Why, he is tall, he is handsome, he wears his livery well; and he will say 'yes' to whatever you say.

Altogether he will make an ideal Member of Council.⁷³

The above conversation shows how even the moderate leaders were annoyed with the attitude and policy of the Government.

Another item in the non-co-operation programme was the boycott of law courts. The one basic function of law courts is to meet out justice to the subjects of the State. It is also obligatory on the State that justice should be inexpensive and speedy. The law courts as they functioned in India under the British Government fell short of this. Writing about Courts, Gandhi wrote:

They are supposed to dispense justice. But when they support the authority of an unrighteous Government, they are crushing houses to crush nation's spirit.⁷⁴ Such were the martial law tribunals and the Summary Courts in the Punjab. We have them in their nakedness. Such they are even in normal times when it is a matter of dispensing justice between a superior race and its helots.⁷⁴

He further asked a very pertinent question whether a single Englishman had ever suffered extreme legal penalties for murders committed in India. No justice was done to Indians when pitted against Englishmen. Motilal Nehru, a lawyer of forty years experience, wrote:

During the last 150 years, every Indian who has met with his death at the hands of a European has either had an enlarged spleen or his death has turned out to be the result of a pure accident. There has not been a single case, so far as I am aware of murder pure and simple.⁷⁵

Everybody felt the iniquitous character of law courts and it found expression in the popular saying: *Adalat men jo jita, so hara, jo hara, so mara*. (Success in the Court is defeat, defeat is death).

The response to the call for boycott of courts by lawyers was not widespread, but it was not discouraging; some of the best known lawyers left their lucrative practice to join the Non-co-operation movement. From U.P. Pandit Motilal Nehru, from Bengal C. R. Das and J. M. Sen Gupta, from the Punjab Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlew and Pandit Ram Bhuj Dutt, from

Gujarat Vallabhbhai Patel, from Bombay M. R. Jayakar, from Maharashtra L. B. Bhopatkar, and from Delhi Asaf Ali and Muhammed Taqi suspended their legal practice in response to the call of the Indian National Congress. In all, more than 1,500 lawyers suspended their practice.^{75a} Lawyers, as a class, showed sympathy for the spirit underlying the Non-co-operation movement. A number of bar associations passed resolutions condemning the repressive policy of the Government.⁷⁶ The Madras Vakils Association entertained the lawyer-members of the Congress and Khilafat Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committees in the association rooms in the High Court building, in spite of threats from the Chief Justice.⁷⁷ The Calcutta Bar Library went all out in showing its resentment against the repressive policy of the Government by cancelling a dinner arranged in honour of Lord Reading.⁷⁸

The boycott of Government and Government aided schools and colleges was another item in the non-co-operation programme. Soon after the Calcutta Session of the Congress, Gandhi and the Ali Brothers made efforts to persuade the Aligarh and Banaras University authorities to nationalise the universities. But they failed. Nevertheless, hundreds of students came out of them as a result of the Non-co-operation movement. Before the Nagpur session of the Congress, students came out of their schools and colleges from the Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Sind, U.P., Madras and Bengal etc.

The decision to non-co-operate was confirmed by the All-India College Students' Conference at Nagpur on the 28th December, 1920 by an overwhelming majority.⁷⁹ In the beginning of 1921 thousands of students joined the movement. The withdrawals from colleges and schools affiliated to the Calcutta University were 27 per cent and 23 per cent respectively of their total number.⁸⁰ The University suffered a loss of no less than £20,000 under examination fee.⁸¹ The total number of students from all over India who left their studies was about 90,000.⁸² In many provinces, schools refused their grants-in-aid to become free of government control. In other words, they became national schools.

The movement made its impact even in England. Kamla Devi

Chattopadhyaya, the socialist leader, left her college in England and returned to India. A. K. Pillai, who was studying at the Oxford University gave up his studies on account of the Non-co-operation movement. The movement attracted a large number of students who later on played an important role as freedom fighters. Some of them were: Zakir Husain, Lal Bahadur Shastri, T. N. Singh, B. V. Keskar, Naba Krishna Choudhary, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ganga Saran Sinha, Hare Krushna Mehtab, Pyarelal, J. N. Sahni, Lala Jagat Narain, Lala Feroze Chand and Chandra Shekhar Azad.⁸³

The boycott of schools and colleges was accompanied by opening of national schools and colleges. National Universities like the National Muslim University (Jamia Millia) at Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapith, the Gauria Vidya Ayatan in Bengal, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Bihar Vidyapith and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith were opened. In these universities the system of education was national and emphasis was laid on the freedom of the country. To inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the students, histories of Ireland and Italy were taught. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* and Mills' *On Liberty* also found place in the course of one of the universities.⁸⁴ No wonder that these universities produced young men who became soldiers in the fight of India's freedom. On the one hand they produced men like Lal Bahadur Shastri and on the other they produced violent revolutionaries like Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev.

Another item of the Non-co-operation programme was prohibition. Gandhi was opposed to drinking because he considered it the worst evil. He wrote: "I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both." Besides the "immorality" of drinking, he considered it ruinous physically, intellectually and economically.⁸⁵ But as far as the Non-co-operation movement was concerned prohibition had two aspects. It aimed at saving the addict from the deleterious effect of drinking and depriving the Government of the revenue it received from the sale of liquor.⁸⁷ This programme appealed to the mass of Indian people, the majority of whom were teetotallers. In certain parts of the country public

opinion became so strong against drinking that even the contractors of liquor shops did not bid for licences to run toddy and arrack shops. The Government revenue from liquor shops fell considerably. The movement was such a success that people abstained not only from liquor but also from other intoxicants like opium, ganja etc. Assam Government admitted the success of the Non-co-operation movement in the following words: "On the other hand, from the decreased consumption shown in the excise return throughout the province, it is clear that non-co-operation is a very living force."⁸⁹

The British Government, partly in order to honour the distinguished persons in the country, but largely to have powerful supporters, conferred titles and honours on leading public men. The recipients of honours from the Government were mainly big *Zamindars*, *Jagirdars* and moneyed people who were generally drawn from the conservative section of society. In return for the honours conferred on them, they were expected to give their allegiance to the *Raj*.⁹⁰ In most cases, these honours were conferred on persons without any personality or sense of honour, i.e. on those expected to be ever ready to toe the line of the Government. So, it was not expected that many persons would surrender their titles and honours and thereby would be ready to incur the displeasure of the Government. But these title-holders lost their prestige in their own localities. The titles which were symbols of respectability became the insignia of insult, ridicule and shame. Title-holders were "reduced to the position of untouchables".⁹¹

The boycott of foreign goods was also an item in the programme of the Non-co-operation movement. Gandhi was originally opposed to the boycott of foreign goods. He considered it a form of violence, totally impracticable and vindictive.⁹² The boycott of foreign goods was included in the Non-co-operation resolution passed at the Calcutta Congress in September, 1920, in spite of Gandhi. He did not relish its inclusion in the resolution. In spite of the clause demanding the boycott of foreign goods being a part of the resolution, Gandhi did not propagate it. He restricted the scope of the boycott of foreign goods to that of foreign cloth, which was the principal imported item of con-

sumers' goods. He stood for Swadeshi pure and simple. And Swadeshi to him meant increase in the production and use of *khadi*.

The campaign for Swadeshi formed a very important aspect of the Non-co-operation movement with its invariable concomitant the boycott of foreign cloth. The quantum of imports from Britain as far as cloth was concerned was substantially sliced. Of all the means employed, this hit at the tenderest spot of the British body-politic. The partial success it achieved not only caused concern to the Indian Government but also to the British industrial magnates. The Indian businessmen were also seriously affected by it. The net import of cotton textiles was 1,771 million yards in 1916-17. It was import of cotton million yards in 1921-22. On the other hand the production of textiles in Indian mills (excluding exports) rose during the same period from 1,297 million to 1,529 million yards.⁹³ The main reason for this phenomenal rise was the campaign of boycott of foreign cloth. Trade in foreign cloth was going down almost in every province of India. In Sind the foreign cloth trade dwindled by 50 per cent.⁹⁴ In other parts of India like the C.P., Bihar and the city of Bombay the position was the same.⁹⁵ The impact of the movement was so powerful that some Indian business houses had to close down. A firm hit by the boycott campaign wrote to Gandhi:

With the present movement of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, we have been brought to a very critical condition. Our Manchester office has had to be closed. Our stocks are all lying unsold and we have suffered unbearable losses and are threatened with more, unless things improve, which is not likely. . . . It is almost unbearable. So much so that there is no way for us but to go into liquidation to relieve ourselves from the unbearable liabilities and responsibilities that we owe to our different creditors, both English and Indian.⁹⁶

At Manchester, the cotton manufacturing firms like Graham and Company Ltd., Ros Howeth & Co. and Thomas Dinnin & Co., Ltd., went into liquidation for 770,000, 283,77 and 186,666 pounds sterling respectively. Mr. J. A. Ormerod, head of a well

known spinning firm and a manufacturer of textiles at Blackburn, affected personally by the boycott, told the correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*:

Traders in India are not buying because the boycott is on India (sic) who is our chief customer and Lancashire never makes money unless India is in the market. At the present moment more than half the looms of Blackburn are idle. . . . Unless that trouble is speedily settled, half the Lancashire manufacturers will go into Bankruptcy Court.⁹⁸

Another contemporary commentator wrote that cotton goods worth £20,000,000 were lying unsold on Indian ports and Lancashire textile mills could not work full time if India kept herself out of the market.

Boycott of foreign cloth cut down the import of foreign cloth into India, particularly from England. It directly encouraged hand-spinning and hand-weaving which was the main rural industry in India. It had died soon after the British came to India. Its disappearance had been the main cause of rural poverty in India. Gandhi was the first Indian leader to make a serious effort to popularise the use of *khadi* among Indians. It killed two birds with one stone. First, it saved the money that was drained out of India on account of the import of foreign cloth; secondly, it provided employment to a large number of people suffering from unemployment or partial unemployment, and, thus they could better their lot at least a little. In spite of the fact that *khadi* was costlier than the imported or Indian mill made cloth, its demand increased. A large number of spinning wheels began to hum in Indian homes; looms were started; and *khadi* worth lakhs of rupees was produced.⁹⁹ It seriously affected the British commercial interests in India, and, to the same degree, brought India nearer freedom.

Khadi also played an important role in the national life of India from another angle. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, it became the "livery of freedom"; it also became a symbol of revolt against the Government authority. It created a sense of comradeship among the freedom fighters.

The meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bezwada on the 31st March, 1921, marked the end of the first phase of

the Non-co-operation movement. Gandhi was of the view that the various items of the Non-co-operation programme particularly the boycott of Councils and educational institutions, had made its impact on the people. Therefore, campaign for these served little purpose. Instead, he pleaded for popularising the *charkha*, for he believed that it would lead India to Swaraj. Therefore, efforts were diverted in that direction and the target of twenty lakh *charkhas* plying all over the country was fixed and nearly achieved.¹⁰⁰ Another item of the Bezvada programme was the collection of one crore rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund; the fund was over-subscribed by fifteen lakh rupees.¹⁰¹ The third item laid emphasis on enrolling one crore Congress members but the target could not be achieved. Nevertheless membership increased tremendously.¹⁰² But the figures of membership did not convey the real following of the Congress. As Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "The number of members on its rolls, large as it was, was only a feeble reflection of its widespread representative character, for membership depended not on the people's desire to join but our capacity to reach remote villages".¹⁰² The number of the Congress committees increased. They came into being in innumerable districts, *tahsils* and villages and even in the municipal wards in some cities.¹⁰³ The exact number of Congress committees in the various provinces is not known but they were roughly estimated at fifty thousand.¹⁰⁴ The wide network of Congress committees with lakhs of members really made the Congress a mass organisation. It sucked in those sections of society which had been outside the pull and the vortex of politics before. The peasants and workers joined the Congress. The women, who till then had lived a sheltered life, also came forward to join. It was Gandhi who made the Congress a "mass organisation".¹⁰⁵ As Coupland has stated:

He (Gandhi) had already changed the course of Indian history. He had done what Tilak had failed to do. He had converted the nationalist movement into a revolutionary movement. And he had not only made the nationalist movement revolutionary, he had also made it popular.¹⁰⁶

The greatest achievement of Gandhi was the participation by

the masses in the movement. And they participated without any fear. According to Jawaharlal Nehru:

There was a tremendous feeling of release there, a throwing off of a great burden, a new sense of freedom. The fear that had crushed them retired into the background and they straightened their backs and raised their heads. Even in remote bazars, the common folk talked of the Congress and Swaraj (for the Nagpur Congress had finally made Swaraj the goal), and what had happened in the Punjab, and the Khilafat.¹⁰⁷

Events were moving fast. India was passing through revolutionary times. A spirit of militancy was abroad. There were disturbances in Rae Bareilly in January, 1921; a powerful Akali movement sprang up in the Punjab in March, 1921; in April, 1921, the peasants of Mulshi Petha in Maharashtra offered Satyagraha; Nagpur witnessed serious incidents on account of the picketing of liquor shops. There was an exodus of Assam tea garden coolies who were subjected to inhuman oppression and indignities for decades. The Non-co-operation movement gave them courage to rise against the sub-human treatment they were getting. The Government became solicitous about the fortunes of the European tea garden owners. The migrating coolies were not allowed to board the railway coaches. This led to the Assam-Bengal Railway strike and then to the strike of the employees of the steamer company (R.S.N.) plying in East Bengal rivers. Then came the Malegaon outbreak in April involving serious loss of life and property.

The critical political situation forced Reading's hands to call Gandhi for an interview at Simla. The interview took place in the second half of May, 1921, largely through the efforts of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. At these meetings, discussion centred on the "causes of discontent in India, including, the Punjab disturbances, the Treaty of Sevres and the general condition of the people."¹⁰⁸ Curiously enough Swaraj was not discussed at these interviews.¹⁰⁹ The only common point between Gandhi and the Viceroy was non-violence.¹¹⁰ The interview was abortive. But it was for the first time in the history of the British rule in India that the representative of the King-Emperor was

eager to seek an interview with the popular leader of a mass movement.

The Bezwada resolution was fully implemented by the time the All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 28th July, 1921, except that the target of one crore members could not be achieved. At its meeting at Bombay A.I.C.C. gave a call for complete boycott of foreign cloth by the 30th September, 1921, and for the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales.

Soon after the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay on the 31st July, 1921, bonfires of clothes made of foreign cloth were made in various parts of India. The people responded to the call with enthusiasm. One such bonfire was lit on the 30th July, 1921, in Bombay on the grounds of the Elphinstone Mills. *The Bombay Chronicle* published an account of this bonfire in the following words:

It was a vast crowd that had gathered there; it would only be counted in lakhs and not in thousands; . . . opposite the platform was a nicely decorated mount of foreign clothes of varieties. There were solar hats, neckties, collars and the fine silk also of foreign manufacture; in the centre there was huge heap of foreign caps and coats and other things. It was a gayly decorated affair.¹¹¹

Bonfires of foreign clothes became frequent incidents; practically every town in India had similar bonfires.

Many criticised Gandhi for making bonfire of foreign clothes. C. F. Andrews was one such critic. To him the burning of foreign cloth appeared as a "subtle appeal to racial feeling". He feared that it would lead back to "old bad selfish nationalism".¹¹² In making a bonfire of foreign cloth, Gandhi was not motivated by any ill-will towards either England or Englishmen. In reply to C. F. Andrews, Gandhi wrote:

If the emphasis were on all foreign things, it would be racial, paraochial and wicked. The emphasis is on all foreign cloth. The restriction makes all the difference in the world. I do not want to shut out British lever watches or the beautiful Japanese lacquer work.¹¹³

The Indian Government, in consultation with the British Government, arranged the visit of the Prince of Wales to counter

the Non-co-operation movement. They set store by the visit. Therefore, the Indian Government summoned all their resources to make it a success. People were hired to gather on the streets through which the Prince passed.¹¹⁴ Even falsehood was used to project the visit as a success.¹¹⁵ As ill luck would have it, riots broke out in Bombay on 17th November, 1921—the day Prince landed at Appollo Bunder. Gandhi took immediate steps to restore peace. Along with other Congress leaders, he toured the affected areas. He also admitted his responsibility for the violent outburst. All through, he was very particular about the observance of non-violence and peace. India observed a *hartal* the day Prince landed in Bombay. The authority of the Government was at its lowest ebb. People were openly asking: "Who rules India, Reading or Ganáhi?"¹¹⁶ It was apparent that the "willing allegiance of the nation was no longer to the British rule but to the Indian National Congress".¹¹⁷ As a result of the shock of the boycott, the Viceroy broke down.¹¹⁸

The Congress viewed the visit as a subtle means to buttress the British rule. Therefore, without meaning any disrespect to the person of the Prince, it employed all its resources to make the visit a failure. And verily it succeeded. Only flunkeys attended the receptions and functions organised in honour of the Prince. In Allahabad the *hartal* was "complete and voluntary... Not even a *pan* or *bidi* shop was open".¹¹⁹ The Allahabad University students did not bother to turn up to honour the guest! It was reported that "out of total of 1,200 students not more than 20 attended the meeting in the Senate Hall..."¹²⁰ In spite of the the Government propaganda proclaiming the visit a success, the Prince came to know the truth. In a letter to Montagu he wrote: "They (the British) think my tour is a success, and I must reluctantly tell you that it is no such thing".¹²¹ He wrote an angry letter to the Viceroy:

You will no doubt have had reports from Bombay, Poona, Ajmer, Lucknow, Allahabad, Benares and Patna. The cases of each have been the same—*hartals* and more or less emptied streets... I must say I was very angry and felt very insulted when at the University of Lucknow, Allahabad and Benaras practically all the students (in the case of Allahabad

all the students) refused to meet me or to attend the university functions. At Benares it was quite a big ceremony, conferring of honorary degrees etc. and it would have been humorous if it had not been so sad this way they tried to 'kid' me by filling up the empty students seats with High School boys, boys scouts and Europeans. I suppose they hoped I would never get to hear of what had been done, or realise what a b.f. (bloody fool) they had made of me!!!!¹²²

The political situation in India was becoming more serious everyday. The response of the people to the call of the Congress to boycott the visit of the Prince and make bonfire of foreign clothes unmistakably showed the unpopularity of the Government. Its prestige was shaken. No wonder, even the Viceroy felt "puzzled and perplexed".¹²³ The Government^e suppressed the right of association by declaring the volunteer organisations illegal. Immediately all the important leaders like Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das enlisted themselves as Congress volunteers. Many Congress committees passed resolution asking all Congress members to enlist themselves as volunteers. The spirit of defiance was everywhere dominating the mind of the people—who only a year ago were considered by the Government as dumb and dead to all such feelings.

The Government denied the right of speech by proclaiming the Seditious Meetings Act in the various parts of India. The Government arrested a large number of people all over the country. The repression was in full swing. On the 3rd December, 1921, Lala Lajpat Rai, K. Santhanam, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava and Malik Lal Khan were arrested at the Provincial Congress Committee office at Lahore while holding a general meeting of the Committee to consider the political situation in the Province for violating the Seditious Meetings Act.¹²⁴ Many important Sikh leaders were also arrested. S. E. Stokes, an American settled in India, Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Gurbux Rai were also arrested.¹²⁵

In the U.P. many important leaders including Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottamdas Tandon, Chaudhuri Khaliq-uzzaman, Mohan Lal Saksena, Harkaran Nath Misra were arrested.¹²⁶ Soon thereafter, fifty-four members of the U.P. Congress Committee were arrested *en bloc*.¹²⁷

C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. T. S. Rajan and Ramaswami Naicker were arrested in the Madras Presidency.¹²⁸ In Assam T. R. Phookan, Moulvi Tayabulla and ten others were arrested.¹²⁹ In Delhi, L. Shanker Lal, Hanumant Sahai, Suraj Bhan and Asaf Ali were taken into custody.¹³⁰ In short, all the important leaders throughout India were arrested. Many political workers were prohibited from making speeches at public meetings.

While this was going on in the Punjab and other parts of the country, Calcutta made history by openly defying the Government in a perfectly non-violent manner. By the end of November, the Bengal Congress Committee met *in camera* to decide the future course of action.¹³¹ It decided upon civil disobedience, and in view of the state of emergency, it vested its powers in C. R. Das, who was authorised to name his successor. C. R. Das wanted to "make a modest beginning"¹³² in this regard. He decided on the sale of *khaddar* by volunteers as a method of offering civil disobedience. His idea was that if the Government prosecuted the volunteers for selling *khaddar*, then its action would be regarded arbitrary and unjustified by the public. Thus, a large number of people would rally round the Congress. To begin with, he sent his son, Chiraranjan Das, to hawk *khaddar* in the city. On the 6th December, 1921, he was arrested.¹³³ The next day, Basanti Devi, wife of C. R. Das, along with Urmila Devi, his sister, and Suniti Devi was also arrested.¹³⁴ Their arrests had a startling effect on the people. The news of the arrests spread like a wild fire throughout Calcutta. The recitement beggars description. A contemporary described the scene:

A scene was witnessed in Bara Bazar, where the arrest took place, such as comes but once in the life-time of a nation. Marwaris joined, Moslems joined, Bhattias joined, Sikhs poured in, coolies, mill-hands, school boys, all rushed to the scene. Some wept, some cried, some ran aimlessly—the wild multitude watched and watched and then long after melted away with brewing thoughts such as brew only on the eve of a revolution.¹³⁵

This was not all. The arrests of the ladies were resented even by the loyalists. As Mrs. Das stepped into the police van, many constables came up to her and took a vow to resign from their

jobs.¹³⁶ S. N. Mullick, a top liberal politician of Bengal, left the Government House as a protest where he had gone to attend a dinner party, when he heard of the arrest of Mrs. Das.¹³⁷ The people were so much excited over the arrests and the atmosphere had become so tense that the Government felt compelled to release the ladies and it was given out that they were arrested by mistake.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, as a protest against the arrest of the ladies, came out without editorials. The editorial column was kept blank. The paper wrote: "The only course open to us now is to cease writing editorials, till we feel we can write them to the advantage of the country. Nothing but news and reports will appear in these columns till then".¹³⁸

In a few days two prisons in Calcutta were filled with political prisoners. Camp prisons were opened but they too were full soon. These masses came forward to court arrest. Thus, thousands of people went to jail. Jawaharlal Nehru has graphically described the atmosphere as follows:

There was an orgy of arrests and convictions, especially in the United Provinces and in Bengal. All the prominent Congress leaders and workers in these provinces were arrested, and ordinary volunteers by the thousand went to prison. They were, at first, largely city men and there seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of volunteers for prison... Many people, who had so far taken no part in any Congress or political activity, were carried away by the wave of enthusiasm and insisted on being arrested. There were cases of Government clerks, returning from their offices in the evening, being swept away by this current and landing in gaol instead of their homes. Every evening we could hear from inside the gaol, lorry after lorry arriving outside heralded by our slogans and shouts. The gaols were crowded and the gaol officials were at their wit's ends at this extraordinary phenomenon. It happened sometimes that a police lorry would bring, according to the warrant accompanying it, a certain number of prisoners—no names were or could be mentioned. Actually, a large number than that mentioned would emerge from the lorry and the gaol officials did not

know how to meet this novel situation. There was nothing in the *Jail Manual* about it.¹³⁹

The Government was afraid that the visit of the Prince to Calcutta would not pass off smoothly. At last on the 8th December (before the arrest of C. R. Das) Lord Ronaldshay, the Governor of Bengal, saw C. R. Das to discuss the issues involved. But no means to resolve the deadlock were found. Lord Ronaldshay communicated the gist of talks he had with C. R. Das to the Viceroy. The Government wanted the Congress to waive the boycott of the visit of the Prince when he visited Calcutta. Das could not promise to do so, because it was the decision of the Congress and he could not revoke it.¹⁴⁰ C. R. Das told the Governor that these activities would cease if the Government withdrew all repressive orders. The Government failed to gain its point. Thereafter on the 10th December, 1921, C. R. Das and his associates were arrested. According to the estimate of the Bengal Government during the three days preceding the arrest of C. R. Das nearly 500 persons were arrested.¹⁴¹ Among those arrested at Calcutta were: Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose, B. N. Sasmal, Maulana Akram Khan, Ambika Prasad Bajpai, Padamraj Jain, Bholanath Burman, J. Pal, son of Bipin Chandra Pal, and Harilal Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi.¹⁴² Again there was anger and excitement over the arrest of C. R. Das and others. As a protest against these arrests, the members of the Calcutta Bar cancelled the banquet to which they had invited the Viceroy.¹⁴³

The large scale arrests led to a "disappointing revulsion on the part of the moderate sentiment".¹⁴⁴ It was difficult for them to openly ally with the non-co-operators but they could never approve of the repressive policy of the Government. Jagat Narayan, a Minister in U.P. wrote to Sapru: "Sometimes one is compelled even against his better judgment to believe in non-co-operation".¹⁴⁵ Some of them were not satisfied with the role played by their own leaders. H. N. Kunzru, a member of Gokhale's Servants of India Society, wrote to Sapru: "Your career in the Assembly makes me feel indeed to go now to Mr. Gandhi's side!"¹⁴⁶ The moderates were indeed in a predicament.

It was in these circumstances that Madan Mohan Malaviya made efforts to mediate between the Government and the non-

co-operators to restore normal conditions. Malaviya deputation met the Viceroy in Calcutta on the 21st December, 1921. The reply of the Viceroy to the deputation was a queer mixture of humility and threat. He was agreeable to the calling of a conference as asked by Malaviya deputation provided the non-co-operators gave up their campaign of picketing and enrolling of volunteers. Since Reading got no assurance on behalf of the non-co-operators to suspend what Gandhi termed as "defensive civil disobedience", he refused to call a conference in the following words: "I cannot comply with the request."¹⁴⁷ But he did not miss an opportunity to give a warning. He said: "an affront to the Heir-Apparent, when he came to India to make acquaintance with India, is an affront to the British people, for the Crown with us is beloved by the people and when I remind you that it is from those British people that any amendment must come to alter the constitutional system of India."¹⁴⁸ Before the deputation met the Viceroy on the 21st December, 1921, Malaviya paid a visit to C. R. Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the Presidency Jail, Calcutta. He felt that if he could persuade the Bengal leaders to his point of view, Gandhi would attach greater importance to his proposals. From 19th to 21st December, 1921, Madan Mohan Malaviya shuttled between the Viceroy House and the Presidency Jail several times. The result of their discussions was a telegram from C. R. Das and Abul Kalam Azad to Gandhi. It read:

We recommend calling off hartal on the following conditions:

1. Government calling a conference (which shall) soon consider all questions raised by Congress.
2. Withdrawal of recent Government *communique* and police and magisterial orders.
3. Releasing all prisoners under this 'new law unconditionally.'¹⁴⁹

To this Gandhi replied the same day:

Composition (and) date of conference should be previously determined. Releases should include prisoners convicted for Fatwas, including Karachi ones. Subject to these conditions in addition (to) your we can in my opinion waive *hartal*.¹⁵⁰

After the receipt of Gandhi's telegram, Madan Mohan Malaviya again saw Lord Reading and told him about the additional terms of Gandhi at which it is reported the Viceroy got annoyed.¹⁵¹ The next day Malaviya again sent another telegram to Gandhi in which an additional demand was added to the calling off of the hartal that "pending conclusion of the proposed conference, non-co-operation activities other than relating to national education, Swadeshi and prohibition of intoxicants, without picketing in any case, will be suspended . . ."¹⁵² To this Gandhi replied: "Regret exceedingly inability (to) give undertaking asked. Non-co-operation can cease only after satisfactory result (of) Conference. In no case have I authority (to) decide for Congress."¹⁵³ But Gandhi was prepared to attend the Conference unconditionally in his individual capacity.

The real point in the negotiations was that Gandhi wanted all points regarding the proposed Round Table Conference to be settled in advance. He also wanted that the *Fatwa* prisoners, including the Karachi ones, should be released. On the contrary the Viceroy did not want to be bound by any conditions. It appears that his aim in entering into negotiations was to persuade the Congress leaders to call off the boycott of the Prince's visit to Calcutta on the 24th December, 1921. On the 21st December, the Viceroy was rather rude and brusque to the deputation—consisting of Malaviya, Jinnah and Besant.

Gandhi did not object to the quelling of violence by the Government but he could not tolerate suppression of free expression of opinion. He wrote: "Let them put down violence, veiled, open or intended, but we must resist with our lives this wanton (and) violent suppression (of) freedom (of) opinion."¹⁵⁴ Another reason was that "if Government mean well, they should retrace steps by unconditionally withdrawing notification, disbandment, and public meetings and doing partial reparation by discharging those unwarrantably imprisoned."¹⁵⁵ The negotiations, therefore, were unsuccessful. Distrustful of the Government as Gandhi was, he was no less conscious of the weakness of the non-co-operators. He believed that they had not shown enough strength by way of self-sacrifice. "India has not yet" he wrote, "incontestably proved her strength. Her suffering is great indeed, but nothing

and not prolonged enough for the object in view. She has to go through greater discipline."¹⁵⁶

Gandhi made it a pre-condition for holding of the proposed parleys that the *Fatwa* prisoners should be released. This additional condition by Gandhi was a wise move. In case he had agreed to the clause regarding the releases as it stood, the Ali Brothers would not have been released. Any Round Table Conference without them could not be a representative conference because they were then the most popular leaders of the Muslims. Therefore, any conference with the Government without the Ali Brothers would have been a blunder. The Ali Brothers and the Muslims might have taken it as an act of treachery on the part of the Hindus not to have made efforts to have them at the conference table. And this might have created a schism in the nationalist ranks. Lord Reading was eager to divide Gandhi and Mahomed Ali.¹⁵⁷ It should have been no surprise if he had tried to play the same game again. Thus, by insisting on the release of the Ali Brothers, Gandhi warded off the danger of a split in the Congress.

At that time, it might have seemed that Gandhi made a mistake in rejecting the proposals for a conference. But now when the official papers are available, one cannot endorse that view. Madan Mohan Malaviya was not the first to make efforts for the summoning of a Round Table Conference. It had been discussed a few times before also. But every time the Government of India rejected the proposal for a discussion on it in the Legislative Assembly. The proposal for calling a Round Table Conference was rejected as early as the 27th January, 1921.¹⁵⁸ After that, whenever the question of calling a conference came, it was rejected by the Government. Even in December, 1921, the various provincial governments were not in favour of a Round Table Conference. The Governor of Madras even hinted at what could be the reason for the assurance of calling a Round Table Conference. He wrote to the Viceroy: "We understand that the offer of a conference is designed to produce a purely temporary arrangement to tide over the Prince's visit."¹⁵⁹ Therefore, it would be too much to believe that the Government was *really* and *genuinely* interested in such a conference.

The Ahmedabad session of the Congress took place in the last week of December 1921. One of the resolutions appealed to all to "offer themselves for arrest by belonging to volunteer organisations to be formed throughout the country in terms of the resolutions of the Working Committee arrived at in Bombay on the 3rd day of November last."¹⁶⁰

There was an unprecedented and unexpected political consciousness in the country. Even the Government servants could not remain unaffected by the political tempo of the time. There were a large number of resignations from government service. It percolated even to the ranks of the police. In November 1921, the Commissioner of Police of Calcutta told an officer of the Intelligence Department that a large number of policemen had resigned and "many more were going and he feared that the whole lot would leave the service."¹⁶¹ The Viceroy reported to the Secretary of State for India: "Even Government officials in the face of religious fanaticism are becoming doubtful whether loyalty to the crown is worth anything. Government officials will not be able to prevent a debacle against the Government in Sind."¹⁶²

In this state of the country, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some other moderate leaders made another attempt in a conference in Bombay on the 14th January, 1922, to which 300 leading Indians were invited. The purpose of the conference was to "settle the terms of truce" with the Government.¹⁶³ Gandhi sympathised fully with the conveners of the Conference and attended it on behalf of the non-co-operators. By a resolution the Conference asked for the calling of a Round Table Conference between the Government and the representatives of the people. To facilitate such a conference, the Representative Conference wanted the Government to withdraw all notifications and orders restricting the liberty of speech and writing.

At the request of the Conference, Gandhi agreed to suspend picketing of liquor shops and the starting of civil disobedience for a fortnight—up to the 31st January, 1922. But he did not agree to stop the enlisting of volunteers. However, he was convinced of the futility of such a conference. Therefore, he told the Conference: "I have my misgivings about the Round Table

Conference becoming successful".¹⁶⁴ It may be asked if he had had misgivings about the Round Table Conference why did he suspend the civil disobedience and picketing of liquor shops. Perhaps Gandhi wanted to get the moral support of, and to wean away, as many moderates as he could from the Government side, or, to use his own words: "to buy the support of those countrymen of mine who are not non-co-operators in order to enlist their sympathy on our side".¹⁶⁵ The resolutions of the Conference were at once wired to the Viceroy. As the Committee of the Bombay Conference wanted some time to make the negotiations a success, the Congress Working Committee met on the 17th January and passed a resolution resolving not to start civil disobedience till the 31st January, 1922. But it was all hoping against hope. In December, 1921, the Government talked of a Round Table Conference to bide time, until the Prince's visit was over; but now that urgency was over. The representatives of the Conference went on sending telegrams to the Viceroy from the 16th January, 1922, but failed to get even a reply. Then on the 26th January, 1922, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy wrote to the Secretaries of the Conference: "His Excellency regrets that the proposals now put forward should have been regarded by those who subscribed to the resolution as a response to the sentiments which the Viceroy expressed at Calcutta... No useful purpose would therefore be served by entering into any detailed examination of their terms."¹⁶⁶ The sponsors of the Conference still pursued the matter but the Government took up an attitude of pure cussedness.

As there was no favourable response from the Viceroy, Gandhi issued his 'ultimatum' to the Viceroy on the 1st February, 1922, if the demands were not accepted, to start civil disobedience in Bardoli, a small *tahsil*, in the Surat district then in the Bombay Presidency. In his letter to the Viceroy, he strongly condemned the "official lawlessness" and pleaded for the freedom of speech, association and Press. He gave seven days' time to the Viceroy to decide and make a declaration accepting the demands of the non-co-operators.¹⁶⁷ But, instead of agreeing to the demands made by Gandhi, the Government issued a *communique* on the 6th February, 1922, in the concluding part of which, it said; "The

issue is no longer between this or that programme of political advance but between lawlessness with all its dangerous consequences on the one hand, and on the other, the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of civilised Government."¹⁶⁸

In reply to the *communiqué* of the Government, Gandhi issued a rejoinder in which he replied to every charge contained therein. To prove that the Government indulged in repression, he cited nine cases out of many, of official lawless repression. Hardly had he issued his rejoinder to the *communiqué* of the Government, when he read about the tragic happenings at Chauri Chaura, where an angry mob had forced twenty-two constables and a sub-inspector of police into the police station and set fire to it. All of them died in the fire, Gandhi was very much pained and agitated at this and decided to scrap all activities in respect of civil disobedience.

The Working Committee of the Congress met at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th February, 1922, and passed a resolution suspending all kinds of activities of civil disobedience.¹⁶⁹ The suspension of civil disobedience was not approved of by many leaders. Lajpat Rai wrote from prison: "We have been defeated and that too very badly. Our defeat is in proportion to the greatness of our leader".¹⁷⁰ J. L. Banerjee, a staunch Gandhian, from Bengal, wrote: "To speak frankly and without concealment, the resolution had been a disappointment."¹⁷¹ Syed Mahmud wrote from Bihar: "Working Committee's decision published today greatly surprising; people in Bengal and Bihar are disappointed."¹⁷² Asaf Ali, a Congress leader from Delhi opined: "The latest decision of the Working Committee came to me—in fact to all three of us—as a thunder bolt from the blue, and quite naturally too."¹⁷³ Even so faithful a disciple as Mahadev Desai was not without misgivings. He wrote to Gandhi that the Bardoli resolutions gave him "the most dreadful of all shocks . . . I cannot imagine how you could bring yourself to be a party to such resolutions as these".¹⁷⁴ Subhas Bose wrote: "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity . . . I was with the *Deshabandhu* at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma

Gandhi was repeatedly bungling".¹⁷⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru's reaction was also sharp.¹⁷⁶

Many reasons were advanced against the suspension of the civil disobedience. It was argued that violence at Chauri Chaura could not have affected Bardoli. That it was politically unwise. Some argued that suspension was "due to the unfortunate fact that a religious preacher rather than politician is at the helm of affairs".¹⁷⁷ The communists traced the course of suspension of the movement to its bourgeois leadership. The secret service of the Government was of the opinion that the movement was suspended because Bardoli was not ready for it.¹⁷⁹

It is very difficult to agree with any of these explanations given for the suspension of the movement. Gandhi explained his position in the article "The Crime of Chauri Chaura" which was described by Romain Rolland as the most "human document ever written".¹⁸⁰ Gandhi was a firm believer in non-violence. Therefore, Gandhi could never support any violent movement, much less lead it. He had made it quite clear that "certainly violence on the part of the Non-co-operators" would kill the movement.¹⁸¹ The Chauri Chaura affair was certainly a very gruesome affair. There is no doubt that the people became violent only after one of their leaders had been hit by a sub-inspector of police and firing had been resorted to. There is also evidence to show that some volunteers "openly desisted and even tried to persuade others to desist" from doing violence.¹⁸² But these efforts did not meet with any success. On the whole, it appears that people became uncontrollable and violent. Gandhi's argument was: "No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob".¹⁸³ He believed that "the drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound".¹⁸⁴ To Gandhi who considered himself primarily a man of religion, nothing could be more supreme. To the people who asked how a disturbance at Chauri Chaura could affect Bardoli, his reply was: "Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is a perfect co-operation from other parts.

Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when other parts of India will remain non-violent".¹⁸⁵ The argument of loosing prestige did not bother him in the least. He wrote:

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is a million times better to *appear* untrue before the world than to *be* untrue to ourselves.¹⁸⁶

But it was not the moral argument alone which led him to adopt the course he had taken. The situation in the country was unfavourable to the resort of civil disobedience. Hence, Gandhi cannot be accused of sacrificing the interests of the country for his own principles. Both the practical exigencies of the situation as well as his moral principles demanded the suspension of the movement. The country was heading towards violence and indiscipline. He was receiving many letters requesting him to suspend the movement even before the Chauri Chaura tragedy. After the violence in Chauri Chaura even the supporters and sympathisers of the movement demanded that the movement be suspended.¹⁸⁷ The Chauri Chaura incident was "really an index finger".¹⁸⁸ The violence at Chauri Chaura was not committed by unknown people but by Congressmen. This weighed with Gandhi.¹⁸⁹ He had also been receiving news of indiscipline in the Congress ranks for quite some time. He hoped to set things right. But before he could do so the news of Chauri Chaura came in. Gandhi summed up all reasons for suspending the movement in a very frank and candid letter he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru in jail and sent through his sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit. He wrote:

I must tell you that this (Chauri Chaura affair) was the last straw. My letter to the Viceroy was not sent without misgivings as its language must make it clear to anyone. I was much disturbed by the Madras doings, but I drowned the warning voice. I received letters both from Hindus and Mohammedans from Calcutta, Allahabad and the Punjab, all these before the Gorakhpur (Chauri Chaura) incident, telling me that the wrong was not all on the Government side, that our people were becoming aggressive, defiant

and threatening, that they were getting out of hand and were not non-violent in demeanour. Whilst Ferozepur Jirka incident is discreditable to the Government, we are not altogether without blame. Hakimji complained about Bareilly. I have bitter complaints about Jajjar. In Shahajampur too there has been a forcible attempt to take possession of the Town Hall. From Kanouj too the Congress Secretary himself telegraphed saying that the volunteer boys had become unruly and were picketing a High School and preventing youngsters under 16 from going to the school. 36,000 volunteers were enlisted in Gorakhpur, not 100 of whom conformed to the Congress pledge. In Calcutta Jamnalalji tells me that there is utter disorganisation, the volunteers wearing foreign cloth and certainly not pledged to non-violence. With all this news in my possession and much more from the South, the Chauri Chaura news came like a powerful match to ignite the gunpowder, and there was a blaze. I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended *we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle*. It is undoubtedly true that non-violence is spreading like the scent of the otto of roses throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the foetid smell of violence is still powerful, and it would be unwise to ignore or underrate it. The cause will prosper by this retreat. The movement had unconsciously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings, and we can again go straight ahead.¹⁹⁰

Thus under these circumstances, Gandhi was unable to direct the fight. There lies the secret of the suspension of the movement. In the circumstances then prevailing in India it was the right decision. Even Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru who were critics of Gandhi's decision, later on admitted the wisdom of his decision of suspending the civil disobedience.¹⁹¹

The Government felt this was the opportune time to arrest Gandhi who had also anticipated his arrest. On March 9, 1922, he gave his last message in the article "If I am Arrested". He asked the people to maintain peace. On 10th March, he was arrested on the charge of sedition for three articles published in

the *Young India* and was given two years imprisonment on each article to run consecutively—but not concurrently as was the judicial convention; so in all six years.

During the trial Gandhi did not defend himself; in fact practically no non-co-operation prisoner defended himself. In an oral statement he said "I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this Court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me."¹⁹² Then in a written statement he explained how from a loyalist and co-operator, he had "become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. . . The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act. . . Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Musalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled".¹⁹³ Gandhi also stated that the British system of administration was based on the "exploitation of the masses"—which he described as "crime against humanity".¹⁹⁴ And he thought it would be sinful to co-operate with such a system of administration. He also said in the Court, "I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and if I was set free, I would still do the same."¹⁹⁵

It may be relevant to make an assessment of this great movement. Superficially, history may give a verdict of failure, as it had failed to bring Swaraj within one year as promised. In the course of the movement twice Gandhi's loyal supporters differed from him and criticised him. When in December 1921, Malaviya initiated talks for compromise, many thought, he should have agreed to a conference with the Government, as that would, at least, have brought a semblance of Swaraj within one year. But, as we have stated, the Viceroy, Reading, was interested only to save his face before the Prince of Wales; so he was eager to make the Congress agree to suspend its programme of the boycott of the Prince. Similar eagerness at two subsequent stages of fight was shown by the Government—the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 and the Cripps Mission of 1942. On both these occasions, the Government was not sincere in its desire for any

understanding. There is no reason to think that in 1921, the Government was more honest in its proposal.

The second occasion of public criticism was on the suspension of the civil disobedience movement after the Chauri Chaura tragedy. Purely from political point of view, perhaps, no political leader should have done that. But, Gandhi was not simply a political leader; nor was the motive force behind his movement purely political. In him, we find a strange amalgam of politics and ethics. He wanted to keep the movement non-violent. In his oral statement in the Court, he stated—"Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered, had done an irreparable harm to my country, or to incur the risk of the mad fury of my people".¹⁷⁶ Yet whenever, there was an outburst of that mad popular fury, he suspended the movement. Further let us consider what would have been the consequences if the movement was not suspended. Practically all the leaders—national, provincial or even local—were in prison. There was a move to lead and guide the movement on wrong lines. Outburst of popular violence would have been no match against the organised violence of the Government. The steam-roller of Government repression would have mauled down the courage of the people.

The greatest achievement of the Non-co-operation movement was that it made the inert masses of India bold enough to defy the authority of the mighty British *Raj*. After the abortive revolt of 1905, the Russian Social Democratic Party had not been able to raise its head till 1917 and that also when the Czarist regime had collapsed due to the pressure of the First World War. Gandhi had asked the people to be ready for sacrifice and suffering and to cultivate the virtue of *Abhaya* or fearlessness. There is a limit to the power of endurance by the people. So it can be said—considering the situation in a historical perspective—that Gandhi's decision of calling off the civil disobedience was not unjustified even from a political point of view.

The Non-co-operation movement made the Indian masses conscious of their strength to stand up before the repressions of an alien Government. If Lenin's dictum of "One Step Forward

and Two Steps Backwards" was right, if Lenin was right in condemning thoughtless extremism as infantile leftism, Gandhi was also correct in advising the nation to hasten slowly and to call off the movement that was going on the wrong track. He gave a touch of new life to every section of the society. In the year 1921, there were 400 labour strikes involving about 500,000 workers—a thing almost undreamt of before. He instilled a new life in men and women belonging to the lowest strata of society—the untouchables, the prostitutes, the lepers and similar other sectors of society who so long had not been given any thought by any one.

The Non-co-operation movement was a new technique of fight against a Government with all deadly arms and weapons at its command. He said, "Non-co-operation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil".¹⁹⁷ To withhold co-operation from an evil system is not only the moral duty but also the moral obligation of any person. He urged: "A complete revolution is the greatest need of the time"¹⁹⁸ and as a true revolutionary, he declared "Destruction is the quickest method of stimulating production."¹⁹⁹ These were the ideas he preached and propagated through the Non-co-operation movement. But his method of revolution was non-violent and peaceful in thought, word and deed. That is why he could say that a Satyagrahi had no enemy. His idea was to fight the evil without harbouring any ill-will towards its perpetrators. From this moral plane he spoke and acted; and from this plane we should judge him.

NOTES

1. Surendranath Banerjee, *A Nation in Making*, (London, 1931), p. 300.
2. *Young India*, 28 July 1920. Also see M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, (Ahmedabad, 1950), pp. 483-84.
3. Chimanlal H. Setalvad, *Recollections and Reflections*, (Bombay, 1946), p. 311.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, (London, 1964), pp. 124-25.
8. Murray T. Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, (Calcutta, 1959), p. 62.
9. See Declaration by the Government of India made in November 1914
10. Syed Mahmud, *The Khilafat and England*, (Patna n.d.), p. 11, *Proceedings of the Council of Governor General of India*, Vol. LIII, (Calcutta, n.d.), p. 232.
11. *Debates on Indian Affairs: House of Lords, session 1914-16*, (London, 1916), p. 152.
12. 125 *H. C. Deb.*, 5S pp., 1960-61.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 1962.
14. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, (London, 1946), p. 198.
15. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It*, (London, 1925), p. 215.
16. E. Lipson, *Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries 1815-1939*, (London, 1963), p. 448.
17. See *The Independent*, 25 May 1920, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, *Autobiography of Sir C. Sankaran Nair*, (Madras, 1966), p. 392. R. M. Gray and Mani Lal C. Parekh, *Mahatma Gandhi*, (Calcutta, 1931), p. 57. P. Spratt, *Gandhism: An Analysis*, (Madras, 1939), p. 246. H. C. E. Zacharias, *Renascent India*, (London, 1933), p. 197.
18. C. F. Andrews to Rabindranath Tagore, April 1919. Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes, *Charles Freer Andrews* (London, 1949), p. 131.
19. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 482.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 481.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Mahadev Desai, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, (Agra, 1946), p. 42.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
25. *Ibid.*
26. M. K. Gandhi's letter dated 1 March 1920 to the Press, *Young India*, 10-3-1920.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Young India*, 7 July 1920.
29. *Report of the Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee*, (Allahabad, 1922), p. 12.
30. *Young India*, 7 July 1920.
31. *The Indian Annual Register 1921*, p. 116.
32. M. K. Gandhi to Viceroy, 2 Aug. 1920. N.A.I., Home Political (Deposit), August 1920, No. 38.
33. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, (Bombay, 1946), p. 200.
34. Resolutions passed at the Fourth Gujarat Political Conference, Ahmedabad, *Young India*, 1 September 1920. Rajendra Prasad, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, (Bombay, 1949), p. 39.
35. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 499.
36. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 September 1920.
37. *Ibid.*

34. Indulal K. Yajnik, *Mahatma Gandhi As I Knew Him*, (Delhi, 1943), p. 153.
35. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 Sept. 1920.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.* 9 Sept. 1920.
- 38a. *Ibid.*, 8 Sept. 1920.
39. Indulal K. Yajnik, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
40. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 September 1920.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.* According to Sitaramayya Gandhi's resolution was carried by a majority of seven votes. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
43. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 499.
44. *Ibid.* It may be mentioned here that the Bihar Provincial Conference was the first, under the inspiration of Babu Brajkishore Prasad, to add the attainment of Swaraj to the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs for the redress of which Non-cooperation was going to be adopted as a method. Rajendra Prasad, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, p. 41.
45. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 September 1920.
46. See Gandhi's speech on the Non-cooperation Resolution in the Calcutta Congress, 8 September 1920. *Young India*, 15 September 1920.
47. The resolution which Gandhi placed before the Subjects Committee did not have the word "gradual". But it found place in the resolution moved by him in the open session of the Calcutta Congress. It appears that it was inserted in the Subjects Committee. But Gandhi accepted it as a "concession to . . . weakness and recognition of . . . unreadiness" of the people. For the resolution which Gandhi moved in the Subjects Committee and in the open session and his reply to the debate on his resolution, see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 and 8 September 1920; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVIII, p. 250.
48. *Young India*, 15 September 1920.
49. *Indian National Congress 1920-1923*, (Allahabad, 1924), pp. 6-9.
- 49a. *Young India*, 15 September 1920.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography with Musings on Recent Events in India*, (Bombay, 1962), p. 64.
52. "The Conflict—And the Result", *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 September 1920. Also see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 September 1920.
53. "The Congress" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 15 September 1920.
54. The results of voting were as follows:

Province	For Resolution	For Amendment
Bombay	243	93
Madras	161	135
Bengal	551	395
U.P.	259	28
Punjab	254	92
Andhra	59	12
Sind	36	16
Delhi	59	9
Bihar	184	28
Burma	14	4
C.P.	30	33
Berar	5	28
	<hr/> 1,855	<hr/> 873

55. *Ibid.*
56. Hari Dev Sharma, *Non-cooperation Movement 1919-22* (Unpublished Thesis submitted in the Department of History, Delhi University, 1969). Appendix A.
57. Valentine Chirol, *India Old and New*, (London, 1921), pp. 201-02.
58. For Gandhi's itinerary from the middle of September 1920 till the end of December 1920 see, Chandulal Bhagubhai Dalal (Comp), *Gandhiji in Dimbari*, (Ahmedabad, 1970), pp. 109-116 and *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVIII and XIX, (Delhi), pp. 496-500 and 585-90.
59. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
60. *Report of the Thirty-fifth Session of the Indian National Congress*, (Nagpur), p. 70.
61. Lajpat Rai was strongly opposed to the boycott of schools and colleges by students, when Gandhi made some changes in this respect in the revolution, Lajpat Rai also agreed to support the resolution. Algurai Shastri (Comp.), Lala Lajpat Rai (New Delhi, 1957), p. 349.
62. Prithwis Chandra Ray, *Life and Times of C. R. Das*, (London, 1927), p. 159.
63. C. R. Das, *The Way to Swaraj*, (Madras, 1923), pp. 127-8.
64. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
65. The raising of the "Tilak Swarajya Fund" was first suggested by Bipin Chandra Pal in the last part of his notice of amendment, addressed to the Congress President, to Gandhi's resolution on Non-cooperation in Calcutta as under: "That be it further resolved that in order to achieve the above mentioned objects, a fund of Rs. 20 lakhs (to start with) be immediately raised to be called the Tilak Swarajya Fund to be spent under the direction and control of a Sub-Committee of the All-India Congress Committee". It, however, did not appear in the amendment actually moved by Pal. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9 September 1920. Motilal Ghose is reported to have suggested to Gandhi after the Calcutta Congress to start 'Tilak Fund at the Nagpur Congress. It is likely that Gandhi took it up at his instance. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 September 1920.
66. *Report of the Thirty-fifth Session of the Indian National Congress*, Appendix F.
67. *Ibid.*
68. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
69. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 69.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
73. K. P. S. Menon, *C. Sankaran Nair*, (Delhi, 1967), pp. 136-7.
74. "The Hallucination of Law Courts" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 6 October 1920.
75. "An Appeal to Lawyers" by Motilal Nehru, *Young India*, 13 October 1920.
- 75a. Hari Dev Sharma, *op. cit.*, Appendix F.
76. *Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee*, p. 48
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*

79. The division on Non-cooperation was under:

Province	For	Against
Madras	40	1
Bombay	87	1
Bengal	33	27
Central India	All for	
U.P.	All (71) for	
Bihar & Orissa	All (9) for	
Punjab with the exception of two	All for	
Assam	5	7
Andhra	All for	
C.P.	150	30

Tribune, 29 December 1920.

80. Letter dated 24 November 1921 from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education. N.A.I., Education (B), January 1922, Nos. 52-68.

81. L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *India in 1921-22*, (Calcutta, 1923), p. 236.

82. Congress Secretaries' Report: *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 December 1921.

83. See. Yusuf Meherally, *Leaders of India*, Vol. II (Bombay, August 1946), p. 29. K. P. S. Menon, *My Many Worlds* (Bombay, 1966), pp. 53-4. Sumangal Prakash, *Woh Nanha Sa Aadmi* (Varanasi, 1966), p. 3. D. R. Toliwal (Ed.), *Bharat Ki Bibhutiyan: Bharat ke Rashatriya Jeevan ka Itihas San 1857 se 1953 Tak* (Nagpur, 1957), pp. 227, 154 and 275. Rambrikash Benipura, *Jayaprakash* (Patna, 1947), pp. 33-4. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, *Early Phase* (Ahmedabad, 1965), p. 9. *The Tribune*, 28 February 1921, and 19 November 1920. D. R. Toliwal, *op. cit.*, p. 277. N. K. Nigam, *Balidan* (Delhi, n.d.), p. 7.

84. Swami Ramananda Tirtha, *Memoirs of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, (Bombay, 1967), p. 31.

85. "To the Moderates" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 8 June 1921.

86. M. K. Gandhi, *Key to Health* (Ahmedabad, 1960), p. 36.

87. Congress Secretaries' Report, *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 December 1921.

88. *Statistical Abstract for British India 1915-16 to 1924-25* (Calcutta, 1926), p. 171.

89. Fortnightly Report of the political situation in India for the second half of July 1921 from the Government of Assam to the Government of India dated 31 July 1921. N.A.I., Home Political, July 1921, No. 18.

90. F. G. Sly, Governor of C.P. and Berar to Neazuddin Khan, 30 December 1920. S.No. 4416 (Gandhi Papers).

91. *Prajapaksha*, 9 January 1921. N.A.I. Report on Indian Papers published in Central Province and Berar for the week ending 13 January 1921.

92. See "Boycott of Goods Vs. Non-cooperation Programme" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 25.8.20 and "Khilafat" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 17.3.20.

93. *Indian Cotton Textile Annual*, 1949, p. 159 quoted in V. V. Balasubshovich and A. M. Dyakov, *A Contemporary History of India* (New Delhi, 1964), p. 27.

94. *Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee*, Appendix III.

95. *Ibid.*

96. Jagasia Brother to Gandhi, 19 July 1921. S.No. 7580 (Gandhi Papers).

97. *Rangoon Mail*, quoted in *Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee*, Appendix XIV, p. 1.

98. *Manchester Evening News*, quoted in *Ibid.*

99. For figures regarding the number of spinning wheels, looms, and *khadi* produced, see. *Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee*, Appendix III.

100. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

101. *Ibid.* Donations to the Tilak Swaraj Fund from the various Provinces up to 4th July 1921:

Provinces	Amount
1. Bombay City	Rs. 37,50,000
2. Bengal	25,00,000
3. Gujarat and Kathiawar	15,00,000
4. Punjab	5,00,000
5. Madras and Andhra	4,00,000
6. C.P. and Berar	3,00,000
7. Maharashtra (including Bombay suburbs)	3,00,000
8. Bihar	3,00,000
9. Sind	2,00,000
10. U.P.	2,50,000
11. Burma	1,25,000
12. Karnatak	1,00,000
13. Delhi	2,00,000
14. Ajmer and Mewar	50,000
15. Orissa, Assam etc.	25,000
TOTAL	Rs. 10,50,000

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 July 1921.

Province	No. of members	Date
1. Ajmer-Merwara and Rajputana	5,000	3rd September 1921
2. Andhra	188,599	16th December 1921
3. Bengal	172,098	2nd July 1921
4. Berar	30,000	29th November 1921
5. Bihar	350,000	19th November 1921
6. Bombay City	45,000	29th November 1921
7. Central Provinces (Hindustani)	149,056	6th December 1921
8. -do- (Marathi)	52,940	25th November 1921
9. Delhi	55,000	December 1921
10. Gujarat	169,113	18th December 1921
11. Karnatak	72,000	10th December 1921
12. Kerala	25,000	1st January 1922
13. Maharashtra	79,489	13th November 1921
14. Punjab and the NWFP	102,307	31st July 1921
15. Tamil Nad	66,474	26th November 1921
16. U.P.	328,966	July 1921
17. Utkal	54,085	7th December 1921

"The Development of Indian National Congress as a Mass Organisation 1918-1923" by Gopal Krishna in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, May 1966, p. 420.

102. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Calcutta, 1956), pp. 386-7.
103. Progress of Non-violent Non-cooperation in Assam, Congress Bulletin No. XI. *The Independent*, 24 May 1921; Non-cooperation in Amraoti. *The Independent*, 16 June 1921; Progress of Non-cooperation Movement in Andhra Desa. *The Independent*, 30 June 1921; Non-cooperation at work: Record of Kerala, *The Independent*, 11 August 1921; Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *India's Fight for Freedom* (Lahore, 1936), p. 81.
104. Upendra Chandra Bhattacharya and Shovendu Sunder Chakravarty (eds and comps), Pandit Motilal Nehru (Calcutta, 1931), p. 26.
105. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 381.
106. Sir Reginald Coupland, *India: A Re-Statement* (London, 1945), p. 119.
107. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 69.
108. "The Agreed Statement", *Young India*, 4 August 1921.
109. *Ibid.*
110. "The Simla Visit"—M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 25 May 1921.
111. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 August 1921, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1922, Vol. I, p. 182.
112. C. F. Andrews quoted in "Ethics of Destruction" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 1 September 1921.
113. *Ibid.*
114. N. Awab Zada, *Indian India* (London, 1940), p. 79.
115. Reginalds Reyonalds, *White Sahibs in India* (London, 1946), p. 173. "A Lying Placard" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 2 March 1922. K. Rama Rao, *Pen As My Sword* (Bombay, 1965), p. 28.
116. K. T. Paul, *The British Connections with India* (London, 1927), p. 142.
117. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18 November 1921.
118. Chimanlal H. Setalvad, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
119. M. S. Godbole to M. K. Gandhi, 13 December 1921. S.No. 7713 (Gandhi Papers).
120. *Ibid.*
121. S. D. Waley, *Edwin Montagu* (Bombay, 1964), p. 262.
122. *Ibid.*
123. Viceroy's Address to the British India Association, Calcutta, *The Independent*, 11 December 1921.
124. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 December 1921.
125. *Ibid.*, 9 December 1921.
126. See *Ibid.*, 8 December 1921, *The Independent*, 5 December 1921.
127. *The Independent*, 20 December 1921. This issue of the paper gives name of all the persons arrested. However, Jawaharlal Nehru has recorded that the total number of persons arrested was fifty-five, Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 80.
128. *The Independent*, 17 December 1921.
129. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 December 1921.
130. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1921 and *The Tribune*, 14 December 1921.
131. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Indian Struggle 1920-1942* (London, 1967), p. 64.
132. *Ibid.*
133. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 December 1921.
134. *Ibid.*
135. H. N. Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register 1922*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1923), p. 242.
136. Subhas Chandra Bose, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 December 1921.

139. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 80.
140. *The Indian Annual Register 1922*, Vol. I, p. 244.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
142. *The Tribune*, 13 December; *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 & 11 December 1921.
143. *The Indian Annual Register 1922*, Vol. I, p. 247.
144. L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *India in 1921-22*, p. 93.
145. Jagat Narain to T. B. Saprú, 8 July 1921, N-2 (Saprú Papers).
146. H. N. Kunzru to T. B. Saprú, 4 March 1921, K-86 (Saprú Papers).
147. Viceroy's reply to the Malaviya Deputation, N.A.I. Home Political, No. 89, Part I.
148. *Ibid.* It is strange that the words quoted were deleted from the text of the Viceroy's speech as reproduced in L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *India in 1921-22*, Appendix VIII.
149. Telegram 19 December 1921 from Das and Azad to Gandhi, S.No. 7730 (Gandhi papers).
150. Telegram 19 December 1921 from Gandhi to Das and Azad, S.No. 7730 (Gandhi Papers).
151. Shyam Sunder Chakraverty quoted in Krishandas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. II (Dighwara, 1928), p. 163, also see Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, *From Nagpur to Lahore* (Comilla, n.d.), p. 31.
152. Telegram 20 December 1921 from Malaviya to Gandhi, S.No. 7730 (Gandhi Papers).
153. Telegram 20 December 1921 from Gandhi to Malaviya, S.No. 7730 (Gandhi Papers).
154. Telegram 21 December 1921 from Gandhi to Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, S.No. 7730 (Gandhi Papers).
155. *Ibid.*
156. "The Demand by M. K. Gandhi", *Young India*, 19 January 1922. Also see C. Rajagopalachari *Gandhiji's Teachings and Philosophy* (Bombay, 1963), p. 21.
157. See Marquess of Reading, *Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading*, Vol. II, (London, 1945), p. 199.
- Writing fifteen years later, Jawaharlal Nehru, keeping in view the results of the Round Table Conferences, in the early thirties, when the national movement was much stronger, justified the action of Gandhi regarding the negotiations with the Viceroy in December 1921. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, pp. 87-8.
158. Minute by H. D. Craik, 31 May 1921. N.A.I., Home Political (A), June 1921, No. 110-112.
159. Telegram 20 December 1921 from the Governor of Madras to the Viceroy, N.A.I., Home Political, 1922, No. K.W. to 89, Part I.
160. *Report of the Thirty-Sixth Indian National Congress* (Ahmedabad, n.d.), p. 113.
161. Note by Assistant to I.B., N.A.I., Home Political, November 1921, No. 303.
162. Telegram P., No. 1137 18th November 1921 from the Viceroy (Home Department), Delhi to the Secretary of State, London, N.A.I., Home Political, October 1921, No. 18.
163. *The Indian Annual Register 1922*, p. 276.
164. Gandhi's Speech at Representatives Conference, Bombay. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 January 1922.
165. *Ibid.*
166. M. R. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, Vol. I (Bombay, 1958), pp. 543-44.
167. Letter 1 February 1922 from M. K. Gandhi to the Viceroy. *Young India*, February 1922.

168. Government of India's *communiqué* dated 6 February 1922 on M. K. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy dated 1 February 1922. L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *India in 1921-22*, p. 329.
169. *The Indian National Congress 1920-23*, p. 177.
170. Lajpat Rai to Members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, undated. S.No. 7917 (Gandhi Papers).
171. J. L. Banerjee to Gandhi, undated S.No. 7914 (Gandhi Papers).
172. Syed Mahmud to Gandhi, 14 February 1922. S.No. 7913 (Gandhi Papers).
173. Asaf Ali to Mukhtar Ali, 18 February 1922. S.No. 7926 (Gandhi Papers).
174. Mahadev Desai to Gandhi, 15 February 1922. S.No. 7822 (Gandhi Papers).
175. Subhas Chandra Bose, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
176. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, pp. 81-2.
177. Wasin to M. A. Ansari, 22 February 1922. S.No. 7930 (Gandhi Papers).
178. R. Palme Dutt, *Modern India* (Bombay, 1926), p. 74. Also see A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, 1966), p. 354.
179. Report of a Secret Agent called "Justice" dated 12 February 1922. N.A.I., Home Political 1922, No. 580-II.
180. Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi* (Agra, n.d.), p. 131.
181. "What Will Kill Non-cooperation" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 16-2-1921.
182. A Report on the Chauri Chaura Tragedy by Devadas Gandhi. S.No. 7907 (Gandhi Papers).
183. *Ibid.*
184. "The Crime of Chauri Chaura" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 16-2-22.
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*
187. Among others such letters came from:
 - (i) Kidwai of U.P. to M. K. Gandhi, 11 February 1922. S.No. 7903 (Gandhi Papers).
 - (ii) Swami Shraddhananda to M. K. Gandhi, 11 February 1922. S.No. 7901 (Gandhi Papers)
 - (iii) P. C. Ray to M. K. Gandhi, 11 February 1922. S.No. 7902 (Gandhi Papers).
 - (iv) Ajmal Khan and M. A. Ansari to M. K. Gandhi, 11 February 1922. S.No. 7809 (Gandhi Papers).
188. "The Crime of Chauri Chaura" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 16-2-22.
189. "Notes: Vykom Satyagraha" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 19-6-24. Also see "Interrogatories" by M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 25-10-25.
190. M. K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 19-2-22 in Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Branch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 23-24.
191. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, *Mahatma Gandhi As I Saw Him* (Delhi, 1968), p. 114. Also see Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 86.
192. Gandhi's oral statement in the Court, *Young India*, 23 March 1922.
193. Gandhi's written statement in the Court, *Ibid.*
194. *Ibid.*
195. *Ibid.*
196. *Ibid.*
197. "The Poet's Anxiety" by M. K. Gandhi. *Young India*, 1 June 1921.
198. "To the Moderates" by M. K. Gandhi. *Young India*, 8 June 1921.
199. "Ethics of Destruction" by M. K. Gandhi. *Young India*, 1 September 1921.

VII

The Spirit of Defiance & Self-Immolation

(Statements Before Courts)
(A.C.G.)

Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt suddenly burst into prominence when they threw two bombs on 8th April, 1929 on the floor of the Central Assembly—the present Lok Sabha. The Assembly was discussing the obnoxious Public Security Bill and the presiding officer of the Assembly—President Vithalbhai Patel—was expected to certify the Bill as out of order. One after another two bombs were thrown on the hall—exploding near the official gallery. Bhagat was a graduate of Punjab and Batuk was a resident of Kanpur. Three official and one non-official members (one was a knight—‘Sir’) were wounded but not seriously. Bhagat and Batukeswar were both members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army—a revolutionary organisation of Punjab and U.P. Both of them were sentenced to transportation for life by the Delhi Sessions Judge. Subsequently in the Lahore Conspiracy case, Bhagat along with Sukhdev and Rajguru were given death sentence.

Bina Das came to the Convocation meeting at Calcutta in the Senate Hall on 6th February 1932 to receive her certificate for the graduate degree. When the Governor, Sir Stanley Jackson

was reading his address, she fired 5 shots from her revolver on the Governor. But as soon as she was seen aiming the revolver, the Governor ducked his head. She thus missed her aim. The Vice-Chancellor was slightly wounded. The Jugantar party was then engaged in fighting the alien Government on two fronts in Bengal—Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 and the violent revolutionary movement. This side they took up as a challenge to, and to avenge, the brutal police repression on the non-violent civil resisters. Among many overt acts organised in Bengal then under the guidance of the Jugantar party, Bina's attack on the Governor attracted wide public attention. She was sentenced to 9 years' rigorous imprisonment.

Below are printed the two statements, one made by Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt in their trial for the bombs thrown in the Central Assembly and the other by Bina Das made in the court during her trial for shooting at the Governor of Bengal, Jackson, at the Senate Hall of Calcutta. These two statements are not to be taken as bravado of immature youth, but as the bold declaration of the article of faith of the revolutionaries. They were not blood-thirsty terrorists but they were revolutionaries—guided with a noble purpose and with spirit of defiance. From the point of view of immediate achievement, perhaps one may consider that both these attempts had failed and so had not served any political purpose. But what Bhagat and Batukeswar wanted to demonstrate was not the killing or injuring particular men but to declare to the world that they did not recognise the alien Government functioning in India. They went there fully prepared for the highest penalty. Similarly Bina Das might have missed her target but she made it clear in her statement that she had no particular grudge against Sir Stanley Jackson the person; her real target was the system of governance prevailing in the country.

Both these statements are typical of the spirit of defiance and non-recognition of the foreign Government. The same spirit we found earlier in the statement made by Bhupendra Nath Datta in 1907, while he was prosecuted for sedition. He stated there, "I, Bhupendra Nath Datta, do hereby beg to state that I am the editor of the journal *Jugantar* and I am solely responsible for

all the articles in question. I have done what I have considered in good faith to be my duty to my country. I do not wish the prosecution to be put to the trouble and expense of proving what I have no intention to deny; I do not want to make any other statement or to take any further action in the trial." He did not like his case to be defended; yet eminent jurists like Ashutosh Choudhury, C. R. Das, Aswini Kumar Banerjee and others appeared on his behalf. He was awfully annoyed that these eminent persons were taking the trouble of distorting the political stand he had taken before the alien court. He then drew up another statement which he was not allowed to submit to the court, but it may also be quoted below:

"I do not wish any address to be delivered by counsel on my behalf. I have refused to plead not because I wish to withdraw a single word of what I have written or acknowledge the justice of any sentence that may be passed on me, but for an opposite reason. I have written what every one knows to be true and what is in the mind of all my countrymen; but I was aware that in doing so, I would have no chance of justice in the British courts. I do not think it consistent with the views I have always preached to plead before them."

Another case may be recalled in this connection; that was of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay. He also was prosecuted for sedition in 1907 for some articles written in the daily paper *Sandhya*. He also told the court that he did not recognise the authority of the court to try him and he "accepted the entire responsibility of the publication, management and conduct of the newspaper *Sandhya*." He refused to take part in the trial declaring that he "was in no way accountable to the alien rulers." Further, he told his friends that this *feringi* court won't be able to touch his body; and before that he would leave his body like a worn-out pair of shoes. And he died before the trial concluded.

That is why Aurobindo then wrote in the *Bandemataram*: "If there were some irrational features in the revolt of the people against foreign things, it was the violence of the malady which necessitated the violence of the reaction. The late Upadhyay was the type and champion of this feature of the National movement. . . . His declaration in the court and his death put a

seal upon the meaning of his life and left his name stamped indelibly on the pages of history, as a saint and martyr of the new faith. It washed out all human weakness and impurity with the wave of a great spiritual act of devotion and renunciation and left the soul of the man, only for posterity to cherish."

We also find the same spirit of defiance in Kanai Lal Dutt and Satyen Bose. While they were in the Alipore jail, they shot dead Naren Gossain—the approver in the Alipore Bomb Case (1908). It was a mystery to the Government how they managed to get the revolvers inside the jail. When in the lower court, the Sessions judge condemned them to capital sentence and asked them to file an appeal to the High Court, Kanai defiantly replied: "There *shall* be no appeal."

We also find^e Bhagat Singh arguing from jail with his father dissuading him from putting up any defence on his behalf. When they arranged proper defence in the case, he wrote a long letter to his father: "...You know that we have been pursuing a definite policy in this trial. Every action of mine ought to have been consistent with that policy, my principles and the programme.... I had only one idea before me throughout the trial, i.e., to show complete indifference towards the trial in spite of the serious nature of the charges against us. I have always been of opinion that all the political workers should be indifferent and should never bother about the legal fight in the law courts and should boldly bear the heaviest possible sentences inflicted upon them."

The two statements are put below simply to show the spirit of defiance and of self-immolation which inspired those young revolutionaries to sacrifice their life or their future prospects for the cause of the country.

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STATEMENT OF BHAGAT SINGH AND BATUKESWAR DUTT

"We humbly claim to be no more than serious students of history and the conditions of our country and human aspirations and we despise hypocrisy. Our practical protest was against an institution which since its birth has eminently helped to display

not only its worthlessness but far-reaching power for mischief. The more we have pondered, the more deeply we have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to the world India's humiliation and helplessness and, it symbolises the over-riding domination of irresponsible and autocratic rule. Time and again the national demand has been pressed by the people's representatives, only to find the waste-paper basket as its final destination. Solemn resolutions passed by the House have been contemptuously trampled under foot on the floor of the so-called Indian Parliament. Resolutions regarding the repeal of repressive and arbitrary measures have been treated with sublime contempt and Government's measures and proposals rejected as unacceptable by elected members have been restored by a stroke of the pen.

"In brief, in spite of earnest endeavour, we have utterly failed to find any justification for the existence of the institution which, despite all pomp and splendour organised with the hard-earned money of the sweating millions of India, is only a hollow show and a mischievous make-believe. And alike have we failed to comprehend the mentality of public leaders who help to squander public time and money on so manifestly stage-managed an exhibition of India's helpless subjection. We have been ruminating upon all this, as also upon the wholesale arrests of leaders of the labour movement. When the introduction of the Trades Disputes Bill brought us into the Assembly to watch its progress and course of debate, it only served to confirm our conviction that labouring millions of India had nothing to expect from the institution that stood as a menacing monument to the strangling power of the exploiters and the serfdom of helpless labourers.

"Finally, the insult of what we considered an inhuman and barbarous measure was hurled on the devoted heads of the representatives of the entire country; and the starving and struggling millions were deprived of their primary right and sole means of improving their economic welfare. None who has felt like us for the dumb driven drudgery of labourers could possibly witness this spectacle with equanimity. None whose heart bleeds for those who have given their life-blood in silence to the building up of the economic structure of the exploiter, of whom the Government happens to be the biggest in this country, could

repress the cry of the soul in agonising anguish, which, so ruthless a blow wrung out of our hearts. Consequently, bearing in mind the words of the late Mr. S. R. Das, once Law Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, which appeared in the famous letter he had addressed to his son, to the effect that the bomb was necessary to awaken England from her dreams, we dropped the bombs on the floor of the Assembly Chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was to make the deaf hear and to give the heedless a timely warning.

"Others have as keenly felt as we have done and from under the seeming serenity of the sea of Indian humanity, a veritable storm is about to break out. We have only hoisted the danger signal to warn those who are speeding along without heeding the grave dangers. We have only marked the end of the era of utopian non-violence, of whose futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt. Out of our sincerest good-will to and love of humanity, have we adopted this method of warning, to prevent untold sufferings which we, like millions of others, clearly foresee.

"We have used the expression 'utopian non-violence' in the foregoing paragraph, which requires some explanation. Force, when aggressively applied, is 'violence' and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable. But when it is used in furtherance of a legitimate cause, it has its moral justification. Elimination of force at all costs is utopian and the new movement which has arisen in the country and of which we have given a warning is inspired by the ideals which guided Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kemal Pasha and Reza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi, Lafayette and Lenin. As both the alien Government and the Indian public leaders appeared to have shut their eyes and closed their ears against the existence and voice of this movement, we felt it our duty to sound a warning where it could not go unheard.

"We have so far dealt with the motive behind the incident in question and now we must define the extent of our intention. It cannot be gainsaid that we bore no personal grudge or malice against any one of those who received slight injuries or against

any other person in the Assembly. On the contrary we repeat that we hold human lives sacred beyond words and would sooner lay down our own lives in the service of humanity than injure anyone else. Unlike mercenary soldiers of imperialist armies, who are disciplined to kill without compunction, we respect and, in so far as it lies in us, attempt to save human life. And still we admit having deliberately thrown bombs into the Assembly chamber.

"Facts, however, speak for themselves, and the intention should be judged from the result of the action without drawing upon hypothetical circumstances and presumptions. Despite the evidence of the Government expert, the bombs that were thrown in the Assembly chamber resulted in slight damage to an empty bench and a few abrasions in less than half a dozen cases. While the Government scientist ascribed this result to a miracle, we see nothing but precise scientific process in it all. The first two bombs exploded in vacant spaces within wooden barriers of the desks and benches. Secondly, even those who were within two feet of the explosion, for instance Mr. P. R. Rau, Mr. Sanker Rau and Sir George Schuster, were either not hurt or only slightly scratched. Bombs of the capacity deposed to by the Government expert (though his estimate, being imaginary, is exaggerated) loaded with effective charge of potassium chlorate and sensitive picrite would have smashed the barrier, and lain many low within some yards of the explosion. Again, had they been loaded with some other high explosive with the charge of destructive pellets or darts they would have sufficed to wipe out a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Still again, we could have flung them into the official box, choke-full with people of note. And, finally, we could have ambushed Sir John Simon whose luckless Commission was loathed by all responsible people and who was sitting in the President's gallery at the time. All this, however, was beyond our intention and the bombs did no more than they were designed to do and the miracle consisted of no more than deliberate aim which landed them in safe places.

"We then deliberately offered ourselves to bear the penalty for what we had done and to let the imperialist exploiters know

that by crushing individuals they cannot kill ideas. By crushing two insignificant units, a nation cannot be crushed. We wanted to emphasise the historical lesson that "*lettres de cachet*" and Bastilles could not crush the revolutionary movement in France. Gallows and Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian Revolution. Bloody Sundays and Black and Tans failed to strangle the movement of Irish freedom. Can Ordinances and Safety Bills put out the flame of freedom in India? Conspiracy cases trumped up or discovered and incarceration of all young men who cherished the vision of a greater ideal cannot check the march of the revolution. But a timely warning, if not unheeded, can help to prevent loss of life and general suffering. We took it upon ourselves to provide this warning and our duty is done.

"Bhagat Singh was asked in the lower court as to what we meant by the word 'revolution'. In answer to that question we could say that 'revolution' does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change. Producers or labourers, in spite of being the most necessary element of society, are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary right. On the one hand, the peasast who grows corn for all starves with his family. The weaver who supplies the world market with textile fabrics cannot find enough to cover his own and his children's bodies. Masons, smiths and carpenters, who rear magnificent palaces, live and perish in slums. And on the other hand, capitalist exploiters, parasites of society, squander millions on their whims. The terrible inequalities and forced disparity of chances are heading towards chaos. This state of affairs cannot last and it is obvious that the present order of society is merry-making on the brink of a volcano; and innocent children of exploiters no less than millions of exploited are walking on the edge of a dangerous precipice. The whole edifice of this civilisation, if not saved in time, shall crumble.

"Radical change, therefore, is necessary, and it is the duty of those who realise this to reorganise society on a socialistic basis. Unless this is done and exploitation of man by man and of

nations by nations, which goes masquerading as imperialism, is brought to an end, the suffering and carnage with which humanity is threatened today cannot be prevented and all talk of ending wars and ushering in an era of universal peace is undisguised hypocrisy.

"By revolution we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such breakdown and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognised and as a result of which a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery of imperial wars.

"This is our ideal and with this ideology for our inspiration, we have given a fair and loud enough warning. If, however, it goes unheeded and the present system of government continues to be an impediment in the way of the natural forces that are welling up, a grim struggle must ensue, involving the overthrow of all obstacles and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way for the consummation of the ideal revolution.

"Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imprescriptible birthright of all. The labourer is the real sustainer of society. The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of workers. For these ideals and for this faith, we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content. We await the advent of revolution. Long Live Revolution!"



PAMPHLET THROWN IN THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

"'It takes a loud noise to make the deaf hear'. With these immortal words uttered on a similar occasion by Vaillant the French anarchist martyr, do we strongly justify this act of ours. Without repeating the humiliating story of the past ten years of the working of the Reforms, and without mentioning the insult hurled down upon the head of the Indian Nation through

this House, the so-called Indian Parliament, we want to point out that while the people are expecting some more crumbs of reforms from the Simon Commission and are even quarrelling over the distribution of bones, the Government is thrusting upon us new repressive measures such as the Public Safety Bill and the Trades Disputes Bill, reserving the Press Sedition Bill for the next session.

"The indiscriminate arrests of the Labour leaders working in the open field clearly indicate which way the wind is blowing. In these extremely provoking circumstances, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in all seriousness and realising its full responsibility has decided and ordered its 'Army' to do this particular action so that a stop may be put to this humiliating farce and to let the alien bureaucratic exploiters do what they wish but make them come before the public eye in their naked form.

"Let the representatives of the people return to their constituencies and prepare the masses for the coming revolution and let the Government know that while protesting against the Public Safety Bill and Trades Disputes Bill and the callous murder of Lala Lajpat Rai, on behalf of the helpless Indian masses we want to emphasise the lesson often repeated by history that it is easy to kill individuals but you cannot kill ideas. Great empires have crumbled while ideas have survived. The Bourbons and the Czars fell, while revolutions marched triumphantly over the heads.

"We are sorry to admit that we who attach so great sanctity to human life, we who dream of a very glorious future when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty, have been forced to shed human blood. But the sacrifice of individuals at the altar of revolution which will bring freedom to all, rendering the exploitation of man by man impossible, is inevitable. Long Live the Revolution!"

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STATEMENT OF MISS BINA DASS

Early in 1932, Calcutta University was holding its Convocation for conferring degrees. When Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor

of Bengal and Chancellor of Calcutta University, got up in the Senate Hall to deliver the Convocation address, a young girl, Miss Bina Das, one of the recipients of the B.A. degree, shot at him. The Governor escaped unhurt. She was promptly arrested and put up later before a special tribunal which sentenced her to 9 years' imprisonment.

STATEMENT (February 1932)

"I confess I fired at His Excellency the Governor on the last Convocation Day at the Senate House. I hold myself entirely responsible for it. My object was to die, and if to die, to die nobly, fighting against this despotic system of government, which has kept my country in perpetual subjection to its infinite shame and endless suffering; and fighting in a way which cannot but tell.

"I fired at the Governor impelled by my love of my country which is being repressed, and what I attempted to do for the sake of my country was a great violence to my own nature too. I am glad that the life of Sir Stanley Jackson has been saved by Providence and that Lady Jackson and her children have been spared their terrible misfortune; and I am glad to have attained my end without loss of life.

"I have been grieved to learn that Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen is said to have been injured at the Convocation Hall. I had not the slightest intention to do any harm to him or to anybody else, neither did it strike me in the least that my act would affect him or anybody else in any way.

"I can only place here the state of my mind which led me to this act, which I do realise was an outrage to my nature and a severe injustice to the family to which I belong and the institution where I was having my education—an institution which loved me dearly and exercised the highest influence on my life and character, and which I looked upon with all regard due to a mother. But the love of my country was always uppermost and supreme in my mind and I felt very deeply in my heart the condition of my country.

"I had been thinking—Is life worth living in an India so

subject to wrong and continually groaning under the tyranny of a foreign government, or is it not better to make one supreme protest against it by offering one's life away? Would not the immolation of a daughter of India and of a son of England awaken India to the sin of its acquiescence in its continuous state of subjection, and England, to the iniquities of its proceedings? This was the one question that kept thundering at the gates of my brain like the incessant hammer-blow that could neither be muffled nor stilled.

"My sense of religion and morality is not inconsistent with my sense of political freedom. I believe that a person who is a slave politically cannot realise God who is the spirit of freedom and has made His sons and daughters free to share in the joy that is in Him! I have held, therefore, that political freedom is organically connected with religion and morality; and there ought to be no conflict between them. In fact, I feel in my heart of hearts that the best and the divine in humanity cries in revolt against all forms of tyranny in this world.

"Political freedom, religion and moral ideals should, therefore, be blended together into one harmonious whole and the subject races inhabiting this globe should be politically free. It was for the purpose of bringing this fact home to the thinkers in India and other countries that I selected the Convocation Hall of my sacred Alma Mater as my field of action.

"I am emotional in my temperament. Every act of humiliation to my country, nay, any suffering even to an animal would cause the severest pain to me, which would almost make me mad till it found expression in some work of relief. All the ordinances, all measures to put down the noble aspiration for freedom in my countrymen, came as a challenge to our national manhood and as indignities hurled at it. This hardened even my tender feminine nature into one of heroic mould.

"I studied in the Diocesan College for my B.A. Degree and passed with Honours in English and my father sent me to that College again for an additional course of study for the B.T. degree in order to bring me into closer touch with truly Christian souls and to give me opportunities to see the best side of British character. I gratefully acknowledge that I have immensely

profited by my study under the Sisters of my dear College. But at the same time with the comparative knowledge of things, I felt, and felt with deep anguish, that the Christian spirit was not much in evidence in the administration of a Christian government.

"The series of ordinances savouring of martial law, to my mind, showed nothing but a spirit of vindictiveness and were only measures to crush down all aspirations for freedom. The outrages perpetrated in the name of the Government at Midnapore, Hijli and Chittagong which is my own district—although I have never seen it—and the refusal to publish the official enquiry reports, were things I could never drive away from my mind. The outrages on Amba Dasi of Contai and Niharbala of Chittagong literally upset my whole being. I was private tutor to the wife of a detenu. Every day I saw with my own eyes the sufferings of the poor girl leading the life of widowhood in the lifetime of her husband, the almost demented mother and the father everyday sinking into the grave without their having the faintest notion of the nature of their son's supposed guilt.

"I attended the Court to see the trial of my own sister, Kalyani Das. Her punishment to serve a term of rigorous imprisonment for attending a meeting which could not be held, and for being member of an unlawful Society, without any evidence to show that she was a member thereof except a leaflet, which I learnt was published and circulated without her knowledge, was to my mind extremely unjust. She is a Graduate with Honours and lived in all the comforts of the life of a well-to-do respectable family; still for some days of her life in prison, she was subjected to the ignominy of jail dress and jail diet of an ordinary criminal and had even to pass sleepless nights amongst such criminals. I saw all these with my own eyes and also saw the bitter tears welling out of my dear parents. I thought such must be the sufferings of many families, and many men and women to be counted by thousands.

"All these and many other such things worked on my feelings and worked them into a frenzy. The pain became unbearable and I felt I would go mad if I could not find relief in death. I only sought the way to death by offering myself at the feet

of my country and thus make an end of all my sufferings and by my death invite the attention of all to the situation created by the measures of the Government, which can unsex even a frail woman like myself brought up in all the best traditions of Indian womanhood.

"I can assure all that I could have no grudge against any person or any thing on earth. I have no sort of personal feeling against Sir Stanley Jackson, the man. He is just as good to me as my father; and Lady Jackson, the woman, is also just as good to me as my mother. But the Governor of Bengal represents a system which has kept enslaved 300 millions of my countrymen and countrywomen.

"Now I stand alone before the judgement seat of God and open myself before Him and pray for His all-forgiving love to wash me clean, that I may be a worthy offering to Him. May I see the benignant countenance of the Mother Divine and feel Her loving embrace for me, even for me, at this the most solemn moment of my life, if it be Her will that I should die; or consecrate my life to the service of suffering humanity, which was the deepest longing of my heart, if She out of Her infinite mercy spares it to be used by Her as Her instrument. May God fulfil Himself through my death or life, if it so pleases Him.

"THY WILL BE DONE, O GOD"

(Miss Bina Das is the daughter of Beni Madhab Das—a truly pious and honest gentleman. By religion—he was a Brahmo and very catholic in his ideas; by profession, he was a teacher—served as the headmaster of several Government schools. Subhas Bose, who was a pupil of his in the Cuttack Government schools entertained very high regard for him. Thus Bina, was brought up in the best and highly enlightened traditions of Indian society.)

VIII

Chittagong Uprising

(A)

BENODE CHAUDHURY

The years 1757 and 1857 were vital turning points in Indian history. In the first there was an attempt to prevent the English from being firmly established as rulers. In the second the Indian army in different provinces of India rose in revolt against the British. Unfortunately both the attempts failed. But they did leave a deep impression on the minds of the people of our motherland. Through ruthless brute force, repression and oppression, treachery and fraud, the people were subdued for the time being. But the patriotic feeling kindled in their minds could not be extinguished. It gained momentum year after year.

Secret societies were organised to devise means to rouse the people from slumber. The seeds of revolutionary ideas were sown by poets and writers and patriotic sentiments and ideals flowed from the pens of Hem Chandra, Rangalal, Jyotirindranath Tagore, Nabin Sen, Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath and others. Newspapers and books depicting a true but horrible picture of the country roused national feelings.

Then came Swami Vivekananda, he wanted to organise the young men who would not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice their

comforts and happiness and would be ready to undergo any sort of hardship for the suffering humanity. His clarion call to shake off cowardice greatly influenced the minds of the people of our country. His contribution to the regeneration of the then India, specially Bengal, was incomparable.

Another worthy son of India whose courage, organising ability and foresight deserve mention is Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra. It was he who first boldly preached that in attaining freedom of one's country, the end justifies the means and that every means that would lead to political emancipation of one's motherland was justified. Sri Aurobindo in Bengal also followed a programme of forming secret organisations for the object of armed insurrection.

The partition of Bengal unleashed an agitation of momentous intensity which gave foundation to a national life. The movement gripped the imagination of the young men of Bengal. It was sought to be suppressed by ruthless repression. The nationalist press including the *Bandemataram*, *Sandhya*, *Jugantar* and other papers came out with writings that inspired the people to shake off the shackles of slavery.

A band of selfless young men, undaunted in courage, spread throughout Bengal, took a solemn vow to free their motherland from foreign yoke, if necessary, at the cost of extreme sacrifice. They did fully know that sporadic outbursts of violence resulting in deaths of some Europeans or oppressive Indians would not bring their country's freedom. What they wanted was to rouse the nation and infuse patriotic zeal in the masses by their sacrifices, leading to a real mass upsurge. From the very beginning, it was a decentralised party with different sectors working somewhat independently but invariably pursuing a common policy and programme. The programme inevitably varied with the progress of the national movement, but was the same with the different units at any single moment. In the twenties everywhere it worked in the Congress and through *ashrams* of its own, as always, through small clubs or organisations of youths.

Masterda (Surya Kumar Sen) was the unquestioned leader of the Chittagong unit of the party. Attempts have been made by

interested individuals and parties to depict the Chittagong group as a separate organisation. But it is twisting history with an unholy motive. The secret intelligence reports of the Government, which are now available to the public, also gave the lie to it. In fact, the Chittagong group became integrated with the Jugantar party since the early twenties, when its well-known leader Bhupendra Kumar Datta passed months in Samyasram of Chittagong with Masterda. Their outlook remained identical throughout and Masterda had a hand in chalking out the party's programme after the 1928 session of the Congress in Calcutta. For obvious handicaps, it was not possible to give comparable shape to its working in different places.

Masterda, Nirmalda (Nirmal Kumar Sen), Anantada (Anantal Singh), Ganeshda (Ganesh Chandra Ghose) and Lokada (Lokanath Baul) were released in 1928. Masterda was pleased to find that his lieutenants Madhu (Madhusudan Datta—killed in Jalalabad fight), Ardhendu Datta, Futuda (Tarakeswar Dastidar) and Ramkrishna Biswas (both executed) had done wonderful work in forming a well-knit organisation throughout Chittagong. The leaders' release gave a new impetus to the workers. Organisational activity started in full swing.

The Geeta, life of Swami Vivekananda, the discourses of Ramakrishna Paramhansadeb, lives of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Khudiram, Kanailal, Satyen Bose, *Deshar Katha* by Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, *Pather Dabi* (all proscribed books), Mazzini, Garibaldi, De Valera and books such as *Bejoyee Prachya*, *Bidrohi Prachya* by Shri Arun Chandra Guha and the weekly *Swadhinata* were widely but secretly circulated among the school and college boys who were found to be reliable enough to be members of the revolutionary organisation. The members of the party were recruited after thorough scrutiny and different tests. Morally weak and physically unfit boys were discarded. Masterda's emphasis was always on quality and not on number. Everybody deemed it an honour to be able to meet Masterda, who would invariably try in the first instance to dissuade them from joining a revolutionary party. Personally I had to argue with him on two occasions as to why one should rebel against the imperialist foreign Government. If one could convince him of his earnest-

ness, he would become a member. Of course every trusted worker of Masterda had different methods. Some leaders stressed on adventures but Masterda insisted on dedication to the country and its freedom; the service might often prove silent and prolonged.

Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was experimenting with the cult of non-violence to arouse mass consciousness and he started the non-violent non-co-operation movement. All the revolutionaries including those of Chittagong gave Mahatma a chance but he called off the movement after the Chauri Chaura incident.

When Gandhiji gave the call, Chittagong rose to the occasion, and so tremendous was the movement in the district under the able guidance of Deshpriya Jatindra Mohan Sengupta with such able lieutenants as Sheikh-e-Chatgam Kazem Ali, Nripen Banerjee, Mohim Chandra Das and others that the movement shook the district administration. The Assam Bengal Railway strike, Bullock Brothers strike, Tea-garden workers' strike were launched and such strikes of the workers and labourers brought in a new phase throughout India. Mahatmaji paid his august visit to Chittagong along with Maulana Shaukat Ali and other leaders and the people of this picturesque town of the Eastern front were as if electrified.

After his return from Chittagong, Mahatmaji wrote in *Young India* an article captioned "Chittagong to the Fore". People of Chittagong irrespective of caste and creed joined the movement and courted imprisonment. The words "Chittagong to the Fore" gave them new inspiration. But the prophets of revolution did know that the imperialist rulers would not part with power—power would have to be seized by the masses by their sacrifice. They did not lose the opportunity. They began to recruit cadres from young men, some of them having undergone their terms of imprisonment in Congress movement. They also realised that this national awakening would help them in getting rid of foreign rule and bringing down the strong edifice of a powerful empire. There was comparative lull after the movement was called off. The revolutionaries renewed their activity. After release Masterda made contacts with other revolutionary leaders

of Bengal and began work in right earnest. But where is the money? In the year 1923 two dacoities were committed, the last one is known as the daring railway dacoity case. They decamped with a large sum of money which they sent to Calcutta. But after some time Masterda and Ambikada (Ambika Chakravarti) were arrested in Sulak Bahar hill. But before arrest they had a severe fight with the police and the villagers who followed them. But the accused were acquitted in the case. Thenceforward, it was decided that no more dacoities would be committed. Dacoities entailed risks and worries. Moreover public support is also lost if they try to collect funds through dacoities of private money. Masterda recognised the value of public support. Then all the leaders of Chittagong were detained without trial under Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1924.

I have already narrated briefly that after release in 1928—Masterda found that groundwork for further revolutionary activity had been well prepared by some of his workers who could fortunately avoid imprisonment without trial.

The annual session of Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in 1928. The revolutionaries of different districts got an opportunity to meet together. Ganeshda and Anantada joined the volunteer corps organised in connection with the session. The military uniforms and the military parades caught the imagination of both the leaders, and returning from Calcutta, they began to organise a volunteer corps in Chittagong. The enthusiasm was very great. A physical culture club was at first started at Sadarghat. Body-building, boxing, dagger-play, motor-driving, iron bar bending were regularly taught there. Masterda did not approve of the demonstrative side of it. He would always avoid exuberance of spirit and romantic glamour. He asked me not to be a member of any such club. Of course, he would always ask us to take regular exercise. His idea was not to attract the attention of the intelligence department of the Government.

A district youth conference was held in May 1929. That the youth of Chittagong was restless for action was amply evidenced. But Masterda wore the cloak of a non-violent Congress leader. He worked in his own inimitable way. The District Congress Committee was controlled by Shri Mahim Chandra Das,

Shri Tripura Charan Choudhury and others who used to depend on Masterda very much for Congress organisation. The police had begun to suspect the activities of some of his lieutenants, who had been encouraging young boys to move about dressed in uniforms. To hoodwink the police, Masterda decided to give an appearance of greater seriousness in Congress work, which was then going on in a humdrum way. To give it more vigour our party decided to contest Congress election, which was to take place in September 1929. We were asked to fall in at the J. M. Sen Hall at least two hours before the fixed time of the Congress meeting. The opponents, who were workers of another secret party, were taken by surprise to see that the Hall was packed to suffocation and, feeling absolutely sure that they would be out-voted, they let loose a reign of terror by resorting to violence. Masterda, Nirmalda and some others were wounded but when resistance did come, the opponents took to their heels. Masterda got a deep wound on his forehead as somebody hurled a chair at him. But he was unconcerned. He had a determined look. The forehead was bleeding profusely but he would not leave the Hall. He repeatedly appealed to us to sit calm and quiet in spite of provocations. The election of the executive committee with Masterda as Secretary and Dr. Mahim Chandra Das as president was completed. The resolution was unanimous. I found a smile in his face after the election but Sukhendu Datta, a young boy of about fifteen and one of our best workers, had been mortally wounded while going away from the Hall. There was great excitement. Anantada and Ganeshda were talking of taking retaliation. Masterda forbade them from doing anything of the kind. He advised them to remain calm to deal with the common enemy and not be guided by emotion only. There was none to disobey Masterda.

While working in the Congress, he was making preparations on an insurrectionary programme along with other revolutionaries of different districts. Hence he thought a showdown with another secret party at this juncture would be suicidal though its activities were misdirected.

After Sukhendu's death, I had the opportunity of an interview with Masterda. I asked him why he had not allowed us to

take revenge on Sukhendu's death. He kept silent for a while and told me the Punjab revolutionaries Bhagat Singh, Batukeswar Dutt and others had already started activities. I knew about Saunders murder and throwing of bombs in the Assembly hall, Delhi. Masterda asked me—would it be wise now to fight amongst ourselves? We should conserve our energies to deal a death blow to our foe instead of dissipating the same in petty fights with our political opponents. Bengal should not lag behind. We should give a lead to other provinces. He was exceptionally grave on this occasion. He said great sacrifice would be required now. The thirst of mother India would not be quenched with stray blood-shed of martyrs here and there; Indians must be roused from their stupor. Nearly two hundred years of bondage had demoralised the entire nation. We should have to sacrifice hundreds of Sukhendus to win our freedom. Selfless sacrifice only could inspire our people to rise against the imperialist rulers. We, the revolutionaries, should pave the way for that, so that our future generation might reap the harvest of freedom. I was spellbound. I asked Masterda—"Won't it be possible for us to see our country free and sovereign?" Perhaps you would, replied Masterda but only if you work earnestly for the cause and our masses take up our cause and rebel. In that case India would be free by 1957. The mention of the year 1957 made me curious. Realising my curiosity, Masterda mentioned 1757 and 1857 and explained the implications of the fights by our countrymen. He then had a broad smile on his lips and told me that he was not an astrologer. What he meant was that we must create circumstances that might lead to the achievement of freedom quickly.

After the heinous murder of Sukhendu, Masterda, in consultation with his experienced and trusted co-workers, took a firm decision that there should be no more courting of imprisonment. They must do something which would shake the very foundation of the imperialist fortress and they would create opportunities to fight against the British.

The death of Jatin Das after a hunger strike of 63 days and the fortitude, firmness and courage he displayed, thrilled us all. A very big procession shouting *Inqlab Zindabad, Bandemataram*,

Jatin Das ki jai paraded the streets of Chittagong town and fiery speeches were made by the leaders in the J. M. Sen Hall premises—that urged the audience to avenge the death of the Indian McSwiney. The Irish freedom fighters like De Valera, Terence McSwiney were a great inspiration to Chittagong revolutionaries. The date of our final assault was fixed, keeping in mind the Irish Easter Rebellion. The arrest of some revolutionaries of different districts and unearthing of the Machuabazar conspiracy was a pointer to Masterda. No more of marking time. Quick action became urgently necessary. So a plan and a programme were chalked out but very few knew what that was. We could only guess from the hectic preparations that something daring and bold was being contemplated.

One day in January 1930 I had to accompany Futuda to his house in Firinghee Bazar. I saw Ramkrishna and Ardhendu Dastidar there in a room boiling something over a spirit lamp. I had to stir it for sometime and I was told that crystals would form which would be necessary to prepare bombs. I was shown some yellow crystals collected by this process. The main object of taking me to the place was to direct me to be friendly with the bearers of the college laboratory. Futuda gave me a list of articles to be removed from the laboratory if need be, by bribing the bearers. I did my little bit and came to Firinghee Bazar the next afternoon. Ramkrishna asked me not to go to that place any more as Masterda had not approved of my association in the preparation of bombs. I had with me a dozen heavy bomb-shells of the Dakshineswar type. One day Ramkrishna sent Ardhendu to me to take those shells. Naturally I felt distressed.

The office of the District Congress was shifted from Dewan-bazar to Askhar Khan Dighirpar (bank of Ashkhar Khan's tank). A thatched house surrounded by wild bushes on all sides was hired for the purpose. One day I was asked to see Masterda there. He came to know that I felt a little hurt. He patted me on the back and asked me to be prepared for more responsible work. I was also told to go about the town every afternoon to watch the movement of the police. I also came to know afterwards that other unmarked members of our party had been deputed for the purpose. Masterda could guess that the Intelli-

gence Branch had been minutely watching the movements of our leaders and arrest of some of them might take place. So precautions was to be taken. Police and I.B. movements were to be watched. In the evening and at nights, Masterda would gather information from different sources. Unfortunately Ramkrishna and Ardhendu were wounded at this stage while making bombs. They were removed to different shelters. But fortunately for us the stupid I.B. could not even imagine that bombs were being prepared in the heart of the town. Some time before the "D" Day, Futuda was also seriously injured like Ramkrishna. I found Masterda very restless and anxious that evening. He ordered me to go away immediately and not to come to Congress office for a couple of days at least. I did not show curiosity about what he meant. I thought something serious had happened. But I was anxious for Masterda. The next morning I went out for a morning walk along with two other hostelmates and passed by the side of the Congress Office. I did not notice anything unusual. On the 3rd day I could not help meeting Masterda. He was drafting an appeal to the people of Chittagong to join the Civil Disobedience movement. Leaflets in thousands were distributed under his signature as Secretary, District Congress Committee. This was another shrewd move of Masterda to mislead the I.B. The old Congress leader Mahim Chandra Das had left Chittagong for Kumira—a village adjacent to the sea-shore with a band of volunteers to prepare salt from the sea water. Masterda gave a clarion call to the youth of Chittagong to enrol as volunteers to join the movement of Mahatmaji. The response was very encouraging.

The plan and programme for the 18th of April had already been finalised. But only the principal leaders Ambikada, Nirmalda, Ganeshda, Anantada and Lokada were in the know of the whole plan. Masterda's plan was to overpower the district authorities and make the district free from British bondage at least for some time. The armoury would provide arms to hundreds of our countrymen. The treasury would be taken possession of, prisoners would be freed. The tricolour national flag would be hoisted on the Court Building Hill and Masterda would be the first president of Free Chittagong. Thousands of

leaflets in the name of Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, would be distributed throughout the district appealing to the people to join the revolutionaries. The twenty-one police stations and several arms and ammunition shops of the town would have to be forcibly taken possession of by the members of the party who had been selected for the action of the 18th April. There were hundreds of workers throughout the district. The telephone and telegraph office was to be attacked and burnt down with the help of petrol. So the Government officers would not be able to contact Calcutta or other districts. The Railway lines were to be removed so as to stop re-inforcements arriving; the lives of all Europeans who usually gather at the European Club in the evening for drinking and merry-making were forfeited as a retaliation for the brutal oppression committed on our unarmed and peaceful countrymen. The main armoury situated near the waterworks on the south-western corner of the town and the other armoury of the British Auxiliary Force situated near Pahartali would have to be taken possession of.

Masterda knew quite well that re-inforcements and military would be rushed in. The revolutionaries would fight to the death the British army from the Court Hill top. Such sacrifice of a band of heroic youngmen would doubtless open the eyes of our countrymen and revolutionary activities would grow fast, leading to a total conflagration. Freedom could be had only through a revolution that called for maximum sacrifice of the people.

I do not think we had more than a dozen revolvers and pistols and the same number of bombs. Some of our party members managed to take away the guns of their parents and hand them over to our party. Preparations went on in full swing from the early part of 1930. Some of the members were taught to drive cars; target practice for all of us by turns was arranged in several places in the surrounding hills and on the southern side of the River Karnafuly. Almost 90% had practised boxing and jiu-jitsu. Military preparations proceeded apace.

A mobilisation list was prepared with respective duties allotted to each one of us. On the morning of the eventful day, the majority of us were told of our duties. The mobilisation

list was found in the house of our G.O.C. when his house was searched subsequently and the police could know the names of the participants. Anantada had a Baby Austin; and another Chevrolet car was purchased. But more cars were needed, we had to hire them and then chloroform or overpower the drivers. Thus we got some motor cars at our disposal on the appointed day.

Upenda (Upen Bhattacharjee) was released, after serving several years of imprisonment in Deoghar conspiracy case, some days before the 18th of April. He did not get any rest. He was made the leader of the members who were entrusted to tamper with the railway lines in Dhoom and Jorarganj which they successfully did and a goods train was derailed and the railway lines were blocked.

Ambikada was the leader of the band which was to destroy the telephone and telegraph office. There was very little resistance and everything was done according to plan and programme.

Lokada and Nirmalda and four others were to occupy the British Auxiliary Force magazine stationed at Pahartali. If they could withstand the first assault of the soldiers, they would shout *Bandematarām* and *Inqlab Zindabad*. Several of our members, who would be watching the action, would rush towards the Auxiliary Force Armoury shouting the same slogans. The shouts would invite reinforcements. Lokada was fair-complexioned and dressed in military uniform with stars and stripes. When he went to the gate of the magazine, the sergeants took him for a high-ranking official and sergeant Farrel gave him a military salute. He and others at once opened fire killing some and wounding others. The Auxiliary Force Armoury was broken open with a rope tied to the motor car. There were a number of revolvers with cartridges in the magazine; there were also machine guns, lewis guns and magazine rifles but cartridges could not be found. Resistance came from outside. The District Magistrate also came; he was fired at and his driver was killed. Terror-stricken, the magistrate fled away. Everything useful for us was taken to the car and the magazine was set on fire. The party men reached the police lines where all were eagerly waiting for them.

It was apprehended that the revolutionaries would get serious resistance in the police lines. Anantada, Ganeshda and four others—Bidhu Bhattacharjee, Saroj Guha, Himangshu Sen and Haripada Mahajan—drove their car into the police lines. The sentry on duty shouted "Hookumdar" (Who comes there?). The reply was "Friends". Getting down from the car, they started indiscriminate firing. The sentry was wounded and the others took to their heels. They raised the slogans *Bandemataram*, *Inqlab Zindabad*. We also, twenty of us who had been lying in ambush, darted forward shouting the same slogans and joined the main group. The lock of the armoury was broken open and to our great excitement and joy, we found a large number of musketry rifles and cartridges. So long many of us had no fire-arms; and now there were enough for us all. It took us only fifteen to twenty minutes to gain control of the police armoury and the police lines. The police who were in the barracks fled away, having lost their armoury. The plan was that all other parties after finishing their respective duties would meet together in the police lines.

The instruction to those of us who had been hiding dressed in military costume round about the police lines and the British Auxiliary Barrack was to return to our respective houses in case the two main groups were unsuccessful in their attempts to overpower the police and the auxiliary force. If shouts of *Bandemataram* and *Inqlab Zindabad* were raised we should also rush in, shouting those slogans. The wounded sentry lying on the ground also shouted *Bandemataram* but Andu (Himangshu Sen) silenced him, firing two or three shots point blank at him.

Naresh Roy was incharge of the group which had been sent to kill the Europeans in the European Club. Tripura Sen, Monoranjan Sen, Biren De, Debaprasad Gupta and Amarendra Nandy, all of them very daring and bold, accompanied him. The European Club was closed on account of Easter holiday and only this part of our plan could not be worked out. The party had to return disappointed and dejected. When all the groups had assembled together on the police lines hillock, we were taught how to handle musketry rifles. The national flag of India

was hoisted and the Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, formed itself into a provisional Revolutionary Government under the presidentship of Masterda. A guard of honour was presented to the President.

Swadesh Roy was not selected for action. He lived near the police lines. Hearing shouts of *Bandemataram*, he sensed that his party members had attacked the police lines armoury. He ran forward to join us. Seeing somebody rushing towards us, our sentry shouted aloud, "Who comes there? Hands up." He raised his hands and slowly advanced. There was great joy in our camp to see Swadesh. He died a heroic death in the Kalarpole fighting. The enemies were not sitting idle. They attacked us from the water-works side (eastern side). We were ordered to take lying down position and silence the enemy by continuous firing with the muskets. They fell back for a while.

We collected as many arms as we could and destroyed the remaining by setting fire to the armoury with petrol. Andu caught fire. He began to roll on the ground to put out the fire. He sustained severe burn injuries. Instead of relieving him of the pains by putting him to eternal sleep as he had himself done to the sentry of the police lines, both our top leaders Anantada and Ganeshda, on whom rested the whole responsibility of our military operations, took Andu to a car. Ananda Gupta and Makhan Ghosal also followed them and they left even without informing Masterda of their plan.

The district authorities reinforced themselves from Double Mooring jetty armoury and began machinegun firing. We promptly and effectively repulsed them with incessant firing on the orders of General Lok Nath Baul. Time passed but no sign of the car returning again. There was hurried consultation among Masterda, Ambikada, Nirmalda and Lokada. It was decided to shift ourselves from our position as enemy firing became more intense. Nothing positive could be done in the dense darkness of the night. Ambikada led us to a nearby hill through the paddy fields. Many of us had not the opportunity of an evening meal and some of us collected melons which grew plentifully in the area. It was decided to spend the rest of the night in Sulak Bahar hill where some seven years back our

leaders had fought the police. Amarendra Nandy was sent to the town to contact Anantada and Ganeshda and also to gather information about enemy activity. Unfortunately he could not come back. We were very near the town; and the next night we marched towards the north and took shelter in the Fatehabad hills. On the way biscuits were purchased from a shop and distributed to every one of us. Messengers were again sent to the town in plain clothes but could not contact our operation leaders—Anantada and Ganeshda. We learnt in the evening that curfew had been imposed throughout the municipal area. Masterda remarked it would have been better if martial law had been imposed. Masterda apprehended that the authorities would suppress what had taken place and the people would be quite in the dark. From the 18th night we had been without food. We plucked green mangoes from some trees where we had been hiding. We had already finished the melons—but we did not waste the husks which along with the green mangoes appeased our hunger. Friends—Rajat, Tripura, Manoranjan, Debu and others requested Masterda that they might be allowed to attack the town and die fighting the police and the military and they should not fritter away their energy in the hills. Masterda assured them that their desire would be fulfilled. When they had left, Masterda told me that even well-disciplined soldiers of any foreign army would have revolted if they had been without food for three days. The patriotic soldiers of Indian Revolution had given proof of great morale. He asked Ambikada to try to arrange some food for the hungry soldiers. Ambikada left the hill and came back after about three hours. Nobody could recognise him. He had clean-shaved his beard and he looked like a youngman. He brought plenty of foodstuffs. Everybody had *khichuri* (a preparation of rice and dal) to his heart's content.

Decision had been taken by the leaders that we would approach the town and in different batches attack the Government authorities and, if need be, embrace death. That night we started again but we could not reach the town before daybreak. Very early in the morning, we had to take shelter on a hill; later we came to know that it was Jalalabad Hill. On the 22nd night,

we planned to enter the town simultaneously from different directions and face the police and the military. But some cowherds and woodcutters saw us resting in the Hill dressed in military uniforms. They informed the police and the latter marshalled their forces to arrest us dead or alive.

From some distance we could notice that a train had stopped and soldiers were advancing towards the hill in quick march order. Our sentries were quick to despatch the news to Masterda. He immediately ordered Lokada to arrange the sixtytwo revolutionaries in military formation to have an open fight with the British. Positions were taken by us in the different sides of the Jalalabad hill. Lokada gave us orders to be in battle array. Tegra (Hari Gopal Baul), Tripura Sen, Bidhu Bhattacharjee and Naresh Roy were on the eastern side. Myself, Sasanka Datta, Madhuda (Madhusudan Datta), Ardendhu Dastidar and Jiten-Dasgupta were fifteen to twenty feet to their left; all the others also took positions in different groups. The enemy was advancing on quick march. They began to climb the hill. When Lokada observed that they were within our shooting distance—he shouted —“Friends! open fire.” At once our muskets roared and a free fight ensued. We could see British soldiers rolling down the hills wounded. But we had our casualties also. Tegra was the first victim as the enemy tried to get to the hill at the place where Tegra and others had taken positions. The trained British soldiers had to retreat for a while. All our friends who were with Tegra died fighting bravely. Everyone of us was eager to shoot at the enemy and to silence their firing. The enemies were better equipped. Finding it inconvenient to fight from below, one group climbed a nearby hill and began machine-gun firing at us. It was difficult to resist the soldiers with musket firing. We could fire only one shot and re-load the musket. The muskets got jammed and too hot to hold. The machine gun firing intensified. This took a heavy toll of us. There were shrieks and shouts and booming of rifles, muskets and machine guns. Ardendu shouted—“I am wounded, somebody may take my musket. It is working splendidly.” Jiten and Sasanka’s muskets ceased to work. So I had a natural curiosity to see what had happened. I raised my head nearly a foot when a bullet hit me in my throat piercing

it from left to right and flew away. Madhuda, Jiten and Sasanka had already succumbed. There was profuse bleeding from my wound. It was already dark. The battle had been in progress for long two hours. Rajat and Monoranjan had successfully exploded some bombs on enemy targets. There was chaos in the enemy rank. We could stop their advance to the top of the hill. At last—for reasons best known to them, they slouched away from the hill. Maybe they were afraid of a determined attack in the darkness of the night. Masterda was all the time inspiring us, going round to different groups crawling and helping them in various ways such as clearing the jammed muskets.

When the enemy fled away a hurried conference was held. I was unconscious at the time. A quick and prompt decision was taken to leave Jalalabad Hill. Masterda advised continuing a guerilla type of fight. Military honour was paid to the departed dead. Rajat Sen and Santi Nag came to the place where Ardhendu and myself were lying wounded. Ardhendu told them to take his musket, cartridges and other things. He also pointed at me in the slope of the hill. Ardhendu was seriously wounded in the abdomen. He refused to leave as it was impossible for him to stand on his legs. I regained my consciousness by their whispers. Rajat was one of my bosom friends. He asked me if my pain was unbearable. In that case he would put me to sleep. But Santi intervened. He suggested that I should be carried away. Lokada ordered them to bandage my wound to stop further bleeding and asked them to bring me down the hill. We climbed down in darkness by the western side. The march started again through thick bushes. But alas! one party with Masterda and Nirmalda and the other with Lokada got detached from each other. I was with Lokada's party. He was every now and then asking friends to be all attention to me. I could by this time gain strength to walk. We walked hours and took shelter in a hemp-field for the rest of the night.

The Jalalabad fight as it took place and as I witnessed deserved a more glorious place in the history of independence movements of nations than our foreign masters allowed it to have.

Chittagong Uprising

(B)

AFTER JALALABAD

SATIBHUSAN SEN

The four colleagues Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghose, Makhan Ghosal and Ananda Gupta, separated from the main body of insurgents, left the town when they found that enemy reinforcements were daily arriving and it was not possible to join the main body any longer. They boarded a train from a nearby railway station, but were stopped at Feni about 60 miles away. There was a skirmish with armed police force and they, however, managed to shoot their way out and escaped. Amarendra Nandy had been sent by Surya Sen to contact Ananta Singh and others. Having failed to contact them, he arrived in town, too late, after the Jalalabad battle; he was then too tired to go back to his village shelter. The police got scent of his presence and surrounded the area where he was hiding. He hid himself under a culvert in a lane, but when he found that escape was impossible, took his own life, in the morning hours of 24-4-30.

The European population who had sent their family members—women and children—on board a sea-going vessel on the 18th April when the town was captured by rebels, were staying in a camp in Pahartali guarded by Gurkha soldiers. Six of the revolutionaries—Manoranjan Sen, Devaprosad Gupta, Rajat Sen, Swadesh Roy, Phani Nandy and Subodh Chowdhury—drew a plan of attacking the European camp. Before they could approach Pahartali, however, they were spotted by some Muslims of Firinghee Bazar. They tried to elude the gang and crossed the river Karnafuli in a sampan (a country boat). They found themselves in a Muslim village and no quarter was given to them. The police and the mob chased them in the dark and two of them were separated from the others, and were captured. The other four, Manoranjan, Devaprosad, Rajat and Swadesh, were killed in the encounter. This was the first counter-attack from

the Government on the revolutionaries and happened on 6th May 1930.

Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghose and two young boys left Chittagong within a few days after the armoury raid; but they had lost mutual contact. Ganesh Ghose arrived first at Calcutta via Barisal and he went straight to 71 Mirzapur Street where Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, a leader of the Jugantar party and some other members of Jugantar were then living. Bhupen provided temporary shelter for him. The next to arrive via Comilla was Ananta Singh. He too came to Bhupen Dutta. A good shelter was now arranged at Kidderpur through Himangsu Bose of the Munshigunj section of Jugantar. Soon came also Ananda Gupta and Jiban Ghosal. But before they could be shifted to the shelter, Jiban strayed away. Ananta apprehended he might have gone to the place of 'X' and he did not like that. So he dashed to the place requesting Bhupen Dutta to accompany him and rescued Jiban. Bhupen then arranged a secure shelter through Basanta Banerjee at Chandernagar and gave it a family appearance by including a girl among the three party workers chosen for running the shelter. Lokanath Baul, another leader with a herculean physique and remarkable appearance and known to all and sundry in Chittagong, was sent out of the district. He also came to 71 Mirzapur Street, Calcutta, then a sort of headquarters of the Jugantar party. But Bhupendra Kumar being arrested in June, he was received there by another senior colleague, Kiron Chandra Mukherjee, who sent him to the Chandernagar shelter. Ananta, in the meantime, for mysterious reasons, surrendered to the Intelligence Branch in July. The Chandernagar house was raided by the Indian police only a few days after that. It may be mentioned that Chandernagar was then a French territory and so was considered somewhat safe for political absconders.

The Police Commissioner of Calcutta got information about the Chandernagar shelter and with a posse of hand-picked British officers and sergeants surrounded the house at dead of night and then informed the French authorities and sought their help. No protocol was allowed to stand in the way. The four fugitives attempted to break out but failed. Makhan Ghosal was

riddled with bullets but the other three, Ganesh, Lokenath and Ananda were wounded and taken into custody, in the early hours of 2nd September 1930.

A Special Tribunal was formed for the trial of the prisoners at Chittagong who now numbered about 30 including Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghose and Lokenath Baul among the leaders. After the Jalalabad fight Ambika Chakravarti was considered dead and was left on the hill-top along with other dead. But he survived and took shelter in a village. Ambika Chakravarti was later arrested. Now only Surya Sen the supreme commander and his friend Nirmal Sen were the two leaders who kept the fire burning. They had many opportunities of moving out of the district, but would not hear of it. They kept secret contact with the prisoners in jail and planned further action.*

The Inspector-General of Police, Craig, had come to Chittagong and when he was returning to Calcutta, two young men followed him. They tried to approach his compartment at Laksam Junction but could not because of Gurkha sentries guarding Craig's compartment. But at Chandpur Station, where Craig was to board the steamer, in early hours of 1st December 1930, they jumped into the compartment and fired at whom they thought to be Craig. The victim was however Tarini Mukherjee, an Inspector of Police guarding the I.G.; he was fair and tall like a European. In the melee they escaped but when they were walking away, a few miles from Chandpur, they were caught in the headlight of a police car. They were not prepared for such an emergency and were caught before they could bring out their pistols. In the trial that ensued Ramkrishna Biswas was sentenced to be hanged, and Kalipada Chakravarti to transportation for life.

At this time a plan was being perfected to dynamite the Chittagong court building at the time of the trial, and in the melee, to whisk away the prisoners to safe shelters. Two of his lieutenants had come to consult and report to Surya Sen when they found that they were being followed. They turned round and shot Sasanka Bhattacharya, a Sub-Inspector of Police. Tarakeswar Dasidhar and Birendra De escaped in the gathering darkness. This was in the month of May 1931. On the 2nd June, however,

a young man was arrested and a big land mine was found on his person. He was laying it near the court buildings and connecting it with electric wires. Within a short time the police dug up all the mines and miles and miles of electric wire, all leading to an abandoned hut of the Municipal school just near the court building.

When this attempt failed, and many young boys were arrested, another plan was drawn up for breaking up of the jail. At the end of June 1931, some masons were working inside the prisoners' compound, when they unearthed a foot or two of electric wire and some bulb, which appeared to be new. This aroused the suspicion of the jail authorities and they began to dig up the whole compound foot by foot. About twenty revolvers and pistols with cartridges, a dozen daggers, six swords and a huge quantity of explosives were unearthed.

With the failure of these two collective plans, Surya Sen went back in favour of individual action. He drew out a plan to murder Khan Bahadur Ashanulla, the D.S.P. of Intelligence Branch. By then, he had made himself notorious by his over-zealous and repressive actions. Now Ashanulla's house was in a Muslim area and guarded by Muslim watchers. No outsider could approach within 500 yards of the house. But he had a weakness for sports. There was the football shield final in which his team was to play on the 30th October 1931. Proper precaution was taken, the pavilion was surrounded by Gurkhas and the D.M. and S.P. were also present there. A young boy of 15, Haripada Bhattacharya, managed to slip through the Gurkhas with an umbrella in his grip. In this umbrella was a loaded revolver. A dedicated and determined boy can surmount any obstacle. Haripada saw Ashanulla dead before he thought of escape. He was shot and beaten up and in the trial was awarded transportation for life instead of hanging because he was below sixteen.

Hell was let loose on Hindu residents of Chittagong. Muslim goondas of the town and suburbs were mobilised and given a free hand to loot Hindu houses. Hindu males between the age of 15 and 45 were beaten up and dragged through the street to the Police station. Shops and private houses were looted and some of them were set on fire. It was given the label of communal

riot, which raged through the district for three days. Over and above, a collective fine of Rs. 1 lakh was realised from the Hindus of the town.

Surya Sen then shifted his activities to neighbouring districts. Benode Dutt was sent to Comilla, Saroj Guha to Noakhali and Benode Chaudhuri to Dacca and Mahendra Chaudhuri to Calcutta. They were to draw up their plan of action and get permission from the leader for the green signal. Benode Dutt's assistant Sailesh Roy shot down at Comilla the Addl. Supdt. of Police Ellison when he was on his way to office, killed him and escaped. Saroj Guha with his assistant Ramen Bhowmik of Noakhali shot and seriously wounded Durno, the District Magistrate of Dacca when he went to a shop in Nawabpur in Dacca and escaped. Benode Chaudhuri had to leave Dacca in a hurry. Mahendra Chaudhuri drew up a bold plan of shooting Nalini Mazumdar, the Deputy Commissioner, Special Branch, but the plan failed.

In the meantime the villages of Chittagong were honeycombed with police camps, and spies were recruited from all sections. An identity card was introduced, which was to be carried by every young man between the ages of 12 and 35. These cards were in three different colours, white, blue and red, with the name and address of the holder. White indicated that the holder had nothing against him, a blue card indicated that he was a suspect and the red card indicated that he was really dangerous. Every young man was to carry his card and produce it for inspection when met by a policeman or military.

The military camp commander Cameron of Dhalghat, on certain information one night surrounded the house of a widow, Sm. Sailobala Devi. When he rushed into the house he was shot dead. The Gurkhas surrounding the house started firing, which was replied to from inside the house. In the morning a machine gun was trained on the house and the inmates were asked to surrender. The dead body of Nirmal Sen was found on the top floor and Cameron's body at the foot of the stairs. The body of another absconder, Apurba Sen, was found about 100 ft. from the house. Evidence in the house indicated that Surya Sen the leader and a girl Pritilata Waddedar were also there but had

managed to break through the Gurkha cordon. It was on 12th June 1932.

Previously girls were generally given the task of arranging shelters and collecting money. But as days passed, they wanted front line jobs and Surya Sen had to yield. He planned a raid on the Pahartali European Club, and entrusted Pritilata Waddedar to lead the action. After the Dhalghat incident, the Europeans breathed more freely as only one senior leader was now at large. Suddenly a bomb burst in the hall succeeded by a volley of bombs and shots from all directions. An European lady was killed and scores were injured. The raiders vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. Only the dead body of Pritilata was left on the approach road. Priti had taken her own life, in the early^a hours of 24-9-32.

Now information from spies was pouring in, the police raiding this house and that. Most of the informations were baseless; some reached the police too late. It was evident that Surya Sen was then almost alone; but he declined to leave the district which, by then, had become very unsafe for him. One evening the police surrounded a dilapidated house in the village of Jangalkhain on the 22nd Nov., 1932. A young man Syam Kumar Nandi tried to break through and was killed while another escaped. In that house were arrested one young man with burn injuries and his attending doctor.

After several false clues the police at last surrounded a house in Gairala village near Patiya on 16th Feb., 1933. The military took positions and fired flare-rockets for illumination. In spite of it several young men and a girl, Kalpana Dutta, managed to escape though all of them were wounded by rifle shots, but Surya Sen, the leader, was spotted and captured when he had almost broken through the cordon. The revolutionaries learned that Netra Sen, a neighbour, had betrayed them. He was hacked to death in a few days. And the O.C. of Patiya, Makhn Dikshit, who had led the military party, was shot dead on 26.3.1933, ten days after the arrest of Surya Sen.

The first Armoury Raid case had ended by this time resulting in the sentence of transportation of twelve of the accused, while the other eighteen were given lesser periods. In the second

Armoury Raid case Ambika Chakravarti, Hemendu Dastidar and Saroj Guha were tried. Nobody knew that Saroj Guha was the fugitive of the Durno outrage of Dacca. Ambika Chakravarti was sentenced to death, which was later reduced to transportation for life. Saroj was given transportation for life while Hemendu was kept in detention. Chittagong Jail now held only Surya Sen, but he was undaunted and lost no time in winning over some sweepers and warders and drew out a plan for a jail break.

Sailesh Roy, who had disappeared from Comilla after the Ellison murder, appeared in Chittagong and took admission in Chittagong College. He was arrested on suspicion on 20-30-33. A piece of paper which he was trying to swallow was extracted from his mouth. It contained a list of arms, ammunitions and explosives. A search of his house and a nearby Muslim's house unearthed a revolver, some cartridges and bombs.

Meanwhile the police were combing the district for the remaining few of the revolutionaries. On 18-5-33 they surrounded a house in Gohira village and in the battle that followed, Manoranjan Das and Purna Talukder were killed, and two revolutionaries escaped. But in the house was captured Tarakeswar Dastider and a girl absconder Kalpana Dutt. In the trial that ensued Surya Sen and Tarak were sentenced to death and Kalpana to transportation for life.

On 12-1-34 Surya Sen and Tarakeswar Dastider were hanged in Chittagong Jail. Tarakeswar's body was cremated within the jail but the mortal remains of Surya Sen were buried into the sea, so that no trace of the bold and beloved leader of Chittagong could be unearthed by the people in future.

The revolutionaries planned a fitting farewell to bid good-bye to their beloved Masterda Surya Sen. On 7-2-34 a cricket match was being played on the ground adjoining the European Club. Just when the game had ended four young men dressed like Muslims rushed from four sides. They had luckily eluded the police up till now, but were spotted as soon as they started firing. Nriitya Ranjan Sen and Himangsu Chakravarti were shot dead and Krishna Chowdhuri and Hemendra Chakravarti overpowered. They were sentenced to death by another Special Tribunal.

Chittagong Uprising

(C)

REPRESSION—IMPERIALIST BARBARITY

(A. C. G.)

It may be relevant here to give a picture of police repression in Chittagong during these days. We get a vivid picture of that in what has been written by a Muslim police officer (S'adat Ali Akhand) who was then posted in Chittagong and who also previously had five years' experience in the I.B. office at Calcutta. Khan Bahadur Ahsan Ullah was the head of the Intelligence Branch at Chittagong. He was ruthlessly carrying out the Government policy of repression. Akhand writes about him—"There was some originality in the repressions of Khan Bahadur. Even without any search warrant, he would conduct search not only in the house of the suspect but of all his neighbours and relatives. This was, of course, illegal Physical oppression apart, he would destroy everything in the house searched. In one house, with the help of an axe, he destroyed cots, almirahs and furniture and burnt them all." Naturally he attracted the notice of the revolutionaries and he was murdered by a boy below 16—Haripada Bhattacharya—in open daylight on 30th August 1931 in a public place. Because of his tender age, his death sentence was commuted to life transportation.

We are giving here the translation of what Akhand has written in a Bengali book recently published in Bangladesh: "On the night of the murder of Khan Bahadur Ahsan Ullah, something strange happened. The same day by 9 o'clock in the evening, all the Hindu shops, firms, godowns were looted. The entire police force was observing mourning and they were engaged in the burial ceremony of Ahsan Ullah. On return from the burial place, they found that the work of looting had been effectively done without any hindrance. The officer-in-charge of the Kotwali Police Station took down reports in his *ejahar* (book for taking

down the first information reports). After taking down about 300 such cases, the pages of his book were exhausted.

"It was an affair of a big loot. For about three or four hours in a leisurely way, the loot was carried on. There were also some cases of arson. The electric works of Chittagong were working. The whole town, the shops and the roads had enough of electric light; even then the complainants did not mention any name of the looters. They only mentioned that they could identify them but they did not know the names.

"Police version was that the complainants deliberately did not mention the names (surely out of fear of further oppression). Otherwise, how was it possible that they could not even name 10 or 12 persons out of these thousands of plunderers. Wherefrom could these unknown looters have come? The Hindus of Chittagong believed that this looting was possible because of the deliberate indifference of the police. The hooligans knew that there would be no opposition from the police... After the Chittagong armoury raid when the entire Hindu population of Chittagong was oppressed under the boots of the police and military, at that stage Deshpriya Jatindra Mohan Sengupta asked the Hindus to withdraw the cases so that the harmony between the two communities might be re-established. And really, communal harmony was restored.

"But there was no restoration of normal relations between the Hindus and the police. From the night of the armoury raid, the British Government had been conducting unrelenting repression and that somewhat abated only after the execution of Surya Sen and Tarakeswar Dastidar (12.1.34). For these full four years the entire Hindu population of Chittagong, men and women, were under the steam roller of the police and military let loose on them. Yet the Hindus did not like to come to any compromise with the Government. Murder of Capt. Cameron, raid on the Pahartali European Club, murder of police spy Netra Sen in broad daylight, all these were indicative of the unbending fortitude of the revolutionaries. The Hindus did not render any help in the investigation of the murder of Khan Bahadur Ahsan Ullah; they completely non-co-operated with the whole affair.

"It is undeniable that there was no remedy for the Hindus of

Chittagong, irrespective of men and women, from the relentless oppression of the police and military. When all the avenues were closed to them, they became more determined to kill any Englishman or any supporter of Englishmen and, for this young boys and girls whose names were never in the list of suspects with the police also participated in daring acts.

"By murdering Ahsan Ullah they wanted to save the whole community from oppression and so the poor boy Haripada was sacrificed for this purpose. But what was the result? Did the oppression stop after this? No. When Khan Bahadur was replaced by Nani Babu, oppression became perhaps more intense."

This officer, the author of the book, was then a court inspector in Chittagong. One day while he was sitting in his room, one sub-inspector entered his room in full uniform and handed over a young girl to him and asked him to take charge of that girl and the sub-inspector left. The author then continues the story: "I saw the girl limping towards a chair and groaning. I asked her, 'Have you been sick? Have you got fever?' As if she could not understand the implication of my question, she looked at me and advanced her hand towards me. I examined her pulse; there was no sign of fever. I asked her then, 'Why are you groaning?' The girl burst into tears, 'I am not groaning for fever but they have thrashed me all over my body and inflicted several injuries.' I received a sudden shock and got up from the chair. The reply was so unexpected! and I asked her—who had beaten her? The girl almost in a groan said 'That khaki'. I asked, 'Was it the police?' She replied, 'No'. Those Gurkhas, the D.I.B. Inspector Nani Das was along with them and he directed them and identified me as the sister of Dipti Medha (a political suspect then). And those bull-dogs pounced upon me."

"I could not find any reply or could not see how to appease her insulted womanhood. After some time I asked her, 'Why did you not complain to the Magistrate?' She roared, 'What do you mean? I complained to that leprosy-faced Magistrate this morning. Do you know what that rascal said? He said that's nothing....'

"The girl was groaning in pain. I was feeling helpless, how to relieve the suffering of this oppressed girl. I am not a doctor."

The only offence of this girl who had just then reached her teenage was that she was the sister of a suspect. That was the reign of terror which ruled Chittagong for more than four years, and the entire Hindu community and also quite a number of Muslims particularly in rural areas stood against this repression and helped the revolutionaries. Surya Sen and Nirmal Sen and other important absconders could not have remained at large for about four years without the support of the rural people, including even some of the Muslims, who then formed about 80% of the rural population.

J. M. Sen Gupta along with Akram Khan conducted a non-official enquiry on behalf of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. The Committee found the whole thing to be the outcome of a definite policy of the Government. Calcutta Corporation also passed a resolution accusing the Government. Sen Gupta in supporting the resolution said, "I have personally inspected the places where these incidents occurred. I have visited the houses which have been destroyed. I have visited a printing press which has been broken to pieces—I am sorry to say—by some non-official Europeans. I have visited the villages where poor women's houses have been destroyed and burnt in the middle of the day not by Mahomedans, nor by paid hooligans, but by the so-called protectors of the peace—the police, British officers and so-called Gurkhas. Therefore, it does not, to my mind, require any investigation. One has to merely go and witness the havoc, the destruction of houses in the town and in the villages. One need not do anything but look at the severe injuries which still remain on the bodies of persons on whom injuries were inflicted. Therefore, I give my whole-hearted support to this resolution.

"I may state here once more that we have come to a definite finding that the incidents at Chittagong, on that night of Sunday, the 30th August, were entirely under the control and guidance of police officers and non-official Europeans and the officials of the town. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday all the attacks on the houses and villages were entirely conducted by Police Officers and British Officers. Not a single Mahomedan—be it said to their credit—although that community was canvassed,

came forward to help these people. The only incident in which Mahomedans took part was the looting of shops in the town at midday on Monday. It was there that we found some tinge of communalism on the face of it. But on examination we found that it was only a few hooligans mainly who did that.

"These are the conclusions that we came to in the enquiry. Those are the conclusions that the people of Bengal have accepted." (*Calcutta Municipal Gazette*).

IX

A Colony, A World War and A Patriot

AMIT KUMAR GUPTA

Subhas, of all the fore-runners of Indian liberation movement, remained a relatively straightforward character for the posterity to understand. Since the days of the Non-co-operation movement, when (in 1921) he resigned from his position in the Indian Civil Service, till at least January 1941, prior to his dramatic disappearance from Calcutta, he was consistently polemical, uncompromising and outspoken. He did never show traits of enigmatic vagueness of the *Mahatma*, Hamletian hesitancy of Jawaharlal and disconcerting quietude of the Sardar. But, curiously enough, the last leap of the "springing tiger" was more staggering than intelligible.

There was hardly any trace of astonishment when public tension was mounting over Subhas's arrest in July 1940, his undertaking a fast until death in protest against his continued detention and his subsequent internment in the Elgin Road house. An interlude of rumours soon followed over Subhas's devoting himself entirely to meditation. He was reported to have declined to see visitors, family members and servants and submitted himself to scriptures, rosary and potraits of saints. But this was

not altogether a surprise at a place where revolutionaries were also religiously inclined. After all, the public were familiar with rebel Aurobindo's renunciation following the minor political hazard of an arrest warrant. So Subhas's political future suddenly appeared so predictably simple. Was he not devoted to spiritual values of the country? Did he not idolise Swami Vivekananda? When people were thus trying to grasp Subhas's spell of spiritualism there came the startling news of his mysterious escape from house arrest on 16 January 1941. The national stupefaction continued till his broadcast to the nation on 19 February 1942 over Azad Hind Radio, defying all gossips as to his whereabouts, and even a British assertion about his death in an air crash. Subhas abruptly seemed to be a half-known hazy character, unpredictable and almost unreal. But was he?

The clue lies in the periodic factionalism of Indian National Congress as revealed in 1939, reminiscent of the bickerings of Moderates and Extremists in 1907 or Pro-changers and No-changers in 1922. But the battle between Gandhi and Subhas in 1939, and thereafter, was more intense, ruthless and vindictive (on both sides) than all similar incidents. It all started with Subhas's excessive eagerness for a showdown with the British *Raj* and Gandhi's extreme caution in a fight. The latent difference of this militancy and moderation was there as early as in February 1931 when Gandhi confidentially remarked to Viceroy Irwin that Subhas was his "opponent" and capable of "denouncing" him.¹ This Subhas actually did with venom in Vienna along with Vithalbhairam in May 1933. The storm was gathering and Subhas was turning into an exuberant critic of Gandhi in the succeeding five years. He was impatiently spoiling for a fight with the British *Raj* for India's complete independence, and with Gandhian leadership for the radicalisation of the Congress. Subhas was an enthusiastic fighter, but not a particularly strong one in political manoeuvring. Neither in political image nor in diplomatic guile could he compete with the *Mahatma*. Behind the facade of militancy, Subhas was still hovering in search of a distinct political programme.

The situation considerably eased when Gandhi became a guest of the Boses in Calcutta in October 1937 and Congress

Presidentship at Haripura was offered to Subhas to satiate his ambition—a trick paying rich dividend with Jawaharlal in the past. For a time it was apparently all smooth sailing till Subhas sought re-election in 1939. Gandhi never expressly opposed Subhas's move or publicly suggested his own nominee. But discreetly he prompted his *Satyagrahis* to resist Subhas on the plea of unanimous Presidential election.² As expected, Subhas discovered a confrontation of the old guard, imagined a plot of their compromise with the British Government, fought grimly for a victory in the Presidential contest with Sitaramayya and won finally a defeat. The "morally sickening atmosphere" in Tripuri in March 1939 grew with Gandhi's injudicious call for the minority to come out of a Subhasist Congress and the Working Committee's resignation in protest against the President's alleged lack of confidence in them. It progressed with throwing overboard Subhas's pet theme of serving an ultimatum of mass civil disobedience on the British Government. It ended with Pant's shrewd vote of no-confidence against the President through a demonstration of religious reliance on Gandhi, who was conveniently away in Rajkot throughout. By Pant's resolution Subhas was forced to ask for co-operation from the promulgator of non-cooperation over the selection of a Working Committee bearing Gandhi's confidence. Much was then said about the ridiculous proposition of a homogenous leadership in a heterogeneous party. It was an incredible situation on the whole and Subhas had to resign. Gandhi's political oligarchy in the Congress was saved anyhow.

Subhas was great in attack but weak in defence. Gandhi amply demonstrated in 1939 that Subhas's intrinsic strength was limited and that he had not much to fall back upon. He was favourite of the masses but not their leader. He had an all-India name but no all-India base. He rejected the Gandhian creed but could not devise his own plan of mass movement. Ideologically he was yet groping for National Socialism, Sin Feinism and Bolshevism in turn. He was the mouthpiece of the New but not the acclaimed representative of the Left. He had little link with the peasants and workers and he controlled merely the sentimentalist youthful middle class. At the hour of his defeat Subhas

must have become aware of his limitations. But he did not let pass his opponents unchallenged and replied by forming the Forward Bloc and rushing forward for a Left Consolidation inside the Congress. None of these made much headway but both contributed to Subhas's expulsion from the Congress in August 1939. However, the showdown was by no means the end of the show and Subhas continued his lone fight. He undertook tours, addressed meetings and wrote powerfully—all against the Gandhian claim of spinning away to freedom. Unlike many public figures of the day, Subhas's professions and practices were more or less compatible.

Meanwhile took place two developments which finally led Subhas to determine his future, namely, the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and his arrest in July 1940. The former offered him the hint of a different dimension and the latter gave him the opportunity to ponder over a new course of action. Following Britain's entry into the War, India was declared a belligerent country by a Government declaration. When the Congress leadership was brooding over their bargaining position against the British Government in return for the utilisation of Indian resources in the war, Subhas pleaded—in his characteristic manner—for striking when the iron was hot. He repeated his advocacy for an ultimatum of civil disobedience to the British Government in order to take full advantage of Britain's difficulty in an imperialist war. Following the Anti-Compromise Conference in March 1940, he—all by himself and his Forward Bloc—attempted a "countrywide" *satyagraha* against the war effort and "nefarious designs" of British imperialism—a cudgel taken up two years later by a half-hearted Congress leadership in a left-handed manner. In the Nagpur Conference of the Forward Bloc in June 1940, Subhas was marvelled at Germany's blitzkrieg, the capitulation of Central Europe and the Battle of Britain looming large. The hour of Britain's crisis indeed seemed the hour of India's emancipation. But in July 1940 an iconoclast Subhas was arrested while campaigning against Holwell monument for rehabilitating the highly romanticised Sirajuddowla—a metaphorical digression in Gandhian style. Subhas's continued detention without trial and then without any prospect of release

in the near future must have made him bitter, anguished and frantic. It must also have afforded him a leisurely opportunity to think furiously about himself—a stock-taking of what he could do or could not do, an introspection into his own position in the national movement and India's position in a fast moving world. The outcome was a glimpse of the possible future course of action. Subhas himself recollected later how he spent "days, weeks and months in carefully considering the pros and cons" of his escape in January 1941.³ It was not as inexplicable as it first appeared.

Subhas's obviously hypothetical line of action was based on certain premises. The situation of the Second World War, though extremely fierce, was relatively simple. The Axis Powers led by Germany was vastly successful. Italy was energetically driving from Cyrenaica towards Egypt while Germany became the master of Central Europe. France had fallen and Britain was alone fighting the battle of her existence. As it seemed then (even after Britain's success in the Battle of Britain) persistent aerial and undersea blows could finally dispose of Britain's resistance and nobody thought it was beyond Hitler's capability. (It was not known at that time that Hitler's generals treated the invasion of Britain as "a bluff"⁴ and that Hitler's thoughts, from October 1940 onwards, were singularly occupied with a surprise attack on Russia.) Russia was near the fence, worried yet relieved that she had managed to buy ephemeral security from an imperialist war by signing the Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact of 23 August 1939. The United States was still philosophically watching the development from an ivory tower. Japan, though all set, was yet perplexed at what Hitler was really up to.

It was "crystal clear" to Subhas that in Britain's decline alone lay the hope of India's freedom.⁵ As no compromise was possible between British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism, "...one must perish for the other to live"⁶. The setback of the allies in the War, especially of Britain, offered to Nationalist India "a golden opportunity... rare in a nation's life time" to free herself.⁷ In the previous war of 1914-19 Indians, unlike the Irishmen, merely contemplated about taking advantage of Britain's troubles without being able to act on it. Subhas would not like another

opportunity to be wasted. Nationalist India must, therefore, side actively with the Axis Powers, for Britain's enemies were but India's friends.⁸ In his eagerness, however, Subhas did not care to examine the strength of Hitler's determination to destroy Britain. But who could foreshadow in 1941 that Hitler was pressurizing Britain only for a convenient understanding? Subhas was equally unwilling to be carried over by ideological issues. He was known to have a soft corner for the Black Shirts in Italy and the Nazis in Germany though, in fact, he repudiated the Imperialist aggression of the Fascists in 1938,⁹ and of Japan in 1937.¹⁰ But neither ideological finesse nor internationalist sophistication was Subhas's strong point. His devotion to nationalism was infinitely stronger than his belief in Socialism. He did not bother as much to discover if Fascist internal and external policies stemmed from the same origin as to use the Fascist position in War in India's national interest. Did not Daladier and Chamberlain appease Hitler in Munich in September 1938 to divert aggression towards Communist Russia? Did not an internationalist Stalin do the same in August 1939 in anticipation of war and with the prior knowledge of persecution of the working class movement in Germany? Then, did not Churchill, in the midst of war, co-operate with Stalin for self-preservation against Fascism? Nationalism and political naivety, though characteristics of the subject races, were not solely Subhas's monopolies.

The other major premise of Subhas's formulation was that Britain would not give up her empire without a challenge of strength and that the struggle for national liberation, armed of course, could not be won without external aid. "I have studied very carefully this struggle for liberty that has gone on all over the world during the last 200 years but I have not as yet discovered one single instance where freedom was won without outside help of some sort"¹¹. In the context of the onward march of Axis Powers in the war "it would indeed be foolish not to take the fullest advantage of such assistance which fate and history provided for Indians"¹². This assertion of Subhas, with an undertone of Indian revolutionary terrorists of 1914-16 and Irish Volunteers of 1916, about lessons of history was substan-

tially correct. But history also indicates that the initiative of utilising external aid, which is but one of the elements of a successful freedom struggle, should always remain inside the country—on the very spot of struggle. In his own case, Subhas was exporting the initiative abroad. Besides, was external aid really essential for India's deriving advantage from an imperialist war? A violent anti-British upsurge throughout the country at Britain's hour of distress would in itself have been crucial. Strangely, Subhas, who always longed for such an upsurge, decided to leave—in his anxiety to seek foreign help—the multitude in India to the care of a "compromising" Gandhian leadership. Unfortunately for Subhas, as it seemed to him perhaps, he was left with no choice. He was pushed out of the Congress and deserted by the Left. His Forward Bloc was far from catching the popular imagination and he himself was still away from swaying the masses. Besides, the British Government was alert not to give him a free hand or to allow him any immediate freedom from arrest. Subhas must have concluded that his effectiveness in steering the internal situation had come to an end. In his plunge into Europe, Subhas staked his own future more than his country's. He felt it necessary, therefore, to limit himself to the task of seeking external help synchronising any future development inside the country rather than to wait and lose time. He left India "... in order to establish direct contact with the enemies of British imperialism and thereby link up India's fight for freedom with the struggle of the Tripartite Powers against our old enemy, Britain"¹³.

Subhas could not have remained indifferent towards the most ticklish of all the issues, namely, the apprehension of letting the Axis Powers in while chasing the British out of India. There is nothing on record to show Subhas's explicit reactions. He was also not likely to express himself publicly while living under the shadows of the Axis Powers. Yet it is possible for one to find camouflaged statements in his speeches here and there, like, "... no one should make the mistake of concluding that external collaboration with the Tripartite Powers means acceptance of their domination or even of their ideology in our internal affairs"¹⁴. Again,—“In the political field I should be the last man

to expect foreign powers to sympathise with us if it were not in their own interest to do so"¹⁵. These remarks at least hint that Subhas's attitude towards the Axis Power was one of political expediency. The outcome of such an expedient in the event of a Tripartite victory is, however, a matter of conjecture. Subhas often spoke of numerous contradictions among the Allied Powers and he probably had in mind similar conflicts of interest inside the Tripartite bloc. Hitler and Mussolini, even at the outset of their European adventure, did not always agree on all the issues. The conflict for a sphere of influence over India, following a British defeat, was a likely phenomenon to arise in Hitler-Mussolini relations. Again, the Japanese entry into the war—a foreseeable development in 1941¹⁶—could always result in a rivalry between Oriental Japan and Occidental Germany and Italy for hegemony over South Asia. This was a distinct possibility in the perspective of a known Japanese dream of an Eastern Empire covering the western coast of India. It is also relevant to recall Hitler's reaction at the initial Japanese successes in the war: "It means the loss of a whole continent, and that is to be regretted, for it is the white race which is the loser"¹⁷. It is quite possible that Subhas depended on this possibility as far as his vague future was concerned. He was reported to have commented confidentially, while in Germany, that only two situations could emerge from the Second World War—a defeat for the Axis Powers meaning a setback for India's liberation, or a victory of theirs with the prospect of Indian independence tinged with apprehensions, of course, of another foreign domination. In the case of the second alternative Subhas did not, and could not, take any assurance of the Axis Powers on its face value and felt his chances lay in taking advantage of an eventual contradiction between Japan and Germany.¹⁸ Apart from victory and defeat in a strenuous, all-pervading war there was always a third alternative, namely, a revolutionary changeover. It happened in the cases of Russia and, partially, Turkey in the First World War. It is not known whether Subhas at all pondered over this point. But chances of a third alternative coming to the surface in Germany were dormant in the situation. The Nazi regime was based more on persecution than on Mittel European myths. But

opponents of Nazism in Germany were subdued and not eliminated. Social-Democrats were sprinkled all over Germany, pro-Communist elements hidden here and there and discontentment in the army under Prussian blue blood was rising with the pressure of war. This undercurrent of hostility often revealed itself through assassination attempts on Hitler and carefully laid out plots. This discovery of the widening conflict inside Nazi Germany is obviously the result of a post-war postmortem. But significantly Subhas's main contact in Hitlerite Germany throughout was a disguised socialist, Adam von Trott Zu Solz, an opponent of Nazi Germany from its very inception and a martyr participant of the famous Stauffenberg plot of July 1944. Curiously enough, Subhas seemed to be aware not only of "an ultra-nationalistic" nature of Nazi Government¹⁸ but also of the prospect of a future German Government "predominantly Leftist in character"¹⁹.

Whatever might have been the various hypotheses of Subhas, they were certainly centred round the Soviet Union and the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact. The understanding of August 1939 gave an impression to the rest of the world that Russia would remain outside the war flames. This was an important consideration for an Indian explorer in the war-time European situation. At the outbreak of war, Stalinist Russia enjoyed a unique position—she was, by no means, the ally of any of the warring combinations and the ultimate enemy of both. Though no more eager as in the 1920's to squander money away for transporting revolutions in the East, Soviet Russia was still theoretically committed to her spacious profession of liberating the colonial countries. To Subhas, a militant nationalist in the thick of anti-Imperialist struggle, Soviet Russia thus appeared to be the biggest dividing and dubious factor in the West, an ideal springboard for any indefinite European adventure. It was but natural that Subhas's preference was to go to Moscow first before he could think of proceeding towards Berlin or Rome. This is exactly what Uttam Chand, Subhas's friend in the Afghan wilderness, recorded. This was what Subhas unequivocally stated before the Nazi authorities soon after his arrival in Germany: "... *status quo* between Germany and Soviet Russia should be

maintained" to wreck British influence in the colonial countries of the East.²⁰ The Russian embassy in Kabul, however, was reluctant to assist Subhas in obtaining a visa for Moscow. It was not unusual for an isolated suspicious power to be on guard against a mysterious visitor—whose plans were not abundantly clear even to himself and whose wavering faith was evenly distributed between Russia and Germany. But Russia did not reject Subhas altogether—the grant of a transit visa through Russia was a tacit indication. On 28 March 1941 Subhas flew into Berlin from Moscow with a bold plan of action. It involved—as all bold plans did—risky calculations and miscalculations.

Before Subhas could settle in Germany, get over Nazi suspicions and begin his diplomatic overtures the fatal mishap of the War took place. On 22 June 1941 Hitler chose to attack Russia—a mistaken strategic decision which he took by over-emphasizing the Anglo-French reverses and in preference to strengthening Italy's battle in North Africa and carrying it to the Middle East. For Subhas the Hitlerite aggression on Russia proved to be a miscalculation of far-reaching consequences. He immediately remonstrated to the Germans by pointing out the adverse effect it would have on Indian opinion. Indians looked upon Russia as an anti-Imperialist country and, therefore, an ally of India against Britain. Germany would be considered in India, for her attack on Russia, as yet another dangerous Imperialist country.²¹ Ernst Woermann, Nazi Foreign Secretary, was shocked to find Bose so strongly favouring the Soviet Union's case as against Germany's.²² But Subhas did never budge from his position and always held that Hitler's attack on Russia was "fundamentally responsible" for Germany's final collapse.²³ In June 1941 his apprehension was stronger than disappointment and the invasion of Russia menacingly hinted him—not merely the end of his hope of help from Stalin, but the beginning of an end of the War itself.

That Subhas continued persistently in convincing the stony Nazi Government of the necessity of assisting the Indian cause, established a Free India Centre in Berlin for propagating Indian aspirations, obtained monetary aid as a national loan to be paid back, arranged for the setting up of Azad Hind Radio for

nationalist propaganda, organised an Indian Legion with prisoners of war under German training and on condition of their fighting in India alone—and all these in one year's time—speak of Subhas's great energy and organising ability. Still India remained far too distant and the high hopes of the march of an Indian Liberation Army through the German-dominated (if not occupied) Russia or through Balkans, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan to India looked so unreal. This was because of Subhas's failure to evoke German response to his main objective, namely, a joint declaration in favour of Indian independence—a step towards committing the Axis Powers in an Indian undertaking. The Axis Powers sympathised with Subhas, trained his men, financed his organisation without holding, however, any further promise. The reason was probably as Count Ciano, Mussolini's Foreign Minister, mentioned—a general doubt about the real “value of this upstart”²⁴. Possibly they wanted Subhas merely for war propaganda as evidenced from Goebbel's satisfaction on the effect of Azad Hind Radio on “the British nerves”²⁵. There was, however, no doubt about one fact—that Hitler was not contemplating any invasion of India at any stage. He always recognised the continued existence of the British Empire and thought it as useless to him as the Catholic Church.²⁶ Besides, Hitler continued to be hopeful for an Anglo-German understanding till at least the middle of the war. He was fighting Britain with the sole object of extracting a British promise to leave Germany a free hand in Eastern and Central Europe. Thus it seemed to Nazi Germany that any public commitment to Subhas was a risky manoeuvre. When Hitler met Mussolini in the palace of Klessheim, Salzburg, on 29 April 1942 and the issue of Indian independence was raised, he referred to the German declaration of Polish independence during the First World War hardening Russian attitude and consequently frustrating the German expectation of a Russo-German understanding. Hitler apprehended similar British determination to fight the war if he declared Indian independence to satisfy Subhas.²⁷ Subhas, who found Hitler as one with whom “logical discussion” was scarcely possible,²⁸ had no alternative but to relinquish his confidence and search for opportunities elsewhere. The prospect of a

Japanese co-operation was reported to have been hinted by Hitler himself.

Though clouds were gathering for some time, the Japanese storm over South-East Asia broke on 7 December 1941 with an attack on Pearl Harbour. In its sequel it brought the ominous development of War—the American participation—leading to rapturous Churchillian excitement on the Allied Powers' prospects. Japan was aware of this significance and thus raced against time to capture Malaya and Dutch East Indies—a rich source for war raw materials. She produced an immediate harvest of victories between January and May 1942 in a spectacular drive on Guam, Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore and Rangoon. In a rush, the Japanese attained their military objectives in 70 days in place of estimated 100 days. Subhas—the man himself in a hurry—was deeply impressed. Meanwhile General Tojo, the Japanese Premier, expressed some good wishes in March and in June 1942 with regard to possibilities of Indian independence. (Tojo's official announcement about Japanese support to Indian freedom, however, did not come till Subhas decided to leave Germany.) Subhas was also knowledgeable about the stir in the sizable and resourceful Indian community in the East and South East Asian countries, who established the Indian Independence League with Japanese encouragement. Following the commencement of the Pacific war, it was in Japan's interest to play upon the anti-British fervour of a substantial community living in the occupied zones. They also engineered (even if one concedes the patriotic efforts of Pritam Singh, Mohan Singh and others) the formation of the Indian National Army in September 1942 with Indian prisoners of war, attached it to the League and planted an old Indian revolutionary turned Japanese citizen, Rashbehari Bose, at the head of a combined organisation. It was a successful move—though it did not work very smoothly due to constant frictions between the patriotic Indians and Japanese paternalists and among Indian leaders themselves.²⁹ But the existence of an Indian organisation with an army—however weak and uncertain—must have given Subhas a hope. By this time Subhas and his Indian Legion in Germany were well-known and both the Japanese and the League were thinking about persuading

Subhas to come to the East to give a lead. Since June 1942 the League was inviting Subhas, and Rashbehari later supplemented the endeavour with great effect.

Even in May 1942 Subhas expressed his wish to shift to Asia, where Japanese forces reached the neighbourhood of India. "But now the time has come when I should be in the East"³⁰. The final decision, nevertheless, was still delayed till August 1942 when developments in India and Russia occurred simultaneously. The beginning of the Quit India movement in India was to Subhas a dream coming true. It was, he felt, "a non-violent guerilla warfare" which could paralyse the British administration in India.³¹ Thus the opportune moment arrived at last when Subhas's military efforts from outside should be co-ordinated with the agitation inside. The objective situation of upsurge had matured to receive a vanguard action: "... I will live to participate in the final struggle for liberty not from abroad, but at home. ..."³² Co-incidentally Germany's dissipation in the Russian interior proved also to be decisive. Heroic Russian resistance started in Stalingrad in August 1942 and by the approaching winter it swallowed up the Hitlerite campaign. To Subhas it was no more the beginning of an end but an end in itself.³³ It was irrelevant thereafter to cling to Berlin, especially when General Oshima, Japanese Ambassador in Germany, was proceeding with Subhas's journey towards Singapore. Following a perilous travel, in a sub-marine from Kiel to Sumatra and a flight therefrom to Tokyo and Singapore Subhas at long last passed through all stages of deliberation and landed at the site of final action.

From June 1943, when Subhas arrived in South East Asia, to May 1945, when Britain recovered Burma from Japanese control, incidents moved rather in a stright line—though a bold straight line by all means. This was all bustle for Subhas. In July 1943 he took over the Presidentship of Indian Independence League, assumed the supreme command of the Indian National Army in August and proclaimed a Provisional Government of Free India in October to "launch and conduct" the last war against the British in India. Soon it was given a cloak of legitimacy and a token territory in Andaman and Nicobar by Japan enabling it to declare a formal war against the Anglo-Americans.

Hurried recruitment in the I.N.A. and training of the recruits in Tokyo military academies were 'undertaken. A total mobilisation of the immigrant population and levy for funds were pressed. The battle cry was raised, emotions were swelled and women were formed into a regiment. Simultaneously went on vociferous propaganda, careful dealings with the Japanese and attempts at spreading espionage in India. Subhas the leader always outshone Subhas the idealogue. In his cryptically busy movements round Tokyo, Manila, Shanghai, Singapore, Rangoon, Bangkok he was at his best. He was frantically short of time as the flickers of Quit India movement were gradually dying. Hitler's Moscow campaign was turning out to be a Napoleonic failure. Allied Powers were wresting the initiative in North Africa and "the superior wealth and superior productivity of the U.S."³⁴ were going to tell on Japanese strength. Subhas passionately longed for the presence of his liberation army on the frontiers of India, on the North-East if not on the North-West. Did not the presence of Garibaldi and his Red-Shirts in Marsala make all the difference in Sicily and Naples?

Whatever might have been Japan's grand design, her Pacific war had a limited object which did not include an invasion of India. Japan's objective was to occupy Hongkong, Indo-China, Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Dutch East Indies, Thailand and Burma. With the occupation of Burma the Japanese army halted as they had little wish to disperse their forces in vast Indian sub-continent. Strategic considerations, however, compelled Japanese militarism to look towards the Indo-Burma frontier. By July 1942 Japan began anticipating a counter-attack of the Allies through the Burma frontier on her new acquisitions. By the logic of tactics Japan had to resolve to occupy some areas of India's North-East Frontier, namely, Imphal and Kohima. The plan of the Imphal campaign developed in the latter half of 1943 corresponding significantly with Subhas's hectic activities. Occupation of Kohima and Imphal with the aid of I.N.A. would not only strengthen the Japanese defence of Burma but also would leave Subhas's Provisional Government of Free India as the most disturbing factor for British India. The Japanese interest was too obvious. But the immediate prospect of stationing the I.N.A.

on Indian territories certainly outweighed the distant risks. It was, after all, fishing in troubled waters where convenience should be superior to conscience. Similar instances in Burma and Indonesia showed how the nationalists sought Japanese co-operation and rejected it to suit their needs. Subhas was adhering to the line: "Today we are taking the help of Japan, tomorrow we shall not hesitate to get help from any other power"³⁵.

But the plans did not materialise and the protracted Imphal campaign, directed towards the Arakan hills and Imphal, between January and June 1944, ended in a disaster. Though given a subsidiary role by the Japanese, the I.N.A. battalions fought well, suffered much and even reached bits of Indian territory. But the whole campaign was overwhelmingly a Japanese one and its fate was not affected by I.N.A.'s successes or lapses. It could not, however, pursue, as Subhas visualised, a mighty breakthrough on the battle front. The campaign was undertaken at a time when the Allied Powers were ready to burst open the Indo-Burma frontier. In consequence the Japanese were out-numbered and out-manoeuvred. Even a delayed retreat ended in hunger, disease and desertion. On July 14, 1944 the Japanese High Command called off the shattered campaign. The Kohima campaign failed but the legend of I.N.A. lived. It filled the nation subsequently with its battle cries, marching songs, sacrifices and glories. The mercenary Indian sepoy's illustration moved the men in the Royal Indian Navy and Air Force. The court-martial of I.N.A. prisoners evoked such nationwide excitement and tension that the Congress in October 1945 had to decide for their legal defence with the enthusiastic support of even Nehru, who always disapproved of Subhas's choice of ally.³⁶ "Netaji", a designation resembling the "Fuehrer", became a unifying symbol in a diverse and divisible country. But all these came a little too late of Subhas's opportune moment or the final hour of his militant nationalist experiment in a truncated world. Subhas, the desperate patriot of a colonial country, was indeed a collaborationist, but not in the sense Marshal Petain, the stately figure in independent France and the hero of the First World War, was. Nothing fails like failure. But what would

have been the case if the *status quo* between Hitler and Russia continued during the war, or the Hitlerite regime in Germany were replaced by a sudden Social Democratic changeover? What would have happened if Subhas reached India with his liberation army at the height of Quit India movement? What other methods were there for turning an Imperialist war in India into a "peoples war" except supporting Britain when Hitler attacked Russia and even when Stalingrad defied destruction? (India, unaffected directly by war, was not passing through simultaneous civil war and imperialist aggression as China or Indo-China did). What is a "peoples war" after all? What would have been the case if the Kohima campaign were successful and a Provisional Government of Free India set up on the border? What would have been the subsequent form of struggle in India if Britain did not select to abdicate authority?

The outcome of the Kohima campaign upset Subhas no doubt, but could not break him. He was searching with his characteristic zeal another ally when he saw Germany's defeat and Japan's imminent downfall. Russia attracted his vision again. "If there is one man in Europe today, who holds in his hands the destinies of the European nations for the few decades, that man is Marshal Stalin."³⁷ He could discern contradictions between the Anglo-Americans and the Russians and differences of their respective war ends. To Subhas these differences were "irreconcilable".³⁸ It was thus imperative for India to "utilise" the conflict between the Soviet Union and Anglo-Americans.³⁹ He was calculating again about another revolt within the country, among the armed forces if possible, to coincide with his new venture. He was calling on his countrymen to disrupt British administration on the line of Chittagong Armoury Raid of 1930. Till his reported death in air crash on 18 August 1945, Subhas was hopefully looking for yet another fight. If India could not emerge as an independent state by the end of the Second World War "our plan should be for a post-war revolution, and if we fail in that too, there shall be world War No. 3 to give us another opportunity to fight for our freedom."⁴⁰

NOTES

1. Gandhi-Irwin Conversation, Extract from Mahadev Desai's manuscript diary, 19 Feb. 1931. By courtesy of Gandhi Collected Works, Vol. 45 (in press).
2. Patel to Nehru, 8 Feb. 1939. Nehru, J. L., *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 322, Bombay, 1958.
3. Subhas's broadcast from 'Rangoon, July 7, 1944. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 73, Delhi, 1946.
4. Lidell Hart, B. H., *The Other Side of the Hill*, p. 222, London, 1951.
5. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, March 13, 1942. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 3, Delhi, 1946.
6. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, Dec. 7, 1942. Ibid, p. 35.
7. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, April 6, 1942. Ibid, p. 15.
8. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, Dec. 7, 1942. Ibid, p. 36.
9. Jog. N. G., *In Freedom's Quest*, p. 121, New Delhi, 1969.
10. Ibid, p. 130.
11. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, March 1, 1943. "Arun" *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 49, Delhi, 1946.
12. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, Jan. 26, 1943. Ibid, p. 46.
13. Ibid.
14. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, March 1, 1943. Ibid, p. 50.
15. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, Aug. 31, 1942. Ibid, p. 22.
16. Subhas in April 1941 foresaw the cataclysmic happenings in the Far East following Japan's advent in the War. Bose, S. C., *The Indian Struggle*, p. 430, Bombay, 1967.
17. Voigt, Dr. P. J. H., *Relation Between the Indian National Movement and Germany* (a pamphlet), Issued and published by Press and Information Section, Consulate Gen. Federal Republic of Germany, Calcutta.
18. An interview in Calcutta on 11.2.71 with Shri Promode Sengupta, a Marxist, who joined Subhas in Germany and his Avad Hind Radio. A. C. N. Nambiar, Subhas's deputy in Germany, could possibly be more enlightening on this point.
19. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, May 25, 1945. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 80, Delhi, 1946.
20. Suppl. Memo. to German Govt. by S. C. Bose, 3.5.41. Bose, S. C., *The Indian Struggle*, p. 433, Bombay, 1967.
21. Report of an interview with Subhas by Woermann, 17 July, 1941. *The Indian Struggle*, pp. 438-39, Part II, Bombay, 1967.
22. Ibid, p. 439.
23. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, May 25, 1945. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 79, Delhi, 1946.
24. Jog, N. G., *In Freedom's Quest*, p. 203, New Delhi, 1969.
25. Ibid, p. 209.
26. Bullock, A., *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny*, p. 589, London, 1965.
27. Dr. Voigt, P. J. H., *Relations Between the Indian National Movement and Germany*, p. 13.
28. Mookerji, Girija, *This Europe*, p. 134, Calcutta, 1950.
29. Dr. Ghosh, K. K., in his book, *The Indian National Army*, Meerut, 1969 covered in a meticulous manner the formative period of I.N.A. movement in East and South East Asia. His study, however, could in places lead to conclusions at variance with his own findings.
30. Subhas to German Foreign Minister, 22 May 1942, Berlin. Bose, S. C., *The Indian Struggle*, p. 460, Bombay, 1967.
31. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, August 31, 1942. "Arun" *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 25, Delhi, 1946.
32. Subhas's broadcast from Berlin, Dec. 7, 1942. Ibid.
33. Interview with Shri Promode Sengupta in Calcutta on 11.2.71.

34. Dr Ghosh, K. K., *The Indian National Army*, p. 183, Meerut, 1969 (Citing a Press Statement of Subhas on 12 Dec., 1943).

35. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, June 26, 1945. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 128, Delhi, 1946.

36. Nehru's enthusiasm becomes suspect if one has to believe what Mountbatten said. According to Mountbatten Nehru, while visiting Singapore in March 1946, agreed readily to the suggestion that he should not lay a wreath on the memorial to I.N.A. soldiers, if asked by local Indians. (p. 5) Then again, in April 1946 Nehru agreed and persuaded others to withdraw an Assembly motion, backed up by all parties, calling for immediate release of the I.N.A. prisoners (p. 17). The Second Jawaharlal Nehru Lecture 1968 by Earl Mountbatten of Burma, *Reflections on the Transfer of Power and Jawaharlal Nehru*, Camb. Univ. Press, Camb., 1968.

37. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, May 25, 1945. "Arun", *Testament of Subhas Bose*, p. 81, Delhi, 1946.

38. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, June 24, 1945. Ibid, p. 120.

39. Ibid, p. 123.

40. Subhas's broadcast from Singapore, June 27, 1945. Ibid, p. 135.

Gandhian Technique of Revolution

ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

From the beginning of the last century or even earlier, there were sporadic and spontaneous violent uprising in different parts of the country. This phase started almost immediately after the British conquest of India. The Sanyasi rebellion in Bengal may be called the first manifestation of India's opposition to an alien rule. It may be mentioned here that the Sanyasi rebellion in Bengal formed the background story of *Ananda Math*, the famous novel of Bankim Chandra in which he gave us the national slogan of *Bandemataram*. These armed conflicts took different shapes in different places. In some places it took the shape of agrarian risings; in some places it manifested itself in tribal risings and in some other places it found expression in fanatical religious outbursts. The Wahabi Movement throughout the whole of northern India and the Kooka Movement in Punjab are two examples of the last variety. Again in some places, it took the form of guerilla rising as in Maharashtra.

By the end of the last century, Balwant Rao Phadke made the first prolonged attempt in Maharashtra to stage a sort of guerilla war in the hilly regions of Maharashtra. In Chotanagpur of

Bihar in the last decade of the last century and the first few years of this century, we had the rising of the Mundas under the leadership of Birsha Bhagwan. Then almost from the beginning of this century, under the leadership of Tilak, Maharashtra tried to organise a secret revolutionary movement for an armed rising against British rule. Aurobindo, then in Baroda, got in touch with the Maharashtra movement. Then came the partition of Bengal in 1906 and the consequent secret society movements in Bengal for an armed rising. This movement drew forth from the traditionally mild Bengalees a spirit of heroism and martyrdom which was almost unexpected of a people who had so long been noted for their pro-British tendency and meek temperament. This episode had its climax during the First World War. In the Indo-German conspiracy, the Jugantar Party of Bengal and the Ghadr party in Canada and U.S.A. particularly participated. The Ghadr migrants from U.S.A. created a lot of trouble in Punjab during those critical days for the British empire. In a number of conspiracy cases many persons were given death sentence for trying to stage a revolt against the British Government. Several others were sentenced to transportation and long terms of imprisonment. In Punjab, the movement lasted only three or four years during the War period. But in Bengal the movement continued with almost unabated vigour from 1906 to 1917-18. A few thousand young men were incarcerated. A number of them died in skirmishes or on the scaffold and more than a thousand had been put in jails in India or sent to the Andamans. In Madras the violent revolutionary movement had a short span of two or three years during the first decade of this century culminating in the Tinnevely conspiracy case.

To inquire into the report on the revolutionary conspiracy in India, the Government set up a Committee called the Sedition Committee, popularly known as the Rowlatt Committee after the name of its Chairman. The Committee made certain recommendations, particularly to enact two laws, more or less on the line of the Defence of India Act which was a wartime measure and would lapse after the War.

From 1920-21, the Indian revolution took a new turn. Gandhi, the hero of the South African battle, came to India during War

time. While in South Africa, he had fought the South African Government against their policy of racial discrimination and the sub-human status given to the coloured people. He achieved some success in this fight conducted through peaceful means by way of passive resistance to the unjust policy of the South African Government. Yet he harboured full faith in the British sense of justice and rendered useful service to the British Government during the Boer War and the Zulu War. During the First World War also, in India he acted as a "recruiting sergeant" of the British Government. In fact, he had an almost full confidence in the British sense of justice and in the British method of Government. Perhaps, he had formed this belief out of his experience of working of the Parliament in England while he was a student there. The democratic method, followed there, was almost unique as no other country had such wide franchise and had such established democratic institutions. This loyal Gandhi had the first shock to his sense of loyalty to the British Government by the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee Report. While he was vacillating as to the future line he would follow in India, the Rowlatt Report helped him make his choice. He decided that the two Bills framed according to the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee must be opposed by all peaceful means.

During his stay in South Africa, he had read some books of Ruskin and Tolstoy. Ruskin's book "Unto This Last" and Tolstoy's book "The Kingdom of God is Within You" and some other books made a deep impression on his mind. When he left for England as a student in his youth, he had hardly any knowledge of Indian scriptures and holy books. In fact, he has stated: "During the days of my education, I had read practically nothing outside text-books". The first impression on his youthful mind was made by Arnold's "Song Celestial" (Translation of the Gita) and "The Light of Asia" (Life of Buddha). That was practically his first contact with Indian culture and philosophy. The "Song Celestial" made a deep impression on his mind. In subsequent years he read the Gita in the original with a spirit of devotion and with his own interpretation. Practically all the political leaders of India have written commentaries on the Gita. Bankim Chandra, Tilak, Aurobindo, Gandhi and others—all

have their own commentaries and interpretations of the Gita. But Gandhi's interpretation was somewhat unusual. He interpreted the whole thing as a vindication of non-violence. The battle of Kurukshetra has been interpreted by him as a battle between the evil and the good within man. Of all the Hindu scriptures, the Gita, of course according to his own interpretation, made the deepest impression on his mind; and he also had great reverence for the Bible. The lives of Christ and Buddha taught him the virtue of *ahimsa* or peace or love.

In 1919, he decided that the two Bills framed according to the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee must be opposed by all peaceful means. And when he decided to fight the Rowlatt Acts, his first programme was satyagraha or passive resistance. It may be stated here, that he did not like the phrase passive resistance; in fact what he advocated was active resistance. He said, "Never was anything done on this earth without direct action. I reject the word 'passive resistance' because of its insufficiency." Though he was a great admirer of Tolstoy and almost a votary of Christ and though the Bible had made a deep impression on his mind, he did not accept the Bible's precept "Resist no evil" which had also been accepted by Tolstoy. So he decided to resist the evil of the Rowlatt Bills. I do not like to go in details into the happenings of those years except to mention that Satyagraha or passive resistance was stubbornly resisted by the British Government with the police and the army. There was blood-shed in many places, particularly in Delhi and Punjab and also, to some extent, in Calcutta. There were also some outbursts of popular violence—which he deprecated strongly.

From this came the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at Amritsar on 13th April, 1919. The whole of India was shocked by the enormity of the inhuman attitude of Dyer who massacred about 300 innocent and unarmed people who had met in a closed space, known as Jallianwala Bagh on the Baisakhi day, i.e. the first day of the Hindu year. The subsequent events of martial law were no less shocking to India's *amour propre* and national self-respect. The crawling order—forcing people to crawl on the streets instead of walking, public flogging of respectable citizens, insults to women and children—all these shocked India to the bottom.

Then came the Khilafat question. Violating all their solemn pledges during the War for appeasing the feelings of the Indian Muslim soldiers, the British Government made the Khalif practically a prisoner under a British commissioner at Constantinople. Muslims holy places—Mecca and Medina and other holy places—were all taken out of the control of the Khalif. Gandhi aligned himself with the aggrieved Muslims; he took up their case perhaps more energetically than many of the Muslims. It was with Gandhi not so much a political issue as a moral issue or even as a religious issue. The British Government had indulged in an immoral act by violating their pledges to the Indian Muslims. It had also transgressed upon the religious sentiments and beliefs of 8 crores of Indian Muslims. So he decided that he must side with and stand by them. Other leaders, including Tilak and even the Moderates, condemned the action of the British Government in this regard.

Gandhi had by then focussed two issues before the public,—redress of the Punjab wrong and the Rowlatt Bills. By that time the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms report had been published. In the Amritsar Congress of 1919, the Reforms report receded into the background; all the public leaders focussed their attention on Punjab and the Rowlatt Bills. From Amritsar to the special session at Calcutta, during the period of 8 or 9 months, things were moving fast. The Khilafat question came very much to the forefront. Gandhi took up the Khilafat issue as one of the two national demands: the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs. With Gandhi it was a question of moral obligation but perhaps with many other leaders, it was only a political strategy for winning the support of the Muslims of India to the national demand. And there was nothing wrong in that. The Muslims constituted an important section of the nation and the Government had been trying to win them over and to alienate them from mainstream of the political life of the nation. So it should be the concern of any political leader and party to win their sympathy and support for the national cause, of course not through any morally unjustifiable means.

Tilak, so long the dominating figure in Indian politics, to some extent receded into background by the advent of this new

man. A thin small figure, with an unimposing look and with the fame of a loyal supporter of the British Government, somehow dominated Indian politics and even overshadowed Tilak. It should also be mentioned here that in all his expressions and speeches, Gandhi was most respectful towards Tilak. Never did he utter a word against Tilak, as a person or as a political leader. By then, Gandhi had fully identified himself with the Muslims in their demand for redress of the Khilafat wrongs. It was in a Khilafat conference that he decided to adopt a campaign of non-violent non-co-operation with the Government. Tilak died before the special Calcutta session of the Congress held in September 1920.

During the discussion in that session of the Congress, Gandhi realised that in a national programme for a mass struggle, two demands of topical interest like Punjab and Khilafat cannot supply the real zeal and enthusiasm for that movement. When others suggested that he should have a national demand in the real sense of the term, he readily agreed to accept the demand for Swaraj as one of the grounds for the non-co-operation movement. The resolution to this effect was adopted in the special session of the Congress at Calcutta in September 1920. The movement was called non-violent non-co-operation. This resolution was confirmed after four months at Nagpur in December 1920. He said, "Non co-operation is a protest against the unwitting and unwilling participation in evil." This signified a new technique against a fully armed imperialist power; and this is being appreciated by the suppressed peoples of other countries even today.

Apart from getting the non-co-operation resolution accepted by this session, Gandhi framed a new constitution for converting the Congress into really a mass organisation. His attention was always on the masses. And so he wrote, "My hope is more with masses so far as the later stages of non-co-operation are concerned." He also said then, "A complete revolution is the greatest need of the time." So he converted the Congress into his machinery for a complete revolution by the masses. So long the Congress was an organisation of the upper middle class. Even in Amritsar, it was hardly an organisation even of the lower middle class. At

the initiative of Gandhi, a new constitution was adopted and a new objective of the Congress was defined. The Congress goal no longer remained representative government on the colonial line to be achieved by 'constitutional means'; this Congress defined its objective to be the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. A change in the goal may not be so significant as Swaraj remained undefined; but as for the means, the change from 'constitutional' to 'legitimate and peaceful' means signified a radical change and that drove out of the Congress a number of leaders who had been, till then, considered extremist. Thus began the era of Gandhi and a new era in the politics of India and opened a new vista before the world.

So long British rule was considered to be almost a God-ordained arrangement and it was considered preposterous for anyone to challenge the authority of the mighty British Raj. The Indian masses were practically inert in the social and political sense. Every decade saw two or three famines during the whole of the British rule and each famine was taking a toll of about a few million of human lives. The average per capita income of India was estimated at about Rs. 30/- annually; after the War (1920-23), it rose to about Rs. 80/- per year; this was due to war expenditures causing inflation. In health, in education, in social amenities, there was a complete blank. When millions were dying of hunger, plague, cholera, malaria and other preventable diseases and causes, not a finger moved, no troubles occurred except for the Congress passing a pious resolution at each annual session. Gandhi's first concern was to infuse life into the inert mass of the people of India. A "complete revolution" which was his aim cannot be achieved except through the complete mobilisation of the masses.

But to move the Indian masses into a complete revolt not only against the British authority but also against the social set-up was considered almost an impossible task. And the British Government very much banked on this sense of security. During the First World War, the British Government exploited the masses, plundered the country in every respect disregarding the distress caused even to the poorest section of the people. There was no protest and no cry of distress. So a mass of humanity, dead to all

human sensibilities and human ambition, was to be moved if India aspired to have a revolution. Gandhi came as the leader of the Indian revolution with a new technique unprecedented in the world. With Gandhi, this technique was an article of faith; but with India as a nation, it was an inescapable compulsion—totally disarmed and emasculated as she was. Gandhi knew this and frankly said in his speech at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta that if India had arms to fight the Government, he would get no hearing in that assembly.

It may be pertinent here to say a few words about the philosophy of Gandhi. As I have stated earlier, he took his main directions from Gita, Ruskin and also the Bible. Subsequently he read other books on Hindu philosophy, particularly the Upanishads. He based his philosophy on some basic principles derived from Hindu tradition. The first thing for him was the 'man' as an individual; and he considered man to be the supreme factor. That is why he says: "The individual is the one supreme consideration." That is why his economy was based on the idea of the worker to be the owner of his means of production as also of the product of his labour. He has decried the present industrial economy as in it the man—the individual—is made a slave of the machine. His philosophy may be summed up in one word "*Sarvodaya*". This idea received great support from Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. He had scant regard for a majority which could and very often did indulge in tyranny over the minority. He was therefore opposed to the utilitarian theory of the greatest good to the greatest number. His idea is that a social order must aim at the good of all, which means it should touch *unto this last*, i.e. the last member of the society. *Dharma*, according to him, should conduce to our material benefits as well as to the perfection of the individual in moral and spiritual sense. In this respect he has followed the Indian tradition and has deviated from the western tradition in which, from the time of Plato and Aristotle, politics is a domain separate from the spiritual or moral life of the individual. But for Gandhi, politics is a relevant part of an individual's ethical and spiritual value.

For him there are five cardinal virtues—*Satya* (truth), *Ahimsa* (non-violence or love), *aparigraha* (non-possession or renuncia-

tion), *Asteya* (non-covetousness or non-stealing) and *Brahmacharya* (self-control). To this, he added another virtue, *abhaya* (fearlessness). These six cardinal virtues are in demand in both human morals and politics. These virtues, at least the first five, he got primarily from the Gita and also the Upanishads. For Ahimsa and Satya, whatever might be his other sources of inspiration, it may be presumed he got his strongest inspiration from the Hindu scriptures. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma the venerable warrior grandfather, giving his advice to Yudhishthira, is reported to have said, "*Ahimsa* is the highest religion, it is again the highest penance, it is also the highest truth from which all duties proceed." And in many scriptures there are similar passages regarding Ahimsa and Satya. It may also be mentioned that Sanskrit word *Sat* which is the root of the word *Satya* also means Existence, i.e. God. According to the Hindu tradition, the Supreme Being in its absolute sense is defined as *Neti*, which means that no definition can be assigned to Him. But when we come a step down to theistic conception, we find He is defined as *Sat* (existence or truth), *Chit* (knowledge), *Ananda* (bliss or peace). Gandhi also took his cue from the Hindu scriptures about the supremacy of man, the individual, in all social considerations.

With this philosophical background Gandhi entered the arena of a political fight with the mightiest empire the world has ever seen. In the first onslaught, i.e. in the non-co-operation movement, the world was amazed that he was able to rouse the sleeping, nay, the inert masses of India. From every town, every hamlet and every village, came echoes of Gandhi's slogan of non-co-operation with the Satanic Government. In pursuance of the resolution passed by the special session of the Congress, people boycotted the first election under the new reforms. Only about 25% of the voters could be pressurised to cast their votes, even though the Government used all their tactics and pressure to make the people participate in the election. Gandhi hailed this as the acceptance of the non-co-operation strategy by the people. Election was held before the Nagpur session of the Congress.

The movement, really speaking, started only after the Nagpur session of the Congress ending on 31st December 1920. The

Government issued a number of ordinances, orders and instructions to suppress the movement. Thousands marched from every corner of the country to defy the Government ban or the Government order. Police and military repression was let loose on the public so long considered docile, mild and always afraid of the mighty British Raj. But now they shook off their accustomed fear and spirit of meek submission. They resisted the mighty steam-roller of Government repression. How many people participated in the movement is difficult to estimate. But it may be thousands and thousands—some actively, some passively and some tacitly. At least 66,000 people courted arrest; according to another estimate the number would be not less than 1,00,000. And when the prisons were more than full, the Government set up some improvised prisons; and soon these also became over-full. The Government then resorted to another strategy—arresting truck-loads of civil resisters, showering un-mentionable brutalities on them and then taking them in the wintry nights of December, January and February to distant places and unloading them there in open fields.

Schools emptied, liquor shops were closing down, the number of cases in the courts considerably went down, thousands of lawyers suspended their practice. The Establishment was shaken in a way, it had not apprehended in the long period of over 150 years of British rule. But Gandhi was true to his principle of truth and non-violence. He did not try to take any undue advantage by relaxing his principle of truth and non-violence. Before every step he took, he had been scrupulous to write to the Viceroy of his next programme of action. Often he offered opportunities to the Government for friendly discussion and honourable settlement. All through he avoided any spirit of vengeance or hatred against individual officers or against the British nation. Whenever there was an error, he shouted at the top of his voice that there was a 'Himalayan blunder'. Whenever there was an outburst of violence, he called off the movement and unreservedly expressed his regret for that. Whenever he had called off the movement, as if by magic, he pacified the wave of the public's indignant demonstration. His trusted colleagues and friends often bitterly criticised him for his withdrawals of the movement. But

every time he had the confidence of the people. On many such occasions, he underwent fasting by way of penance.

Gandhi promised Swaraj within one year, i.e. in 1921; the year ended without the Swaraj being even in the horizon. But his control over the masses remained undiminished as was demonstrated in the Ahmedabad Congress at the end of 1921. In spite of his failure to secure Swaraj within the year, he dominated the deliberations of the Congress which passed a resolution congratulating the nation—which—"has made great advance in fearlessness, self-sacrifice and self-respect". When in February 1922, there was an outburst of popular violence at Chauri-Chaura, he called off the civil disobedience movement which was scheduled to take place shortly. He did not care if there would be any political setback or if he would be accused of having faked at a critical moment; he remained true to his principle. The suspension of the proposed Satyagraha was taken by the Government here and in Britain as a sign of his weakness. Montagu uttered a sort of warning from "the most determined people (i.e. the British) of the world who would once again answer the challenge (of India) with all the vigour and determination." Birkenhead reminded India of the "hard fibre" of Britain. Gandhi replied to this arrogant challenge of the imperialist with equally strong, but not insolent, language in an article "Shaking the Manes". He referred in that article to the "gory claws" of Britain.

Soon Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment. It was an epic trial reminiscent of the trial of Socrates 2200 years ago. He was prosecuted under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code for spreading discontent against the Government in 3 articles published in *Young India*. He pleaded "guilty to all the charges". He further said, "I know I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free, I would still do the same." Then he explained "how from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator." In the usual process of law, for 3 articles—the accused would have been given concurrent sentences on 3 counts; but in this case, Gandhi was given 3 consecutive sentences of 2 years each, i.e. for 6 years in all.

When he had apprehended his arrest was coming, he had issued an appeal to the people to remain calm in the event of his arrest and not to indulge in any violent activities. And the people observed his directive and did not give expression to their deep feeling in any violent outburst. The Government gloated over this apparent victory and expected that the influence of Gandhi over the people had been removed. But in this they were sadly mistaken. That was found out almost immediately after his release. While in jail, he underwent an operation for appendicitis. The Government took advantage of this and released him after 2 years. On his release, he took up the reins of the political struggle. For about 2 years he kept himself somewhat aloof from the affairs of the Congress, concentrating all his energy on the constructive programme. It should be remembered that Gandhi did give a rude shock not only to the alien government, but he gave no less a rude shock to the current social order. He roused the conscience of the nation by strongly denouncing untouchability, denial of normal rights to the women, prostitution, drinking, personal luxury etc. He founded a national university, fostered village industries to give occupation to the unemployed or half-employed rural people. He took up the whole gamut of the nation's life in his programme.

About four years of lull followed. According to his actual term of sentence, he would have been in jail for another 4 years. Gandhi felt it would not be quite moral for him to indulge in creating discontent during that period. But he did not sit idle; he toured the whole of India making an assessment of the political situation and urging people for prosecuting his constructive programme—including Hindu-Muslim amity, removal of untouchability, removal of *purdah* for the women, hand-spinning and hand-weaving, revival of village industries etc. But the simmering discontent of the people continued and he intensified the implementation of his constructive programme. As the movement proceeded, his idea developed, his programme clarified and his technique became more effective.

During these years from 1920 to 1928, there were so many attempts at round table conferences and negotiations with the Government. Gandhi kept himself more or less aloof without,

however, discarding any proposal that might come from any quarter for an honourable understanding with the Government on the basis of satisfaction of the demands made. He left, as a man of peace and as a man without any malice, he should not reject any offer for an honourable settlement.

Gandhi for the past two years had avoided direct politics and had been touring all over the country and preparing the nation for the next fight. But his main theme of speeches and preachings was the emphasis on his constructive programme—particularly removal of untouchability. During his campaign against untouchability, he appeared to the orthodox Hindus almost as an iconoclast as he was breaking down many of the images and icons enshrined in their superstitions for ages. He argued with them on the basis of Hindu scriptures—the *shastras*; but his main argument was the dignity of man. In many places he had to take up long arguments with orthodox *pundits* well versed in Hindu *smritis* and *shastras*. To them, Gandhi would finally reply—"I accept no authority or no *shastra* as an infallible guide". His only guide was how to preserve the value of man. He even went to the length of saying that if untouchability was considered a part of Hinduism then he would have no regard for that Hinduism; but he was firmly preaching that it was only a superstitious belief and sense of caste superiority which inflicted those indignities on the untouchables. Before God and humanity, —there is no distinction between man and man.

So long the British Government had been persistently refusing to have a review of the Reforms before the scheduled date of 1929. But suddenly in November 1927, they appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon; it was intended to anticipate a more liberal step by the next Government likely to be formed by the Labour Party. It was an all-white commission with no Indian member in it. The Commission was received by all parties with utmost contempt. Everybody thought it to be an insult to the nation that the future constitution of India would be decided by a body in which Indians would have nothing to contribute or participate. Annie Besant condemned it in bitter terms. Moderate leaders including Tej Bahadur Sapru and others refused to accept it and decided to non-co-operate with

the Commission. But Gandhi, for some time, refrained from making any comment on the Simon Commission, ignoring it altogether. He carried on his crusade against untouchability among the Hindus and for asserting the rights of the untouchables as human beings and as honourable members of the Hindu society. In the Madras session of the Congress in 1927, Gandhi kept himself aloof from any active part. Congress as also other parties decided to boycott the Simon Commission. It was in the background of the appointment of the Simon Commission and as a challenge to it, that All-Parties Conference was convened for drafting a constitution under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. Its report, generally known as the Nehru Report, was the main subject matter for discussion in the Calcutta Congress. This report declared dominion status as the goal of India.

Then came the Congress session at Calcutta in 1928. There was a clash in the Congress session regarding the goal of the Congress. The previous year the Congress at Madras had passed a resolution in favour of independence. But the resolution was not properly amplified; and in the Calcutta session of 1928, Gandhi was in favour of accepting the recommendation of the All-Parties Conference which recommended dominion status within the Empire. Jawaharlal and Subhas, two important leaders of Indian youth, surrendered to him and agreed not to oppose the resolution. Subhas was, in fact, a signatory to the report recommending dominion status; Jawaharlal was the secretary to the Working Committee of the Congress. Still initially he opposed the official motion for dominion status. As its secretary, he had to accept the decision of the Working Committee.

Ultimately, both Jawaharlal and Subhas agreed not to oppose the motion in the open session. But the Jugantar party members of Bengal took up the challenge. In the wintry night, they moved from camp to camp, met delegates of different provinces and of different districts of Bengal; and then they arranged to move an amendment to the official resolution in the open session through Sarat Bose, the elder brother of Subhas. Then Subhas realised that he could no longer remain aloof from this resolution, particularly because of the insistent demand of his supporters in Bengal. And in the open session, he put forward the amendment

for complete independence. Main reason for Gandhi in advocating dominion status at the 1928 Congress session was to emphasise the unity of India in that demand which was the recommendation of the All-Parties Conference. In the resolution he made certain changes—a time limit of one year for the government to concede the demand and; failing that, the demand of complete independence would be moved in the next year.

In the mid-night of 31st December, the resolution for complete independence was passed at Lahore and the flag of independent India was hoisted. Gandhi would not be a party to any resolution—unless the country had been made ready to implement that and unless he had a definite programme to enforce the decision taken. He informed the Viceroy about the resolution passed at Calcutta and wanted to know his reaction to the demand for dominion status within 1929. Repeatedly he tried to avoid a direct fight; but all his efforts went in vain. Rather, the Government started a campaign of repression throughout the country. In May 1929, at the A.I.C.C. meeting, he gave the Congress 3 months' time to prepare its organisation—by enrolling at least 7.5 lakhs Congress members: "The Congress must be represented in every village and every member must know what the Congress means and he must respond to the demand made upon him by the Congress." This showed where his emphasis was—on the moral strength of the individual member. After the Lahore Congress, on January 26, 1930, Independence Day was celebrated throughout India; every village, every town, every mohalla celebrated it with great enthusiasm—taking the pledge of Independence, they declared, "the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth." The pledge was a unique one—for its moral contents as well as for its socio-political demand.

The Government did not agree to accept any of the suggestions made either by Gandhi or by other intermediaries. So came the second fight in 1930. This was called the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was a movement for direct violation of some of the laws of the Government and he particularly picked up for violation the salt tax law. It was always considered an iniquitous tax

collected even from the poorest section of the country. India, having such a wide sea coast, was not allowed to manufacture salt, which was mostly imported from Manchester. Gandhi took up this Act for violation.

When the resolution for Civil Disobedience was passed, nobody realised what would be the particular law to be violated and there were simpers of ridicule in many quarters against such a resolution. The country was waiting in suspense as to the time and nature of Civil Disobedience, as this was to be decided by Gandhi. A few days before the announcement, he wrote a long letter to Viceroy, Lord Irwin, offering terms for compromise. This letter was resented by many of his loyal supporters—as it indicated a climb-down from the spirit of the Lahore resolution. On Viceroy's reply rejecting his offer, he wrote an article, "The English Nation Responds to Force". Then he announced the violation of the Salt Act and of his determination of march to Dandi. Within a short time, the salt satyagraha gained an unprecedented momentum. The most spectacular thing was the Dandi march; from Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhi made a long trek of 249 miles to the sea coast of Gujarat to violate the Salt Act of the Government at Dandi. He left Sabarmati Ashram with 78 followers on 12th March, 1930. Day after day, hundreds of people followed him; village after village had simply a new light, a new energy and a new life, as he marched along. Visitors, supporters, admirers, journalists, foreign correspondents—all accompanied him in this wonderful march. Day after day for near about a month, the slim, thin figure marched bare-foot mile after mile through sandy and stony earth, taking his nightly rest in any village falling on his way, going through his daily prayers and addressing village people wherever he stopped.

The Dandi march gave the signal to the nation for starting the Civil Disobedience movement in every part of the country. While he was deeply engaged in organising a direct fight with the Government and speaking to the people everywhere and leading his non-violent army to the battlefield, he did not slacken in sending his weekly despatches for *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Week after week, he was propagating his ideas. And every word he wrote or uttered was being published in all the papers through-

out India—including Indian language papers. Every week people were eagerly waiting for his ideas and instructions. As Government repression was mounting, he was also pouring forth open defiance through his speeches and writings in the two journals and in his daily prayer meetings. He poured forth fire everyday. In one of his writings he said, "The call of 1920 was a call for preparation; today it is a call for engaging in a final conflict." Many foreign visitors and journalists came and watched his daily march and his contemplated raid on the Dandi beach where natural salt was in abundance. Government issued, one after another, 12 or 13 ordinances to curb this movement but everywhere the people were facing the Government repression with courage.

The one virtue which he wanted to inculcate among the people was fearlessness or *abhaya*, along with the virtue of non-violence. He repeatedly stressed that his non-violence was not an outcome of cowardice; he wanted non-violence of the brave and the courageous. He gave a call to women to come forward and take up the work of picketing foreign cloth and liquor shops in which, he felt, women workers would be more effective and more courageous. It was Gandhi who actually dragged the womenfolk of India from their kitchens into the public life of India. During the Non-co-operation Movement, a large number of women participated and a far larger number participated in the movement of 1930.

Even during those hectic days of direct fight with the Government, there was no slackening of his zeal regarding the different items of constructive programme. His crusade against the social sin of untouchability was relentlessly carried on. Khadi and the removal of untouchability might be deemed to be his first concern. He asked the people to carry on with the work of propagating Swadeshi, boycott of foreign cloth, boycott of liquor and all narcotic drugs and also propagation of Hindi as the national language; he also instructed vigorous but non-violent picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops. His constructive programme included even cleaning village roads, nursing the lepers, basic education, communal amity and the removal of all the social disabilities of any section of the people. His constructive pro-

gramme, though a part of his political programme, was not purely political; it had a wider social and economic implication. It may even be called a step towards social and economic revolution by rousing the social conscience in favour of socio-economic necessities and demands.

On 8th April, Gandhi broke the salt law at Aat, a salt godown. His campaign let loose all the inherent resentment of the people against the foreign rule. The programme had almost a magical effect on the people. Even in distant places people contrived to manufacture some salt out of saline water or from the soil, or anything found convenient and defiantly violated the salt act. Thousands and thousands were arrested. Men and women from the highest to the poorest sections came in and courted brutal oppression; the whole nation felt a fresh thrill unprecedented in the annals of any revolution. No revolution upto date had experienced such an excitement, such enthusiasm and such upheaval of the vast mass of the people.

On 18th April, occurred the Chittagong Armoury raid organised by Surya Sen who was then the Secretary of the District Congress Committee. For about a week, Chittagong town with its suburbs was under the control of the revolutionaries—with communications with Calcutta or any other place cut off. Some ships waiting sent wireless news to Calcutta. Then came the military and the police to re-occupy Chittagong after a pitched battle for over two hours at Jalalabad, a hillock outside the town. This was a violent expression of public resentment against the foreign rule. Then came the mutiny of the Royal Garhwali Rifles. Two battalions of Hindu troops were taken to Peshwar where Gandhi's follower Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan along with his Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God) band was organising the Civil Disobedience movement. Abdul Ghaffar was arrested and the angry Muslim masses surrounded the place of his detention. Hindu Garhwali soldiers, asked to shoot on the unarmed Muslim demonstrators, refused. This was almost unprecedented in Indian history after the 1857 mutiny. The Government withdrew the military and the police from Peshawar and the whole city for about 10 or 12 days was under the control of the people. British soldiers came and occupied the city again. The Garhwali soldiers

were court-martialed and were sentenced to heavy punishment.

Gandhi then wrote two articles called "The Black Regime" and "Goonda Raj" denouncing Government oppression. In a number of places, there were almost daily cases of police lathi charge, shooting, beating and insult to women. Gandhi gave an ultimatum to raid the Dharsana Salt Depot, the biggest depot of the Government. All the time he was on march from one village to another. On 4th May at 12.45 a.m., i.e. at midnight, the District Magistrate of Surat with a number of policemen armed with rifles and pistols surrounded his camp in a village three miles away from Dandi and arrested him while he was asleep. Gandhi, a man of peace, had to be arrested in the depth of night by armed forces openly making a display of their arms. He was arrested under Regulation XXV of 1827 which meant detention without trial and he was whisked off in a truck to Yervada Central Prison, Poona. Mirabeau (Miss Slade) said then, "At the dead of night, like thieves, they came to steal him away." So awfully afraid was the mighty British Raj about this man! A picture of the inhuman repression on the people of India was given by H. N. Brailsford. He mentioned numerous cases of lathi charge, oppression on women including rape, whipping of political prisoners in jail, shooting, imposition of punitive police and punitive tax, wholesale migration of village people due to oppression etc. According to Governments' statement in the Assembly, in April, May & June about 765 persons were killed and several hundred wounded. But the actual number was much more.

His arrest gave a rude shock to the conscience of the entire world. Romain Rolland, Dr. Haynes Holmes and many other distinguished persons of the west protested against the arrest. One hundred clergymen of Britain asked MacDonald, the British Premier, to come to some understanding with Gandhi. Many British journalists and publicmen came into India during this period. One of them wrote, "The imprisoned Mahatma now incarnates the very soul of India." It can be said that India then posed not only a political problem but also a moral problem before the conscience of the world.

Gandhi appointed Abbas Tyabji, an ex-Judge and a Muslim,

as his successor-dictator of the movement. Tyabji also was arrested within a week. Then Sarojini Naidu, the nightingale of India, took over charge as the dictator of the Congress movement and she along with 2000 volunteers raided the Dharsana depot. She said, "Gandhi's body is in jail but his soul is with India." The brutalities perpetrated by the Government force at Dharsana attracted the attention of the world. An American journalist reported, "Suddenly at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. . . . In two or three minutes, the ground quilted with bodies. . . . The survivors, without breaking ranks, silently and doggedly marched on until struck down." He further reported, "In 18 years of my reporting in 20 countries during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharsana." His report was published in over 300 papers throughout the world. This time Gandhi's arrest did not pass so smoothly. Reports of trouble came from different places almost all over India. But in Sholapur the people practically took over the control of the city and established their own rule. Martial Law had to be proclaimed to reoccupy the town.

In the meantime, the Government scheme of having a second dose of reforms had started even earlier than the inauguration of the C. D. movement. In 1928, the Simon Commission came to India. Congress had already rejected the outline of the scheme as presented by Lord Irwin and boycotted the Simon Commission. In the course of this campaign, there were police repressions and lathi charges as a result of which at Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai received a fatal injury and died in a few days. This was avenged by some Punjabi youngmen with the murder of Saunders (December 1928) who was in charge of the police which inflicted the lathi blow on Lalaji. Then came the bomb-throw in the Central Assembly Hall by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt (April 8, 1929). These were preludes to the coming fight and expressions of the people's resentment towards the alien and oppressive regime. The whole of 1930 was a period of direct conflict with the Government on two fronts—on the one hand, inten-

sive non-violent activities under the guidance of Gandhi and on the other hand, violent revolutionary activities particularly in Bengal.

Starting with the Chittagong armoury raid, violent revolutionary activities went on for near about 4 years with an attack on Sir Charles Tegart the notorious Police Commissioner of Calcutta, murder of Lowman, his companion, murder of I.G. Prisons in a raid in the Writers' Buildings, murder of three District Magistrates of Midnapur, murder of the Alipore Sessions Judge in his court, attacks on the editor of *The Statesman*, murder of the District Magistrate of Comilla by two girls, attack on the Governor of Bengal by another girl in the Senate Hall of Calcutta University, attack on the next Governor on the Polo Ground in Darjeeling and many other similar activities. In Bengal, Midnapur district showed unusual courage and spirit of sacrifice and suffering for breaking the salt law and manufacturing salt on the sea coast or wherever any saline water was available in the district. Police repression in that district was almost unprecedented. During this period, some sporadic violent revolutionary acts occurred in all the provinces—Bengal, Punjab, U.P., Bihar, Bombay, Madras etc. These were symptoms of the refractory impatience prevailing among the people and of deep resentment against the alien Government—autocratic and unresponsive to the will of the people. Gandhi tried his best to canalise the public resentment through non-violent methods.

However, Government realised the necessity of having some parlance with Gandhi. The Viceroy deputed two eminent moderate leaders, Jayakar and Sapru, to see Gandhi and other Congress leaders in Yervada prison. A truce was effected after a rather prolonged discussion between Irwin and Gandhi. The Pact was signed on 5th March, 1931. While the discussion was going on, Churchill fumed in anger, "As loss of India would be final and fatal to us. . . and would reduce us to the scale of a minor power." Yet the Labour Government decided to have some understanding with the Congress. It was agreed that Gandhi would attend Round Table Conference at London.

The ban on the Congress organisation was removed; all the members of the Congress Working Committee were released;

other prisoners of the C.D. movement were also released. But the revolutionary prisoners continued to be in prison and some of them were under sentence of death. The Garhwali soldiers who had been court-martialled for disobedience of order, were also not released. Non-release of other political prisoners and of the Garhwali soldiers was a weak point of the Pact. Gandhi later on tried his utmost for the commutation of the death sentence on Bhagat Singh and his two colleagues, Rajguru and Sukhdev. This Pact was ratified in the Karachi session of the Congress held on March 25. When the delegates and leaders were assembled at Karachi, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed on the 23rd. Gandhi had to face angry demonstrations and it was feared the session would not be held. But Gandhi calmed the demonstrators and the session passed off rather quietly. But in this session, a resolution was passed which "while disassociating itself from and disapproving of political violence . . . places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice" of the three martyrs. It further said that—"this triple execution is an act of wanton vengeance and is a deliberate flouting of the unanimous demand of the Nation for commutation." In passing this resolution, Gandhi had to relent from the stand he took in 1923 about a similar resolution for Gopinath Saha. This he did as he realised the deep resentment of the people at this defiant attitude of the Government towards the "unanimous demand of the Nation."

On September 15, 1931, there was an unprovoked attack on the Hijli (Bengal) Detention Camp where about 300 political suspects were detained without trial. The attack was pre-arranged and there were indiscriminate shootings and lathi charges. Two detenus died and several others were wounded. Bengal Government set up an official committee of enquiry composed of 2 I.C.S. officers. The committee could find no justification for that indiscriminate attack. But no step was taken against the offending police officers.

The ground was thus prepared beforehand for the failure of the Round Table Conference. While in England, Gandhi received a hearty welcome from the British public, specially the poorer section; and on his return journey passing through France and Italy, everywhere he got a most hearty reception. On his way,

he stayed with Romain Rolland who was a great admirer of his. Public reception to Gandhi either in Britain or in the continent was not very much to the liking of the British Government. On his way to England at Port Said, he was presented with an address on behalf of Madame Zaglul and Nahas—the leader of the Wafd Party of Egypt. He returned to India on 28th December, 1931. Eminent leaders were arrested without any act of violation of law in the last week of December. Ghaffar Khan and Jawaharlal were arrested on 24th and 26th December respectively, i.e. even before the arrival of Gandhi. He noted that on the one hand there were signs of discontent all over the country, and on the other, there was a definite change in the attitude of the Government which then was determined to take recourse to repressive measures.

In the meantime, there was a change of Government in Britain; MacDonald remained Prime Minister—not of the Labour Government but of a coalition Government, more or less as a stooge of the Conservatives. In India, Irwin was replaced by Willingdon as Viceroy. With the change in Government in England and also the change of the Viceroy in India, the spirit of Gandhi-Irwin Pact was being subtly sabotaged, and the Government of India renewed the policy of repression. Their policy of condoning and rather encouraging the Muslims in their intransigence, dismayed Gandhi. Even before he left India, non-official Europeans had started a campaign to put pressure on the British Government—then Tory—not to entertain Gandhi's views. In clear violation of Irwin's commitment, Willingdon dropped Dr. Ansari from the list of delegates to the Round Table Conference. Stories of repressive measures were coming from different provinces.

Members of the Congress Working Committee were in favour of Gandhi's abandoning the trip to London. But Gandhi was always eager to explore all the chances of an amicable settlement with Britain. Gandhi then wrote a letter to the Viceroy on August 11, 1931—referring to the policy then pursued—which "renders impossible my departure for London. . . I shall await reply before making an announcement." Viceroy's reply was curt and impolite. Then Gandhi wired decision not to go, but certain intermediaries

including Sapru, Jayakar and others intervened. There was a meeting between Gandhi and Viceroy—who gave certain assurances. On that, he left for London in September—without much hope of success. He went there with only the loin cloth and a shawl in spite of the coming cold weather there.

The new leaders of Britain found easy tools to frustrate the attempt of Congress and Gandhi to have an agreed solution. The first step to this was the repudiation of Irwin's assurance regarding the participation of nationalist Muslims like Dr. Ansari and Sir Ali Imam. When the Round Table Conference was going on, the Aga Khan became instrumental for the 'second command' performance. Aga Khan had manipulated an All-Parties Muslim Conference to put forward some demands for the Muslims which practically gave a handy plea to the British Government to repudiate the claim of the nationalist leaders then assembled at London for an agreed solution. The Round Table Conference was really ship-wrecked on this rock. In fact, the British Government was feeling uneasy at the frank speeches of Gandhi which were getting world-wide publicity. Gandhi spoke not only in the Round Table Conference but also in many public functions held in his reception in Britain. He came back empty-handed on March 28, 1931. And in November 1931, they decided to wind up the R.T. Conference suddenly.

Gandhi was again arrested on 4th January 1932 under the same Regulation XXV of 1827. Then began a reign of terror throughout India. A batch of Englishmen, representing the India League of Britain, came to India during those days. They toured practically every part of India for nearly 3 months, and published a report of what they saw in India. They noted that eminent British missionaries were also assaulted and taken to prison. They compared British rule in India with the barbarous tyranny of the Middle Ages in England and in Europe. In his preface to this publication, Bertrand Russell wrote: "Few people in England realise that misdeeds quite as serious (as the worst in history) are being perpetrated by the British in India." The ordinances, which were withdrawn after the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, were re-introduced; ten such ordinances were issued. Provincial Governments also issued several such ordinances. The British delegation

also noted the courage and fortitude with which the people of India were facing the repressive policy of the Government. In a number of places there was shooting, causing death to several hundred persons and injury to a few thousand. It should be remembered that on the Congress side, the struggle was non-violent and they carried no arms with them. Lathi charge was, of course, a daily occurrence. Cases of molestation, including rape of women, were innumerable. The North-Western Frontier Province and Bengal had had the biggest dose of government repression. Punitive police was posted in several villages and they committed the most gruesome crimes. One British officer boasted that with the posting of punitive police, any village was bound to be humbled. Asked how, he replied—"Within twenty-four hours there will be not a virgin or a four-anna piece left in that village."

Even after the arrest of all the leaders, the people continued the struggle. Prisons were again over-full, improvised prisons were set up; these also became over-full. Then began the old tactics of arresting and assaulting people and then dropping them in far-off open fields in the wintry nights. In the meantime, the British Government were pursuing their policy of giving a second dose of reforms to India. They cared little whether the Indians liked the medicine they were prescribing; but India must be made to swallow that medicine. MacDonald by then was a thoroughly changed man and surrendered himself completely to Sir Samuel Hoare, the die-hard conservative Secretary of State for India.

Then came (17th August, 1932) the Communal Award of MacDonald promising separate electorate to the Scheduled Castes of the Hindu community. By this Award the British Government perpetuated the existing separate electorate for the Muslims but also almost doubled the number of their representatives by giving them undue weightage in the provinces. It further introduced separate electorate for the depressed classes among the Hindus. The Communal Award created various compartments in the nation, e.g. Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, Muslims, Landlords, Commerce and Industries, Scheduled Castes etc. Instead of integrating the nation, Britain was encouraging separatist interests to be formed so that no one could be entitled to

speaking for the whole Indian nation, Gandhi, from his prison cell, raised his voice of protest against this policy of dissecting the Hindu community into caste and scheduled caste sectors or depressed class. All these years he was fighting for removing the disabilities of the Scheduled Castes and for giving them social status consistent with human dignity and civic rights—as an integral part of the greater Hindu community. The Government rather put obstacles to legislative measures for the amelioration of the condition of these people.

Gandhi took up the challenge of this mischievous move of the Communal Award and went on an indefinite fast to undo the mischief of creating a division even within the ranks of Hindus. He wrote to the British Premier of his determination on the 18th to go on fast from September 20 for an indefinite period in protest against the Award. The whole of India was stirred by his fast. All public men of India rushed to Poona. Even Rabindranath Tagore, with his feeble health and in spite of his disagreement with the main political techniques of Gandhi, came over to Poona. At last an agreement was reached between the caste and the scheduled caste Hindus whose leaders M. C. Raja and Ambedkar put their signatures on the agreement. The agreement gave a larger number of seats to the scheduled castes than given by the Award; but there would be a joint electorate. The Communal Award was a mischievous device to perpetuate British control over India. The Muslims were given undue weightage where they were in a minority—but the Hindus were not given any weightage in Bengal. In the Bengal Assembly the Hindus, who constituted over 45% of the population, were given only 80 seats out of 250 seats. Of these 250 seats, 11 were reserved for Europeans, 4 for Anglo-Indians and 9 for Commerce and Industry—a fair number of which would go to the Europeans who formed less than 0.25% of the population.

By his fast, Gandhi was able not only to change this particular item of the Communal Award; he also made the caste and scheduled caste Hindu leaders come closer. The assembled leaders met in a conference and, while endorsing the modification of the Award, resolved: "Henceforth among the Hindus, no one shall be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth and those,

who have been so regarded hitherto, will have the same right as other Hindus in regard to the use of the public wells, public schools, public roads and other public institutions." In this matter, Gandhi was concerned really with the question of social rights of a section of the Hindus who had so long been denied those rights. He stated that the caste Hindus should have the opportunity, and should realise the obligation, to do the necessary penance for the injustice done by them to the scheduled caste people. After this, he intensified his campaign for the removal of the disabilities of the scheduled castes; he had already taken up this issue even from 1920—particularly after his release in 1923. Untouchability Abolition Week was organised to carry on the campaign with vigour. The All-India Anti-untouchability League was set up with a net-work of branches all over the country. He then directed his attention to the opening of Hindu temples to the scheduled castes people. This was a campaign for a social revolution. But his technique was based on peaceful and non-violent methods, intended to make the upper caste Hindus realise their sin and do the necessary penance. The Government took an unhelpful attitude in this matter. A bill to enable the untouchables to enter Hindu temples, passed by the Madras Council, was held back by the Government of India and another bill in the Central Assembly was blocked by the Government.

Putting the leaders in jails, the Government let loose a ruthless regime of mass oppression. Enormities of Government's repressive measures were vividly described by the India League delegation of Britain. Special instructions were sent to the jail authorities to be particularly hard on political prisoners, who were generally treated like ordinary criminals, except for a few top leaders; but rules were more vigorously enforced for the political prisoners. Whipping of non-violent satyagrahis in jails was a common feature. Pandit Malaviya—so long just an honest moderate—was goaded into active participation in civil disobedience because of the inhuman oppressive measures. He was twice arrested—at Delhi and Calcutta—in his attempts to preside over the banned sittings of the Congress. He stated that at least 1,60,000 persons had been arrested for non-violent and peaceful Satyagraha; the number of arrests is apprehended to far exceed that number. The

whole of India became a vast prison house. One typical case will indicate the perversity of the Government outlook; one young man was practically kidnapped from his house and taken to the police station. Kerosine oil was poured on his head and then his hair was ignited. The wife of the officer screamed in horror and then a constable came and put out the fire. By that time, his hair was burnt and even his scalp had been sufficiently burnt. During the first part of 1932, about 110 newspapers and 100 printing houses were asked to deposit security money; some of them had to deposit twice, the first deposit having been forfeited. Thus, the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay had its first deposit of Rs. 10,000/- forfeited and a second deposit of Rs. 20,000/- was demanded. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta also had to make deposits twice.

When Gandhi and all the Congress leaders were in jail, some moderate leaders started discussing the way out. In the meantime, the Government had been consistently following the policy of weaning away the Muslims from the Congress. The Government in both England and India had been systematically saying that no constitutional advance would be possible except with the consent of the Muslims who under Jinnah's leadership took the stand that the nationalist Muslims did not and could not represent the views of the community. The Muslim League—an avowedly communal body of the die-hard Muslims—got the recognition of the Government as the sole representative body of that community. And by 1935 they had been successful in making a division between Congress and the Muslim League which had, by then, got the power of veto over any constitutional advance.

Jinnah had already put forward his Fourteen Points demand which it was difficult for any nationalist to swallow. These demands cut at the very root of the concept of a secular Indian nation. An All-Party Conference was meeting at Allahabad to discuss the future shape of the reforms and particularly a settlement with the Muslim League and they were almost on the verge of coming to an agreed formula when in November 1932, Samuel Hoare declared the decision of the British Government giving undue weightage to the Muslims in the provincial and Central legislatures. Thus the attempt of the leaders of the two communi-

ties was forestalled. The Allahabad conference decided with the concurrence of the Muslim leaders that in the Central Assembly, they would get 32% seats, though they constituted only 25% of the population. Hoare announced that the Muslims would get 33½% of the seats to be allotted for the Indians, i.e. excluding the seats reserved for Europeans. This undue weightage was given to the Muslims simply to encourage the Muslim League in its intransigence towards the Congress. Yet in the next election (1935) of the Central Assembly under the 1919-Constitution, the Congress practically swept the poll and out of the seats then reserved for the Muslims, the Muslim League could not return any member in its own name. Still, for the next Constitution the British Government proceeded on the basis of the claims made by the Muslim League, as the sole representative body of the Muslims. Out of 77 elected Indian seats, the two wings of the Congress got 55 seats. As for the undue weightage promised by Hoare to the Muslims in the central and provincial legislatures, Gandhi thought that the Hindus could afford to be generous to them; and on that item the Congress did not protest. This angered a section of the Hindus, particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra. All these happened as Government decisions, without any prior agreement of the Round Table Conference which had been suddenly closed a year ago.

After the fast, Gandhi started a paper, *Harijan*, which replaced *Young India* as his vehicle of propaganda and fight. Harijan, meaning God's people, is the name given to the scheduled castes by Gandhi. On 30th April, 1933, Gandhi, still in prison, undertook a fast of 21 days. He declared—"Many are the causes, too sacred to mention. . . . But they are all connected with the Harijan cause." Nowhere in the world did a political leader, engaged in a direct fight with the mightiest imperial power, take up the cause of social reform on the ground of humane considerations. Only Gandhi could do that. During the fast he was released from jail; but even then, he completed the fast for 21 days. In the meantime, the British Government drafted and passed the new Reforms Act of 1935.

Other Congress leaders were also gradually released. Then came the election of 1937 under the Reforms Act of 1935. The

Congress contested the election and got an absolute majority in five and a working majority in three more provinces. Provisions of the Act were not applied to the Central Government; so the Central Assembly continued as already constituted. It should be mentioned that seats were reserved for Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Landlords, Industry and Commerce etc. In Bengal out of 250 seats, 41 seats were reserved for these interests. That was a handicap for the Congress to get an absolute majority; in Bombay, the Congress polled 56% of the votes cast; yet it was short of an absolute majority by 2 seats. Gandhi argued for some time with the Viceroy by long correspondence regarding some of the doubtful points in the Reforms Act, particularly about the privilege of the Governor to interfere in the Minister's powers in the conduct of affairs. The Viceroy gave him the solemn assurance that the Governor would not usually interfere in the action of the Ministers. Only then, Congress allowed its members in eight provinces out of 11 to take office. Of the Muslim majority provinces, one had a Congress government and two others had independent coalition Governments headed by anti-League Muslim leaders. This was the position of the League in spite of the patronage of the Government. The provincial Governments under the Congress were formed by about the middle of 1937; and in about 2 years' time came the Second World War.

The Second World War broke out on 1st September 1939 with an unprovoked invasion on Poland from the west by Germany and from the east by Russia. And two days later, Britain and France declared war. The same day India became a belligerent; several ordinances were promulgated and the Government of India Act of 1935 was modified. The Viceroy sent for Gandhi and Jinnah and some other leaders on the 5th. Gandhi made no commitment to the Viceroy and came back "empty handed". The political situation in India was then somewhat confused; there was never any sympathy for the Nazi rule in Germany, or for the Fascist rule in Italy. On the outbreak of the World War, the German army in swift succession overran Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and other smaller countries of Europe. France also collapsed and Britain was seriously threatened. There was a general feeling of sympathy

for those countries and a revulsion of feeling against the Nazis and Fascists. Jawaharlal on September 8 considered this war to be a war between "freedom and democracy on the one hand and Fascism and aggression on the other." so, he said, "... I should like India to play her full part and throw all her resources into the struggle for a new order." His suggestion was for full support to Britain in this War 'with all her resources'—which certainly meant even military resources.

Congress Working Committee met on September 14. Expressing its sympathy for distressed France and Britain, it made two basic points clear: it did not approve the Government's action in declaring war on behalf of India without consulting her, and if this war was for the defence of freedom and democracy, then those principles must be applied to India before India could help the war measures.

The moderates and the Hindu Mahasabha extended unconditional support to the war measures; the Muslim League (Sept. 18) took a diplomatic line in its official resolution—neither to oppose nor to support; it also gave a warning to the Government over the Muslim minority". But it allowed three provincial governments partly controlled by it to avow full support to the war measures. Eight provincial legislatures, with Congress ministries functioning, passed an identical resolution withdrawing co-operation to the war. Subhas Bose, who had already gone out of the Congress and had formed his Forward Bloc, was, of course, for opposing the war measures. Gandhi expressed his sympathy for Britain and France for their sufferings and troubles; but he severely condemned the Government action in declaring India a belligerent—firstly, without consulting Indian public opinion and, secondly, without making a clear and unambiguous declaration of Britain's plan to apply to India the principle of democracy and freedom for which the war was supposed to be fought. The Government of India was acting in a most reckless and autocratic manner. In 1938, the Government made a solemn policy declaration in the Central Assembly that the Indian army would not be taken out of India without consulting the Assembly. That assurance was blatantly violated and Indian soldiers were sent out of India even before the formal declaration of war. Eleven

provincial governments under elected ministers had been functioning and none of them were consulted.

During his interview with the Viceroy, Gandhi could offer Britain only his moral and non-violent support, for which the Viceroy had no necessity, or even no appreciation. The Viceroy and the Government wanted India's material and martial support. But Gandhi wanted the war aims to be clarified. In a statement given to some foreign papers including the *New York Times*, *Daily Herald*, *Paris Soir*, *Yorniri Shimbun* and others—Gandhi said, "Congress has demanded no constitutional change during the war. Its demand is for a declaration that Britain's war aims necessarily include the independence of India." Similar statements were made by him on many occasions. The Government's reaction to Indian opinion was the promulgation of some repressive measures through ordinances; they could not wait even to consult the Assembly—so grave was their suspicion about India's loyal support. Paderewski, the eminent Polish leader of international fame, both as a musician and also as a revolutionary, appealed to Gandhi: "I appeal to you, as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world, to use your influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship." Gandhi promptly replied, "My whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are engaged for the sake of saving their freedom." Then he referred to the slavery of India and her non-violent struggle which had had only a partial success. He ended his reply, "Their (Polish) cause is just and their victory certain."

The Working Committee of the Congress met on September 9 and continued its deliberations up to the 14th. Gandhi felt the Congress or even the Working Committee had not that abiding faith in non-violence which he had; for most of them, non-violence was at best a policy or strategy to fight the battle of freedom. He did not press his point of view except by putting forward his views in a draft resolution. He allowed the Committee to give preference to a draft resolution put up by Jawaharlal Nehru as it was agreed that instead of Gandhi, Nehru would conduct the negotiations with the Government. To facilitate this, a War Committee of the Congress was set up with Jawaharlal

as its President, Maulana Azad and Ballabhbhai Patel as members. But Nehru's enthusiasm was soon damped by the stolid and unresponsive attitude of the Government. Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, declared that the 1935-Reforms would work and that in the mean time, he could form a consultative group, with members of all the parties, including Muslim League, Liberals, Hindu Mahasabha, Communist and even the Princes with himself as its president. A committee with such heterogeneous combination and that also for consultation—can not have any utility at all. He also repeated the usual cant of dominion status as the goal of the British Government.

Instructions were sent to the eight Congress Ministries to resign by 30th October. Each of eight Assemblies under Congress Ministry passed a resolution:—

“... This Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the War... without the consent of the people of India and have further, in complete disregard of the Indian public opinion, passed laws and adopted measures, curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments.... In consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential, in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people, that the principle of democracy, with effective safeguards for the Muslims and the other minorities, be applied to India and her policy be guided by her own people and that India should be regarded as an independent nation, entitled to frame her own constitution, and further that suitable action should be taken, in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to present governance of India.... And in view of this failure of the British Government to meet India's demand, this Assembly is of the opinion that the Government cannot associate itself with British policy.”

In each provincial Assembly, the Muslim League members moved an amendment: “... The democratic parliamentary system of Government under the constitution has failed, it being utterly unsuited to the condition and genius of the people.... The entire problems of India's future constitution should be

wholly reviewed and revised *de novo* and that the British should not make any commitment in principle or otherwise without the consent of the *All India Muslim League, which alone represents, and can speak, on behalf of the Musalmans of India, (Italics ours)* as well as without consent of all important minorities." This power of veto of the Muslim League had already been conceded by Lord Linlithgow on October 17, 1939. As stated before, the Government, by this time, had put forward many minority claims including the Princes, the Muslims and others and designated the Congress as representing only the caste Hindus. In several Government policy statements, they had mentioned the interests of the Muslims, the Princes (but no mention of the people of the States under the tyrannical rule of those Princes), the Scheduled Castes and other minorities. The Government had sufficient resources to mobilise support. Dr. Ambedkar, Savarkar, Kelkar, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and others warned the Viceroy not to accept or act according to the advice of the Congress. Gandhi, in fact, then became the target of criticism from all sides; but he remained firm in his faith in non-violence and also in Indian democracy. After the resignation of Congress Ministries, the Muslim League celebrated a "Deliverance Day"—to tell the world that the Congress was their enemy. That perversity mightily pleased the British Government.

During this crucial period, Gandhi was being assailed both from the extreme and the moderate sections in the country—or even within the Congress. Though Subhas Bose had by then left the Congress, yet his influence over a section of Congressmen was undeniable. This section was in favour of an immediate fight. The socialist group of the Congress was also eager for an immediate fight. Jawaharlal was in favour of a contingent fight, i.e. to fight if the conditions put by the Congress were not fulfilled. But the Government made it clear by various statements in India and in Britain and by certain steps and acts that they were not in any mood to appease India. Gandhi also made it clear to all that the Congress could offer only moral and non-violent support; he was particular not to use the word 'support'; he always used the word 'sympathy'. And that also, if India's demand were conceded.

In November, the All-India Congress Committee met at Allahabad and passed a resolution demanding a constituent assembly "as the only democratic method of determining the Constitution of a free country . . . only adequate instrument for solving communal and other difficulties." The idea behind this resolution was to circumvent the bogey of the communal differences, mostly fomented by the Government. The Congress Working Committee had to review the situation on several occasions. On February 28, (1940) the Committee met at Patna; Gandhi was present there. It passed only one resolution for the coming annual session. It declared its conviction "that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for the imperialist ends. . . . The Indian Congress cannot, in any way, directly and indirectly, be party to the war, which means the continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation (i.e. the exploitation of India and other Asian and African countries). . . . The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete Independence can be accepted by the people of India. . . . The Congress desires to draw the attention of all Congressmen to Mahatma Gandhi's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring Civil Disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme as prescribed in the Independence Pledge. . . . The Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of civil disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation." Readers should here note two points—(1) the precondition to civil disobedience is the fulfilment of the constructive programme, and (2) the call for evoking the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

After the Working Committee in September, (1939) Gandhi had practically retired from the position of guiding the Congress—as the Working Committee had its reservation regarding the non-violence. In a way, it offered even military support to the war efforts. Gandhi then wrote, "I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could be done on a purely non-violent basis." The Working Committee then set up a Board with Jawaharlal Nehru as its Chairman to conduct negotiation

with the Government. So Gandhi was practically relieved of the responsibility of guiding the Congress.

Now the Congress again sought Gandhiji's guidance and leadership in the general session of the Congress at Ramgarh. Why? Because he alone could move the masses of India. Jawaharlal himself admitted to the writer, "We differ from Gandhiji in many matters; but we simply cannot do without him. He has an uncanny sense to understand the mass mind; we cannot exactly read the mass mind." A similar view was expressed by Azad. Gandhi alone could understand and move the mass mind because he identified himself with the masses completely; and that was his strength which no other leader had.

In March 1939, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was mainly responsible for the atrocities inflicted on Punjab and the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh, was shot dead by an Indian named Udham Singh in the Caxton Hall at London. Even after 20 years, the Punjabees could not forget the injury and the insult of the martial law regime in 1919. This murder was to avenge that. It may be stated that during these years 1930-1934, there were a number of violent revolutionary acts in Bengal, Punjab and also in U.P.

The annual session of the Congress at Ramgarh on March 17 to 19th 1940 endorsed the Patna resolution. But soon differences in outlook between Gandhi and the majority of the Working Committee members became intensified when the Nazi army was ravaging country after country. Before the German Blitzkrieg, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway—all fell and were occupied. Again a false humanist emotion of some got prominence and the cause of India and her distressed masses receded into the background in their minds. Gandhi, by then, had moved to a position which it was very difficult for the Congress leaders to accept. He wanted that even for the defence of the country, India should depend on non-violence. The Working Committee met on 17th June at Wardha and declared that they "are unable to go to the full length with Gandhiji and recognise that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and therefore absolve him from the responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue." The Committee decided to have a parallel arrangement of self-defence. This was the second time

that the Working Committee relieved him of guiding the Congress. But soon the Working Committee had to call Gandhi back to take charge of the whole thing. So great was his hold on the people and so great was his understanding of the human problem that other leaders, all combined, could not lead the Indian masses to a struggle against the Government.

The nature of the War changed when U.S.S.R. was attacked by Germany in June 1941; immediately the Communist Party of India declared the war as a peoples' war; previously they had characterised it as an imperialist war. The character of the war underwent a further change when Japan declared war against Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the allied powers in December 1941. With unexpected swiftness Japan conquered the whole of east Asia and was striking at the eastern gate of India. Subhas Bose with his I.N.A. was also hammering at the eastern border of India. While other leaders were vacillating, Gandhi remained firm in his opposition to the war measures of the Government. War measures then taken, in most cases, caused unnecessary suffering for the poorer section of the people. The scorched earth policy, the denial policy, subtly demoralising the people and lastly, the great man-made famine in Bengal—would not and need not have been necessary at all, had there been a popular government. Even people in Britain had not experienced such panicky measures born out of a total lack of confidence in the people.

Gandhi carried on a strenuous campaign against many of the war measures taken by the Government and asked the people not to co-operate with the Government in their war efforts. He first organised the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement (October 1940). Each civil resister was to be approved by him. Criterion for the selection was faith in non-violence and in the constructive programme. There were whispers of criticism even within his intimate circle that in such a critical time, he was insisting on some wholly non-political points. The first resister chosen by him was Vinoba Bhave. The resister would go out and address the people; the main theme of his address was—'Not a pie; not a man' for the war efforts. There were ridicules and taunts about the utility of such a campaign. The Communist

Party and the younger section of Congress workers were critical about his insistence on non-political points. When Russia was attacked by Germany in June 1941, the Communists of India overnight changed their policy of resistance to the imperialist war into a policy of collaboration with the Government in conducting the people's war. They were reported to be helped by the Government for working against the Congress workers.

Yet individual civil disobedience movement gathered momentum gradually and a large number of people were arrested. Gandhi made it clear to the people that this was a preparation for a bigger fight. Congress leaders were all soon arrested. At this stage the British Government felt the pressure of war and of world opinion for some understanding with the Congress. The die-hard conservative Prime Minister sent the noted socialist Sir Stafford Cripps to India for negotiation with the Congress. But the directives from Whitehall were not conducive for any settlement and Cripps returned without achieving any success. Churchill had to send Cripps only at the pressure of Roosevelt and also of Chiang-Kai-Shek. Churchill made this announcement on March 11, 1942—after the fall of Singapore and Rangoon to the Japanese. Cripps arrived in India on March 23. Important Congress leaders were released. Gandhi was not arrested this time. It may be recalled that Cripps came to India also in October 1939; on his return to Britain then, he said "India's salvation remains in a Constituent Assembly". He then fully supported the Congress as the real representative of the people of India. Cripps mission in 1942 was simply an eye-wash to satisfy world opinion.

Gandhi laid two main points in this struggle: (1) Resistance to war should be in a non-violent way. This he stressed in his open letter "To every Briton". (2) Britain had not clarified her intentions as regards the application of the principle of freedom and democracy to India. India had every reason to doubt the *bonafides* of Britain—particularly because Churchill was then the Prime Minister in London. Churchill had never made any secret of his feelings about India; rather he had repeatedly declared, "India is vital to the well-being of Britain" and "loss of India will destroy all we have." Even after the outbreak of

World War II, he stated in Parliament, "To transfer responsibility, to this highly artificial and restricted oligarch of Indian politician, would be a retrograde act... a shameful act..., an act of cowardice...." Even after the signing of the Atlantic Charter (August 1941), he stressed the Charter would apply to "the States and nations in Europe now under Nazi yoke" and would not apply to "India, Burma and other parts of the British Empire." Gandhi's idea was that only a free and independent India can decide what attitude she would take in that war; an alien Government should not usurp the right of the people to decide as to how she would defend her rights as also the rights and freedom of other nations.

Gandhi and all other Congress leaders were awfully disappointed at the attitude of Cripps; his radio talk, intended for the U.S.A. hearers, was full of distortion of facts and gross misrepresentation of the views and demands of the Congress. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, who was an admirer of Cripps, was highly dissatisfied at his attitude. Then Gandhi started preparations for the final struggle. Practically the whole of Europe was in the grip of war; only Sweden and the Iberian peninsula were somewhat out of the war zone. In Asia, Japan was ravaging China and the whole of East Asia; her army was then at the gate of India. So there was a greater public abhorrence against Nazi rule and a greater sympathy for the war-ravaged countries. Even some Congress leaders felt that a direct action at that stage would not be proper. But Gandhi overcame all opposition and hesitation among the members of the Working Committee. And gradually the attitude of the Congress was hardened and Nehru also said, "We want independence here and now". Gandhi was asked by L. Fischer why he suddenly took such a stiff attitude. He replied—"It was the Cripps fiasco that inspired the idea. Hardly had he gone, when it seized hold of me."

The idea of the Quit India call started working in his mind from the end of April, 1942. Every week in *Harijan* he expounded the idea, giving the broad outlines of the movement. In his interview with Fischer he said, "The peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt... it will give the peasants courage to think that they are capable of *independent action*." He expressed his

deep sympathy for China and the countries ravaged by Nazi hordes. By that time China and the U.S.A. had shown a keen interest in some solution of the Indian problem. Chiang-Kai-Shek came to India and talked with the Congress leaders and also with the Viceroy. President Roosevelt was putting pressure on Churchill to come to some settlement with India. He even deputed a special envoy to India.

Then on August 9, 1942, the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay passed a resolution in favour of a campaign demanding that Britain must "quit India" immediately. Gandhi, the members of the Working Committee and most of the members of the A.I.C.C. were immediately arrested. But he had, by then, given the slogan "Do or Die"; that greatly enthused the people. The Working Committee had already endorsed the proposal. Gandhi carried them all to the non-violent battlefield. As I have stated, during the War period there were occasions of sharp differences between Gandhi and other leaders. On two occasions, Gandhi withdrew his leadership of the Congress on the point of non-violence and also on the point of political strategy. But other leaders felt that without Gandhi, they were simply dumb and lame in the arena of Indian politics. And within a few months they had to request Gandhi to come back and take the leadership of the Congress.

The 'Quit India' movement drew forth the entire population of India into this struggle except the Communists who were stubbornly opposing the movement and were working in full collaboration with the Government in their attempt to suppress the movement. M. N. Roy was also fully collaborating with the Government. Yet the Congress call created an unprecedented popular enthusiasm. The repressive measures of the Government were working in full force. It was then no longer a question of counting the number of persons arrested; it was the question of making an estimate of the number of persons killed or wounded. Even on a moderate estimate at least 10,000 persons were killed and 25,000 wounded. The struggle was taken up by the people as a call to withdraw allegiance from the alien government. In many places, the people set up their own Government with their own revenue collection, their own courts to try cases, their

own police to maintain law and order. Railway and postal communications were disrupted in many places.

During the war years, particularly on the eastern side, in Bengal and Assam there were large concentration of British and American troops. The war policy of the Government included even such items as the denial policy, the scorched earth policy, the policy of evacuating an entire village at 24 hours' notice, and lastly the policy of organising in Bengal one of the biggest famines of India, simply to undermine the morale of the people. That "man-made famine" took a toll of about 50 lakhs of people. All these caused great hardship to the people of India but their allegiance to Gandhi and to the Congress remained unabated. It can be claimed that the entire masses of India joined the movement. Every town and village had the tremendous impact of this movement, and people stood firmly against the repressive measures of the Government.

In the meantime, the Government policy of divide and rule, which was the calculated policy even from the last century, had matured to give its final result. The Muslim League demanded partition of India and to have a Pakistan of their own to be carved out of the Muslim majority provinces. Roosevelt, the American President and Chiang-Kai-Shek, the Chinese President, still pressed upon the British Government to come to terms with India. However, the war ended with the surrender of Germany, and later on of Japan—with complete victory of Britain and her allies. After the end of the War, Britain had a Labour Government which sent the Cabinet Mission to India. I do not like to enter into their deliberations except to state that the Government felt the urgency of coming to terms with India. Gandhi then was mostly absent from Delhi; he was busy in restoring communal amity and the sense of human brotherhood in the riot-ravaged areas like Calcutta, Noakhali and Patna.

India achieved independence, of course with partition conceding Pakistan to the Muslim League. Partition was not according to the choice of Gandhi; he resisted it to the last. But he was then a man of eighty. When he found all his trusted lieutenants had already decided to accept partition, and practically all other parties (the Communists, Hindu Mahasabha etc.) were

pressing for partition, he had hardly any alternative but to yield to the pressure of his trusted colleagues and to public opinion and also to his growing physical weakness due to old age. The massacre of Punjab came as a great shock to the Congress leaders; lakhs and lakhs of people were killed or otherwise subjected to inhuman brutalities. The connivance of British officials of Punjab to all the deeds and demands of the Muslim League made the Congress members of the Indian Government helpless to provide basic security to the people of Punjab.

The Muslim League members in the Interim Government took an obstructionist attitude within the government and fomented communal discord and riots in the country. In the final meeting of the All India Congress Committee to consider the question of partition, Gandhi pleaded his old age and asked the delegates to make their choice between opposing partition which would mean discarding the present set of leaders, forming a new Working Committee with a new set of leaders, and acceptance of partition and Pakistan. The A.I.C.C. by an overwhelming majority accepted partition. There was then a desperate feeling that no price would be too high to get rid of the cursed alien rule.

We should narrate another chapter of Gandhi's life. Before independence, the British Government by their deliberate manipulation intensified the communal conflict to its maximum. When Gandhi appeared on the political arena of India in 1919, he laid great stress on Hindu-Muslim unity. He identified himself with the Khilafat problem; and for that he was often criticised by a section of the Hindus. The first two years of the Non-cooperation movement passed off smoothly with complete communal amity. Gradually a rift developed between the two communities. The first riot was in the extreme south in the Malabar region of Madras. It was known as the Mopla rising. Gandhi wanted to go there with Mohammad Ali; but on their way to Malabar the Government arrested Mohammad Ali. Hindu-Muslim riots then became a frequent occurrence. Whenever there was any such riot, Gandhi would try to go there to restore peace. He undertook several fasts as atonement for the riots and also to create a moral pressure on the leaders of both the communities. Twice he fasted in Delhi; during these fasts he

was in the houses of two Muslim leaders—Mohammad Ali and Dr. Ansari.

It may be mentioned here that communal riots practically started with the intensification of political movement in India. And it can be said without any hesitation that this was practically the creation of the British Government following the Roman dictum of 'Divide and rule'. To Gandhi, all religions were equal. In his prayer meetings often Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Zoroastrian scriptures were read. He also declared himself to be a believer in Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Zoroastrian and Confucian faiths—though he declared himself as a Sanatani Hindu, i.e. a real Hindu. In spite of his catholicity of religious belief, he could not keep the Muslim community aloof from the wily politics of the Government and the influence of the Muslim League. The forces of imperialist designs were too strong for him. The Government were giving every encouragement to Jinnah and his Muslim League to have the final word for the Muslims as a community and gave them sufficient encouragement to raise their demand to an absurdity. I do not like to enter into the details of this communal tangle; I would limit myself only to what has appeared to me to be the peak of Gandhian technique of fighting evils. After negotiation with the Cabinet Mission, the Interim Government was formed. The Muslim League declined to join the Government; certain seats were kept vacant for them whenever they would join.

Then came an astute Conservative Viceroy, Mountbatten, though the Government in England was that of the Labour Party. Mountbatten had his cue from Churchill, his party leader. He somehow manipulated to bring the Muslim League members into the Government, giving them hopes of satisfying all their demands. In 1946 they declared a Direct Action Day to secure their aim—Pakistan. No one then anticipated that the direct action would be directed on the Hindus in certain parts of the country in the form of organised bloody assaults. Only in Bengal there was a Muslim League Government functioning; and Suhrawardy, the head of the Government, manipulated the police postings in Calcutta to have almost a monopoly control over Calcutta Police by Muslim officers-in-charge of the police stations

and Europeans at the top. Calcutta became the scene of the Direct Action struggle. It was curious that a political party took up a programme, not against the Government but against a sister community. For the first two days, Muslim hooligans aided by Government machinery massacred innocent Hindus all over the city. From the second day's evening, Hindu young boys started organising resistance and then they took the offensive. On the evening of the 4th day, the Muslim League Government realised that the game was going against them. So the military were called in; but slaughter of innocent pedestrians continued for full one year. It was really a fight to secure Calcutta for Pakistan. But they lost the fight.

Having been baffled at Calcutta, the Muslim League organised a riot at Noakhali which had about 70 per cent Muslim population. Hindu houses were burnt, Hindu women were molested, kidnapped and raped. Hindu temples were desecrated. Then Gandhi rushed to Noakhali to restore peace there. That was another epic in Gandhi's career and the writer feels that that was perhaps the biggest achievement of Gandhi or at least the biggest and the boldest effort to restore human values. Hundreds of young workers went to Noakhali, put up temporary camps of peace among Muslims whose fanatic zeal had been roused to almost brutal frenzy. From village to village, Gandhi toured with two or three followers. He solaced the fear-stricken Hindus and gave them courage. He argued with the turbulent Muslims and tried to restore humane and brotherly feelings in them. Before peace was fully restored in Noakhali, he had to rush to Bihar. Another fire broke out in Bihar where the Hindus took the offensive to avenge Noakhali. Then Gandhi started running from Noakhali to Bihar, from Bihar to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Delhi. On the eastern and western borders of India, communal fires were burning; he rushed to all places with his message of peace and love.

Before partition was accepted, there were wide-spread riots in Punjab—very often with the connivance of British district officers. They were systematically disregarding the instructions of Sardar Patel—then in charge of Home Affairs in the Interim Government. The non-League ministry of Khajir Hayat Khan was

by-passed and ultimately forced to resign. The Congress ministry in another Muslim majority province—the N.W.F. Province—was dismissed. Then the great communal riots began in Punjab. Hindu and Sikh minorities were killed in not in thousands—but in lakhs; there were arsons, loots, abductions and rapes in thousands. So the Congress leaders in the Interim Government became desperate and eager to stop human sufferings—even by accepting partition.

Then with partition, there were fresh riots in Punjab. Lakhs of Hindus were pouring into India from the western portion of Punjab and the N.W.F. Province. Similarly lakhs of Muslims from this side were fleeing to Punjab for security. Lakhs of Hindu refugees from Punjab came to Delhi, related their stories of sufferings and sorrows, begged for protection to the Hindus still left in these parts, almost marooned among hostile angry Muslim mobs. The leaders both in the Government and outside felt helpless. Vallabhbhai who was in charge of the Home Department at the Centre found his directions and instructions flouted by the European officials in Punjab. Gandhi felt awfully unhappy at this massacre of fellow countrymen on both sides of the line of partition. All along he strongly held the idea that Indians should not fight Indians either on the basis of class interest or on that of caste prejudices or for religious fanaticism. He felt so depressed that he went on fast. His fast raised public opinion and soon calm was restored.

Gandhi rushed to Calcutta, where communal fire was still burning. Suhrawardy, the most hated man then in Calcutta as the organiser of the diabolical 'great massacre' at Calcutta, sought the protection of Gandhi even though he was still the Premier of Bengal. Suhrawardy assured Gandhi of his changed attitude and Gandhi accepted him as his companion when he decided to reside in a Muslim area in a derelict Muslim house. Angry Hindus ridiculed Gandhi for his foolishness in believing Suhrawardy, threatened him and in fact made some attacks on that house. But Gandhi remained firm and quiet. Ultimately peace was restored in Calcutta.

There were also Hindu fanatics who did not like Gandhi's interest in saving the lives of the Muslims in Delhi, Punjab, Bihar

and Calcutta and at other places; and he died a martyr on 30th January, 1948. He had had sufficient warning. About a week earlier, a bomb had been thrown at him. Police protection was offered by the Government which was then conducted by his own followers but he declined. He wanted to live as a private citizen without any protection from the Government. For that he was ready even to court death and he courted death. While going to his evening prayer meeting, a Hindu assassin fired 2 shots at the greatest and noblest man at least for near about 2000 years. The last word from his lips was "RAM"—the God whom he worshipped. Perhaps he was too good to avoid being a victim of an assassin, as Bernard Shaw said after his murder.

Thus came the end of a man who even after his death looms large before humanity. We are naturally reminded of what the great Negro leader Dr. Martin Luther King said when he came to India—described by him as a 'pilgrimage'—in 1954. In a press conference, he was asked by a correspondent, "Where is Gandhi? We do not see him anywhere." Dr King emphatically replied, "Gandhi is inevitable. If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inevitable." His influence now is felt all over the world more than when he was living. He liberated India through non-violent struggle. As a living human being, he was mostly considered in the background of his role in India's struggle. But after his martyrdom, his teachings and ideals are now considered in the background of the present-day ills and anomalies of the world. This is the justification of Dr. King's observation that "if humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inevitable."

When during the War, India declined to co-operate with the British Government in war measures, the Government made repeated attempts to get that co-operation. The British Government was feeling the public pressure within Britain as also of world opinion. During the War, Subhas Chandra Bose escaped out of India, organised the Indian National Army and was on the borders of India with his I.N.A. All these made the British Government feel that even after having their biggest military victory, in the prevalent circumstances it would not be possible for them to maintain their imperial control over a rebellious India; and they decided to withdraw from India. That was

primarily, if not solely, due to Gandhi's fight conducted for a quarter of a century from 1921-46 with non-violent and truthful means. Persistent non-violent revolt of the masses of India made imperialist Britain realise the impotency of her military forces. So the process of history did not stop only with the withdrawal of the British from India. The forces that were generated out of this movement were also found operating in other parts of the world. Soon Burma, Ceylon, Indo-China and many other territories found liberation from colonial and imperial rule. The process continued from 1947 to 1957. Thus within these 10 years, the whole of Asia and Africa (except a small portion) were liberated. The two continents were liberated from colonial rule. It should also be remembered that these were the two continents where imperialism had thrived, suppressing the local population and exploiting their resources; and imperialist exploitation from these two continents enriched the people of Europe. In Africa, there were sporadic outbursts of violence; but the French, the British and the Dutch withdrew from Asia and Africa practically due to their realisation of the moral and political forces generated all over the world mainly by the Gandhian technique of fight.

Now, East Bengal in her struggle for liberation from the auto-cracy and exploitation of the western wing of Pakistan adopted non-violent non-co-operation as her weapon of fight. But, later the unarmed people there were forced to resist Pakistan military savagery even by organising guerilla bands. Ultimately to stop wide pogrom and genocide, the Indian army had to be moved. Big Pakistani forces surrendered with all their arms practically without any fight. That was largely made possible due to the spirit of non-co-operation maintained by the whole people there. The most ruthless and unprecedented oppression of the Pakistan military could not break the morale of the people of Bangladesh or extort their co-operation. The people there also derived their inspiration from the technique of Gandhian fight and thus they could stand straight before the mighty military forces indulging in most savage barbarities. The undisputed leader of Bangladesh Mujib is reported to have said in London—"My heritage is of Mahatma Gandhi and of non-violence." A new nation is thus

born, in spite of the two powerful nations, U.S.A. and China rendering every possible military help to Pakistan.

This is only the immediate political achievement of Gandhi's fight. But Gandhi's influence is not limited only to India or its neighbouring countries; his influence is now spreading also in America and in Europe. Nor is his influence limited only to political field; rather it is more intensely felt in the social and economic problems now facing humanity. When human ingenuity has produced deadly weapons and methods of warfare sufficient to annihilate within a few days the entire human race, many wise people all over the world are now turning to Gandhi and his technique of non-violence. When the craze for more and more indulgence in luxury and leisure is tending to demoralise humanity, thinkers all over the world are turning to Gandhi and his life of abstinence and simplicity and his theory of bread labour. The present techniques of industrial production and distribution, mainly based on exploitation of the labour of the vast populace and the less developed portions of the world, is making the whole human society devoid of any moral sense. In that situation, eminent men, who have the mind to project their vision to the posterity yet unborn, have been looking to Gandhi with a view to inducing a moral sense in human relations. The surplus value of labour, as expounded by Marx, will not cease to operate with elimination of private capitalism to be replaced by state capitalism.

In the process of social evolution, new theories and ideas, new social and economic systems, new techniques and weapons of struggle have been devised. Marx is considered as one of the cleverest exponents of revolution and of social development. His analysis of history or of revolution on the basis of class conflict was arrived at in a period when the technique of production was quite different from the present-day technique. The kind of revolution that was necessary for extracting the Magna Carta from King John of England and of the revolution conducted by Simon de Montfort was not the same as was necessary for Cromwell on the same soil of England. Similarly the French Revolution had to adopt another technique of revolution and the very content of that revolution was different. In all these revolutions, the element

of violence at the time of the seizure and transfer of power was not the deciding factor. In the French Revolution, violence came in later on, mostly when the foreign powers intervened and attacked France. Then the revolutionary Government of France had to face the interventionists in the battlefield of Valmy. Again in the Russian Revolution, we find quite another pattern of revolution. There also the orgy of violence came only after November 1917, i.e. after the seizure of power by the Bolshevik Party and mostly after the intervention of foreign powers.

It is not always true that class conflict should be the basis of revolution. The social and economic order that was prevalent during the Industrial Revolution in England when Marx wrote his books has since then undergone several changes. Even eminent Marxist theoreticians like Lukas and others admit that capitalism and capitalist technique of production have undergone immense changes in this long period of 100 years. We agree with Marx that in each revolutionary change, the mode of production is a precedent condition; and that equally important is the consequence that follows from the revolution. This generation has to think whether the mode of production and distribution of the last 100 years has been helpful to bring peace to the world. It is also to be considered whether class conflict today is as sharp as it was in the time of Marx, and whether so much emphasis on class struggle so as to provoke a struggle of mutual extermination would be necessary or helpful for the future of humanity.

Gandhi's conception of revolution is based mainly on a few basic ideas. As we have already stated, he was not in favour of giving a free hand to the majority; he wanted every member of the society up to the last man to have his say and his controlling voice in deciding the affairs of the society. It may be relevant here to realise more clearly his stress on the totality of the members of any society as this is almost a complete negation of the present-day concept of State and social organisation, which is based on majority decision—ignoring the minority altogether. This idea first finds expression in his small book—*Hind Swaraj*—written in 1908. But the idea has been further developed in his subsequent writings. In 1946, he wrote "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat

having full powers... Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs, even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit....

"Life will not be a pyramid with apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an economic circle whose centre will be an individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for a circle of villages, till the last whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integrated units.' Similarly, he has advocated a system of decentralised economy in which great importance has been placed on production through village industries. This is what he has called cent-per-cent Swadeshi.

It may appear to be a puzzle to many that Gandhi stressed the importance of *charkha* (spinning wheel) and other primitive rural industries in this twentieth century when machines had achieved high production potentiality. Even discarding his moral and ethical consideration for his objection to the present factory production, the *charkha* should be considered as an instrument to supply a link between the poorest, the meanest and the highest and the most sophisticated. One European writer in his able analysis of Gandhian ideas has stated approvingly, "The spinning-wheel supplied what no Indian politician has hit on before, an instrument by which the educated could make contact with the uneducated." In India and perhaps, in many other countries, the vast majority of people are not wholly employed or occupied. At least that was, and even now is, the position in India. Hardly any politician has ever bothered about those people who are partly employed and Gandhi said, "I propose to utilise the spare time of the nation even as a hydraulic engineer who utilises an enormous waterfall." In Indian conditions at that time it was not possible and even now it is not possible to find any other occupation for the spare time of the vast number of people in India. He realised that in the prevailing awful poverty of India, some means of production, easily available to the people, must

be provided so that they may have their bread. That is why he said, "To a hungry man, God must appear only as a piece of loaf and work with promise to give him the loaf."

Some people even now describe Gandhi as the defender of private property. Palme Dutt has said of him, "The ascetic defender of property". But was he really a defender of property? Surely not. About the ownership of property, Gandhi stands on the same level with Marx; only he differs from Marx as to the means of abolishing the private ownership of property. He has asked the rich and the capitalist to consider themselves as trustee of their property which they would share with the workers and the neighbours; the owner of property should not have any special right to enjoy his property, denying others at least an equitable share of his property.

Gandhi has repeatedly stressed the importance of self-employment where human dignity as also dignity of labour will be respected. So, he advocated the adoption of the spinning wheel, the handloom, and cottage industries. Basically, here his idea would be more or less identical with that of Marx, i.e. the producer must be the owner of his means of production as also of the product of his labour. In the present Communist society, this principle of Marx has no relevance; rather it has deviated far from the Marxian idea "*where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.*" (Communist Manifesto) Gandhi's aversion for class conflict and class struggle comes basically from his idea of human dignity and then from his theory of trusteeship which would not admit the classification of the owner-capitalist as against the labour. Moreover, class conflict is based on the tacit acceptance that one class is the implacable enemy of another class. Gandhi was of the view that a Satyagrahi has no enemy; even if he fights, he fights against the system, not against any person or any community or section of persons. He believed that a certain social system might create a conflict of interest between one section and another. The system can be changed and has to be changed. So, according to him, there should not be a feeling of class struggle; rather the system of production and distribution of social or national wealth has to be changed; the heart of the privileged class is to be converted. Here comes his

slogan of change of heart of the opposite group or individual. And he expected a change of heart even of the British rulers. This expectation emanated from his conception of the basic goodness of man.

It is wrongly assumed that he was basically against machines. What he was against was man being made a slave of the machine, as the present system of factory production with machinery has made him. Labour has become in the present system simply a cog in the machine; that is the position both in the capitalist and in the socialist systems of production. Here also his main point is the dignity of man. When he was asked about the factories for mass production, he advocated nationalisation. But his idea was that nationalisation by state legislation was a sort of violence; so he would prefer that nationalisation should come voluntarily with the consent of the factory owners and through the system of trusteeship. Here he has made a difference between violence and force exerted through moral and social pressure and even—if necessary—by legal steps. He has also advocated social ostracism of, and withdrawal of any co-operation from, the obstinate owner or property holder. To understand Gandhi's ideas in this matter, one should remember the basic philosophy of Gandhi. He was not so much a political leader as he was a moral teacher; his struggle was to protect some moral principles on which a society should be based. And then and then only, the human society, according to him, can be called just, free and equitable. To him the moral is absolute and that is why he insisted that the means as well as the end should be morally correct.

Before him Buddha, Christ and many other holy persons preached non-violence and peace as a supreme human and moral virtue of individual life. Their teachings were for individuals to cultivate and follow. Gandhi has made non-violence the collective virtue for society and a weapon of revolution; and he has applied it to social and national fields. When the whole world is mad after deadly arms and weapons, doubts arise about the practical value of non-violence in such a world. But in such a crisis, Man has the greatest need of a new vision, a new idea and a fresh outlook. I should repeat what Gandhi said on many occasions: "When the night is the darkest, dawn is not far off." When vio-

lence has become so intensive and extensive, it is time that some one should preach a halt to this craze for violence and mutual hatred among humanity.

I have no difficulty in conceding that it would be very difficult for humanity to reach the goal. Many ideals of the world have not been realised; even the ideal of a classless society based on free co-operation of free individuals, based on humanism, has not been reached. We have not practised Christ's precept to turn the other cheek when we are slapped on one cheek. Yet moral precepts have their value for human guidance. Most of the precepts preached by Gandhi were prevalent even before him; but he practised them during the fight of a large nation against a mighty imperial power. Let us not forget that every man, even the greatest among men, is to a great extent a product of the historical forces operating in his age; and so, he is to be understood in the background of the social conditions prevailing in his time. Gandhi is the product of the social conditions prevailing in India; a nation of 500 million, totally unarmed and emasculated, had to save its very existence from the grip of the mightiest imperial power. Armed revolt against that power was very difficult, if not impossible. The history of some successful armed revolutions has shown how destructive and cruel the aftermath of such revolutions was. So he had to take the path of non-violence. A similar situation is now before the human race. •

Gandhi is often described as an orthodox or even as an obscurantist. As we have stated earlier, he had no caste or creed distinction in his dealings and behaviour and had high regard for all religions. He was catholic in his religious belief. But he was a pious Hindu, a believer in God and Hindu scriptures, but not an orthodox and surely not an obscurantist. Once he told Romain Rolland: "God is not a person; God is an eternal principle, that is why I say God is Truth." No orthodox Hindu would say that God is not a person. Not even a good Christian would say that; because all the religions are based on belief in what is known as Theism in theology—i.e. belief in a personal God. But to Gandhi, God is not a person. Every day in his prayer meeting, *Ramdhoun* was being sung and other religious scriptures were also read. He was preaching about *Ram Rajya*

which he wanted to establish; but, about Rama he said, "his Rama is not the historic Rama, but an unborn and eternal entity." It was only Gandhi who took up the cause of the scheduled castes to make them as respectable as other members of the Hindu society. It was Gandhi who forced the gates of Hindu temples open before the untouchables. Along with his political struggle, he never lagged in propagating his ideas against untouchability which he described as one of the greatest vices of the Hindu society. He was a great advocate of the emancipation of women so that they might have equal status and opportunity with others.

No man before Gandhi, except perhaps Manu, has touched every aspect of human life in the course of his campaign which was pre-eminently a political campaign. In human history, there is no political leader who had so many facets. He tried to develop cottage industry and to base the economic structure on the principle that the producer should be the owner of the means of production as also of the products. He enunciated his ideas about personal life and particularly against the craze for indulgence and luxury. He advocated austerity, abstinence and consideration for neighbours. He did not set one section of people against another but he wanted a synthesis of conflict in human society through mutual adjustment.

Marx and Engels based their social and economic ideas on the concept of class conflict. According to them history has evolved through a dialectic process; class conflict is a manifestation of that process. And so they advocated class struggle as the only basis of social revolution. This class struggle will lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat and other classes would be liquidated. But the relevant question here is, whether with the establishment of communism through the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dialectic process of evolution through conflict between thesis and anti-thesis would cease working. If class conflict is eliminated in a communist society, as they have envisaged, how will the dialectic process work thereafter? What force will put forward a new anti-thesis to bring about a new synthesis? They have categorically stated that history has evolved and can evolve only through a dialectic process. But their subsequent concept of the

communist society eliminates all conflicts within the society and, as such, they practically call a halt to the dialectic process. This is, apparently, contradictory to their earlier concept of social evolution through the dialectic process. Certainly they did not suggest that with the establishment of communism, social evolution will reach a complete halt. Such an idea is abhorrent to the law of nature.

Moreover, from the primitive stage—man has always to face a hard struggle; and that is with Nature. Social evolution so long was due more to that eternal struggle with Nature than through class struggle. Man has to survive and to march on the road to progress by conquering the inclement forces of Nature. Class distinction and the consequent class struggle—if at all—appeared at a later stage to play its role. But even then this struggle has not been so bitter and hard as Man's fight with Nature. That fight or struggle is still continuing and will continue for ever, irrespective of whether Man is living in a communist or a non-communist social order. So long Nature has acted as a powerful anti-thesis for the emergence of a new synthesis; and that will continue to supply new anti-thesis age after age for Man to synthesize and to advance. Even Communist U.S.S.R. as also the Capitalist U.S.A. is seriously engaged in unravelling the mysteries of the nature within and even beyond our little earth.

Further, we find that in the process of evolution, the biological nature of man has undergone a radical, or a qualitative change from the earliest stage of evolution. Man is not as pugnacious and ferocious as the lower animals or as the earliest type of man or the proto-man; the difference is not of degree or quantity but of quality. Man has many social and family virtues which are lacking in beasts or were lacking in the Neanderthal man or the caveman. So it may not be quite utopian to hope and strive for a still higher or more spiritual level to prevail in human nature and society. The saga of man's march towards civilisation goes back to millions of years. In that background, Buddha's concept of love and peace 2500 years ago or the Sermon on the Mount 2000 years ago, should not be discarded as unrealistic fancies of some idle dreamers. Gandhi has suggested some steps for man to rise higher on the moral level; he was not merely propagating the

gospel, but he also showed its practical application in the theory of trusteeship. It does not repudiate the existence of class conflict; but it also does not advocate bringing that conflict to the stage of class struggle and class extermination and suggests the voluntary surrender of property and wealth for the benefit of the society. It also advocates the adjustment of the conflict of interest between different strata of society through the concept of trusteeship.

Gandhi wanted the identification of the interests of different sectors of the society and to remove the gaps existing between different sectors. The process, according to Gandhi, should start from the early age of the individual. Many educationists before Gandhi had criticised the existing system of education; the Basic Education system was intended to inculcate the idea of identification of the educated with the uneducated, the richer with the poorer. He gave a concrete alternative.

Through Basic Education, he wanted to give a place of honour to every kind of manual labour. A child of a rich family also has to do some manual work when he learns; every child should feel that he has the obligation to produce something before he can be entitled to have his meals. This has to be taken with "Gandhi's theory of bread labour. Every man should do some constructive work; otherwise, he will be eating sin—not bread. This is the justification of one's living by taking a share of the products of others. Further, Gandhi gave a moral justification for human life by insisting on purity of character, love for humanity and truthfulness and participation in the production of social wealth. To him, truth is Absolute and Eternal. In this matter, he differed fundamentally from the Marxists for whom truth is partial and conditional. As the greatest and practical humanist, he advocated 'loving service of all that lives'.

It is not without any reason that almost all the eminent men of this age have given the highest appreciation to the work, life and words of Gandhi. Romain Rolland, Einstein, Bertrand Russell, all have hailed Gandhi as having opened a new vista before humanity. It is not without reason that the great philosopher Will Durant has said—"Perhaps Gandhi will, as saints are likely to, fail in this Darwinian world. But how could we accept life if it did not, now and then, fling into the faces of

successes, some failures like this?" The great Negro leader Dr. Martin Luther King must have had cogent reason to say, "From my background, I learned my regulating Christian ideas. From Gandhi, I learned my operational technique." Another experiment of his technique has been tried in Bangla Desh—the former eastern wing of Pakistan. Gandhi created the greatest mass upsurge the world had ever seen and that mass was almost an inert mass. It was the meek non-violent Gandhi who imparted life into that inert mass when the British Government was sure that it would not be possible for anyone to make the Indian masses rise against the might of the British Raj.

Before concluding I would like to quote a passage from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*:

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory."

Gandhi has given us this—life, joy, empire and victory. It is for us—the humanity—to preserve it and to expend it.

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