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*The Western Impact on Indian  
Politics (1885-1919)*



*The Renaissance to  
Militant Nationalism  
in India*

SANKAR GHOSE



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*To Sumitra*

## Preface

THIS BOOK deals primarily with Indian political ideas and movements from the birth of the Renaissance to the emergence of Gandhi. The social and religious movements which gave rise to the Renaissance as also the revivalistic ideas and trends which sought to counter the same from the background against which later political movements developed and the study of these social and religious movements, whether reformistic or revivalistic, is essential for an understanding of these subsequent political movements and developments. Hence the study of the Brahmo Samaj and Western rationalism, the Arya Samaj and Hindu revival, the Theosophical Society and Indian spiritualism and the Rama-krishna Mission Movement.

The rationalistic, utilitarian and liberal challenge of the West was dealt with each in their own different ways by the early cultural leaders of modern India, such as, Rammohan, Dayananda and Vivekananda. The responses of the political leaders of India to the challenges that modern Indian polity faced were again as diverse as the responses of the cultural leaders of India to the social and religious challenges that India faced in modern times.

There was one trend of thought which stimulated the spirit of constitutionalism and liberalism in India and there was yet another trend of thought which led to extremism and militant nationalism. The approach of constitutionalists, such as, Dadabhai, Surendranath and Gokhale, were as different from that of the militant nationalists, such as, Tilak, Bipin Pal, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo, as Rammohan's approach was different from that of Dayananda or Vivekananda. Later Gandhi, the great *satyagrahi*, who claimed Gokhale to be his political *guru*, pursued political methods which were significantly different from the constitutionalism of Gokhale as also the policy of boycott and direct action of Tilak. Gandhi's approach to the modern West, industrialism and parliamentary democracy was also widely divergent from those of the constitutionalists.

The debate between revival and reform and between con-

servation and change continues even today. So also the debate between constitutionalism and liberalism on the one hand and militant nationalism on the other. The conflict between secular nationalism and religious nationalism which developed at an early stage of the nationalist movement in India still remains unabated. The problem that political freedom can have no meaning or reality without social freedom and equality, which exercised the minds of the early cultural and political leaders of India, still awaits, and urgently requires, a solution. Some of the problems of the past remain unresolved but a study of the past helps in understanding and then in changing the present.

The materials relating to the past are to be found partly in India and they are lodged partly in England. It is unfortunate that all the rich mass of materials available in the India Office Library at London are still not available in India. My thanks are due in particular to the Librarian and staff of the India Office Library, the British Museum, the India House Library and the National Library at Calcutta for access to the materials used for the purpose of this book, which were collected over a number of years.

I have indicated in appropriate places the sources of the materials used for this book. The persons by discussion with whom I profited are legion but they would prefer anonymity.

The story of the Renaissance to Militant Nationalism in India is many-sided and complex. This story has always attracted me. I dealt with a part of this fascinating story in an earlier book *The Western Impact on Indian Politics (1885-1919)*. The personalities who played their part in that story are numerous. But I have ignored certain lesser figures and selected some dominant personalities so that there may be space enough for them and their ideas to live. I only hope that this book would provoke discussion and stimulate further interest in the ideas of those who courageously faced the social and political challenges of modern India.

I am indebted to my wife who watched over the progress of the book assiduously notwithstanding the long hours of silence that its writing entailed.

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THE RENAISSANCE TO MILITANT  
NATIONALISM IN INDIA



## CHAPTER ONE

# *The Indian Renaissance*

### I. RAMMOHAN, MACAULAY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION

India has always been a meeting place of races and cultures. Before the British came to India the Western Asiatic culture of Islam and the Eastern culture, which had once spread to the far east, were in the process of assimilation and synthesis. The coming of the British from the further west affected Indian life and polity powerfully. Much that is vital in Eastern culture to-day is either a response to or a reaction from Western civilization.

The invigorating culture of the West kindled the latent liberal forces of India. The first spark of Indian liberalism was lighted by Rammohan Roy. Rammohan gave a public dinner at Calcutta when in 1820 the Spanish people got a constitution. On his way to Europe when Rammohan saw in a port a French ship flying revolutionary flags he insisted on visiting the ship to honour the people who preached the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. And Rammohan's manifesto in favour of the liberty of the press has been christened as the *Areopagitica* of the Indian press.

It has been said that the Western contact has given India the modern political ideals, that India owes her democratic spirit to the parliamentary rhetoric of Bright and Gladstone, that it is the Western literature of revolt that has inspired Indians to cherish the ideal of political liberty and that the nationalists of India are the unmistakable fruits of Western education. Such a claim is somewhat exaggerated but it is indubitable that the Western influence on India has been considerable, and, in fact, such influence has continued notwithstanding the termination of British rule in India.

More than a year after India had attained independence, Jawaharlal Nehru speaking in English at the Constituent Assembly in Delhi on 16 May 1949 said: "The House knows that inevitably during the last century and more all kinds of contacts have arisen between England and this country; many of them were bad and we have struggled throughout our lives to put an end to them. Many of them were not so bad, many of them may be good and many of them, irrespective of what they are, good or bad, are there. Here I am the patent example of these contacts, speaking in this Honourable House in the English language. No doubt we are going to change that language for our use, but the fact remains that I am doing so and the fact remains that most other members who will speak will also do so. The fact remains that we are functioning here under certain rules and regulations for which the model has been the British Constitution. Those laws which exist today have been largely forged by them. Gradually, the laws which are good we will keep and those that are bad we will throw away. Any marked change in this without something to follow creates a hiatus which may be harmful."<sup>1</sup>

Western civilization had an irresistible appeal for educated Indians practically up to the end of the nineteenth century. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, vividly described how Western civilization appeared to the educated Indians towards the end of the nineteenth century when he was young. At that time the educated Indians had a romantic vision of the West, which still revealed itself in the last glow of illumination of the French Revolution. "It was," said Tagore, "a chivalrous West, which trained the enthusiasm of knight-errants ready to take upon themselves the cause of the oppressed, of those who suffered from the miserliness of their fate and we felt certain that the special mission of Western civilization was to bring emancipation of all kinds to all races of the world. Though the West came to our shores as cunning tradesmen, it brought with it also the voice and a literature, which claimed justice for all humanity."

In 1941, a few months before his death, when he had completely lost his earlier faith in the integrity of Western nations in their dealings with subject races, Tagore again described how in his youth the days and nights of the English-

educated Indians were eloquent with the steady declamations of Burke and 'with Macaulay's long-rolling sentences, how they were engrossed with Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and how they were inspired by "the large-hearted Liberalism of the nineteenth century English politics... (educated Indians) hoped that the victor would of himself pave the path of freedom for the vanquished."<sup>2</sup> But this romantic vision of the West could not last for very long and Tagore gave expression to his disillusionment with the West in his "Crisis of Civilization" and after referring to the crumbling ruins of the proud civilization of the West, Tagore said that "the new dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises."<sup>3</sup>

In the early days of British rule in India the champions of that rule asserted that a moral and civilizing function had devolved on the English in Asia similar to that which ancient imperial Rome had fulfilled in Europe and particularly in Gaul and Spain. But Gaul and Spain were almost destitute of culture and civilization when they were under the domination of imperial Rome and thinking that the Indian past was a blank page, protagonists of British rule cherished the idea of Anglicizing India and of making Indians black Englishmen in the same manner as once imperial Rome had Romanized Gaul and Spain.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, famous for his Minute in Education and who to a great extent was responsible for the introduction of English education into India, aimed at training a class of persons "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, words and intellect." It was also Macaulay's devout hope that the introduction of English education would result in the destruction of Hinduism and to a large-scale conversion to Christianity. In a letter to his father Macaulay stated: "It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes of Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytise; without the smallest interference with religious liberty, merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection."<sup>4</sup> Such also was the hope and faith of Sir Charles Trevelyan who was a member of the Committee of Public Instruction and a brother-in-law of Macaulay, the President of the Committee of Public Instruction. In the same manner as Macaulay, Trevelyan believed that the introduction of Western

education would "shake Hindooism and Mohammedanism to their centre and firmly establish our language and learning and ultimately our religion in India."<sup>5</sup>

The manner of India's contact with Britain was unfortunate and gave rise to much bitterness, frustration and struggle but it was a good thing for India to come in contact with the scientific and industrial West. Science was the great gift of the West and science brought food to the starving millions. Europe had her lamps ablaze when she came to India. We must light our torches at its wick, said Rabindranath Tagore.

Modern India welcomed science and technology because they had revolutionized human life and transformed modern society. The cultural and political leaders of India, such as Tagore and Nehru, welcomed science not only because it inculcated a rationalistic spirit but primarily because of its technical achievements and "its capacity to transform an economy of scarcity into one of abundance."<sup>6</sup> They realized that science and Western education were essential for solving the problems of hunger and poverty as also of illiteracy, superstition, deadening custom and tradition.<sup>7</sup>

It is English education that introduced India to modern science. The introduction of English education changed the whole cultural life of India. The joint activities of David Hare and Rammohan Roy resulted in the foundation of the Hindu College in 1817. The object of the College was the tuition of the sons of respectable Indians in the English and Indian language, and also in the literature and sciences of Europe. A year later a zealous trio of Baptist Missionaries, namely, Carey, Marshman, and Ward, founded the Serampore College for propagating the teachings of Christianity. In 1830 another college was started by Alexander Duff. These private enterprises soon attracted government attention. In fact, due to the efforts of Rammohan Roy and others a Committee of Public Instruction was appointed in 1823. The Committee was presided over by Macaulay, and his enthusiastic Minute on Education to the Governor-General-in-Council definitely accelerated the triumph "of instruction in European languages and science through the medium of English."

A government proclamation was issued in 1844 which opened up prospects of profitable employment for those who succeeded

at the final examination instituted from that year and which involved a critical acquaintance with the works of Bacon, Johnson, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. *Pari passu* with this educational movement there appeared as its offshoot journals and clubs on the English model. *The Gayamuneshy* (or the pursuit of knowledge) was published by Dakshinaranjan Majumdar and Rasik Krishna Mullick, two Hindu College students of Henry Derozio.

The name of Derozio (1808-31) is especially associated with the Hindu College and with the spread of English education and ideas in India. Derozio was of mixed Portuguese and Indian origin and he was unquestionably the first Anglo-Indian who left a permanent imprint on his times. Being an Anglo-Indian the highest avenues of government employment were not at that time open to Derozio. But Derozio was an amazingly brilliant man and at the age of seventeen he composed poems on the banks of the river Ganges which made his name well known in Calcutta. At the age of about nineteen he was appointed Assistant Head Master of the famous Hindu College. Here Derozio found his true vocation. He poured the knowledge of Europe into the young minds of the Calcutta boys and created a ferment. He died at the early age of twenty-two but by that time he had produced a tremendous commotion in the intellectual world of Calcutta and among his numerous pupils was Michael Madhusudhan Dutta, the famous and colourful poet of Bengal.

Derozio's influence was felt not only within the precincts of the Hindu College but even more so in the Academic Association, the discussion group which he had founded. In the classroom and in the discussion group he explained his novel and revolutionary ideas on religion, idolatry, priestcraft, free will, and liberty. Derozio created such an impression that like Socrates of ancient Greece he was accused of having corrupted the minds of the young. So much so that orthodox Hindu parents combined to demand Derozio's removal. The governing body of the Hindu College eventually bowed to the wishes of orthodox parents on the ground of pure expediency, for the governing body explained that their decision to dismiss Derozio was "founded upon the expediency of yielding to popular clamour, the justice of which it was not incumbent on them to investigate."

The basic charge against Derozio was that he did not believe in God and that his teachings had tended to create a spirit of revolt and an irreligious frame of mind among the boys. Derozio defended himself in a famous letter:

"I have never denied the existence of a God in the hearing of any human being. If it be wrong to speak at all upon such a subject, I am guilty, but I am neither afraid nor ashamed to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers upon this head, because I have also stated the solution of these doubts. Is it forbidden anywhere to argue upon such a question? If so, it must be equally wrong to adduce an argument upon either side. . . . And, I can vindicate my procedure by quoting no less orthodox authority than Lord Bacon: 'If a man,' says this philosopher (and no one ever had a better right to pronounce an opinion upon such matters than Lord Bacon), 'will begin with certainties he shall end in doubt.' This, I need scarcely observe, is always the case with contented ignorance when it is roused too late to thought. One doubt suggests another, and universal scepticism is the consequence. I therefore thought it my duty to acquaint several of the College students with the substance of Hume's celebrated dialogue between Cleanthes and Philo, in which the most subtle and refined arguments against theism are adduced. But I have also furnished them with Dr Reid's and Dugald Stewart's more acute replies to Hume—replies which to this day continue unrefuted. This is the head and front of my offending. If the religious opinions of the students have become unhinged in consequence of the course I have pursued, the fault is not mine. To produce convictions was not within my power and if I am to be condemned for the atheism of some, let me receive credit for the theism of others."<sup>8</sup>

Derozio had a passionate love for his country and, though he revolted against the fallen state of India, he delved into history to discover the ancient glories of India and like the English Romantic poets he dedicated sonnets to his country. One of these sonnets ran thus:

TO INDIA—MY NATIVE LAND

My country! in thy day of glory past  
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,  
And worshipped as a deity thou wast.

Where is that glory, where that reverence now?  
Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,  
And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou;  
Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee  
Save the sad story of thy misery!  
Well—let me dive into the depths of time,  
And bring from out the ages that have rolled  
A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,  
Which human eye may never more behold;  
And let the guerdon of my labour be  
My fallen country! one kind wish from thee!<sup>9</sup>

Educationists like Derozio, missionaries like Carey, and administrators like Macaulay helped the dissemination of English education in India. But while Macaulay aimed at the establishment of an alien culture by supplanting that which belonged to the land and hoped for the wholesale conversion of the Hindus to Christianity, the object which Rammohan Roy cherished was a harmonious blending of the two. Long before Macaulay had composed his famous minute, Rammohan had already led a movement for the introduction of a European system of education into India. The initiative that Rammohan took for the establishment of the Hindu College in 1817, the encouragement he gave to the educational activities of the missionaries, the famous letter he wrote to Lord Amherst in 1823 protesting against the proposal to have a Sanskrit College in Calcutta and the religious reform activities that he carried on proved that Rammohan was seeking a genuine synthesis of the ideals of the East and the West.

It is significant that Rammohan grew up before the introduction in India of a definite system of English education. Macaulay's famous minute was penned in 1835, about twelve years after Rammohan had established several schools at his own expense in which the boys of Bengal were given instruction through the medium of the English language. While Rammohan was doing his best to disseminate education through the English language he was distressed to find that in 1823 the government had decided to found and support a new college for Sanskrit studies. Rammohan pleaded that instruction should be given through the medium of the English language. As Rammohan represented the most advanced and enlightened section of the Hindu com-

munity, his advocacy of the English language provided the Anglicists on the Committee of Public Instruction with great moral support in their struggle against the Orientalists.

In his famous letter to Lord Amherst, then Governor-General, against the decision of the government made in 1823 to found and finance a new college for the spread of Sanskrit studies, Rammohan said: "We find that the government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindu pandits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected, to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will here acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India."<sup>10</sup> Rammohan pointed out that Sanskrit was a difficult language and that almost a lifetime was necessary for acquiring a proper knowledge thereof. Rammohan stated his position in support of the introduction of instruction through the medium of the English language with great courage and rare vision. He said: "If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature."<sup>11</sup>

As early as the 1770s the East India Company had decided to foster Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit studies. Subsequently when the East India Company became the paramount power in India, many Indians realized that the passport to jobs in the new government was the acquisition of knowledge of English, even though Persian continued to be used for certain official purposes even during the nineteenth century. But even apart from the economic motive of obtaining employment under the British, the spread of the knowledge of English would have had other far-reaching results by way of diffusion of modern ideas. It is this aspect which appealed most to the enlightened Indians of those days and particularly to Rammohan.



In 1834 when Thomas Babington Macaulay became the President of the Committee of Public Instruction, the Committee was greatly divided between the Anglicists and the Orientalists. The Anglicists wanted to train a class of clerks and others who would become loyal government servants and docile exponents of the English will. The Orientalists, on the other hand, feared that the spread of English education would offend the susceptibilities of the Indian upper classes and may even lead to their general rebellion.

Further, the Orientalists had no wish to disturb the ancient beliefs of the East. Their scholars had come under the spell of the treasures of Sanskrit literature. Sir William Jones (1746-94), one of the great Orientalists, who inspired succeeding generations of Orientalists, had great regard for Indian languages. "The Persian language," he said, "is rich, melodious, and elegant; it has been spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia and a number of admirable works have been written in it by historians, philosophers and poets, who found it capable of expressing with equal advantage the most beautiful and the most elevated sentiments.... It must seem strange, therefore, that the study of this language should be so little cultivated at a time when a taste for general and diffusive learning seems universally to prevail."<sup>12</sup>

The Orientalists were themselves partly Brahminized and they could hardly be expected to help in an attempt to westernize the Brahmins. One conspicuous exception to this, though at a later time, was Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91), a profound Sanskrit scholar who became the Principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851. Though Vidyasagar was a Sanskrit scholar he, like Rammohan, welcomed English education and helped to accelerate the process of secularization initiated by Rammohan. Writing to the Council of Education, Vidyasagar expressed his views thus: "For certain reasons... we are obliged to continue the teaching of the Vedanta and Sankhya in the Sanskrit College. That the Vedanta and Sankhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute. These systems, false as they are, command unbounded reverence from the Hindus. While teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence."<sup>13</sup>

Macaulay, the President of the Committee of Public Instruction, who had just arrived from England and who was then only thirty-four years old, had little knowledge of the Indian languages but he unhesitatingly decided in favour of the Anglicists in his Minute on Education. Rammohan's famous letter on education had been written in 1823 and Macaulay in his equally famous "Minute on Education,"<sup>14</sup> while supporting the Anglicists, used many of the arguments and even some of the phraseology of Rammohan. Macaulay had a high regard for English and a very poor opinion of classical Sanskrit and Arabic literature, though this opinion was the product not of knowledge but of ignorance of these languages. "I have no knowledge," stated Macaulay, "of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value.... It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same. ... How, then, stands the case? We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language."

"Never on this earth was a more momentous question discussed," was historian Seeley's observation with regard to Macaulay's minute recommending instruction of Indians in English. As a result of Macaulay's minute the Anglicists had their way. "Thereafter the wave of Western learning was poured with disastrous results into the old bottles of Hinduism and there is no doubt that it went to the heads of young Bengal," wrote Earl of Ronaldshay, who was once the Governor of Bengal, in *The Heart of Aryavarta*.<sup>15</sup>

But the fact that education was given throughout India in one common language, that is to say, English, helped to give rise to an English-educated class throughout India and also helped in the development and promotion of a spirit of all-India nationalism. If, on the other hand, education had been given from the very beginning in the diverse vernacular languages prevailing in different regions then that might have helped the growth of regional nationalism and not of an all-India nationalism.

Rammohan was the first great Indian to welcome the introduction of English education in India. English education was associated with English rule but later when the nationalist movement developed in India and English rule was sought to be liberalized by the moderates they yet continued to welcome English education in the same manner as Rammohan. In December 1903 Gokhale, the moderate leader, fairly expressed the attitude of nationalists of the "moderate" type towards Western culture and English education, thus: "In the present circumstances of India all Western education is valuable and useful... to my mind, the greatest work of Western education in the present state of India is not so much the encouragement of learning as the liberation of the Indian mind from the thralldom of old-world ideas, and the assimilation of all that is highest and best in the life and thought and character of the West."<sup>16</sup>

The moderates enthusiastically welcomed the spread of higher Western learning in India. In a speech at a students' meeting at Lucknow in 1913 Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar, another moderate leader, said that "books like Lecky's *History of Rationalism* and *European Morals*, Guizot's *History of Civilization*, Maine's *Ancient Law*, Spencer's *Study of Sociology*, Mill's *Liberty* and *Representative Government*, Sir Alfred Lyall's *Asiatic Studies*, Morley's *Compromise*. . . Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*, Sceley's *Expansion of England* and *Lectures in Political Science* ought to form part of every undergraduate's private studies."<sup>17</sup> The moderates exhorted their countrymen to learn the natural and social sciences of the West and one of their major criticisms of the system of education that obtained in India was that it did not make sufficient provision for instruction in Western science and technology.<sup>18</sup> Even the extremists, who were not as enthusiastic for Western education as the moderates, and who were interested in establishing a system of national education in India, did not want to banish Western science and Western culture from national schools. The National Council of Education that was started in Bengal during the anti-partition days under the inspiration of the extremist movement did not seek to exclude Western knowledge. One of the main objects of the National Council was stated in its Memorandum of Association thus: "To impart education, literary and scientific as well as technical and professional, on national lines and exclusively under national

control... attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, history and philosophy, and designed to incorporate with the best Oriental ideals of life and thought the best assimilable ideals of the West...."<sup>19</sup>

Lajpat Rai, the extremist leader, constantly urged Indians to learn the natural and social sciences of the West. He said that by learning them Indians would not become absolutely Westernized but they would become modern up-to-date Indians, and he denounced those who believed that a system of national education could only be based on a complete rejection of modern Western thought.<sup>20</sup> Indians could not completely replace modern medicine and surgery by old Indian medical methods so that thousands should die in order that they might remain truly national; in military matters, it would have been disastrous for Indians if they relied for their defence on the ancient and indigenous bows and arrows, swords and spears, and refused to learn the modern science of arms; in economics, they would have remained ignorant if they only studied the old Arthashastras and neglected the newer and fuller Arthashastras written by European thinkers; in law they would be taking a retrograde step if they took the laws of Manu, Narada, and Apastamba as their guides and rejected all the statute-made laws of modern India which were more in harmony with the spirit of the times.<sup>21</sup> Lajpat repeatedly asserted that it would be foolish for Indians to refuse to learn natural and social sciences simply because in modern times those sciences had largely been developed by non-Indians.

## II. THE BRAHMO SAMAJ AND WESTERN RATIONALISM

In the early days of English education Western ideas had the glamour and romance of the new thing and their introduction broke down everything old. Students who came in contact with Western ideas alienated themselves from their ancient traditions. Sentiments of Hume entered the debating clubs of Hindu College and students refused altogether to be bound by the Sastras and claimed as rational human beings the right to judge all things, sacred and profane, for themselves.

Through the medium of English language came the thought

of Europe explaining the success of European arms and armies in the East' and proclaiming the higher place of European civilization as compared with the civilizations of the East. Westernism became the fashion of the day and Westernism demanded of its votaries that they should cry down the civilization of their own country. With the spread of English education intellectual anarchy set in and the rising generation was swept before it like a craft which had snapped its moorings. Scepticism became the fashion of the day. The more the admiration for everything Western, the more vehement was the denunciation of everything Eastern. The ancient learning of India was despised, ancient customs and traditions were thrust aside, ancient religion was decried as an outworn superstition. But this common borrowed culture of the West was half assimilated. Students in the college halls of Calcutta and Bombay laughed openly at the faith of the ancient sages but were inwardly uneasy. The heart struggled to reconcile the ancient traditions of India with the alien social and political philosophy. There was an intellectual conversion to Western doctrines but without a foundation of faith and without the springs of emotion being touched.

But soon the atheistic criticism of Indian religion generated opposition. The indiscriminate attacks of some Christian missionaries on Indian life and thought brought about a return to *Vedantism*. The attacks were so outrageous that in the first decade of the nineteenth century the then Governor-General (Lord Minto) ordered confiscation of Christian propaganda leaflets on the ground that "without arguments of any kind they were filled with hell fire and still hotter fire against a whole race of men merely for believing in the religion which they were taught by their fathers and mothers and the truth of which it is impossible it should have entered into their minds to doubt."

In the circumstances a plea was made for the *Advaita* philosophy which rejected idolatry, caste, and superstitious rites. Rammohan, who was to some extent influenced by Benthamite Utilitarianism, brought from ~~the~~ the rich store-house of Hindu thought new weapons to meet the challenge posed by the thought of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Europe. And Rammohan, instead of repudiating the claims of the unseen

in the determination of the truth of the seen, which was a dominant note of nineteenth-century illumination, sought to blend the deepest experiences of the religious and the spiritual life of ancient India with the message of social democracy of the French Revolution.

Rammohan (1772-1833) was the father of the Hindu Reformation of the nineteenth century. Rammohan emerged at a time when the light of Holbach, Condorcet, Diderot, and other great Encyclopaedists had not died down and when the influence of Bentham and the Utilitarians of England who were to have such a great influence on nineteenth century thought was just beginning to be felt. Rammohan was one of the last Encyclopaedists and a friend of Bentham. Rammohan brought India into direct contact with the European liberalism and humanism of the eighteenth century and of the early nineteenth century.

Rammohan represented the new spirit of India with its thirst for science and love of rationalism, reform, and a broad humanism. Though Rammohan had a passionate love for reform he yet had a critical regard for the past and disinclination for revolt. As a reformer Rammohan founded the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj was the first important religious reform movement that fairly dealt with the Western challenge and the new ideas that came from the West.

Rammohan was born of devout Brahmin parents. From his early days Rammohan had an insatiable interest in religious questions. After mastering Persian, Rammohan went to Banaras, the major religious centre of Hinduism, and devoted himself to the learning of Sanskrit scriptures. Between the age of fifteen and twenty Rammohan wandered throughout India in search of spiritual knowledge and he even went to Tibet where he devoted several years to the study of Buddhism.

Long before he had any knowledge of English, Rammohan, mainly as a result of his studies in Patna, a lively centre of Islamic thought, had developed certain ideas about religious reform.<sup>22</sup> If he had never come into contact with European thought, he might have become a religious reformer in the manner of Nanak or Kabir. In 1796 Rammohan began learning English. Rammohan also studied the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta Sutras* in Sanskrit and the Old and New Testament in the original Hebrew and Greek. He published some translations of the *Upanishads*

and a book called the *Precepts of Jesus, The Guide to Peace and Happiness* which contained not so much a message for his own countrymen as an answer to the Christian missionaries. He rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus but was much impressed by his ethical teachings.<sup>23</sup> And Rammohan's arguments against the doctrine of Trinity were so convincing that he converted to Unitarianism the Scotch missionary with whom he had entered into a joint venture to translate the New Testament into Bengali. Rammohan had many Christian missionary friends but he spurned the attempts of some of them to convert him to Christianity.<sup>24</sup>

Rammohan had been a distinguished administrator in the Bengal Civil Service. Rammohan's success as an administrator and an assured income from landed property enabled him to retire from service at the age of forty-two, to settle down in Calcutta and to devote himself completely to spiritual, social, and political matters. Rammohan spent his life in the task of the spiritual and social regeneration of India and he persisted in his reformistic activities notwithstanding the angry clamour and opposition of the orthodox Hindus. During the last years of his life Rammohan went to England to plead the cause of the powerless Emperor of Delhi. In crossing "the black waters" to go to England Rammohan again defied one of the prevalent taboos of Hindu society against crossing the seas. In England Rammohan spoke before the Committee of Parliament about the ways and means of improving the government of India and he also came in contact with Jeremy Bentham who hailed him as his great friend. In a letter to Rammohan, Bentham wrote: "Your works are made known to me by a book in which I read a style which but for the name of a Hindu, I should certainly have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly educated and instructed Englishman."<sup>25</sup> In the same letter while praising the great work of James Mill on the *History of India* he regretted that "though as to style I wish I could with truth and sincerity pronounce it equal to yours."<sup>26</sup> In England Rammohan was everywhere honoured as an unofficial Ambassador of India. Rammohan died at Bristol in 1833.

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Rammohan was the first great Indian reformer who assimilated the liberal and humanitarian tradition of Europe and who yet sought to recapture and restate the true principles of Hinduism.

Rammohan discovered and propagated the true basis of Hindu faith which had been obscured by beliefs in empty rituals and he found in the *Upanishads* the source and spring of a religion of ethical monotheism. Educated Indians who had come in contact with the sciences of Europe and who hungered for a faith consistent with modern rationalism found solace and inspiration in Rammohan's rationalistic interpretation of the Hindu scriptures.

Rammohan's rationalistic interpretation of the Hindu scriptures helped to stem the tide of conversion of Hindus to Christianity. One of the most persistent criticisms of Christian missionaries had been that the worship of graven idols and images was the essence of Hinduism. Rammohan proclaimed that the Hindu scriptures enjoined faith in one supreme being and that idol worship was not the foundation of but an excrescence of Hinduism and that an English-educated Hindu who was revolted by the worship of graven images need not embrace Christianity but had only to go back to the ethical monotheism of the *Upanishads*. Rammohan had to wage a war on two fronts: against the Christian missionaries and against the orthodox Hindus. Both to the Christian missionaries and to the orthodox Hindus, Rammohan sought to demonstrate that Hinduism sanctioned neither idol worship nor any barbarous custom.

Rammohan sought to defend Hinduism by reinterpreting it as also by purifying it. Rammohan was the first great Indian who dealt with the rationalist and liberal challenge of Europe but in doing so he neither rejected the spirit of modern Europe nor succumbed to it but he used it only as a stimulus for discovering the latent humanitarian tradition and ethical monotheism of Hinduism which had been obscured by thoughtless beliefs and meaningless rituals. The contact of Christianity and Western science with Hinduism and an ancient civilization was bound to give rise to conflicts and tensions. Rammohan's supreme genius lay in this that he was able to recognize what was good and assimilable in the message of the West without forsaking faith or belief in Hinduism and without also forgetting the urgent need for its reform and purification.

In the past Hinduism had faced challenges first from Buddhism and then from Islam. Confronted with the dynamic and egalitarian message of Islam, Kabir and Nanak had in the fifteenth



and sixteenth centuries defended Hinduism by incorporating therein all that could be taken from the spirit of Islam. Rammohan did in the nineteenth century what Kabir and Nanak did in their times and Rammohan dealt with the rationalist, utilitarian, and liberal challenge of the West by incorporating all that could be incorporated therefrom into Hinduism and by discovering afresh in Hinduism the real source of its universal humanism and ethical monotheism which had been concealed by the inertia and thoughtlessness of an overgrown priestcraft and a lethargic populace.

Like the Christian missionaries, Rammohan inveighed against polytheism and idolatry. He explained that popular polytheism and idolatry were completely antagonistic to the monotheistic spirit of the *Upanishads*.<sup>27</sup> Rammohan saw that most orthodox Hindus could not justify the idolatry they practised and when questioned on the subject, in place of adducing arguments in support of idolatry, they merely quoted their ancestors as positive authorities. "And some of them have become very ill-disposed towards me," said Rammohan, "because I have forsaken idolatry for the worship of the true and eternal God."<sup>28</sup>

To establish that idolatry was not sanctioned by the highest religion Rammohan went back to the *Vedas*, which contained the whole body of Hindu theology and which was said to be coeval with creation. As these works were extremely voluminous and were sometimes written in a highly elevated and metaphorical style and as some of their passages were confused and contradictory, the great Vyas had about two thousand years ago composed a complete and compendious abstract of the whole in order to reconcile all these texts, some of which appeared to stand at variance with one another. This work was termed the *Vedanta*, signifying the resolutions of all the *Vedas*. The *Vedanta* has continued to be the most highly revered book of the Hindus and, in place of the more diffuse arguments of the *Vedas*, it was always referred to as of equal authority. "But," said Rammohan, "from its being concealed within the dark curtain of the Sanskrit language, and the Brahmins permitting themselves alone to interpret, or even to touch any book of the kind, the *Vedanta*, although perpetually quoted, is little known to the public; and the practice of few Hindoos indeed bears the least accordance with its precepts."<sup>29</sup>

In order to familiarize the Hindus with the *Vedanta* Rammohan translated this hitherto unknown work, as well as an abridgment thereof, into Bengali and distributed it free of cost among his countrymen. This he did to show that the *Vedanta* did not sanction idolatry.

Rammohan wanted to preserve Hinduism by reinterpreting it, but his catholic mind did not reject the new cultural values of the West. He welcomed the introduction of Western education, and asked the government of India to promote not the old Sanskrit system of learning but "a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy... [and] other useful sciences."<sup>30</sup> But though Rammohan welcomed Western science and Western mechanical arts he always maintained that the East also had its rich heritage of knowledge and philosophy. In a letter to *Bengal Harkaru*, Rammohan wrote that "if the *Christian* says we are indebted to the English, [by which] he means the introduction of useful mechanical arts, I am ready to express my assent and also my gratitude; but with respect to Science, Literature, or Religion, I do not acknowledge that we are placed under any obligation. For by a reference to History it may be proved that the World was indebted to our ancestors for the first dawn of knowledge which sprung up in the East and thanks to the Goddess of Wisdom, we have still a philosophical and copious language of our own, which distinguishes us from other nations who cannot express scientific or abstract ideas without borrowing the language of foreigners."<sup>31</sup>

As a reformer Rammohan took a prominent part in the agitation against the burning of widows. He also cooperated with the foreign rulers in forbidding this cruel practice.<sup>32</sup> In seeking the support of the foreign rulers to enact socially progressive legislation Rammohan was the forerunner of later social reformers such as Ranade and Gokhale. Rammohan narrates that originally he had only hatred for the English but later, after considerable social intercourse with them, he came to the conclusion that English rule, though foreign, would be favourable to the progress of Indians, because, among other things, it would facilitate the growth of liberal religious thought and the development of social reform movements.<sup>33</sup>

It is significant that at a time when the Marathas and Sikhs

were in a limited and local way fighting the British, Rammohan, realizing that British Rule had been firmly established in the country, cooperated with the British rulers in establishing necessary social reforms in India. Rammohan, the father of modern India, felt deeply that even for the attainment of political freedom social reform was essential. In this respect Rammohan was the father of the Indian moderates rather than of the Indian extremists and the forerunner of Gokhale rather than of Tilak.

Rammohan's genius was constructive. He was a reformer not a revolutionary. Rammohan wanted not to overthrow and uproot the existing social or political order but to reform it. Rammohan believed not in writing on a clean slate but in completing a half-written sentence. Rammohan was the father not of any revolution but of the great Hindu Reformation of the nineteenth century. Because Rammohan was a reformer and not a revolutionary he welcomed British rule, but he noticed quite early the contradiction involved in the continuance of British imperial rule in India and the golden stream of English writing called the literature of revolt or more appropriately the literature of freedom and he assiduously fought to liberalize that rule and to increase the political liberties of Indians.

The first contact of resurgent India with socialist thought was through Rammohan. When Rammohan was in England he met Robert Owen at a party. Rammohan's biographer Miss Collet records: "Owen did his best to convert Rammohan to socialism. As the Scot finally lost his temper the Hindu was considered to have had the best of the arguments."<sup>34</sup>

Rammohan can also be said to be the first Indian who was an internationalist. Rammohan envisaged the establishment of liberty in India in a world context. Rammohan spoke of Indian liberty in the context of the development of the forces for liberty throughout the world in the same manner as Nehru did about a hundred years later. On receiving news about the reverses that the people of Naples suffered at the hands of the Austrians, Rammohan wrote to Mr. Buckingham asking to be excused from an important engagement as he was much "depressed by the late news from Europe" and added: "I am obliged to conclude that I shall not live to see liberty universally restored to the nations of Europe and Asiatic nations, specially those that are European colonies...under these circumstances I consider

the cause of the Neapolitans as my own and their enemy as ours. Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been and never will be ultimately successful.”<sup>35</sup> Miss Collet also records how “at Cape Colony on his way to England, the sight of the tricolour flag on two French ships lying at anchor in Table Bay fired his (Rammohan’s) enthusiasm. Lame as he then was owing to a serious fall from the gangway ladder he insisted on visiting them. The sight of the republican flag seemed to render him insensible to pain.”<sup>36</sup> ••

Rammohan had founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1882. After Rammohan’s death Dwarkanath Tagore gave some financial support to the Samaj but he could not give it any significant spiritual leadership. Such leadership to the Samaj was given subsequently by his son Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905). Debendranath had founded a small association of his own and in 1843 this association was merged with the Brahmo Samaj that Rammohan had founded. Debendranath who succeeded Rammohan as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj introduced a high note of piety and spirituality in the life of the Samaj.

Debendranath’s father Dwarkanath was one of the earliest Indian entrepreneurs and when Dwarkanath was in England the task of managing his various affairs devolved upon Debendranath. But Debendranath was not able to attend to these business matters properly and his subordinates had to do all the work. Debendranath concerned himself with the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta*, religion, God, and the ultimate goal of life. “I felt no inclination to become the owner of all this wealth. To renounce everything and wander about alone, this was the desire that reigned in my heart,” wrote Debendranath.<sup>37</sup>

In his *Autobiography* Debendranath tells us about his spiritual quest and his doubts and questionings which were aggravated by the fact that he had imbibed both Eastern and Western knowledge. “As on the one hand there were my Sanskrit studies in the search after truth, so on the other hand,” wrote Debendranath, “there was English. I had read numerous English works on philosophy. But with all this, the sense of emptiness of mind remained just the same, nothing could heal it, my heart was being oppressed by that gloom of sadness and feeling of unrest. . . . My endeavour was to obtain God, not through blind faith but by the light of knowledge. And being unsuccessful in this,

my mental struggles increased from day to day. Sometimes I thought I could live no longer.”<sup>38</sup>

Debendranath describes how by an intuitive flash he came to find God and discard idolatry, how he came to know the truths of the inner world and to realize that God did not reside in any image or in any place. Debendranath wrote: “With the knowledge of objects comes the knowledge of the subject, with the knowledge of the body comes the knowledge of the spirit within. It was after a prolonged search for truth that I found this bit of light. . . . I now realized that with the knowledge of the outer world we come to know our inner self. . . . One day, while thinking of these things I suddenly recalled how, long ago, in my early youth, I had once realized the infinite as manifested in the infinite heavens. Again I turned my gaze towards this infinite sky; studded with innumerable stars and planets, and saw the eternal God, and felt that this glory was His. He is infinite wisdom. He from whom we have derived this limited knowledge of ours, and this body, its receptacle, is Himself without form. He is without body or senses. He did not shape this universe with his hands. By His Will alone did He bring it into existence. He is neither the Kali or Kalighat, nor the family *Shaligram*. Thus was laid the axe at the root of idolatry.”<sup>39</sup>

Debendranath sought to purify Hinduism by getting rid of its crudities and reviving the pure stream of Hindu monotheism. He attracted many enlightened Hindus to the Brahmo Samaj and he and his friend Akshay Kumar Datta, the editor of the *Tatvabodhini Patrika*, did much to check the conversion of Hindus to Christianity.<sup>40</sup> Debendranath recorded in his *Autobiography* that hearing that the graduates of the mission schools were being converted to Christianity he called a meeting of the Hindus and raised funds to start a free school for their children and thenceforth “the tide of Christian conversion was stemmed and the designs of the missionaries were knocked on the head.”<sup>41</sup>

In the course of the controversies with the Christian missionaries the *Tatvabodhini Patrika* had proclaimed the *Vedas* as the basis of the faith of the Brahmo Samaj “as a set-off against the Bible of the Christians.”<sup>42</sup> Debendranath sent four students to Banaras and assigned to them the task of learning the four *Vedas*. Debendranath had hoped that they would be able to

help him to give an authoritative canon for the Samaj. But the research of these four students did not lead to any clear conclusion and increasingly Debendranath fell back on intuitional insight for the worship of the one true God. Eventually Debendranath repudiated the doctrine of the infallibility of the *Vedas* and asserted the right of every individual to know by direct intuition all the highest religious truths.<sup>43</sup> Debendranath's repudiation of supernatural scriptural authorities naturally appealed to those Hindus who had through their English education been touched by the rationalistic thought of nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>44</sup>

Though Debendranath rejected idolatry and came to rely on intuitional insight as distinguished from mere tradition, he wished to make haste slowly in matters of social reform and this cautious approach brought him into conflict with one of his fiery and combative disciples, Keshub Chunder Sen, who split the Samaj by insisting that the Brahmos discontinue the wearing of the sacred thread worn by the orthodox Brahmins. The split weakened the Samaj considerably for Keshub took away the majority of the Brahmos with him. Debendranath increasingly fell back on himself, and in later life spent most of his time in meditation and in pilgrimages to the Himalayas.

After Keshub's secession in 1867 Debendranath gave a precise formulation of the creed of the Brahmos and asked the Brahmos to proceed with circumspection. Debendranath said that the Brahmos were part of the great Hindu community, that though they did not believe in image-worship they recognized that those who could not yet grasp the highest truth may tread the religious path through image worship. He said: "We are worshippers of Brahma, the Supreme Being. In this we are at one with Orthodox Hinduism, for all our Shastras declare with one voice the supremacy of the worship of Brahma, enjoining image worship for the help of those who are incapable of grasping the highest Truth. . . . The negative aspect of our creed which prohibits the worship of any created being or thing as the Creator further distinguishes us from all who are addicted to the worship of avatars or incarnations or who believe in the necessity of mediators, symbols, or idols of any description. We base our faith on the fundamental truth of religion, attested by reason and conscience and refuse to permit man, book, or image to

stand in the way of the direct communion of our soul with the Supreme Spirit. This message of the Brahmo Samaj in the abstract does not materially differ from the doctrines of the pure theistic bodies all the world over.”<sup>45</sup>

Debendranath believed that in the matter of religious reform a middle course should be pursued and he apprehended that a revolutionary zeal for social or religious reform would defeat itself. Debendranath counselled the Brahmos to tread the path of gradualism. He said: “We are in and of the great Hindu community and it devolves upon us by example and precept to hold up as a beacon the highest truth of the Hindu shastras... Why should we needlessly wound the feelings of our parents and elders by desecrating an image which they regard with the highest reverence, when all that our conscience can demand of us is to refrain from its adoration... The steering of this middle course is by no means an easy task... Nevertheless, great as are the claims of our land and our people, we must never forget that we are Brahmos first, and Indians or Hindus afterwards. We must on no account depart from our vow of renouncing the worship of images and incarnations, which is of the essence of our religion... Our Motherland is dear to us, but Religion is dearer, Brahman is dearest of all, dearer than son, dearer than riches, supreme over everything else.”<sup>46</sup>

Debendranath was a proud man and at a time when the prestige of British rule was at its zenith in India he did not seek any support or assistance from the foreign rulers. Rajnarayan Bose recorded: “Debendra Babu is usually unwilling to be acquainted with the Europeans because he cannot agree with them on... Indian affairs. It is easy to get recognition in England and India by endorsing their views, but Debendra Babu is not anxious to get recognition from the British.” The Principal of the Krishnanagar College, Mr Lobb, once wrote: “The proud old man does not condescend to accept the praise of Europeans.”<sup>47</sup>

After Debendranath, Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84) was the next important leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Keshub always sought for new religious knowledge and in fact Keshub’s thirst for novel spiritual experiences was unquenchable. Keshub said: “If I ask thee, O Self, in what creed wast thou baptized in early life? The self answers, in the baptism of fire. I am a worshipper of the religion of fire. I am partial to the doctrine

of enthusiasm. To me a state of being on fire is the state of salvation. . . . When I gathered truths from one set of scriptures, I have longed for others, and before finishing these I have looked out for others again, lest anything should become old or cold to me. This is my life that I am continually after new ideas, new acquirements, new enjoyments.<sup>48</sup>

Keshub was one of the first leaders of modern India who felt that the West could teach India science and practical arts and that India could teach the West religion and spirituality and that it is in the harmonious blending of the ideals of the East and the West that the salvation of the world lay. This view of Keshub was later propagated by Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tagore, and many other Indian leaders.

In a speech<sup>49</sup> delivered at Calcutta in 1877 Keshub said: "India in her present fallen condition seems destined to sit at the feet of England for many long years, to learn Western art and science. And, on the other hand, behold England sits at the feet of hoary-headed India to study the ancient literature of this country (*applause*). All Europe seems to be turning her attention in these days towards Indian antiquities, to gather the priceless treasures which lie buried in the literature of Vedism and Buddhism. Thus while we learn modern science from England, England learns ancient wisdom from India. Gentlemen, in the advent of the English nation in India we see a reunion of parted cousins, the descendants of two different families of the ancient Aryan race." The idea that Indians and the British belonged to the same Aryan family was later taken up and popularized by many moderate leaders including Surendranath Banerjea.

Keshub gave expression to his hope that India would produce missionary soldiers of God who would spread the truths of religion. Such a call reminds one of Vivekananda's subsequent call to young Indians to act as missionaries of practical Vedanta and to conquer the world with Indian spirituality. Keshub said: "Let England give us her industry and arts, her exact sciences and her practical philosophy, so much needed in a land where superstition and prejudices prevail to an alarming extent. But we shall not forget our ancient sages and rishis. Ye venerable devotees of ancient India! Teach us meditation and asceticism and loving communion. Let England baptize us with the spirit



of true philosophy. Let the sages of Aryan India baptize us with the spirit of heavenly madness. Let modern England teach hard science and fact; let ancient India teach sweet poetry and sentiment. Let modern England give us her fabrics; but let the gorgeous East lend her charming colors.... Let us have only fifty young men from our Universities, trained in science and philosophy, and baptized with the spirit of madness, and let these men go forth as missionary-soldiers of God, conquering and to conquer and in the fullness of time the banners of truth shall be planted throughout the length and breadth of the country (*loud cheers*)."

In the same speech Keshub referred to the establishment of British rule in India as part of the design of providence. This speech was delivered soon after Queen Victoria had assumed the title of Empress of India and was replete with profuse sentiments of loyalty to the Queen. Such sentiments were repeated later by moderate leaders such as Dadabhai, Gokhale, and Surendranath with only this difference that Keshub being a religious man referred to British rule as part of ecclesiastical history whereas the moderates referred to it as part of political history. Keshub said: "Loyalty shuns an impersonal abstraction. It demands a person, and that person is the sovereign, or the head of the state, in whom law and constitutionalism are visibly typified and represented. We are right then if our loyalty means not only respect for law and the Parliament, but personal attachment to Victoria, Queen of England and Empress of India (*applause*). Assuredly the record of British rule in India is not a chapter of profane history, but of ecclesiastical history (*cheers*). The book which treats of the moral, social and religious advancement of our great country with the help of Western science, under the paternal rule of the British nation, is indeed a sacred book. There we see clearly that it is Providence that rules India through England (*applause*). Were you present at the magnificent spectacle at Delhi, on the day of the assumption of the imperial title by our sovereign? ... Did not the eye of the faithful believer see that God Himself stretched His right hand and placed the Empress's crown upon Victoria's Head? (*loud cheers*). And did he not hear the Lord God say unto her: 'Rule thy subjects with justice and truth and mercy, according to the light given unto thee and thy advisers, and let righteous-

ness and peace and prosperity dwell in the Empire?' (*applause*)."

Unlike Debendranath,<sup>50</sup> Keshub was considerably influenced by Christianity. In a lecture in 1861 Keshub enthusiastically claimed Jesus as an Asiatic<sup>51</sup> and spoke very feelingly about his "extraordinary greatness and supernatural moral heroism."<sup>52</sup> But in a letter to Max Müller on 9 July 1881, Keshub, however, said that he had always disclaimed the Christian name and had refused to identify himself with the Christian Church, because he could not accept the popular doctrines about the divinity of Christ.<sup>53</sup>

Keshub sought harmony and synthesis in religions. He wanted to combine the highest truths of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian faiths and he envisaged the evolution of a future church or religion of India which people of all faiths could claim as their own. Keshub expressed his views on "The Future Church"<sup>54</sup> thus: "There are some among us who denounce Mahomedanism as wholly false, while others contend that Hinduism is altogether false, such opinions are far from being correct; they only indicate the spirit of sectarian antipathy. Do you think that millions of men would to this day attach themselves so devotedly to these systems of faith unless there was something really valuable and true in them? This cannot be. There is, no doubt, in each of these creeds, much to excite...ridicule, and perhaps indignation—a large amount of superstition, prejudice, and even corruption. But I must emphatically say it is wrong to set down Hinduism or Mahomedanism as nothing but a mass of lies and abominations, and worthy of being trampled under foot. Proscribe and eliminate all that is false therein; there remains a residue of truth and purity which you are bound to honour. You will find certain central truths in these systems, though surrounded by errors, which constitute their vitality, and which have preserved them for centuries in spite of opposition, and in which hundreds of good men have always found the bread of life. It is these which form even now the mighty pillars of Hinduism and Mahomedanism, and challenge universal admiration and respect. It is idle to suppose that such gigantic systems of faith will be swept away by the fervour of youthful excitement, or the violent fulminations of sectarian bigotry, so long as there is real power in them. All the onslaughts which are being levelled against them in this age of free inquiry and bold

criticism will tend, not to destroy them, but to purify them and develop their true principles. The signs of the times already indicate this process of purification and development; and I believe this process will gradually bring Hinduism and Mahomedanism, hitherto so hostile to each other, into closer union, till the two ultimately harmonize to form the future church of India."

Keshub was a man of unbounded optimism but his vision of a unified church of India, as Akbar's similar vision of a unified religion of India on the basis of Din Elahi, did not materialize. Keshub added: "The Hindu's notion of God is sublime. In the earliest Hindu scriptures God is represented as the Infinite Spirit dwelling in His own glory, and prevading all space, full of peace and joy. On the other hand, the Mahomedans describe their God as infinite in power, governing the universe with supreme authority as the Lord of all. Hence the principal feature of the religion of the Hindu is quiet contemplation, while that of the religion of the Mahomedan is constant excitement and active service. The one lives in a state of quiet communion with his God of peace; the other lives as a soldier, ever serving the Almighty Ruler, and crusading against evil. These are the primary and essential elements of the two creeds, and, if blended together, would form a beautiful picture of true theology, which will be realised in the future church of this country.... The future creed of India will be a composite faith, resulting from the union of the true and divine elements of Hinduism and Mahomedanism, and showing the profound devotion of the one and the heroic enthusiasm of the other."

Keshub's catholic mind envisaged a future religion of India which would combine the highest tenets not only of the Hindu and Muslim faiths but also of the Christian religion and Keshub looked forward to the day when such religion would become the religion not only of India but of the world. He said: "The spirit of Christianity has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian society, and we breathe, think, feel, and move in a Christian atmosphere.... But the future church of India must be thoroughly national; it must be an essentially Indian Church. The future religion of the world I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth, and assume a distinctive and peculiar

character. All Mankind will unite in a universal church; at the same time, it will be adapted to the peculiar circumstances of each nation, and assume a national form."

Keshub had no animosity for Christianity. In fact, he proudly proclaimed that Jesus was an Asiatic and that the future religion of the world would imbibe and include the highest truths of Christianity. He said that Christ had leavened us and Christianized us and the Hindu faith could absorb the highest principles of Christianity. He gave expression to these views in "We Apostles of the New Dispensation."<sup>55</sup> He said: "Admit, then, that Paul was a necessary logical adjunct and consequent of Christ, as Moses was, indeed, his antecedent. Does the continuity stop here? No. If the New Testament follows the Old in the line of logical sequence, the new dispensation follows as necessarily all the old dispensations which have gone before it. If you cannot separate Paul from Christ, surely you cannot separate us from Paul. Are we not servants of Paul and apostles of Jesus? Yes. You cannot regard us otherwise. When I say the New Dispensation is a sequence of the Christian dispensation you will no doubt admit a chronological succession. You will perhaps go further, and trace a theological connection. But you have yet to discover a logical succession. Students of logic will yet recognize in the present movement a deduction and a sequence resulting from the Christian dispensation. You cannot deny us. We are the fulfilment of Moses." And Keshub added: "If it be true that the faith of our ancient Aryan ancestors has permeated us, it is equally true that Christ has leavened us and Christianized us. The acts of his Hindu Apostles will form a fresh chapter in his universal gospel. Can he deny us, his logical succession? Surely he cannot. And so Paul too."

These effusions about Christ and Christianity disturbed many Hindus and Keshub's Christocentric sentiments turned away many Hindus from the Brahmo Samaj. But Keshub was undaunted and in "We Apostles of the New Dispensation" Keshub declared: "In all ages devout and godly men have eaten the flesh of saints and been in turn eaten by others. Divinity went into the flesh of Christ. Then Christ was eaten by Paul and Peter. They were eaten by the fathers and martyrs and all the saints in Christendom, and all these have we of modern times eaten, assimilated, and absorbed, making their ideas and character

our own. Thus one nation may swallow another, and be identified with it. . . . We summon ancient India to come into modern India with all her rishis and saints, her asceticism and communion and simplicity of character, and behold a transfiguration! The educated modern Hindu cast in Vedic mould! How by yoga one nation becomes another! How Asia eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Europe! How the Hindu absorbs the Christian; how the Christian assimilates the Hindu. Cultivate this communion, my brethren, and continually absorb all that is good and noble in each other. Do not hate, do not exclude others, as the sectarians do, but include and absorb all humanity and all truth. Let there be no antagonism, no exclusion."

In spite of all his admiration for Christianity Keshub remained a true Hindu, and from the year 1867 he increasingly began to adopt devotional practices which were distinctively Hindu. Towards the close of his life Keshub was, however, seeking to create an advanced type of Hinduism under the name of New Dispensation<sup>56</sup> so that anyone who accepted the New Dispensation would truly be able to speak thus: "The Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chaitanya my heart, the Hindu Rishi is my soul, and the Philanthropic Howard my right hand."<sup>57</sup> This eclectic faith of Keshub, however, never gained any foothold.

Apart from preaching an eclectic faith, Keshub was passionately interested in social reform, such as elevating the status of women and in removing some of the inequities of caste. Keshub's zeal for social reform brought about a rupture between him and Debendranath in 1865 over the question of the wearing of the sacred thread and Keshub separated from Debendranath and set up an independent organization called the Brahmo Samaj of India. But this was only the beginning of splits in the Brahmo Samaj. In 1878 another split of a different nature took place within Keshub's own organization. The split arose because though Keshub had so long advocated a minimum age for Brahmo marriages and had opposed idolatry he gave away his thirteen-year-old daughter in marriage to a Hindu prince according to traditional Hindu rites. Feeling that this amounted to a gross betrayal of his professions many of his followers left him and founded a separate organization called the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

Another attempt to synthesize Hinduism with Christianity was made by Brahmabandhav Upadhaya (1861-1907) who, like Keshub, was a man partial to the doctrine of enthusiasm and believed in the "baptism of fire." At the age of seventeen Brahmabandhav left college to learn the art of fighting in order to drive out the English from India.<sup>58</sup> Brahmabandhav sought to enlist himself in the Maharaja of Gwalior's Army but failing there he returned to Calcutta and began teaching in a boys' school. In 1887, under the influence of Keshub, Brahmabandhav joined the Brahmo Samaj but Brahmabandhav's restless mind did not find peace there and four years later he embraced Christianity and was first a Protestant and later a Roman Catholic but to the end Brahmabandhav continued to consider himself a Hindu and after 1894 he lived the celibate life and followed the dietary restrictions of a Hindu Sanyasin. In 1901 Brahmabandhav joined Rabindranath in his school at Santiniketan and during the anti-partition agitation in Bengal he wrote passionate anti-British articles in the *Sandhya* for which he was tried for sedition in 1907.

Brahmabandhav felt that Hindu philosophy had more treasures in the realm of speculation than Christian philosophy and, to make any headway in India, Christianity would have to come to terms with Hinduism. Brahmabandhav wrote: "Christianity has again after a long period come in contact with a philosophy which, though it may contain more errors because the Hindu mind is synthetic and speculative still unquestionably soars higher than her Western sister.... We, Catholics of India, are of opinion that attempts should be made to win over Hindu philosophy to the service of Christianity as Greek philosophy was won over in the Middle Ages."<sup>59</sup>

Brahmabandhav said that he had no definite idea of the *modus operandi* for making Hindu philosophy "the handmaid of Christianity" and that the task was "beset with many dangers" but that "the Catholic Church will find it hard to conquer India unless she makes Hindu philosophy hew wood and draw water for her."<sup>60</sup> Brahmabandhav's efforts in this direction were not appreciated by the Catholic Church which in fact forbade him to write on this subject.

But Brahmabandhav held fast to his own ideas and he believed in the fusion of the spiritual ideas of Hindu philosophy with the

doctrines of Christian religion and, though he was converted to Catholicism, Brahmbandhav proclaimed himself a Hindu. He said: "By birth we are Hindus and shall remain Hindu till death. But as *dvija* (twice-born) by virtue of our sacramental rebirth, we are *Catholics*, we are members of an indefectible communion embracing all ages and climes."<sup>61</sup>

In spite of all his love for Christianity Brahmbandhav's real love was for his country and he felt that the salvation and freedom of India lay in the revival of Indian ideas and Indian culture. "With the spread of English rule and culture," said Brahmbandhav, "India lost her own ideal of civilization. Our educated classes think as they have been taught by their *Firinghi* masters. Our minds have been conquered. We have become slaves. The faith in our own culture and the love for things Indian are gone. India will reach Swaraj the day she will again have a faith in herself.... The whole mass of our people must now be made to appreciate things Indian and to return to our ancient way. This is *Swadesh* as opposed to *Bidesh*."<sup>62</sup>

### III. THE ARYA SAMAJ AND HINDU REVIVAL

The Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, was more conservative and aggressive than the Brahmo Samaj. Keshub's fiery enthusiasm and the search for new religious experiences and the zeal for social reform did not give stability to the Brahmo Samaj and he twice split the Samaj. Though Keshub had inspired the foundation of the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay, which did the same work for religious and social reform in Bombay that the Brahmo Samaj had done for Bengal, Keshub's enthusiasm for Christ and Christianity and his belief in an eclectic religion confused and bewildered many Hindus. It was felt that Keshub's ecstatic praise of Jesus and his passion for certain aspects of Christianity left only a thin wall between Hinduism and Christianity. All these made the Hindus uneasy and the initiative for religious and social reform later passed from Keshub and the Samaj to others such as Dayananda and Ramakrishna who were rooted more in Indian tradition and who derived their strength from indigenous ideas.

Dayananda accused the Brahmos of having departed too much

from ancient tradition and of imitating the Christians.<sup>63</sup> Lajpat Rai, a prominent Arya Samajist, lamented that Keshub's teachings had left only a thin partition between Brahmoism and orthodox Christianity.<sup>64</sup> Lala Munshi Rama, the leader of the Gurukula section of the Arya Samaj, argued that one of the reasons why the Brahmos were not very successful in checking the spread of Christianity in India was that the Brahmos themselves were very much influenced by ideas that were foreign and not indigenous.<sup>65</sup>

Dayananda, who sprang from conservative Gujarati, was not touched by Western thought. He spoke not of his passion for new experiences or of his adoration for Jesus, but of his belief that the Hindus required no new religious knowledge and no external spiritual aid and that they should rely on the *Vedas* alone which contained the entirety of true religious knowledge. It is to this religious teacher from Gujarat, who had neither knowledge of nor any use for Christian religion or Western civilization and who took his stand on the bedrock of the ancient Vedic religion and the ancient Vedic society, that the Hindus now increasingly turned. It has to be noted, however, that though formal adherence to the Brahmo Samaj gradually diminished, the great work that Rammohan and his Samaj commenced, that is to say, the movement for the introduction of ethical monotheism and a rationalistic temper in Hindu religion and society, had done such good work that the spirit of Rammohan and the spirit of the Samaj had already imbued the minds of the best Hindus of the time though many of them did not give their formal allegiance to the Samaj.

Dayananda took his stand on the *Vedas* and he criticized not only Christianity and Islam but also certain aspects of Western science. But though Dayananda believed that the *Vedas* were the only repository of true religion, he was at once conservative and aggressive, traditional and dynamic, for he wanted not only to revive Hinduism but also to reform it.

Dayananda sought to found a religious reform movement on national and indigenous lines, and he eagerly looked forward to the day when the religion of the *Vedas* would become the religion of the whole human race.<sup>66</sup> He criticized both the proselytizing religions of Islam and Christianity and sought to make Hinduism a proselytizing religion.<sup>67</sup> Dayananda's insistence on the superiority of the Vedic religion appealed to those



Hindus who were becoming resentful of the intellectual slavery to the West in which they found themselves.

Lala Hansraj, who was the guiding spirit of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, recorded that under British rule Indians were reminded of their inferiority in every sphere of life: the establishment of railways, telegraphs, and factories demonstrated the superiority of Englishmen in the matter of applying science for increasing the comforts of life, the complex and unified administrative structure of British India displayed Englishmen's great power of organization, and the perseverance, courage, and patriotism of Englishmen showed the excellence of their character. Hansraj wrote: "What wonder is it then that in [the] company [of Englishmen] we feel ourselves conquered and humiliated? Just at this moment of weakness, the missionary comes to us and whispers that the superiority of the European over the Indian is the gift of the Son of God, whom he has acknowledged as his King and Saviour, and that our countrymen can really become great if they come under His banner."<sup>68</sup> At a time when some Indians felt that they were inferior to Englishmen Dayananda asserted that at least in matters of religion and in the domain of philosophy the best modern European thought did not come up to the level of the best ancient Hindu thought, and he warned the Hindus that inhabiting the land of the *Vedas*, they had no right to sink into mere imitators of European modes of thought.<sup>69</sup> Dayananda claimed that the people of Egypt, Greece and the continent of Europe "were without a trace of learning before the spread of knowledge from India,"<sup>70</sup> and he persuaded himself to believe<sup>71</sup> that the most recent inventions of modern science, such as steam-engines and railways, were known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the *Vedas*.<sup>72</sup> Even though Lajpat Rai appeared to agree with Dayananda in believing that the fundamental truths on which modern European sciences were based were known to the ancient Hindus,<sup>73</sup> he, however, never ceased to draw attention to the fact that the achievements of modern Europeans in the realm of physical science were enormous and that Indians would profit much by learning modern European sciences.<sup>74</sup>

But though Dayananda was a revivalist in religion, he was a reformer in social matters. He said that the hereditary caste system, based on birth and not merit, and the outrage of un-

touchability had no sanction in the *Vedas*,<sup>75</sup> and he attacked polytheism and idolatry as being inconsistent with the teachings of the *Vedas*.

Dayananda has vividly described how he came to develop a revulsion for image-worship and how he shed idolatry at the age of fourteen. "Whenever the Siva Purana was to be read and explained," says Dayananda, "there my father was sure to take me along with him. . . . When the great day of gloom and fasting—called Shivaratri—arrived . . . my father regardless of the protest of my mother that my strength might fail, commanded me to keep a fast adding that I had to be initiated on that night into the sacred legend and participate in that night's long vigil in the temple of Shiva. . . . Having completed my task, namely, having sat up for the first two *paharas* till the hour of midnight, I remarked that the *pujaris*, or temple servants and some of the lay devotees, after having left the inner temple, had fallen asleep outside. Having been taught for years that by sleeping on that particular night, the worshipper loses all the good effect of his devotion, I tried to refrain from drowsiness by bathing my eyes now and then with cold water. But my father was less fortunate. Unable to resist fatigue, he was the first to fall asleep, leaving me to watch alone.

"Thoughts upon thoughts crowded upon me, and one question arose after another in my disturbed mind. Is it possible, I asked myself, that this semblance of man, the idol of a Personal God that I see bestriding his bull before me, and who according to all religious accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps, and drinks; who can hold a trident in his hand, beat upon his dumroo and pronounce curses upon men—is it possible that he can be the Mahadeva, the great Deity, the same that is invoked as the Lord of Kailasa, the supreme being and the Divine hero of all the stories we read of in the Puranas? Unable to resist such thoughts any longer, I awoke my father abruptly asking him to enlighten me and tell me whether this hideous emblem of Shiva in the temple was identical with the Mahadeva of the scriptures, or something else. 'Why do you ask it?' said my father. 'Because,' I answered, 'I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent, living God, with this idol, which allows the mice to run upon its body, and thus suffers its image to be polluted without the slightest protest.' Then my father tried to explain

to me that this stone representation of the Mahadeva of Kailasa, having been consecrated with the Veda mantras in the most solemn way by the holy Brahmins, became in consequence the God himself, and is worshipped as such, adding that as Shiva cannot be perceived personally in this Kali Yug—the age of mental darkness—we have the idol in which the Mahadeva of Kailasa is worshipped by his votaries; this kind of worship is pleasing to the great Deity as much as if, instead of the emblem, he were there himself. But the explanation fell short of satisfying me. I could not, young as I was, help suspecting misinterpretation and sophistry in all this. Feeling faint with hunger and fatigue, I begged to be allowed to go home. My father consented to it, and sent me away with a scpy, only reiterating once more his command that I should not eat. But when once home, I told my mother of my hunger and she fed me with sweetmeats, and I fell into profound sleep.

“In the morning, when my father returned and learnt that I had broken my fast, he felt very angry. He tried to impress me with the enormity of the sin; but do what he could I could not bring myself to believe that that idol and Mahadeva were one and the same God, and therefore, could not comprehend why I should be made to fast for the worship of the former.”<sup>76</sup>

Dayananda sought to establish that idolatry had no sanction in the *Vedas*. Dayananda believed in one God and relied on the *Vedas* as his authority for this which, according to him, was absolutely free from error. He said he had no desire to found a new religion inasmuch as the religion he sought to preach was fully contained in the *Vedas*. “I believe,” said Dayananda, “in a religion based on universal and all-embracing principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come. Hence it is that the religion in question is called the *primeval eternal religion*, which means that it is above the hostility of all human creeds whatsoever.... My conception of God and all other objects in the universe is founded on the teachings of the Veda and other true Shastras, and is in conformity with the beliefs of all the sages, from Brahma down to Jaimini. I do not entertain the least idea of founding a new religion or sect.”<sup>77</sup> Dayananda summarized his beliefs thus: “He, who is called *Brahma* or the Most High; who is *Paramatma*, or the Supreme

Spirit who permeates the whole universe; Who is a true personification of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; Whose nature, attributes, and characteristic are Holy; Who is Omniscient, Formless, All-pervading, Unborn, Infinite, Almighty, Just, and Merciful; Who is the author of the Universe, sustains and dissolves it, Who awards all souls the fruits of their deeds in strict accordance with the requirements of absolute justice and is possessed of the like attributes—even *Him* I believe to be the Great God. . . . I hold that the four Vedas—the repository of Knowledge and Religious Truths—are the Word of God. They comprise what is known as the *Sambhita-Mantra* portion only. They are absolutely free from error, and are an authority unto themselves.”<sup>78</sup>

Dayananda, the religious crusader from Gujerat, believed that truth was God. Such was also the belief of Gandhi, the next religious and political leader that Gujerat produced, though Gandhi, unlike Dayananda, did not believe in proselytization. Dayananda said: “Mukti or salvation means deliverance, in other words, to get rid of all suffering, and to realize God, to remain happy and free from rebirth. Of the means to attain it the first is to practise truth, that is truth which is approved both by one’s conscience and God. . . . The second means to attain salvation is to acquire knowledge of the *Vedas* and follow truth. The third means is to associate with men of truth and knowledge. The fourth is by practising Yoga, to eliminate untruth from the mind and the soul, and to fix it in truth. The fifth is to recite the qualities of God and meditate on them. The sixth is to pray to God to keep one steadfast in truth, and to free one from the woes of birth and death and obtain ‘Mukti’.”<sup>79</sup>

Dayananda, like Rammohan and Debendranath, wanted to stem the tide of conversion of Hindus to Christianity. But unlike them and also unlike Ramakrishna and Gandhi he sought to make Hinduism a proselytizing religion. With his rough words and with his unbounded self-confidence he attacked both Christianity and Islam. “The Christians believe God to be powerful; but to believe that Satan misled Adam to commit sin is to believe that God is not All-powerful,” said Dayananda, “for, if God had been All-powerful, Satan could not have misled Adam, who had been created pure by God. No sensible man can believe that Adam committed sin and all his descendants became sinful. He

alone undergoes sufferings who commits Sin; no one else. You say that Satan misleads everyone, I therefore ask you who misled Satan. If you say no one misled him, then as Satan misled himself, so must Adam have done it. Why believe in Satan then? If you say, somebody else must have misled Satan, then the only one who could have done it was God. In that case when God himself misleads and gets others to commit sin, then how can He save people from sin? Satan disturbs and spoils God's creation, but God neither punishes him nor imprisons him, nor puts him to death. This proves that God is powerless to do so. . . ."<sup>80</sup>

Dayananda's approach to Christianity was very different from that of the Brahmos such as Rammohan and Keshub. Rammohan, though he had rejected the divinity of Christ, was much impressed by his ethical teachings and Keshub was full of admiration for Christianity and declared that Christ had Christianized us and leavened us. And though the Brahmos sought to check the conversion of Hindus to Christianity they had Christian missionary friends. Dayananda, on the other hand, wanted not only to check the conversion of Hindus to Christianity, he wanted to bring non-Hindus into the Hindu fold and to convert them to Hinduism for he believed that the religion of the *Vedas* was the only true religion.

Dayananda criticized the Christian conception of God as being anthropomorphic. Ridiculing the Christians Dayananda said: "Again when God's only son suffered crucifixion for the sins of people, then the people need not be afraid of being punished for their sins and they can go on committing sins with impunity. . . . You gentlemen believe God to be like a man. Man has limited knowledge and does not know everything, he therefore stands in need of recommendation of someone who possesses knowledge. But God is All-knowing and All-powerful. He does not stand in need of any recommendation or help from any prophet or anyone else; otherwise, where would be the difference between God and man?"<sup>81</sup> Dayananda attacked not only Christianity but also Islam. He said: "God is All-powerful. It is a matter of surprise that though the Mussalmans believe God to be one and without a second, yet they made the prophet take part with God in bestowing salvation."<sup>82</sup>

But Dayananda was not merely a revivalist, he was also a courageous social reformer. Dayananda not only criticized Chris-

tianity and Islam and declared that the Vedas were the only source of true religion, he also assailed his countrymen for all the manifold defects in their character. It is to these various defects in Indian life and character that he traced the decline of India and the loss of her political independence and he reminded the Indians that the British ruled India because they had many good qualities.<sup>83</sup>

"Look at the Europeans! They wear boots, jackets, and trousers, live in hotels, and eat of the hands of all. These are the causes of their advancement," remarked a simple admirer of Dayananda. Dayananda promptly admonished him saying: "This is your mistake, since the Muhamadans and low caste people eat of the hands of every one and yet they are so backward." Then Dayananda recounted the causes for the advancement of the British and, amongst others, he mentioned the following:

"The custom of child marriage does not prevail among them, they give their boys and girls sound training and education.... They choose their own life-partners... [in] marriages... called Swyambara, because a maid chooses her own consort.... Whatever they do, they do after discussing it thoroughly among themselves and referring it to their representative assembly,... They sacrifice everything, their wealth, their hearts, aye, their very lives for the good of their nation.... They are not indolent, on the contrary, they live active lives.... They have been in this country for more than one hundred years, and yet they wear thick clothing, as they used to do at home, up to this day. They have not changed the fashion of their country, but many among you have copied their dress. This shows that you are foolish, while they are wise. No wise man will ever imitate others.... Everyone among them does his duty most faithfully.... They obey orders [of their superiors].... They help their countrymen in trade, etc.... It is the possession of such sterling qualities and the doing of such noble deeds that have contributed to the advancement of the Europeans."<sup>84</sup>

It is significant that though Dayananda relied on indigenous sources alone and had no English education he attributed the success and strength of the British to their independence, discipline, activism, spirit of social equality, democratic temper, and nationalistic spirit. Dayananda realized that Indians could not rise as a nation unless they radically transformed their social

system. Dayananda was therefore a great believer in social reform. Dayananda opposed child-marriage and supported widow re-marriage and female education.<sup>85</sup> Dayananda also attacked the inequalities and rigidities of the caste system and stated that a Shudra who was as accomplished as a Brahmin should be treated as a Brahmin and he claimed that a Shudra was in fact so treated in the Vedic age.<sup>86</sup> As Dayananda wanted these reforms in order to revive the golden age of the *Vedas*, even orthodox Hindus could accept his teachings without any fear that by so doing they would denationalize or Westernize themselves.

The Arya Samaj was a crusading and reforming movement and Dayananda's teachings fostered patriotism. But Dayananda believed that compared to the Indians of his time the English had superior governing capacity.<sup>87</sup> In fact, Dayananda believed that India has been subjected to foreign rule because Indian life and society suffered from manifold defects and vices.<sup>88</sup> Dayananda, however, explicitly stated that indigenous native rule was ideally the best form of rule and it was implicit in all his teachings that if Indians could revive the purity of the Vedic times they would again be fit for self-rule.

Valentine Chirol, who visited India in 1907-10 on behalf of *The Times* to investigate the causes of Indian unrest, believed that the Arya Samaj was intimately associated with a political movement directed against British rule.<sup>89</sup> In reply to the charges of Chirol and of others, Munshi Rama and Rama Deva, the editor of *The Vedic Magazine*, which was the accredited English organ of the Gurukula branch of the Arya Samaj, stated that the Arya Samaj was not working for the overthrow of British rule.<sup>90</sup> On the contrary, it believed that political agitation was futile because a nation which considered millions of human beings as untouchables had no business to talk of liberty and democracy.<sup>91</sup> *The Vedic Magazine* argued that Indians were subjected to foreign rule because of their moral weaknesses and that without the necessary religious and social reforms political subjection of Indians was bound to continue, and that the expulsion of the English could only result in a change of masters for Indians.<sup>92</sup> It advised Indians to work vigorously for religious and social reform. Lala Munshi Rama even went so far as to declare that, "An Arya cannot prefer the domination of idol-worshipping Hindus or cow-slaughtering Moslems to the enlight-

ened and tolerant rule of England.”<sup>93</sup> At a later time Gandhi also said that a people who regarded some of their own countrymen as untouchables could not attain Swaraj and those who did not regard the crusade against untouchability as necessary for the attainment of Swaraj did not know the real meaning of Swaraj.<sup>94</sup>

Many Arya Samajists, such as Lajpat Rai and Munshi Rama, actively participated in political agitation. Lajpat Rai, one of the extremist leaders, joined the Arya Samaj in the year 1882. This was a turning point in his life. Later Lajpat wrote claiming that “all that was good and creditable in me I owe to the Arya Samaj. It was the Arya Samaj that taught me to love the Vedic religion and to be proud of Aryan greatness. It was the Arya Samaj that linked me to the Ancient Aryas and made me their admirer and devotee. It was the Arya Samaj that instilled into me love for my nation and that breathed into me the spirit of truth . . . and of liberty. It was the Samaj again that taught me that Society, Dharma and country command our worship and that those shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven who make sacrifices to serve these.”<sup>95</sup>

Munshi Rama and Rama Deva were, however, correct in stating that the Arya Samaj as a whole was not a political body.<sup>96</sup> The Samaj, as Annie Besant put it, was not anti-British but pro-Indian.<sup>97</sup> It stimulated the pride of Indians in their own tradition and culture. By strengthening the spirit of cultural nationalism it was bound, however, ultimately to strengthen the spirit of political nationalism.

#### IV. THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND INDIAN SPIRITUALISM

Like the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, and Colonel Olcott, an American, stimulated the spirit of cultural nationalism among Indians. Both the founders of the Theosophical Society repudiated Christianity. In fact in a letter to Dayananda in February 1878 Olcott said that the Theosophists “have openly proclaimed themselves enemies of the Christian religion.”<sup>98</sup> Both Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were converted to Buddhism. Madame Blavatsky told Annie Besant that she embraced Buddhism because



she wanted to show that "a religion of the East was rather better than the religion of the West."<sup>99</sup>

Olcott spoke about the majesty and sufficiency of Eastern scriptures and appealed to the sentiment of patriotic loyalty of Indians to cherish and uphold the religion of their forefathers.<sup>100</sup> In a speech at Madras in 1885, Olcott declared that he would not deny that English ways, ideas, and literature might be more suited to the English people than Oriental ones, but he maintained that as English boys were brought up in the English way of life so Indian boys should be brought up in the Indian and not in the Western way of life. He declared that in the schools and colleges Indian students were not taught the religion of their ancestors or the history of their forefathers.<sup>101</sup> He pleaded for a revival of Sanskrit learning and of the ancient religion, philosophy, drama, music, and literature of the Hindus. In the face of the criticism of Christian missionaries he asserted that the religious and moral principles inculcated by Hinduism were not inferior to those of any other religion.<sup>102</sup>

The most important propagator of Theosophy in India was Annie Besant. Mrs Besant had an interesting past and a chequered history. In Britain she had been a free thinker along with Charles Bradlaugh and a Fabian Socialist along with Bernard Shaw. Besant always enthusiastically upheld whatever cause she believed in and however unpopular the cause might be. She also never hesitated to change her views in the light of new experiences. Bernard Shaw said of Besant: "Mrs Besant is a woman of swift decisions. She sampled many movements and societies before she finally found herself; and her transitions were not gradual; she always came into a movement with a bound."<sup>103</sup>

In 1874 Besant joined the Free Thought Society and she attended a lecture of Charles Bradlaugh. From the first meeting with Bradlaugh in the Hall of Science there developed a friendship between Besant and Bradlaugh which lasted till Bradlaugh's death. Like Bradlaugh, Besant became a convinced atheist. In a Chapter entitled "Atheism as I Knew and Taught It" in her *Autobiography*, Besant stated: "Proceeding to search whether any idea of God was attainable, I came to the conclusion that evidence of the existence of a conscious Power was lacking and that the ordinary proofs offered were inconclusive; that we

could grasp phenomena and no more." From 1875 Besant began to lecture throughout England on free thought and when the National Secular Society was founded Bradlaugh became the President and Besant the Vice-President, which post Besant held till she joined the Theosophical Society. The National Secular Society was very popular and Bradlaugh, its President, acquired a large personal following. It was even said that Bradlaugh had a larger personal following than any man since Gladstone.

Later, because of their adherence to free thought both Bradlaugh and Besant became involved in a sensational case. The case was started because they republished a book by one Dr Charles Knowlton, who was a follower of Malthus, and who had come to the conclusion that married people should limit their families within their means of livelihood and was thus one of the first exponents of the idea of family planning. The book had been sold for many years without attracting much attention but later a Bristol bookseller had sold copies of the book by adding some indecent and obscene pictures. He was prosecuted and convicted of the charge after he had pleaded guilty. It was at this stage that Bradlaugh and Besant decided to republish Dr Knowlton's book to vindicate the right of free thought though they did not agree with all that was contained therein. They said: "We republish this pamphlet, honestly believing that on all questions affecting the happiness of the people, whether they be theological, political, or social, the fullest right of free discussion ought to be maintained at all hazards. We do not personally endorse all that Dr Knowlton says."

The publication of Dr Knowlton's book brought Bradlaugh and Besant into the centre of controversy and though many, including Giuseppe Garibaldi, acclaimed their action, the law took its own course and both Bradlaugh and Besant were arrested and tried by the Lord Chief Justice of England before a jury. Bradlaugh and Besant defended themselves and though the Chief Justice summed up strongly for an acquittal, the jury found the accused guilty. A sentence of six months' imprisonment and a fine of two hundred pounds was passed but the sentence was eventually quashed.

After this Besant published a pamphlet on *The Law of Population*. At this stage an attempt was made to deprive Besant of the custody of her children on the ground of Besant's unortho-

dox views and way of life. In 1879 a petition was presented to the High Court of Chancery in England for the purpose of depriving Besant of the custody of her children and the same was heard by Sir George Jessel. By an order of Court Besant was deprived of the custody of her children. The Court order so upset Besant that about Sir George Jessel, Besant wrote: "A man animated by the old spirit of Hebrew bigotry, to which he had added the time-serving morality of a 'man of the world' sceptical as to all sincerity, and contemptuous of all devotion to an unpopular cause."<sup>104</sup> Besant appealed against the order and the Court of Appeal in 1879 upheld the absolute right of the father to the custody of the children but gave Besant the right of access to them.

Though Besant had fearlessly crusaded for the right of free thought and in support of atheism, by 1899 she was assailed with doubts and spiritual questionings. At this stage she had begun reading books on spiritualism. Speaking about her spiritual predicament in 1899 Besant wrote: "I finally convinced myself that there was some hidden thing, some hidden power, and resolved to seek until I found, and by the early spring of 1889 I had grown desperately determined to find at all hazards what I sought." It was during this time that William Stead, editor of the *Pall Mail Gazette*, gave to Besant two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* written by Madame Blavatsky, the Theosophist, for the purpose of review. The reading of Blavatsky's book virtually converted Besant to Theosophy. She said: "I was dazzled, blinded by the light in which disjoined facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole and all my puzzles, riddles, problems, seemed to disappear."

Besant knew that her conversion to Theosophy would distress Bradlaugh with whom she had fought many battles in support of free thought. Besant asked herself: "Must I turn against Materialism, and face the shame of publicly confessing that I had been wrong, misled by intellect to ignore the Soul? Must I leave the army that had battled for me so bravely, the friends who through all brutality of social ostracism had held me dear and true? And he, the strongest and truest friend of all, whose confidence I had shaken by my Socialism, must he suffer the pang of seeing his co-worker, his co-fighter of whom he had been so proud, to whom he had been so generous, go over to

the opposing hosts, and leave the ranks of Materialism? What would be the look in Charles Bradlaugh's eyes when I told him that I had become a Theosophist?"

Besant's new convictions were however strong and there was an imperious necessity which led Besant to Theosophy. But when Besant told Blavatsky about her intention to join the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky asked her first to read the report of the Society of Psychical Research, which had branded Blavatsky as a hypocrite and impostor, and then to decide whether she should join the Theosophical Society. But the reading of this report did not shake Besant's faith and she wrote: "Was the writer of *The Secret Doctrine* this miserable impostor, this accomplice of tricksters, this foul and loathsome deceiver, this conjuror with trap-doors and sliding panels? I laughed aloud at the absurdity and flung the Report aside."

Bradlaugh did not hesitate to declare that he had very great misgivings about the development of Theosophic views on the part of Besant. But Besant explained her position thus: "It is not possible for me here to state fully my reasons for joining the Theosophical Society the three objects of which are, to found a Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race or creed; to forward the study of Aryan literature and philosophy; to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the physical powers latent in man. On matters of religious opinion the members are absolutely free. The founders of the Society deny a personal God, and a somewhat subtle form of pantheism is taught as the Theosophic view of the universe, though even this is not forced on members of the Society. I have no desire to hide the fact that this form of Pantheism appears to me to promise solution of some problems, especially problems in psychology, which Atheism leaves untouched."<sup>105</sup>

Later, in a lecture on "Why I became a Theosophist" Besant declared that her allegiance to truth led her to Theosophy and she must pursue the faith though many friendships and human ties may be broken thereby. She said: "An imperious necessity forces me to speak the truth, as I see it, whether the speech please or displease, whether it bring praise or blame. That one loyalty to Truth I must keep stainless, whatever friendships fail me or human ties be broken. She may lead me into the wilderness, yet I must follow her; she may strip me of all love, yet I

must pursue her; though she slay me, yet will I trust in her! and I ask no other epitaph on my tomb but 'she tried to follow Truth'."

Besant's conversion to Theosophy gave rise to much controversy but among those who received this news with great delight was Gandhi who was then a student in London. He wrote: "When I was studying in London in 1888 and after, I had become, like many like me, an admirer of Bradlaugh and Besant. Imagine my excitement when one fine morning I read in the London Press that Annie Besant had become a Theosophist under Blavatsky's inspiration. I was a mere boy practically unknown to anybody. I would have been more than satisfied if I could have touched the hem of the garments of Madame Blavatsky and her distinguished disciple. But I could not, though some friends had kindly taken me to Blavatsky Lodge. When Dr Besant came to India and captivated the country, I came in close touch with her and though we had political differences, my veneration for her did not suffer abatement."<sup>106</sup>

As a Theosophist Besant believed in the idea of a higher and inner spiritual government of the world and she subscribed to many esoteric beliefs. As C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, an admirer and biographer of Besant, states: "Isvara or the Supreme Ruler was, according to the Theosophical belief, assisted by the great hierarchies. Sanath Kumara, according to her belief, was the representative of Isvara, residing along with his disciples in a place called Shamballa in the Gobi desert. She also believed that Vyvasvata Manu was still in his astral form guiding the government of the world, with the help of Rishis and Adepts like Agastya, Maurya and Koot Hoomi. She specially believed that the last two were residing in the Himalayan region and were inspirers of the Theosophical Society, guiding human evolution. She further believed that these great ones would help India to achieve all-round progress and evolve into a self-governing unit working for universal peace and welfare."<sup>107</sup>

Besant had a magnetic personality and was a most gifted orator. Count Hermann Keyserling, the philosopher, said about her: "Annie Besant became the President of the Theosophical Society simply because she could not become the Queen of England." Nehru who first saw Besant in 1901 says this of her: "One of the outstanding events in my life is the day when I first met Annie

Besant. I was twelve then and both her personality, the legends that already surrounded her heroic career and her oratory overwhelmed me. With a young boy's admiration and devotion I gazed at her and followed her about. Then came a gap of many years during which period I hardly saw her; but that admiration continued for a great and unique personality. Long years afterwards I again came into intimate contact with her in the political field and again I became a devoted admirer.... It has been a very great privilege for me to have known her and to have worked with her to some extent, for undoubtedly she was a dominating figure of the age."

Besant came to India in 1893. She said that though she was born under Western skies her true motherland was India; she claimed that she was a Hindu in her former birth and she declared that she had remained Hindu at heart.<sup>108</sup> Besant maintained that the deep interest that Indians took in matters of religion showed that Indians in spite of their degradation yet yearned after the things not of the body, but of the spirit and in a speech delivered on 6 November 1893 she declared that India would take her place in the world "as evolver of the inner man, as teacher of the possibilities of the human soul."<sup>109</sup>

Besant sought to defend Hinduism against the attacks of Christian missionaries and against the criticism of those English-educated social reformers in India who after studying Huxley, Mill, and Spencer had turned atheists and sceptics.<sup>110</sup> The social reformers in their turn criticized Besant. In answer to Besant's claim as to the spiritual supremacy of India the *Indian Social Reformer*, the organ of the social reformers, wrote: "We do not understand the claim of spiritual supremacy that is made on behalf of India.... We hold that India's deterioration is due to a variety of causes, the chief of which was over-spirituality...."<sup>111</sup> The *Indian Social Reformer* attributed to Besant's influence "much of the mischievous results of the reactionary movement. She upheld the most grotesque practices, she idealized some of the least useful customs of Hindu society. Her sex, her eloquence, her antecedents, her nationality, all told in her favour. The educated person who fled from action could point with pride to the approbation of a cultured woman, a member of the ruling race... in exculpation of the strategic movement he had ignominiously executed to the rear."<sup>112</sup> K. Srinivasa Row, one

of the social reformers, wrote an essay on "The Dangers of Spiritualism, or The Advent of Theosophy," and called upon Besant to become a social reformer in order to assist India.<sup>113</sup>

The fact that Besant was a foreigner but was teaching the Hindus their Shastras irked some orthodox Hindus and referring to this fact Har Dayal wrote: "Mark the sad spectacle, ponder over its deep significance. It is the death-knell of the Hindu race." *The Hindusthan Review* of Allahabad observed: "The people of Hindusthan are coming to realize and chafe at the incongruity of an English woman teaching the Hindus Hinduism, and are talking of putting a period to this grotesque anomaly."<sup>114</sup>

Though Besant had started as an enthusiastic champion not only of the Hindu religion but also of the Hindu social system, with the passage of years and particularly since 1898 Besant's views on the Hindu social system began to change and she increasingly came to believe in the need of reforming Hindu society. This change was welcomed by the *Indian Social Reformer* which in 1901 wrote: "Mrs Besant is slowly coming round. The fit of 'spirituality' is passing away, and she is opening her eyes to the hard facts which surround mankind in their mundane existence."<sup>115</sup>

In 1904 Besant declared that reform was needed in Hindu society and that reform meant a resurgence of purified Hinduism, because "without Hinduism there is no future of India. I do not mean Hinduism narrow, unenlightened, dogmatic. I mean Ancient Hinduism enlightened, intellectual, full of vigour and strength." In order to reform Hindu society Besant at first worked for the development of a flexible caste system in place of the existing rigid caste system but later she came to believe that more radical reforms were required and in 1913 she declared that the caste system had outlived its utility and that it must go.<sup>116</sup>

Besant was a devout Theosophist and she cherished various esoteric beliefs. Besant has described her experiences thus: "It was in 1913 that I first came into a direct conscious touch with the Rishi Agastya, Regent of India in the Inner Government. He desired me to form a small band of people who are brave enough to defy wrong social customs, such as premature marriage. This was done, and carrying out His wishes, I gave some lectures that autumn on social reform published under the title of 'Wake Up, India. . . .' These prepared the way for the desired

political reform and this was started in the same year by the resolve to begin a weekly newspaper *The Commonwealth* in January 1913. To guide me in its conduct I was summoned at Shamballa where still abide the King and His three Pupils, 'Four Kumaras' of the Indian Scriptures, He the eldest. Then I was given what I always call my Marching orders: 'You will have a time of trouble and danger. I need not say, have no fear, but have no anxiety. Do not let opposition become angry. Be firm, but not provocative. Press steadily the preparation for coming changes and claim India's place in the Empire. The end will be a great triumph. Do not let it be stained by excesses. Remember that you represent in the outer world the Regent, Who is My Agent. My hand will be over you and My peace with you.' "

Theosophists popularized the study of Oriental classics, especially the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, in Europe and America. They also strengthened the pride of many Hindus in their ancient thought and civilization which as J. N. Farquhar, the Christian missionary, states had for several decades been "most unjustly deprecated and unmercifully condemned by missionaries, by Europeans in general and even by some Hindus."<sup>117</sup>

#### V. RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

##### *Ramakrishna*

Another important religious movement that emerged in India in the nineteenth century was the Ramakrishna Mission movement inspired by Ramakrishna (1836-86), a great Hindu saint in direct line of saints such as Chandidas and Chaitanya. In the course of his spiritual experiments Ramakrishna had tried to understand and practise not only the religious tenets of Hinduism but also those of Islam and Christianity, and in so doing Ramakrishna had followed the dress, food, and meditation that were associated with each particular religion. Ramakrishna went to Muslim and Christian mystics and lived with them for years. Ramakrishna came to the conclusion that Krishna, Allah, and Jesus were but different names of God, and that the practice of all religions would lead to the same goal.<sup>118</sup>

To Ramakrishna God was both personal and impersonal.



Ramakrishna was a devotee of Kali, the divine mother, whose worship Ramprasad had made popular in rural Bengal in the eighteenth century. As a result of his own spiritual experiences Ramakrishna came to believe that one of the ways in which God could be realized was by worshipping Him in the form of Kali or in some human form, that is, by following some of the traditional methods of Hinduism which Christian missionaries had characterized as idolatrous and superstitious.<sup>119</sup>

Ramakrishna was a simple village saint. He was not an erudite scholar and had no Western education but it was to this simple man of faith that many highly educated, sceptical, and Westernized Indians came and in Ramakrishna they found the faith, serenity, and strength that they lacked. Keshub, the Brahmo leader, often came to Ramakrishna and so did Pratap Chandra Mazumdar. And the confrontation between the simple illiterate village saint and the sophisticated Western-educated intellectual can best be described in the words of Mazumdar: "What is there in common between him and me? I, an Europeanized, civilized, self-centred, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, unpolished, half-idolatrous friendless Hindu devotee? Why should I sit long hours to attend him, I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Müller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines? I who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal-minded Christian missionaries and teachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahmo Samaj—why should I be spellbound to hear him? And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same."<sup>120</sup> Those educated Hindus who had accepted the rationalistic ideas of the West with their heads but could not harmonize them with their traditional beliefs were instinctively attracted to this simple village saint who reaffirmed the truths of Hinduism in their highest and purest form. Westernized Indians who came to scoff at this simple village saint stayed on to pray with him.

In order to find God, Ramakrishna had practised austerities of all kinds and as a result he began to have religious trances and ecstasies. "I practised austerities for a long time. I cared very little for the body. My longing for the Divine Mother was so great," said Ramakrishna, "that I would not eat or sleep. I would lie on the bare ground, placing my head on a lump of earth,

and cry out loudly: 'Mother, Mother, why dost Thou not come to me?' "121

Ramakrishna was a God-intoxicated man and he could discern spiritual meaning in the smallest incidents. Some of Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences as recounted by him have been collected by one of his disciples in *The Gospel of Ramakrishna*. Ramakrishna said: "I used to have ecstasy all the time. I saw my disciples as my own people, like children and relations, long before they came to me. I used to cry before my Mother, saying: 'O Mother! I am dying for my beloved ones (Bhaktas), do Thou bring them to me as quickly as possible.'" Again Ramakrishna states that the slightest cause aroused in him the thought of the Divine Ideal. "One day I went to the Zoological Garden in Calcutta. I desired especially to see the lion, but when I beheld him, I lost all sense-consciousness and went into Samadhi. Those who were with me wished to show me the other animals, but I replied: 'I saw everything when I saw the King of beasts. Take me home.' The strength of the lion had aroused in me the consciousness of the omnipotence of God and had lifted me above the world of phenomena."

Many other instances were recounted by Ramakrishna, some of which may even appear as somewhat curious to those who do not care for these kinds of experiences. One day Ramakrishna went to the parade ground to see the ascension of a balloon. "Suddenly my eyes fell upon a young English boy leaning against a tree. The very posture of his body brought before me the vision of the form of Krishna and I went into Samadhi." On another occasion Ramakrishna saw in a harlot the spirit of Sita and the incarnation of divinity. "I saw a woman wearing a blue garment under a tree. She was a harlot. As I looked at her, instantly the ideal of Sita appeared before me. I forgot the existence of the harlot, but saw before me pure and spotless Sita, approached Rama, the Incarnation of Divinity and for a long time I remained motionless. I worshipped all women as representatives of the Divine Mother. I realized the Mother of the universe in every woman's form."

In fact, Ramakrishna reached a state of mind which was above the consciousness of sex. In this connection Ramakrishna has described his experiences while staying in the house of Mathura Babu, one of his disciples: "At that time I felt so strongly that

I was the maid-servant of my Divine Mother that I thought of myself as a woman. The ladies of the house had the same feeling; they did not look upon me as a man. As women are free before a young girl, so were they before me. My mind was above the consciousness of sex."

After having gone through all the austerities in search of spiritual experiences, Ramakrishna realized that it was not necessary to give up the world to find God but that it was only necessary to transform one's mind and heart. He said: "Everything is in the mind. Bondage and freedom are in the mind. You can dye the mind with any colour you wish. It is like a piece of clean white linen; dip it in red and it will be red, in blue it will be blue, in green it will be green, or any other colour. Do you not see that if you study English, English words will come readily to you? Again, if a pandit studies Sanskrit, he will readily quote verse from Sacred Books. If you keep your mind in evil company, your thoughts, ideas and words will be coloured with evil, but keep in the company of Bhaktas, then your thoughts, ideas and words will be of God."<sup>122</sup>

Ramakrishna had no antipathy for any religion for he believed that the essence of religion lay not in holding fast to a set of beliefs but in leading a pure and spiritual life. So far as beliefs are concerned his only quarrel with Christianity was regarding its conception of sin. Ramakrishna did not believe in the idea of sin and chided Keshub Sen, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, that the Brahmos and Christians laid too much stress on sin. "By the mind one is bound; by the mind one is freed. If I think I am absolutely free," said Ramakrishna, "whether I live in the world or in the forest, where is my bondage? I am the child of God, the son of the King of Kings; who can bind me; . . . he who asserts with strong conviction: 'I am not bound, I am free,' becomes free."

Ramakrishna continued: "Some one gave me a book of the Christians. I asked him to read it to me. In it there was only one theme sin and sin, from the beginning to the end. [To Keshub] In your Brahmo Samaj the main topic is also sin. The fool who repeats again and again: 'I am bound, I am bound,' remains in bondage. He who repeats day and night: 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner,' becomes a sinner indeed."<sup>123</sup>

Though Ramakrishna's approach to the question of sin was

different from that of the Christians, he did not in any way seek to decry Christianity nor did he preach a proselytizing faith. Ramakrishna believed that all religions were true and if one followed the highest principles of any religion he would attain Mukti. When a devotee said to Ramakrishna, "Christ and Chaitanya have both taught us to love all mankind," Ramakrishna replied: "You should love everyone because God dwells in all beings."<sup>124</sup> Ramakrishna used to say that there were many paths to God and that some could worship God only with the help of an image whereas others did not need the aid of any image or idol. The Brahmos who had rejected idolatry had found one path for attaining spiritual realization but there were also other ways. "The difference between the modern Brahmanism and Hinduism," said Ramakrishna, "is like the difference between the single note of music and the whole music. The modern Brahmos are content with the single note of Brahman, while the Hindu religion is made up of several notes producing a sweet and melodious harmony."<sup>125</sup>

Keshub Sen, the Brahmo leader, used to come to Ramakrishna often. And Ramakrishna himself once went to see Debendranath Tagore who was originally Keshub's religious Guru. The difference between the approach and ways of Ramakrishna and Debendranath appears from Ramakrishna's description of his meeting with Debendranath Tagore. "I wished to meet Tagore. He is a very rich man, but in spite of his enormous wealth he is devoted to God and repeats His Holy Name. For this reason," said Ramakrishna, "I desired to know him. I spoke about him to Mathura Babu...he took me and introduced me to him saying: 'This holy man has come to see you. He is mad after God.' I saw in him [Tagore] a little pride and egotism. It is natural for a man who has so much wealth, culture, fame, and social position. I said to Mathura Babu: 'Tell me, does pride spring from true wisdom or from ignorance? He who has attained to the highest knowledge of Brahman cannot possess pride or egotism, such as "I am learned," "I am wise," "I am rich" and so on.' While I was speaking with Tagore I went into a state from where I could see the true character of every individual. In this state the most learned pandits and scholars appear to me like blades of grass. When I see that scholars have neither true discrimination nor dispassion, then I feel that they are like

straws; or they seem like vultures who soar high in the heavens, but keep their minds on the charnel-pit below on the earth. In (Debendranath) I found both spiritual knowledge and worldly desire.... I said: 'When you have so much spiritual knowledge, how can you live constantly in the midst of so much worldliness? You are like Raja Janaka; you can keep your mind on God, remaining amid worldly pleasures and luxury. Therefore I have come to see you. Tell me something of the Divine Being.' [Debendranath] then read some passages from the Vedas and said: 'The world is like a chandelier, and each Jiva is like a light in it.' Long ago, when I spent nearly all my time meditating at the Panchavati, I saw the same thing. When [Debendranath's] words harmonized with my experience, I knew that he must have attained to some true knowledge."<sup>126</sup>

Ramakrishna used to speak simply and in homely language and like Jesus took simple events to illustrate profound religious truths. Ramakrishna said: "The vegetables in the cooking pot move and leap till the children think they are living beings. But the grown-ups explain that they are not moving themselves; if the fire be taken away they will soon cease to stir. So it is ignorance that thinks 'I am the doer.' All our strength is the strength of God. All is silent if the fire be removed. A marionette dances well, while the wires are pulled; but when the master's hand is gone, it falls inert."<sup>127</sup>

By casting away egoism one could attain God. "Know thyself," said Ramakrishna, "and thou shalt know the non-self and the Lord of all. What is my ego? Is it my hand, or foot, or flesh, or blood, or muscle, or tendon? Ponder deep, and thou shalt know that there is no such thing as I. As by continually peeling off the skin of the onion, so by analysing the ego it will be found that there is not any real entity corresponding to the ego. The ultimate result of all such analysis is God. When egoism drops away, Divinity manifests itself."<sup>128</sup>

But Ramakrishna's emphasis on spiritual experiences and the praise of renunciation did not appeal to many educated Indians who had come in contact with the liberal, activist, and humanitarian ideals of the modern West and who were seeking a religion that promised not merely personal salvation but primarily emphasized the obligation of the individual to society and glorified the ideal of social service. So when Kristo Das Pal, a leading

representative of the English-educated class, came to see Ramakrishna he said: "Sir, this cant of renunciation has almost ruined the country. It is for this reason Indians are a subject nation today. *Doing good to others...improving the material conditions of the country*—these should be our duty now. The cry of religion and renunciation would, on the contrary, only weaken us." Ramakrishna replied: "You man of poor understanding... You dare to slight in these terms renunciation and piety, which our scriptures describe as the greatest of all virtues. After reading two pages of English you think you have come to know the world... How dare you talk of helping the world? ... God alone looks after the world. Let a man first realize Him. Let [him]... be endowed with His power; then, and then alone, may he think of doing good to others. A man should first be purged of all egotism. Then alone will the Blissful Mother ask him to work for the world."<sup>129</sup> Ramakrishna used to say that the purpose of life was not merely doing good to others by building hospitals and establishing schools but the realization of God and he said that once God was realized, by His will many hospitals and schools could be built.<sup>130</sup>

### *Vivekananda*

Of the many Westernized Indians that came to see Ramakrishna one was Narendra Nath Dutt later known as Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). Vivekananda had a Western-style education and had planned to study law in England but his religious instinct led him from one religious teacher to another in search of true knowledge. He went to Debendranath Tagore and asked him whether he had seen God. Not receiving a satisfying answer Vivekananda went to Ramakrishna and asked him the same question and this simple village saint, not educated in the knowledge of the West, answered that he had. Vivekananda was at first sceptical and was assailed with doubts and questionings about Ramakrishna but eventually conviction came to him and Vivekananda gave his complete allegiance to Ramakrishna.

As a student Vivekananda, like many of his contemporaries, had imbibed the rationalistic culture of the West which was not concerned too much with God or religion. The coming into contact with Ramakrishna, however, transformed Vivekananda's

entire life and thought. But though Vivekananda acknowledged Ramakrishna as his master, temperamentally he was very different from Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna spent the greater part of his life at Dakshineswar preaching a simple faith that went to the heart of the people. But Vivekananda travelled throughout the world to spread the message of Practical Vedanta. Ramakrishna asked people to realize God and believed that unto one who had realized God everything would be added. Vivekananda while not fundamentally departing from his Master's teachings placed a new emphasis on the doctrine of social service and preached a religion whose main concern would be the amelioration of the condition of the poor and the downtrodden. The *Narayana* of Ramakrishna became the *Daridra Narayana* of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda electrified the world by his address to the First Parliament of Religions at Chicago in the year 1893. After Vivekananda had pleaded for the cause of Indian spirituality in the Parliament of Religions, the *New York Herald* wrote that Vivekananda was "undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send Missionaries to this learned nation."<sup>131</sup> Vivekananda's tremendous success in the United States and his militant presentation of Hindu thought strengthened the pride of Indians in their own culture and religion. Vivekananda lectured in America and England for about four years and then returned to India as a national hero. Vivekananda devoted himself to the preaching of the gospel of Practical Vedanta and burned himself out in the service of the country, dying at the early age of thirty-nine.

When Vivekananda asserted the spiritual greatness of India in the face of the Western world, Indians, feeling themselves humiliated under an alien rule, could console themselves with the feeling that although they did not have the outward show and glitter of the West they had the inner article. Vivekananda claimed that Indians belonged to a great nation and a greater religion which refused to be conquered by the vampire of Western materialism. Vivekananda's brilliant presentation of Indian spirituality in Chicago in 1893 created a ferment in the minds of Indians which has been compared to the effect of Japan's victory over Russia in 1905. It was hailed as a triumph of Hindu Renaissance.

Vivekananda admired Americans for their vitality and for the

scientific and mechanical progress they had achieved but he felt that economic considerations dominated the American way of life. In a letter written in 1894 from Chicago to the enlightened Maharaja of Mysore, Vivekananda said: "It is a wonderful country and this is a wonderful nation in many respects. No other nation applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people of this country. Everything is machine. There is no limit to their wealth and luxuries." But he added: "With all the criticism of the Westerners against our caste they have a worse one—that of money. The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here."<sup>132</sup>

During his first journey to the West, Vivekananda had been tremendously impressed by the power, the organization, and the democratic spirit of America and Europe but on his next visit what struck him most was the spirit of division, the prevalence of greed, and the fierce struggles among the Western powers for the mastery of the world. Vivekananda saw the hidden tragedy of Europe, the weariness under the forced expenditure of energy and the discontent and uneasiness under the frivolous mask of Europe. Vivekananda felt that "social life in the West is like a peal of laughter, but underneath it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity is all on the surface, really it is full of tragic intensity. . . . Here [in India] it is sad and gloomy on the surface, but underneath are carelessness and merriment."<sup>133</sup>

In one of his essays written in 1899 Vivekananda referred to the attractions of the industrial and commercial civilization of the West but asked Indians to hold fast to their ancient religious traditions. "On one side is modern Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliance of myriad suns, and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts . . . on the other," wrote Vivekananda, "are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory—traditions that have been brought out of the pages of her history by the great sages of her own land and outside, that run for numberless years and centuries through her every vein with the quickening of life drawn from universal love, traditions that reveal unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality, which are the envy of the gods—these inspire her with future hopes. On one side, rank materialism, plentitude of fortune, accumulation of gigantic power, and intense sense-



pursuits have through foreign literature caused a tremendous stir; on the other, through the confounding din of all these discordant sounds, she hears, in low yet unmistakable accents, the heart-rending cries of her ancient gods, cutting her to the quick. There lie before her various strange luxuries introduced from the West—celestial drinks, costly well-served food, splendid apparel, magnificent palaces, new modes of conveyance—new manners, new fashions, dressed in which moves about the well-educated girl in shameless freedom; all these are arousing unfelt desires in her; again, the scene changes and in its place appear, with stern presence, Sita, Savitri, austere religious vows, fastings, the forest retreat, the matted locks and orange garb of the semi-naked Sanyasin, Samadhi, and the search after the Self. On one side, is the independence of Western societies based on self-interest; on the other, is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan society. In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society should be tossed up and down? Of the West, the goal is—individual independence, the language—money-making education, the means—politics; of India, the goal is—Mukti, the language—the Veda, the means—renunciation.”<sup>134</sup>

Vivekananda exhorted Indians to remember the ancient ideal of renunciation, to preach it and practise it. He asked Indians to preach the message of the divinity of man and their identity with each other and to become emissaries for the spread of Indian spirituality throughout the world. “This is the great ideal before us,” declared Vivekananda in a lecture at Madras, “and every one must be ready for it—the conquest of the whole world by India—nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Let foreigners come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! Aye, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations.... Where are the men who are ready to sacrifice everything, so that this message shall reach every corner of the world? Such heroic souls are wanted to help the spread of truth. Such heroic

workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta. The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed. The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found it vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. . . . We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought."<sup>135</sup>

But Vivekananda believed that whereas the West needed the spirituality of India, India needed the science of the West and he looked forward to the synthesis of Western science with Indian spirituality. Some of his words remind one of Keshub who had asked Indians to learn Western science and who had declared that the West could learn ancient wisdom from India.<sup>136</sup> But whereas Keshub's eclecticism and religious experiments left little permanent impress on the minds of the people, Vivekananda who was more firmly rooted in India's past and her ancient traditions had a more powerful impact on the minds of his countrymen. Vivekananda said: "From the Orient came the voice which once told the world, that if a man possesses everything that is under the sun and does not possess spirituality, what avails it? This is the Oriental type; the other is the Occidental type. . . . Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the Occidental he is a dreamer; to the Oriental, the Occidental is a dreamer, playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. 'Each calls the other a dreamer. But the Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy, and never will make. He

who is trying to make us believe this, will claim that happiness is in the machine, but it is always in the mind. The man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. . . . It is true that external Nature is majestic, with its mountains, and oceans, and rivers, and with its infinite powers and varieties. Yet there is a more majestic internal Nature of man, higher than the sun, moon, and the stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the physical universe, transcending these little lives of ours; and it affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.”<sup>137</sup>

The gospel that Vivekananda preached was that each man was potentially divine and it is in the realization of the divinity of men and their essential unity that the future of mankind lay. He said: “Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God. Who says God is unknown? Who says He is to be searched after? We have found God eternally. We have been living in Him eternally. He is eternally known, eternally worshipped.”<sup>138</sup>

Vivekananda was at once a revivalist and a reformer. He was a revivalist in so far as he sought to revive Indian traditions and not to imitate the West. He was a reformer inasmuch as he sought to incorporate the modern spirit of social and economic equality in Indian society. Vivekananda sought to assimilate the modern rationalistic spirit of the West without discarding Indian spirituality. Vivekananda defended image-worship but described it as the lowest form of worship. “This external worship of images has, however, been described in all our Shastras as the lowest of all the low forms of worship. But that does not mean that it is a wrong thing to do. Despite the many iniquities that have found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue now, I do not condemn it.”<sup>139</sup> And then referring to Ramakrishna who believed both in personal and impersonal God and who had not discarded image-worship, Vivekananda said: “Aye, where would I have been, if I had not been blessed with

the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-worshipping Brahmana!" And then Vivekananda turned to the reformers and said: "Those reformers who preached against image-worship, or what they denounce as idolatry—to them I say: 'Brothers! If you are fit to worship God-without-Form discarding any external help, do so, but why do you condemn others who cannot do the same?'"<sup>140</sup>

So far as the caste system was concerned Vivekananda did not want to discard it altogether but attacked its rigidity and he wanted to transform the rigid caste system into a flexible caste system based on merit. Vivekananda also attacked the outrage of untouchability. Vivekananda sought to reform Hindu society by purifying it and not by discarding ancient institutions altogether. A direct attack on the caste system at that stage might have given rise to more criticism and dissension than real reform. A plea for the introduction of a flexible caste system based on merit was really an attack on the very foundation of the system because the essence of caste system in practice was its rigidity and inflexibility.

But though Vivekananda spoke in favour of social reform he raised his voice in protest against any attack on Indian institutions merely because the Westerners disapproved of the same. He gave expression to his feelings in one of his last essays written in 1899. He said: "Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food and ways of living—therefore, they must be very bad; the Westerners condemn image-worship as sinful—surely then, image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it! ... The Westerners say that worshipping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual good—therefore let us throw our Gods and Goddesses into the river Ganges! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious—therefore let all the different castes be jumbled into ... one.... We are not discussing here whether these customs deserve countenance or rejection; but if the mere disapproval of the Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners and customs, then it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest against it."

Vivekananda spoke out against the indiscriminate imitation of the Western way of life. "When I see Indians dressed in European apparel and costumes," said Vivekananda, who had addressed the Chicago Congress of Religions in the saffron robe of a Hindu

Sanyasi, "the thought comes to my mind—perhaps they feel ashamed to own their nationality and kinship with the ignorant poor, illiterate, downtrodden people of India! Nourished by the blood of the Hindu for the last fourteen centuries, the Parsee is no longer a 'Native'! Before the arrogance of the casteless, who pretended to be and glorify themselves in being Brahmans, the true nobility of the old, heroic, high class Brahman melts into nothingness! Again, the Westerners have now taught us that those stupid, ignorant, low-caste millions of India clad only in loin cloths are non-Aryans! They are therefore no more our kith and kin!"<sup>141</sup>

Vivekananda wanted to stimulate the pride of Indians in their own customs, civilization, and way of life. He lectured throughout the length and breadth of India thundering against mere imitation and an indiscriminate Westernization and he deplored the growing denationalization of Indians under the impact of an alien culture.

"Oh India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence, this slavish weakness . . . wouldst thou," wrote Vivekananda, "with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilization and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? Oh India! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti; forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Shankara, the Lord of Uma; forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim: 'I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother.' Say: 'The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother.' Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice: 'The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the

cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age.' Say, brother: 'The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good,' and repeat and pray day and night: 'O Thou Lord of Gauri, Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—*Make me a man!*'"<sup>142</sup>

Vivekananda wanted radical reforms in Hindu society but he took exception to the approach of and the language used by the social reformers. In 1897 when Vivekananda was lecturing at Madras and he had been attacked by the social reformers he said: "Let any one of our reformers bring out that life, ready to cleanse the W.C. of a Pariah, and wipe it with his hair [as Ramakrishna had done], and then I sit at his feet and learn, and not before that. One ounce of practice is worth twenty thousand tons of big talk."<sup>143</sup> Then, addressing the social reformers, he added: "I do not dare to put myself in the position of God and dictate unto our society, 'This way you should move and not that way.'" And he added: "Boys, moustached babies, who never went out of Madras, standing up and wanting to dictate laws to three hundred millions of people, with thousands of traditions at their back! . . . Irreverent boys, simply because you can scrawl a few lines upon a paper and get some fool to publish it for you, you think you are the educators of the world, you think you are the public opinion of India."<sup>144</sup> About the social reform movement he asked: "What good has been done excepting the creation of a most vituperative and most condemnatory literature?" The reformers, Vivekananda said, "have criticized, condemned, abused the orthodox until the orthodox have caught their tone, and paid them back in their own coin, and the result is the creation of a literature in every vernacular which is the shame of the race, the shame of the country. Is this reform? Is this leading the nation to glory?"<sup>145</sup>

Vivekananda complained that the social reformers had confined their activities to the upper castes and classes and have not touched the masses at all. He claimed that social reformers had laid greater emphasis on widow remarriage, which affected primarily the upper classes, than on the removal of untouchability, which concerned the masses. "Most of the reforms that have been agitated during the last century have been ornamental.

Every one of these reforms only touches the first two castes. . . . Every effort has been spent in cleaning [the reformers'] own houses, making themselves nice and in looking pretty before foreigners. That is no reformation." Vivekananda asked the reformers to go to the masses, "go down to the basis of the thing, to the very roots. That is what I call radical reformation. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation."<sup>146</sup> Vivekananda's hope for India's reformation rested on the spread of education among the masses.<sup>147</sup>

Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 and in the rules of the Math it was stated that with the propagation of education and spirituality social reform will come as a matter of course. The rules of the Math provided: "The first and foremost task in India is the propagation of education and spirituality among the masses. It is impossible for hungry men to become spiritual, unless food is provided for them. Hence our paramount duty lies in showing them new ways of food supply. . . . The Math will not pay much attention to social reform. For social evils are a sort of disease in the social body, and if that body be nourished by education and food, those evils will die out of themselves."<sup>148</sup>

Vivekananda was a *Karmayogi* and he drowned himself in ceaseless activity for the uplift of India. In America Vivekananda was called the "Cyclonic Hindu." Vivekananda died at the early age of thirty-nine, but by that time he had delivered numerous lectures and written a large number of essays and books on religious and social matters. The non-sectarian Ramakrishna Mission which he founded engaged itself not only in religious work and education but in diversified social service activities.

Vivekananda placed a new emphasis on the ideal of social service. Vivekananda was greatly impressed by what he saw of the work of various organizations of the West which engaged in social service activities,<sup>149</sup> and he always advised his disciples not to seek merely their personal salvation but to engage in socially beneficial activities. In the beginning Vivekananda encountered some opposition from his disciples on the plea that the ideal of social service was Western in conception and that an Indian *sannyasi* (religious ascetic) should seek only his personal salvation.<sup>150</sup> Vivekananda declared that what was most urgently needed in India was not religion but food for the common

people, and he asserted that a truly religious man must be prepared to sacrifice his personal salvation in order to serve the common people among whom God Himself resided.<sup>151</sup> From America Vivekananda wrote to his disciples thus: "So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them."<sup>152</sup>

Vivekananda did not mince words. He lashed out against mere religiosity and contemplative idleness. "Let us throw away," he declared, "all this paraphernalia of worship—blowing the conch and ringing the bell, and waving the lights before the Image. . . . Let us throw away all pride of learning and study of the Sastras and all Sadhanas for the attainment of personal Mukti, and going from village to village devote our lives to the service of the poor . . . to serve the poor and the distressed."<sup>153</sup> Vivekananda preached his gospel of activism and social service sometimes in rough but vigorous words: "Who cares for your Ramakrishna? Who cares for your *Bhakti* and *Mukti*? Who cares what your Scriptures say? I will go into a thousand hells cheerfully if I can rouse my countrymen immersed in *Tamas* (inertia), to stand on their own feet and be men inspired with the spirit of *Karma Yoga* (worship through action)."<sup>154</sup>

Vivekananda was a revivalist and cultural nationalist but he did not fail to remind his countrymen of the urgent need of learning Western science and of coming in contact with the culture of the West. He used to say that one important cause of the degeneration of the Hindus was that believing that they could do without the world<sup>155</sup> they refused to travel to foreign countries. Referring to the religious restrictions of the Hindus as to travelling abroad Pramatha Chaudhuri, the Bengali literary critic, satirically wrote: "We [Indians] lose our caste if we cross the oceans, and you [Europeans] lose yours if you do not."<sup>156</sup> Vivekananda asked the Hindus not to observe those social laws which prohibited them from crossing the seas or going to foreign lands,<sup>157</sup> and he himself travelled extensively in Europe and in America.

As a result of his travels Vivekananda came to the settled conclusion that while Western civilization had sought to preserve certain material values, Indian civilization had primarily attempted to preserve certain spiritual values. The dominant desire of the



Indians in the past, he wrote, had been to realize *moksha* and the dominant desire of the Western peoples had been to practise *Dharma*.<sup>158</sup> The pursuit of *Dharma* made men *rajashic* or active and set them in constant search of happiness. On the other hand, the person who sought to attain *moksha* could have no desire to live a life of practical activity devoted to the search of earthly enjoyment, for he knew that earthly happiness could not be permanent and abiding, and that the soul of man could experience eternal bliss only after it had been liberated from the bondage of the mortal body and of physical nature. Vivekananda said that though *moksha* was a higher aim than *dharma*, a person could attain *moksha* only after he had practised his *dharma*, that is, one could renounce the world only after one had first enjoyed it.<sup>159</sup>

In modern India many Indians used to say that they were spiritual and that they did not desire worldly success, but most of these people, Vivekananda pointed out, were not really spiritual, they were merely *tamashic* or lazy and inactive.<sup>160</sup> They lacked the *sattvic* or spiritual qualities of an ideal Indian saint as well as the *rajashic* or active qualities of an ordinary European. It would be futile for the *tamashic* modern Indians to aspire too high and to attempt immediately to develop in India a *sattvic* people. At first Indians should rather attempt to develop the *rajashic* qualities which the Europeans had in abundance. They should try to be active and independent, self-reliant and progressive like the Europeans or Americans.<sup>161</sup> American society was "very superior to ours," declared Vivekananda. He said that lethargic young men of India needed "a little strong blood." In order to rouse them he told: "You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita."<sup>162</sup>

Vivekananda's practical work, writes Charles H. Heimstath in *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, "was possibly of more far-reaching benefit to Indian society than that of any single reformer in the national movement, although it was much less than he might have accomplished if ill-health had not begun to plague him following his return to India."<sup>163</sup> Vivekananda trenchantly attacked the outrage of untouchability and lamented that religion in India had been reduced to don't-touch-me-ism. These devastating remarks about Indian society and the characterization of an ordinary Indian as *tamashic* and of an ordinary

European as *rajashic* would have been greatly resented if it had come from a foreigner or Christian missionary, but from Vivekananda Indians were prepared for any amount of scolding for they knew that Vivekananda had faith in his people and was proud of Indian culture and civilization.

Vivekananda asked his countrymen to learn the methods of modern science<sup>164</sup> and the liberal ideals of social organization from the West.<sup>165</sup> He said that in the past though Indians enjoyed great freedom in matters of religion, yet because they enjoyed very little freedom in social matters they had developed a cramped and crystallized society. The English, he believed, were the instrument sent by the Lord to break the crystallized society of India, and he considered it one of the benefits of British rule that the days when the higher castes could claim exclusive privileges had gone for ever.<sup>166</sup>

Though Vivekananda freely admitted that in matters of science and technology Indians should learn from the West he believed that India would lose herself if she gave up her faith in religion and spirituality. The heart of India, said Vivekananda, was in religion.<sup>167</sup> He asserted that the fundamental interest of Englishmen was in economics, of Frenchmen in politics and of Indians in religion. The English resisted their kings when the kings wanted to extort money from them, the French rebelled against their kings who denied them political freedom, and Indians opposed their kings when the kings attacked the religion of the people.<sup>168</sup> The empire of Aurangzib was destroyed because he attacked the religion of the Hindus, but the empire of the English in India was strong, wrote Vivekananda, because they did not touch the religion of the people.<sup>169</sup> As the peoples in the West were interested in politics a European could say whether he was a Conservative or a Radical, an American could say whether he was a Republic or a Democrat, but the Indian peasant, who was interested in religion, had no knowledge of politics. But though ignorant of politics the Indian peasant was, said Vivekananda, more well-informed on religious matters than an average European or American.<sup>170</sup> Vivekananda was convinced that Indians were destined by their history to be a religious nation, so that it would be futile for them to attempt to imitate the West in order to make politics and not religion the centre of their national life.<sup>171</sup>

The teachings of Vivekananda stimulated the pride of Indians

in their own culture and religion and strengthened the spirit of political nationalism. It causes no surprise therefore that though Vivekananda vehemently denied that he was a political agitator or that he wanted to preach politics,<sup>172</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, who was considerably influenced by the teachings of Vivekananda, actively participated in political work in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Vivekananda believed that no enduring solution of the problems of men could be achieved without a religious or spiritual transformation of the character of men. He said that though the Western peoples had shown great proficiency in industrial and commercial activities they yet failed to create happy and harmonious societies and this was because so long as men remained fundamentally egoistic and desired wealth and power above all other things, the material interests of men were bound to conflict. Men could create happy and harmonious societies only if they realized the great *Vedantic* truth of the unity of all individual selves because of their identity with God.<sup>173</sup> Vivekananda was convinced that there were many people in the West whose spiritual doubts were not resolved by the study of Western religions and that they were eagerly waiting to receive the truths of the *Vedanta*.<sup>174</sup>

In the nineteenth century Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, after studying a Latin translation made by a Frenchman of a not very clear Persian translation of the *Vedas*, declared that the *Vedas* were "the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom" and claimed that the *Upanishads* were the greatest discovery of the century.<sup>175</sup> "In India," he predicted, "our religions will never take root. . . . On the contrary Indian philosophy. . . will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought."<sup>176</sup>

The interest shown in Indian philosophy and religion by Schopenhauer, Deussen, Max Müller and others encouraged Vivekananda to believe that the discovery by the West of Indian religious literature would produce in Europe a revolution of thought as far-reaching and profound as that which was produced by the discovery of Greek literature.<sup>177</sup> The Indian emperor Asoka sought to conquer men not by armies but by religion and spirituality; the mission of modern India, as Vivekananda envisaged it, was the same as the ancient mission of Asoka. In the time of Asoka the lack of the means of communication

and of transport effectively prevented the wide diffusion of Indian spiritual ideas throughout the world. Modern Western nations had revolutionized the means of transport and communication and Vivekananda was grateful to them for creating the material media which had made possible the spiritual conquest of the world by Indian thought.<sup>178</sup>

Vivekananda's message to Indians was: "Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality."<sup>179</sup> The day seemed to have dawned, felt Vivekananda, for the great India of old to resume its ancient mission of spreading spiritualism and of evangelizing the earth. But Vivekananda did not consider India's role as that of "God's chosen people" for though Vivekananda felt that the *Vedanta* could provide the basis for the future religion of thinking humanity the Vedantist missions of Vivekananda's conception were to respect the religions of other peoples and were not to impose any religion on others.

But to his own poor and miserable countrymen it is not an other-worldly religion that Vivekananda preached. The poverty and misery of the Indian masses moved Vivekananda most and he considered that a truly religious man should devote himself to the improvement of the lot of the downtrodden masses. In working for the masses and in considering that the uplift of the masses was the prime concern of the nation Vivekananda was the precursor of Gandhi.

Vivekananda declared that he would better be an atheist than believe in a god that could not bring food to the hungry millions. No country, he said, could boast of spirituality with millions of people dying of hunger. In a letter written from Chicago in 1894 to the Maharaja of Mysore, Vivekananda said: "The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor." And he added: "Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation."<sup>180</sup> The poor was to him *Davidra Narayana* (the salt of the earth). "The only God that exists, the only God in whom I believe... my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races." And these striking words of Vivekananda were taken up again by Gandhi and were constantly used

by him. Thus was achieved the union of religious contemplation with service for the downtrodden castes and classes.

Vivekananda and Gandhi invested service to their fellow countrymen with a divine aureole and raised it to the dignity of a religion. This idea of service to fellow countrymen seized upon the imagination of earnest Indians. Accordingly relief works in connection with famines, floods, fires, and epidemics were taken up by earnest young men and *seva-ashtamas* and *seva-samitis* or retreats or societies for social service such as were practically unknown towards the end of the last century were founded and they have multiplied throughout the country during this century. A rude blow was thus struck at the selfishness of a purely contemplative faith which concerned itself only with individual salvation and not with the social good. The rough words of a Ramakrishna, the illiterate and simple saint, who knew nothing of the West or of Karl Marx, that religion was not for empty bellies, emphasize the teaching of the new times that the desire for individual salvation would have to wait till the poor have been fed. "Man is the highest symbol of God and his worship is the highest form of worship on earth." "By giving your life to save the life of the dying, that is the essence of religion." These sayings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda stirred the hearts and minds of Indians.

## VI. NATIONALISM, ART AND LITERATURE

The discovery of the splendour of ancient Indian religious and philosophical thought took place first. Long thereafter Indians discovered the glory of their ancient art. When the art schools first started in the cities of Calcutta and Bombay the models that were used there were almost exclusively Western models. Most prominent among those who painted Indian subjects on the Western style was Raja Ravi Varma. But because his work was merely imitative, it reached only a second-rate standard of excellence.<sup>181</sup> Those who derived their inspiration only from the West could produce art that was merely imitative and not genuinely creative.

As a result of the work of E. B. Havell, the Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, and of Abanindranath Tagore, the painter,

there came into existence a new school of art known as the Bengal School of Painting. Havell disposed of the collection of much of the European paintings which belonged to the Calcutta School of Art and replaced them by the best Indian paintings of the seventeenth century. But so strong was the common belief that Europe could be the only source of artistic inspiration that this change at first provoked opposition from the Indian students and the nationalist press.<sup>182</sup> The Bengal School of Painting sought their inspiration from Indian sources—from the paintings in the caves of Ajanta, and from Rajput and Mughal paintings. Because the Bengal School derived its inspiration from traditional Indian sources it produced art that was real and creative.

Ananda Coomaraswamy, an Anglo-Tamil who was born (1877) and educated in England, criticized in numerous books and pamphlets the English-educated Indians who had forgotten their ancient artistic heritage. Coomaraswamy pointed out that the denationalized men in India did not have a deep knowledge of Western culture but only an imperfect understanding of it, for, to a really creative person, foreign culture could be “a stimulus not to imitation but to creation.”<sup>183</sup>

Coomaraswamy believed that it was by the development of a national art and not merely by the attainment of political independence that India could gain her real freedom. In 1912 he said that if Indians, who were culturally dominated by the West, immediately gained their political freedom they would not be as free as the Poles who, though politically enslaved, yet adhered to the language, tradition, and culture of their country.<sup>184</sup> He maintained that it was not politicians but poets and painters, sculptors and musicians who established the status of nations. As the highest ideal of nationality was service, Indians would be judged not by what they successfully assimilated from the culture of the modern West but what they actually contributed to the culture of humanity.<sup>185</sup>

In 1909 Coomaraswamy declared that modern Indians instead of combining the best ideals of the East with those of the West were forgetting the ideals of the East and were reproducing in India all the worst features of Western civilization.<sup>186</sup> Educated Indians preferred “flaming Brussels carpets, Tottenham Court Road Furniture, Italian mosaics, German tissues, French oleographs, Austrian lustres and all kinds of cheap brocades” to the

artistic products of the traditional craftsmen of India. They liked English palaces and French villas better than houses built on the Indian pattern. Coomaraswamy lamented that while there existed in India buildings constructed by Indian architects which were as noble as any in the world, no Indian politician had demanded that public buildings should be constructed by Indian architects according to the best patterns of Indian architecture.<sup>187</sup> It was because the Indians had ceased to love the cultural traditions of India that they wanted to live in caricatured English villas and attempted to convert India into a suburb of London, Manchester or Birmingham.<sup>188</sup>

The English-educated Indians did not even know or realize how denationalized they had become.<sup>189</sup> "Speak to the ordinary graduate," said Coomaraswamy, "of . . . the ideals of the *Mahabharata*—he will hasten to display his knowledge of Shakespeare; talk to him of religious philosophy—you find that he is an atheist of the crude type common in Europe a generation ago, and that he is as lacking in philosophy as the average Englishman; talk to him of Indian music—he will produce a gramophone or a harmonium, and inflict upon you one or both; talk to him of Indian dress or jewellery—he will tell you that they are uncivilized and barbaric; talk to him of Indian art—it is news to him that such a thing exists. . . ."<sup>190</sup> Though this description of English-educated Indians was an exaggeration Coomaraswamy stated his proposition in an extreme form to emphasize his point.

Another major influence in the development of nationalism in India was the growth of the vernacular languages. When English education was first introduced in India the educated Indians had a great contempt for the vernaculars as compared with the classical languages such as Sanskrit or Persian.

As a result of Macaulay's Minute on Education it was declared that instruction was to be given not in one of the classical languages of India but in English. The problem of India in the nineteenth century, which had a foreign language as a vehicle of learning, was somewhat similar to that of Great Britain in the sixteenth and preceding centuries, when she had a foreign language as the medium of education. For centuries English in England occupied a position such as the vernaculars occupied in India at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In cultured circles in England at that time English was regarded with con-

tempt as the jargon of the people and there was a feeling that if one was to commune with great minds one must learn Latin. Similarly in cultured circles in India in the early nineteenth century it was felt that great ideas could be expressed only in Sanskrit or Persian and not in any of the vernaculars.

The Committee of Public Instruction which at the time of Macaulay's Minute on Education was divided in opinion on the question whether the medium of instruction should be English or one of the classical languages of India was unanimously of the opinion that "the vernacular languages contained neither the literary nor scientific information necessary for a liberal education." Bengali was looked down upon by cultured Bengalis. A suggestion made by an Englishman, Mr Adam, that some at least of the lectures might be delivered in Bengali, was vetoed by the Indian members of his Committee on the ground that "anything said or written in the vernacular tongue would be despised in consequence of the medium through which it was conveyed."

The Serampore Missionaries, headed by William Carey, had endeavoured to have a mastery of the vernacular languages with the object of translating the Bible into vernacular languages and of bringing the fruits of Western learning to the people through the medium of the vernaculars. These translations by foreigners created a language entangled in the figures of foreign rhetoric and involved syntactical construction. These translations had a curious hybrid character but they also helped the language to grow. Gradually Indian opinion grew less contemptuous of the vernacular languages and the fashion to decry the mother tongue and the prejudice against it began to wear out.

Macaulay had foreseen the day when the vernacular languages refined and enriched by Western thought would be fit vehicles to convey modern knowledge to the great masses of the population. But the Western education that was imparted created at first among the intelligentsia a tendency to ignore the vernaculars altogether. Later, the English-educated intelligentsia realized that education through the medium of an alien language accompanied with neglect of the mother tongue only served to dry up at their very sources the fountain springs of national power and thus impoverished the nation and destroyed all initiative and originality.

Gradually more attention was paid to the vernaculars. The



infiltration of Western ideas and thought in the vernaculars transformed them and led to the secularization of these languages and the development of a standard prose style. Originally the vernacular languages had developed mostly in the realm of poetry. Before the nineteenth century the great names in the vernacular languages, such as Tulsidas, Surdas, Kabir, Vidyapati, Chandidas, and Tukaram were associated with poetry and devotional religion. The poems in the vernacular languages of India had mainly religious themes and so far as the secular tradition was concerned, it was expressed mostly in erotic poetry.

With the infiltration of Western ideas in the vernacular languages there was a shift from devotional to historical themes and this is expressed in the historical novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee which are somewhat reminiscent of the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. The shift from devotional to historical themes also marked the change from poetry to prose. The next development was the introduction of patriotic and social themes in literature. Gradually the vernacular languages developed great flexibility and vitality in style and a standard prose came into existence which was used both for novels as also for journals and newspapers. The greatest master of Bengali, Rabindranath Tagore, was a poet but he infused a new spirit of vitality and flexibility in Bengali prose. The development of the vernaculars produced other literary geniuses such as Mohammad Iqbal, the Muslim poet, and Subramanian Bharati, the Tamil poet.

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century witnessed the transformation of the vernacular languages of India into modern languages. The vernacular languages, such as Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kanarese developed enormously in richness, flexibility, and popularity. It is in the vernaculars that Indians truly expressed themselves and it is through the vernaculars that Western ideas could eventually infiltrate to the masses. The development of the vernaculars helped the growth of modernism as also of cultural nationalism in India.

#### VII. REFORM OR REVIVAL?

New societies founded by Dayananda, Ramakrishna, and others

which sprang up in defence of the old faith of India and which glorified the past, recognized of course the need for cleansing the grosser accretions of Indian society but they displayed unmistakable reactions against the West. In place of the glorification of Western civilization and alien idols there was now a new self-confident militancy fortified by all that was heroic and splendid in India's past.

According to Dayananda "everything worth knowing even in the most recent inventions of modern science, was alluded to in the *Vedas*. Steam-engine, railways, and steam boats all are shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the *Vedas*."<sup>101</sup> The nature of the appeal of the past to Indian revivalists has been described in the criticism of a not very friendly Englishman thus: "For a Hindu peasant the India of the Epics was peopled by Gods in human guise. The forces of nature were powerless before the asceticism of man, . . . With greater modesty, Brahman commentators assure us that none of the materials of modern science was unfamiliar to their ancestors, from the aeroplane to the atom. . . It is not only the imperial splendours of Guptas or the Mauryas or the Kushans that swell the pride of the Indian patriot . . . it is to him no small solace that they were enriching the world of thought at a time when the alien race which now rules his country had not emerged from its primitive dwellings in cave and forest."<sup>102</sup>

In revivalism in India as in Europe there had been an uncritical admiration of the Middle Ages and of all medieval survivals and the attitude to the past had been lyrical and romantic rather than objective and historical. Sometimes events move faster than the minds of men. At these times man, exhausted by the succession of novelties, yearn to live anew in the old and the comfortable. They strive to reproduce the legendary golden age. In India the golden age was conceived as an age of rural simplicity when men practised the simple virtues and did not crowd into towns or swell the labour force of the mills. In Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* written in 1908 one finds this glorification of the ancient legendary period of India. For revivalists a nostalgic recollection of India's greatness in the past took the place of hopeful optimism in the present and the Victorian notion of progress was impugned.

Like all ancient lands India was a mixture of the good and the bad, but because of the growth of meaningless rituals in religion

and the development of a crystalized society the good was hidden and had to be sought after. Macaulay had flung all the ancient lore of India to the scrap-heap remarking that it was a miserable collection of crude puerilities and fantastic superstitions. A single shelf of a good European library was to him worth the whole native wisdom of India and Arabia. This approach hurt Indian self-respect. It led to a renewed study of the Indian scriptures. It led to the discovery of the glory and wisdom of those books.

The new school of militant nationalism in India that grew out of a spirit of pride in one's country needed sustenance from the past, from tradition, and from the soil of the land. An attempt had been made to transplant Western thought on Indian soil but it had no roots in the land. It was an idea, but could not acquire the force of a belief. It appealed to the brain but had no communion with the heart and people hungered for something more comforting than the rigours of Western rationalism.

Indian scholars delved into their musty chronicles and sacred texts and rediscovered India's historic past. The search of Indian scholars and cultural nationalists revealed to them brilliant and highly civilized periods in the remote past of India. "There is much on which the pride of Hinduism can feed, its storied past, its profundity of abstract thought, its aloofness from the modern hustle, its white robe of humanity, in Tagore's phrase, amid the grime of competitive industrialism."<sup>193</sup> The naked ascetic with the begging bowl regards the rich man who motors past him with a mixture of dislike, compassion, and scorn. Not dissimilar, claims Lord Meston, is the attitude of orthodox Hinduism to Western life and civilization.

Militant nationalists and revivalists claimed that vigorous village institutions existed in India in the past and that there was also widespread popular education of a simple and probably mainly religious kind. India had wavered in her fortunes but she had lived on with continuous centuries behind her. Through long ages India had travelled and had gathered much wisdom on the way. Revivalists harked back to the glories and wisdom of ancient India.

Further, revivalists and militant nationalists were not content with discovering the glories of ancient India in religious matters only. They ransacked history to find out the high ability and heroism of Indians in the political and military field. The names

of Shivaji and other Indian warrior-kings became popular. Tilak, the extremist leader, became one of the main promoters of the Shivaji cult. Furthermore, many Indians began to say that what the British called the Sepoy Mutiny was their first war of independence. Veer Savarkar, the Hindu extremist leader, wrote about the Sepoy Mutiny as *The History of the War of Indian Independence*. Some militant nationalists also began to say that this war of independence was not only against the political supremacy of Britain but against the whole new order of things, that this was like the Taiping or Boxer rebellion in China inasmuch as it was designed to cast out the "foreign devil," to counteract the whole Western impact.

Hinduism, which was under attack because of the spread of Western ideas, asserted itself and gave rise to Neo-Hinduism. Neo-Hinduism was a movement of dissent, a protestantism against the protestants, that is to say, a protest against the Anglicized Indians or black Englishmen who had in the first flush of Western enthusiasm denounced all that was glorious in India's past. As a protest against the Anglicism and Westernization of the early English-educated Indians, the wheel turned full circle and returned to the Middle Ages but not in support of superstitious rites or as a refuge in cold monasticism but in the reforming faiths of Dayananda, Ramakrishna, and others. For long educated Indians had lived as intellectual imitators of the West, but now the new reforming faiths in Hinduism gave them strength and comfort whereas previously there was mere doubt and imitation. But in the glorification of the past there was also an exaltation of sentiment over intellect. The phases of this revivalistic and romantic movement had similarities with the Romantic movement which marked the early part of the nineteenth century in Europe. In both there was an uncritical admiration of the Middle Ages and of all medieval survivals. In both the attitude to the past was lyrical rather than logical.

During this romantic and revivalistic movement everything old and ancient appeared to have colour and charm. Patriotism came to mean a blind praise of all that was Indian and educated Indians identified themselves with the indigenous and ancient ideas and cherished hostility to every English innovation. "The more educated, the more bigoted," the phrase passed into a proverb at this time. Among many Indians the idea became

popular that Western politics was without religion and morals and that Western civilization was a civilization only in name. Renunciation was at the centre of Oriental civilization while indulgence was said to be a Western virtue. Cultural nationalists and revivalists in India claimed that Western militarism and profiteering commercialism put a premium on greed and the baser propensities of human nature and they asserted that Western civilization suffered from an ethical dualism sanctioning one set of morals over the internal life of the nation and another set of ideals for others.

Resistance to Western thought was also reinforced by its association with foreign dominion. English thought was untouchable. "Was India to deform herself from a temple of God into one vast inglorious suburb of English civilization?" asked the revivalists. Indians aping the West were warned not to sell their soul for a mess of pottage. We should discard the idol from abroad and worship even the dog we rear at home, said Iswar Gupta, the Bengali poet. The revivalists harked back to the message of the *Gita* that it is better to hold fast to one's native faith and court death than to accept an alien faith and invite disaster. This was the religion of the new nationalism.

The Revivalist movement was aggressive, romantic, mystical, and riddled with fallacies and yet it was sound enough to restore the self-respect of the Indian upper and middle classes. It strengthened the moral fibre against the seduction of Western fashion, it steadied the gaze against the superficial glammers of the West. It checked mere imitation as distinct from the selective assimilation of Western thought. It set men thinking not in terms of piecemeal Western reforms, but of a new India rejuvenated from its own vital forces and free to work out its own destiny in its own way. Annie Besant, the Theosophist and one of the leaders of Indian nationalism, wrote in her *Autobiography* (1893): "the Indian work is, first of all, the revival, strengthening and uplifting of the ancient religions. This has brought with it a new self-respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the future, and as an inevitable result a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation."

But mere perfervid eulogies of Indian spirituality could not stop the encroachments of the West and an attempt had to be made to fit in modern conceptions with the time-honoured

scheme of Indian thought. Resurgent India was shaken to its very depths by the new wind of change from the West but in spite of all that the West had achieved, the cultural nationalists felt that Indians could take pride in her glorious past though she would have to reform her life and society. In this revivalistic approach reform was not altogether discouraged. But reform under this scheme was presented as a return to the freer and simpler life of India of the Vedic age. It was not a direct attack on some of the reactionary aspects of Indian life and practice. It was the strategy of the indirect approach. It was the popular method of many great revolutionaries in the past. This method defeated conservatism on its own ground. Without this method some of the seeds of Western ideas that were valuable would have fallen on barren soil.

And yet this method had its dangers, because its basis was glorification of the past. It prevented men from looking forward. Sir Henry Maine once warned educated Indians against their growing tendency to employ ingenious analogies and subtle explanations to justify outworn usages of the past. And even the nationalist, Manmohan Ghose, complained that it was sickening to hear at every public meeting that the ancient civilization of India was superior to any which Europe ever had. At a later time Jawaharlal Nehru said that it was a great delusion to cherish the belief that because India was industrially backward it was spiritually advanced. "It is a commonplace that in the modern industrial West outward development has far outstripped the inner, but it does not follow, as many people in the East appear to imagine, that because we are industrially backward and our external development has been slow, therefore our inner development has been greater. That is one of the delusions with which we try to comfort ourselves and try to overcome our feeling of inferiority. It may be that individuals can rise above circumstances and environment and reach great inner heights. But for large groups and nations a certain measure of external development is essential before the inner evolution can take place. A man, who is the victim of economic circumstances and who is hedged and restricted by the struggle to live, can very rarely achieve inner consciousness of a high degree. A class that is downtrodden and exploited can never progress inwardly. A nation which is politically and economically subject to another

and hedged and circumscribed and exploited can never achieve inner growth. Thus even for inner development external freedom and a suitable environment become necessary.”<sup>194</sup>

The Arya Samaj and many religious reform movements in India, and political extremists generally as also the mystical school of terrorists of Bengal believed in restricting or limiting European cultural influences in India. Later, Gandhi, to a certain extent, also represented this trend. The reaction against the West had arisen because the first generation of English-educated Indians, the Indo-Anglians, were black Englishmen who were ashamed of India in their hearts and were anxious to consider England their spiritual home. The moderates or liberals who were greatly attracted to Western political thought welcomed the Western influence whole-heartedly. But the extremists claimed that the moderates judged their countrymen in the light of the history and achievements of Europe. Referring to the moderates Bepin Pal, the extremist leader, wrote that “he [the Indian moderate] constantly condemns his own country and culture and with the relentless pity of the missionary propagandist seeks to ruthlessly improve them more or less after these alien ideals.”<sup>195</sup>

But though the extremists helped to stimulate the pride of Indians in their own culture and tradition and thereby strengthened the nationalist movement, they did so partly by introducing the dynamite of religion into politics and thereby reversing to some extent the liberal and secular tradition of the moderates. The moderates, such as Dadabhai, Gokhale, and Surendranath, did not mix religion with politics. The early nationalist movement which was dominated by the moderates was impregnated with the ideas of Victorian liberalism. Later the extremist leaders, such as Tilak, Bepin Pal, Lajpat Rai, and Aurobindo, gave their patriotism a religious colour and encouraged the worship of Hindu gods such as Ganapati or Durga in order to stimulate the spirit of religious patriotism. Though they were not anti-Muslim the very intensity of their Hinduism repelled some Muslims. In an article written in 1912 in the *Comrade* Muhammad Ali claimed that the Hindus who relied on Hindu gods in support of Indian nationalism were really “communal patriots.” Similarly he regarded the Muslims who relied on religion alone as “communal patriots.” Muhammad Ali wrote: “Whatever may

be the inspiration of Hinduism as a religious creed, the educated Hindus made it a rallying symbol for political unity. The aspiration for self-government arrested all movements for social reform which the early impulse towards liberalism had called forth amongst the educated Hindus. Past history was ransacked for new political formulas; and by a natural and inevitable process 'nationality' and 'patriotism' began to be associated with Hinduism. The Hindu 'communal patriot' sprang into existence with 'Swaraj' as his war-cry. He refuses to give quarter to the Muslims unless the latter quietly shuffles off his individuality and becomes completely Hinduized."<sup>196</sup>

Further, some of the Hindu revivalists wanted to go back to the *Vedic* age and some of the Muslim revivalists wanted to look back to Arabia of the early Khilafat. There were real differences between the *Vedic* age and the time of the early Khalifs. The revivalist movement that was born of reaction to Western ideas took both Hindus and Muslims, in thought, to their most ancient times. Hindus and Muslims went beyond the last thousand years of reconciliation and rapprochement back to their distant and divergent traditions.

The growth of a spirit of revivalism in India was almost inevitable because of the contact of a foreign rationalistic and politically dominant culture with the ancient culture and civilization of India. Owing to the spread of English education there had developed an independent attitude of mind among Indians, so that the educated people began to criticize some of the superstitious religious beliefs and irrational social customs that obtained in India. But soon the English-educated Indians discovered that to change their whole social behaviour for the purpose of putting into practice the liberal ideas which they theoretically upheld required an amount of social courage to reform social evils which many of them did not possess. Hence some educated Indians began to justify their conventional conduct by formulating theories which demonstrated to their satisfaction that Indian social institutions were not defective in certain respects but were excellent from all points of view and were actually the best in the world.<sup>197</sup>

Though Indians came into contact with Western liberal ideas in schools and colleges they could not completely accept such ideas, because outside schools and colleges they were, as Tagore



observed, powerfully influenced by the authoritarian ideas on which Indian society was based.<sup>198</sup> Some educated people while paying lip-service to free thought inwardly believed in the infallibility of the sacred books of the Hindus, and shrank from applying to these sacred books the same rational, scientific, and historical tests which they adopted in evaluating the worth of Western knowledge. They behaved as if the laws of reason applied only in the West and not also in India.<sup>199</sup>

In the early days of the spread of English education in India many educated Indians became excessively Westernized and began to criticize ancient Indian culture and civilization indiscriminately. It was partly as a reaction against the excessive Westernization of some educated Indians that other Indians tried to defend every ancient Indian institution.<sup>200</sup> In his novel *Gora* Tagore has described the psychology of an extreme Hindu revivalist with deep insight and understanding. Gora believed that owing to the constant criticisms of Hindu society by Christian missionaries and also by some social reformers, such as the Brahmo Samajists, many Hindus were losing all pride in their race and culture. "We must refuse," he emphatically declared, "to allow our country to stand at the bar of a foreign court and be judged according to foreign law. Our ideas of shame or glory must not depend on minute comparisons at every step with a foreign standard. We must not feel apologetic about the country of our birth."<sup>201</sup> Gora adopted all the practices of an orthodox Hindu. He religiously bathed in the Ganges, regularly performed ceremonial worship, and took particular care of what he touched and what he ate. He proudly proclaimed himself to be a superstitious Hindu and argued that neither Christian missionaries nor Westernized Hindus could reform Hindu society because real reform could not come from foreigners and outsiders, who looked at Hindu society with a critical eye, but could only come from within, that is, from men who loved and respected Hindu society in spite of all its defects.<sup>202</sup>

Bepin Pal, the extremist leader, also spoke in a similar vein when he said that the nationalist "loves his Fatherland, not simply because of the good that is in it, but, yes, also even the very evils of it."<sup>203</sup> He said that to a Westernized nationalist the love of India was merely the love of a so-called reformer and from a distance. "In the name of India," he said, "we loved Europe.

... We loved the abstraction we called India, but, yes, we hated the thing it actually was. Our love for our people was something like the pious love of the Christian missionaries for the heathens....” And he complained, “every patriot was a reformer. And reformers can never be true lovers of their country.... Reformers, by the very necessities of their vocation, dwell constantly on the darkness, the ugliness, the evil and the ignorance about them.” Bepin Pal said that India presented “the curious spectacle of a highly rational and spiritual people like the Hindus subjecting themselves to material symbols in the religious, and irrational institutions in the social life.” But for Pal the salvation of India did not lie in the path adopted by social reformers, which he characterized as one of “applying the untested canons of imported European enlightenment to the examination of the surface values of Indian life and institution.” Pal believed that Hindu society would have to be reconstructed and reinvigorated by infusing among the Hindus the true spirit of toleration and universalism inherent in Hinduism but this could not be done by social reformers who despised all Indian institutions or by the Westernized politicians who believed that freedom would come merely through political emancipation and even without a real and spiritual transformation of Indian society.

It is undeniable that some of the social reformers despised Hindu culture without even understanding it. In *Gora* Tagore gives us a picture of such a social reformer, Haran, who was an ardent Brahmo Samajist. Though Haran had never read the *Bhagavad Gita*, he was firmly of opinion that this and other religious books which were favoured by the orthodox Hindus, should be banished from Brahmo households.<sup>204</sup> But he had no objection to the reading of the Bible, and in fact among the scriptures of the world religions the Bible was his only support.<sup>205</sup> It is as a reaction to the denationalized social reformers of the type of Haran that extremely conservative Hindus of the type of Gora were produced and vice versa. Tagore was confident that through the conflicting movements of extreme revivalism and extreme Westernization Indians would ultimately be able to effect a proper balance between the ideals of the East and those of the West.<sup>206</sup>

But revivalism increasingly exhausted its inspirational value. The golden age could not for long be posited in the past in an

era of rural simplicity. If India's salvation lay in revivalism, then what was to be revived? M. R. Ranade, the reformer from Maharashtra, pointed out the absurdity of a policy of pure revivalism. He said: "When we are asked to revive our institutions and customs, people seem to be very much at sea as to what it is they seem to revive. What particular period of our history is to be taken as the old? Whether the period of the Vedas, of the Smritis, of the Puranas or of the Mahomedan or modern Hindu times? Our usages have been changed from time to time.... The men and the gods of those old days ate and drank forbidden things to excess in a way no revivalist will now venture to recommend. Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognized mixed and illegitimate intercourse? Shall we revive the Niyoga system of procreating sons on our brother's wives when widowed? Shall we revive the old liberties taken by the Rishis and by the wives of the Rishis with the marital tie? Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year's end to year's end, and in which human beings were not spared as propitiatory offerings? Shall we revive the Shakti worship of the left hand with its indecencies and practical debaucheries? Shall we revive the sati and infanticide customs, or the flinging of living men into the rivers, or over rocks, or hookswinging, or the crushing beneath Jagannath Car? Shall we revive the internecine wars of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, or the cruel persecution and degradation of the aboriginal population? Shall we revive the custom of many husbands to one wife or of many wives to one husband? Shall we require our Brahmins to cease to be landlords and gentlemen, and turn into beggars and dependants upon the king as in olden times? These instances will suffice to show that the plan of reviving the ancient usages and customs will not work our salvation, and is not practicable."<sup>207</sup>

Lajpat Rai, the Arya Samajist and an extremist political leader, sought to answer Ranade's attack on the revivalists with equal sarcasm when he asked the reformers "into what they wish to reform us? Whether they want us to be reformed on the patterns of the English or the French? Whether they want us to accept the divorce laws of Christian society or the temporary marriages that are now so much in favour in France or America? Whether they want to make men of our women by putting them into

those associations for which nature never meant them? Whether they want us to reform into Sunday drinkers of brandy and promiscuous eaters of beef? In short, whether they want to revolutionize our society by an outlandish imitation of European customs and manners and an undiminished adoption of European vices?"<sup>208</sup> And referring to the Anglicism of the early English-educated Indians Lajpat said: "He took his dress, he took his cheroot and pipe and also his cup and beefsteak. He began to live in houses built and furnished in the English way. He detested Indian life and took pride in being anglicized. Everything Indian was odious in his eyes." But though Lajpat attacked the reformers, he himself was not a pure revivalist for he wanted to change and purify Hindu society even though he desired to avoid the language and the critical utterances of the social reformers as regards Hindu society.

Rabindranath Tagore sounded a note of warning against a doctrine of pure revivalism whose votaries asked the Indians to reject the whole of Western civilization. Tagore detected traces of this revivalism in some of Gandhi's utterances and it appeared to him that Gandhi's non-cooperation movement was directed not merely against the British Raj but against the whole of Western civilization. Writing from New York on 13 March 1921, Tagore said: "Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide. If in the spirit of national vain-gloriousness we shout from our house-tops that the West has produced nothing that has an infinite value for man, then we only create a serious cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. For it is the mind of men in the East and West which is ever approaching truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision. If it can be true that the standpoint of the West has betrayed it into an utter misdirection, then we can never be sure of the standpoint of the East."<sup>209</sup>

In some of his earlier writings in 1902-3 Rabindranath had, however, emphasized that the cultural impact of the West had, in certain respects, diminished the spiritual force and strength of Indian life. As a result of "the contact with the West the educated youth began to love luxury and to lose the faith of their ancestors in the dignity of renunciation and the strength of poverty."<sup>210</sup> They were so overwhelmed by the pomp of a

commercial civilization that they felt utterly discontented with the simplicity of the Indian villages and began to look down upon the poor Indian villagers.<sup>211</sup>

While ambition was at the root of modern Western civilization, the ideal of ancient Indian civilization, wrote Tagore, was contentment.<sup>212</sup> Indian civilization placed a limit to the ambition of everyone and, through the caste system, fixed for each man in society, great or small, the work he should do and the class to which he should belong. It accepted that all men could not be equal and that a very few people could be great. It asserted that in order to avoid the disappointment of the large majority of people who could not be great it was essential that each man, instead of being too ambitious, should find contentment in doing the particular kind of work, big or small, which society had assigned to him. Tagore said that because in Europe everyone wanted to be great but a very small number of people could realize their ambitions, the large majority of people lived discontented and unhappy lives. He argued that the ancient Indian ideal which valued contentment more than ambition, self-restraint more than self-indulgence, was superior to the ideals that inspired the minds of modern Europeans.<sup>213</sup>

Though in some of his earlier writings Tagore had referred to the harmful consequences that resulted from the cultural impact of the West, in his writings as a whole, and particularly in his later writings, he emphasized the limitations of Eastern as well as Western ideas and institutions,<sup>214</sup> and argued that only a society which combined the best ideals of the East as well as the West could solve the difficult problems which troubled modern humanity.<sup>215</sup>

In most of his later writings Tagore criticized those who regarded everything Indian to be spiritual and praiseworthy and everything Western as material and unethical.<sup>216</sup> Some Hindu revivalists would assert that while the average European was dominated by the love of personal pleasure, the average Hindu was guided by higher spiritual motives.<sup>217</sup> Tagore claimed that the highest ideal of the Europeans was the same as that of the Hindus, and that it was not pleasure for self but happiness for all and the full development of humanity.<sup>218</sup> There were Europeans who only sought personal pleasure and who devoted their lives to rob the wealth and to destroy the happiness of the

weaker peoples of the earth, but there were also in Europe great men who sought the good of all mankind.<sup>219</sup> Foreign cultural contacts did not destroy but rather enriched the indigenous culture of a nation.<sup>220</sup> Tagore pointed out that every modern nation knew that it must bring the treasures of its culture to the market-place of the world in order to estimate their worth and value.<sup>221</sup> The coming of the English to India did not appear to Tagore as a meaningless accident of history, for he believed that England had a mission in India, and that India would have been shorn of fullness if she had been deprived of the Western contact.<sup>222</sup> Tagore pointed out that the greatest men of India in the modern age, such as Rammohan Roy, M. G. Ranade, Swami Vivekananda and others, spent their lives in the task of reconciling the ideals of the West with those of the East.<sup>223</sup> Tagore believed that the ideal civilization should combine the dynamic spirit of the West with the ancient wisdom of the East.<sup>224</sup>

#### VIII. MODERN ISLAM AND THE WEST

One of the first educated Indians who travelled abroad and visited Britain was Abu Taleb, a Muslim, who was born in 1752. Abu Taleb had served the governors of Bengal and Oudh but was later forced to retire and then he came to Calcutta and learnt English with the object of securing a lucrative employment under the English. Having failed in this object and having no occupation whatsoever, he accepted the suggestion of a Scottish friend to travel to England at his expense. Abu Taleb knew, as he says, that "as the journey was long and replete with danger, some accident might cause my death, by which I should be delivered from the anxieties of the world, and the ingratitude of mankind. I therefore accepted his friendly offer, and resolved to undertake the journey." Unlike the Hindus, Abu Taleb, being a Muslim, suffered from no religious taboo regarding the crossing of the seas and he embarked on the journey without any hesitation on grounds of religion. In England Abu Taleb was presented as a Persian prince and he received a splendid welcome. Returning to Calcutta Abu Taleb recounted his impressions of England in Persian in *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan*.

After reaching London, Abu Taleb was so overwhelmed by the beauty of the city and particularly its inhabitants that he gave vent to his feelings in an ode to London thus:

Henceforward we will devote our lives to London,  
and its heart-alluring Damsels;  
Our hearts are satiated with viewing fields,  
gardens, rivers and palaces.  
We have no longing for the Toba, Sudreh, or other  
trees of Paradise;  
We are content to rest under the shade of these  
terrestrial Cypresses.  
If Shaikh of Mecca is displeased at our conversion,  
who cares?  
May the Temple which has conferred such blessings  
on us, and its Priests, flourish,  
Fill the goblet with wine! If by this I am  
prevented from returning  
To my old religion, I care not; nay, I am the  
better pleased.  
If the prime of my life has been spent in the  
service of an Indian Cupid,  
It matters not: I am now rewarded by the smiles  
of the British Fair.  
Adorable creatures! whose flowing tresses, whether  
of flaxen or of jetty hue,  
Or auburn gay, delight my soul, and ravish all  
my senses!  
Whose ruby lips would animate the torpid clay, or  
marble statue!  
Had I a renewal of life, I would, with rapture,  
devote it to your service!

But notwithstanding the wiles and charms of the "heart-alluring Damsels" and "the smiles of the British fair" Abu Taleb made certain shrewd observations about British life and character. In fact Abu Taleb was less impressed by the British than the later generation of his co-religionists such as the great Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Syed Ahmed, the leader of Muslim renaissance, was fascinated by the shine and glamour of Western civilization.

"I am afraid I must confess they are not far wrong in their opinion of us," remarked Syed Ahmed with regard to the Englishman's poor opinion of the natives of India. "All good things, spiritual and worldly, which should be found in man have been bestowed by the Almighty in Europe and especially on England." Europe, or rather Western Europe, of the second half of the nineteenth century was at the height of its civilization, the unchallenged mistress of the world and Syed Ahmed was carried away by it.

Abu Taleb mentioned various infirmities of the English character.<sup>225</sup> "The first and greatest defect I observed in the English," wrote Abu Taleb, "is their want of faith in religion and their great inclination to philosophy (by which Abu Taleb meant atheism). The effects of these principles, or rather want of principle, is very conspicuous in the lower orders of people, who are totally devoid of honesty. They are, indeed, cautious how they transgress against the laws, from fear of punishment; but whenever an opportunity offers of purloining anything without the risk of detection, they never pass it by." Abu Taleb did not stop there. "The second defect," he wrote, "most conspicuous in the English character is pride, or insolence." This Abu Taleb attributed to the fact that the English had been puffed up with their power and good fortune for the last fifty years. The next defect of the English, according to Abu Taleb, was their "passion for acquiring money and their attachment to worldly affairs." Here one traces the beginning of the theory that was subsequently developed and propagated by many cultural nationalists and revivalists in India that Western civilization, unlike Indian civilization, was materialistic.

But Abu Taleb also noticed manifold admirable qualities of the English. The energy and vitality of the English he observed, and he further noticed their faith in development, progress, and evolution. In fact the idea of continuous progress which the English cherished intrigued him. "The English," he said, "have very peculiar opinions on the subject of perfection... that mankind have arisen, by degrees, from the state of savages to the exalted dignity of the great philosopher Newton; but that, so far from having yet attained perfection, it is possible that, in future ages, philosophers will look with as much contempt on the acquirements of Newton as we now do on the rude state of the arts



among savages. If this axiom of theirs be correct, man has yet much to learn, and all his boasted knowledge is but vanity."<sup>226</sup>

But Abu Taleb was only a gay traveller. He had no abiding influence on his co-religionists nor did his writings attract his co-religionists to the English or their civilization. As a matter of fact Indian Islam in the nineteenth century had proclaimed a sort of war against Britain. The Mullas or the religious leaders of the Muslims even forbade on religious grounds the learning of the English language. The substitution of English for Persian as the paramount or official language in matters of government and diplomacy had made many of the Muslims resentful. The Muslims could not easily adjust themselves to the new order and while Hindus flocked to the government and missionary schools in large numbers and avidly imbibed Western education, the Muslims tended to shun Western education and this widened the cultural gap between two communities.

The *Ulama* or the custodians of traditional learning and ideas were opposed to British rule and Western education. The *Ulama* represented the interests of the Muslim masses and about the *Ulama* Sir Alfred Lyall wrote: "It would, I believe, be much nearer the truth to say that the inconsiderate and uneducated mass of them are against us."<sup>227</sup> The school of *Ulama* stood for political freedom and it derived inspiration from Shah Wali Ullah whose ideas had attracted many Muslim divines to the Rebellion or Mutiny of 1857. Prior to the Rebellion of 1857, Muslim religious leaders were generally anti-British and had a bias against Western education, though there were conspicuous exceptions, such as in the case of Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824), who favoured the spread of Western learning.

In 1876 W.W. Hunter wrote: "Our system of public instruction, which has awakened the Hindus from the sleep of centuries, and quickened their inert masses with some of the noble impulses of a nation, is opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements, and hateful to the religion of the Mussalmans."<sup>228</sup> In 1860-62 there was only one Muslim to ten Hindus in the English schools in India, though the Muslims constituted one-fourth of the population of India. In 1870-71 only one-seventh of the students in the schools were Muslims.<sup>229</sup> Even in 1882, only 11 per cent of scholars who received higher education were Muslims.

Not having taken to the English education along with the

Hindus, the Muslims had to live in political wilderness. Syed Ahmed was far-sighted enough to see the dangers of such a situation for his community. Syed Ahmed, like the early Brahmos, attempted an assimilation into Islam of contemporary European culture. On account of the expansion of the commercial framework of British rule to northern India a Muslim middle class was just emerging and Syed Ahmed mainly catered to their needs.

Syed Ahmed genuinely admired Western culture. He founded the Aligarh College, placed it under the guidance of the best English educationists, and asked his co-religionists to cooperate with the new English learning. The generality of conservative Muslim leaders at that time thought that India under British rule had ceased to be Dar-ul-Islam (the land of Islam or peace) and had become Dar-ul-Arab (the land of War) and that to receive Western education was to become a Kafir or infidel. But Syed Ahmed said that the policy of religious toleration adopted by the government justified India being regarded as Dar-ul-Islam. The work started by Syed Ahmed bore fruit. The most remarkable phenomena of modern history, Iqbal, the great Muslim poet, remarked, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West.<sup>230</sup>

Syed Ahmed (1817-98) was born at Delhi of a noble family. At the time of the Indian Mutiny Syed Ahmed served the Company's government in a subordinate judicial post and he remained loyal to the British and he asked his co-religionists also to remain loyal. In his *Loyal Mohomedans of India*,<sup>231</sup> Syed Ahmed sought to establish that the Muslims were not disloyal but that there "was no atrocity committed of which the blame was not imputed to Mohomedans, although the parties really guilty may have been Ramadeen and Matadeen," meaning thereby the Hindus. Syed Ahmed said that both the Christians and Muslims, unlike the Hindus, believed in revealed religion and had therefore much in common and he asked the Muslims not to go against the Christian rulers of the country. In fact Syed Ahmed found no words too strong to condemn those who had participated in the Mutiny. He said: "Be it known however that I am no advocate of those Mohomedans who behaved undutifully, and joined in the Rebellion; on the contrary, I hold their conduct in utter abhorrence, as being in the highest degree criminal, and wholly inexcusable; because at that momentous crisis it was imperatively

their duty, a duty enjoined by the precepts of our religion, to identify themselves heartily with the Christians and to espouse their cause; seeing that they have—like ourselves—been favoured with a revelation from Heaven, and believe in the Prophets, and hold sacred the word of God in his holy book, which is also an object of faith with us. It was therefore needful and proper, that where the blood of Christians was split, there should also have mingled with it that of Mohomedans; and those who shrunk from manifesting such devotedness, and sided with rebels, wilfully disobeyed the injunctions of religion, besides proving themselves ungrateful to their salt, and thereby incurring the severe displeasure of Government, a fact that is patent to every peasant."<sup>232</sup>

Pondering over the causes of the Indian Rebellion, Syed Ahmed advocated admission of Indians to the legislative council so that the British could know the views of the Indians and thereby remove the causes of rebellion. In *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* Syed Ahmed wrote: "The evils which resulted to India from the non-admission of natives into the Legislative Council of India were various. Government could never know the inadvisability of the laws and regulations which it passed. It could never hear as it ought to have heard the voice of the people on such a subject. The people had no means of protesting against what they might feel to be a foolish measure, or of giving public expression to their own wishes. . . . This mistake of the Government then made itself felt in every matter connected with Hindustan. All causes of rebellion, however various, can be traced to this one. . . ."<sup>233</sup>

Syed Ahmed perceived very clearly and very early the danger to the Muslims of not taking advantage of English education. He denounced the old traditional and archaic system of education prevailing among the Muslims and said in unmistakable terms that such a system of education could not teach independence of thought and liberal ideas which were necessary for advancing in the modern world. Syed Ahmed, the father of the Muslim renaissance, welcomed English education in the same manner as Rammohan had done many years ago. Syed Ahmed said before the *Select Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of Learning among the Muhammadans of India* that what he was about to say "would doubtless prove distasteful

to the majority of the members present, but as he considered it his duty to speak what he deemed to be the truth, he had no alternative but to do so." When the question of education is mooted amongst the Muhammadans, their efforts, he said, "are always hampered by their endeavours to adopt their old hereditary system of education, and the old established course of study. . . . The old Muhammadan books and the tone of their writings do not teach the followers of Islam independence of thought, perspicuity, and simplicity; nor do they enable them to arrive at the truth of matters in general; on the contrary, they deceive and teach men to veil their meaning, to embellish their speech with fine words, to describe things wrongly and in irrelevant terms, to flatter with false praise, to live in a state of bondage, to puff themselves up with pride, haughtiness, vanity and self-conceit, to hate their fellow creatures, to have no sympathy with them, to speak with exaggeration, to leave the history of the past uncertain, and to relate facts like tales and stories. All these things are quite unsuited to the present age and to the spirit of the time, and thus instead of doing any good they do much harm to the Muhammadans. Loss of time in a useless pursuit is a loss which can hardly be retrieved."<sup>234</sup> Syed Ahmed said "that his respected fellow members would excuse him, and would consider the points he had just dwelt upon, when determining the new system of education. . . ."

For his advocacy of Western education Syed Ahmed incurred the wrath of orthodox Muslims and he was denounced as being a Christian in disguise. Syed Ahmed answered this charge thus: "I have been accused by people, who do not understand, of being disloyal to the culture of Islam, even to Islam itself. There are men who say that I have become Christian. All this I have drawn upon myself because I advocate the introduction of a new system of education which will not neglect the Islamic basis of our culture, nor, for that matter, the teaching of Islamic theology itself, but which will surely take account of the changed conditions in this land. Today there are no Muslim rulers to patronize those who are well-versed in the old Arabic and Persian learning. The new rulers insist upon a knowledge of their language for all advancement in their services and in some of the independent professions like practising law as well. If the Muslims do not take to the system of education introduced by the British, they

will not only remain a backward community but will sink lower and lower until there will be no hope of recovery left to them.”<sup>235</sup>

Syed Ahmed is best known for his work in founding the Mahomedan Anglo-Orient College at Aligarh, which became a great centre for the spread of Western knowledge as also for the study of Islamic ideas. The then Viceroy laid the foundation stone of that College in 1877 and in the address presented to Lord Lytton at that time it was said: “The British rule in India is the most wonderful phenomenon the world has ever seen. . . . To make these facts clear to the minds of our countrymen, to educate them, so that they may be able to appreciate these blessings; to dispel those illusory traditions of the past which have hindered our progress; to remove those prejudices which have hitherto exercised a baneful influence on our race; to reconcile oriental learning with Western literature and science; to inspire in the dreamy minds of the people of the East the practical energy which belongs to those of the West; to make the Mussalmans of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown; to inspire in them that loyalty which springs, not from servile submission to a foreign rule, but from genuine appreciation of the blessings of good government—these are the objects which the founders of the college have prominently in view. . . .”<sup>236</sup>

Syed Ahmed welcomed Western science and education but not English parliamentary institutions or representative government. He felt that the introduction of representative government would lead to the rule of the majority community. Speaking on the Local Self-Government Bill, Syed Ahmed said on 12 January 1883: “The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interest of the majority of the population, and, in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed, it is no doubt the best system that can be adopted. But, my Lord, in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the sections of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests on the

local boards and the district councils, would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations. ... The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community, and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever." <sup>237</sup>

In his speeches in 1887-88 Syed Ahmed strongly advised his co-religionists not to take any part in the Congress movement. *The Hindu Patriot* wrote in 1888 that had the Muslims "been more thoroughly liberalized by Western culture than they are at present they would have, to a man, sympathized with the objects of the Congress."<sup>238</sup> The Hindus took to Western education long before the Muslims and it was natural, therefore, that the Congress which aspired after Western political institutions and pursued Western political methods would find its most ardent supporters among the Western-educated Hindus. But though the comparative delay in the spread of Western education among the Muslims was one of the reasons, it was not the sole reason why some Muslims did not support the Congress movement. Syed Ahmed, who strongly advised his community to welcome English education, was yet opposed to the Congress movement and argued that if ultimately a parliamentary form of government was set up in India, as many Congressmen envisaged, then the interests of the Muslims would suffer.\*

After Syed Ahmed another great leader of Muslim renaissance in India was Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) who was at once a poet, philosopher, and politician. Iqbal believed in a religion of activity and sought to revive the vigorous spirit of early Islam. Iqbal was an Islamic revivalist as also a votary of modernism and believed in facing the modern world with the spirit of Islam. He said that it was only on the bedrock of Islam that a Muslim could build a modern society and that it would be a great mistake to disregard Islam in any modern scheme of social reconstruction. He wrote: "The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change, pure and simple. It has within it elements of conservation also. While enjoying his creative activity, and

\* Syed Ahmed's political views have been considered further in Chapter Three under the heading, "Modern Islam and Indian Nationalism."

Iqbal believed that Islam could integrate men's lives and lead to dynamic social and communal activity. He condemned ascetic other-worldliness and the excessive devotion to speculation of Sufism and of Greek philosophy. Iqbal believed in action and sang:

Build a nest on the high mountains;  
That thou mayst be fit for life's battle,  
That thou body and soul may burn in life's fire.<sup>240</sup>

In his presidential address at the All-India Muslim League in

1930 Iqbal said: "In Islam God and the Universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit reaching itself in space and time. Europe uncritically accepted the duality of spirit and matter probably from Manichaeism. Her best thinkers are realizing this initial mistake today, but her statesmen are indirectly forcing the world to accept it as an unquestionable dogma. It is, then, this mistaken separation of spiritual and temporal which has largely influenced European religious and political thought and has resulted practically in the total exclusion of Christianity from the life of European states. The result is a set of mutually ill-adjusted states dominated by interests not human but national. And these mutually ill-adjusted states after trampling over the moral and religious convictions of Christianity are today feeling the need of a federated Europe, that is, the need of unity which the Christian church-organization originally gave them, but which, instead of reconstructing it in the light of Christ's vision of human brotherhood, they considered it fit to destroy under the inspiration of Luther.... In the world of Islam we have a universal polity whose fundamentals are believed to have been revealed, but whose structures... stand today in need of... fresh adjustments."<sup>243</sup>

Iqbal believed that atheistic materialism has been a curse for modern Europe and that true progress lay in rejecting materialism, nationalism, and externalism and in returning to the spiritual basis of early Islam. He wrote: "Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others.... The technique of medieval mysticism by which religious life, in its higher manifestations, developed itself both in the East and in the West has now practically failed. And in the Muslim East it has, perhaps, done far greater havoc than anywhere else.... No wonder then that the modern Muslim in Turkey, Egypt, and Persia is led to seek fresh sources of energy in the creation of new loyalties, such as patriotism and nationalism which Nietzsche described as 'sickness and unreason', and 'the strongest force against culture'. Disappointed of a purely



religious method of spiritual renewal which alone brings us into touch with the everlasting fountain of life and power by expanding our thought and emotion, the modern Muslim fondly hopes to unlock fresh sources of energy by narrowing down his thought and emotion. Modern atheistic socialism, which possesses all the fervour of a new religion, has a broader outlook; but having received its philosophical basis from the Hegelians of the left wing, it rises in revolt against the very source which could have given it strength and purpose.”<sup>244</sup>

Iqbal found inadequate both nationalism and socialism. He believed that Islam or religion alone could show the true goal but such a religion was not to be mere dogma or ritual but an activistic, dynamic, and ethical religion. He wrote: “Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psychological forces of hate, suspicion and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy. Neither the technique of medieval mysticism nor nationalism nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma nor priesthood nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter.”<sup>245</sup>

Iqbal attacked not only nationalism but also capitalism and imperialism. He gave expression to his love for the poor and the disinherited in many memorable poems. In the famous poem “God’s Command to the Angels,” he sang:

Go and awaken the poor and the dispossessed  
of my Universe,  
And shake the walls of the rich men’s  
palaces to their foundations!  
Let the fervour of self-confidence warm up the  
blood of the slaves,  
Let the frail sparrow hurt itself against the eagle!

The day of the sovereignty of the masses  
     approaches fast,  
 Demolish the old relics wherever you find them,  
 Is there a field which yields no livelihood  
     to the peasant?  
 Go and burn to the ground every grain of wheat in it!  
 'God is (often) sold away for a 'Sijda', the idols  
     for circumambulation!  
 Better put out the lights of the mosques and  
     the temples!  
 I am disgusted with all these places of worship  
     built in marble;  
 Go and build a lowly hut of clay for my worship!

Though Iqbal denounced the evils of capitalism he was no socialist. Iqbal viewed politics and economics from the Islamic and Koranic standpoint and in his early writings he attacked socialism and Marxism as atheistic and materialistic. However, in later life Iqbal came closer to some kind of humanitarian socialism and even wrote poems canonizing Lenin. Iqbal also raised his voice against any form of exploitation whether capitalistic or imperialistic. In one of his poems Iqbal said:

Man is still a miserable prey to exploitation and  
     imperialism; is it not a grievous  
     calamity that man should prey on man?  
 The glitter of the modern civilization dazzles the  
     eyesight; but this is merely an artistry of  
     false beads!  
 Science, on which prided the wisemen of the west,  
     is but a sword of battle in the blood-stained  
     grip of greed;  
 No magic of political policy can strengthen a civi-  
     lization which rests on the quick-sands  
     of capitalism!

So far as nationalism is concerned Iqbal attacked it from the standpoint of Pan-Islamism. Iqbal had however started life as a great believer in Hindu-Muslim solidarity and Indian unity. In

one of his famous poems *Hindustan Hamarab* Iqbal spoke of India as the best of all worlds and had said that every particle of the country's dust was holy as an idol. But gradually he became an opponent of a multi-religious Indian nationalism under the apprehension that nationalism in India would mean Hindu rule and weaken Muslim brotherhood and the Pan-Islamic sentiment.

Iqbal emphasized the concept of *Millat* as the realization of the Muslim fraternity, which concept was the political manifestation of the concept of *Tauhid* or unity of God-head implying the idea of equality and fraternity. To Iqbal Islam itself was a league of nations. He said: "My real purpose . . . is to look for a better social order and to present a universally acceptable ideal before the world but it is impossible for me, in this effort, to outline this ideal, to ignore the social system and values of Islam whose most important objective is to demolish all the artificial and pernicious distinctions of caste, creed, colour, and economic status. Islam has opposed vehemently the idea of racial superiority which is the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity and cooperation; in fact, Islam and racial exclusiveness are utterly antithetical. This racial ideal is the greatest enemy of mankind and it is the duty of all well-wishers of the human race to eradicate it. When I realized that the conception of nationalism based on the differences of race and country, was beginning to overshadow the world of Islam also and that the Muslims were in danger of giving up the universality of their ideal in favour of a narrow patriotism and false nationalism, I felt it my duty, as a Muslim and as a well-wisher of humanity to recall them back to their true role in the drama of human evolution. No doubt, I am intensely devoted to Islam but I have selected the Islamic community as my starting-point not because of any national or religious prejudice but because it is the most practicable line of approach to the problem."

Iqbal called the Muslims first an all-India minority and then a nation. In the thirties Iqbal advocated the idea of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State and eventually he came to believe in the ideal of Pakistan.\* •

\* The views of nationalist Muslims, such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, have been considered in Chapter Three under the heading, "Modern Islam and Indian Nationalism."

## IX. ETHICAL RELIGION AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Many Orientalists had declared that India was a land of saints and philosophers, which bowed low before the political blasts "in patient deep disdain and rose but to plunge in thought again" and that Indians knew little of activism or politics. Professor Dunning in the Introduction to his work entitled *A History of Political Theories, Ancient and Medieval* said: "The Oriental Aryans never freed their politics from the theological and metaphysical environment in which it is embedded today" and that he was therefore compelled to limit himself "practically to the philosophy of the European Aryan peoples." Professor Dunning was not an Orientalist but Professor Müller, a great Orientalist, also said: "The Indian never knew the feeling of nationality. The only sphere where the Indian mind found itself at liberty to act... was the sphere of religion and philosophy. ... The Hindus were a nation of philosophers. Taken as a whole history supplies no second instance where the inward life of the soul has so completely absorbed all the practical faculties of a whole people. ..." "The Hindus were a nation of philosophers. Their struggles," wrote Professor Müller, "were the struggles of thought, their past the problem of creation; their future, the problem of existence." It has often been said that in Hindu thought there was no provision for the interests of the State and that the Hindus had made no contribution to the science of politics.

There was some truth in these saying and this appeared to be the complete truth until Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and other ancient Indian books on politics were brought to light. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was a severely practical book on politics, wherein there was no encroachment or intrusion of philosophy or theology. Research into ancient Indian history also revealed that there were various political doctrines in ancient India. One school, namely *Barhaspatya*, laid down that theology was a pious fraud. Another school went to the extreme of reducing all Vidya to one, namely, Dandaniti and asserted that Dandaniti alone deserved to be called Vidya so that theology and philosophy were subordinated to the science of polity. It can by no means be said that Indians always subordinated the science of politics to that of theology or that they had never developed

politics as an independent branch of knowledge. The idea that ancient Indians had made considerable development in the realm of politics was first enunciated by historians like Jayaswal and later by Bhandarkar, R. C. Majumdar, and others.

The discovery that in ancient India there had been considerable development in the political field strengthened the spirit of political nationalism in modern India and also led to an emphasis on, and glorification of, social and political ideals in place of ascetic and other-worldly<sup>a</sup> ideals. This change was not confined to the Hindus only. In modern times a profound change has come over Islam, diverting the attention of the young Muslims from heaven to earth, from piety to politics, from seventh-century Arabia to their country of today or tomorrow. This is largely due to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Sir Muhammad Iqbal who were strongly influenced by the spirit of the West. During his stay in Europe Iqbal was impressed by the immense vitality and activity of Europeans and their confident restlessness whereby if the Europeans did not like a thing they discarded it at once. After his visit to Europe Iqbal developed a vision of the tremendous possibilities of human life—the potentialities of which the Orient had not dreamed but which Europe was already realizing. In Europe men could think, do, and be a thousand things for which, Iqbal felt, his countrymen in India were not even striving. Iqbal rejected transcendentalism, ritualism, and asceticism and preached a doctrine of vigorous activism and dynamism.

The ascetic ideal had once a great hold on Indian minds. Life for the earnest was the pursuit of the Big Minus. But in modern times the ascetic ideal of old has increasingly come under fire. Such an ideal is opposed to *Yugadharma*, the zeitgeist or the spirit of the times. The moderns have discarded to a large extent the philosophic approach, the search for ultimate reality, as well as devotionism and mysticism. Humanity is its God and social service its religion.

Ethical and political activism finds a large place in modern Indian thought. The best of modern Indian thinkers preach an ethic of active social service. They do not consider life and the world as sorrowful and meaningless from which one should escape into caves and monasteries. Is this emphasis on ethical activity and social service a continuation of old Indian thought or a radical departure from it? What really was the nature of

ancient Indian thought? Was it other-worldly and pessimistic, believing life to be a bondage and seeking in Moksha or Nirvana a way of individual salvation outside the pale of organized social life? Or did it generally preach the ideal of disinterested social action as does Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*? No understanding of modern Indian thought is possible without a knowledge of the conflicting elements of world and life negation and world and life affirmation in ancient Indian thought.

The earliest Indian thought of which we have literary record are the hymns of the Rig Veda. The oldest hymns were probably composed as early as 1200 B.C. As the hymns reveal, the ancient Aryans who came to India had a simple joy in existence. The world to their minds was made for men and for their enjoyment. They supplicate to the bright nature gods, so that they may have "health, wealth, cattle and children" and they seek "that blessing may be upon two-footed and four-footed."<sup>246</sup> Their attitude to wealth would have condemned them in the eyes of latter-day Indian sanyasis. "Wealth today," they pray to the God Savitar, "wealth tomorrow, wealth day by day, procure us."<sup>247</sup> From Pushan, the "wonder-worker," they expect "wealth easy to win."<sup>248</sup>

In the philosophical hymns of the Vedas there are men who are no longer content with mere economic welfare. They seek a knowledge of the fundamental nature of reality. In the *Upanishads* which dates from about 800 B.C. there emerges the idea that "he who knows that wonderful being as the first-born—namely, the Brahma is the Real—conquers these worlds."<sup>249</sup> A person possessed of such knowledge is invincible. Anyone who wishes evil to such a person falls to pieces as does a lump of clay when it strikes against a solid stone.<sup>250</sup> By the knowledge of the sole reality of Brahma one "obtains all desires."<sup>251</sup> If so, can there be any motive left for remaining in this world? In the *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad*, Yajnavalkya says that the real Brahman desires neither son nor property.<sup>252</sup> Seeking only Brahma, he renounces all and becomes a mendicant. It is a long distance we have traversed since the days of the Rig Veda when after a drink of the Soma the thought was expressed: "Thus indeed, thus is my mind: kine and horses will I win. Have I not drunk of the Soma?"<sup>253</sup> The person who feels himself

uplifted above the phenomenal world knows Brahma and has little interest in the acquisition of kine and horses. Such a person renounces the world.

If everyone renounces the world in quest of Brahma all social life comes to an end. But in the Brahmanic scheme of life there were four stages or *asramas*. In youth and manhood the Brahman passed through the stages of the student (*brahmachari*) and of the householder (*grihastha*). Then came a gradual withdrawal from life and the stage of *Vanaprastha*, that of the forest-dweller, and finally that of the ascetic mendicant who had completely renounced the world. In this scheme renunciation was only the crown of life, its base was the life of the student and of the householder. In the impatience to reach this final goal by which one obtains all desires, the early stages of the student and the householder came to be looked down upon and later a tendency developed to reach the final stage without going through these early preliminary stages.

When the final goal is reached the individual soul is merged in the Universal soul of *Brahma*. The Brahma is without attributes, he is described negatively as *Neti Neti* (not, not). No ethical qualities are attributed to him. By knowing him one gains transcendental vision and one's soul is merged in the universal soul.

The idea here is not one of dominating nature and the world but of becoming one with the soul of the universe. The universal soul dwells in all beings, in the life of plants and animals as in human souls. In India's tropical nature vitality was revealed in powerful beasts and luxuriant vegetation as much as in man. The huge dimensions of nature and its large-scale operations gave rise to a sense of vastness, immensity, infinitude. In this vast cosmic whole, man enjoyed no peculiar predominance. Man was not the measure of all things as he was to the Greek Protagoras. In the *topovanas* (the priest-hermitages), where much of India's thought developed, man felt himself not the master of nature but as a part of it. The purpose of man was not to dominate nature but to be one with it.

What then was the message of the *Upanishads*? Did it ask men to lead a life of contemplation divorced from action? This indeed was the conclusion that the great commentator Sankara draws in the ninth century A.D. But the *Upanishads*, like many great works, contain no consistent philosophy and easily lend

themselves to different interpretations. There are many passages in the *Upanishads* which glorify life and activity on the basis of which Ramanuja in the eleventh century and Rabindranath Tagore in our times built their philosophies. The *Upanishads* say: "In the midst of activity alone wilt thou desire to live a hundred years." "It is the saying of those," said Tagore, "who had amply tasted of the joy of the soul. Those who have fully realized the soul have never talked in mournful accents of the sorrowfulness of life or of the bondage of action."<sup>254</sup>

After the *Upanishads* there developed the Samkhya doctrine, and, later, Jainism and Buddhism. The main urge in the *Upanishads* had been to realize union with Brahma. The main desire, as it develops now, is to be free from the endless chain of births and rebirths, from the intolerable bondage of life and existence. The belief that the world is full of sorrow from which deliverance is to be sought finds its strongest utterance in Samkhya, Yoga, and Buddhism.

Samkhya holds all life to be sorrow. In the Yoga system of Samkhya, by ascetic practice and meditation the normal mind-structure is destroyed. The Yogi realizes a transcendent state and is free from the psychological bondage which drives ordinary men to sense-objects and sense-gratifications which cause sorrow.

In Jainism, by ascetic life and *tapas* (austerities) the *karmic* seeds which are the cause of rebirths are destroyed and one is liberated. In Buddhism it is the desires that lead us to actions which are considered to be productive of sorrow. It is by the cessation of desires that Nirvana is realized and one is free from reincarnation.

At the time of the rise of Jainism and Buddhism many thinking men were dominated by the desire to be delivered from the intolerable bondage of existence. In the past the Upanishadic doctrine that the Brahma alone is real did not lead to any great movement of world renunciation. The esoteric doctrine of the Absolute led only a few ascetically inclined men to renounce the world and retire in forest hermitages. But the widespread desire to be free from reincarnation that existed at the time of the rise of Buddhism and Jainism led to the construction of huge monasteries where a large number of people congregated. The name of the present province of Bihar is derived from Vihara



(monastery) which indicates how full of monasteries the area must have been.

The people that gathered in these monasteries did not seek any good that was of this world. They were pessimistic about the prospects of improving the world and society, which they renounced, though they were optimistic about their liberation. They would extinguish the desires that were the cause of their sorrows and not control or canalize them in the direction of social good. In Hinayana Buddhism the saint feels disgust with the world, feeling disgust he is repelled, being repelled he is freed.

When a large number of people are repelled by the world, then there must be something wrong with the world. From the time of the expedition of Alexander down to the inroad of the Huns in the fifth century A.D., northern India was torn by constant warfare. By incessant fighting the Kshatriya military power was shattered. It is significant that both Buddha and Mahavira, came from the Kshatriya castes. Both turned away from this world, the city of destruction. The people weary of strife in the outside world accepted the religions that bade them seek peace inside. As from "a disintegrating Hellenic world the Stoics withdrew into an 'invulnerability'... and the Epicureans into an 'imperturbability'" so "from a disintegrating Indic World, the Buddhists withdrew into an unruffledness (Nirvana)." <sup>255</sup> In a world of political insecurity all peace and happiness are impermanent. "Is that which is impermanent sorrow or joy?" Buddha asks his disciples. "Sorrow, Lord," is the answer. <sup>256</sup> The quest for that which is permanent and eternal must lead one away from this world of transient phenomena.

The most remarkable thing about Buddha's saying that the world is full of sorrow is that when he said this he was not contradicted and no one spoke of the pleasures of life. Many systems of Indian philosophy unite in the belief that all life is sorrowful. The internal warfare and foreign invasions from which India suffered throughout the centuries must have generated this widespread belief in the doctrine of sorrow. Only the heretical Charvakas did not share this belief. According to the Charvakas there is no soul or heaven or liberation; and so long as life remains, one must live happily even if one runs into debts.

Gradually Buddhism declines, and Brahmanism is revived

whose great Vedantic commentator was Sankara (ninth century A.D.). Sankara came to be revered almost as a god by the Hindus. By some, however, he is regarded as a hidden Buddhist (*prach-channa Bauddha*) who, like the Buddhists, preached an ethic of inaction and substituted for the Buddhist concept of the flux of the finite universe the idea that the world is *maya* or illusion.

According to Sankara the *Upanishads* contain the highest truths about Brahma. The highest good is union with Brahma. Brahma is eternally complete. How can he who is complete have any motive for action? Brahma is "akarta," a non-agent. Anyone who through knowledge has become one with Brahma need not act. Sankara fought an interminable battle with those who held that perfect knowledge (jnana) is compatible with perfect action (karma). Action is for beings of a lower order. The man who attains to the highest truth is free from action and responsibility. The social consequences of such a doctrine can well be imagined. In one place, however, Sankara admits that the disinterested actions or *Karma* of Sri Krishna or King Janaka are not the type of karma which he holds to be incompatible with the highest knowledge.<sup>257</sup> But the transcendental idealism of Sankara was generally understood or misunderstood by the people in a way that led to inaction or led to a concern only for individual salvation and not for social good. It has been said that the doctrine of identity of the individual and the Absolute produced in the minds of the common people the impression of the futility of all religious and moral obligations so that not a very high standard of morality prevailed in the centuries following the age of Sankara.<sup>258</sup>

Sankara, whatever may be his views, lived a life of intense activity and his ceaseless activity has been an inspiration to successive generations of Indians. But in the Middle Ages India produced a large number of saints who refused to live the life of the world and sought to keep themselves pure from all contact with the sense-world. The sense-world was dismissed as *Maya*, an illusion. It is futile to battle with the illusory events of this world and to make history. The history of *Maya* (or of this world) the Hindus did not care to write. By desisting from action, by mere contemplation one is "enabled to enter in some measure into the peaceful being of the Absolute which knows nothing of errors and illusions and is tirelessly at rest..."<sup>259</sup>

Is action then incompatible with the knowledge of the Absolute? In the *Bhagavad Gita*, which may well date from the third century B.C. Sri Krishna reconciles belief in the sole reality of the Absolute with an ethic of activity. Krishna admits that the world is a play in which God acts with himself. But he would not concede that a man who knows this should retire from activity and remain a non-participating spectator of God's play. Life involves action. "No man shall escape from act. By shunning action; nay, and none shall come by mere renouncements unto perfectness."<sup>260</sup>

God is complete and yet He acts.<sup>261</sup> God is born again and again on earth to punish the wicked and to exalt the virtuous.<sup>262</sup> So should man act for the social good. *Tyaga* is not giving up of all works but the mental giving up of the fruits of works.<sup>263</sup> Gita preaches "subjective *nivritti*" or detachment from desires and not "objective *nivritti*" or cessation of work.<sup>264</sup> The man who knows Brahma is repeatedly urged to perform his duties in the sense-world.<sup>265</sup> He is not above duty or morality.

The glorification of ethical activity is also to be found in the great Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which belong to the second century A.D. These epics are full of varied, bubbling, and abundant life. They contain stories of love, heroism, war, and adventure and not arguments on the illusoriness of human action. The ideals of Rama, the hero king, Sita, the ideal wife, and Lakshman, the ideal brother, have been sources of inspiration to millions in northern and in other parts of India for centuries.

The Kurul, a work on popular ethics, which belongs to the second century A.D. is full of maxims on earthly love and domestic virtues. There is no necessity of leaving house and home or of becoming a lonely hermit.<sup>266</sup> A virtuous householder "shall first among all strivers be." Wealth is meant for service and hospitality. A life without service to others is more bitter than death.<sup>267</sup>

The value of ethical activity is emphasized not only in the epics and in the popular maxims but also in some of Indian philosophical doctrines which are supposed to be merely spiritual<sup>268</sup> and not ethical. In the *Upanishads* though there are a few passages<sup>269</sup> that would exalt the knower of Brahma above ethics, on the whole it is clearly stated that mere knowledge without good

conduct will not lead one to the goal.<sup>270</sup> It is true that some schools of Indian philosophy leads one to a region beyond good and evil but excepting in the Sankara School of Vedanta (and even this is doubted by many including Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan<sup>271</sup>) the seer is in all schools of Indian philosophy strictly enjoined to perform his normal duties.

Jainism and Buddhism have been criticized as life-negating religions and yet both, and particularly the Mahayana form of Buddhism, are intensely ethical. The Jaina doctrine of ahimsa or non-injury might have originated in the idea of keeping pure and undefiled from the world but once the idea of ahimsa spreads, it operates with educative effect and rouses compassionate feeling.

There is a story that while Buddha sat beneath the Bodhi tree the demons tempted him to attain *Nirvana* forthwith and forsake the world. Because he resisted the temptation India has loved him as the great compassionate one (*Mahakarunika*). In Mahayana Buddhism Buddha's compassion reaches its logical development. There the Boddhisattva out of compassion for all sentient creatures renounces entrance into *Nirvana* in order to be born again and again on earth to work for their deliverance.

The Buddhist *Nirvana* has been variously interpreted. It is not clear whether it means the complete extinction of all desires or merely the destruction of evil desires. It is significant that the great Buddhist Nihilist Nagaryuna who denied all kinds of reality did not renounce ethics. "View as enemies avarice, deceit, duplicity, lust, intolerance, pride, greed and hatred," says the Nihilist, Nagaryuna.<sup>272</sup> The moral idealism of the Buddhist king Asoka is well known.<sup>273</sup>

It is true that Buddhism in some aspects was pessimistic and Sankara, regarded by some as a hidden Buddhist, preached, to a certain extent a doctrine of inaction. Sankara's Absolute was supra-ethical. As a protest against Sankara's doctrine Ramanuja in the eleventh century found in the Vedanta support for an ethical God, kind and helping, whom man could worship in loving self-devotion. In Ramanuja the thought is expressed that man can manifest his relationship with God in action.

Ramananda who came in the fourteenth century was an adherent of the sect of Ramanuja. In Ramananda's thought love of God is to be expressed in love of man. In his love of man

Ramananda breaks the bonds of caste and embraces men of low caste. Kabir (1440-1518), a weaver, was the most important disciple of Ramananda and continued his master's humanistic tradition. Ramananda taught devotion to Rama, the ethical God. In the same line comes the poet Tulsi Das (1532-1624) who in his *Ramcharitmanas* conceives Rama as a fatherly God and preaches brotherly love. This vernacular version of the Ramayana of Tulsi Das, which is very popular, has taught the people a humanistic ethics. In the devotional religions of Ramanuja, Ramananda, and others, though the main aim is the realization of God, devotion to God is expressed in the service of man and it is in the construction of wells, temples, and guest houses that the devotee expresses his love for God through the service of man.

The ethical life-affirmation in Hindu thought that was expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Ramanuja, Ramananda, and others was developed and strengthened in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when India came in contact with the ethical, humanitarian, and activistic thought of the West. Political insecurity led many men in the Buddhist period to seek salvation outside this sorrowful world and in the Middle Ages to find in the Sankara Vedanta a justification for their inactivity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when there existed political security throughout India due to the application of modern science in transport, communication, economy, and administration, what was emphasized was not the sorrowful aspects of life but the optimistic message contained in the greater part of the *Upanishads* and the ideal of disinterested ethical activity preached in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The idea of deliverance and desire for freedom from reincarnation which dominated men's minds in various stages of Indian civilization find a quite unimportant place in modern Indian thought. "Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our Master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever."<sup>274</sup> "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight,"<sup>275</sup> speaks modern India through the voice of her philosopher-poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

Continuing the humanistic tradition of Ramanuja and Ramananda, Rammohan Roy in modern times found in the *Upanishads*

an ethical personality whom one can worship through the service of man. Ramakrishna—though he reached *Samadhi*, the highest religious ecstatic state of mind—asked Vivekananda, his great disciple, not to seek *Samadhi* but to devote himself to the service of man. India was hauled out of the shifting sands of mere contemplative speculation by the activist ideas preached by Vivekananda and others. The essence of Vivekananda's teaching was the proclamation of the identity of the soul with the supreme reality but this was not to be attained by passive contemplation but by selfless and social service. The great *sanyasi* never sought refuge in mystic ecstasies but he was ever inspired by a practical social idealism and he urged his countrymen to become an Occidental of Occidentals in work and energy. Under Vivekananda's inspiration the reservoir of Indian mysticism broke its bounds and spread by a series of great ripples into action and social service. "What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills, which nothing can resist," said Vivekananda. Vivekananda preached a practical Vedanta which was very unlike Sankara Vedanta which had appeared, at least to the popular mind, to preach a gospel of inactivity.

Vivekananda's activism and the doctrine of creative service was an illustration of *Aitareya Brahmana* cult of *Charaiveti* (march on) and the *Vedic* dictum that there was no prosperity to a man who did not weary himself with movement and evil came to him who remained inactive. In his vitalism Vivekananda was at one with the philosopher Bergson, the foundation of whose philosophy was the doctrine of *élan vital* or the urge for life. To Vivekananda life was action. Vivekananda preached the *Gita* of action and social service. "We have to conquer the world. That we have to do! India must conquer the world and nothing less than that is my ideal. . . the sign of life is expansion, we must go out, expand, show life or degrade, fester and die," said Vivekananda.

Such has been the spirit of modern India that ancient religious practices and rites have increasingly been given humanistic meaning and significance. The ancient rite of *Yagna* which meant the burning of butter before a sacrificial fire for propitiating the Gods was treated as part of the modern cult of social service and a new interpretation was given to this religious ritual. This can be illustrated from the writings of Ramendra Sundar Tri-

vedi (1864-1928) who in his *Yajna-Katha* (the Doctrine of *Yajna*) stated that *Yajna* was equivalent to the cult of active social service and the positive ethics of philanthropy. To Trivedi *tyaga* meant the sacrifice of self-interest and it was not tantamount to ascetic mortification of the flesh or renunciation of the world, for, in order to practise *dharma*, one did not have to forsake activities but what was necessary was that all activities should be associated with self-denial, that is to say, "there would be production without profit, action without self-assertion."

Trivedi's views and interpretation of *Yajna* stood in sharp contrast to the view of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great Bengali novelist. Bankim was a rationalist who called a spade a spade. He was interested in recreating and reforming Hinduism on humanist and Comtist foundations. The dialogue form common in Bankim's discussions on culture and religion can be traced back to Comte's *Catechism Positiviste* in which the discussion takes the form of conversation between a woman disciple and a philosopher. Bankim used this dialogue form for preaching a religion whose essence was humanism and whose gospel was the doctrine of social service. Bankim who had assimilated Comte's positivism did not see in *Yajna* anything more than external rites and offerings. "According to Bankim Chatterjee," says Trivedi, "*Dharma* is not to be found in *Yajna* but in vocation. Perhaps he believed that *Yajna* meant nothing but burning ghee [clarified butter] in logs of wood and trying to get some boon from the Gods by the process." But Trivedi was bent upon giving a humanistic meaning to the ancient rite of *Yajna* in order to harmonize the same with the activistic and humanistic spirit of the times.

An "idealist view of life" once so fashionable in academic circles increasingly came under suspicion. It was felt that the paralysing spirit of false and other-worldly philosophies had contributed to India's helplessness and absence of initiative and that every Indian, whether artist or politician, should endeavour to inculcate an activistic philosophy of life among his countrymen.

In 1919 Lajpat Rai, the Arya Samajist and extremist leader, expressed the view that the basis of all the national weaknesses of the Indians was that they were too much dominated by an other-worldly attitude towards life. Lajpat was trenchant in his

criticism of those who praised the virtues of sadhuism and renunciation and asceticism.<sup>276</sup> Lajpat hailed the spread of English education because it had made many Indians realize the evils of sadhuism more clearly than they had ever done before. Lajpat considered that the primary duty of the modern Indian reformer was to spread the gospel of life, to make people realize the glory of humanity and the evils of excessive idealization of asceticism and renunciation, and for this, he said, Indians should come in close contact with the secular and humanistic spirit of the modern West.<sup>277</sup>

The most violent attack on the ideal of sadhuism or asceticism came from Har Dayal, the revolutionary. Har Dayal's views are contained in a number of remarkable articles which he sent from America between 1912 and 1913 to *The Modern Review*. He said that the Europeans had made considerable progress in the modern world not because they were religious or spiritual but because they believed in science and the scientific temper. A little of science has brought greater happiness to Western humanity than all the philosophy and the uninstructed piety of the Middle Ages.<sup>278</sup> It was modern medical science and not the piety and the penance, the fasting and the ringing of Church bells of the Middle Ages that cured human diseases. Pasteur and Koch were not so religious or ethically so great as St Francis, St Dominic, and other moral giants which the religious Middle Ages produced; but Pasteur and Koch, by their scientific discoveries, did more good for mankind, wrote Har Dayal, than the men of religion had ever done.<sup>279</sup>

Har Dayal asked educated Indians to learn one or other of the European languages and not to spend their energies in the study of Sanskrit or Persian.<sup>280</sup> He implored them to go on pilgrimages to London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Geneva, and other centres of European intellectual thought and not to waste their time in going to Puri, Benaras and other Indian holy cities.<sup>281</sup> He lamented that instead of coming into close contact with the natural and social sciences of the West, some Indians wasted their energies in religious practices such as solitary contemplation and Samadhi (eighth stage of yoga), emotional worship and religious pilgrimages. He lamented that Indians honoured men of religion too much and respected statesmen, economists, and scientists too little. He maintained that Aurobindo the politician



was a greater man than Ramakrishna the saint. He believed that Ramakrishna was an incomplete man because Ramakrishna did not understand the Indian currency problem and perhaps did not know the difference between a representative and a despotic form of government.<sup>282</sup> A complete man must not only be disinterested and saintly, he must also have a sound knowledge of the natural and social sciences. Har Dayal maintained that India did not need metaphysicians and saints, such as Ramakrishna and Rama Tirth, she needed secular and practical men such as J. C. Bose, Sayajirao Gaekwar, Tilak, and Aurobindo (Aurobindo, however, later became a mystic and a great religious leader). Har Dayal was so interested in secular problems and so sceptical about the value of metaphysics that he went to the length of saying that there was "more wisdom in one of Tilak's political speeches than in all the *Upanishads*."<sup>283</sup> In supporting this thesis Har Dayal criticized metaphysics and called it a child's toy.<sup>284</sup> He said that the sciences were the modern *Vedas* and that metaphysics was a luxury which Indians could ill afford.<sup>285</sup> But metaphysics is a subject which has and will always interest human thinkers. Har Dayal asked Indians to read Plato, Aristotle, and Spencer, but these thinkers were not indifferent to metaphysics. Har Dayal was however convinced that metaphysics was the curse of India and had encompassed her ruin.<sup>286</sup>

While Har Dayal asked Indians to discard religion and spirituality and to study Western natural and social sciences, the extremist leaders of India thought that in order to develop in India a political spirit and the modern sentiment of nationalism it was not necessary to discard religion but, on the contrary, the people could be activated politically only with the dynamite of religion. While Har Dayal said that there was more wisdom in one of Tilak's speeches than in the whole of the *Upanishads*, Tilak himself relied on the *Bhagavad Gita* for preaching the gospel of activism. Extremist leaders such as Tilak and Aurobindo wrote their commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* glorifying the ideal of *Karma-yoga* or activity. Gandhi, at a later time, also wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizing its ideal of disinterested ethical activity.

With the growth of nationalism in India the activistic and humanistic ideals came into prominence. Gradually the political

ideal became so dominant that even the profession, and practice of art came under suspicion. Art was denounced as an escape from hard political realities into fantasy. Tagore had kept away from active politics in the manner of Goethe. Gandhi asked Tagore to give up the lute and take to the spinning wheel. He wrote with unusual passion: "I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir." To a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God can appear, declared Gandhi, is work and promise of food as wages. "When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible for me is to feed the hungry," he said. This was a continuation and development of Vivekananda's doctrine of *Daridra Narayana* or the gospel that service of the poor was service of God.

In the past quietism had often been associated with religion but Gandhi, on the other hand, claimed that it is religion that had brought him into politics. It is also significant that Gandhi, who represented the religious instinct of India, named Nehru, who represented the secular instinct of India, as his successor.<sup>287</sup> Nehru had no faith in religion in the traditional sense and he believed that usually "religion becomes a social quest for God or the Absolute, and the religious man is concerned far more with his own salvation than with the good of society."<sup>288</sup>

But Nehru, who declared that he was not a religious man,<sup>289</sup> also referred to the *Gita* as a book which preached the gospel of action. In *The Discovery of India*, Nehru wrote: "The *Gita* deals essentially with the spiritual background of human existence and it is in this context that the practical problems of everyday life appear. It is a call to action to meet the obligations and duties of life, but always keeping in view that spiritual background and the larger purpose of the universe. Inaction is condemned, and action and life have to be in accordance with the highest ideals of the age, for these ideals themselves may vary from age to age. The *Yugadharma*, the ideal of the particular age, has always to be kept in view."<sup>290</sup> Nehru, who was influenced by the Western socialist thought, disliked Gandhi's denunciation of industrialism but he was at one with Gandhi in believing that religion and politics in India must concern themselves with the improvement of the lot of the common people.

"Act as men of thought and think as men of action," said

Bergson. "Thought that does not lead to action is an abortion," declared Romain Rolland. These sayings and utterances have been quoted again and again by Nehru and many modern Indians dedicated to the ideal of activism. In fact Subhas Bose, another dynamic political leader, even considered that Gandhi's philosophy was not activist enough and he said that the school of thought emanating from Pondicherry and associated with Aurobindo and the Sabarmati School of thought associated with Gandhi fostered passive tendencies.<sup>291</sup>

The doctrine of activism was preached by all nationalists who sought political freedom. Many activists also urged the adoption of an active and pragmatic view of life which had conquered the practical business civilization of the United States of America. Activism was preached not only by nationalists but also by socialists. The insistence of Marxist philosophy that theory and practice are organically related, that philosophy must issue forth in action, that it must change the world and not merely interpret it, has greatly influenced Indian socialists and communists. Even the fascist philosophy at one time seemed to have some attractions in India because of its insistence on action and its doctrine that philosophy grows out of the flux of action.

With the coming of political independence in 1947 it appeared that India would definitely play a more activist and vital role in world affairs and that Indian thought will gradually be more oriented towards activism and humanism. On 8 November 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru declared: "For long periods Asia performed a very great function in the world in many ways, culturally of course, but even in regard to mechanical appliances, and processes of manufacture. Then it kept static, unmoving, unchanging and naturally it fell back. For 300 years or so it played no vital role in world history. The static period of Asia has ended and it was again on the verge of playing that vital and dynamic role." Again, in a speech at the University of California on 31 October 1949, Nehru referred to the activism and dynamism of new Asia thus: "A change of supreme importance has now come over the world scene and this is the renaissance of Asia. Perhaps, when the history of our times comes to be written, the re-entry of this old continent of Asia—which has seen so many ups and downs—into world politics will be the most outstanding fact of this and the next generation."<sup>292</sup>

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245. Ibid., pp. 187-88.
246. *Vedic Hymns* (tr. Edward J. Thomas), XXVI, 1, pp. 69-70.
247. Ibid., XII, 6, p. 44.
248. Ibid., XXXV, 5 & 6, p. 81.
249. *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (tr. R. E. Hume), *Brihad-Aranyaka, Upanishad*, 5, 4, p. 151, & p. 58.
250. Ibid., *Chandogya Upanishad*, 1, 2, 8, p. 179 & p. 58.
251. Ibid., *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2, 1, p. 283 & p. 59.
252. *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (tr. R. E. Hume). *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad*, 3.5, p. 112. Yajnavalkya said: "Brahmans who know such a soul (that is, the soul which is in all things) overcome desire for sons, desire for wealth, desire for worlds, and live the life of mendicants. For desire for sons is desire for wealth and desire for wealth is desire for worlds, for both these are merely desires."
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254. Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 121. In the *Isa Upanishad* it is written that if one works in the thought of the Lord, then "even doing deeds here, one may desire to live a hundred years," *The Nineteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 362.
255. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (abridgement by D. C. Somervell), p. 438; also pp. 21, 227.
256. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch*, Vol. I, p. 203.
257. Pandit Sibnath Tattabhusan, *Sankaracharya: His Philosophy*, Part I. pp. 143-44.
258. N. K. Brahma, *Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana*, pp. 85-86.
259. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 100.
260. *The Song Celestial or Bhagavad Gita* (tr. Sir Edwin Arnold), p. 17.
261. Ibid., p. 19.
262. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
263. Ibid., p. 101.
264. Surendranath Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 508.

265. Krishna says:  
 "He that acts in thought of Brahma,/Detaching end from act, with  
 act content./The world of sense can no more stain his soul./Than  
 water mar th'enamelled lotus leaf."—*The Song Celestial or Bhagavad  
 Gita* (tr. Sir Edwin Arnold), p. 30.
266. *The Sacred Kural or the Tamil Veda of Tiruvalluvar* (tr. H.A.  
 Popley), p. 40.
267. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
268. Albert Schweitzer, in *Indian Thought and Its Development* says  
 about Brahmanic mysticism that it "has nothing to do" with ethics.  
 "It is through and through supra-ethical" (p. 43).
269. He who knows Brahma alone to be real "although he commits very  
 much evil, consumes it all and becomes clean and pure...." *The  
 Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (tr. Hume), *Brihad-Aranyaka Upa-  
 nishad*, 5.14.8, pp. 60, 157.
270. *Ibid.*, *Kata Upanishad*, 3. 7-8, pp. 60, 352.
271. According to S. Radhakrishnan *maya* did not mean even to Sankara  
 that the world is an illusion. (S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*,  
 London, 1931, Vol. II, Chapter VIII.)
272. "Philosophy" by Surendranath Das Gupta in *The Legacy of India*,  
 ed. G.T. Garratt, p. 120.
273. Asoka sums up Buddhist ethics in one of his inscriptions thus: "What  
 is the Dharma? To eschew evil and follow after good, to be loving,  
 true, pure of life, and patient, this is the Dharma." (H.G. Rawlinson,  
*Indian Historical Studies*, pp. 11-12.) In this statement there is no  
 trace of the so-called Buddhist pessimism.
274. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, p. 9. Also see Tagore's two poems,  
 "Renunciation" and "The Way of Salvation." The English transla-  
 tions are given in A. Coomaraswamy's *Art and Swadeshi*, pp. 116-17.
275. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, p. 68. See also Tagore's criticism of  
 Chandranath Basu's praise of Hindu other-worldliness in *Sadbana*,  
 1298-99 Falgun, pp. 371-75.
276. Lajpat Rai, "National Education," in *The Modern Review*, April  
 1919, p. 333.
277. *Ibid.*, pp. 333-34.
278. Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation," in *The Modern Review*,  
 July 1912, p. 48.
279. *Ibid.*
280. Har Dayal, "India and the World Movement," in *The Modern  
 Review* February 1913, p. 187.
281. Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation," in *The Modern Review*,  
 July 1912. In his characteristic manner Har Dayal wrote that to look  
 upon Samadhi or trance or the process of swooning away as the  
 height of enlightenment was a folly reserved for Indian philosophers.
282. "Mr. Har Dayal's Rejoinder," *The Modern Review*, December 1912,  
 p. 648.
283. *Ibid.*

- 284. See Har Dayal, "The Wealth of the Nation," in *The Modern Review*, July 1912, p. 45.
- 285. Ibid., pp. 46, 49.
- 286. Ibid., p. 45.
- 287. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1942, Vol. II, p. 283.
- 288. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 377.
- 289. *Conversations with Mr Nehru*, 1956, p. 144.
- 290. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 1946, pp. 114-15.
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- 292. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Speeches (1949-53)*, p. 419.

## *Constitutionalism and Liberalism*

### I. CONGRESS: A DURBAR FOR DUFFERIN?

WITH THE SPREAD OF English education in India there was felt the need of forming political institutions and associations to ventilate the grievances of politically conscious Indians and to give expression to their political aspirations. The work of Raja Rammohan and his school, the activities of Prosonna Coomar Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen, Ramgopal Ghose, Peary Chandra Mitra, had prepared the ground for the formation of such political associations and institutions. As early as 1843 the British India Society was founded in Bengal. The landlords of Calcutta led by Rajendralal Mitra and Ramgopal Ghose organized themselves in 1851 under the name of the British Indian Association. At about the same time the Bombay Association was started by Juggan Nath Sarkar, Dadabhai Naoroji and others. Poona also organized her public life in the Poona Sarbajanik Sabha.

In 1876 Surendranath Banerjea founded the Indian Association in Bengal. Surendranath had graduated from the Calcutta University and was one of the first Indians who was admitted to the coveted Indian Civil Service, the famous "steel frame" of British rule in India. But he was dismissed for an alleged failure to correct a false report prepared in his name by a subordinate official. Surendranath went to England to plead his case but without success. Then Surendranath appeared for the Bar examination and wanted to be called to the Bar but even there he was not admitted. Surendranath realized that the wrongs done to him were symbolic of the wrongs done to his countrymen in general. Thenceforward Surendranath devoted his life to the redress of the wrongs done to India. His aim was to rouse patriotic senti-

ment among Indians, which he sought to do by lectures on Indian unity. One of the main objects of Surendranath and the Indian Association was the unification of the people of India on the basis of common political interests and aspirations. This idea was derived very largely from Mazzini as Surendranath himself admitted. Surendranath made the name of Mazzini familiar among the educated classes and the Indian Association at that time used to rule public opinion from Peshwar to Chittagong.

But the formation of these associations and organizations was opposed by the Anglo-Indian bureaucrats and even loyalist Indians felt uneasy about their political activities. When the Bombay Association drew up a petition asking for an enlightened system of government and indicted the government of the East India Company, there was a rift in the Association. One of the seceders, Maneckji Cursetji, issued a pamphlet entitled *A Few Passing Ideas for the Benefit of India and the Indians*, the burden of which was, "first creep, then walk, then run."<sup>1</sup>

The petition of the Bombay Association created a stir in England and several friends of India raised their powerful voices in favour of the petition. The activities of these friends of India could not in fact materially influence the decision of the House of Commons, which still acquiesced in the retention of the double system of government with all its cumbrous machinery. A salutary change was however introduced in the Court of Directors. This did not gratify the politically conscious Indians. Yet it established one point clearly, namely, that concerted agitation and action had wrung from the rulers more than was considered possible. It illustrated alike the advantages of such petitions and the need of propaganda to dispel the ignorance and apathy of the British public towards Indian affairs.

The associations that were formed during the fifties and sixties of the nineteenth century by the educated middle classes at the principal centres of British rule made them increasingly conscious of their political rights and political role. The time was ripe for forming an all-India organization. Surendranath Banerjea first suggested the idea of having an all-India organization at the first National Conference at Calcutta as early as 1883. The National Conference was the predecessor of the Indian National Congress and ultimately merged itself into that body. While the second National Conference was being held at

Calcutta the Indian National Congress was being ushered into existence at Bombay.

In the year 1885 there were two national assemblies in session, namely, the National Conference and the Indian National Congress. Allan Octavian Hume, a retired Civil servant and one of the founders of the Congress, did not want to incur the displeasure of the Government by giving Surendranath, a dismissed Civilian and a released convict and the then stormy petrel of Indian politics, a prominent place in the new organization. But the initiative of Hume in canvassing the formation of an all-Indian political body, that is to say, the Indian National Congress, would not have come had there not been already symptoms of a similar movement in Bengal. Again if at that time any Indian wanted to found an effective all-Indian political organization the bureaucracy would have suppressed it as a seditious growth. Hume's unique position as an Anglo-Indian, having connections with the Indian administration as well as the Liberal Party of Great Britain, made his proposal for the formation of an all-Indian body appear less offensive to bureaucratic minds.

Though in 1851 the British Indian Association had been started in Calcutta and about the same time in the Western Presidency the Bombay Association had been established and though these were in a sense the forerunners of the Indian National Congress, yet a whole generation had to pass before the Congress could be established in 1885. This gap represents the period of the Revolt of 1857-58, its suppression and its aftermath.

After nearly a century of British rule Bengal accommodated itself to it. Bengal was the first to receive English education and in Bengal therefore the educated classes aimed through the methods of peaceful agitation and constitutional means the eventual establishment of a national representative assembly on Western lines. The intelligentsia of Bengal looked to the West and hoped that progress would come through English education and English liberalism. The position of the English-educated class of Bombay and Madras was also similar to that of Bengal. But in the other provinces where English education had not spread there was no such submission or accommodation to British rule. There was discontent among the masses and an intense anti-British feeling and, in fact, the spirit of revolt was growing.

In Delhi, where English education had not been introduced,



high and low, rich and poor, had only one idea. It was the expulsion of the British by force of arms and the establishment of an Indian form of government. Attention was drawn as early as 1838 to these two currents of thought having their sources in nationalism, one Indian and revolutionary, the other Western and constitutional by Sir Charles Trevelyan in his brochure *On the Education of the People of India*.<sup>2</sup> Trevelyan ascribed the difference in the sentiments of the people of Delhi and northern India on the one hand and of Bengal and Bombay on the other solely to the influence of English education, though there were other reasons for this difference not excluding the one that Delhi had for long centuries been the seat of the central power of India. Later, however, nationalism and anti-British feeling grew more rapidly in Bengal which had received English education first and in nationalist circles the saying became current that what Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the situation in India was such that British bureaucrats thought it would be judicious if steps were taken to divert the discontent of the people into a safe and constitutional channel. Lord Ripon in his despatch proposing a system of local self-government stressed the necessity of controlling the nationalistic forces which might cause serious political danger unless it was given an overt and constitutional channel. Some of the British rulers supported a measure of liberalization of the Indian government to stem the tide of nationalism and they wanted to make the legislatures a safety-valve for the growing discontent against an alien rule which was developing in India and which might otherwise have given birth to violent revolution.

Hume, one of the founders of the Congress, believed that the Congress would provide a constitutional outlet for the growing public opinion in the country. Hume was a member of the Covenanted Civil Service during the period of the Indian "mutiny." He had observed that there was great economic discontent in the country and that the government was out of touch with the people.<sup>3</sup> From a study of certain confidential documents and from the information he received about the desperate attitude of the people, Hume was convinced that India under Lytton was on the verge of a revolutionary outbreak.<sup>4</sup> As Secretary to the Government of India, Hume had seen these confidential

documents. Hume recorded: "The evidence that convinced me, at the time (about fifteen months, I think, before Lord Lytton left) that we were in imminent danger of a terrible outbreak, was this. I was shown seven large volumes . . . containing a vast number of entries . . . all going to show that these poor men of the lowest classes were persuaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs, that they were convinced that they would starve and starve and die, and that they would do something. . . . They were going to do something and stand by each other, and that something meant violence."<sup>5</sup> In 1872 Hume warned Lord Northbrook: "Your Lordship can probably hardly realize the instability of our rule. . . . I am strongly impressed with the conviction that the fate of the empire is trembling in the balance and that at any moment, some tiny scarcely noticed cloud may grow and spread over the land a storm raining down anarchy and devastation."<sup>6</sup>

Hume believed that the Congress by impressing upon the government the necessity of removing the genuine grievances of the people would help to prevent the growth of political discontent. In 1888 in a letter to Colvin, Hume described the Congress as the safest and the most constitutional outlet that could be devised for the growing discontent in the country.<sup>7</sup>

In 1879 Hume had been removed from his post as the Secretary to the Government of India by Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, because of his independent views and Hume had retired from service in 1882. Hume was a favourite of Lord Ripon but was disliked by Lord Dufferin. On 9 May 1886 Dufferin wrote to Sir Henry Maine: "There is a mischievous busybody of the name of Hume whom Lord Ripon rather fêted and who seems to be one of the chief stimulators of the Indian Home Rule movement. He is a cleverish, a little cracked, vain, unscrupulous man . . . very careless of truth."<sup>8</sup>

Both Dufferin and Maine thoroughly disapproved of Hume's views as to the gradual introduction of representative institutions into India. On 2 June 1886 Maine wrote to Dufferin: "There is the rather melancholy consideration that the ideal at which the educated natives of India are aiming, is absolutely unattainable. How can 180 millions of souls govern themselves? Responsible and representative government are terms without meaning when they are applied to such a multitude. . . . I cannot bring up the

total number of educated university-bred natives to more than 5,000. But any machinery which enables 5,000 men to govern 180 millions of souls, creates an aristocracy and, in this case, an aristocracy which is not powerful, nor representative, nor friendly to any social reform.”<sup>9</sup>

Many have claimed that Hume was the father of the Congress. Criticizing those who argued otherwise De Mello said in his book *The Indian National Congress*: “It is even sought to give the Congress\*an impersonal origin, a birth in circumstances, a spontaneous character rather than admit that it was the creation of an individual.” The Congress could, in fact, not be founded by a single individual. Various circumstances and movements of the past had prepared the ground for the formation of an all-India political organization such as the Congress. The roots of the Congress are to be discovered in the separate political associations that existed in various parts of India. It was watered by controversies over the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the reduction of the age limit for entrance into the Indian Civil Service and the Ilbert Bill. “Neither Indians nor Englishmen,” Rushbrook Williams wrote, “can claim to be its sole creators.” But the initiative that came from Hume, an Englishman, made it easier for the Congress to be formed. “No Indian,” declared Gokhale, “could have started the Indian National Congress. If an Indian had the temerity to launch it, it would have been nipped in the bud by the British Officials.”

Hume’s object was to counteract revolutionary tendency by a body working along constitutional lines. Hume and the early Congressmen made no secret of their loyalty to the British Raj and in the very first Congress session Hume while declaring his loyalty said that he considered himself unworthy to loose the latchet of the Queen’s shoes. Owing to the revolutionary role played by the Congress party in later years it is easy to exaggerate the importance of the first Congress. Neither Hume nor the seventy-two delegates, who had “to be pressed and entreated to come”<sup>10</sup> had any conception what the Congress would later become, namely, a revolutionary organization which would launch civil disobedience movements to terminate British rule and to establish *Swaraj* in India. The Congress had committees scattered over the different provinces and it was this fact which later made it an organization worth capturing when nationalist

sentiment in India became more militant and revolutionary.

When Hume saw Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy, at Simla and discussed with him the project of bringing together every year the leaders of Indian opinion to discuss various affairs, Lord Dufferin remarked that as there existed no parliamentary opposition in India, unlike as in Britain, the Government would welcome such a proposal. It appears that originally Hume's idea was to make the Congress an all-India social body but Dufferin suggested to Hume that the Congress instead of being a social body should be a political organization. This Dufferin suggested because there did not exist in India an opposition as in Britain and because of the absence of an opposition the Indian Government could not properly assess Indian opinion. Dufferin wanted the Congress to be a forum for expressing Indian opinion and to develop into a new sort of *darbar*.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Dufferin suggested that the Congress should be a political body was later revealed by W. C. Bonnerji, the first President of the Indian National Congress. W. C. Bonnerji disclosed: "Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country, and this condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr Hume knew anything about the matter."<sup>12</sup> But though Dufferin envisaged that the Congress would act as a new sort of *darbar*, the Congress eventually developed into a potent instrument for the termination of British rule in India.

Soon after the Congress was founded Dufferin realized that it would proceed to make political claims which were thoroughly unacceptable to him. Writing to Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, on 20 March 1887, Dufferin said: "Of course, I entirely agree with you that what really secures the welfare of the Indian people is English justice and English administrative efficiency, and that the ascendancy of both these elements must, under any circumstances, be maintained absolute and pre-eminent."<sup>13</sup> Dufferin characterized the Congress in his letters to Cross as a "Babu Parliament" which was making "childish" claims and as a "hysterical assembly in which the more violent and silly of their members rule the roost."<sup>14</sup>

II. THE MACHINERY OF WESTERN CONSTITUTIONAL  
AGITATION

Dadabhai, the grand old man of India and who was one of the early nationalist or moderate leaders, asserted in 1852 that the authorities erred, but, it might be, with the best of motives. The purpose of agitation and association according to him was to suggest improvements which, he believed, would be adopted by the authorities. The permanence of British rule was the starting-point and foundation of the political philosophy of the moderates but they wanted liberalization of that rule. But with the passage of time the criticism of British rule by the moderates increasingly became more bitter and in 1898 Dadabhai said: "While expressing our attachment to the Queen, we cannot help feeling that her noble Proclamations for the welfare of her people have been interpreted by her ministers in exactly the opposite light to that in which we view them."<sup>15</sup> But Dadabhai did not lose faith. Addressing an English audience Dadabhai said: "The Congress has for its object to make you understand your deficiencies in Government, the redress of which would make India a blessing to you and make England a blessing to us, which it is not unfortunately at present." Even in 1906 when "extremist" ideas were gaining ground, Dadabhai said: "I for one have not a shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. . . . I have never faltered in my faith in the British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our gracious Sovereign proclaimed to us in our great Charter of the Proclamation of 1858 will be realized, namely 'in their contentment our best reward'."

The moderates believed that the best way of securing concessions from the rulers was by means of agitation. The educated Indians carried on their political agitation not merely through the platforms of the political organizations but also through the Indian-owned newspapers that were set up in the country. In fact, as early as 1780 a number of newspapers had been very critical of the government and this led to conflict with the governmental authorities and to the establishment of strict censorship. Among the earliest champions of the freedom of the press

in India were Englishmen and one of them, James Silk Buckingham, was deported from the country. The first Indian-owned and edited newspaper was published in English in 1818 and in the same year the Baptist missionaries of Serampore brought out a Bengali monthly and a weekly which were the first periodicals published in an Indian language.

Since 1799, however, there has been a strict censorship on the publication of journals. In 1817 Lord Hastings abolished the censorship but laid down regulations prohibiting the discussion of certain matters. In 1822 Sir Thomas Munro declared that "a free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible."<sup>16</sup> Lord Elphinstone was also opposed to the idea of a free press in India. "In other countries," he wrote in 1832, "the use of the press has extended along with the improvement of the government and the intelligence of the people; but (if India has a free press) we shall have to contend at once with the most refined theories of Europe, and with the prejudices and fanaticisms of Asia both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed. Is it possible that a foreign government, avowedly maintained by the sword, can long keep its ground in such circumstances?"<sup>17</sup> Elphinstone agreed with Munro in thinking that a free press and a foreign rule could not exist together.<sup>18</sup>

Sir Charles Trevelyan disputed this proposition<sup>19</sup> and stated that in the absence of representative government, a free press was one of the few institutions which could express the aspirations of the people, ventilate their grievances, and operate as a continuous outward check on the conduct of the officials.<sup>20</sup> Seeing that the English-educated class was then (1838) loyal to British rule,<sup>21</sup> and believing that a free press would be considerably influenced by that class, Trevelyan came to the conclusion that a free press instead of preaching sedition, would desire the continuance of British rule. If there had been a free press in Britain during Roman Rule, the "Groans of the Britons," the famous petition which implored the Roman emperor not to withdraw his army from Britain, would, argued Trevelyan, have found expression in the press.<sup>22</sup> Trevelyan persuaded himself to believe that if Britain left India in an undue haste then the "Groans of the Indians" would find expression in the Indian press.

In 1823 Mr Adam, the then acting Governor-General, issued an Ordinance prohibiting the publication of newspapers or other periodicals without a government licence. Raja Rammohan Roy, the great champion of the liberty of the press, and his five colleagues presented a memorial against this press Ordinance of 1823. This memorial was couched in a language and style for ever associated with the glorious vindication of liberty. The memorialists "invoked against the arbitrary exercise of British power the principles and traditions which are distinctive of British History," wrote Rammohan's English biographer.

In the Memorial to the Supreme Court and to the King-in-Council, Rammohan and his colleagues maintained that the freedom of the press "is equally necessary for the sake of the governors and the governed."<sup>23</sup> It was necessary for the sake of the governors because "the political axiom so often acted upon by Asiatic Princes, that the more a people are kept in darkness, their Rulers will derive the greater advantages from them... was but a short-sighted policy which did not ultimately answer the purpose of its authors. On the contrary, it rather proved disadvantageous to them; for we find that... [when] an ignorant people... revolted against their Rulers, all sorts of barbarous excesses and cruelties have been the consequences." The memorialists urged that a free press helped to remove the causes of rebellion, because through the press, the people could represent their grievances against the government in order to secure their redress. In the absence of a free press popular discontent festered underground and excited rebellion.<sup>24</sup> In Great Britain there existed considerable amount of freedom of comment and remark both on the conduct of the sovereign and on the policy of his ministers, but the former did not forfeit the respect of the people, neither did the latter lose their power over the country because of open public scrutiny and criticism.<sup>25</sup> A free press was not an instrument which could only weaken the power of a government, for if the press was an instrument of attack, it was equally so a weapon of defence. The memorialists, however, maintained that the Indian press was not seditious.<sup>26</sup>

The memorialists urged upon the British rulers not to adopt the political maxim that the more the people are kept in darkness, the greater the advantages their rulers would derive. They pointed out that the consistent pursuit of a policy of keeping the

people in a state of ignorant subjection would have involved the suppression not only of all newspapers and periodical literatures but also of all educational institutions. And history testified to the fact that the adoption of a policy of complete suppression did not strengthen but rather weakened the foundations of empires.<sup>27</sup>

In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Governor-General, withdrew all restrictions on the freedom of the press. H. T. Prinsep, a member of the Governor-General's Council, who had some doubts about the new measure, remarked that there was wisdom in the dictum that "when you have a free press on board a man-of-war then you may think of giving one to India."<sup>28</sup> Metcalfe however realized that by fettering the press, discontent could not be removed, it could only be driven underground.<sup>29</sup> Further, for the spread of knowledge of the West the existence of a free press was necessary.<sup>30</sup> Though Metcalfe believed that the spread of knowledge through a free press would not weaken the British empire, he yet asserted that, whatever might be the political consequences, it was the duty of the rulers to spread knowledge and not to attempt to perpetuate their rule by covering the land with darkness.<sup>31</sup>

Till 1878 the freedom of the Indian press was not interfered with except, temporarily, for a year during the Indian "mutiny." The advantage of a free press was much appreciated by the English-educated class. One of the leading representatives of this class, Kristo Das Pal, declared that as the "tongue was always tied under Oriental government," the people had to take resort to the sword for the achievement of their rights, but that under British rule because the press was free, Indians could constitutionally represent their grievances to the government in order to secure their redress.<sup>32</sup> *The Hindu Patriot*, a leading newspaper, wrote in 1872 that in Russia, where people were deported to Siberia for presuming to ask for a free press, the government was a despotism tempered by assassination, but that in India, where the people enjoyed a free press, the government was a despotism tempered by public opinion.<sup>33</sup>

In 1878 by the Vernacular Press Act of Lytton, the Governor-General, the freedom of the vernacular press was curtailed. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, the government spokesman, stated that while "the English Press had been, on the whole, loyal . . . to the government . . . a section of the vernacular press had been chiefly



remarkable for its disloyalty.”<sup>34</sup> Support for the Act came significantly from the landed gentry. The Raja of Bhinga, a landed aristocrat, stated that the Act did not curtail any right of moderate and rational criticism.<sup>35</sup> The English-educated middle class, however, strongly denounced the Vernacular Press Act.<sup>36</sup>

“The only political representatives of native opinion,” Lord Lytton wrote sarcastically to Lord Salisbury in 1875, “are the Baboos, whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native press, and who really represent nothing but the social anomaly of their own position.”<sup>37</sup> Salisbury, the Conservative leader, characterized the literary class as “a deadly legacy from Metcalfe and Macaulay” and expressed the opinion that this class could not but oppose the government in times of peace and rebel against it in times of trouble.<sup>38</sup>

Nationalist opinion in India had no cause to have any sympathy for the British Conservatives and in 1879 *The Bengalee* fervently prayed for the overthrow of the Conservative Ministry and expressed the hope that if the Liberals came to power they would repeal Lytton’s Press Act and reverse some of his other unpopular policies.<sup>39</sup> When the Liberals came to power in 1880, Ripon succeeded Lytton as the Governor-General. Unlike Lytton, the Liberal Ripon treated the English-educated class with sympathetic understanding. To give the growing public opinion a constitutional outlet Ripon repealed Lytton’s restrictive Press Act.

The newspapers in India became a potent instrument of political agitation and the men who managed the newspapers were well-versed in European political theories. Apart from newspapers, political agitation was carried on through public meetings and by means of pamphleteering. The Indian nationalists adopted in toto the Western method of agitation through newspapers, pamphleteering, mass meetings and monster petitions. The establishment of Town Halls in the three Indian cities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras had already secured to the educated classes places for holding public meetings. Public meetings for the expression of grievances in the correct British tradition were held in these Town Halls. As time passed intensive agitation of the Western type was started by sending out lecturers to the countryside, by issuing pamphlets and by distributing tracts and leaflets throughout the country. The pamphlets were sometimes

in the nature of parables whose moral was that if a people wanted to improve their lot they must press for representative institutions through united, patient, and constitutional agitation.

As the resolutions passed by the first two Congresses produced no visible impression on the government, Congressmen decided that in order to increase their political effectiveness it was necessary to adopt a new method of political propaganda. In February 1887 *The Tribune* wrote that the new method of propaganda should be conceived on the lines of the Corn-Law-League agitation.<sup>40</sup> At the third Congress at Madras the policy of agitation on the lines of the Corn-Law-League was approved. At the third Congress Hume narrated that when the Corn-Law-League was refused a hearing in the House of Commons, Cobden had said: "The delegates have offered to instruct the House; the House has refused to be instructed; and the most unexceptionable and effectual way will be by instructing the nation."<sup>41</sup> In order to instruct the nation, the Congress organized monster meetings in the towns, sent lecturers to the countryside and circulated and broadcast numerous leaflets and pamphlets.

Two remarkable pamphlets, a Tamil catechism on the Indian National Congress and "A Conversation between Moulvi Farid-Ud-Din . . . and . . . Rambaksh," were issued.<sup>42</sup> These pamphlets criticized certain features of the British administration and pointed out that to improve their lot the people should in a constitutional manner press for the introduction of Western representative institutions into India.<sup>43</sup>

The publication of these pamphlets and the adoption of a vigorous method of political agitation from the year 1887 gave rise to some controversy. *The Pioneer Mail*, the organ of the British community in India, wrote that treasonable literature was being distributed with the implied sanction of Congress leaders, and it declared that the Government of India would be within its legal and moral rights if it took necessary measures to put Hume's genius for agitation under restraint so long as Hume chose to remain in India.<sup>44</sup> Sir Roper Lethbridge, who was the Press Commissioner when Lytton's Press Act was in force, thought that the circulation of the above-mentioned pamphlets, with the *imprimatur* of the Congress,<sup>45</sup> would render it impossible for the people of England to support the Congress movement.<sup>46</sup> Sir Auckland Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of North-

West Frontier Provinces, also impugned this new method of Congress agitation. He believed that the criticism of the British government which the two new pamphlets contained might incline the uneducated villagers to attribute all their ills to mis-government by the British rulers.<sup>47</sup>

As a matter of fact, the pamphlets did not preach sedition or favour the termination of British rule but merely wanted to mitigate the evils of that rule. When Rambaksh said to Moulvi Farid-Ud-Din: "But surely you don't want us to join together and fight with the Sirkar. If we killed all the Europeans... All would be anarchy"; the Moulvi replied: "God forbid, This would be sin. Why should we kill the poor Europeans? Many of them are really good men, most of them mean at any rate to do right."<sup>48</sup>

It was clear, however, that these pamphlets would encourage the spirit of criticism and weaken the foundations of British rule and these pamphlets were therefore criticized not only by the British bureaucrats but also by the Indian landed aristocrats. Landed aristocrats, such as the Raja of Bhinga, argued that as Indians were not trained in the methods of criticism prevalent in an European democracy they could easily confuse any criticism of a particular governmental measure with a challenge to the very constitution of the country.<sup>49</sup> Critics of the Congress asserted that in Britain because the people were educated they could not easily be influenced by irresponsible propaganda, but in India, where the number of people who had any education was small, there was no limit to the political credulity of the masses.<sup>50</sup>

As early as 1886 Dufferin had asserted that the machinery of European democratic agitation could not be applied in India with impunity, and he had stated that it was desirable "to forbid mass meetings and incendiary speechifying."<sup>51</sup> Theodore Morison, the associate of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, agreed that the machinery of European democratic agitation could not be introduced into India, because the Government of India being irremovable, the Indian critics would not be subdued by a sense of responsibility that chastened the criticism of the opposition party in Britain which knew that it might any time be called to assume power and be asked to make good its criticism.<sup>52</sup> In Britain the government merely meant a ministry which was temporarily in

power, and any attack on the government was consistent with loyalty to the constitution of the country. But in India, argued Morison, because the government meant the constitution,<sup>53</sup> criticism of the government could not easily be distinguished from disloyalty to the very constitution of the country. Arguing on these lines he maintained that the grant of the right of free criticism, by means of a free press and by open public debate, had been a great mistake on the part of the Indian government.<sup>54</sup>

Morison was not alone among the members of the British community in India in lamenting the introduction of free political institutions into India. W. S. Seton-Kerr, once a High Court Judge in India, wrote in 1889 that Lytton's Press Act was repealed under the mistaken notion that the principles of English Radicalism could be applied into India.<sup>55</sup> Seton-Kerr wrote that the conditions under which the native press functioned had no parallel in European countries, and he maintained that the virulence of the native press would not have been tolerated even for a day in the Native States of India.<sup>56</sup> George Chesney also regretted that Lytton's Press Act was repealed in deference to, what he called, a party cry raised in England.<sup>57</sup> The opinion of Lepel Griffin, the agent of the Governor-General in Central India, was still more emphatic. "Of the many mischievous acts of Mr Gladstone," he wrote in 1889, "there is probably none that has been more productive of evil than the repeal of Lord Lytton's wholesome Press Act."<sup>58</sup> He affirmed that an institution such as the free press was only suited to enlightened, free, and constitutional countries, such as England and France, and was an anomaly and danger in a despotic country like India.<sup>59</sup> In 1894 George Chesney similarly remarked that there was "no instance of any country not invested with free institutions and self-government in which the press was free," and commented that India was not yet fitted for the one and had showed itself absolutely unfit for the other.<sup>60</sup>

It could be said, as Munro had said in 1822, that the first duty of a free press would be to teach the people to free themselves from the yoke of a foreign rule.<sup>61</sup> The early Congressmen, however, merely wanted to mitigate the evils of British rule and sought to liberalize it by means of constitutional agitation through the press and the platform. *The Tribune* wrote that the native press served the role of a constitution opposition.<sup>62</sup> If the

press was suppressed and the opportunities of constitutional agitation were limited, then how could Indians secure from their British rulers the redress of their political grievances? The theory that even if Indians did not agitate, British rulers would of their own free will redress Indian grievances, could not be accepted even by the early Congressmen who had a touching faith in the British sense of justice. Further, Congressmen pointed out that the suppression of a free press could not check sedition but could only drive it underground. "If I were disposed to foment sedition in India," declared R. C. Dutt in his 1899 Congress presidential address, "I would desire in the first place to suppress all free discussion, suppress all newspapers, and suppress all public meetings as a burglar puts out the lights of a room before he commits burglary."<sup>63</sup>

Early Congressmen believed that it is only by means of constitutional agitation on Western lines through the press and the platform that political reforms could be achieved. It is only through such agitation that the government could be informed of the aspirations of the political reformers and again it is only through such agitation that the reformers could educate the people. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha once sent a memorial, prepared with considerable expenditure of labour, to the government on the conditions of some districts where there was severe scarcity, asking for remedial action. The Government sent a reply of only two lines, saying that it had noted the contents of the letter. Gokhale, who was then the Secretary of the Sabha, was disappointed and asked Ranade, his political Guru, whether such memorials directed to the government was of any use. "You don't realize our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to the Government, in reality they are addressed to the people so that they may learn how to think in these matters," replied Ranade.<sup>64</sup>

The moderates had faith in the efficacy of constitutional agitation because they believed, as was stated by Dadabhai Naoroji, that if the British people were true to themselves, true to their inbred sense and traditions of equality, justice, and fair play, they would help India to obtain freedom. It is true that the conduct and performance of the government of India was not such as to stimulate such hopes. "But who were the real rulers of India?" asked Dadabhai and he answered: "The Government of

India? Certainly not. Their masters in England? Yes. But who hold the reigns of government in England? The bureaucracy? Certainly not. The Crown? Not at all. The ministers? Nay. It was the people of England that governed India and England." "We Indian people believe," he would tell English audiences, "that although John Bull is a little thick-headed once we can penetrate through his head into his brain that a certain thing is right, you may be quite sure that it will be done."

The Congress had the double task of developing in the Indian people a genuine appreciation for free institutions and of urging upon the government the necessity of liberalizing the administration. Early Congressmen were determined to follow those methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation which had proved so successful in Britain.<sup>65</sup> Progress was to be harmonized with order, freedom was to grow gradually from precedent to precedent and great changes were to be effected in a bloodless manner.

Gokhale and other moderates pointed out that it would be wrong to believe that the government would easily or quickly grant to Indians even those political rights for which they were eminently fitted.<sup>66</sup> They reminded the nationalists that even in self-governing England, many a cause had to be agitated for long before success was achieved.<sup>67</sup> The struggle for the emancipation of the Catholics and the repeal of the Test Acts, the fight of Bright and Cobden for the repeal of the Corn Laws, the agitation for the reform of parliament, and the movement for the enactment of improved factory laws had to be long and arduous.<sup>68</sup>

When in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century there came into prominence a party of extremists who were dissatisfied with the rate of political progress that the inordinate method of agitation had secured and who derided the moderates for believing that political reform could be gained merely by petitioning the British rulers about the desirability of introducing such reforms, moderate leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji argued that Indians had not been able to realize their political aims, not because they had petitioned or agitated too much but because they had agitated too little.<sup>69</sup> In his 1906 Congress presidential address Dadabhai said: "Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history

of England... The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation... Agitation is the civilized, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force... Agitate over the whole length and breadth of India... if we really mean to get justice from John Bull."<sup>70</sup> Referring to this appeal *The Bengalee* asked: "Could any commandment be more solemn, sacred, or binding?"<sup>71</sup>

It is by agitation that the English, said Dadabhai, accomplished their most glorious institutions and liberties and, in short, their first place among the nations of the world. The whole life of England every day was all agitation. "You do not open your paper in the morning but read from beginning to end: it is all agitation, Congress and conferences, meetings and resolutions without end—for a thousand and one movements, local and national. From the Prime Minister to the humblest politician, his occupation is agitation for everything he wants to accomplish. The whole Parliament, press and platform is simply all agitation," said Dadabhai.

Liberalism thrived in England because the English people enjoyed a system of parliamentary and constitutional rule. In a democratic country the constitution provides a method of bringing about changes in a peaceful manner. But India had no such democratic constitution and consequently constitutional agitation could not possibly be as efficacious in India as it was in Britain where there was a democratic parliament. But the Indian liberals did not regard these differences so vital as to rule out the possibility of constitutional agitation in India ever being efficacious, for they had as great a faith in the efficacy of persuasion as in the sense of justice of the British people. The Indian liberals or moderates thought that if the British people were convinced of the necessity of liberalization of the Indian administration then they would eventually grant the reforms asked for. The moderates had also great faith in the intrinsic reasonableness of their cause and they therefore took great pains in mastering the facts of the case and in presenting them in a sober manner to the British public and British statesmen.

Some have called this the springtime of Indian nationalism and its fairest period.<sup>72</sup> Undoubtedly the public mind during this early period of Indian nationalism was ardent and yet generous. In May 1941 Rabindranath Tagore, who by then had lost all his

earlier faith in the liberal instincts of the British people, looked back to this period and said: "At heart we had not lost faith in the generosity of the English race. This belief was so firmly rooted in the sentiments of our leaders as to lead them to hope that the victor would of his own grace pave the path to freedom for the vanquished. This belief was based upon the fact that England at that time provided a shelter to all those who had to flee from persecution in their own country. Political masters who had suffered for the honour of their people were accorded unreserved welcome at the hands of the English. . . . About this time I was a boy in England and I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches of John Bright both in and outside Parliament. The large-hearted radical liberalism of those speeches, overflowing all narrow national bounds, had made so deep an impression on my mind that something of it lingers even today, even in these days of heartless disillusionment."

### III. THE BRITISH THEORY OF IMPERIALISM AND THE CONGRESS DEMAND FOR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Though Indian nationalists demanded representative institutions, throughout the nineteenth century and even thereafter there was a well-developed theory in Britain that, considering the circumstances then prevailing in India, India could be ruled only according to principles of benevolent despotism. This theory had been propounded by James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 'thirties of the nineteenth century and was restated with great clarity and candour by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in 1883.

In 1832, before a parliamentary committee James Mill, the great advocate of representative institutions, was asked: "Do you consider in the present state in India anything approaching to representation as entirely out of the question?" "I conceive wholly so," he replied.<sup>73</sup> Next year Macaulay said: "If the question was, what is the best mode of securing good government in Europe? The merest smatterer in politics would answer, representative institutions. Of all the innumerable speculators who have offered their suggestions on Indian politics not a single one as far as I know, however democratical his opinion



may be, has ever maintained the possibility of giving at the present time, such institutions to India.... The light of political science and history are withdrawn. We are walking in darkness."<sup>74</sup>

Cobden was one of the few Englishman who did not see any danger in the introduction of self-government in India. "Hindustan," wrote Cobden, "must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly according to our notions—by its own kith and kin—than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes." Further, the cynical Cobden was one of the few Britons who could see no advantage either to the Indians or to their foreign masters in the retention of the vast Indian possession of Britain.

Cobden believed that the fact that Britain possessed an empire would inevitably tend to weaken popular government and parliamentary institutions in Britain itself. In a letter written on 16 May 1858, Cobden said: "I am afraid our national character is being deteriorated, and our love of freedom in danger of being impaired by what is passing in India. Is it possible that we can play the part of despot and butcher there without finding our character deteriorated at home? Were not the ancient Greeks and Romans corrupted and demoralized by their Asiatic conquests, and may we not share their fate, though in a different way?"<sup>75</sup>

The view that imperialism abroad would affect political liberty and popular government in Britain was repeated at a much later time and with great force by J. A. Hobson in *Imperialism, A Study* published in 1902. Hobson wrote: "Imperialism and the military, diplomatic and financial resources which feed it, have become so far the paramount considerations of recent Governments that they mould and direct the entire policy, give point, colour and character to the conduct of public affairs, and overawe by continual suggestions of unknown and incalculable gains and perils, the nearer and more sober processes of domestic policy. The effect on parliamentary government has been great, quick, and of palpable import, making for the diminution of the power of representative institutions. At elections, the electorate is no longer invited to exercise a free, conscious, rational choice between the representatives of different intelligible policies....

In the deliberations of the House of Commons, the power of the Opposition to oppose has been seriously and progressively impaired.”<sup>76</sup>

It is to be noted however that though Hobson considered that imperialism and popular government had nothing in common, he did not regard imperialism as an unmitigated evil and in fact he bestowed high praise on the British imperial system in India. He wrote: “We have established a wider and more permanent internal peace than India had ever known from the days of Alexander the Great. We have raised the standard of justice by fair and equal administration of laws; we have regulated and probably reduced the burden of taxation, checking the corruption and tyranny of native princes and their publicans. For the instruction of the people we have introduced a public system of schools and colleges, as well as a great quasi-public missionary establishment teaching not only the Christian religion but many industrial arts. Roads, railways, and a network of canals have facilitated communication and transport, and an extensive system of scientific irrigation has improved the productiveness of the soil; the mining of coal, gold, and other minerals has been greatly developed; in Bombay and elsewhere cotton mills with modern machinery have been set up and the organization of other machine industries is helping to find employment for the population of large cities. Tea, coffee, indigo, jute, tobacco, and other important crops have been introduced into Indian agriculture. We are gradually breaking down many of the religious and social superstitions which sin against humanity and retard progress, and even the deeply-rooted caste system is modified wherever British influence is felt.”<sup>77</sup>

The British bureaucrats in India however opposed from the very beginning any measure for the liberalization of the Indian government. In 1852 the Bombay Association drew a petition for submission to the Imperial Parliament asking for an enlightened system of government. This made the Anglo-Indian newspapers, the *Telegraph* and *Courier*, indignant who declared that the idea of establishing English institutions into India or the idea that the country could be governed by the people was a notion to which no honest politician could ever lend the slightest countenance. These papers observed that it was not possible to introduce into the East the Anglo-Saxon political institutions and

they doubted whether the tree of liberty would at all flourish after its transplantation in an alien soil.

The British who came to India were not social or political revolutionaries. They were conservatives<sup>78</sup> and instead of welcoming the demand for more representative institutions they, to a certain extent, encouraged and consolidated the position of the socially backward groups in India. Changes came to India partly because of the impact of the West, but also in spite of the British in India. The traditional view of the British bureaucrats in India was expressed by Sir Charles Wood who said in 1861: "All experience teaches us that where a dominant race rules another, the mildest form of government is a despotism. It was so in the case of the democratic republics of Greece, and the more aristocratic or autocratic sway of Rome. . . ." <sup>79</sup>

The idea that Britain was a dominant and superior race and that Englishmen could not admit equality with Indians was very widespread among Anglo-Indian bureaucrats in India and among politicians and statesmen in Britain. Lord Elgin wrote in his *Journal* on 21 August 1857: "It is a terrible business, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman, since I came to the East, heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world."<sup>80</sup>

The great Rebellion or Mutiny of 1857 embittered Indo-British relationship to an extreme degree. In 1866 G. Trevelyan wrote: "It was tacitly acknowledged that mercy, charity, the dignity and sacredness of human life—those great principles which at ordinary times, are recognized as eternally true—must be put aside till our sway was restored and our name avenged."<sup>81</sup>

In fact the Anglo-Indian paper *The Friend of India* wrote on 8 September 1858: "It became an unquestioned doctrine that our [British] rule had been too good for the people, that they were little better than wild beasts and that the only way to rule them was to abandon the paternal methods of the company and rule them henceforward with a rod of iron." And the paper added: "Any relaxation of our military control, any attempt to cover the steel hand with a velvet glove must be temporarily abandoned. The Asiatic, true to his training of 3,000 years, respects only the strong, and his rulers must prove that their armed strength is irresistible."

Early British historians also had a very poor opinion of India and its inhabitants and they believed that only a despotic form of government was appropriate for a country like India. Mill in his *History of British India* stated that politics in pre-British India showed "that disgusting state of weak and profligate barbarism, which is the natural condition of government among such a passive people as the Hindus."<sup>82</sup> And about the moral character of the Hindus and Muslims he wrote that they shared "the same insincerity, mendacity and perfidy; the same indifference to the feelings of others; the same prostitution and venality are conspicuous in both."<sup>83</sup>

Sir Henry Elliot in his *History of India* claimed that the common people of India were plunged in the lowest depths of wretchedness and despondency during Muslim rule and comforted himself with the belief that a study of the history of the Muslim period in India "will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule. If instruction were sought for them, we should be spared the rash declarations respecting Muhammadan India, which are frequently made by persons not otherwise ignorant.... We should no longer hear bombastic Babus, enjoying under our Government the highest degree of personal liberty, and many more political privileges than were ever conceded to a conquered nation, rant about patriotism, and the degradation of their present position. If they would dive into any of the volumes mentioned herein, it would take these young Brutuses and Phocians a very short time to learn, that in the days of that dark period for whose return they sigh, even the bare utterance of their ridiculous fantasies would have been attended, not with silence and contempt, but with the severer discipline of molten lead or impalement. We should be compelled to listen no more to the clamours against resumption of rent-free tenures, when almost every page will show that there was no tenure, whatever its designation, which was not open to resumption in the theory of the law, and which was not repeatedly resumed in practice. Should any ambitious functionary entertain the desire of emulating the 'exceedingly magnificent' structures of his Moghal predecessors, it will check his aspirations to learn, that beyond palaces and porticos, temples, and tombs, there is little worthy of emulation. He will find that, if

we omit only three names in the long line of Delhi Emperors, the comfort and happiness of the people were never contemplated by them; and with the exception of a few sarais and bridges—and these only on roads traversed by the imperial camps—he will see nothing in which purely selfish considerations did not prevail. The extreme beauty and elegance of many of their structures it is not attempted to deny; but personal vanity was the main cause of their erection, and with the small exceptions noted above, there is not one which subserves any purpose of general utility.”<sup>84</sup>

The position of the British as the conquerors of India and their approach to Indian life and history gave them ideas of racial superiority. Referring to the feelings of racial pride that the English entertained G. C. Trevelyan wrote in 1866: “It is painful, indeed, to observe the deep pride and insolence of race which is ingrained in our nature, and which yields only to the highest degree of education and enlightenment. The lower in the scale of society, the more marked become the symptoms of that baneful sentiment.”<sup>85</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the natives of India had a profound fear of the Sahibs and, even if they had the money, they dared not travel in first class compartments with the Sahibs. Writing in 1866 Trevelyan observed: “Natives almost invariably travel third class.... The most wealthy Hindoos would probably go first-class if it were not for a well-founded fear of the Sahibs.”<sup>86</sup> Trevelyan added that his experience in India convinced him that any idea of the amalgamation of the conquerors and the conquered was utterly impracticable and utopian.

The situation that prevailed in India was clearly realized by Cobden and in a letter to Bright on 24 August 1857 Cobden narrated: “Chance has thrown me in the society of some ladies who have lately returned from India, where they were accustomed to barrack life, their husbands being officers in native regiments. I find the common epithet applied to our fellow subjects in Hindoostan is nigger.”<sup>87</sup> Speaking about the reform of the Indian government, Cobden said in a subsequent letter of 22 September 1857: “I now regard the task as utterly hopeless. Recent and present events are placing an impassable gulf between the races.”<sup>88</sup>

In fact the English in India came to trade and not to settle. As Knowles in his *Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century* points out "the English are not an assimilating race, their motives of expansion are wholly economic."<sup>89</sup> The British came to India not to found a home there or to colonize but to trade and to invest their capital. It is true Rudyard Kipling called upon his countrymen:

Take up the White Man's burden—  
 Send forth the best ye breed—  
 To bind your sons to exile  
 To serve your Captives' need;  
 To wait in heavy harness,  
 Our fluttered folk and wild—  
 Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
 Half-devil and half-child.<sup>90</sup>

But the British did not want to remain in exile permanently or to colonize in India in order to serve the "captives' need." Where the British settled down as in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—the white colonies—the position was different. In fact since 1867 a new phase was inaugurated so far as the white colonies were concerned. In 1867 the British North American Act made Canada a Dominion. Responsible Government was introduced in Cape Colony a few years later. In 1900 Australia became a federal union under the Australian Commonwealth Act and in 1904 Transvaal and Orange Free State were admitted as self-governing states in the British empire.

In the early days the British did not envisage the grant of self-government or Dominion Status to the non-white colonies, such as India. For India what was recommended was some form of paternal government. The most logical and consistent presentation of the imperialist case and the case for continuing an absolute, non-representative, and paternal form of government in India permanently was made by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen who was the Legal Member of the Supreme Council from 1869 to 1872 and was a Judge of the High Court from 1879 to 1891. Sir James stated his views in a letter to *The Times* on 1 March 1883.<sup>91</sup> He asserted that discussion of the form of government to be introduced into India must first take note of the central

fact that the British rule in India was based not on consent but on conquest. He wrote: "It has been observed in many articles, some published in *The Times*, that if the government of India have decided on removing all anomalies from India, they ought to remove themselves and their countrymen. Whether or not that mode of expression can be fully justified, there can, I think, be no doubt that it is impossible to imagine any policy more fearfully dangerous and more certain, in case of failure, to lead to results to which the Mutiny would be child's play than the policy of shifting the foundations on which the British Government of India rests. It is essentially an absolute Government, founded, not on consent, but on conquest. It does not represent the native principles of life or of government, and it can never do so until it represents heathenism and barbarism. It represents a belligerent civilization, and no anomaly can be so striking or so dangerous as its administration by men who, being at the head of a Government founded upon conquest, implying at every point the superiority of the conquering race, of their ideas, their institutions, their opinions, and their principles, and having no justification for its existence except that superiority, shrink from the open, uncompromising, straight-forward assertion of it, seek to apologize for their own position, and refuse, from whatever cause, to uphold and support it."

Many British politicians and administrators had conducted themselves on the basis of the superiority of the conquering race but the theory of superiority was never so clearly or frankly stated as by Sir James. Sir James repudiated the idea that the principles of representative government could have any universal application and stated: "One great practical inference is that government in India must proceed upon principles different from and in some respects opposed to those which prevail in England, and which, since the outbreak of the French Revolution, have acquired in many parts of Europe something like the consistency and energy of a new religion. In England, and in countries which derive their political institutions from our own, the Government has come directly to represent the great body of the people; all modern legislation has been directed to a great extent towards the object of making that representation more and more direct and peremptory. In India the opposite is the case. The government which now exists had

not been chosen by the people. It is not, and if it is to exist at all, it cannot look upon itself as being the representative of the general wishes and average way of thinking of the bulk of the population which it governs. It is the representative of a totally different order of ideas from those prevalent amongst the natives of India. . . .”

Sir James stated in unmistakable terms that British rule in India was founded on conquest and therefore British rule must be absolute and that the British rulers should not be ashamed of affirming this position and in proceeding on that basis. Sir James wrote: “Another practical inference from the fact that the British power is founded on conquest is that it must be absolute. The British Government of India differs from the various native governments which it has successively conquered, and on the conquest of which it is founded, not in its origin, but by its objects. . . . The rule of the Queen, and that of the Moguls whom she displaced, differ, not in the foundation on which they rest, nor in the extent of the power which they possess, but in the spirit in which they rule and in the principles by which they govern themselves. The great peculiarity of the British Government in India is that it is essentially both English and European . . . my proposition is that it is absolutely essential to its existence, and to its utility both to England and to India, that the foundation on which it rests should be as distinctly acknowledged and borne in mind in practice as the principles by which it is animated; and I further say that much of the language recently used by persons high in authority both in India and in England, either conceals this fact or shows that the writer or speaker is afraid or ashamed of it.”

Sir James’ views were closer to the views of Burke that representative government was a peculiar monopoly of the British and were very different from the views of Gladstone that it was Britain’s moral duty to spread the light and message of representative institutions throughout the world. Sir James did not believe either in the sovereignty of the people or in what he called the Divine Right of Representative Institutions. Sir James wrote: “In the first place, then, it should be observed that the strong association which exists in the minds of most English people between good government and representative government is likely to mislead them in dealing with the government



of India. . . . I think, however, that it may be safely asserted that absolute government has its own merits and conveniences; that it is, so to speak, as legitimate a form of government as any other, and that if it exists, if it is well and successfully administered, and if it is suited to the circumstances and tastes of those amongst whom it exists, there is no reason why those who administer it should seek to substitute for it a representative system, or should feel in any respect ashamed of their position as absolute rulers, or desirous to lay it down. Much of the language used about the British Government in India implies, if it does not exactly state, a doctrine which might perhaps be called the doctrine of the Divine Right of Representative Institutions, or of the Sovereignty of the Peoples; it seems to assume that the exercise of absolute power can never be justified except as a temporary expedient used for the purpose of superseding itself, and as a means of educating those whom it affects into a fitness for parliamentary institutions. The point at which I differ from many of those who write and speak upon the Government of India is that I do not in any degree share in this view, whether it is regarded as a doctrine or a sentiment. I do not think that the permanent existence of such a Government as ours in India must in itself be a bad thing; that we ought not to desire its permanence even if we can secure it; and that the establishment of some kind of parliamentary system instead of it is an object which ought to be distinctly contemplated, and, as soon as it is practicable, carried out."

James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay had also ruled out the possibility of introducing representative institutions into India but they did not rule out the possibility of introducing such institutions into India for all times to come. Sir James, on the other hand, repudiated the ideal of representative government for India not because India was not yet fitted for it but because he did not envisage a period when India would ever become fit for it and accordingly he aimed at the permanence of British despotic rule in India. He wrote: "When all these considerations are put together, it appears to me to follow that the British Government must forget not only its origin, but all that is most important and characteristic in its position, if it forgets that it is and must be an absolute government founded on conquest. . . . The most definite point on which I should disagree with the

views about India which seem to be becoming popular is that I do not share in the view so often stated and insinuated in all kinds of forms, that it is a moral duty on the part of the English nation to try to educate the natives of India in English ideas in such a way as to lead them to set up a democratic form of government administered by representative assemblies."

But from the very beginning educated Indians had set their hearts on representative institutions. Hume in his opening manifesto for the Indian National Congress, that was founded in 1885, stated that "indirectly, this conference [that is, the Indian National Congress] will form the germ of a Native Parliament, and, if properly conducted, will in a few years constitute an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is unfit for any form of representative institutions."

In the very first Congress W. C. Bonnerji, the president, declared that politically-minded Indians wanted to be governed according to the ideals of government prevalent in Europe.<sup>92</sup> Congressmen believed that no Englishman worthy of his name could ultimately refuse Indians their claim for representative government. In a speech at the second Congress in 1886 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya asked: "What is an Englishman without representative institutions? Why, an Englishman at all, a mere sham, a base imitation and I often wonder as I look round at our nominally English magnates how they have the face to call themselves Englishmen and yet deny us representative institutions and struggle to maintain despotic ones. Representative institutions are as much a part of the true Briton, as his language and his literature. . . ."<sup>93</sup> "We call on England," said Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, "to be true to her traditions, her instincts and herself and grant us our rights as freeborn British subjects."<sup>94</sup>

Congressmen wanted to introduce, slowly and gradually, Western representative institutions into India. George Yule who was the first non-Indian to become the President of the Indian National Congress while arguing for the right of representation of Indians in framing the policies of the Indian government said that while not a penny of the income of the British Government was raised without the consent of the people, there was not a man outside the Supreme Council in India who had a voice in the matter of the Indian Budget and he pointed out that if Indians transferred their persons to England for twelve months

or more and paid certain rates they were held to be qualified to enjoy all the rights and privileges of British subjects. "If you and I go to England we are qualified," said George Yule, but "if we return to India, our character changes and we are not qualified."

The great words "Representative Institutions," said Surendranath Banerjea in the third Congress, were written in characters of gold in the banner that the Congress unfurled.<sup>95</sup> "England," said Bishan Narayan Dhar exuberantly in the same Congress, "has moved us from our ancient anchorage. She has cast us adrift, against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat, and we turn back to England, and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institutions by which, amid a thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."<sup>96</sup> Though the early Congress leaders turned to England for guidance and for the grant of representative institutions, political leaders in Britain generally did not show any inclination to give any such guidance.

British statesmen, such as Burke, considered representative institutions, as "something peculiarly British, as an inherited national privilege."<sup>97</sup> The idea that representative institutions were the peculiar monopoly of any particular nation was challenged by the American Revolution and the French Revolution. And when in 1890 Gladstone, the liberal leader, said: "It often happens in the counsels of Providence that each nation or some particular nation is appointed to work out great social, political, or economical problems for the world at large. . . . In the adoption of that system [that is, the system of representative institutions] we long stood alone, but one after another great countries of the world have come in, and the nations sprung from our loins have given further countenance and currency to our example, and now the man would be deemed mad who should denounce the system of popular representation."<sup>98</sup>

Indian leaders welcomed this sentiment. Surendranath asked England to practise the gospel of "political Christianity" that Gladstone preached.<sup>99</sup> "Representative institutions," said Surendranath Banerjea in a lecture at the Oxford Union, "are a consecrated possession which in the counsels of Providence has been entrusted to the English people, to guard that possession, to spread it, and not to make it the property of this or that people, but the heritage of mankind at large."<sup>100</sup>

So great and touching was the faith of Congressmen in representative institutions that in the third Congress Surendranath Banerjea confidently asserted that it was "impossible to think of a domestic grievance or... complaint which would not be remedied" if the legislative councils were reformed and made more representative.<sup>101</sup> This statement was bound to give rise to controversy. Critics accused Congressmen of cherishing a most extravagant faith in representative institutions and in conceiving that such institutions could cure 'all evils, not only political but also economic and social.'<sup>102</sup>

In this connection the lively debate at the second Congress over a resolution which expressed grave concern over the poverty of India and suggested that "the introduction of Representative Institutions will prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people,"<sup>103</sup> is illuminating. Ambica Charan Mazumdar said that the connection between poverty and the absence of representative institutions appeared to him as "somewhat remote."<sup>104</sup> The "chief causes which have brought about the dire poverty of India are not all political" and cannot be removed by mere political changes, declared another speaker. Various factors which contributed to the poverty of India—lack of industrialization, backwardness of agriculture, over-population, etc.—were enumerated by different speakers.<sup>105</sup> Even Surendranath Banerjea was not satisfied with the resolution and, on behalf of the Bengal delegates, he proposed that the resolution be so amended as to state that "the wider employment of natives of India, the encouragement of indigenous trade and manufacturers, are among the circumstances which, along with the introduction of representative institutions, would palliate the poverty of the masses."<sup>106</sup>

Supporters of the original resolution pointed out that it was not intended to enumerate all the circumstances which contributed to India's poverty. The Congress being a political organization could only point out that an important political reform—the introduction of more representative institutions—though it would not work any direct miracle would help the government to know more fully and therefore remove more easily the economic sufferings of the people.<sup>107</sup> On the basis of these clarifications

the resolution in its unamended form was carried by a large majority.

British bureaucrats in India, however, ruled out the possibility of introducing representative institutions into India and in 1899 Sir Alfred Lyall said that those who desired, with the help of Britain, to elevate the moral and intellectual standard of Indian life "must see how ruinously premature it is to quarrel with the British Government upon details of administration, or even upon what are called constitutional questions."<sup>108</sup>

English liberals also thought that India could not have a free government, but she could have the next best thing, a firm and impartial despotism. The Indian government was carried on in a spirit of conservative despotism. The British aristocracy had shouldered the responsibility of the governance of Great Britain for two hundred years and they felt that they could shoulder the responsibility of governing India also. The British in India came out to trade and had neither the time nor the inclination to teach Indians the art of self-government or of political democracy and they had no love for representative institutions which the Congress demanded. In 1889 J. M. Maclean, a member of the British Parliament, suggested that the government should prohibit all Congress meetings.<sup>109</sup> He doubted the loyalty of Congressmen: "Professions of loyalty from Orientals are utterly worthless."<sup>110</sup> With great frankness he stated his position thus: "Let us have the courage to repudiate the pretence, which foreign nations laugh at, and which hardly deceives ourselves, that we keep India merely for the benefit of the people of that country and in order to train them for self-government. We keep it for the sake of the interests and the honour of England; and the only form of government by which we can continue to hold it in subjection is that of despotism."<sup>111</sup>

In 1888 Dufferin characterized the educated class or Congressmen who were agitating for Western representative institutions as constituting a "microscopic minority" of the population of India.<sup>112</sup> Out of the two hundred millions of people of British India not more than five or six per cent could read or write and less than one per cent had any knowledge of English, and the knowledge of most of the literates was only elementary. Furthermore, the number of graduates produced by the universities since 1857 was less than eight thousand. Accordingly, Dufferin

argued that the educated class formed only a small section of the population and it would be unwise to hand over power to a national representative assembly at the bidding of this "microscopic minority" of the English-educated class.<sup>113</sup>

The reform schemes adumbrated by the Congress raised apprehensions in the minds of British administrators that the Congress desired the early establishment of full-blown parliamentary institutions into India. In a speech in 1888 Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy of India, complained that a section of the educated class had set up the ideal of "a representative body or bodies in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British executive into subjection to their will."<sup>114</sup>

But Congressmen wanted representative institutions to be introduced into India gradually and they did not advocate the immediate introduction of full-blown parliamentary institutions into India. *The Indian Mirror* commented that Dufferin "attempted to mislead his audience, unintentionally but ignorantly, by saying that the Congress wanted to usurp the reins of power."<sup>115</sup> The idea of transferring to Indian hands the ultimate power of decision of all Indian questions was rejected by early Congressmen as beyond the range of practical politics.<sup>116</sup> They wanted, as *The Bengalee* which supported Congress policies, pointed out, "a consultative council and not representative government."<sup>117</sup> True, Congressmen demanded that at least half the members of the legislative councils should be elected but not all elected members were likely to vote against the government, and even if they did, Congressmen conceded that the government should have the right of vetoing all adverse votes.<sup>118</sup> "Now . . . if there be one thing more than another that we have tried to make clear," said George Yule in his 1888 Congress presidential address, "it is that the British Executive should continue to be paramount in the councils."<sup>119</sup>

"Let me say on behalf of the Indian National Congress," said Surendranath Banerjea in 1890, "that we do not wish to see installed in our midst anything like a democratic form of government. We do not think India is ripe for it yet; nor do we want Home Rule. . . . We want something much less than an English House of Commons."<sup>120</sup> In his presidential address to the Con-

gress in 1890 Pherozeshah Mehta declared that Congressmen were not so ignorant of history as to demand the immediate and wholesale importation into India of the parliamentary institutions that Britain had evolved through the discipline of centuries.<sup>121</sup>

In a letter to the Anglo-Indian newspaper *The Pioneer*<sup>122</sup> in 1888 Theodore Beck said: "Parliament is what the promoters of this [that is, the Congress] movement have as their goal, and the assurance that the only object is a reconstitution of the legislative councils is the language of diplomacy."<sup>123</sup> Though Beck was certainly mistaken if he believed that for the immediate present the Congress wanted anything more than the reconstitution of the legislative councils, he was undoubtedly correct in thinking that the establishment of a responsible parliament was the ultimate aim of some Congressmen.

#### IV. THE 1892 COUNCILS ACT AND THE REPUDIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

The demands of the English-educated classes eventually forced the British government to pass the Indian Councils Act, 1892. Lord Dufferin, the then Governor-General of India, however, carefully explained that the proposed reform of the councils must not be interpreted as "an approach... to English Parliamentary Government and an English constitution." There was to be no responsible or parliamentary government on the British model and the government in India would continue to be appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Secretary of State who would remain ultimately responsible to the British Parliament. In order to maintain its responsibility to the British Parliament the Government of India would remain free to carry out its policy whichever way the voting in the council went. The leaders of a dissentient majority in a council was not to bear the sense of responsibility borne by a parliamentary opposition, since they would never be called upon to replace the government they criticized and the status of the council was to be that of a *darbar* rather than of a parliament in embryo.

Dufferin wanted to give only "consultative, critical and suggestive" powers to the educated class of India for whom he did

not, in any event, have a high opinion. In his famous Minute of 1888 Dufferin said: "To extend, therefore, to this infinitesimal and only partially qualified fraction of the people of India anything beyond the consultative, critical and suggestive powers which we are now recommending, would be evidently impracticable. The chief concern of the Government of India is to protect and foster the interests of the people of India, and the people of India are not the seven or eight thousand students who have graduated at the Universities, or the Pleaders recruited from their numbers who are practising in our Courts of Justice, or the newspaper writers, or the Europeanized Zamindars, or the wealthy traders, but the voiceless millions whom neither education, nor civilization, nor the influence of European ideas or modern thought, have in the slightest degree transfigured or transformed from what their forefathers were a thousand years ago."<sup>124</sup>

The Congress, however, had some supporters in the British Parliament. The most powerful advocate of the Congress cause in the British Parliament was Charles Bradlaugh, who in reply to an address presented by the Congress said in 1889: "I feel I should like to have the title that some have given me in sneer, and some in hearty meaning of 'Member for India'."<sup>125</sup> The 1889 Congress submitted to Bradlaugh a scheme for the reform of the legislative councils—the most important feature of which was that one-half of the members of the reconstituted Governor-General's and provincial councils should be elected—in the hope that he would draft a Bill on the basis of that reform scheme and introduce it in the British Parliament.<sup>126</sup>

After Bradlaugh had introduced his Bill, Lord Cross, the Secretary of State of Lord Salisbury's Conservative Government, brought forward on 21 February 1890, a Bill for the reform of the Indian legislative councils.<sup>127</sup> Some of the proposals of the official Bill were adopted from a dispatch which Dufferin had sent to Britain in 1888 in which he had advocated the liberalization of the legislative council, but wherein he had also expressly disclaimed that he had any intention of setting up in India those representative and parliamentary institutions which Britain had evolved, patiently and gradually, through the discipline of many centuries.<sup>128</sup> The executive in India was to remain responsible to the Sovereign and Parliament in Britain; it was not to be



brought into subjection to the will of any legislative council in India, and no legislative council was to have a majority of elected members.<sup>129</sup>

The Indian Councils Bill introduced by the Conservative Government made no provision for the introduction of the elective principle and this Bill was accordingly criticized by many liberals. Lord Northbrook on 6 March 1890 expressed in the House of Lords his regret that Cross's Bill made no provision for choosing some nonofficial members by a system of election or selection.<sup>130</sup> Lord Northbrook's regret was shared by Lord Ripon<sup>131</sup> and Kimberley.<sup>132</sup> Kimberley while maintaining that "the notion of a parliamentary representation of so vast a country—almost as large as Europe—containing so large a number of different races, is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men,"<sup>133</sup> yet strongly favoured the introduction of a partially elective system. Kimberley also drew attention to the fact that though the government in presenting Dufferin's minute to Parliament had excluded the portion in which he had recommended the adoption of the elective principle, it was widely known that Dufferin had favoured the elective principle.<sup>134</sup> In a speech on 4 March 1909 Cross however said that the surreptitious publication of Dufferin's Minute forced the hands of the government and compelled it to do something about it.<sup>135</sup> Ultimately an amendment known as the Kimberley clause was adopted which, by empowering the Governor-General in Council with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council to make regulations as to the conditions of nominating the additional members,<sup>136</sup> permitted, though it did not prescribe, the adoption of the elective principle.

Cross's Bill was not passed in 1890. In a letter to Lansdowne on 27 June 1890 Salisbury wrote that he did not think that the Bill would live.<sup>137</sup> He was unduly apprehensive that it would be a capital danger to the empire if the language that Gladstone was likely to use in the discussion of the Bill was taken as a watchword by political agitators in India. "To speak plainly and asking your pardon if I wound," he wrote, "any political sympathies—I dread this question being discussed while Mr Gladstone is still a political force."<sup>138</sup> When on 28 March 1892 Gladstone spoke in the House of Commons on the Indian Councils Bill, his speech was not, however, from the imperial point of

view, in any way dangerous. He supported the elective principle, but he also said that though Parliament should lay down the principles of Indian administration, the task of devising specific machineries for realizing those principles should generally be left to the government of India.<sup>139</sup>

The Indian Councils Bill was not enacted in 1890, or even in 1891. The dropping of the Bill in 1891 was attributed by the Congress President of that year to the death of Bradlaugh.<sup>140</sup> When the Bill was reintroduced in the beginning of 1892, controversy again centred round the question of adopting the elective principle. In the House of Commons, Maclean criticized the Kimberley clause by saying that he apprehended that if a Liberal Government came to power, and if Lord Ripon and Lord Reay were appointed Secretary of State and Governor-General respectively, then they would strain the Kimberley clause in every way in order to introduce the elective system.<sup>141</sup> Curzon, the government spokesman, explained the effect of the Kimberley clause by saying that the Indian Councils Bill empowered the Viceroy "to invite representative bodies in India to elect or select or delegate representatives of themselves and their opinions to be nominated"<sup>142</sup> to the legislative councils.

But Lord Curzon ridiculed the notion of representative government for a people of whom the overwhelming majority consisted of "voiceless millions" of illiterate peasantry. On 28 March 1892 Lord Curzon declared in the House of Commons: "No system of representation that has ever been devised, no system of representation that the ingenuity of the Hon'ble Member can suggest, no system of representation that would stand the test of twenty-four hours' operation, would, in the most infinitesimal degree, represent the people of India. Who are the people of India? The people of India are the voiceless millions who can neither read.... The people of India are the ryots and the peasants, whose life is not one of political aspiration, but of mute penury and toil. The plans and policy of the Congress Party in India would have this vast amorphous residuum absolutely untouched.... That party contains a number of men, who undoubtedly represent a portion of the Indian people which has profited by educational advantages placed at their doors and which is more or less imbued with European ideas."<sup>143</sup> But such people, Curzon said, represented "a minute and almost

microscopic 'minority of the total population of India."

"You can as little judge of the feelings and aspiration of the people of India," said Curzon, "from the plans and proposals of the Congress Party as you can judge of the physical configuration of a country which is wrapped up in the mists of early morning, but a few of whose topmost peaks have been touched by the rising sun." And then he authoritatively declared the policy of the government thus: "The government assume the responsibility of stating that...the time has not come when representative institutions, as we understand the term, can be extended to India. The idea of representation is alien to the Indian mind. We have only arrived at it by slow degrees ourselves, through centuries of conflict and storm. Nay, it may be said that it is only within the last twenty-five years that we have in this country entered into anything like its full fruition." In this speech Curzon expressed the views which were later to guide him as Governor-General of India. Curzon had no sympathy for the Congress and considered himself as the protector of the Indian people or of the Indian peasants against the Congress or the English-educated class and Curzon devoutly hoped that he would be able to bring about the peaceful demise of the Congress. But Curzon's policies and the practical application of the concept of "benevolent despotism", while he was the Viceroy of India, shook the very foundations of British rule in India in the first decade of the twentieth century.

In 1892 British statesmen were as united and emphatic as their predecessors in 1861 in rejecting the idea of introducing representative government on British lines in India. "It may be," said Lord Salisbury, the Conservative Prime Minister, "I do not desire to question it, that it is to be ultimate destiny of India," but he said that it was "not an Eastern Idea" and that it worked well only when all those who were represented desired much the same thing.<sup>144</sup> Lord Salisbury asserted that the principle of election was alien to Eastern minds, and that its application in Eastern countries, such as Turkey and Egypt, had not produced any tangible result.<sup>145</sup> He said that considerable religious differences existed between the Hindus and the Muslims and argued that whereas representative government or government by election could work successfully in a society where all those who were represented desired much the same thing, it was put to

an intolerable strain when it was adopted in a society which was divided into two sections, one of which was hostile to the other.<sup>146</sup> At about the same time this view was also propagated by Syed Ahmed Khan, the Muslim leader, and it is the development of this view that eventually led to the establishment of Pakistan. Lord Cross also asserted that two of the most important reasons why English parliamentary institutions could not be introduced into India, were that the peoples of India lacked a sense of common nationality, and that the large majority of them were uneducated.<sup>147</sup>

The repudiation of the representative or the elective principle pleased the Anglo-Indian paper *The Pioneer Mail*.<sup>148</sup> which had previously argued that the sudden introduction of English representative institutions into India would "be a blunder so great that England would deserve to lose India forthwith."<sup>149</sup> The paper was even opposed to the partial introduction of the elective principle which, it maintained, would not satisfy those classes who were "making a trade of political agitation."<sup>150</sup>

About the partial introduction of the elective principle, Lord Salisbury had on 6 March 1890 stated that it would be wrong to believe that the introduction of the elective principle in small doses would be of much use. "At least," he said, "we know this of the elective principle from our experience of Europe, that whenever it has made for itself a small channel it has been able to widen gradually, until all has been carried before it and that is the danger of any action you may take in India."<sup>151</sup> This danger was clear enough for it was inevitable that once the elective system was introduced in small doses that would only whet the appetite of Indian nationalists for the introduction of more representative institutions. And this was what actually happened in India and Congressmen also wanted precisely this to happen.

Answering Salisbury's criticism that the representative principle was not an Eastern idea, Pheroza Shah Mehta approvingly quoted the following remarks of *The Manchester Guardian*: "Salisbury's great argument is that the elective principle is not an Eastern idea. It is sufficient perhaps to say that English rule is not an Eastern idea, yet it prevails in India, and it is by Western rather than by Eastern ideas that it is to be strengthened and made permanent."<sup>152</sup> Congressmen said that if the principle of

election was a Western idea it was too late in the day to say that it would not work in an Eastern soil, because downright elections had already been introduced in the local boards; and as the elective system had not worked unsatisfactorily in the local boards, Congressmen urged its extension in the provincial and imperial field.<sup>153</sup>

Though under the 1892 Councils Act the representative bodies that were set up could only recommend the names of candidates, the government of India, as a matter of course, accepted those recommendations.<sup>154</sup> The elective system was thus adopted, *de facto* though not *de jure*, by the traditional English method of allowing convention to grow as distinguished from the method of specific legislation. But under the Indian Councils Act, 1892 non-official members were to be chosen not from territorial constituencies, but from municipalities, district boards, chambers of commerce, and universities, and they were selected, as Lansdowne claimed, "to represent types and classes rather than areas and members."<sup>155</sup>

In April 1892 *The Pioneer Mail* wrote that because the reforms proposed in the Indian Councils Bill might raise hopes that it meant a new departure in Indian policy, future Indian agitators would be able to "denounce the Government of India not merely for being despotic, but for dishonestly pretending to be something else." That is, the Bill was "a delusion, and therefore, more or less, a snare."<sup>156</sup>

The Act of 1892 which retained official majorities in the Governor-General's and the provincial legislative councils did not impair the authority of the government of India, but as the Act liberalized the legislative councils, even though to a very limited extent, the Congress welcomed it and also expressed the hope that the rules for the selection of the members that were to be prepared under the Act, would be framed in the spirit of Gladstone's declaration in the House of Commons.<sup>157</sup> and that there would be a real and genuine, even though a limited application, of the elective principle.<sup>158</sup> The rules, when prepared, fell far short of Congress expectations.

The reason for not introducing the elective principle in the 1892 Act in any effective manner was obvious. Neither Conservatives, such as Salisbury and Curzon, nor Liberals, such as Kimberley, had any positive belief in the desirability of introduc-

ing English parliamentary institutions into India. The repudiation of parliamentary government for India by most British politicians widened the gulf that separated Indian Congressmen from their British rulers.

But notwithstanding the inadequacies of the 1892 Act the moderates did not lose faith either in representative institutions or in the British sense of justice. The faith of the moderates in British representative institutions and in the British sense of justice was expressed unreservedly by Surendranath Banerjea in his Congress presidential address of 1895. "To England," said Surendranath, "we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our peoples. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our life-blood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom. We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English political philosophy. We have been brought face to face with the struggles and the triumphs of the English people in their stately march towards constitutional freedom. Where will you find better models of courage, devotion, and sacrifice; not in Rome, not in Greece, not even in France in the stormy days of the Revolution—courage tempered by caution, enthusiasm leavened by sobriety, partisanship softened by a large-hearted charity—all subordinate to the one predominating sense of love of country and love of God. . . . We should be unworthy of ourselves and of our preceptors—we should, indeed, be something less than human—if, with our souls stirred to their inmost depths, our warm oriental sensibilities roused to an unwonted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is. . . . The course of civilization following the path of the sun has travelled from East to West. The West owed a heavy debt to the East. We look forward to the day when that debt will be repaid, not only by the moral regeneration, but by the political enfranchisement of our people."<sup>159</sup>

V. THE MODERATE LEADERS AND THEIR FAITH  
IN ENGLISH LIBERALS

The foremost among the moderate leaders was Dadabhai Naoroji who spent a life of ceaseless activity for presenting the Indian case to the British public and for arousing the political consciousness of the Indians. Dadabhai (1825-1917) was a Parsi. The Parsis were the most Westernized as also one of the wealthiest communities of India. The Parsis took to English education early and distinguished themselves as businessmen.

At the age of 27 Dadabhai became a Professor of Mathematics in Elphinstone College, then the leading College of Bombay. But at the age of thirty Dadabhai left India for England to become a partner in an Indian firm there. Dadabhai settled in England permanently and devoted his life to agitation for enlightening the British public about India's grievances. For about fifty years Dadabhai laboured in Britain for the Indian cause and from time to time submitted numerous petitions and memorandums to the government, read diverse articles mainly on economic matters before learned societies and agitated privately and publicly in England for the Indianization of the services and the liberalization of the administration of India. In 1892 Dadabhai was elected to the British House of Commons on a Liberal ticket and by his persistent endeavours he succeeded in having a parliamentary commission appointed to investigate the financial administration of India. Dadabhai was one of the first Indian politicians who analysed the economic effects of British imperialism in India. Dadabhai propounded his famous theory of the "drain" of India's wealth by Britain to which he attributed the cause of India's misery.

Dadabhai carried on agitation for the Indian cause with rare tenacity and singleness of purpose. Dadabhai's family name was Dordi which meant "twisted rope" and Dadabhai used to say "you may burn Dordi but you can never take the twist out of it. So it is with me. When once I form a decision, nothing will dislodge me from it."

Dadabhai was elected Congress president thrice, for the years 1886, 1893, and 1906. Dadabhai was specially invited to preside over the 1906 Congress to bridge the gulf that separated the moderates led by Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea, and Pheroze-

shah Mehta and the extremists led by Tilak, Bepin Pal, Aurobindo, and Lajpat Rai. The presence of Dadabhai prevented a split in the 1906 Congress, but the split came next year. Dadabhai was the great patriarch of Indian politics and he came to be known as the Grand Old Man of India.

Another moderate leader of India was Surendranath Banerjea (1848–1926). Surendranath carried on an uncompromising fight against the injustices of British rule and his affectionate countrymen used to call him “Surrender-not” Banerjea. Surendranath was one of the first Indians who passed the Civil Service examination in England and was admitted to the “steel frame” of British administration. But for a failure to correct an erroneous report furnished by a subordinate he was dismissed, a penalty which would not have been meted out to any of his British colleagues for a similar mistake. Surendranath did not accept without protest the government’s decision to dismiss him and he journeyed to London to appeal to the governmental authorities there but without success. He then appeared for the Bar examination but he was not admitted there. Surendranath was convinced that the injustice and wrongs meted out to him were symbolic of the wrongs and injustices from which Indians suffered and he determined to dedicate his life to removing the wrongs done to Indians.

After returning from England Surendranath first served as a teacher but his nationalistic spirit led him to form the Indian Association, a patriotic society of Bengal. Surendranath also founded a newspaper and by his writings he sought to arouse the patriotism of the people. Surendranath was a powerful orator and he travelled throughout the country from Bengal to Punjab preaching the gospel of Indian unity and the need of concerted endeavour to remedy India’s grievances. Surendranath translated the works of Mazzini into Bengali and made the name of Mazzini a household word among the educated Bengalees. Surendranath was jailed for criticizing a British Judge but he gladly courted imprisonment. He was one of the first politicians who courted imprisonment for the cause of Indian freedom.

Surendranath was a constitutionalist and though he exhorted his countrymen to imbibe the patriotic sentiments of Mazzini, he warned them against his violent methods. Surendranath believed in the moderation of Burke and in the liberalism of



Gladstone. Twice Surendranath was elected the President of the Congress. Throughout, however, Surendranath entertained moderate views and in 1918 when he found that the militant nationalists had decided to boycott the legislative councils set up under the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Scheme he left the Congress and formed a separate All India Liberal Federation.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) was another fine product of Indian liberalism. Gokhale came from Maharashtra and was a Chitpavan Brahmin like the moderate Ranade, whose disciple he was, and very unlike the other great Chitpavan Brahmin of Maharashtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the extremist leader, with whom Tilak differed both in political and social matters.

At the age of nineteen Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society in Poona. The members of the Society had to take a vow of poverty for twenty years in order to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the service of their countrymen.

Gokhale was a constitutionalist and a consummate parliamentarian. In 1899 Gokhale was elected a member of the then recently formed legislative council of Bombay. At the age of thirty-six he became the representative of Bombay to the Imperial Legislative Council where he distinguished himself by his speeches particularly on the budget and on economic affairs. Gokhale had a thorough mastery of facts relating to the economy of India and one of his great mottoes was "no taxation without representation."

Gokhale concerned himself not merely with political questions but also with economic questions and, furthermore, he considered that no real national uplift could be achieved without radical social reforms. Gokhale felt that one of the primary causes of the decline of India was the prevalence of the social inequalities of caste and the treatment meted out to the untouchables. Gokhale believed that it would be futile for Indians to attempt to realize their national aspirations so long as they kept large numbers of their countrymen in ignorance and degradation and regarded them as untouchables. Gokhale, like Rammohan but unlike Tilak, believed that in India the state should intervene to enact progressive social legislation.

Gokhale was a radical and even a revolutionary so far as social reforms were concerned. In this respect Gokhale's policies were

fundamentally different from those of Tilak. Tilak was an extremist and a revolutionary in politics but was a moderate and to a certain extent a revivalist in social matters. Gokhale felt that the political regeneration of India could not be attained without the social uplift of the people and he worked assiduously for the elevation of the status of the lower castes, for removing social inequalities and for cementing Hindu-Muslim unity.

In politics Gokhale was a moderate and firmly believed that the use of violence in the circumstances then prevailing in India was futile and suicidal. Gokhale stated that British rule was ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of providence for India's good. Gokhale denounced not only the revolutionary or terrorist methods but also the policy of extremism pursued by Tilak, Bepin Pal, Aurobindo and others.

But though in politics Gokhale differed from the extremists and their method of passive resistance, Gokhale supported the passive resistance movement of Gandhi in South Africa. When Gandhi came to India he was immediately attracted by Gokhale and Gandhi described Gokhale as his political Guru or Master. Gokhale believed in the spiritualization of politics and felt that right means must always be used for attaining right ends. This doctrine of the spiritualization of politics went to the heart of Gandhi and in Gandhi's insistence on the purity of means one finds traces of Gokhale's doctrine of the spiritualization of politics. Gandhi accepted Gokhale's political methods in so far as those methods eschewed violence but otherwise Gandhi's methods were more akin to the method of direct action and passive resistance preached by extremists such as Tilak, Bepin Pal, and Aurobindo.

All the moderate leaders, such as Dadabhai, Surendranath, and Gokhale had great faith in the English Liberals and in the British sense of justice. In 1893 Dadabhai Naoroji said to a British audience: "We hope to enjoy the same freedom, the same strong institutions which you in this country enjoy. We claim them as our birthright as British subjects." The early Indian liberals desired the continuance of British rule but as was stated in a resolution passed at a conference of Indian residents in the United Kingdom in 1897 they demanded that "such British rule must be based on British principles and British institutions, on British

citizenship and not rest on the existing despotic, un-British and selfish principles. . . .”<sup>160</sup>

The moderates functioned within the frame-work of British ideology and if a thing was bad it would be called un-British, as the title of Dadabhai Naoroji's book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* shows. For the early liberals political advancement of India was envisaged under the aegis of the British empire and through British parliamentary institutions and with the help, cooperation, and guidance of Britain. In this scheme of thought imperialism was not considered as inherently evil. The British were looked upon as the allies of Indian progressives and what was considered as the main enemy of progress was India's backwardness. There was a search for reasonable reconciliation between the requirements of Indian nationalism and of British imperialism. The moderates sought self-government within the empire and they said that Indians could achieve their political aims only through a long and laborious period of apprenticeship in the principles and practices of representative government.

In answer to a question in 1890 the then Viceroy's Private Secretary wrote to the Congress: "The Government of India recognized that the Congress movement is regarded as representing what would in Europe be called an advanced Liberal party."<sup>161</sup> But notwithstanding this communication from the government most Englishmen in India were, as H. Whitehead, a former Bishop of Madras, records, from the very beginning hostile to the Congress.<sup>162</sup> As early as 1888 Theodore Beck declared that "the agitation of which the Congress is the visible head will, if unchecked, sooner or later end in a mutiny."<sup>163</sup> In 1889 Sir Edward Watkin, a member of the British Parliament, even made an allegation that Congressmen were tempted to create agitation by the offer of Russian gold.<sup>164</sup> In 1894 General Sir George Chesney characterized the Congress as a thoroughly disloyal organization,<sup>165</sup> and Whitehead narrates that in the early years of the Congress "all talk of self-government in India was regarded by the majority of the British as disloyal."<sup>166</sup>

However the communication from the Government in the year 1890 referred to above encouraged and emboldened the Indian liberals and in fact the Congress also derived some support from certain members of the British Parliament. John Slagg, who was once a member of the British Parliament, wrote

in May 1886 that the first Congress was like the handwriting on the wall of Belshazaar's palace, for it showed that the educated Indians who had imbibed English political ideas would no longer remain satisfied with the system of government that obtained in India.<sup>167</sup> In 1888 Sir Richard Garth, who was once a Conservative member of the British Parliament and later the Chief Justice of Bengal, testified to the fact that the Congresses were attended by "the recognized leaders of native thought and opinion,"<sup>168</sup> and in 1890 Sir Charles Dilke after a visit to India declared that "there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, and who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way."<sup>169</sup>

The Indian moderates looked up to the British liberals for sympathy and support. They derived inspiration from the English Liberals, such as Gladstone and Morley and not from the English Conservatives. Gokhale scathingly criticized one of the great Conservatives England sent to India as Viceroy, Lord Curzon. Gokhale compared his régime with that of Aurangzeb. Gokhale said: "In Mr Morley's life of Gladstone one striking expression repeatedly occurs, it is what Mr Gladstone calls 'the profound principle of liberty.' Mr Gladstone says again and again that though Oxford had taught him many things, Oxford did not teach him an appreciation of the profound principle of liberty as a factor of human progress. Well, it seems other Oxford men, too, have not learnt how to appreciate that principle. Lord Curzon is no believer in free institutions."<sup>170</sup>

Many of the active British supporters of the Congress were Liberals and Radicals, such as John Bright, Charles Bradlaugh, Allan Octavian Hume, William Wedderburn, and others. Surendranath Banerjea in his 1895 Congress presidential address declared that though Indians had tried not to get involved in British party politics it was clear that most of the Congress sympathizers were Liberals and not Tories.<sup>171</sup>

From the middle of 1895 to the end of 1905 the Tories, in close alliance with the Liberal Unionists, remained in power in Britain. Many Congressmen felt that the Liberal Party, which

under the leadership of Gladstone had insisted on the rights of the Irish people and had supported the demand for Irish Home Rule, would sympathize much more with the political aspirations of Indians than the Tories had done.<sup>172</sup> No important political reform was introduced in the period from 1895 to 1905, and Curzon, who was Viceroy in the latter part of this period, did not believe that, during his time, India was ripe for political reforms.<sup>173</sup> *The Bengalee* wrote that just as a Liberal Viceroy, like Ripon, could make Indians forget all the defects and shortcomings of Liberal policy towards India so a Conservative Viceroy, like Curzon, could make Indians forget whatever good things the Conservative Party in the past might have done for India.<sup>174</sup>

In 1903 W. C. Bonnerjee optimistically declared that the return to power of the Liberal Party in Britain would, sooner or later, enable Indians to redress all their grievances and help them to acquire a real share in the government of the country.<sup>175</sup> The hopes of the Liberals were roused when at the end of 1905 the Liberal Party came to power in Britain and when Morley became the Secretary of State for India. Regarding this event Gokhale said: "And as regards the new Secretary of State for India, what shall I say? Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr Morley as towards a master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles as it had never hoped or trembled before. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone—will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he, too, succumb to the influences of the India Office around him and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster?"<sup>176</sup>

After the Liberals came to power in Britain Gokhale went to England and his principal aim was to interview important members of Parliament on both sides and to plead with them the urgent need for the introduction of immediate reforms in the administration of India. On returning to the Congress at Calcutta in December 1906 he made a hopeful and encouraging report of what he had seen and heard of resurgent liberalism in Britain. In the Calcutta Congress of 1906 Dadabhai also held out hopes resting on the revival of liberalism in England. A year before in 1905 Dadabhai had already written to Gokhale: "It is in Parlia-

ment we have to fight our last fight, and say our last word. . . ."<sup>177</sup>

The moderates expected that the Liberal John Morley, who became Secretary of State at the end of 1905, would govern India in a really disinterested and truly liberal way. "Some of my countrymen, I know," said Rash Behari Ghose in the 1906 Congress, "think that in relation to Indian affairs the Liberal is as illiberal as the Tory, and they may be right. But of Mr Morley it cannot certainly be said that he has given to party or class what was meant for mankind. To him the sun-dried bureaucrat is only a bureaucrat and not the very incarnation of wisdom. . . . Morley is now engaged in digging the grave of bureaucracy; and we can almost hear the thud of the spade and the music, yes, the music of the knell."<sup>178</sup>

The extremists did not hear this music of the knell.<sup>179</sup> Tilak, the extremist leader, maintained that the philosopher Morley must be different from Morley the politician.<sup>180</sup> A philosopher could talk nobly, but a philosopher would not be allowed to hold a high political position if the actual application of his moral principles injured the material interests of the British electorate. Tilak did not believe that in her struggle for freedom Indians would secure the support of any British political party. He thought that the attitude of the British labouring class towards India would be no better than that of the Liberals or Conservatives. "On the contrary," he said, "they would treat you worse, because British labourers obtain their livelihood by sending us their goods."<sup>181</sup> "There is no empire lost," said Tilak in January 1907, "by a free grant of concessions by the rulers to the ruled."<sup>182</sup> In the manner of Arthur Griffith, the Irish Sinn Féin leader, the extremists urged the people not to rely on "any such myths as English justice or English mercy."<sup>183</sup>

## VI. THE CRITIQUE OF BRITISH RULE AND CURZON'S REGIME

Dadabhai Naoroji said that British rule should be based on British principles and institutions, and that it must not be "maintained by political hypocrisy and continuous subterfuge, unworthy of the British honour and name. . . ."<sup>184</sup> A resolution of the House of Commons in 1893 which favoured the introduction of simultaneous examinations for the civil service in India and in

England,<sup>185</sup> for which Congressmen had been agitating for a long time, was not implemented;<sup>186</sup> and Congressmen pointed out that in the matter of recruitment to the superior ranks of the civil services the British rulers had not acted in accordance with the promise given in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 to the effect that race shall be no disqualification for holding government offices. As late as 1915 only five per cent of the posts of the superior civil services were occupied by Indians.<sup>187</sup>

Referring to the evils that existed in India such as its misery, its famine, and plague Dadabhai said that "the main cause of all these was the unrighteous and un-British system of Government" which was maintained "by political hypocrisy and continuous subterfuges, unworthy of the British honour and name, and entirely in opposition to the wishes of the British people, and utterly in violation of Acts and repeated pledges of the British nation and sovereign."<sup>188</sup> This was the language used in a resolution passed by Indian residents in the United Kingdom in 1897 at the instance of Dadabhai. Some complained that the resolution was couched in very strong language. But Dadabhai replied that the language used was not his own but the language of some of the most eminent British statesmen. To take the word "subterfuge," for instance, it was a word once used by the Viceroy Lord Lytton and also by the then Prime Minister Lord Salisbury who had once emphatically stated that the whole conduct of the authorities amounted to political hypocrisy. But Dadabhai never completely lost his faith in the British people for in the very next year he said: "We still believe that the British people have a conscience. We look to them for justice."

The moderates clung to the ideal of colonial self-government or Dominion Status. The struggles of the British colonies for Dominion self-government and their success in attaining the same within a relatively short time at once inspired and depressed the Indian liberals. On the first day of the first year of the twentieth century the Commonwealth of Australian Colonies was inaugurated. To Dadabhai it afforded food for reflection. Why was it that a very small part of the British Empire had been progressing during the last century by leaps and bounds while the great empire of India which had been connected with the British nation for more than a hundred years was in a most backward condition? In 1901 Dadabhai said before an

English audience: "Britain claims that Britons shall never be slaves. Is it her intention that she should make others slaves? You must insist that your representatives in Parliament do India justice."<sup>189</sup>

Dadabhai's attack on the Indian government of the time could be scathing. The whole system of government was modelled, he declared, on Russian methods, it was a system unworthy of free England, unworthy of a country which gloried itself on the possession of constitutional liberty; it was a system of government dependent largely on confidential police records. "Gagging the press is simply suicidal. There never was a greater mistake," warned Dadabhai, "than to prosecute Mr Tilak. . . . This was a new departure from the principles on which the British Government was conducted. Now you are introducing the Russian system under which a man can be arrested and imprisoned and sent away without trial and without reason being given."<sup>190</sup> In 1898 Dadabhai said that the Indian bureaucrats were wiping out whatever was left of the good name of the British by Russianizing the system and by repressing freedom of speech and the liberty of the subject and that "the Government had ceased to be British Government and had assumed the role of Russian Government."

In 1897, for example, when, in connection with the plague riots of Poona, the Natu brothers were imprisoned without trial and detained in jail without charge, Congressmen stated that it was a violation of the elementary principles of British justice, and a breach in the "sense of absolute confidence in the majesty of law and the security of person."<sup>191</sup> In this connection Congressmen referred to the right of habeas-corpus which Englishmen enjoyed, and demanded that the rule of law that informed the British constitution should also inform the British administration in India.<sup>192</sup>

The early Congressmen or the moderates admired the British nation for its democratic character, but they pointed out that the bureaucrats in India, composed mainly of British officials, were soulless autocrats and were utterly hostile to the aspirations of Indians for greater self-government.<sup>193</sup> They further lamented that Britain had used its political power to secure economic advantages at the expense of India and that the interests of Indian manufacturers had been sacrificed to that of Lancashire manufacturers.<sup>194</sup>



Dadabhai attributed the poverty of India to the drain of the wealth of India to Britain. The sole cause of India's degradation was the disastrous drain of the country and Dadabhai wrote that "not till this disastrous drain was duly checked and not till the people of India were restored to their natural rights in their own country was there any hope for the material amelioration of India."<sup>195</sup> Dadabhai's views on the question of the drain of the wealth of India were published in the form of a book entitled *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. Dadabhai pointed out that the drain of the wealth of India impeded capital formation in India. Dadabhai said: "As the drain prevents India from making any capital, the British by bringing back the capital which they have drained from India itself secure almost a monopoly of all trade and important industries, and thereby further exploit and drain India."<sup>196</sup>

Dadabhai's famous theory of the drain, though much criticized, was the first attempt made by the Indian liberals to examine the nature of imperialism which was the product of capitalism of the nineteenth century. Dadabhai's theme of the exploitation of India by Britain was later developed by many Indian publicists. Tilak, one of the extremist leaders, writing in the *Kesari* on 22 June 1897, also referred to the drain of India's wealth to England thus: "It is true that Indian commerce was very insignificant before, but that means that all the articles needed by us were manufactured by us here. Things have undergone a complete change during the last sixty years, and matters have now come to such a pass that we send agricultural produce to England and take in English manufactures. It is simply a delusion that our trade has increased. Whatever be the increase in India's commerce, it must not be forgotten that we lose in it thirty-four crores of rupees annually. Appliances like railways, telegraph, and roads have increased, but all this is like decorating another's wife. Not only do they not belong to us, but we have to suffer annually loss in interest and exchange on their account. India will never prosper in this way. Old industries and arts have almost died out. . . ."<sup>197</sup>

The moderates thanked the British rulers for establishing peace and security in place of the chaos and disintegration that followed the break-up of the Mughal empire and for saving the country from the ravages of plundering armies; but then Dada-

bhai said that the British prevented Indians from pluhdering each other in order that the British themselves might exploit the wealth of India, and that by maintaining the security of property they found that it was possible to drain away the wealth of India with perfect security.<sup>198</sup> The statement that Britain secured India from plunder was characterized by Dadabhai as only a half-truth. The whole truth was that they prevented the different peoples from plundering each other in order that they themselves might plunder all. Further, the British government, said Dadabhai, "was killing millions by famines and plagues and starving scores of millions. . . ." <sup>199</sup>

Speaking in London in 1871 Dadabhai sought to quantify the loss that India had suffered by reason of the drain of India's wealth to Britain. Dadabhai said: "The political drain, up to this time, from India to England, of above £500,000,000 at the lowest computation, in principal alone, which with interest would be some thousands of millions. The further continuation of this drain [was] at the rate, at present, of above £12,000,000 with a tendency to increase."<sup>200</sup> To this drain Dadabhai attributed the poverty of India and the "consequent continuous impoverishment and exhaustion of the country, except so far as it has been very partially relieved and replenished by the railway and irrigation loans, and the windfall of the consequences of the American war, . . . Even with this relief, the material condition of India is such that the great mass of the poor people have hardly 2d. a day and a few rags, or a scanty subsistence."<sup>201</sup>

Romesh Dutt, the first distinguished economic historian of modern India, also attributed the poverty of India to the exploitation that the country was subjected to under a foreign rule. Referring to the intense poverty of the Indian people under British rule he claimed: "The poverty of the Indian population at the present day is unparalleled in any civilized country; the famines which have desolated India within the last quarter of the nineteenth century are unexampled in their extent and intensity in the history of ancient or modern times. By a moderate calculation the famines of 1877 and 1878, of 1889 and 1892, of 1897 and 1900, have carried off fifteen millions of people. The population of a fair-sized European country has been swept away from India within twenty-five years. A popu-

lation equal to half of that of England has perished in India within a period which men and women, still in middle age, can remember.”<sup>202</sup> Adverting to the causes of the intense poverty of India and the repeated famines, Dutt stated that these could not be explained by the theory that India was overpopulated or that the population had increased too rapidly. “It was said,” he wrote, “that the population increased rapidly in India, and that such increase must necessarily lead to famines; it is found on inquiry that the population has never increased in India at the rate of England, and that during the last ten years it has altogether ceased to increase.”<sup>203</sup>

Under early British rule the industry and agriculture of India declined. “It is, unfortunately, a fact,” wrote Dutt, “which no well-informed Indian official will ignore, that, in many ways, the sources of national wealth in India have been narrowed under British rule. India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and of Europe. It is, unfortunately, true that the East Indian Company and the British Parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufacturers of England. Their fixed policy, pursued during the last decades of the nineteenth, was to make India subservient to the industries of Great Britain, and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was pursued with unwavering resolution and with fatal success; orders were sent out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company’s factories; commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers; prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of nominal duty.”<sup>204</sup>

Referring to this phenomenon H. H. Wilson, the British historian, had said that the British manufacturer “employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms. . . .” As a result, Dutt recorded, “millions of Indian artisans lost their earnings; the population of India lost one great source

of their wealth. It is a painful episode in the history of British rule in India: but it is a story which has to be told to explain the economic condition of the Indian people, and their present helpless dependence on agriculture. The invention of the power-loom in Europe completed the decline of the Indian industries; and when in recent years the power-loom was set up in India, England once more acted towards India with unfair jealousy. An excise duty has been imposed on the production of cotton fabrics in India which disables the Indian manufacturer from competing with the manufacturer of Japan and China, and which stifles the new steam-mills of India."<sup>205</sup>

As to the real causes of India's poverty Dutt had no doubt. "Place any other country," he wrote, "under the same condition, with crippled industries, with agriculture subject to a heavy and uncertain Land Tax, and with financial arrangements requiring one-half of its revenues to be annually remitted out of the country, and the most prosperous nation on earth will soon know the horrors of famine."<sup>206</sup> Dutt added: "It is instructive, if somewhat painful, to watch how this process works. The annual economic drain to Great Britain is met directly from the revenues of India. A great part of the revenues of India is derived from the soil in the shape of the Land Revenue. The Land Revenue is realized, generally, from cultivators in southern India, and from landlords in northern India, who in their turn exact rents from their tenants. Cultivators pay their revenue or rents by selling a large portion of the produce of their fields keeping an insufficient stock for their own use. Exporting merchants have their agents all over the country to buy what the cultivators are compelled to sell; and railways rapidly transport these purchases to sea-ports whence they are exported to Europe. India presents a busy scene to the winter globe-trotter when these transactions take place in every large town and market; but under the cheery appearance of a brisk grain trade lies concealed the fact that the homes and villages of a cultivating nation are denuded of their food to a fatal extent, in order to meet that annual tribute which England demands from India."

An imperial rule could not but lead to the economic exploitation of the country that was placed under such imperial domination. Dutt and other Indian nationalists referred to John

Stuart Mill's observation: "The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not, and cannot, exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle-farm to be worked for the profits of its own inhabitants." "There is more truth," wrote Dutt, "in this strongly worded statement than appears at first sight. History does not record a single instance of one people ruling another in the interest of the subject nation. Mankind has not yet discovered any method of safeguarding the interests of a subject nation without conceding to that nation some voice in controlling the administration of their own concerns."<sup>207</sup> It is on such arguments and on the strength of such economic analysis that the early Congressmen or moderates asked for a greater share for Indians in the affairs of the British Indian government.

The feature of India's foreign trade which had far-reaching consequences so far as the economy of India was concerned was the uncompensated or unrequited surplus of exports from India. The East India Company pursued a policy of purchasing Indian goods out of the revenue collected from Bengal and of exporting them to England. These purchases were euphemistically called "investments" and these "investments" constituted a drain of the wealth of India.<sup>208</sup>

William Digby, after taking into account the transfer of treasure on private individual accounts and also after taking into account the export surplus that appeared in official trade statistics, estimated that "probably between Plassey and Waterloo a sum of £1,000 millions was transferred from Indian hoards to English banks."<sup>209</sup> On this basis the average drain was £17.2 millions per annum. Professor Furber, an American investigator, came to the conclusion that "although there can be no doubt that a drain of Indian wealth in the sense above defined existed, it certainly did not reach vast proportions. The drain towards the west should not be reckoned as exceeding £1.9 millions annually during the period 1783-93."<sup>210</sup>

Speaking about the Home Charges and other expenses debited to India Leyland Jenks, an American writer, states: "The burdens that it was found convenient to charge to India seem preposterous. The cost of the Mutiny, the price of the transfer of the Company's rights to the Crown, the expense of simul-

taneous wars against China and Abyssinia, every governmental item in London, that remotely related to India down to the fees of the charwoman in India House and expenses of the ships that sailed but did not participate in hostilities, and the cost of Indian regiments for six months training at home before they sailed—all were charged to the account of unrepresented ryot.”<sup>211</sup>

Again, writing about the Home Charges Ramsay MacDonald, once the Prime Minister of Britain, observed: “And these dead charges under a foreign government are doubly serious, for they are not only drawn from Indian production but are withdrawn from India itself. . . . It withdraws from the production stream a very considerable amount of fertilizing water, and means of impoverishment.”<sup>212</sup>

The foundation of the critique of British policy in India by the moderates was what they called the “deep and deepening poverty” of the country and for explaining this poverty they referred to the drain of the wealth of India. Britain by establishing law and order provided in India a measure of security for life and property which had never existed before, but she also opened up and exploited Indian markets for her own advancing industries and this brought about a sharp decline of urban handicrafts of India and caused an exodus away from the towns to the villages and towards land. This increased the pressure on land and accelerated the subdivision of holdings and their fragmentation into small uneconomic units. Romesh Dutt analysed this development and on this basis explained the growing poverty of India under British rule. He asserted that the first impact of the modern industrial economy of the West on India, instead of helping the growth of Indian economy, brought about its decay and disintegration.

While criticizing the drain of the wealth of India early Indian moderates were really complaining against the “unrequited exports” of India. The problem of unrequited exports received considerable attention immediately after the first Great War when J. M. Keynes in the *Economic Consequences of the Peace* spoke of the burdens that would be placed on Germany if she had to liquidate the amounts claimed by the victors. Keynes wrote: “It cannot be overlooked in passing that in its results on a country’s surplus productivity, a lowering of the standard of life (caused by payment of tribute) acts both ways. Moreover,

we are without experience of the psychology of a white race under conditions little short of servitude. It is, however, generally supposed that if the whole of man's surplus production is taken from him, his efficiency and his industry are diminished. The entrepreneur and the inventor, the trader and the shop-keeper will not save, the labourer will not toil, if the fruits of their industry are set aside not for the benefit of their children, their old age, their pride or their position, but for the enjoyment of the foreign conqueror."<sup>213</sup>

To explain the increasing poverty of India Dadabhai referred the "drain" of the wealth of India to Britain under the Home Charges and Romesh Dutt laid emphasis on the role of land revenue settlements as an impoverishing factor. According to Dadabhai the drain consisted in the payment of the Home Charges, such as interest on sterling debt, payments for stores bought in England, pensions and furlough charges of the British army and civilian personnel and India Office charges. It is true that not all these payments could really be described as a "drain" inasmuch as some of these payments were made for goods and services received and it is perhaps for this reason that Gokhale did not lay the same stress<sup>214</sup> on the theory of the drain as Dadabhai did. According to Gokhale the real drain of the wealth of India constituted in the excessive employment of British personnel in India and the debit of the cost of the expenses of the India Office establishment to India's account and these Gokhale referred to as the bleeding of India.

Criticizing the expenditure policy of the Indian government Gokhale once said: "Things cannot be otherwise, for it is the Government of the people of one country by the people of another, and this, as Mill points out, is bound to produce evils."<sup>215</sup> Speaking of the "drain" of the wealth of India Gokhale said: "As in Ireland, the evil of absentee-landlordism had in the past aggravated the racial domination of the English over the Irish, so in India what can be called absentee capitalism has been added to the racial ascendancy of Englishmen."<sup>216</sup>

The moderates also criticized the use of Indian troops for imperial purposes and they objected to the use of India as a base for political manoeuvres and military actions against neighbouring countries, such as Tibet, Afghanistan, Persia, and Burma. As a matter of fact at the very first session of the Con-

gress of 1885 the annexation of upper Burma by the British was condemned. In 1904 the Congress resolved that the expedition to Tibet "was but a part of general forward policy... which threatens to involve India in foreign entanglements."<sup>217</sup> This was perhaps the earliest expression of India's dislike of being involved in foreign entanglements.

Gokhale believed that Indian nationalism could be reconciled with British imperialism but he also sounded a note of warning. He said that he could understand an imperialism which was willing to give equal opportunities to all concerned, but in India one had to face a narrower and lower kind of imperialism, which was represented by mere racial ascendancy and arrogance, and which looked upon the world as though it was made for the white races only.<sup>218</sup>

Among British rulers and politicians there was a well-established theory that Indians were not fitted for important administrative work. As early as 1862 Sir Charles Wood wrote: "Indians, though not deficient in learning and acuteness, were wanting in character and moral courage which enabled a man to act alone in a responsible position."<sup>219</sup> Similarly in 1897 Lord Lawrence wrote: "We have conquered India by force of arms, though policy and good government have already aided us. In like manner we must hold it. The Englishman must always be in the front rank, holding the post of honour and of power, as the condition of our retaining our rule."<sup>220</sup>

Denouncing the theory of white supremacy Dadabhai in his evidence before the Welby Commission said: "The Indians must provide every farthing for the supremacy of the minority of the dominant class and should not have the slightest voice in the spending of that... farthing, and find every solemn pledge given for equality of British citizenship flagrantly broken... in letter and in spirit. And why? Is it because, as Lord Salisbury says, they have the Government and have the rifles;... This Commission has the duty, at least so far as a fair apportionment of charges is concerned, to redress this great wrong." And then he added: "Do the British Indian authorities really think that the Indians are only like African 'savages, or mere children, that, even after two thousand of years of civilization, when the Britons were only barbarians, after the education they have received at the blessed British hands, producing, as Lord Dufferin



said, 'native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence,' they do not see and understand these deplorable circumstances of their true position of degradation and economic destruction? Or do these authorities not care, even if the Indians did understand, as long as they can mislead the British people into the belief that all is right and beneficent in British India when it is really not the case?"<sup>221</sup>

The criticism by Indian nationalists of British rule became most intense and most bitter during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1898-1905), one of the most brilliant men Britain sent to India. Curzon cherished with unquestioning tenacity the conviction of the superiority of Englishmen over Indians.<sup>222</sup> Curzon himself was a somewhat superior person. Curzon's contemporaries at Balliol composed the following parody about him:

My name is George Nathaniel Curzon  
I am a very superior person.  
My cheek is pink, my hair is sleek  
I dine at Blenheim once a week.

Curzon did not have a high conception of Indian character. Addressing Bengali students at the Convocation of the Calcutta University Curzon spoke of truth as primarily a Western virtue, and suggested that Orientals, like the Cretans, were not always steadfast in their adherence to truth and that they were given to flattery and suffered from other vices.

Curzon believed in paternal despotism and not in representative government. As Ronaldsday put it, in Curzon's view "there was no room for an Indian intelligentsia aspiring to lead and speak for the masses."<sup>223</sup> Curzon believed that the rule of India should remain, for an indefinite period of time, in the hands of the British, and naturally enough, in his farewell speech at the Byculla Club in Bombay, he spoke of an Indian whose destiny was bound up with those of the British race and whose development would continue to be a British duty.<sup>224</sup>

Curzon deprecated the talk of India for Indians alone.<sup>225</sup> In 1902 he said that the Indian as well as the Englishman must work in India in a spirit of refined and cosmopolitan patriotism.<sup>226</sup> But one of the obstacles that stood in the way of work in such a cooperative spirit was Curzon's belief that the Englishman

should occupy, not only an important but a clearly superior position in the administrative structure of India. In 1904 he declared that the Imperial Civil Service, the highest ranks of civil employment in India, though open to Indians who could proceed to England and pass the required tests would, as a general rule, be reserved for Englishmen.<sup>227</sup> Outside this *corps d'élite* Indians, as a general rule and as far as possible, were to be employed, except in certain cases where, for example, "particular responsibility" had to be exercised, and where it would be necessary to maintain "a strong European admixture and sometimes even an European preponderance." It was stated that the reason for reserving the higher ranks of civil employment for Englishmen generally was that they possessed "partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind and the vigour of character, which [were] . . . essential for the task." The rule of India being an English rule its tone and standard, said Curzon, must be set by the English.<sup>228</sup>

This line of thought was developed in greater detail by *The Pioneer Mail*,<sup>229</sup> the organ of the British community in India. The paper wrote in December 1908 that the higher civil service should remain "sturdily foreign" and "un-Indian."<sup>230</sup> The civil service could persist in the task of Europeanizing India if only it was composed of Englishmen who clung tenaciously to European ideals in spite of all their contacts with Indian humanity.<sup>231</sup>

By 1908 when *The Pioneer Mail* was saying that the Indian Civil Service should remain sturdily un-Indian, Indians had produced great administrators, such as Sir Salar Jang, Sir T. Madhava Rao, Sir Dinkar Rao, and others, who, as Ministers or Diwans of Native States, had discharged their duties with high ability and integrity.<sup>232</sup> The Public Service Commission of 1886-87 also testified to the fact that Indians who had gained appointments to the Indian Civil Service, through the channel of English competition, had discharged their duties efficiently and to the satisfaction of their superiors.<sup>233</sup>

Wise British administrators in the past, such as Munro, had advocated a policy of the wider employment of Indians in important government offices. In a minute in 1824 Munro wrote: "Let Britain be subjected by a foreign power tomorrow, let the people be excluded from all share in the government,

from every office of high trust and emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their knowledge and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming, in another generation or two, a low-minded, deceitful and dishonest race.”<sup>234</sup>

The policy of the exclusion of Indians from offices of high trust and position had a dwarfing or stunting influence on the Indian character. “The upward impulse,” said Gokhale in 1897, “which every school boy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Washington, and which may draw forth the best efforts of which he is capable, that is denied to us.”<sup>235</sup>

When Curzon adumbrated the policy that the higher civil service should as a general rule be reserved for Englishmen, Gokhale observed that this implied that “race shall constitute in the case of all but a very few a conclusive disqualification for the higher offices of the state,” and that this dictum was, therefore, inconsistent with the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858<sup>236</sup> which had declared: “And it is our further will, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.”<sup>237</sup>

Curzon’s highest ideal of Indian government was not democracy, but some form of paternal despotism. He believed that administrative reforms were necessary in India, but he did not think that it was desirable to concede political reforms to the educated classes.<sup>238</sup> How completely he failed to realize the strength of the demand of the educated classes for greater self-government that found expression through the Congress movement, is clearly revealed in the opinion that he expressed on 18 November 1900: “My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.”<sup>239</sup>

The idea that India should be ruled in a nondemocratic manner was preached in an extreme form by *The Pioneer Mail*, the organ of the British community in India.\*The paper asked the educated Indians not to imagine that representative institutions on the English model would work well in India,<sup>240</sup> and it warned them not to look upon the political institutions of a distant island “as

a fetish and a counsel of perfection.”<sup>241</sup> It declared that the complicated and cumbrous machinery of representative government, with its recurrent and wasteful expense of electioneering, was an amusement as local to the West as excessive litigation was to the East,<sup>242</sup> and it lamented that the many obvious benefits of the spread, through English education, of the English language in India were counterbalanced by the danger inherent in the use of English political phrasology in the totally different conditions of India.<sup>243</sup>

*The Pioneer Mail* could not envisage that parliamentary government could ever be the goal of India’s political endeavour, and it ridiculed those Indians who had a vision of this goal. The pressure for more self-government, it wrote pontifically, came from men who had “been touched by Western thought through misdirected forms of Western education,” and that such men did not and could not contribute anything for the real progress of India.<sup>244</sup> In the opinion of the paper it was vain for educated Indians to expect that all of them could have some share in the administration of the country. Even in Europe and America many of the most energetic and intelligent educated young men had absolutely no voice in the government, for modern governments were “in fact, if not in name, small cliques of aristocrats, plutocrats or oligarchs.”<sup>245</sup> It maintained that if the Indian masses were given the right to vote, and if they knew how to exercise that right, they would not vote in favour of “the frothy rhetoricians of the Congress,” but they would as certainly vote for the existing system as the British workman voted for Balfour and Chamberlain.<sup>246</sup>

In one of his early speeches in 1900 Curzon had declared that the opinion of the educated classes is one that it is not statesmanship to ignore or to despise.<sup>247</sup> But as time passed and Curzon, in spite of the strong protest of the educated classes, carried into law the Calcutta Municipal Act (1899), the Official Secrets Act (1904), the Universities Act (1904), and the measure for the partition of Bengal (1905), Congressmen became disillusioned about Curzon’s attitude towards public opinion.

Curzon’s policy created intense discontent among the educated classes and in his 1907 Congress presidential address Rash Behari Ghose went so far as to say that Curzon alone was responsible for the rise of the “extremist” party.<sup>248</sup> Though this was an

exaggeration,' there can be no doubt that Curzon's unpopular policies had, as Surendranath Banerjea declared in the 1908 Congress, deepened the nationalist sentiment in favour of self-government.<sup>249</sup>

Gokhale strongly protested against Curzon's doctrine<sup>250</sup> that efficiency of administration alone should be the highest ideal of statesmanship in India.<sup>251</sup> He lamented that Curzon did not believe in what Gladstone used to call the principle of liberty as a factor in human progress,<sup>252</sup> and in criticizing those who opposed all reform on the ground that the people were not ready for it, he quoted<sup>253</sup> the saying of Gladstone: "It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty. This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds; but it is far safer than the counter doctrine, wait till they are fit."<sup>254</sup>

#### VII. THE MODERATION OF BURKE

The Indian moderates like Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerji and others believed along with their British colleagues, such as A. C. Hume and William Wedderburn, that the interests of the Indian people and the interests of the British were not fundamentally antagonistic and that the continuance of the British connection could be made to conform to the best interests of India. Further, the moderates hoped that English representative institutions could slowly be introduced into the country by the adoption of constitutional and gradualist methods.

The English-educated intelligentsia were enamoured of English representative institutions. Their minds were full of British constitutional and political history and their first impulse naturally was to take as their own the ideal which the British had adopted in their own country. "Is English literature so barren, are English institutions so worthless," asked the *Tribune*, "that they can be read and studied without a love for popular self-government springing up in the heart of a nation?"<sup>255</sup> The paper stated that if in the course of a fifty or a hundred years Indians become fitted to enjoy a fully parliamentary form of government then the British rulers would willingly establish such a form of government in India.<sup>256</sup>

The moderates, however, felt that representative institutions

could be introduced into India only through a long period of laborious apprenticeship and not by any revolutionary means. In England there had been no violent revolution. There liberty had been built up from precedent to precedent and by the gradual and persistent force of constitutional agitation. The moderates also did not ask for any revolutionary change and they did not press for the immediate application in India of the abstract doctrines of liberty and democracy to their logical extremes. "We know," said Surendranath Banerjea in 1895, "that politics is a practical art, and it cannot deal with principles in the abstract."<sup>257</sup> In this he was at one with Burke, whose ideas on politics, he said, had influenced him greatly.<sup>258</sup>

The Indian moderates had profoundly assimilated Burke's conservative wisdom. Burke had said: "Nothing universal can be rationally affirmed on any moral or any political question, metaphysical abstraction does not belong to these matters. The lines of morality are not like the lines of mathematics. . . . They admit of exceptions, they demand modifications, these exceptions and modifications are not made by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only the first in rank of the virtues political and moral but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all." The moderates used the concepts of liberty and nationality but only as tools and serviceable instruments. They knew that these concepts had their limits and they echoed Burke in his sentiments: "I never govern myself—no rational man ever does govern himself—by abstractions and universals. . . . A statesman differs from a Professor in an university [in this respect]. . . ."

The Indian moderates and liberals were practical men. They did not engage themselves in any elaborate discussion on the nature of representative government nor did they concern themselves with first principles. They spoke of no abstract equality but of the equality as promised in the Queen's Proclamation or in the Charter Acts. And they did not quarrel with the government merely because it was a foreign government but they inveighed against it because it sought to maintain deliberately its foreign character.

Many English conservatives have, however, regretted that Indian moderates and liberals had derived so much inspiration from British Liberalism and Radicalism. "It might have been

better," wrote L. S. Amery, "for India if the English political literature of the last century had been less dominated by the abstract doctrines of a democratic liberalism which could only work in this country subject to the corrective of strong unwritten traditions, and which is in many of its aspects peculiarly inapplicable to Indian conditions. But, after all, if Indian politicians are inclined to be somewhat doctrinaire Liberals and Radicals it is still English Liberalism or Radicalism that inspires them. The leading ideas are fundamentally ours, and even with their doctrinaire theories they have mostly imbibed some of the saving qualifications, some of the historical and practical sense, on which we pride ourselves."<sup>259</sup>

The moderates had certainly imbibed along with the principle of English liberalism a considerable amount of historical and practical sense. Gokhale said that whatever political concessions the educated classes wanted, they wanted them only gradually, and that they were willing to pass through periods of laborious apprenticeship before each instalment of power. "For it is a reasonable proposition," he stated in his 1905 Congress presidential address, "that the sense of responsibility, required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West, can be acquired by an Eastern people through political training and experiment alone."<sup>260</sup>

"The Government of a people by itself has a meaning and reality but such a thing as Government of one people by another does not and cannot exist." "One people may keep another as a warren or preserve for its own use, a place to make money or as a human cattle farm to be worked out for the profits of its own inhabitants." Ideas such as these were not unknown to the early moderates but considering the weakness of the early nationalist movement in India they sought to reconcile the claims of Indian nationalism with the rights and privileges of the British government.

In spite of all their criticism of British rule, the moderates did not ask for the termination of that rule. National consciousness up to the end of the nineteenth century was weak and the people had only hazy notions of their rights. At such a stage advocates of reform could merely appeal to the sense of fair play and justice among the authorities and work for gradually building up political consciousness among their own countrymen. It is the weak-

ness of the nationalist movement of the time that made the early nationalists so moderate. This is clearly revealed in the correspondence that passed between Dadabhai, the confirmed constitutionalist, and Hyndman, the British Socialist.

Hyndman wrote to Dadabhai in 1900: "Yes, I saw your memorial in *India*. I consider it much too humble in tone.... I remember being with my old and honoured friend Giuseppe Mazzini.... To us was shown in an emissary from King Victor Emmanuel. You should have seen the old man straighten up and have heard him talk."<sup>261</sup> But it was the consciousness of his own capacity and the force behind him which gave Mazzini that strength.

"My desire and aim," wrote Dadabhai to Hyndman in 1897, "has been not to encourage rebellion but to prevent it and to make the British connection with India a benefit and blessing to both countries...." In another letter to Motilal Ghose in 1897 Dadabhai said: "I, of course, cannot join him [Hyndman] on the line that India may rebel.... Our stand is confidence in the British people...." In 1898 Hyndman wrote to Dadabhai asking: "What do you judicious people gain by your moderation? They must kick you and pass sedition acts over you, and lie about you.... Suave moderate gentlemen don't get much attention when the band begins to play."<sup>262</sup> Dadabhai in reply said: "All that you say is true, but Indians cannot do yet what you say. You should realize their position in every respect.... The Government are now openly taking up the Russian attitude, and we are helpless.... John Bull does not understand the bark. He only understands the bite, and we cannot do this."<sup>263</sup> But Hyndman persisted: "I think it a mistake to ask for charity instead of demanding justice.... Nothing will be done unless some serious agitation is set on foot.... Another word I must say. I cannot help feeling contempt for the Indians here and in India who instead of seriously taking up their own cause in a serious way... pass such a silly resolution of congratulation to the Queen as was passed at the Indian National Congress the other day. Congratulations for what? For having ruined India for two or three generations to come?"<sup>264</sup> In 1900 Hyndman wrote: "If I have succeeded... in rousing the attention of a considerable part of the English people to the mischief of our rule in India, this has been done and similar things have been done in all ages,



not by mild examinations of truth but by vigorous attacks and the use of strong language."

But the early moderates felt that as a result of peaceful constitutional agitation Englishmen would allow the people of India some voice and some power in the administration of the country. The moderates knew that reforms could come only gradually and for them British rule was not a citadel that was to be sapped but a metropolis which was to be gradually modernized.

It was perhaps inevitable, thought the moderates, that in the early years of British rule when an administrative machinery of the Western type had to be introduced into India the essential power would be retained in the hands of English officials, who were familiar with Western standards of government, but they stated that there was no excuse for maintaining in the Indian administration a monopoly for English officials and they claimed that the administration should be gradually Indianized. British ideas of gradualism and peaceful evolution had fully impregnated the minds of the moderates. They felt that the true reformer had not to write on a clean slate, for his work was more often than not to complete a half-written sentence, as was stated by Justice Ranade, the social reformer.

The approach of the moderates reminds one of Burke's exhortation to reform but not to destroy. Gokhale used to ask one of his neighbours to examine him in passages from Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* which he had learnt by heart. Gokhale paid his friend one anna for every mistake which he made in his recitation of passages from the book. The bargain proved a bad one from the point of view of his friend. Burke's condemnation of the excesses of the French Revolution was to the Indian moderates or liberals the final estimate and ultimate verdict on all revolutions. To them, as to Burke, revolution meant not so much the fall of Bastille as the Reign of Terror and for the Indian liberals revolution in India would have meant the substitution of the Reign of Law which the British had imposed in India for the reign of plunder and anarchy that had immediately preceded it.

The moderates preached the gospel of patriotism and nationalism to their countrymen but asked them to eschew violence of all kinds and to pursue only strictly constitutional methods. Surendranath Banerjea, the moderate leader, while exhorting his

countrymen to strive for the realization of their political aspirations, referred to the glorious struggle that the English had waged in their own country to secure their liberties but reminded his countrymen that such struggle should be waged through constitutional means. Surendranath said that the time had come when every Indian must "do his duty, or stand condemned before God and man. There was such a time of stirring activity in the glorious annals of England, when Hampden offered up his life for the deliverance of his own country, when Algernon Sydney laid down his head on the block to rid his country of a hated tyrant, when English bishops did not hesitate in the discharge of their duty to their Fatherland to descend from the performance of their ecclesiastical functions and appear as traitors before the bar of Criminal Court. These are glorious reminiscences in England's immortal history, which Englishmen to this day look back upon with pride and satisfaction." But then Surendranath sounded a note of warning and added a word of caution: "It is not indeed necessary for us to have recourse to violence in order to obtain the redress of our grievances. Constitutional agitation will secure for us those rights, the privileges which in less favoured countries are obtained by sterner means. But peaceful as are the means to be enforced, there is a stern duty to be performed by every Indian. And he who fails in that duty is a traitor before God and man."<sup>265</sup>

Dadabhai once met a Bengali terrorist or revolutionary in London who argued that fifty years of preaching and supplication had proved of no avail and that in order to gain independence India would have to take recourse to violent methods. The revolutionary from Bengal who believed in the bullet and the bomb said that half an ounce of lead had worked wonders and would work still greater wonders. "I felt staggered," said Dadabhai, "and could not very well repudiate the claims that were put forward...but the idea was wholly repugnant to my feelings and convictions. I still believe that India's salvation lies in the hands of the British public."<sup>266</sup>

The moderates or liberals were opposed to the use of violence and they condemned terroristic activities. The Congress officially condemned the deeds of violence committed by the terrorists.<sup>267</sup> Describing the terrorists as anarchists Surendranath Banerjea said in the 1912 Congress: "Anarchism has wrecked

the prospects of Russian freedom; an emasculated Duma was the reply of the Czar to Russian anarchism."<sup>268</sup> He declared that anarchism was not of the East and that it was absolutely foreign to the spirit of Indian culture and civilization.<sup>269</sup> Echoing Surendranath's sentiments Lajpat Rai, the extremist leader, asked: "Shall we in this land of the Buddha, in this land of the Vedas, in this land of mercy to animals...blacken our past by taking to this cult of the bomb?"<sup>270</sup>

The moderates believed in gradualism and in reform and they were wholly opposed to the adoption of any violent method. Their real aim was the development of a democratic spirit and the establishment of a parliamentary form of government in India. They therefore, believed in political liberalism even more than in political nationalism. They conceded that in order to attain democratic freedoms Indians would have to be trained in the art of parliamentary self-government and they believed that under British rule Indians would be able to get the requisite training for developing into a democratic nation. Speaking at a gathering of students in 1909 Gokhale said: "Our old public life was based on a frank and loyal acceptance of British rule due to a recognition of the fact that it alone could secure to the country the peace and order which were necessary for slowly evolving a nation out of the heterogeneous elements of which India was composed and for ensuring to it a steady advance in different directions."<sup>271</sup> Referring to the extremist movement which had come into existence after the anti-partition agitation of 1905 Gokhale said: "The new teaching condemns all faith in the British Government as childish and all hope of real progress under it as rash." But Gokhale fundamentally differed from this approach of the extremists and he declared: "We have to remember that British rule, in spite of its inevitable drawbacks as a foreign rule, has been on the whole a great instrument of progress for our people. Its continuance means the continuance of that peace and order which it alone can ensure in our country and with which our best interests, among them, those of our growing nationality, are bound up." It is because of this belief that Gokhale once said: "Why, my Lord even if I could defeat the Government to-day, I would not do it, I would not do it for this reason... the prestige of the government is an important

asset at the present stage of the country and I would not lightly disturb it."

In July 1909, Gokhale stated that no man could be so fallen as not to feel the humiliation of living under a foreign rule, but he maintained that inasmuch as because of their endless divisions, feeble public spirit, and other national defects the Indians were unfitted for immediate self-government and inasmuch as British rule alone stood between order and anarchy, "only mad men outside lunatic asylums could think or talk of independence."<sup>272</sup>

Gokhale was opposed to any aggressive or extremist political policy. Gokhale lacked the bitterness as also the recklessness of a revolutionary. It is interesting to note in this connection the evaluation of Gokhale by W. S. Blunt, who had been in diplomatic service and who had travelled widely in India. At the request of Henry Nevinston, the journalist, Gokhale and Lajpat Rai went to see W. S. Blunt. Blunt recorded his impressions about Gokhale thus: "Gokhale is a well bred, highly educated and intelligent man, a Maharata Brahmin, I believe, and according to Nevinston the Leader of the National movement. He expresses himself well in English, and I have no doubt is an able speaker. But he is clearly no leader of a revolution, and they will effect nothing without one. He lacks the enthusiasm which a belief in ultimate success would give, or even the bitterness which is also the force of hatred and despair. He told me that he did not like being called a moderate, but if he represents anything that can be called extreme, there is small chance for India. . . . He disclaimed an appeal to force in any shape. 'What could we do,' he said, 'against Kitchener and the army?' He would not hear even of obstruction. 'It is no use,' he said, 'to try to overthrow the present administration until we have something to put in its place.' Language of this sort may be true, as it certainly is prudent, but it is not the language of revolution. . . . He [Gokhale] had been a great believer in Morley, and had read all his writings on liberty, but he feared that Morley was more for personal than national liberty."<sup>273</sup>

The moderates pointed out various defects of British rule in India in the hope that the British parliament, in which they had a touching faith, would remove those defects. But they also asked their countrymen to realize that the rate of political progress in India depended not on the will of the British parliament alone

but on their own political capacity. Gokhale lamented that though the standards of family life that the Indians had evolved in the past were high, in the field of public life their achievements, compared with those of modern Western people, were quite inconsiderable.<sup>274</sup> Holding views of this nature and believing that the political capacity of Indians could develop only gradually, Gokhale did neither expect nor ask for any rapid political advance in India.<sup>275</sup>

Gokhale and other moderates believed that the propagation of liberal ideals and of a liberal attitude was equally, if not more, important than the strengthening of the nationalistic fervour against a foreign rule. The moderates wanted to educate the people and to raise the standards of public life in India and then to claim national freedom. In the age that followed, that is the age of Tilak and the extremists and later of Gandhi and the satyagrahis, the emphasis was more on the development of nationalism than on the development of liberalism. B. R. Ambedkar, one of the architects of the Indian Constitution, who regretted the latter tendency and who was never sympathetic towards the Congress, while speaking of Ranade, the political Guru of Gokhale, said: "If the India of Ranade was less agitated it was more honest and...if it was less expectant, it was more enlightened. The age of Ranade was an age in which men and women did engage themselves seriously in studying and examining the facts of their life, and what is more important is that in the face of the opposition of the orthodox mass they tried to mould their lives and their character in accordance with the light they found as a result of their research. In the age of Ranade there was not the same divorce between politician and student which one sees in the Gandhi age. In the age of Ranade a politician, who was not also a student, was treated as an intolerable nuisance, if not a danger. In the age of Gandhi learning, if not despised, is certainly not deemed to be a necessary qualification of a politician." Ambedkar had many political differences with the Congress and Gandhi and his comments on Gandhi or his age has necessarily to be taken with certain qualifications and reservations.

English revolutions were bloodless and the English political philosophers had a horror of bloody revolutions. The Indian liberals shared this feeling of their English political preceptors.

The lesson of the complex, swift, and cruel eruptions of human desires, long suppressed, had little meaning for them. They developed and retained the English feeling of opposition to direct action and aggressive politics. The Indian liberals admired Mazzini for his patriotism but asked their countrymen to eschew the violent methods of Mazzini. Surendranath Banerjea, who in the seventies of the nineteenth century made the name of Mazzini familiar among educated Bengalis, wrote: "Upon my mind the writings of Mazzini had created a profound impression.... I discarded his revolutionary teachings as unsuited to the circumstances of India and as fatal to its normal development along the lines of peaceful and orderly progress."<sup>276</sup>

The liberals represented to some extent the prosperous and well-to-do. They could afford to wait for *Swaraj*. The masses who cannot wait for *Swaraj* had not yet entered politics. The liberals could only attract the classes. In fact even the extremists who succeeded the liberals but who adopted more aggressive methods could not also attract the masses and the extremist movement, though more dynamic and aggressive, was also confined to the classes. Only later during the days of Gandhi the masses entered Indian politics. In the pre-Gandhian era Hindu politicians seeking an outlet for industry and investment looked up to Bright or the Gladstonian Liberals and the Muslim politicians of the landlord class admired the Tories and the landed classes of England, but both Hindu and Muslim politicians could afford to wait and they therefore believed in gradualism and peaceful methods.

In the meantime the British ruled India in the fashion of an enormous country-house in which they were masters and Indians had developed the mentality of good country-house servants. Greater than any victory of arms or of diplomacy was this psychological triumph of the British in India. Many early Indian nationalists accepted this country-house conception of imperial rule, they accepted the system to be right but felt that the men who worked the system were sometimes at fault so that the real need was a personal change at the top. So in 1898 Dr Sarat Mullick, venturing to dip into the future, said that the time would come when the President of the Indian National Congress would be consulted by the Governor-General and even an Indian himself might hold the high post of the Governor-

General. Indianization with a change in the colour of the administration was to bring salvation.

The moderates desired a constitution to be framed for them by the British Parliament, the mother of parliaments. They believed in Britain and in the British ideals of liberty. The moderates knew by heart one of the central principles of English politics that self-government was better than good government and that self-government could be claimed as a matter of right. But the study of British political philosophy did not dispel the faith of the moderates in the idea that though self-government could be claimed as a matter of right it could also be earned as a reward by a display of "wisdom, experience, moderation, power of persuasion, quiet influence and real efficiency."

According to the moderates the political advance of Indians could only be gradual and at each stage of progress it was necessary for Indians to pass through a course of apprenticeship before they were able to go to the next one. They asserted that it was not unreasonable to hold that the sense of responsibility required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West could be acquired by an Eastern people only through practical training and experiment.

But by the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century even the moderates had become restive. In 1904 Surendranath asked: "Are Asiatics inferior to the Europeans? Let George Hamilton answer and George Hamilton is not a friend of the people of this country. Gentlemen, are we the representatives of an inferior race, we who are the descendants of those who while all Europe was steeped in superstition held aloft the torch of civilization?"<sup>277</sup>

In the turbulent Calcutta Congress of 1906 its president Dadabhai Naoroji, a great Moderate, referred to the fact that the peasants of Russia were fit for and had obtained the Duma from the greatest autocrat in the world and that the Prime Minister of the British Empire, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, had proclaimed that self-government was better than good government. Dadabhai felt that Indians were better fitted for self-government than the peasants of Russia and he said that it was futile to tell the Indians that they must wait till all the people were ready, for the British people did not wait for their parliament till every Britisher had become fit to work parliamentary institutions.<sup>278</sup>

The early moderates claimed a share in the administration of India and nothing more. Indeed how could they claim more, since the nationalist sentiment in the country was weak and since they believed profoundly in British character and the British sense of justice? Of their sincere admiration for and faith in British character there can be no doubt. The moderates quoted the principles of English liberalism with triumph to the British rulers and they trusted that, sooner or later, the latter would translate the wisdom of their political philosophers into action. Meanwhile they studied Mill and sighed with Tennyson. The nationalist movement had not gathered much strength up to the end of the nineteenth century and the nationalist movement was confined to the educated classes. Barring a few, the moderates (and even the extremists) had not discovered any link with the vast majority of the illiterate people of the land whom they wished to serve; and without such vital links they were impotent to transmit to their countrymen the energy they themselves felt inspired with.

The influence of the moderates declined with the rise of the extremists. The extremists reacted against the moderates saying that the adoption of the political and social philosophy of the moderates would result in the absorption of India into an alien civilization and in the loss of the status of an Indian for an indeterminate and subordinate position inside the British Empire. By the first decade of the twentieth century the young and ardent had lost faith in the moderates and in constitutionalism and there came into existence the extremist movement whose leaders were in a hurry and who ushered in an era of militant nationalism.

But though the extremists derided the moderates for their Anglicism and their love of things British and for their unbounded faith in British parliamentary institutions, the main debate and dispute between the two was on the question of the political method that should be employed and not on the form of government that was to be established. It is true that the moderates looked up to Britain and to the British parliament whereas the extremists had little faith in Britain or things British and many extremists such as Bepin Pal and Aurobindo Ghose asked the people to turn away from the government and the legislative councils and to establish their own government in the



villages, that is to say, to establish a *Swadeshi Samaj* which could rule on its own. But all these were said in support of a political campaign to fight the British and not so much in repudiation of representative government or parliamentary democracy. It is true that many extremists said that they did not believe in mere institutions or in legislative councils on the Western model but in direct action and in indigenous institutions but again all these were said mainly as part of a programme to make politics more aggressive, dynamic, and effective and not so much in final repudiation of a parliamentary form of democracy. The extremists were concerned more with political methods than with the final form of government that should be established and their emphasis was more on nationalism and on the termination of British Raj in India than on democracy or on the establishment of a parliamentary form of government. But they knew—though they might not have always openly acknowledged it—that British rule could not be terminated in India forthwith and they really concentrated on the technics of a nationalist struggle against a foreign rule so that that rule could be ended sooner than what the moderates believed to be possible rather than on discussion on the form of government that would succeed such rule or in the repudiation of parliamentary form of government because it was English in origin.

#### VIII. THE MODERATES AND SOCIAL REFORM

The moderates wanted to reform the existing administration and not to replace it. The extremists who had nothing but scorn for the moderate method of political agitation wanted self-government as quickly as possible and were not particular as to the methods that were adopted for achieving the same. The extremists who were more aggressive were better suited for earning self-government for a subject nation. But then the moderates or liberals, who were constructive politicians, were better suited for developing and liberalizing the country. The moderates generally considered that for the development of the country it was essential to liberalize Indian society and to introduce necessary social reforms therefor. As a matter of fact the extremists were aggressive in the political field but were generally

conservative in social matters whereas the liberals who were moderate in politics were generally radical so far as social matters were concerned. The moderates believed that mere attainment of political freedom was not sufficient or even possible unless social anomalies such as the inequalities and rigidities of caste were removed.

But though the moderates were generally interested in social reform they realized that it would be difficult for a political body like the Congress to take up questions relating to social reform. Dadabhai Naoroji in his presidential address at the second Congress stated that the Congress being a political body could not take part in social reforms. He asked: "How can this gathering of all classes discuss the Social Reforms in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the traditions, customs, feelings, prejudices of any class but his own? ... Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reform therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of Social Reforms, and other class questions, to class Congresses." But Dadabhai added that all the delegates present were as deeply "nay, in many cases far more deeply—interested in social as in political questions, and that they were doing what they could in their particular spheres to promote social reform."<sup>279</sup>

Some of the moderates like Telang, however, though they passionately believed in social reform advocated, on grounds of expediency, that the Indian nationalists should concentrate on political reform. In 1886, a year after the Congress was founded, Telang in his famous speech "Must Social Reform Precede Political Reform in India?" said that India had made considerable political progress under its own rulers in the seventeenth century without having made much social progress and that even in England "there are still social evils, huge and serious social evils, awaiting remedy" to which "attention is not directed with anything like the force and energy bestowed on political affairs."<sup>280</sup> Telang thought that in the matter of social reform there would be enormous opposition from the orthodox and the least resistance would be encountered if political agitation was carried on for securing political reforms. He said: "If we compare the Government and the Hindu population to two forts facing the

army of reform, can there be any doubt that the wisest course for that army is to turn its energies first towards the fort represented by the Government, where we have numerous and powerful friends among the garrison.... As to the other fort, the case is as far as possible from being one of *veni, vidi, vici*. The soldiers of the old garrison are not in the least ready to 'give up,' and in some respects we have yet even to forge, and to learn to wield, the weapons by which we have to fight them." Recommending the pursuit of a policy which would encounter the least resistance Telang declared: "Let us then all devote the bulk of our energies to political reform."<sup>281</sup>

Moderates such as Telang, Dadabhai, and Gokhale, however, believed that liberalization of Indian social life was essential for the political progress of India. In a speech<sup>282</sup> to a social conference in 1903 Gokhale attacked the inequality inherent in the institution of caste as also those advocates of the caste system who argued that the Indian caste system was only a variation of the Western class system. Gokhale said: "It is sometimes urged that if we have our castes, the people in the West have their classes, and after all, there is not much difference between the two. A little reflection will, however, show that the analogy is quite fallacious. The classes of the West are perfectly elastic institutions, and not rigid or cast-iron like our caste. Mr Chamberlin, who is the most masterful personage in the British empire today, was at one time a shoemaker and then a screwmaker. Of course, he did not make shoes himself, but that was the trade by which he made money. Mr Chamberlin today dines with royalty, and mixes with the highest in the land on terms of absolute equality. Will a shoemaker ever be able to rise in India in the social scale in a similar fashion, no matter how gifted by nature he might be?" Gokhale exhorted his audience to accept the modern concept of social equality saying: "Modern civilization has accepted greater equality for all as its watchword, as against privilege and exclusiveness, which were the root-ideas of the old world."

Gokhale used to say that the attitude that the educated classes adopted towards the lower castes was painful and humiliating and that political reform or freedom could not be attained without social reform and social equality. He bluntly stated that Indians could not complain of discrimination by Europeans in South Africa or elsewhere unless they ceased to discriminate

against their own low-caste countrymen. In the same speech he said: "I remember a speech delivered seven or eight years ago by the late Mr Ranade in Bombay, under the auspices of the Hindu Union Club. That was a time when public feeling ran high in India on the subject of the treatment which our people were receiving in South Africa. Our friend, Mr Gandhi, had come here on a brief visit from South Africa and he was telling us how our people were treated in Natal and Cape Colony and the Transvaal—how they were not allowed to walk on footpaths or travel in first-class carriages on the railway, how they were not admitted into hotels, and so forth. Public feeling, in consequence, was deeply stirred, and we all felt that it was a mockery that we should be called British subjects, when we were treated like this in Great Britain's colonies. Mr Ranade felt this just as keenly as anyone else. He had been a never-failing adviser of Mr Gandhi, and had carried on a regular correspondence with him. But it was Mr Ranade's peculiar greatness that he always utilized occasions of excitement to give a proper turn to the national mind and cultivate its sense of proportion. And so, when everyone was expressing himself in indignant terms about the treatment which our countrymen were receiving in South Africa, Mr Ranade came forward to ask if we had no sins of our own to answer for in that direction. I do not exactly remember the title of his address. I think it was 'Turn the Searchlight Inwards' or some such thing. But I remember that it was a great speech—one of the greatest that I have ever been privileged to hear. He began in characteristic fashion, expressing deep sympathy with the Indians in South Africa in the struggle they were manfully carrying on. He rejoiced that the people of India had awakened to a sense of the position of their countrymen abroad, and he felt convinced that this awakening was a sign of the fact that the dead bones in the valley were once again becoming instinct with life. But he proceeded to ask: 'Was this sympathy with the oppressed and downtrodden Indians to be confined to those of our countrymen only who had gone out of India? Or was it to be general and to be extended to all cases where there was oppression and injustice?' It was easy, he said, to denounce foreigners, but those who did so were bound in common fairness to look into themselves and see if they were absolutely blameless in the matter. He then described the manner

in which members of low caste were treated by our own community in different parts of India.”<sup>283</sup>

The extremist Tilak, unlike the moderate Gokhale, wanted that Indian nationalists should have little to do with social reform and he apprehended that the nationalist movement would be split and the masses may be estranged from the Congress, if the Congress spoke out in favour of social reform. Tilak had an open conflict with the Social Conference leaders in 1895 and in a letter to *The Times of India* he said that one party, namely, those who thought on the lines of Tilak wished “to draw to the Congress as large a portion of the public as it possibly can, irrespective of the question of Social Reform; the other does not wish to go much beyond the circle of friends of reform. The real point at issue is whether the Congress in Poona is to be a Congress of the people or of a particular section of it.”<sup>284</sup> In thinking that it would be unwise for the Congress to take up the question of social reform Tilak, the extremist and aggressive nationalist, was at one with Dadabhai Naoroji, the moderate and constitutionalist leader, but whereas Dadabhai and many moderate leaders believed in a policy of social reform though they realized it could not be pursued through a political body, such as the Congress, Tilak was not enthusiastic about social reform and he wanted to concentrate all his energies on political agitation and for building up in India an anti-British nationalist sentiment. Aurobindo Ghose, the extremist leader, in his *Appreciation of Tilak*, wrote that Tilak believed that “the political movement could not afford to cut itself off from the great mass of the nation or split itself up into warring factions by a premature association of the social reform question with politics. . . .”<sup>285</sup>

It is interesting to observe that in 1890 Tilak had signed along with Ranade, the great social reformer, and certain other persons a circular letter advocating various reforms, such as promotion of female education and raising the age for marriages of girls and boys.<sup>286</sup> But gradually there developed serious differences between Tilak and the social reformers. By 1893 Tilak had begun to organize Ganapati festivals. Increasingly Tilak became more aggressive and nationalistic and he sought to derive support from Hindu sources and tradition and he was estranged from the social reformers. In 1895 Tilak made it an issue that

the Social Conference dealing with social reforms should not be allowed to use the meeting pavilion of the Indian National Congress and some of the extremists "threatened to burn the Congress pandal if the Congress allowed it to be used by the Social Conference."<sup>287</sup>

While the moderates were eager for social reform, extremists, such as Tilak, had no love for it. It may be recalled in this connection that when the Congress was originally founded Hume wanted to make it primarily a social reform body whereas Dufferin, the then Viceroy, suggested that the Congress should take up political questions so that it could act as a *darbar* in which Indian views could be expressed. The British bureaucracy in India, however, generally took the view that without a social regeneration of India political progress could not be achieved. Sir Auckland Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, in the famous letters that he wrote to Hume in the 1880's gave expression to these sentiments. Colvin wrote to Hume saying: "What, I think, people have objected to, is not so much that the Congress does not deal with social questions, as that, with social questions so urgently requiring to be dealt with, a body having for its main object political changes, should have thrust itself across the path of reforms. What, if I understand them rightly, your critics say, is, not that they expect the Congress team to draw the ponderous car of social reform, but that they find you putting your political *char-à-banc* before their social reform horse, with the result that neither will you progress, nor can they make a single stride. They fear that the people of India will find it infinitely more agreeable to clamour for place and power; to cry aloud to all that pass by that they are, in spite of much testimony to the contrary, aggrieved and neglected; to scramble for the loaves and dive for the fishes; than to impose upon themselves the rigorous discipline of social reform.... They ask of them only that they should listen to those who appeal to the physician to commence by healing himself."<sup>288</sup> Colvin argued that Western political forms could not at all be adopted in India unless Indian society was radically altered and he claimed that the Indians were "as much out of harmony with the political atmosphere breathed by us of English birth or desired by their own countrymen of English education,

as an elephant would be out of his element in Scotch mists, or a banyan tree in Parliament Street.”<sup>289</sup>

In answer Hume criticized those who were “fatuous enough to urge it as a reproach that the Congress does not directly meddle with social questions,” and he said that anyone “who should endeavour to work out the delicate and intricate questions of social reform by the aid of the rough-and-ready engine of the National Political Congress would be as foolish as someone who sought to use a plough as a vehicle of transportation.”<sup>290</sup>

The attitude of Colvin and others gave rise to a suspicion among certain Indians that the British bureaucrats were seeking to divert leading Indians from political agitation to social reform activities and to generate in them a feeling of moral superiority from their countrymen so that they may not lead their countrymen into political agitation and, as Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer recalled, in the 1890's the British wanted the leading Indians to espouse the cause of social reform and to wear a “moral top-hat, just as they did a physical top-hat!”<sup>291</sup>

Tilak and other extremist leaders felt that the advocacy of social reform would only weaken the nationalist movement and, unlike the moderates, they wanted to dissociate themselves from social reform. The extremist party that came into existence in the first decade of this century preached a gospel of vigorous, aggressive, and religious nationalism and not a policy of social reform.\* Aurobindo Ghose, the extremist leader, said: “Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation; to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility.”<sup>292</sup>

\* The attitude of the extremists to social reform has been further considered in the next chapter.

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32. Speech of 28 January 1875 (*Speeches and Minutes of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal*, p. 304).
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36. See Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 62.
37. Letter to Lord Salisbury dated 11 May 1876 (*Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, ed. Lady Betty Balfour, Vol. II, p. 21).
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- 1952), N. V. Rajkumar, New Delhi, 1952, p. 37.
218. *Speeches of the Honourable Mr G. K. Gokhale*, 1st edn., p. 665.
219. *Wood Papers*, Wood to Sir H. Maine, 9 October 1862 (quoted in Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, 1967, p. 497).
220. Ibid.
221. *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, pp. 356-57.
222. Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 419.
223. Ibid.
224. Speech on 16 November 1905, *Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 589.
225. Ibid., p. 488.
226. Ibid.
227. *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1904*, p. 560.
228. Ibid.
229. *The Pioneer Mail*, 25 December 1908. "The Civil Service of India," wrote H. Fielding Hall, "is a peculiarly English service; it is efficient exactly in so far as it is English; when Indians enter it they must be inefficient more or less.... Government must do its work in its own way, and that is the English way. No Indian can tell what that is." (H. Fielding Hall, *The Passing of Empire*, pp. 190-94).
230. *The Pioneer Mail*, 16 March 1906.
231. Ibid.
232. See speech of Surendranath Banerjea at the 1904 Congress (*Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p. 62) and speech of B. N. Dhar at the 1905 Congress (*Report of the Twenty-first Indian National Congress*, p. 43).
233. *Report of the Public Service Commission 1886-87* (C. 5327) 1887, para 61.
234. *Major-General Sir Thomas Munro: Selections from His Minutes and Other Official Writings*, ed. Alexander Arbuthnot, Vol. II, p. 322.
235. *Speeches of the Honourable Mr G. K. Gokhale*, 1st edn, Appendix A, p. xliii.
236. *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India 1905 to March 1906*, pp. 129-30. See also the *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, pp. 39-40; the *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress*, pp. 40-41, and *The Bengalee*, 17 November 1905.
237. *Royal and Other Proclamations, Announcements, etc. to the Princes and Peoples of India*, p. 4. The phrase "so far as may be" was ambiguous, and could be narrowly or liberally interpreted.
238. See Curzon's Speech on 16 November 1905 (*Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 585), and Ronaldshay, *The Life of Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 420.
239. Ronaldshay, op. cit., p. 15.
240. *The Pioneer Mail*, 19 December 1907.

241. Ibid., 22 December 1905.
242. Ibid., 13 October 1905.
243. Ibid., 22 December 1905.
244. *The Pioneer Mail*, 27 July 1906. See also Justice Beaman, "The Situation in India," in *The Empire Review*, February 1909, p. 64.
245. *The Pioneer Mail*, 15 December 1905.
246. Ibid.
247. Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 150.
248. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 756.
249. *Report of the Twenty-third Indian National Congress*, p. 48. In the same speech Banerjea said that Curzon was "the one man who, more than any other, by his labours contributed to the upbuilding of our national life."
250. See speech on 30 March 1904 (*Lord Curzon in India*, ed. Raleigh, p. 142).
251. *The Proceedings of the Council of Governor-General in India: 1905 to March 1906*, p. 132.
252. *Report of the Twenty-first Indian National Congress*, p. 7.
253. Ibid., p. 14.
254. John Morley, *The Life of Gladstone* (abridged edition by C. F. G. Masterman), London, 1st edn., p. 393.
255. *The Tribune*, 2 June 1888.
256. Ibid.
257. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress*, p. 23.
258. Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 142.
259. L. S. Amery, *The Forward View*, p. 213.
260. *Report of the Twenty-first Indian National Congress*, pp. 13-14.
261. R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, pp. 400-1.
262. Ibid.
263. Ibid.
264. Ibid., p. 412.
265. *Speeches and Writings of Hon. Surendranath Banerjea*, pp. 227-31.
266. R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, p. 57.
267. *Report of the Twenty-third Indian National Congress*, p. 68. See also *Report of the Twenty-seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 38.
268. *Report of the Twenty-seventh Indian National Congress*, p. 39.
269. Ibid.
270. Ibid., p. 40.
271. Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of Indian Nationalist Movement*, p. 41.
272. See G. K. Gokhale, "The School of Co-ordination," in *The Indian World*, July-August 1909, pp. 21-22.
273. W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries*, Part II, pp. 219-21.
274. G. K. Gokhale, *Responsibilities of Public Life*, pp. 2-3.
275. *Speeches of the Honourable G. K. Gokhale*, 1st edn., p. 759.
276. S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p. 43.
277. *How India Fought for Freedom*, pp. 1397-98.
278. R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, pp. 500-1.



279. *Indian Politics*, Second Part, pp. 8-9.
280. Telang, *Selected Writings and Speeches*, Vol. I, p. 284.
281. *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.
282. *Speeches of the Honourable Mr G. K. Gokhale*, pp. 740-47.
283. *Ibid.*
284. Ram Gopal, *Lokamanya Tilak*, p. 112.
285. Aurobindo Ghose's "Appreciation" in *Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, Madras, pp. 14-15.
286. Government of Bombay, *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, II, p. 201.
287. See B. R. Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*, p. 13.
288. A. O. Hume and A. Colvin, *Audi Alteram Partem*, London, 1888, p. 20.
289. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
290. A. O. Hume, *A Speech on The Indian National Congress, its Origin, Aims and Objects etc.*, Calcutta, 1888, p. 3.
291. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer said this to Charles H. Heimsath, author of *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, 1964, p. 227.
292. Aurobindo Ghose, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, 1952, p. 3.

## CHAPTER THREE

# *The Challenge of Militant Nationalism*

### 1. EXTREMISM

The Mazzinians hated Cavour even more than they hated the Austrians and it is perhaps true that during the Surat split in 1907, when the moderates and extremists came into open and violent conflict, the extremists hated Gokhale and the moderates even more than they hated the British. The differences between the two led to a split at the Surat Congress where even shoes were hurled. On the fateful morning of 27 December 1907 the moderates and extremists clashed and Henry Nevinston, the correspondent of *Manchester Guardian* who was present, describes the scene thus: "Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Maharatta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendranath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off up Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbanned men surged up the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos."<sup>1</sup>

The name of Mazzini was a great inspiration to the extremists or militant nationalists of India. Mazzini's works had been translated into Indian languages and his biographies had been written by Indian authors. Lajpat Rai, the extremist leader, published a life of Mazzini. In his autobiography Lajpat Rai said:

"I determined that all my life I would follow the teachings of Mazzini and serve my nation. I made Mazzini my Guru and so he continues to be to this day.... I read Mazzini's biography from cover to cover and I was moved by it far more intensely than I had been several years before by Babu Surendranath Banerjea's speech about Mazzini. The profound nationalism of the great Italian, his troubles and tribulations, his moral superiority, his broad humanitarian sympathies, enthralled me." Later Vinayak Savarkar, an extremist and revolutionary leader, made a Marathi translation of Mazzini's autobiography which soon became popular in Bombay. Surendranath Banerjea had been the first to translate the works of Mazzini into Bengali so as to place them within the reach of those who did not understand English and he popularized Mazzini among the young men of Bengal. The history of Italian *Risorgimento* was carefully studied and a society called Young India was founded in Bengal on the same lines and with the same objects as Young Italy and the cry of India for Indians echoed that of Italy for Italians.

But Surendranath Banerjea, being a moderate, asked his countrymen only to imbibe the patriotic sentiments of Mazzini and to discard his revolutionary methods. Surendranath wanted to combine the patriotism of Mazzini with the moderation of Burke. But to the extremists the appeal of Mazzini lay not merely in his patriotism but even more so in his revolutionary methods.

The study of the European literature of revolt as distinguished from British constitutional history helped to change the character of the nationalist movement in India. With the rise of extremism in India the glamour of England and English political life and institutions gradually waned and the English influence came to be replaced by influence from other countries of the West or by the influence emanating from the European literature of revolt. The study of British constitutional history had given the moderates a love for and faith in Dominion Status and Gokhale declared that though he recognized no limits to his aspirations for the motherland, he felt that the whole of his aspirations could be realized within the British empire. But the story of how the Italians had driven the Austrians out of their land gave the militant nationalists in India a new conception and a new ideal of complete independence. Self-government under British paramountcy had been the goal of the old moderate school but the

ideal of the new extremist or militant school was national autonomy and freedom from all foreign control.

The sturdy leader of the extremist movement was Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920). Tilak was very different from the Westernized moderate leaders. Tilak learnt Sanskrit and English from his father but his memory was full of recollection of Maratha history and of the days when British rule had not reached Maharashtra and particularly of the great Rebellion of 1857–1858, stories regarding which he had heard from his grandfather. Tilak imbibed the spirit of militancy and a desire for freedom from his childhood.

At the age of sixteen Tilak was an orphan. Later Tilak and his associates started a school and two newspapers to spread Western knowledge among the people of Maharashtra. Tilak helped to found the Deccan Education Society and Ferguson College but later Tilak had disputes with Gokhale and Agarkar on the question of social reform. Tilak was a militant nationalist and he considered that political freedom should precede social reform and he clashed with Gokhale and Agarkar who believed that social reform was as necessary as political agitation. Due to differences on the question of social reform Tilak severed his connection with the Deccan Education Society in 1890.

Thereafter Tilak began to propagate his views through the Maharashtrian weekly *Kesari* and the English newspaper *The Mahratta*. Tilak's methods and approach were completely different from those of the Westernized moderates who were impregnated with Victorian ideas of liberalism and who believed in secularism in politics. Instead of separating religion from politics Tilak regarded the places where Hindus congregated for the purpose of worship and festival as ideal places for propagating patriotic sentiments. In the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta* Tilak began to popularize the worship of the Hindu god Ganesh and to encourage the holding of ceremonies in memory of the Maharashtrian hero Shivaji. Unlike the moderates or liberals Tilak had no hesitation whatsoever in introducing religion into politics. Tilak wanted to rouse the patriotic pride of Maharashtrians by organizing Shivaji festivals. Tilak's encouragement of Ganesh Puja and Shivaji festivals appealed both to the religion and the patriotism of the Hindus though the same could not obviously appeal to the Muslims. Tilak also supported the agitation

against the killing of cows which Dayananda, the Arya Samajist leader, had started and which movement was to continue long after Tilak had passed away. Tilak's devotion to Hindu gods and Hindu military leaders was a departure from the secular politics of the moderates and this to a certain extent estranged the Muslims.

Tilak not only roused the political consciousness and the pride of Maharashtrians in their history before the British came and conquered India but also encouraged militant methods in politics. The stirring articles written in the *Kesari* soon attracted the attention of the government. After the assassination of two British officials in Poona in 1897 the British government in India accused Tilak of having fomented the spirit of sedition and violence by his articles in the *Kesari*. Tilak was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for eighteen months.

Coming out of the prison Tilak continued his patriotic activities. During this time the political situation in India was changing rapidly and in 1905 with the agitation against the partition of Bengal the whole political scene in India was utterly transformed. During the anti-partition agitation there emerged the extremist movement and a demand for *Swaraj*. Tilak and other extremist leaders preached a policy of direct action and passive resistance and they denounced what they called the political mendicancy of the moderates. The rift between the moderates and extremists began to increase and Dadabhai Naoroji was brought from England to preside over the 1906 Congress in order to bridge the rift. As a result of Dadabhai's mediation the gulf between the two was bridged only temporarily but next year at the session of the Congress at Surat the differences again reached such proportions that the meeting degenerated into a riot and shoes were hurled and sticks brandished.

Tilak's militancy again brought him into trouble with the government and shortly after the Surat session Tilak was tried for sedition and was sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment. Tilak, like many subsequent political leaders such as Nehru and Bose, utilized the solitude of prison for further studies. In the Mandalay prison in Upper Burma where Tilak was confined, he wrote his interpretation of the *Gita* pointing out that the real message of the *Gita* was not so much renunciation as preached in the later parts, but a call to action as proclaimed in the opening

parts. Tilak proclaimed that the *Gita* had preached a gospel of incessant activity. A similar interpretation was put forward by Aurobindo, another extremist leader, who after coming out of prison said that the *Gita* was placed in his hands in prison by a higher force so that he may preach the gospel of *Sanatana Dharma*. Tilak was a political realist and in the *Gita* he found an inspiration not only for action but justification even for violent action in a righteous cause. This latter part of the interpretation appealed to the revolutionists and terrorists of the time.

The government considered that by his writings in the *Kesari* and by his deftly veiled innuendos Tilak had supported the gospel of violence. Twice Tilak was imprisoned on charges of sedition. Valentine Chirol, the British journalist who came to India at that time, described Tilak as the father of the Indian unrest. It does not appear, however, that Tilak openly preached violence. In fact Tilak often said that Indians did not have arms and that in the absence of arms a violent revolution would be futile. But Tilak felt that Indians did not need any arms and by a policy of passive resistance alone *Swaraj* could be attained. Though Tilak did not preach the adoption of violent methods he did not consider that a subject people had no right to resort to violence for the attainment of freedom. For Tilak's services to the nation he was called Lokmanya (honoured by the people). After the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were introduced Tilak was in favour of giving the legislative assemblies that were to be set up thereunder a trial, unlike Gandhi. The untimely death of Tilak in 1920 created a political vacuum which was filled up by Gandhi.

During the anti-partition agitation Tilak wrote: "The time has come to demand *Swaraj* or Self-Government. No piece-meal reform will do. The system of the present administration is ruinous to the country. It must mend or end." According to Tilak *Swaraj* was the birthright of every Indian. The word *Swaraj* is an old term. It is a vedic term. Tilak borrowed the word from Hindu shastras and in Tilak's value system *Swaraj* was a moral necessity.<sup>2</sup> "The term [*Swaraj*]," said Bepin Pal, another extremist leader, "is used in the *Vedanta* to indicate the highest spiritual state, wherein the individual having realized his identity with the universal, is not merely free from all Bondage, but is established in perfect harmony with all else in the world."<sup>3</sup>

According to this approach *Swaraj* was not merely political but a moral concept and the state of *Swaraj* was distinguished from the English word "freedom" because the former, unlike the latter, was a positive not a negative concept. "The corresponding term in our language," said Bepin Pal, "is not *non-subjection* which would be a literal rendering of the English word Independence but self-subjection which is a positive concept. It does not mean absence of restraint or regulation or dependence but self-restraint, self-regulation and self-dependence. In fact our self-subjection means a good deal more than whatever the terms self-restraint, self-regulation, or self-dependence would convey in English. . . . Self-subjection means therefore in our [Hindu] thought, really and truly subjection to the universal. The complete identification of the individual with the universal, in every conscious relation of his life, is thus with us, an absolute condition-precedent of the attainment of freedom, as it would be called in English."<sup>4</sup> The idea that *Swaraj* was not merely a political concept and was not tantamount to the mere termination of British rule, but that it was a spiritual concept denoting the regulation of the self by a higher moral ideal was later elaborated and propagated by Gandhi.

Another extremist leader who, like Tilak, spoke in favour of the ideal of *Swaraj* was Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), one of the most arresting personalities that the extremist movement produced. Though Aurobindo was an exponent of extreme Indian nationalism he had from the beginning a highly Westernized education. Aurobindo had been admitted to a Convent School at the age of five and he was taken to England for studies at the age of seven. After leaving Cambridge University, Aurobindo returned to India in 1893 and obtained employment in the princely state of Baroda. But during the anti-partition agitation he left his job as the Vice-Principal of the Baroda College and threw himself into the vortex of that agitation.

Aurobindo's stirring articles and writings in the *Bande-Mataram* endeared him to the people but roused the wrath of the British-Indian government. Aurobindo was deeply religious by nature and his political writings were full of references to religion. Long before Gandhi, Aurobindo, like the other extremists such as Tilak, Bepin Pal and Lajpat Rai, began to mix religion with politics.

Aurobindo protested not merely against the political domination of the country by the British but against the entire process of the Westernization of India and in this his ideas were later elaborated and developed by Coomaraswamy and Gandhi. Aurobindo said that the educated Indians have become denationalized and he sought to rouse them by a spirit of religious nationalism. Thus Aurobindo, like the other extremists, departed from the secular tradition of politics which the moderates or liberals had sought to develop.

The British Government in India arrested Aurobindo on a charge of complicity in the Alipore Bomb Case. The defence put forward on behalf of Aurobindo by C. R. Das, who later became the leader of the Swarajist Party and came to be known as Deshabandhu (Friend of the Country), was that Aurobindo was a poet of patriotism and prophet of nationalism. Whether Aurobindo was really implicated in the Alipore Bomb Case will remain a mystery (though Barindra Ghose, his brother, has described Aurobindo as the "leader of the Secret Party of violence"<sup>5</sup>). But Aurobindo made no secret of his faith that for attaining independence the adoption of violent methods could not be described as unethical and he never gave his allegiance to the doctrine of absolute nonviolence which Gandhi subsequently preached.

Aurobindo's confinement in prison after the Alipore Bomb Case only whetted his fighting spirit and after release from prison he began to preach a gospel of religious nationalism saying that patriotism was not politics but religion. But politics could not hold Aurobindo for long and the religious instinct eventually overwhelmed his political urge so that in 1910 Aurobindo left his family and Bengal and settled in Pondicherry where he spent about four decades in meditation and spiritual realization and emerged as a great mystic and religious teacher known throughout the world as "Sri Aurobindo."

Aurobindo defined *Swaraj* as meaning complete independence from British rule. "We of the new school," he said, "would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute *Swaraj*—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom."<sup>6</sup> Aurobindo stated his ideal thus: "Our ideal is that of *Swaraj* or absolute autonomy free from foreign control. We claim the right of every nation to live its own life by its own energies according to its own



nature and ideals. We reject the claim of aliens to force upon us a civilization inferior to our own or keep us out of our inheritance on the untenable ground of a superior fitness.”<sup>7</sup>

The leaders who helped to spread the extremist movement in Bengal were Aurobindo Ghose and Bepin Pal. Bepin Pal (1858–1932) has been described as the chief architect of the Swadeshi movement of 1905. Bepin Pal first started his political life as a moderate. But after 1904 Pal began to give expression to his extremist views in *New India*, whose stirring articles did much to foster the growth of extremism and the demand for *Swaraj* in India. During the period from 1904 to 1908 Pal was the chief exponent of extremism in Bengal and like Aurobindo he believed in religious or spiritual nationalism. In August 1908 Pal visited England and gradually a change came over his political ideas and during the period from 1908 to 1911 Pal propagated the idea of Imperial Federation in place of his previous ideal of *Swaraj* and asserted that there was no necessary contradiction in the ideas of nationalism and imperialism but that the same could be harmonized “in the larger life of some federal Empire.”<sup>8</sup> Pal was also a staunch advocate of the federal idea and he came to believe in “a Pan-Indian Federation, the United States of India.”<sup>9</sup> Pal’s visit to England also brought him in contact with socialist thought and like the other extremist leader from Punjab, Lajpat Rai, Pal was one of the first Indian leaders to come in contact with socialist thought though he was not converted to it. Pal considered that the essential idea of socialism was not different from the egalitarian ideas of the ancient Hindu rishis and he even spoke of “Hindu socialism.”<sup>10</sup>

Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Pal constituted the extremist triumvirate called “Lal-Bal-Pal.” Lajpat’s father was a follower of the Muslim sect headed by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan but his mother belonged to a staunch Sikh family and in 1882 Lajpat joined the Arya Samaj founded by Dayananda. As an Arya Samajist, Lajpat believed in social reform and he was not a Hindu revivalist like the other extremist leader Tilak. Referring to Tilak, Lajpat used to say: “He was a pucca Sanatanist; I was an Arya Samajist.” In social reform matters Lajpat was nearer the moderates, such as Telang and Gokhale, than the extremists, such as Tilak and Aurobindo. But in politics Lajpat followed the extremist creed by supporting

Swadeshi, Swaraj, Boycott, and a programme of National Education. Even in the days when Gandhi was engaged in his non-cooperation movement Lajpat continued to have faith in the political policy of the extremists, whose chief exponent had been Tilak, and Lajpat started the Tilak School of Politics in Lahore. Lajpat's visit to England and the United States brought him in contact with socialist thought and he was attracted to socialism though he was not converted to it.<sup>11</sup> Further, Lajpat did not believe in the international solidarity of the working class for he felt that the interests of the working class of Britain, which ruled India, were bound to be different from the interests of the Indian working class,<sup>12</sup> and he often told Jawaharlal Nehru not to expect too much from the socialist forces in Britain. In political matters Lajpat, like the other extremists, believed that India must rely on her own strength and should not look to Britain for any help and he derided the moderate method of constitutional agitation.

The moderates believed in representative government and they hoped that under British rule Indians would gradually become fitted for operating parliamentary institutions in India. Accordingly they believed in gradualism and not in a policy of the sudden or violent termination of British rule. They were not oblivious of the indignity of being members of a subject nation and Dada-bhai said in 1905: "Suppose by some mischance England came under French or German or some alien despotic Government . . . in the same condition and under the same circumstances as India is at present, will he not, as an Englishman, do his utmost to throw off 'the heaviest of all yokes,' the yoke of the stranger, even though all Englishmen were full of all faults which the Anglo-Indians, rightly or wrongly, ascribe to the Indians? Will he not as an Englishman at once tell me 'corrupt or not corrupt, faults, or no faults, a Briton shall never be a slave.' And yet he coolly justifies and assumes the right divine of making other people slaves."<sup>13</sup> But, none the less, the moderates were prepared to wait till Indians acquired fitness for parliamentary self-government. But the extremists did not care so much for the establishment of a democratic form of government as for the establishment of an Indian government or a government which was in Indian hands. The extremists asked for freedom not on the ground that Indians were fit to operate democratic institutions

but on the simple ground that in India, Indians must rule and that freedom or *Swaraj* was their birthright.

The attitude of the extremists towards British rule was that however much it might be improved and liberalized it could never be made as beneficial to Indians as an indigenous Indian rule could be.<sup>14</sup> Their attitude was the same as that of the Irish Sinn Féiner Arthur Griffith who had said: "[In] the British Liberals as in the British Tory we see our enemy, and in those who talk of ending British misgovernment we see the helots. It is not British misgovernment, but British government in Ireland, good or bad, we stand opposed to."<sup>15</sup>

Lajpat Rai, the extremist leader, wrote that the politicians of a free nation might aptly be divided or classified into radicals, liberals, or conservatives, into evolutionaries and revolutionaries, into Royalists and Republicans, into democrats or anti-democrats, but a subject nation could have no politics except the politics of freedom. Every national of a subject country had to be a nationalist. If he was a nationalist it did not matter whether he believed in democracy or autocracy. The days of Gokhale, whom sympathetic Britishers felt they could trust with democratic responsibility, were over and the policy of the extremists headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bepin Pal, Lajpat Rai, and Aurobindo Ghose, which bewildered British liberals, came to be hailed by the rising generation of politically conscious Indians.

Later with the coming of Gandhi the emphasis on self-government or *Swaraj* became even more pronounced. For Gandhi "anarchy under home rule was better than even orderly foreign rule." He asked the British to leave India to God or Anarchy. Gandhi considered that it was the absolute right of India even to misgovern herself, for self-government was anytime better than good government.

The liberal lawyers and jurists who dominated the moderates had acquired the legal habit and the legal mind of looking at things political in terms of positive law and they had a profound faith in the rule of law and in the order and security that the British rulers had introduced in the country. A study of Indian history had convinced them that the British had established peace and order in the midst of the chaos of warring nationalities that prevailed in India before the British came, much in the same manner that the Roman Empire had once established peace in

Europe. Any revolutionary activity might endanger that peace, subvert law and order, and plunge India back into the chaos out of which it had emerged under the iron rule of the British. For the moderates the maintenance of law and order in the country was as necessary as the struggle to attain greater political liberties and they did not want to jeopardize the peace that the British maintained in India by a policy of political adventurism. Gokhale said that the continuance of British rule meant the continuance of that peace and order which it alone could maintain. Consequently the moderates urged their countrymen to seek greater political rights only by means of constitutional agitation and not by resort to violence or revolutionary means.

Moderatism or liberalism was based on a dread of any disturbance of the law and order that existed in the country. In the oratorical style of Burke or Gladstone the moderates gave utterance to their liberalism and their belief in gradualism. They sought to make the provincial legislatures and the civil service more representative and more Indian, but the process was long and the progress slow. In the unprogressive economic and political structure of the country and particularly in the background of Curzon's unpopular policies including the partition of Bengal, the youth of India thirsted for action and they found little outlet for their energies in the constitutional method of agitation that the moderates sought to pursue.

The 1904 Congress strongly criticized Curzon's proposal to divide "the Bengali nation into separate units."<sup>16</sup> As a protest against the partition of Bengal (October 1905), the nationalists supported a policy of boycotting British goods. They were disappointed when Morley described the partition as a settled fact,<sup>17</sup> but they refused to accept that the question of partition had been finally settled.<sup>18</sup> Surendranath Banerjea declared that in order to undo the partition, the Bengalis would fight with the same determination with which Irishmen, in spite of their many failures over a hundred years, had steadfastly persevered in their struggle for the attainment of complete home rule.<sup>19</sup>

The moderate Gokhale lamented that Curzon's unpopular policies had created such discontent that many nationalists were growing up in a spirit of "Irish bitterness."<sup>20</sup> But this was exactly what the extremists wanted. In 1907 Bepin Pal said that Curzon was a better Viceroy than Ripon and he made the para-

doxical statement that the "Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon... [had] been one of the most beneficent if not decidedly the most beneficent Viceroyalty that India ever had."<sup>21</sup> He meant that he preferred the policy of Curzon to that of Ripon because while Ripon satisfied educated Indians with political concessions, Curzon, by his unpopular policies, made them so discontented that they demanded *Swaraj* more urgently than they had ever done before.

Aurobindo told Henry W. Nevinson, the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, that he considered the partition of Bengal to be a most beneficial measure because, by arousing intense opposition among the people, that measure had stirred up and strengthened national feeling.<sup>22</sup> He lamented that the unbroken peace maintained by Britain in India had emasculated the Indians, and had reduced them "to the condition of sheep and fatted calves." Under British rule the ordinary man devoted his energies to money-making and the thoughtful man spent his time in admiring and imitating Shelly and Swinburne. This tendency of degeneration and of denationalization was, interrupted by "the disguised blessings of Lord Curzon's errors."<sup>23</sup>

By the closing years of the nineteenth century there had grown up a new generation whose estimate of British rule and British character was founded only on experience of evasion of promises and of repression and not primarily on a study of Shelly, Burke, or Mill. A growing section of the people began to deride the idea of dependence on the British public for the redress of India's woes. With the increasing disillusionment in the British sense of justice and as a reaction to Curzon's proposal for the partition of Bengal there came into existence the extremist party led by Tilak, Pal, Aurobindo, and Lajpat.

The words "moderates" and "extremists" had according to Tilak "a specific relation to time. The Extremists of today will be Moderates tomorrow just as the Moderates of today were Extremists yesterday."<sup>24</sup> When the National Congress was first started and Dadabhai Naoroji's criticisms of British rule were made public, he was, Tilak pointed out, "styled as an Extremist. We are extremists today and our sons will call themselves Extremists and us as Moderates."<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note that Tilak himself started his political life as a moderate. During this phase of moderatism Tilak had

said: "We do not desire to weaken the Government. On the contrary, we wish to strengthen it, to render it impregnable to all assaults, whether from Russian or any other foe."<sup>26</sup> For this purpose Tilak asked for greater association of Indians in the administration of the country. But by 1896 Tilak had begun to lose his faith in the British sense of justice. Writing in *Kesari* on 12 January 1897 Tilak said: "For the last twelve years we have been shouting hoarse desiring that the government should hear us. But our shouting has no more affected the government than the sound of a gnat. Our rulers disbelieve our statements or prefer to do so. Let us now try to force our grievances into their ears by strong constitutional means." But though by 1897 Tilak had lost faith in the British sense of justice he yet advocated the use of constitutional methods and not the method of passive resistance. By the middle of the first decade of this century, however, Tilak came to advocate the adoption of the fourfold programme of *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, national education, and boycott and he asserted that the political salvation of India lay not in supplication but in self-assertion, not in submission but in counteraction or in direct action. "Political rights," said Tilak, "will have to be fought for. The moderates think that these can be won by persuasion; we think that they can only be got by strong pressure." Instead of prayers and petitions, the extremists believed in the programme of *Swadeshi*, boycott, and national education.

The contrast between the moderates or liberals and the extremists or militant nationalists and the differences in their methods and approach can best be seen if a comparison is made between Gokhale, the moderate leader, and Tilak, the extremist leader. P. Sitaramayya, the official historian of the Congress, has brought out the contrast between Gokhale and Tilak and though his evaluation is more sympathetic to Tilak it brings out the basic differences in the approach of these two leaders. Sitaramayya wrote: "Gokhale's plan was to improve the existing constitution; Tilak's was to reconstruct it. Gokhale had necessarily to work with the bureaucracy; Tilak had necessarily to fight it. Gokhale stood for cooperation wherever possible and opposition wherever necessary; Tilak inclined towards a policy of obstruction. Gokhale's prime concern was with the administration and its improvement; Tilak's supreme consideration was with the Nation

and its upbuilding. Gokhale's ideal was love and sacrifice, Tilak's service and suffering. Gokhale's method sought to win the foreigner, Tilak's to replace him. Gokhale depended upon others' help, Tilak upon self-help. Gokhale looked to the classes and the intelligentsia, Tilak to the masses and the millions. Gokhale's arena was the Council Chamber; Tilak's forum was the village Mandap. Gokhale's medium of expression was English; Tilak's was Marathi. Gokhale's objective was self-government for which the people had to fit themselves by answering the tests prescribed by the English; Tilak's objective was Swaraj which is the birthright of every Indian and which he shall have without let or hindrance from the foreigner. Gokhale was on a level with his age. Tilak was in advance of his times."<sup>27</sup>

Tilak and other extremists advocated a policy of non-cooperation with the British government. But did they also advise the people to try to subvert British rule violently as the terrorists did? Tilak, who poured ridicule on the moderates by saying that their policy of three p's—pray, please, and protest—would never be effective, said on 7 June 1906: "Look to the examples of Ireland, Japan, and Russia and follow their methods."<sup>28</sup> Did this mean that Tilak supported the methods of Irish or Russian terrorists? It is possible that Tilak's speeches were interpreted by some as amounting to a tacit justification of the methods of the terrorists, but it does not appear that Tilak definitely and unequivocally advocated the use of violent methods.<sup>29</sup> But Tilak was opposed to the adoption of the methods of violence not on ethical or moral grounds but purely on the ground of expediency. Tilak used to say that if there was even a fifty per cent chance of the success of an armed rebellion in India he would resort to it,<sup>30</sup> but he felt that there was no such chance.

Tilak, Aurobindo, and Pal argued that the illiberal policy of the government was responsible for the "rank and noxious fruit of terrorism," and they criticized the policy of the government as well as the method of terrorists.<sup>31</sup> After two English ladies were killed on 30 April 1908 as a result of a bomb thrown by a terrorist, Shamsundar Chakravorty, an extremist leader, wrote: "Outrages of this kind have absolutely no sanction in our ancient tradition and culture. . . . Moderatism is imitation of British constitutionalism, this form of so-called extremism . . . is imitation of European anarchism, and both are absolutely foreign to the spirit

of nationalism, which though opposed by one and occasionally mistaken for the other is bound in the long run to carve out the future of India."<sup>32</sup> In his 1907 Congress presidential address Rash Behari Ghose, referring to the extremist party, said: "Like the Sinn Fein party in Ireland it has lost all faith in constitutional movements, but it must be said to its credit that it has also no faith in physical force."<sup>33</sup>

The extremist Pal said that in the disarmed and disorganized condition of the people of India any violent uprising could easily be checked and controlled by the government.<sup>34</sup> Similarly Aurobindo admitted that the physical strength of the country belonged largely to the established authority, and he warned the people not to come into any violent physical conflict with the authorities.<sup>35</sup> In January 1907, Tilak declared: "We are not armed, and there is no necessity of arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon in boycott."<sup>36</sup>

Tilak said: "When you prefer to accept *Swadeshi*, you must boycott *Videshi* [foreign] goods. Without boycott *Swadeshi* cannot flourish." For Tilak boycott was a weapon of war and a substitute for the bullet. "As we cannot go to war as did the Boers in South Africa," said Tilak, "the next best thing is to refuse to buy British goods. That is the spirit behind the *Swadeshi* and boycott movement."<sup>37</sup> For Tilak boycott was not so much an economic weapon as a weapon of political warfare. "The Congress agitation based on the so-called 'constitutional methods' is sheer waste of time," said Tilak and he argued that the constitutional methods that were available in England were totally inapplicable to Indian conditions for Indians had no democratic constitution through which they could attain power. "In all seriousness," wrote Tilak in the *Kesari* on 12 February 1907, "one can suggest that what Mr Gokhale called India's Constitution is really the Indian Penal Code. If he and his moderate friends suggest that our agitation should be within the four corners of that Code we can appreciate the argument—then it will mean that it should be legal and legitimate—that is perfectly understandable. . . . It would be more honest and realistic to ask the people to be legal in their agitation, the scope of which can be determined by circumstances, but it is futile and misleading to call it constitutional."

Tilak sought to substitute the method of passive resistance for



the moderate method of constitutional agitation. He exhorted his countrymen to make the administration impossible by non-cooperation. In 1902 Tilak said: "Though downtrodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so. It is you who make settlements and collect revenues, it is in fact, you who do everything for the administration, though in a subordinate capacity, you must consider whether you cannot turn your hand to better use for your nation than drudging on in this fashion."<sup>38</sup>

In a public lecture at Calcutta in 1907 Tilak elaborated his ideas further and said: "What the new party wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be for ever fallen. If you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence so as not to assist this foreign Government to rule over you? This is boycott, and this is what is meant when we say boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them our assistance to collect revenue and keep the peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when the time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united effort? If you can you are free from tomorrow.... This is the line of thought and action in which you must train yourself. This is the way a nation progresses, this is the way national sentiment progresses, and this is the lesson you have to learn from the struggle now going on."<sup>39</sup> Later, these ideas were repeated and were applied on a larger scale by Gandhi during the non-cooperation movements that he launched.

In the same speech Tilak said: "We thought that everything that the rulers did was for our good and that this government has descended from the clouds to save us from the invasions of Tamerlane and Chengis Khan, and, as they say, not only from foreign invasions but from internecine warfare, or the internal or external invasions, as they call it. We felt happy for a time but it soon came to light that the peace which was established in this country did this, as Mr Dadabhai has said in one place—that we were prevented from going at each other's throats, so

that a foreigner might go at the throat of us all. . . . We believed in the benevolent intentions of the government, but in politics there is no benevolence. Benevolence is used to sugar-coat the declarations of self-interest and we were in those days deceived by the apparent benevolent intentions under which rampant self-interest was concealed. . . . English education, growing poverty, and better familiarity with our rulers, opened our eyes and our leaders, the venerable leader who presided over the recent Congress [Dadabhai Naoroji] was the first to tell us that the drain from the country was ruining it. . . . So terribly convinced was he of this that he went over from here to England and spent twenty-five years of his life in trying to convince the English people of the injustice that is being done to us. . . . He has come here at the age of eighty-two to tell us that he is bitterly disappointed. He is a friend of mine and I believe that this is his honest conviction. Mr Gokhale is not disappointed but is ready to wait another eighty years till he is disappointed like Mr Dadabhai."

Tilak went on to say that the extremists were not pessimists and that they would gain better results by adopting more militant methods. He asked the people not to rely on any such illusion as the British sense of justice. "There is no empire lost," he said, "by a free grant of concession by the rulers to the ruled. History does not record any such event. Empires are lost by luxury, by being too much bureaucratic or overconfident or from other reasons. But an empire has never come to an end by the rulers conceding power to the ruled."

Aurobindo, Tilak, and Pal asked the people not to rely at all on the foreign rulers and not to cooperate with the government. Aurobindo said that as "no representation, no taxation" had been the principle of the American revolutionaries, similarly "no control, no cooperation" should be the motto of the Indian nationalists.<sup>40</sup> The basic theory of Tilak, Aurobindo, and Pal, which was later put into application on a mass scale by Gandhi, was that as the existence of the government of India depended on the cooperation of the people, the government would cease to function or to exist the very day the people withdrew their cooperation from the government.<sup>41</sup> If that was so, then why were Indians content to remain the willing instruments of their own oppression? Pal, who unlike the Westernized moderates

liked to express his political ideas in the phraseology of Indian philosophical literature, argued that this riddle could be explained by the fact that the Indian people were under the spell of *maya* (illusion) which prevented them from perceiving the reality of the Indian situation.<sup>42</sup> The Indian people had been hypnotized to believe that, though they were three hundred millions of people, they were weak and that their rulers were strong.<sup>43</sup> They had been told that they were unfit to manage their own affairs, and that, compared with the peoples of the modern West, they were uncivilized. They cherished the illusion that Englishmen came to India for the altruistic mission of civilizing Indians, and for training them in the art of Western democratic self-government. They did not know that the Englishman's mission in India was not altruistic but commercial and economic,<sup>44</sup> that the Englishman came to India to exploit the resources of the country, to spread his trade and commerce, and in order to found an empire.<sup>45</sup> When Englishmen said that they came to India on a civilizing mission, the Indian people, "untrained in the crooked ways of civilized diplomacy,"<sup>46</sup> believed in their words, and they developed such a great faith in the liberal instincts of the British people that they came to look upon the British rulers "as more than human and little less, if less at all, than God."<sup>47</sup>

Because the beneficent activities of a despotic government increased its hold over the acquiescence, if not on the affection of the people, Pal wanted to restrict the beneficent activities of the government of India within the narrowest possible limits, that is, he wanted to make it responsible only for maintaining the internal and external security of the Indian state.<sup>48</sup> In other words, he advocated a policy of *laissez-faire*. The theory of *laissez-faire* formed an important part of the liberal theory of freedom. Borrowing a term from the phraseology of European political theory the moderates sometimes described themselves as liberals. Pal argued that the Indian moderates were not liberals, because unlike most liberals of Western countries, they did not believe in *laissez-faire* but wanted to increase the powers and functions of the state.<sup>49</sup> •

Bepin Pal, like Tilak, advocated a policy of passive resistance and not the adoption of violent means. Again the objection to the use of violence sprang from practical and not from any

ethical consideration or any abstract love for the doctrine of *Ahimsa*. Bepin Pal said: "No one outside a lunatic asylum will ever think, of, or counsel any violent or unlawful methods in India, in her present helplessness for the attainment of her civil freedom."<sup>50</sup> But Pal believed that the method of passive resistance would be no less effective and he said: "If we may not oppose physical force by physical force, we may yet make the administration in India absolutely impossible by simply taking our hands off the machine of the state. . . . By refusing to accept it [the government] as our own . . . a refusal which is in nowise criminal, we can, we believe, bring this Government down on its knees far more effectively by absolutely peaceful means than we may ever hope to do by any violent measures. Our ideal is freedom, which means absence of all foreign control. . . . Our method is Passive Resistance, which means organized determination to refuse to render any voluntary or honorary service to the government."<sup>51</sup>

Lajpat Rai, another extremist leader, denounced the moderate method of constitutional agitation and advocated a policy of passive resistance. "Personally I am a believer in the efficacy of prayer," said Lajpat, "as an instrument of religious discipline. . . . [But] prayers to the ruling nation may be useful to you in proving the uselessness of appealing to the higher sense of man, in matters political where the interests of one nation clash with those of another and in driving you to the conclusion that human nature constituted as it is, is extremely selfish and not likely to change or bend unless the force of circumstances compels it to do so in spite of itself."<sup>52</sup>

Lajpat who believed in social reform, had differences with the extremist Tilak, whom he considered as socially conservative and a revivalist but he agreed with the political method of Tilak. Referring to his differences with Tilak he said: "Yet with all these differences, we had common political principles and almost common political ideals with a deep-rooted distrust in foreign rule and lack of faith in foreign help, and in the sweet words and promises and pledges of British statesmen."<sup>53</sup> Lajpat, who along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Pal, constituted the three leaders of the extremist movement and who were compendiously known as Lal-Bal-Pal, advocated the adoption of a political programme of *Swadeshi*, Boycott, and National Edu-

cation. "*Swadeshi* ought to make us self-respecting, self-reliant, self-supporting, self-sacrificing and last but not the least manly. ... In fact, the *Swadeshi* ought to be the common religion of United India," wrote Lajpat.<sup>54</sup>

Lajpat believed that the people had to be educated in a school of politics and initiated into a religion of true patriotism and for this the adoption of the political method of passive resistance was "perfectly legitimate, perfectly constitutional and perfectly justifiable."<sup>55</sup> The recourse to violence as a political method was ruled out on the ground of expediency. "To think of physical force in the existing conditions and circumstances is folly," said Lajpat<sup>56</sup> and for this reason he did not join the Indian revolutionaries and maintained an attitude of "benevolent neutrality" between the supporters of the British empire and the Indian revolutionaries. But short of physical force which was ruled out on the ground of expediency Lajpat was prepared to use any method against the British rulers of India including civil disobedience which, he declared, "is based on truth and on a sense of duty. It is fundamentally right."<sup>57</sup>

The extremists pointed out that British rule in India was based on weak and insecure foundations. There were only a handful of Englishmen among a people of three hundred millions. In each district of India there were not more than half-a-dozen Englishmen. Even if the number of British troops in India were increased by a hundred times they could not keep India under control, if Indians did not willingly acquiesce in British rule.<sup>58</sup> Indians, therefore, could be free as soon as they refused to co-operate with the British rulers in the work of carrying on the administration of the country.<sup>59</sup>

In a series of articles written for the *Indu Prakash* in 1893 under the title "New Lamps for Old" Aurobindo attacked the constitutional methods of moderate Congressmen. He characterized the Congress as a middle-class organization which was "selfish and disingenuous in its public action and hollow in its professions of a large and disinterested patriotism." The Congress, he felt, was only playing with baubles and he derided all talk about "the blessings of British rule, and the inscrutable Providence which has laid us in the maternal... bosom of just benevolent England," and he lamented that "the walls of the Anglo-Indian Jericho stand yet without a breach and the dark

spectre of Penury draws her robe over the land in greater volume and with an ampler sweep.”<sup>60</sup> The Congress, he charged, had “made no attempt to be a popular body empowered by the fiat of the Indian people. The great mass of the people have not been appreciably touched. The proletariat is the real key of the situation. The right and fruitful policy is to awaken and organize the entire power of the country and thus multiply infinitely, the volume and significance [of the common man].”<sup>61</sup>

Aurobindo called the moderates mendicants because they believed in the effectiveness of “the method of prayer and petition.” He said that “merely by spending the ink of the journalist and petition-framer and the breath of the orator”<sup>62</sup> India would not be able to secure complete independence. Independence could be attained only through passive resistance. Passive resistance was considered by Aurobindo as the best policy that could be pursued by the nationalists.

But this passive resistance of Aurobindo, unlike that of Gandhi in succeeding years, was not part of a gospel of non-violence or *Ahimsa*. “Sri Aurobindo never concealed his opinion that a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence if it can do so or if there is no other way; whether it should do so or not, would depend on what under particular circumstance is the best policy—not on ethical considerations of the Gandhian kind.”<sup>63</sup> Aurobindo was no believer in the gospel of non-violence and in his *Essays on the Gita* Aurobindo supported the ideal of *Dharma Yuddha* and asserted that to kill national enemies in a *Dharma Yuddha* was a part of *Dharma* or religion. In an article called “The Morality of Boycott” Aurobinda said: “The *Gita* is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin and aggression as a lowering of morality.”<sup>64</sup> “Politics is the realm of the Kshatriya,” said Aurobindo, “and the morality of the Kshatriya ought to govern our political action. To impose in politics the Brahmanical duty of saintly sacrifice is to preach Varnasankara.”<sup>65</sup>

Aurobindo unequivocally stated that one of the courses “open to an oppressed nation is that of armed revolt. . . . This is the old time-honoured method which the oppressed or enslaved have always adopted . . . in the past and will adopt in the future if they see any chance of success; for it is the readiest and swiftest, the most thorough in its results, and demands the least

powers of endurance and suffering and the smallest and briefest sacrifices.”<sup>66</sup>

Aurobindo's rejection of a policy of violence was based purely on grounds of expediency and not of morality. While commending a policy of passive resistance and not of violence Aurobindo said: “We would not for a moment be understood to base this conclusion upon any condemnation of other methods as in all circumstances criminal and unjustifiable. It is the common habit of established Governments, and especially those which are themselves oppressors, to brand all violent methods in subject peoples and communities as criminal and wicked.... But no nation yet has listened to the cant of the oppressor... the morality of war is different from the morality of peace. To shrink from bloodshed and violence under such circumstances is a weakness deserving as severe a rebuke as Sri Krishna addressed to Arjuna when he shrank from the colossal civil slaughter on the field of Kurukshetra. Liberty is the life-breath of a nation; and when the life is attacked, when it is sought to suppress all chance of breathing by violent pressure, any and every means of self-preservation becomes right and justifiable just as it is lawful for a man who is being strangled to rid himself of the pressure on the throat by any means in his power. It is the nature of the pressure which determines the nature of the resistance. Where, as in Russia, the denial of liberty is enforced by legalized murder and outrage, or, as in Ireland formerly, by brutal coercion, the answer of violence to violence is justified and inevitable.”<sup>67</sup>

Though Aurobindo considered that a policy of peaceful passive resistance was the best policy in the circumstances prevailing in India he always remained in close touch with the secret revolutionary societies of Bengal, one of whose leaders was his brother Barindra Ghose. Barindra stated that Aurobindo was the “leader of the Secret Party of Violence.” In a note that Barindra handed over to Dr Karan Singh, the political biographer of Aurobindo, in 1959, Barindra recorded: “Sri Aurobindo not only made organized efforts on constitutional lines to win Swaraj through Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods and practice of passive resistance including nonpayment of taxes if necessary, but he organized also secret societies all over Bengal to violently oust the Imperial power through armed resistance and murder of

British officers and judiciary. No way for achievement of the main object was abhorrent or unwelcome to him. Except the C.I.D. Department, none in the country knew that Sri Aurobindo was the inspirer or leader of the Secret Party of Violence too. B. C. Chatterjee was surprised to know that fact from me and was persuaded with difficulty to admit the indisputable truth of it."<sup>68</sup>

But so far as the public record of Aurobindo was concerned he stood for peaceful passive resistance and he was acquitted of the charge of sedition brought against him in the Maniktolla Bomb Case, more popularly known as the Alipore Bomb Case. C. R. Das who defended Aurobindo in that famous case before Mr Beachcroft, the District and Sessions Judge, and who incidentally was a fellow student of Aurobindo at Cambridge, in his closing address said: "My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after the turmoil and agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will have 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 standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High Court of History."<sup>69</sup>

During the anti-partition agitation Aurobindo preached the gospel of passive resistance and he claimed that defiance of an unjust law imposed by a foreign power was justified. He said that "a law imposed by a people on itself has a binding force which cannot be ignored except under extreme necessity; a law imposed from outside has no such moral sanction, its claim to obedience must rest on coercive force or on its own equitable and beneficial character and not on the source from which it proceeds, if it is unjust and oppressive, it may become a duty to disobey it and quietly endure the punishment which the law has provided for its violation."<sup>70</sup> The view that an unjust law could be disobeyed was later developed by Gandhi and was put into large-scale operation in his civil disobedience movements.

Aurobindo preached a policy of non-cooperation and in place of the slogan of the American War of Independence of "No Taxation Without Representation," Aurobindo coined the slogan "No Control, No Cooperation."<sup>71</sup> "If the Indians no longer



consented to teach in Government schools or work in the Government offices, or serve the alien as police, the administration could not continue for a day," declared Aurobindo.<sup>72</sup> Aurobindo and other extremists, however, confined themselves to a policy of economic boycott and did not launch any campaign calling upon the people not to pay taxes to the foreign rulers.

In April 1907 Aurobindo wrote a series of articles defining the aims and objects of the extremists. Aurobindo's object was to put an end to the politics of petitioning and to usher in a period of militant nationalism in India. He believed in self-reliance and not in concessions from foreign rulers. "Our attitude," he declared, "to bureaucratic concession is that of Laocoon: 'We fear the Greeks even when they bring us gifts.' Our policy is self-development and defensive resistance."

Aurobindo asked the people to boycott not only British goods but the British government itself. "We would not only buy our own goods, but boycott British goods; not only have our own schools, but boycott government institutions; not only organize our league of defence, but have nothing to do with the bureaucratic executive except when we cannot avoid it. At present even in Bengal where boycott is universally accepted, it is confined to the boycott of British goods and is aimed at the British merchant and only indirectly at the British bureaucrat. We would aim it directly both at the British merchant and at the British bureaucrat who stands behind and makes possible the exploitation by the merchant," declared Aurobindo.<sup>73</sup>

Aurobindo preached a doctrine of undiluted passive resistance and in that he can be said to be the precursor of Gandhi. Aurobindo said: "For ourselves we avow that we advocate passive resistance without wishing to make a dogma of it. In a subject nationality, to win liberty for one's country is the first duty of all, by whatever means, at whatever sacrifice; and this duty must override all other considerations. The work of national emancipation is a great and holy *yajna* of which boycott, *Swadeshi*, national education, and every other activity, great and small, are only major or minor parts. Liberty is the fruit we seek from the sacrifice and the Motherland [is] the goddess to whom we offer it; into the seven leaping tongues of the fire of the *yajna* we must offer all that we are and all that we have, feeding the fire even with our blood and lives and happiness of

our nearest and dearest; for the Motherland is a goddess who loves not a maimed and imperfect sacrifice, and freedom was never won from the gods by a grudging giver.”<sup>74</sup> And then he added: “We should have the bow of the Kshatriya ready for use, though in the background. Politics is especially the business of the Kshatriya, and without Kshatriya strength at its back, all political struggle is unavailing.” Though Aurobindo never openly advocated resort to violence the reference to the bow of the Kshatriya being kept ready for use certainly gladdened the hearts of the terrorists.

The extremists sought to follow the Irish method of Sinn Fein. Gokhale, who had retained his connection with the Ferguson College till 1904, spoke often of Irish history. “In a course of lectures on English history,” said Paranjpye, one of his students, “he turned aside for a week to give us a resume of the history of Ireland since the Union. The course of Irish history he always regarded as somewhat similar to that of India, and he never lost an opportunity of impressing on the minds of his people the long course of steady work and disinterested sacrifice which the Irish leaders have shown during the whole century.... He used to take in the *Dublin Freeman* and the tri-weekly edition of the *London Times* even in his early days, to keep himself well posted in English political thought.” But Gokhale remained a moderate and the greatest practical influence of Irish thought and the ideas of Sinn Fein were on the extremists.

The word Sinn Fein can be imperfectly translated as “we ourselves.” The Sinn Fein idea of relying on oneself and not looking to Great Britain for succour or charity readily appealed to the extremists. The Sinn Fein deprecation of constitutional activities and the idea of direct action and of non-cooperation appealed to the militant Indian nationalists.

The Irish Sinn Fein organization was founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905. The Sinn Fein policy implied non-cooperation with the established state and a kind of declaration of Swaraj by the people. The policy of non-cooperation with an established state by a people striving to establish a different one in its place had been pursued by Francis Deak in Hungary. The success of this policy led Arthur Griffith in 1905 to publish a series of articles on the applicability of what was called the “Hungarian

Policy" to Ireland. Application of the Hungarian policy to Ireland came to be known under the casually acquired name of Sinn Fein. "Hungary," said Arthur Griffith, "won her independence by refusing to send members to the Imperial Parliament at Vienna or admit any right in that parliament to legislate for her."<sup>75</sup> He advised Irish Members to withdraw from the British Parliament. He asked the Irish people to pursue a policy of absolute non-cooperation with the administration of Ireland, and to set up their own arbitration courts, taxing authorities, civil services, banks, stock exchanges, industries, and educational institutions.<sup>76</sup>

Referring to the extremist party, Rash Behari Ghose, the moderate leader, said in his 1907 Congress presidential address: "Like the Sinn Fein party in Ireland, it has lost all faith in constitutional movements.... All its hopes are centred in passive resistance of a most comprehensive kind, derived, I presume, from the modern history of Hungary the pacific boycott of all things English."<sup>77</sup> Like the Sinn Feiners the Indian extremists wanted to leave the government severely alone and they advocated a comprehensive policy of boycott. Aurobindo Ghose said: "Boycott of foreign goods is a necessary condition for the encouragement of Swadeshi [national] industries, boycott of Government schools is a necessary condition for the growth of national education, boycott of British courts is a necessary condition for the spread of arbitration."<sup>78</sup>

Mainly as a result of the insistence of the extremists, the 1906 Congress passed a resolution urging the people to set up educational institutions "on national lines and under national control."<sup>79</sup> Arthur Griffith had said that because Irish schools were controlled by the British government the "language of Ireland, the history of Ireland, the economics of Ireland, the possibilities of Ireland, the rights of Ireland... found no place in their curriculum."<sup>80</sup> Many Indian leaders felt that when Griffith was speaking about Ireland he was, in some measure, "unconsciously speaking of India also."<sup>81</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, though he was no extremist, also asked Indians to rely only on their own strength and not to hope for any sympathy from the foreign rulers. He said that it would not be wise for Indians to think that merely by producing good arguments in support of the cause of Indian political reform

they would be able to induce the British rulers to grant them larger political rights.<sup>82</sup> A government was not a mechanical moral machine which unerringly and unceasingly applied moral principles to the governance of a country. A government, whatever might be its moral pretensions, was composed of men who had their greeds and hatreds. The British officials who occupied privileged positions in the established political structure in India could not be expected to love those Indian reformers who criticized that political structure. Human nature being what it was, it was not unnatural that the ruling Englishman in India would seek to dominate the Indians. The ruling Englishman did not make India his home or associate with Indians on a basis of equality. He was, in fact, placed in an elevated position far above the Indians. From that position Indians looked small and insignificant, and their sentiments and emotions looked rather unreal. Tagore believed that if Indians knew how small and insignificant they looked in the eyes of the British, they would immediately realize the futility of depending on the British sense of justice.<sup>83</sup>

## II. RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

The extremists believed that the heart of India was in religion and that a religious people would not understand anything unless stated in religious terms and that purely political propaganda without the touch of any sort of religious mysticism would not appeal to the Indian people. The religious appeal and fervour is well expressed in *Bhawani Mandir*, written by Aurobindo Ghose. In the *Bhawani Mandir* it was stated: "India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the eternal religion which is to harmonize all religions, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. It is for this that Sri Ramakrishna came and Vivekananda preached." It was said that by participating in a militant nationalist movement "you will be helping to create a nation, to consolidate an age, to Aryanize a world."

Extremists and cultural nationalists felt that it was futile to emerge as a nation or to win political freedom if India was to remain in the end enslaved at heart by purely material ends which was supposed to be the end of European civilization and that a national movement had no real justification if no new manifestation of Indian genius relating to the real things of life took place. Vivekananda, the great sanyasin, had already stated that India would be immortal if she persisted in the search for God but if she gave it up for politics then she would not survive.<sup>84</sup>

But the teachings of Vivekananda, who was a great cultural nationalist, stimulated the pride of Indians in their own culture and religion and strengthened the spirit of political nationalism. It causes no surprise, therefore, that though Vivekananda vehemently denied that he was a political agitator or that he wanted to preach politics,<sup>85</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, who was considerably influenced by the teachings of Vivekananda, actively participated in political work in the first decade of the twentieth century. Aurobindo, one of the leaders of the extremists, desired to found the nationalist movement on a spiritual basis.<sup>86</sup> The extremists or militant nationalists believed that national emancipation could not be achieved by India on purely Western lines and that though in the West politics could be separated from religion, Indian politics must derive support from religion.

Tilak, one of the extremist leaders, was a Sanskrit scholar and a serious student of Indian history and culture. Tilak accused the moderates of having been Westernized and he used mystical quasi-religious appeals to energize the nationalist movement. Tilak revived the Maratha politico-religious tradition. He appealed not merely to the English educated intellectuals but also to the illiterate and he sought to forge a political weapon out of the social and religious sentiments of the illiterate. He wanted to energize political nationalism with the dynamite of religion and to utilize religious festivals for the cause of nationalism. On 8 September 1896 he wrote in the *Kesari* that "the educated people can achieve results through these national festivals which it would be impossible for the Congress to achieve. Why should you not give the shape of huge mass meetings to the bigger *jatras*? Will it not be possible for political activities to enter the humblest cottages of the villages through

these festivals? Will it not thus be possible to make available to our illiterate countrymen in the villages the moral and the religious education which you have got after strenuous efforts?"<sup>87</sup>

Tilak encouraged the celebration of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals. But it is interesting to note, as is pointed out in an authoritative biography of Tilak published by the Kesari Mahratta Trust, that the idea of starting the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals was derived by Tilak from a study of European history. The study of Greek history and of the Olympic games gave Tilak the idea of organizing Ganapati festivals, and the principles of hero worship that Tilak imbibed from the study of Carlyle and Emerson encouraged him to inaugurate the Shivaji festivals.<sup>88</sup> Ganapati was the elephant-headed Hindu god of foresight and prudence and Shivaji, the Maratha chief, was largely responsible for the fall of Mughal empire. The association of nationalism with Hindu gods and heroes made nationalism at once popular with the Hindus and gave rise to some misgivings in the minds of the Muslims. Tilak, a Sanskrit scholar, also wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* and he gave an interpretation of the *Gita* which was in conformity with the spirit of the times, for Tilak showed that the *Gita* had preached a gospel of ceaseless and selfless activity and not of mere passive contemplation.

The worship of the old gods as the manifestation of the nation was the message of the new nationalism. The West had rejected the worship of graven images and of idols. But the Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had given a mystical significance to the idea of the motherland by interpreting the goddess *Durga* in her different manifestations as symbolic of national evolution. Such an interpretation imparted a new meaning to the prevailing ceremonialism of the country and people while worshipping *Jagadhatrī* or *Kali* or *Durga* accosted them at once with piety and patriotism with the inspiring cry of *Bande Mataram*. In Bankim's novel *Anandamath* there was a song which became famous as *Bande Mataram* and which was adopted as the *Marseillaise* by the extremists during the agitation against the partition of Bengal. *Bande Mataram* (Hail Motherland) was a salutation to the country conceived both as a mother and as a deity.

The early poets of Bengal, for example, Hemchandra (1834–

1904) regarded India as a nation having a spiritual mission and one which had been selected by God to proclaim to the world the highest form of faith, as the Hebrews had been chosen to declare the highest form of law. In the poems of Nabinchandra (1848–1909) there was an emphasis on the political aspect of Sri Krishna's *lila*. The immediate task which lay before Hemchandra, Nabinchandra, and other patriotic poets was the same as the task which lay before two great statesmen in Europe in the nineteenth century, namely, Cavour in Italy and Bismarck in Germany, that is to say, the task of building from a set of disconnected states one strong nation. Nabinchandra's objective was the revival of Hinduism on the basis of a new interpretation of Hindu religion and mythology to suit the changing times. According to this interpretation Sri Krishna was the soul, Vyasa the head, and Arjuna the arm of the body-politic of regenerated India. Sri Krishna as an *Avatar* was to triumph over conflicts and was to remove divisions and discords. In this scheme of nationalistic thought all divisions were subversive of Indian unity. "So long as India is divided into independent units, Oh Partha, the divisions of religion will be as sharp and the Aryans will be cut up into many groups."<sup>89</sup>

The patriotic work of Hemchandra and Nabinchandra was continued by Bankimchandra. Bankim described Krishna as the ideal man and as "the wisest and the greatest of the Hindus." Speaking about Krishna in the *Dharmattatva* Bankim said: "He who by the strength of his arm subdued the wicked, by the power of his wisdom unified India, by the power of his knowledge proclaimed a unique selfless religion, Him, I salute... Who in the land whose strength was the Vedas, at a time when the Vedas were strong, said, 'Dharma is not in Vedas—Dharma is what conduces to the well-being of man', whether he be God or man, I salute him. He, who contains within himself alone Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, and Ramchandra; who is the source of all strength, of all virtue, of all religious truth, of all love, whether he be God or not, I salute him."<sup>90</sup>

In *Krishnacharitra* Bankim said that for the advancement of the country the prime need was a religious and spiritual revival and he wrote that Krishna "never sought to be a social reformer. His objective was to bring about the moral and political regeneration of the society, spread religion and establish a kingdom

based on religion. If this can be achieved, society will be reformed on its own, social reformation is impossible without this. ... We create trouble by approaching the problems of the society independently. Religious advancement is also the root of political advancement. Then, every one must endeavour for the advancement of religion. If this is done, no independent effort will be required for the reformation of society.”<sup>91</sup>

For the regeneration of the country Bankim looked forward to a spiritual revival. Bankim also idealized the country and worshipped her as the Mother. Bankim set up the image of the Mother in conceiving of the Motherland, saying: “Behold, this is our Mother, well-watered, well-fruited, cooled with the southern breeze, green with the growing corn, worship her and establish her in your homes.” In such appeals, the people could feel the true continuity of their national history. Bankim’s patriotic doctrine of the country as the object of worship is integrally associated with his Comtist religion in which humanity and divinity commands adoration.

Nationalism in many parts of the world has been connected with attachment to some common language and its associated literary heritage. Bankim by his writings in Bengali also fostered a spirit of nationalism which, however, was Bengali as distinct from an all-India nationalism. Bankim’s concept of “the Mother” of *Bande Mataram*, referred at once to the land of Bengal and to the female aspect of the Hindu deity. This association of the country, which was the subject matter of patriotic concern, with the worship of the deity, which was the subject matter of religion, formed the real basis of modern Hindu nationalism. This idea of the patriotic Mother or of the divine Motherland and this equation of the love of country with the love of God, made an instinctive appeal to those nationalistic Hindus who believed in patriotism but who also yearned for some religion, and to whom the purely political and secular creed of the moderate nationalists appeared unsatisfying and uninspiring. This association of patriotism with religion made patriotism popular with the people or the masses, but such patriotism being based on the worship of Hindu deities, also gave rise to Hindu revivalism.

In his famous and controversial novel *Anandamath* Bankim based his story on the Sanyasi Rebellion in Bengal of the 1770’s.



The Sanyasi rebellion was led by ascetics and Bhavananda, one of the Sanyasis, was the leader of the raiding ascetics. In the life of these ascetics there was a fusion of religion and patriotism. These ascetics felt that in serving the country they served God or the mother. Bhavananda, the leader, explained to Mahendra, the disciple, the aim and purpose of the Sanyasis. Bhavananda described the glory of the country and the Mother in glowing language:

Mother, I bow to thee!  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Cool with thy winds of delight,  
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,  
Mother free.

Mahendra asked: "Who is the Mother?" Bhavananda did not answer but sang:

Glory of moonlight dreams  
Over the branches and lordly streams,  
Clad in thy blossoming trees,  
Mother, giver of ease,  
Laughing low and sweet!  
Mother, I kiss thy feet  
Speaker, sweet and low!  
Mother, to thee I bow.

"It is the country and no mortal mother," cried Mahendra.

"We own no other mother," said Bhavananda, and he continued: "We think the land of birth to be no other than our mother herself. We have no mother, no father, no brother, no wife, no child, no hearth or home."

Mahendra now understood the song and asked Bhavananda to sing again. Bhavananda went on singing:

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,  
When the swords flash out in twice seventy million hands  
And seventy million voices roar  
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?

With many strength who are mighty and stored,  
To thee I call, Mother and Lord!

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,  
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,  
Thou the love divine, the awe  
In our hearts that conquers death.  
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,  
Thine the beauty, thine the charm,  
Every image made divine  
In our temples is but thine  
Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,  
With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,  
Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,  
And the Muse a hundred-throned.

Bhavananda explained to Mahendra that the Sanyasis were the children of the mother or the country. "We are the Children," said Bhavananda. "Children! Whose Children are you?" asked Mahendra. "Our mother's," answered Bhavananda.<sup>92</sup>

Bankim gave a religious significance to the idea of the Motherland by declaring that in the image of the benign goddess Durga could be seen the future greatness of the Motherland.<sup>93</sup> The Bengali extremists, such as Aurobindo and Pal, popularized this idea. Pal explained that while worshipping Durga or Kali or Jagadhatri the people really worshipped the Mother or the Motherland.<sup>94</sup> Aurobindo declared that Bankim's supreme service to the nation was that by showing to the people that the Motherland was not merely a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, but was really a great Divine and Material Power, he raised patriotism to the dignity of religion.<sup>95</sup> An ideal of nationalism that was sanctified by religion and was associated with the worship of ancient gods and goddesses became popular with the nationalists particularly because it appeared to be an indigenous ideal and not as something borrowed from the alien culture of Europe.<sup>96</sup>

Bepin Pal, one of the militant nationalist leaders and philosophers, wrote in *The Soul of India*: "All these old and traditional Gods and Goddesses who had cast their hold upon the modern

mind, have been reinstalled with a new historic and nationalist interpretation in the mind and soul of the people. Hundreds of thousands of our people have commenced to hail their motherland today as *Durga*, *Kali*, *Jagadhatrī*. These are no longer mythical conceptions or legendary persons or even poetic symbols. They are different manifestations of the Mother. The Mother is the spirit of India. This geographical habitat of ours is only the outer body of the Mother. . . . Behind this physical and geographical body, there is a Being, a personality—the personality of Mother . . . our history is the sacred biography of the Mother.”<sup>97</sup>

“Every nation,” wrote Bipin Pal, “has a particular world-idea of its own, and develops . . . particular institutions and politics for the due realization of this world-idea.” Bipin Pal and Aurobindo Ghose claimed the fundamental conception of the *Vedānta* philosophy—that is, the unity of all life—to be the world-idea of the new Indian nation. “This new Nationalist movement in India is essentially a spiritual movement. . . . The philosophy that stands behind it,” said Bipin Pal, “is the philosophy of the Absolute, the philosophy of Brahman, as applied to the interpretation of man’s social and civic life. . . .” The sacred and the secular are “strangely blended together in every department of the comparatively primitive life and activities of the people.”<sup>98</sup> Bipin Pal said that “the old world distinction between . . . the religious and the secular, the sacred and the profane at once melts into thin air. Religion merges into politics, politics into civics, the secular becomes sacred; and the temporal spreads its wings into eternal principles . . . for all . . . are guided by eternal law, all are mere evolutions, mere manifestations, under various conditions of the external varieties of human nature and all are designed to help the eternal progress of man.”<sup>99</sup>

Bipin Pal sought to utilize the enthusiasm of the “Mother-worshippers” and the idealism of the “New Vedantists” for the service of the new religion of nationalism. “The so-called idolatry of Hinduism,” declared Pal, “is also passing through a mighty transformation. The process started really with Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who interpreted the most popular of the Hindu goddesses as symbolic of the different stages of national evolution. . . . This interpretation of the old images of Gods and Goddesses had imparted a new meaning to the current cere-

monialism of the country and multitudes, while worshipping either Jagadhatri, or Kali, or Durga, accost them with devotion and enthusiasm, with the inspiring cry of *Bande-Mataram*. . . . This wonderful transfiguration of the old gods and goddesses is carrying the message of new nationalism to the women and the masses of the country."<sup>100</sup> Again, as to Neo-Vedantism, Pal said: "Neo-Vedantism, which forms the very soul and essence of what may be called Neo-Hinduism has been seeking to realize the old spiritual ideals of the race, not through monkist negations or medieval abstractions, but by the idealization and the spiritualization of the concrete contents and actual relations of life. It demands, consequently, a social and economic and a political reconstruction, such as will be helpful to the highest spiritual life of every individual member of the community. The spiritual note of the present nationalist movement in India is entirely derived from this revived Vedantic thought."<sup>101</sup>

Bepin Pal, like Bankimchandra, pointed out that the idea of the nation was not a mere word or a mere abstraction, but it was "something very tangible, something very concrete. It is both word and thought, both an idea and its symbol and manifestation—it is both abstract and concrete. Its concrete elements are places and persons sanctified by noble historic associations. . . ." <sup>102</sup> Like Bankim, Bepin Pal said: "The mountains, these rivers, these extensive plains and lofty plateaus are all witnesses into the life and love of our race, in and through which the very life and love of the Mother have sought and found uninterrupted and progressive expression. Our history is the sacred biography of the Mother. Our philosophies are the revelations of the Mother's minds, our poetry and our painting, our music and our drama, our architecture and our sculptures all are the outflow of the Mother's diverse emotional moods and experiences. Our religion is the organized expression of the Soul of the Mother."<sup>103</sup>

Aurobindo Ghose, another leader of the extremist movement, wanted to fuse political with religious and cultural nationalism. Aurobindo went back to the Gita for inspiration and guidance. The life and teachings of Rāmakrishna and Vivekananda also influenced Aurobindo considerably. In Aurobindo people saw both a political crusader and a religious leader.

Aurobindo declared that India had once been the High

Priestess of the Orient. He said: "Had not her civilization left her ripple-marks on the furthestmost limits of Asia? India still has a soul... she alone in a pharisaical world where every one acclaimed God in speech and denied Him in fact, offered Him the worship of her heart, she alone had given birth to the choice spirits who cast aside the highest of earth's gifts in their enraptured pursuit of the life of life. Only India could produce in the nineteenth century the Saint of Dakshineswar. The saving wisdom was still in the land—the wisdom gathered and garnered in their priest-homes by her Priest-Philosophers, the builders of the Vedas, the thinkers of the Upanishads." Aurobindo asked whether India, which had been a temple of God, would convert herself into "a vast inglorious suburb of English civilization," and referring to the fallen condition of India, Aurobindo lamented that "the alien domination not only impoverished her body but also strangled her soul."

Aurobindo asked the people to rely for their political salvation as much on a policy of boycott as on the will of God. The moderates relied on the method of constitutional agitation and on the liberal instincts of the British rulers. Aurobindo had no such faith in the liberal instincts of the British rulers, and he knew that the nationalists had no physical strength which the foreign government of India could not crush.<sup>104</sup> He felt that in this situation a nationalist had to rely on God, who was stronger than any earthly power.<sup>105</sup> India, he believed, was bound to be free because it was God's will that she should be free.<sup>106</sup>

Soon after the moderates and the extremists had split at the Surat Congress of 1907, Aurobindo is said to have made his mind a blank, and at a meeting at Bombay he spoke as the spirit moved him thus: "There is a creed in India today which calls itself Nationalism, a creed which has come to you from Bengal. This is a creed which many of you have accepted when you called yourselves Nationalists. Have you realized... what that means... what it is that you have taken in hand? Or is it that you have merely accepted it in the pride of a superior intellectual conviction? You call yourselves Nationalists. What is Nationalism? Nationalism is not a mere political programme. Nationalism is a religion that has come from God. Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live. Let no man dare to call himself a Nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is

more patriotic, thinking that he is something higher, than those who do not call themselves by that name. If you are going to be a Nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God.... This is happening daily in Bengal, because, in Bengal, Nationalism has come to the people as a religion, and it has been accepted as a religion.... It always happens when a new religion is preached, when God is going to be born in the people, that... forces rise with all their weapons in their hands to crush the religion. In Bengal too a new religion, a religion divine and *sattvic* has been preached and this religion they [the British rulers] are trying with all the weapons at their command to crush. By what strength are we in Bengal able to survive? Nationalism is not going to be crushed. Nationalism survives in the strength of God and it is not possible to crush it, whatever weapons are brought against it. Nationalism is immortal; Nationalism cannot die; because it is no human thing, it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail."

Then Aurobindo asked his audience: "Have you got a real faith? Or it is merely a political aspiration? Is it merely a larger kind of selfishness?" and he continued: "Do you hold your political creed from a higher source? Is it God that is born in you? Have you realized that you are merely the instruments of God, that your bodies are not your own? You are merely instruments of God for the work of the Almighty. Have you realized that? If you have realized that, then you are truly Nationalists; then alone will you be able to restore this great nation."<sup>107</sup>

Aurobindo was essentially a religious man and his imprisonment by the British authorities gave him more solitude to meditate further on the problems of life and on India's freedom. In prison Aurobindo heard a call to dedicate himself for the uplift of his country and to the spread of the *Sanatana Dharma*. After coming out of prison in 1908 Aurobindo spoke to the people that he heard the Voice of God in prison. He said that God appeared to him in prison and placed the *Gita* in his hands and made him realize the simple truths of the Hindu religion.<sup>108</sup> He said that the East must rise in India's rising and India will rise to spread the message of the *Sanatana Dharma*.

Though the *Sanatana Dharma* was a universal religion, Auro-

bindo believed that India more than any other country had been the guardian and exemplar of the truths of the *Sanatana Dharma*.<sup>109</sup> He was convinced that God was raising the Indian people as a nation, so that she could spread the truths of the *Sanatana Dharma* throughout the world.

After release from prison, at a meeting of the society for the Protection of Religion, Aurobindo spoke thus: "The message came and it said: 'Something has been shown to you this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints, and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. 'This is the *Sanatana Dharma*, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have revealed to you. The agnostic and the sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the *Sanatana Dharma* that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise . . . when therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the *Sanatana Dharma* that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the *Sanatana Dharma* that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend itself, it is the *Sanatana Dharma* that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the *dharma* and by the *dharma* that India exists. To magnify the religious means to magnify the country. I have shown you that I am everywhere and in all men and in all things, that I am in this movement. . . ."

Referring to the name of the society which had invited him to speak, namely "Society for the Protection of Religion," Aurobindo said: "Well, the protection and upraising before the world of the Hindu religion, that is the work before us. But what is Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatana, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this Peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly

and forever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge that he is in all men and all things and that in Him we move and have our being."

Referring to his earlier speeches where he had said that nationalism in India was not political but religious, Aurobindo added: "I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the *Sanatana Dharma* which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with *Sanatana Dharma*, with it, it moves and with it, it grows. When the *Sanatana Dharma* declines, then the nation declines, and if the *Sanatana Dharma* were capable of perishing, with the *Sanatana Dharma* it would perish."

Aurobindo was a cultural nationalist. He said that Indians should accept what was best in the culture of the West as men who were proud of their history and tradition and not as a denationalized people who sought to Westernize themselves completely.<sup>110</sup> By imitating, India could never become exactly like Europe, for, the histories of Europe and India being different, their futures were also bound to be different. But even if India succeeded in Europeanizing herself to a great extent, she would have gained little, because she would have lost her cultural individuality. In the words of the *Gita*, Aurobindo declared: "Better the law of one's own being though it be badly done than an alien *Dharma* [way to life] well followed."<sup>111</sup>

Aurobindo claimed that many Indians in the twentieth century had come to realize that most nationalists in the nineteenth



century, under the influence of European intellectual ideas, made a great mistake in not discerning the spiritual mission of the Indian nation.<sup>112</sup> "It has been driven home to us by experience," he wrote, "that not in the strength of a raw unmoralized European enthusiasm shall we conquer. . . . It is the East that must conquer in India's uprising. It is the Yogin who must stand behind the political leader or manifest within him, Ramadas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour. The divorce of intellect and spirit, strength and purity may help a European revolution, but by a European strength we shall not conquer. The movements of the last century failed because they were too purely intellectual. . . . Nationalism also has been defective; it has been Indian in sentiment and aspiration, European in practice and actuality. It has helped itself with the intellect . . . but it has not been sufficiently supported by inspired wisdom. It has attached itself to imagination and idealism, but has not learned to discern the deeper Truth and study the will of God."<sup>113</sup> The idea that the message of the growing Indian nationalism was religious or spiritual was not confined to the leaders of the anti-partition agitation of 1905 but the same idea was expressed later by Gandhi, an idea "with which the Western mind is little familiar," wrote Earl of Ronaldshay in the *Heart of Aryavarta*.<sup>114</sup>

Aurobindo, Pal,<sup>115</sup> and other extremists maintained that not only in the realm of religion but also in the domain of politics the claim of the Indian genius to live its own life must be established. They argued that the political philosophy of the moderates was foreign in character and in spirit.<sup>116</sup> The moderates wanted to establish a colonial form of self-government. Aurobindo held that the goal of India's political endeavour should be the attainment of full *Swaraj*, and that India should not remain "an outlying province of the British Empire or a dependent adjunct of European civilization."<sup>117</sup> He thought that India should try to evolve her own political ideals and institutions and not try only to reproduce European political institutions. "We do not believe," he wrote, "that our political salvation can be attained by enlargement of councils, introduction of the elective principle, colonial self-government, or any other formula of European politics. We do not deny the use of some of these things as instruments, as

weapons in a political struggle, but we deny their sufficiency whether as instruments or ideals."<sup>118</sup>

Aurobindo was not much interested in establishing any particular form of government or political institution. A system of government was merely a political machinery which could be worked well or ill by good or bad individuals. Aurobindo said that though some people in Europe set great store by some particular type of political machinery and hoped that the millennium could be brought about by Acts of Parliament, the Indian nationalist should concern himself not so much with political machineries as with the spirit that would operate such machineries.<sup>119</sup> As a good body polity could not be organized by merely adopting the political forms of the West, so no good society could be formed by merely reproducing in India the social institutions of the West. Indians could mechanically imitate the social institutions of the West by substituting class for caste, by introducing inter-marriage, inter-dining and numerous other social changes, but those changes, in themselves, said Aurobindo, would not create a good society in India.<sup>120</sup> These ideas, which went against the secular and Westernized approach of the moderates, were later taken up and developed by Gandhi.

Aurobindo thought that Europe set too much value on social institutions and devoted too little energy for the improvement of human character. To him it appeared that modern Europe almost accepted egoism and individual competitive selfishness as the foundation of its society.<sup>121</sup> He was convinced that the people of ancient India, through the joint family system, the corporate caste system, and the communal village society, had actually made some attempt, however imperfect, to build a society on a foundation of love.<sup>122</sup> He, however, pointed out that a society based on a foundation of love could only be successfully organized when every man realized in his life the essential truth of the *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Religion), the unity of all men because of their identity with God.<sup>123</sup>

Though the *Sanatana Dharma* was a universal religion, Aurobindo believed that India, more than any other country, had been the guardian and exemplar of the truths of the *Sanatana Dharma*.<sup>124</sup> There was a great similarity between the ideas of Mazzini and that of Aurobindo. Both believed that faith in God was the basis of morality, that politics could not be separated

from morality, and that their nations (the Italian, in the case of Mazzini, and the Indian, in the case of Aurobindo) had a special, moral, or spiritual mission for the world. Mazzini said that the mission of the Italians should be to prove that they were "all sons of God and brothers in Him."<sup>125</sup> Italy, he wrote, must "give a pledge of moral progress to the European world" and "a moral priesthood among the peoples of Europe."<sup>126</sup> Aurobindo also declared that it was to spread the message of the *Sanatana Dharma* that India was rising as a nation.<sup>127</sup>

The extremist leaders of the anti-partition movement in Bengal sought to evolve what they called a spiritual type of nationalism as distinguished from the political or territorial type of Western nationalism. According to this approach the country was conceived not as a territory but as a spiritual being and the nation was to be built up not on the basis of territorial unity or common self-interest, but on the basis of religious feeling that "we are all sons of one common mother."<sup>128</sup> The mother was invested with a personality, and referring to this conception of a nation, Aurobindo said that it "is not merely a division of land but it is a living thing. It is the mother in whom you move and have your being."<sup>129</sup>

Aurobindo and Pal shared Mazzini's idea of a nation as the radiant and luminous mother. It is Gandhi who quietly diverted attention from the radiant and luminous mother to the everyday visible tragedy of Indian life and to its poverty, untouchability, and other social evils. Gandhi's love of India was not the youthful adoration offered to a heroine but a more disenchanted, and yet steadfast, love of an older and wiser age. Gandhi, though he spoke earnestly of religion, was not overwhelmed with India's spiritual mission in the world, which has been described as "a beautiful illusion which flatters us and might even sustain us if we did not know that patriots in Montenegro also felt the same about the mission of their people." Though Gandhi was more practical and laid greater emphasis on removing the woes and miseries of the people, he was also a deeply religious man and he claimed that he was driven to politics because of a religious passion to improve the lot of the downtrodden. But so far as Gandhi was concerned he also eventually came to believe in some kind of mission for the Indian people, and that mission was the

spread of the gospel of *Ahimsa*, or nonviolence, throughout the world.

### III. THE CULT OF VIOLENCE

In the first decade of the twentieth century, nationalists in India were divided into three classes: the moderates, the extremists, and the terrorists. The moderates, who drew their inspiration from English constitutional history, wanted to achieve a colonial form of self-government and sought to achieve it in a peaceful, gradual, and constitutional manner. The extremists generally wanted *Swaraj* or full independence and, like the Irish Sinn Feiners, had a great faith in the efficacy of a comprehensive policy of boycott. The terrorists, who also believed in *Swaraj*, sought to achieve their ends by the adoption of the methods of revolutionary violence which had been widely practised in Russia and certain other countries.

Politics, previously a hobby for many, came to be a whole-time affair for the terrorists. The niggardly nature of concessions made by the government, the Russian methods it used, and the absence of sympathy of the rulers for the ruled, slowly undermined the position of the moderates and liberals and made way for the emergence of militant nationalists and gun-powder politicians.

But terrorism in India could not lead to any insurrection. The masses had not yet entered politics, and so there could not be any revolution on the lines of the French Revolution, involving vast numbers of people. The Indian terrorist or revolutionary movement was a *Bhadralog* movement and was confined to the bourgeois classes. It hardly touched the rural millions. So, instead of revolution, there emerged terrorism, the universal expression of petit-bourgeois desperation. The European literature of revolt was ransacked to furnish examples of terrorism and to justify its inevitable success. Mazzini's doctrines, the doings of Russian Nihilists, the murder of Marquis of Ito were all closely studied. The English hatred of political assassination was very strong, but in the Italian war of liberation and the Home Rule struggle of Ireland—with which the militant nationalists had for many years been comparing the Indian nationalist movement—political murder had played an important part. If the Irish considered

the shooting of unpopular officials as a legitimate means of bringing pressure on the Government, why could not such a policy be adopted in India, asked the Indian terrorists and revolutionaries. The history of the French and Italian independence movements convinced the terrorists that at no less a price than the horror and anguish of a mighty convulsion could freedom be won. Barindra Kumar Ghose, the terrorist, breathed forth contempt and ridicule against the constitutionalists. What he demanded of India was blood "to remove the stain of her age-long subjection." "Come, then, with the vow of death that you may renew life," was the motto of the terrorists.

The social and economic structure of Russia during the nineteenth century had resemblances with that of India and it was not surprising that a section of the Indian intelligentsia was attracted to then prevalent Russian ideas of Nihilism. To the Indian revolutionaries, the Italian Carbonari became popular and physical force samitis or associations were set up and certain political dacoities also took place. The cult of the bomb was also borrowed by the Indian revolutionaries from the armoury of revolutionary Europe.

It was a common belief with the terrorists that the rule of a foreign Western power was destructive of Indian religion and culture and that the violent overthrow of that rule was essential for the spiritual survival of India. During the Ganapati festivals of 1894 leaflets were circulated throughout the city of Poona, which referred to the intolerable yoke of a foreign rule and urged the Hindus to rise up in arms against the alien British rule, as Shivaji had done against Muslim rule.<sup>130</sup> In the Shivaji festival two orthodox Chitapavan Brahmins, Damodar and Balakrishna Chapekar, asked the people to risk their lives "on the battlefield in a national war" and to "shed upon the earth the life-blood of the enemies who destroy our religion."<sup>131</sup> They asked: "This is called Hindustan, how is it that the English rule here?" They advised the people to kill the English. On 12 June 1897 one of the speakers in the Shivaji coronation festival said that if the people who participated in the French Revolution could argue that they did not commit murder but only removed the obstacles on their way, there existed no reason why the people of Maharashtra could not use the same argument.<sup>132</sup>

In 1897 when plague broke out in Poona the government used

troops to search the houses of suspected cases. The local press complained that the privacy of houses have been violated. *The Sholapur Samachar* wrote: "It is really a misfortune that honour, religion and the modesty of women which was safe even under the rule of the Moguls, should be violated under the enlightened English government."<sup>133</sup> The paper went further and charged that all this was done for the purpose of retaliating the tortures once inflicted by Tantia Topi on Europeans and for punishing the people of the Deccan for taking the lead in every public agitation. Another local paper, the *Sudharak*, declared that Rand, the Plague Commissioner, had shown what British tyranny was like and added: "And still we look calmly on and show not the slightest sign of resistance. What does this prove? Simply that we have no pluck, no spirit left among us, that we are an over-meeek and cowardly race of beings..." Tilak's paper, the *Kesari*, also wrote in a similar vein.<sup>134</sup> On 22 June 1897, Rand was assassinated.

Terrorism, that first emerged in 1897, reappeared in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century. After Plehve, the Russian Minister of Interior, had been assassinated, the *Kal*, a Maratha newspaper, wrote on 3 September 1904 that such assassinations had "an educative value," their laudable object was "to cut off a poisonous part," they were "a kind of surgical remedy," and they were "perpetrated for the good of the world."<sup>135</sup> It quoted the manifesto alleged to have been issued by the central committee of revolutionary socialists in Russia which declared that the oppression of Plehve rendered his assassination inevitable. *The Pioneer Mail* remarked that the *Kal* was possibly the first Indian paper which had unequivocally and publicly commended political assassination.<sup>136</sup> But though the *Kal* justified the method of political assassination in certain circumstances, it did not openly declare that the adoption of this method had become necessary in the particular conditions of India. In the same article it also remarked that Curzon's regime in India had been far less oppressive than that of Plehve's in Russia.<sup>137</sup>

After the failure of the constitutional agitation to prevent the partition of Bengal in 1905, some people argued that nothing could be achieved without the use of violence. The frustration of the early nationalist endeavours made the terrorists believe that freedom could not be had on the easy terms envisaged by

the moderates. It could only be earned by suffering and sacrifice and through fire and sword and in the manner that the Italians and Frenchmen had earned their freedom. They came to believe that India would not be free unless she had something to compare with the tumbrills, guillotines, and the massacres of the French Revolution.

A study of the history of Japan also seemed to strengthen the argument for the use of physical force. It was because Japan was militarily strong that in 1905 she could defeat Russia, a Western power. India, similarly, could throw off the rule of a Western power by adopting violent, rather than constitutional, means. Soon after the Japanese victories, a correspondent of *The Pioneer Mail* pointed out that the Japanese victories would weaken the conviction of Indians that resistance to British authority was useless and that, therefore, it would make the foundation of British rule less secure.<sup>138</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century many ardent nationalists felt that the people must suffer, and even sacrifice their lives, in order to attain freedom. "Remember then," wrote the *Swaraj*, a nationalist paper, "the difficulties undergone for independence in Western countries. In England... many battles were fought for people's rights... In these conflicts, many patriots were placed in prison for Rajadroham [treason]. Many persons who served their country sacrificed their lives. In France there was a great revolution for independence... Indiscriminately kings and nobles were killed... [when] the Japanese waged [war] against the Russians... [many] sons of Japan gladly laid down their lives. Just as a gem cannot shine unless it is polished, just as butter cannot be got unless curds are churned, so unless commotion takes place, the people's power cannot shine."<sup>139</sup> The paper, however, did not ask the people to take up arms against the rulers, it advised them to rely on the weapons of *dharma* (righteousness) and boycott.

But the use of violent methods was openly and unequivocally advocated by the *Yugantar*, the organ of the Bengal terrorists. It declared that sedition had no meaning from the Indian standpoint,<sup>140</sup> because if every Indian came into violent conflict with the laws of the state in order to overthrow an alien rule then right and justice would be on the side of the Indian people and not of the British rulers. The terrorists argued that the Indian

people were "in a perpetual state of war"<sup>141</sup> with the British rulers and that, therefore, every manner of attack on the foundations of British rule was justified.

The *Yugantar* pointed out that not much muscle was required to shoot Europeans.<sup>142</sup> Not only revolvers but bombs also were used by the terrorists of Bengal. "In every country," wrote the *Yugantar* on 12 August 1907, "there are plenty of secret places where arms can be manufactured. . . . The very large number of bombs which have been and are being manufactured in Russia have all been manufactured in the secret factories of the revolutionists."<sup>143</sup> Narendranath Gossain, a terrorist who later turned government approver, said in Court during the hearing of the Alipore Bomb Case that Barindra Ghose, the terrorist leader, told him: "We are sending some young boys to Japan, England, France and America to learn science." He asked: "What science?" "How to make bombs, etc.," replied Barindra.<sup>144</sup>

The *Kal* wrote that though in Russia many people sided with the government against the bomb-throwers, in India, where the people were no longer in a mood to sing the praises of British rule, very few people were likely to support an alien government against Indian bomb-throwers. It argued that if "even in such circumstances Russia got the Duma, *a fortiori* India is bound to get *Swarajya* [home rule or independence]."<sup>145</sup>

The *Kesari*, Tilak's weekly, had in 1907 a favourite topic in its columns alleging the Russianization of the Indian administration which will lead to the adoption of Russian methods of agitation by the people. In December 1907 the following passage appeared in the *Indian Sociologist* which was published in London under the guidance of Shyamiji Krishnavarma, and which was an organ of the revolutionary Home Rule Society: "It seems that any agitation in India must be carried on secretly and that the only methods which can bring the English Government to its senses are the Russian methods vigorously and increasingly applied until the English relax their tyranny and are driven out of the country. . . . It is likely that as a general principle the Russian method will begin with Indian officials rather than European."<sup>146</sup> The particular method to be followed will, however, depend, added *The Indian Sociologist*, on local circumstances. But the Indian terrorists who killed both European and Indian officials started by first killing European officials.



In Bengal the methods adopted by the terrorists was to recruit young men by religious appeals and later to preach the Russian methods of revolutionary violence to them. Secret factories were installed to manufacture bombs. In the Sedition Committee Report it was stated that the revolutionary societies in Bengal injected the principles and rules advocated in *Bhawani Mandir* with the Russian idea of revolutionary violence, and that though a great deal had been said in the *Bhawani Mandir* about the religious aspect, the Russian rules were matter-of-fact. The societies and associations of the terrorists that were formed after 1908 gradually dropped the religious ideas underlying the *Bhawani Mandir* pamphlet, with the exception of the formalities of oaths and vows, and developed the practical terroristic side with its necessary accompaniment of dacoity and murder.<sup>147</sup>

Barindra Ghose one of the terrorist leaders, stated before a Magistrate on 22 May 1908 that at Baroda he had devoted himself to the study of history and political literature, that after being there a year he came back to Bengal with the idea of preaching the cause of independence as a political missionary. He said: "I moved from district to district, and started gymnasiums. There young men were brought together to learn physical exercises and study politics. I went on preaching the cause of independence for nearly two years. By that time I had been through almost all the districts of Bengal. I got tired of it, and went back to Baroda and studied for a year. I then returned to Bengal, convinced that a purely political propaganda would not do for the country, and that people must be trained up spiritually to face dangers. I had an idea of starting a religious institution. By that time the *Swadeshi* and boycott agitation had begun. . . . We [were] always thinking of a far-off revolution . . . so we were collecting weapons in small quantities. Altogether I have collected 11 revolvers, 4 rifles, and 1 gun. Among other young men who came to be admitted to our circle was Ullaskar Datta. He said that, as he wanted to come among us and be useful, he had learnt the preparation of explosives. He had a small laboratory in his house without his father's knowledge and he experimented there."<sup>148</sup>

Upendra Nath Banerji, another terrorist, stated: "As I thought that some people of India could not be made to do any work except through religion, I wanted the help of some *Sadhus*

[religious ascetics]. Failing *sadhus* I fell back upon schoolboys and collected them to give them religious, moral and political education. Since then I have been mainly engaged in teaching boys about the state of our country and the need of independence, and that the only way left us is to fight for independence and to start secret societies in different parts of the country, to propagate ideas and collect arms and rise in rebellion when the time shall be ripe. . . ."<sup>149</sup>

The terrorists avidly read the stirring articles that Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya used to write in the *Sandhya*. Brahmabandhav wrote articles prophesying that the day of the deliverance of India was near and saying that the *Firinghi* or the foreign ruler would have to be driven out of the country, and that his cannons and guns would avail him not. Brahmabandhav also called upon his countrymen to take up arms.

In 1907 a charge of sedition was brought against Brahmabandhav. The editorial, on which the charge of sedition against Brahmabandhav was primarily based, stated: "We have said over and over again that we are not Swadeshi only so far as salt and sugar are concerned. Our aspirations are higher than the Himalayas. Our pain is as intense as if we had a volcano in us. What we want is the emancipation of India. Our aim is that India may be free, that the stranger may be driven from our homes, that the continuity of the learning, the civilization and the system of the rishis may be preserved. . . . First free the Mother from her bondage then seek your own deliverance. . . . O Mother! Let us be born again and again in India till your chains fall off. First let the Mother be free, and then shall come your own release from the worldly bonds. . . . O Feringhi, here I am with my neck outstretched—offer it up as a sacrifice. You will see, I shall again be born in the land of Bengal and shall cause much more serious confusion. Can you intimidate us? Our power is more than human. It is divine. We have heard the voice telling us that the period of India's suffering is about to close, that the day of her deliverance is near at hand. . . . We have all the advantages of the ancient greatness of India on our side. We are immortal. If you are wise, you should help towards the attainment of deliverance by India. Otherwise, come, let us descend into the arena of war. We hereby summon you to battle. See what a mighty contest presently begins all over the country. The

sons of the Mother are preparing themselves. All the arms—fiery [*agnēya*], water [*varuna*], airy [*vayabīya*—in her vaults, are being polished. Hark, the flapping of the fourfold arms of the Mother? Are we afraid of your cannon and guns? Arm brothers, arm! The day of deliverance is near. We have heard the voice and we cannot fail to see the chains of India removed before we die.”<sup>150</sup> Apart from *Sandhya*, there were other newspapers such as *Yugantar* which preached the cult of violence. “Many a female demon must be killed in course of time, in order to extirpate the race of *Asuras* from the breast of the earth,” was the comment of *Yugantar*, the militant Bengali newspaper, on the murder of an English lady. In *Yugantar*, plunder was deified. “Plunder, we worship you today, be our helpmate . . . come . . . and resuscitate the old martial spirit.”

The *Yugantar* wrote that the money that was required for financing terroristic enterprises could be obtained by plundering post-offices, banks, government treasuries, and by robbing the luxurious rich.<sup>151</sup> The examples of Russian and Irish terrorists who obtained money by means of political robberies were cited to give confidence to those who felt uncertain about the virtues of political dacoity.<sup>152</sup> The *Yugantar* referred to the fact that during the French and Russian revolutions there were some partisans of the revolutionaries among the troops of the government and argued that in India, where the ruling power was foreign, it might be easier to enlist the support of some of the government troops on the side of revolution.<sup>153</sup>

The terrorists believed in dramatic gestures and sensational assassinations. “The only subscription required is that every reader shall bring in a European head.” Passages like the above often appeared in the militant newspapers. One such European head was brought by Madanlal Dhingra who on 1 July 1909 shot Sir Curzon Wyllie dead in London. In England Dhingra had come under the influence of Savarkar and in a statement, said to have been prepared by Savarkar, Dhingra said: “I admit, the other day, I attempted to shed English blood as a humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths. . . . I believe that a nation held in bondage with the help of 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 a wrong done to my country is an insult to God." Dhingra concluded by saying: "The war of independence will continue between India and England so long as the English and Hindu races last [and] if this present unnatural relation does not cease."<sup>154</sup>

Many Irish newspapers paid glowing tributes to Dhingra. "Ireland honours Madanlal Dhingra who was proud to lay down his life for the sake of his country."<sup>155</sup> This reaction in Ireland was only to be expected for many acts of political assassination had taken place in Ireland and the terrorists in India used to derive considerable inspiration from the history of terrorism in Europe and particularly in Ireland and Russia. Referring to this Valentine Chirol, the correspondent of *The Times* who visited India to study the Indian unrest, wrote: "They [the terrorists] have of all Indians been the most slavish imitators of the West, as represented, at any rate, by the Irish Fenian and the Russian anarchist. Their literature is replete with reference to both. Tilak took his 'no-rent' campaign in the Deccan from Ireland, and the Bengalis were taught to believe in the power of the boycott by illustrations taken from contemporary Irish history. When the informer Gosain was shot dead in Alipur gaol, the Nationalists gloried in the deed, which had far excelled that of Patrick O'Connell, who shot dead James Carey, the approver in the Phoenix Park murders, inasmuch as Gosain had been murdered before he could complete his 'treachery,' whereas the murder of Carey had been only a tardy 'retribution' which could not undo the past. The use of the bomb has become the common property of revolutionists all over the world, but the employment of amateur dacoits, or armed bands of robbers, for replenishing the revolutionary war-chest has been directly taken from the revolutionary movement in Russia a few years ago. The annals of the Italian risogimento have also been put under contribution, and whilst there is no Indian life of Cavour, Lajpat Rai's life of Mazzini and Vinayak Savarkar's translation of Mazzini's *Autobiography* are favourite Nationalist textbooks of the milder order. European works on various periods of revolutionary history figure almost invariably amongst seizures of a far more compromising character whenever the Indian police raids some centre of Nationalist activity. Hence in the literature of unrest one frequently comes across the strangest juxtaposition of names,

Hindu deities, and Cromwell and Washington, and celebrated anarchists all being invoked in the same breath."<sup>156</sup>

But even apart from Ireland the assassination by Dhingra had certain repercussions in England. Wilfrid Blunt, who had been in the diplomatic service and who had extensively travelled in India, wrote: "Lloyd George expressed to Winston Churchill his highest admiration of Dhingra's attitude as a patriot. Churchill shared the same views and quoted with admiration Dhingra's last words as the finest ever made in the name of patriotism. They compared Dhingra with Plutarch's immortal heroes."<sup>157</sup>

Regarding Dhingra, Wilfrid Blunt had a discussion with Lyne Stevens, a friend of the King's and referring to this interview Blunt wrote: "He [Stevens] talked about the Dhingra assassination, which seems to have at last convinced his Royal friends that there is something wrong about the state of India. People talk about political assassination as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense, it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like that other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped she apologizes, not before."<sup>158</sup>

Even Annie Besant, who became one of the great leaders of the Home Rule movement, once said: "Violence is the recognized way in England of gaining political reforms.... There would be no Home Rule Bill if landlords had not been shot and cattle maimed—no Reform Bill of 1832 without riot and bloodshed. No later Reform Bills if Hyde Park railings had not gone down." Again, referring to suffragette violence, Besant had asked: "To what else have politicians ever yielded?"<sup>159</sup>

But though Annie Besant said that violence had yielded substantial political results in many cases, she never supported the adoption of violent methods in India. Because it was said, though it was not proved, that Aurobindo, the extremist leader, had sympathy for the terrorists, Besant declared: "Aurobindo Ghose, who has just been acquitted, is a man of the type of Mazzini, with the difference that he is fanatical, which Mazzini was not. He has been the heart of the anti-English movement. He is a man of perfectly pure motives and entirely unselfish. He has no personal axe to grind. But he is dangerous, because he would use any method which would upset British rule."<sup>160</sup>

In India, as in Ireland, politicians and occasionally religious leaders give the terrorists express or equivocally worded encouragement. But there were certain newspapers which openly preached violence. When an attempt on an English Judge's life at Muzaffarpur resulted in the death of two English ladies, the *Yugantar* wrote: "If in an attempt to destroy the enemy a woman is accidentally killed, then God can have no cause of displeasure like the English. . . . Many a female demon must be killed . . . in order to extirpate the race of *Asuras* [demons] from the breast of the earth."<sup>161</sup> The revolutionary papers advocated the adoption of the methods of the Russian nihilists and the use of the bomb. They asked for the avenging of the "murder of the Motherland" by blood, the lighting of a huge sacrificial fire to be fed not with *ghee* [clarified butter] but with blood, the blood that would propitiate the goddess Kali, the Hindu goddess of strength and destruction.<sup>162</sup>

Even the *Bhagavad Gita* was represented as having given sanction to assassination. Murder was said to be in accordance with *Mayer Lila* or the inscrutable ways of the divine mother of the universe. For those who hesitated and had reservations on religious grounds Barindra Ghose said: "Forget the Vedas, the Vedanta, and the Upanishads and free the motherland with your blood."

Some of the terrorists were men of deep religious convictions. They believed that, whatever might be the case in Western countries, religion and politics could not be separated in India. Partly from a study of the works of Vivekananda and others they were convinced that no political or social work could be done in India unless the people were led to believe that there was some religious significance in such work.<sup>163</sup> They felt that the death-defying courage that was required in a terrorist could only be cultivated through some form of spiritual discipline,<sup>164</sup> and in order to provide that training to the new recruits some of the leading terrorists sought the help of *sadhus* (religious ascetics).<sup>165</sup> The recruits were asked to read the *Bhagavad Gita*, the writings of Vivekananda,<sup>166</sup> and Bankim's *Anandamath*. In the *Gita* Krishna had justified "righteous war"<sup>167</sup> in certain circumstances. The terrorists referred to the *Gita* to show that assassination for a worthy cause was not unjustified. The *Anandamath* was also used for the same purpose. The *Santans* (Children of

the Mother or Motherland), who were the chief characters of *Anandamath*,<sup>168</sup> considered it their religious duty to slay the enemies of the gods.<sup>169</sup> It does not appear that Bankim himself sought to justify violent or revolutionary activities in the *Anandamath*, for in the preface to its first edition he had said that the book was written to show, among other things, that the British saved Bengal from anarchy, and that the adoption of revolutionary methods could bring nothing but death and destruction. But it cannot be denied that till one comes to the end of the book, one does not feel that the author does not sympathize with the violent activities of the *Santans*.

The terrorists spent part of their time studying the revolutionary works of the West and partly in studying the Hindu scriptures and they found justification and encouragement in both. The terrorists came to believe that only religion could strengthen the spirit of political nationalism. In Bengal patriotism had been fortified by the development of the cult of *Kali*, the goddess of strength and of destruction. In Calcutta the vow of *Swadeshi* used to be administered at mass meetings in the famous temple of *Kali*. The dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna in the *Gita* was construed as sanctioning political assassination. The cult of the bomb so prevalent in the contemporary records of Russian anarchism was grafted on the cult of *Shiva*, the Destroyer.

Militant nationalists and terrorists who were frustrated under the yoke of foreign rule felt that the softer virtues of pacifism and forgiveness had no place in politics. This idea is expressed in one of Tagore's poems thus:

Age after age, time and again hast thou, O Lord,  
sent thy messenger to this pitiless world.  
They have left their word: "Forgive all, love all—  
cleanse your hearts from blood-red stains of hatred."  
Adorable they are, even to be remembered,  
yet from the outer door did I turn them away  
today, this evil day, with unmeaning salutation.

The terrorists had no clear positive political philosophy. A small minority of them believed in the anarchism of Bakunin.<sup>170</sup> Some of the terrorists were attracted by vague socialistic ideals and some others believed in the social ideals of Vivekananda, but

the large majority of the terrorists had no definite political philosophy.<sup>171</sup> The terrorists were militant nationalists. The primary aim of the terrorists was not to set up a democratic form of government but to establish a government that would be under the control of Indians and not of foreigners. They thought that it was the force of circumstances that would decide who would be the head of the Indian government that would be established as a result of a successful revolution, whether he would be a successful soldier or a President as in the United States.<sup>172</sup>

The terrorists did not propound or even think of the anarchist theory of the state. They were emotional patriots and had no clear-cut political philosophy. They copied the European anarchist and nihilist methods not because their political theories appealed to them, but simply because they believed in gunpowder nationalism. In its later phase this militant terrorist movement sometimes amounted to Blanquism. It attempted to organize a *putsch* or *coup d'état* on the model of Blanqui's army of insurrection. The activities of the terrorists or revolutionaries during the first Great War have been discussed in the next chapter.

#### IV. POLICY OF REPRESSION

When the government of India was faced with the challenge of terrorism the Secretary of State for India was Morley, who had been Gladstone's chief lieutenant in his campaign for Irish Home Rule. Morley realized that a policy of coercion alone would no more solve the Indian problem than it had solved the Irish problem. He hoped that by granting political reforms he would be able to bring the moderates on the side of the government<sup>173</sup> and would also be able to counteract the growing influence of the extremists and terrorists.<sup>174</sup> The government could also pursue the alternative policy of doing nothing and thereby throw the moderates into the arms of the extremists and the terrorists so that they could end up "by getting knocked on the head with rifles and guns." There were some who favoured the adoption of this latter policy and referred to the history of the French Revolution and the Irish nationalist movement to show that the extremists always won in the long run.<sup>175</sup> They argued



that concessions granted to the moderates provided only new weapons of struggle in the hands of the extremists. But Morley favoured a policy of reform, and replying to those who argued that only a policy of extreme repression was suited to Oriental countries, he said on 17 December 1908 that he did not believe that Oriental countries invariably interpreted kindness as fear and he drew attention to the fact that the Founder of Christianity was born in an Oriental country.<sup>176</sup> On 21 October 1907 he declared that because the British in India were the representatives of Western, not Oriental, civilization he could not be hurried into repression by any such assertion that Orientals did not understand patience or toleration.<sup>177</sup>

"If reforms do not save the Raj," wrote Morley to Minto, "nothing else will." On 28 May 1908 Minto replied: "The Raj would not disappear in India as long as the British race remains what it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought, if it comes to fighting and we shall win as we have always won."<sup>178</sup> Minto believed that to repress sedition it was necessary to curtail, to a certain extent, the liberty of the person, the liberty of the press, and the liberty of holding political meetings, and he warned Morley that it would be dangerous for the security of the British empire in India if, "out of too much inherited respect for the doctrines of the Western world quite unsuited to the East," strong repressive measures were not pursued in India.<sup>179</sup> Morley did not believe that it was possible to introduce every English political institution into India, but he yet asked Minto to realize that it was desirable that the spirit of English institutions and its ideas of law and justice should gradually and prudently be applied in India,<sup>180</sup> and that the government could not pursue a policy of complete suppression of popular liberties on the ground that "the Nizam or the Amir would make short work of seditious writers and spouters."<sup>181</sup>

One of the first acts of repression suggested by Minto, which Morley had to approve, was the arrest and deportation in 1907 under the old Regulation of 1818 of Lala Lajpat Rai and of Ajit Singh, after the riots at Lahore and Rawalpindi. The deportations were criticized in Britain by a group of Conservatives led by F. E. Smith, a future Secretary of State for India, and more especially by Liberals and Radicals. Similarly Wedgwood, another member, asserted in July 1910 that the principle of the Regula-

tion of 1818 "is the principle of the Bastille, it is the principle of the *lettre de cachet* under Louis XIV."<sup>182</sup>

There were, however, others in the British Parliament, such as J. D. Rees, who not only approved of the deportations but argued that the government had not used this method as much as was necessary for suppressing sedition. He referred to Aurobindo Ghose who "called upon youths not to be cowards, and said imprisonment was not as terrible as it seemed," and added: "I hope the government will deport this man."<sup>183</sup> He said that a man who could speak like Aurobindo should be deported even though no legal proof could be found against him of any crime that he might have committed. He did not deny that the power of deporting without trial was an autocratic power, but he advocated the use of that power because he persuaded himself to believe that the people of the East would not realize that their rulers had power unless the rulers used that power autocratically in grave and critical situations.<sup>184</sup>

Lady Minto wrote that the "practice of deportation had always stuck in the throat of the Secretary of State, it outraged his Liberal conscience. . . ."<sup>185</sup> Morley had misgivings about the wisdom of the policy of deportations. He wrote to Minto: "Radical supporters will be critical, and Tory opponents will scent an inconsistency between deporting Lajpat, and my old fighting of Balfour for locking up William O'Brien."<sup>186</sup> But he tried to defend his policy by saying that there need not be any necessary inconsistency if the policy pursued in India was not exactly the same as Irish policy because India was greatly different from Ireland.<sup>187</sup>

In a letter to Minto on 16 May 1907 Morley said that if he did not "possess a spotless character as an anti-coercionist in Ireland," the opposition to the policy of deportation would have been much greater than it actually was.<sup>188</sup> However, as time passed, the opposition to this policy grew in strength and force. In a letter to Minto on 12 August 1909 Morley raised the question of releasing the deportees, and pointed out that F. E. Smith was uneasy about deportations, that at least a dozen Unionist members would support a move against deportation, that the orthodox rank and file Liberals did not understand indefinite detention, and that Labour men, possibly, and Irishmen, certainly, would oppose deportation.<sup>189</sup> To Minto's argument that the

detention of deportees would frighten evil-doers generally, he replied on 27 January 1910 thus: "That's the Russian argument: by packing off train-loads of suspects to Siberia we will terrify the anarchists out of their wits, and all will come all right."<sup>190</sup> That policy had been tried in Russia but it had not succeeded. Neither had that policy worked in Ireland. If he knew anything in the world it was, claimed Morley, the working of the Irish Coercion since 1881, and it was when Parnell was in prison and the Coercion Act was in full blast that the Dublin Invincibles were reorganized and strengthened.<sup>191</sup> At the persistent request of Morley, Minto released the Bengal deportees almost immediately after the passing of a stringent press law in 1910.

In order to combat terrorism, apart from pursuing a policy of deportations, the government of India also introduced a new Press Act to control the press. While introducing the 1908 Press Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council, Henry Adamson said that terroristic writings might appear as "ridiculous bombast" to an Englishman, but it was otherwise with "impressionable and immature minds in the East." Consequently the effect they produced on the youthful readers of the revolutionary papers "must be judged by Eastern and not by Western standards."<sup>192</sup> Similarly Minto said, "India is not ripe for complete freedom of the Press."<sup>193</sup>

While discussing the 1908 Press Act in the House of Lords, Earl Cromer, who had supported Ripon in repealing Lytton's Press Act of 1878, recanted his former faith in the desirability of having a free press in India. He said that a policy of complete freedom of the press had been tried in India as well as in Egypt, but the working of the press in those two countries had shown that Western ideas of the freedom of the press were unsuited to Oriental conditions.<sup>194</sup> Curzon, speaking on the same occasion, said that since Ripon repealed Lytton's Press Act, in accordance with what was called Liberal principles, the government of India "had to rely upon the indifferent protection of the Penal Code." He welcomed the new Press Act, but considered it to be inadequate for various reasons, chief among which was that it was confined exclusively to incitements to murder and violence and as such it could not check the ordinary everyday incitements to sedition and attack on the British government.<sup>195</sup> Lord Lamington, a former Governor of Bombay, similarly said

that ordinary everyday attack on the British Government in India was far more insidious than incitements to murder, and he urged upon the government the necessity of introducing a more stringent press law.<sup>196</sup>

As was to be expected the new Press Act was enthusiastically welcomed by the extremely conservative Indians. The *Indian Nation*, an organ of the Bihar landlords, had long been saying that not more freedom but more restraint was necessary in India.<sup>197</sup> The paper repudiated the suggestion of some Congressmen that in India, as in Russia, police repression was largely responsible for producing secret conspiracies and bomb outrages.<sup>198</sup> It wrote that discontent in India had been produced by "villainous rhetoric," in the press, by mere "words, words, words," such as the preaching of the ideal of independence.<sup>199</sup> It solemnly declared that as the propagation of the political philosophy of Voltaire and Rousseau had helped to produce the French Revolution, so the Indian Revolution, if it ever happened, would have resulted from a political philosophy the preaching of which the government had not repressed but had permitted in its most unrestricted form.<sup>200</sup>

The *Pioneer Mail* welcomed the Press Act of 1908, but it considered the Act to be inadequate. It advocated the "return to the principles of Lord Lytton's legislation coupled with a system of licensing of universal application."<sup>201</sup> This would have meant the virtual suppression of a free press.

On 17 December 1908, Morley spoke against the policy of suppressing a free press. He pointed out that a policy of suppression, to be consistent, must involve not only the suppression of the press but also the shutting down of schools and colleges that taught the doctrines of liberty and the enactment of an "Explosive Books Act" which would make the possession of unlicensed books on freedom, such as those of Milton, Burke, Macaulay, and Bright, as completely seditious and illegal as the possession of a bomb.<sup>202</sup>

On 4 February 1910, the Government of India brought forward another Bill for the stricter control of the Indian press. In introducing the Bill, Sir Herbert Risley said that because the 1908 Press Act dealt only with actual incitements to violence, it could not stop those writings which vaguely or indirectly referred to the "methods of guerilla warfare as practised in

Circassia, Spain, and South Africa; Mazzini's gospel of political assassinations; Koussuth's most violent doctrines; the doings of Russian Nihilists: the murder of the Marquis Ito,"<sup>203</sup> that is, which provided implied justification for political assassination by references to revolutions in other countries. The comprehensive section 4 of the Press Bill of 1910 dealt with all writings which had a "tendency, directly or indirectly, whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication, or otherwise" to promote hatred, contempt, or enmity against the Government of India.<sup>204</sup> Risley claimed that though the Bill gave the government the right to demand and to forfeit security from any newspaper, it did not provide for the institution of a system of universal licensing of newspapers. "The liberty of unlicensed printing, for which Milton pleaded three centuries and a half ago, and at the time pleaded in vain," he said, "is untouched by this Bill."<sup>205</sup>

Many British politicians and bureaucrats suggested that to combat terrorism it was necessary to control the system of education that prevailed in India. Speaking on 30 June 1908, in the House of Lords, Cromer asserted that the most important cause which produced the unrest was the system of education that the British had introduced into India.<sup>206</sup> "Western education in India," wrote Justice Beaman in February 1909, "has proved so far a failure. It has not contributed to the strength of our government; it has...weakened and embarrassed it."<sup>207</sup> On 30 June 1908, Curzon referred to the fact that in the course of a police investigation Mill's essay *On Liberty*, and Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* had been found among the personal property of one of the bomb-throwers, and he remarked that from a knowledge of this fact one could detect the remote spark which led to the ultimate conflagration.<sup>208</sup> He argued that the English system of education, which was well adapted to England that had centuries of constitutional development behind it, was profoundly ill-adapted to the different conditions of India, and that it had taught Indians "the catchwords of Western civilization without inspiring them with its spirit or inculcating its sobriety.

The *Pioneer Mail* argued that it was an error to prescribe the works of Burke and Mill as textbooks in Indian colleges. In his essay *On Liberty* Mill was concerned almost exclusively with progressive Western countries, consequently it was fatuous,

wrote the paper, to set it as a textbook in the universities of a backward Oriental country such as India.<sup>209</sup> Sir Charles Elliott, who had been the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1890 to 1895, wrote in June 1907 that one of the causes of unrest in India was that schoolboys and youths at colleges were "fed on the literature of Burke and Herbert Spencer and on political dogmas such as 'no taxation without representation' made in England and unsuitable for export."<sup>210</sup> "It is not too much to say," wrote J. D. Rees, who had been an Additional Member of the Governor-General's Council from 1895 to 1900, "that in our schools pupils imbibe sedition with their daily lessons: they are fed with Rousseau, Macaulay, and the works of philosophers, which even in Oxford tend to pervert the minds of the students to Socialistic and impractical dreams."<sup>211</sup> He lamented that Indians read Mill's essay *On Liberty* without Stephen's "crushing rejoinder."<sup>212</sup>

Rees drew attention to the fact that the *Indian Sociologist*, an organ of the terrorists, gave at the head of each issue the following extract from Herbert Spencer: "Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man. Resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative. Non-resistance hurts both altruism and egoism." He remarked that this was "the kind of pernicious stuff upon which young India fastened and fed."<sup>213</sup> Rees apparently cherished the belief that in India it was necessary to preach not the doctrine of liberty but the gospel of absolute and blind obedience to authority.

Cromer maintained that the extremely literary character of higher Western education had produced a large number of unemployed demagogues, and that owing to the insufficient attention that had been paid to the spread of elementary education among the masses, the numerous unemployed demagogues had found the best opportunity of propagating their subversive doctrines among the ignorant masses.<sup>214</sup> Lord Lamington fondly hoped that the wide diffusion of elementary education among the Indian masses would enable them to appreciate the benefits of British rule and to reject the revolutionary ideas of political agitators. He further suggested that higher Western education should be given "at its proper cost" so that no "fictitious encouragement" was given to Indians for taking up higher education.<sup>215</sup>

Congressmen agreed with Lord Lamington, though not for exactly the same reasons, about the desirability of a wider diffusion of primary education in India as can be seen from Gokhale's insistence in 1911 on the passage of an Elementary Education Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council, but they firmly opposed the suggestion of giving higher Western education in India "at its proper cost" which might have the tendency of checking the number of those who had the benefit of having a higher Western education. They denied that the study of the works of English political philosophers, such as Burke, Mill, and Spencer, was in any way responsible for the growth of a revolutionary party in India. Surendranath Banerjea wrote that he regarded Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* as the strongest and the most reasoned protest against revolutions of all kinds.<sup>216</sup> The study of English political history that was so devoid of violent revolutions could not tend to promote a revolutionary mentality among English-educated Indians. If nevertheless a spirit of revolutionary terrorism had developed in India, it had developed not because of the spread of English education but in spite of it.<sup>217</sup> It may be recalled that in the early years of British rule the spread of English education was partly responsible for weakening the revolutionary sentiment in the country, and for generating in the minds of the educated Indians the idea that political progress should be achieved not by overthrowing British rule, but by working for the liberalization of that rule by means of constitutional agitation. But though Congressmen generally believed in constitutional methods of agitation, Rash Behari Ghose, in his welcome address to the Congress of 1906, warned England that if she sought to deprive India of her just political rights then the condition of India might become like that of Ireland, or even that of Russia.<sup>218</sup> The British response to the challenge of militant nationalism in India consisted, however, in the pursuit of a policy which was a mixture of repression and reform, and the reforms that were introduced were known as the Morley-Minto reforms.

#### V. THE MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS

When the Liberal Party came to power in Britain at the end of

1905, Morley became the Secretary of State. Morley's appointment as Secretary of State was hailed by the moderates. In his Congress presidential address in December 1905, Gokhale said that a large number of educated men looked up to Morley, the Liberal, as towards a master.<sup>210</sup> But though Morley wrote that the Liberal Party "was least likely to quarrel with abstract catch-words in the rising Indian movement,"<sup>220</sup> he himself could not share the faith of Congressmen about the desirability of gradually introducing English parliamentary institutions into India for the ultimate establishment of a colonial form of self-government. In August 1906, he frankly told Gokhale that he believed that for many a day to come Gokhale's hope that India would attain a colonial form of self-government would remain a mere dream. Reporting to Minto on his confidential talks with Gokhale at the India Office, Morley said that Gokhale made no secret "of his ultimate hope and design—India to be on the footing of a self-governing colony. I equally made no secret of my conviction that for many a day to come—long beyond the short span that may be left us—this was a mere dream."

Morley repudiated the ideal of democracy for India. He argued that Liberalism did not uphold the theory that because parliamentary self-government was good for Britain it was equally good for a backward country, such as India, which was passing through a "transition from the fifth European century in some parts in slow, uneven stages up to the twentieth."<sup>221</sup> He could not foresee a time when India would cease to be a "theatre of absolute and personal government."<sup>222</sup> On 23 February 1909, during the second reading of the Morley-Minto Reform Bill, Morley expressed the hope that the reforms might win over those Indian nationalists who desired a colonial form of self-government on the side of those who entertained no such desire, but who would be content if only they were admitted to a fair and workable cooperation in the running of the administration. Morley said that there were extremists who nursed, what he called, fantastic dreams that some day they would drive the English out of India; there was another group who nourished no such hope but who yet desired autonomy or self-government of the colonial species and pattern; and there was the third group who asked for no more than to be admitted to cooperation in the Indo-British administration. "I believe the effect of the



reforms has been, is being, and will be to draw the second class who hope for colonial autonomy, into the third class," said Morley.<sup>223</sup> Morley, so historically minded and so proud of the liberal tradition, did not consider that parliamentary institutions could be introduced into India. Democracy was, like the Canadian fur coat, wholly unsuited to Indian conditions.

But Lord Courtney was bolder, and did not rule out the possibility of the eventual establishment of self-government in India. Speaking in the House of Lords on 24 February 1909 he said: "I see no reason whatever for laying down the maxim that colonial self-government can never, under any circumstances, come to pass in India, when we consider what has been done in the last thirty years in Japan and observe the movement in China, is it not rash to declare what may be the ultimate form of government fifty years hence in India?" India, in fact, attained the status of a self-governing nation even before the expiry of fifty years from the time when Lord Courtney spoke in the House of Lords.

Like Morley, Minto also had no faith in representative government so far as its application to India was concerned. At the first meeting of the reformed Imperial Legislative Council held on 25 January 1910, Minto declared that he and the government of India "distinctly maintained that representative government in its Western sense is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of Eastern populations—that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation—that the safety and welfare of this country depend on the supremacy of British administration—and that supremacy can, in no circumstances, be delegated to any kind of representative assembly."<sup>224</sup> Minto claimed that the introduction of representative government in India "would be a Western importation unnatural to Eastern tastes."<sup>225</sup>

Congressmen were not daunted by the difficulties that stood in the way of the development of English parliamentary institutions in India. *The Bengalee* wrote that England, by first developing parliamentary institutions, had made it easier for other nations to develop such institutions.<sup>226</sup> It maintained that though there were many people in India whose mental development, when Macaulay wrote, was at the stage of the fifth European century, some of them had already been imbued with the spirit

of twentieth-century Europe. Not even a hundred years separated Macaulay's time from Morley's and "yet how momentous has been the transformation which European civilization and European education working upon the Indian soil has brought about in India."<sup>227</sup> *The Bengalee* argued that it was no longer possible to maintain that Oriental peoples, unlike the Occidental nations, were not fit for self-government, because towards the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century there had developed constitutional and democratic movements in Oriental countries such as Japan, Persia, and China.<sup>228</sup> *The Bengalee* drew attention to the curious phenomena that when the progressive peoples of Asia were becoming enthusiastic about the political ideals of democratic self-government evolved by the genius of England and France, many Englishmen upheld the theory of despotic and benevolent imperialism and regarded with doubt and distrust the possibility of the development of self-governing democratic institutions in India.<sup>229</sup>

Though Morley did not agree with the ultimate political aims of Congressmen, he yet believed that it was essential that political concessions or reforms should be granted to Indians.<sup>230</sup> In a speech in the House of Lords on 23 February 1909, Curzon said that when he was Viceroy political concessions were not in the field, but he conceded that in the last few years the whole political situation had changed and that, therefore, he would try, as far as possible to look at the Indian situation through Morley's spectacles.<sup>231</sup>

Speaking in favour of political reforms, Morley said that after the introduction of Occidental education the establishment of a limited measure of Occidental political machinery could not be avoided.<sup>232</sup> Critics such as J. D. Rees and other upholders of the doctrine of absolute rule in India claimed that Occidental political institutions were demanded only by a small minority of English-educated class, and that India should be governed aristocratically and not according to English democratic ideas.<sup>233</sup> Rees suggested that the powers of the hereditary leaders of Indian society should be confirmed and increased. Colonel L. J. H. Grey warned the government against transferring any power to the English-educated and Europe-returned talkers and writers of Presidency towns, and advised it to rule India with the help of the great ruling chiefs, the provincial nobility and the landed

gentry.<sup>234</sup> F. H. Barrow, a retired civil servant, said that the government could give greater political power to the land-holding and commercial classes, who were loyal to British rule, and that it could rely very little on the support of the English-educated professional class.<sup>235</sup> Writing in February 1909 Justice Beaman remarked that the educated Indians were mostly disloyal and that it could well be doubted whether they could reasonably ask for any political concession or reform.<sup>236</sup>

Morley did not believe that the educated class was, on the whole, seditious or that it would be wise to resist the political aspirations of that class by saying that it constituted only a microscopic minority of India's total population. He said that though the educated section of the people was small it would be fatally idle to believe that it did not count. "This educated section," he declared on 6 June 1907, "makes all the difference, is making and will make all the difference."<sup>237</sup> In the same strain as Morley, Montagu, Under-Secretary of State for India, said in the House of Commons on 26 July 1910 that it was true that unrest in India was confined to a small fraction of the people, but when the vast mass of the illiterate people had little or no ideas of politics, then the opinions of the educated classes were "the most prominent factor in the situation."<sup>238</sup> Similarly, Ramsay MacDonald declared in the House of Commons on 28 April 1910, that the problem in India was not chiefly the problem of dealing with the vast mass of ignorant peasantry who ceaselessly toiled in the fields and who had no political aspirations, it was rather the problem of dealing with that small group of educated Indians, who, while they retained their fundamental Eastern characteristics, were trained in Western political ideals and sought to introduce Western political institutions into India.<sup>239</sup> Congressmen enthusiastically welcomed these remarks.<sup>240</sup>

Morley admitted that it was no longer possible to continue to govern India by a cast-iron bureaucracy<sup>241</sup> and he realized that the government would have to deal with the Congress movement. The Morley-Minto reforms dispensed with official majorities in the provincial Legislative Councils.<sup>242</sup> This was resented by Anglo-Indian bureaucrats and others who believed that Indians deserved an absolute and paternal form of government. J. D. Rees said that the democrats in Britain, by approving of the reforms that provided for the creation in the provincial coun-

cils of nonofficial majorities, which were to be largely composed of the professional or English-educated middle class, showed that they had ignored the interests of the masses which could only be protected by the British rulers of India.<sup>243</sup> Sir Bampfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal, gave expression to the same idea by saying that the reforms meant the sacrifice of philanthropy to politics.<sup>244</sup> Curzon also deplored the liberalization of the Councils which were brought about by the Morley-Minto reforms. "I am under the strong opinion," he said on 23 February 1909, "that as government in India becomes more and more Parliamentary—as will be the inevitable result [of the reforms]—so it will become less beneficent to the poorer classes of the population."<sup>245</sup>

The Morley-Minto reforms, however, did not transfer the real control over the government of India into the hands of the English-educated middle class. The *Madras Mail*, an Anglo-Indian paper, rightly pointed out that the abolition of official majorities in the provincial councils would not, in all probability, result in any serious danger to the administration, because, firstly it was not likely that all the nonofficial members (some of whom were not elected, but were nominated by the government)<sup>246</sup> would combine against the government, and secondly, because the fate of measures were not finally settled in the provincial legislatures.<sup>247</sup> In the Imperial Legislative Council, as distinguished from the provincial councils, a substantial official majority was retained, for Morley insisted that that was necessary for maintaining the undisputed supremacy of the British Parliament over Indian affairs.<sup>248</sup>

The Morley-Minto reforms conceded to the members of the legislative councils the right of asking supplementary questions and the right of moving resolutions on all matters including the budget. A. J. Balfour stated that by asking supplementary questions, Indian councillors would be able to attack and embarrass the officials. Englishmen, he continued, being brought up in the parliamentary atmosphere, did not realize how difficult it was to defend an administration against those who wanted to criticize it by the use of all the parliamentary debating dialectics.<sup>249</sup> Further, criticism in India was likely to be irresponsible, because the opposition party in India, unlike the opposition party in Britain, could not be subdued by the calming reflection that one day

it might come to power and then it would have to put into practice all the lofty principles on the basis of which it had criticized the previous government. Balfour could not understand the propriety of making the Indian legislative councils the mimics of all the worst and most laborious parts of British parliamentary procedure so that "some ingenious native lawyer whose delight and pleasure, and perhaps whose road to fame and it may be to income" was to attack and embarrass the Indian administration was given an opportunity to satisfy his desires.<sup>250</sup> History has proved that Balfour's apprehensions were unfounded. "It cannot be said," observed the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, "that the right of interrogation has been abused."<sup>251</sup>

One of the most important reforms introduced by Morley and Minto was the appointment of an Indian in the Governor-General's Executive Council. On the question of the appointment of an Indian member on the Viceroy's Executive Council the Liberal Morley wrote to the Conservative Minto on 15 June 1906: "I suppose the notion of a Native in your Executive Council would not do at all. Is that certain? I daresay it is—and it would frighten that nervous animal (naturally nervous), the European-Indian."<sup>252</sup> This letter was printed in Morley's *Recollections*<sup>253</sup> but he had replaced "animal" by the word "personage" and "European" by "Anglo" in the published version. Minto wrote to Morley on 5 July 1906 saying: "I have very nearly, on several occasions, suggested to you the possibility of a Native gentleman on my Council, but thought it would be premature to say anything about it. (In my opinion there is much to be said for it.) Also it would be necessary to find a man generally looked up to in India with a stake in the country (and not to promote any one of the purely Gokhale type)."<sup>254</sup> The words in bracket were omitted from the official version of the letter as printed in Lady Minto's *India: Minto and Morley*.<sup>255</sup>

In a letter to Morley written on 11 July 1909 Minto reverted to this question. He wrote: "Again, as to a Native member of Council, there is a great deal to be said for it. To me such a possibility appeals very strongly, but I cannot disguise from myself the doubts which naturally arise as to the advisability of committing State secrets to a Native colleague. At the same time I do not feel sure that we are not exaggerating the risk, that our suspicion is not largely due to our own inherent prejudice

against another race.”<sup>256</sup> It appears that the Conservative Minto was more inclined towards the idea of appointing an Indian member than the Liberal Morley.

Early in 1907 Minto had definitely decided in favour of appointing an Indian.<sup>257</sup> But Minto's Council was opposed to the idea. On 27 February 1907, Minto wrote: “The reasons against it stated by Members of Council are generally narrow, based almost entirely on the assumption that it is impossible to trust a Native in a position of great responsibility, and that the appointment of a Native Member is simply a concession to Congress agitation.”<sup>258</sup> However, in a dispatch to the Secretary of State in April 1907, the Government of India definitely advocated the proposal of appointing an Indian member.<sup>259</sup> Morley supported the proposal, but his Council was opposed to it.<sup>260</sup>

In March 1907, Morley casually discussed the question of appointing an Indian member to his Council with Austen Chamberlain. Chamberlain strongly opposed the idea. He argued that the whole British position in India was based on the assumption that the British were different from the Indians. “We could not,” he said, “admit equality. White men could not and ought not to submit to coloured rule. . . .”<sup>261</sup> However in August 1907, Morley took a bold step by appointing two Indians to his Council.

Though the Conservative Viceroy and the Liberal Secretary of State eventually agreed that it was desirable to appoint an Indian in the Viceroy's Council, a strong body of opinion in England was opposed to this proposal. On 12 March 1909, King Edward VII wrote to Morley that he believed that such an appointment was “fraught with the greatest danger to the maintenance of the Indian empire under British rule.”<sup>262</sup> The King argued that the Indian princes would object to the appointment of a commoner of inferior birth, that the Muslims would object if only a Hindu was appointed, that the Indian member might reveal to his countrymen important state secrets discussed in the Council, and that the appointment of an Indian would become a precedent so that future Viceroys would find it extremely difficult to avoid appointing an Indian to the Viceroy's Council.<sup>263</sup>

In a letter on 17 March 1909, Morley drew the attention of the King to the promise given by Queen Victoria in 1858 that

race or colour should not be a bar to the appointment of any Indian to government offices.<sup>264</sup> In a marginal comment to Morley's letter the King wrote that he could not see why the name of Queen Victoria was brought in and remarked that he did not think that the Queen would have approved of the appointment of an Indian member.<sup>265</sup>

Lord MacDonnell, who had held charge of three provinces, said in the House of Lords on 23 February 1909, that the admission of an Indian in the Viceroy's Council would mean "the introduction of a foreign element" in the Council. He fondly believed that the princes of India and the majority of the Indian people would regard an Indian in the Council as a foreign element.<sup>266</sup> Curzon similarly said that Indians would not believe that any of their countrymen was capable of that detachment and impartiality which, he thought, had in the past characterized the British members of the Viceroy's Council. He claimed that if a plebiscite was taken then a large majority of Indians would vote against the admission of Indians in the Viceroy's Council.<sup>267</sup> Lord Lansdowne, another ex-Viceroy, was in agreement with Curzon about the result of such a plebiscite.<sup>268</sup>

It is interesting to consider the views of Cromer, the great imperialist, on the appointment of an Indian. Cromer, author of *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, thought that the idea of self-government for India was not only absurd and impracticable, but to entertain it was to perpetrate a crime against civilization and specifically against the voiceless millions of Indians whose interests were committed to Britain's charge. Notwithstanding the fact that Cromer held these views, he described India to be almost the only country where education had advanced but which was governed by non-resident foreigners, and he suggested that the closer association of Indians with the administration of their country was most essential, and he approved of the appointment of an Indian member in the Viceroy's council.<sup>269</sup>

Congressmen enthusiastically welcomed the appointment of an Indian in the Viceroy's Council.<sup>270</sup> R. N. Mudholkar, in his 1912 Congress presidential address, argued that after Curzon's pronouncement in 1904 that the highest ranks of civil employment should generally be reserved for Englishmen, "the admission of Indians into the Executive Government... was very much like the introduction of a new principle."<sup>271</sup> The appoint-

ment of S. P. Sinha as the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Council was generally welcomed. Minto bore testimony to the able assistance he had received from Sinha, and publicly thanked him for "the absolute fairness and broad-minded patriotism" which had characterized any advice that Sinha had offered him.<sup>272</sup>

Congressmen criticized various features of the Morley-Minto reforms, but yet they considered them as a step towards the development of parliamentary institutions. Surendranath Banerjea exuberantly claimed that Morley would stand forth in history as the Simon de Montfort of the future parliament of India.<sup>273</sup> But Morley himself declared that he would have had nothing to do with the reforms if it could be said that they would directly or necessarily lead up to the establishment of a parliamentary form of government.<sup>274</sup> Morley, however, was not opposed to the introduction of a certain measure of representative institutions into India. While advocating the reform proposals for the liberalization of the legislative councils he had argued that after the establishment of occidental education the introduction of a limited measure of occidental political institutions could not be avoided.<sup>275</sup> While Morley was willing to give Indians some influence over the government by making the legislative councils more representative, he was not prepared to give them any real power over the government by introducing a responsible or parliamentary form of government under which the popular legislature would be able to control the executive authority. But after nonofficial majorities in the provincial councils were introduced by the Morley-Minto reforms, it was almost inevitable that, with the development of Indian nationalism, elected majorities would have to be conceded, and it was certain that the popularly elected legislatures would demand the right of not merely influencing but of controlling the policies of the executive. "You want," said R. N. Mudholkar in his 1912 Congress presidential address, "a Parliamentary form of Government, your Legislative Councils are even now Parliaments *in embryo*. It rests with your representatives to secure their full growth."<sup>276</sup>

The full growth of a parliamentary form of government in India took place when the Indian Constitution of 1950 came into being. The first modest beginnings of a representative form of government in India started with the enactment of the Indian



Councils Act of 1861. Under the 1861 Act in the Centre the supreme head was the Viceroy who was advised by a Council consisting of twelve government officials, all of whom were British, and six nonofficials, both British and Indian. In the provinces the supreme head was the Governor and there was a Legislative Council of which at least half of the members were appointed from nonofficials and most of these nonofficial members were Indians. The next stage in the advance of representative institutions in India was reached with the introduction of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 which indirectly and *de facto*, though not *de jure*, introduced the elective principle to a limited extent. The acceptance of the elective principle, even though only *de facto*, marked a definite milestone on the road to the development of representative institutions in India. The next stage of advance was reached with the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909 whereunder in the Viceroy's Council an Indian member was appointed and in the Legislative Council at the Centre provision was made for the election of 27 Indian members though there still remained 36 government officials, all British, and five nonofficial Indian members to be appointed by the government. Under the Reforms of 1909 in the Governor's Executive Council of the States an Indian member was appointed, and in the Legislative Councils the number of elected members were so increased that if they could secure the support of the nonofficial members appointed by the government then they could outnumber the government officials in the Legislative Councils. The next stage in the advance of representative institutions in India came with the introduction of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919 whereunder in the Viceroy's Council in the Centre out of 7 members 3 were Indians, and in the Legislative Assembly, or the Lower House at the Centre, there were 97 Indian and 8 British members, and 26 government officials, both Indian and British, and also 14 nonofficial Indian members. Under the 1935 Act provincial autonomy was introduced, and each provincial legislature had a majority of elected members and the Governors in the provinces were advised by Councils of Indian Ministers. The next stage in the advance came in 1946 when an interim Government was established at the Centre preparatory to the complete transfer of power into Indian hands. In this interim government all the members of the

Viceroy's Executive Council were Indians. The complete transfer of power came in 1947 when the Indian Independence Act was enacted and a parliamentary form of government was introduced under the Constitution of India of 1950.

#### VI. COUNTERPOISE TO NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The British bureaucrats in India did not believe in democracy or representative institutions. They said that if the Indian administration was to be liberalized, it should be done by giving more power only to the landlords and princes, who were conservative by instinct and who could act as a counterpoise to the growing nationalist movement. Such sentiments were expressed by the British bureaucrats before the 1892 Councils Act was introduced and later when the Morley-Minto reforms were introduced in 1909, and at all subsequent stages when the question of political reforms came up in India.

There were many landed aristocrats and princes in India who also wanted to stem the tide of the growing nationalist and democratic movement in India. The Raja of Bhinga, a representative of the landed aristocrats, gave expression to his views in a work entitled *Democracy Not Suited to India*, published in the year 1888.<sup>277</sup> The Raja believed that it was undesirable "to give men of inferior origin and caste, power over men immensely their superior in birth and social position," and he emphatically maintained that the territorial aristocrats wanted to preserve the social distinctions that existed between man and man in India from time immemorial.<sup>278</sup> The territorial aristocrats had no love for democracy in general or the Congress movement in particular. They were conservative and orthodox. They clung to the old established usages. But the light of orthodoxy had become dim in the minds of many Congress agitators who, the Rajah lamented, were "seeking to introduce into India the strange and complicated institutions of the far West." The Raja claimed that the landed aristocrats represented the real interests of the people and advised the British rulers to govern India through the landed aristocrats.<sup>279</sup>

Similarly Raja Siva Prasad declared in the 1888 Congress that the government should prohibit the extensive distribution of

pamphlets and leaflets which contained criticisms of the British administration in India. Language, such as, "to what condition the nation has been reduced . . . how distressed she feels . . . is she alive or dead," he considered to be objectionable. This conservative Raja said that "to declare the value of the principles of democracy; and that England owes its greatness to it; to hold up to admiration the Republican form of government in France; to show that in the colonies even the Negroes enjoy the same rights as the British-born subjects, implying thereby that the conditions of the negroes is better than that of the people of India," was to use language that was inflammatory.<sup>280</sup>

A little known person by the name of R. C. Saunders, a Calcutta solicitor, suggested in 1890 that by forming an Indian House of Lords it would be possible to rule India through the territorial aristocrats. He computed that the Indian peerage would be composed of 1,280 aristocrats. There would be 130 ruling chiefs of native states, 100 survivors of extinct dynasties and other eminent men, and 950 zemindars of British India.<sup>281</sup> The Indian peerage were to have the right of trial by their own class and they were to have a voice in legislation. It was not clearly specified how real the power of the Indian peerage was to be in this scheme of things, but probably the Indian House of Lords was to be designed so as to function merely as a consultative body. It was not intended that it would be invested with the ultimate controlling power over legislation.

Saunders suggested that some of the ambitious and relatively wealthy educated middle class Indians could be elevated to the Indian peerage in the manner that some middle class persons in Britain had been incorporated in British nobility. The object that Saunders had in mind when he suggested the creation of an Indian House of Lords was that it would have provided a "proper counterpoise" to the Congress movement that was dominated by the English-educated middle class.<sup>282</sup> Saunders wanted to check the growing influence of the English-educated class which was seeking to familiarize their countrymen with Western political institutions and ideas, and who were more enlightened than the territorial aristocrats of India. As the Raja of Bhinga himself admitted, the majority of the ancient nobility of India had not received the benefits of English education and they found it difficult to keep pace with the tide of progress.<sup>283</sup>

Even Syed Ahmed Khan, the great Muslim leader, opposed the Congress movement not merely because it formulated reform proposals on the assumption that Indians were a nation,<sup>284</sup> but also because it sought to import democratic institutions into India which, he maintained, were totally unsuited to Indian conditions.

The question of providing a counterpoise to the growing nationalist movement represented by the Congress assumed great importance at the time of the Morley-Minto reforms. This question was uppermost in Minto's mind and on 27 June 1906, Minto wrote lamenting that Congressmen, who could easily imitate Western political methods, had secured for their political utterances much greater importance in Britain than they ever could aspire to obtain in India.<sup>285</sup> He believed that the most important factor with which the government had to deal was "not impossible Congress ambitions."<sup>286</sup> He desired to satisfy the aspirations of big landowners and others who wanted Indians to have a greater share in the highest councils of the government, but who were not enthusiastic about the Congress demand for the increase of representative government in India. On 28 May 1906 Minto had written to Morley: "I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we find a solution in the Council of Princes, or in an elaboration of that idea; a Privy Council not only of Native Rulers, but of a few other big men.... We should get [from them] different ideas from those of Congress."<sup>287</sup>

In order to provide a counterpoise to the Congress influence, Minto desired to have a larger representation of the landed interests in the Councils and in a letter written to Morley on 11 July 1906, Minto said: "But I am inclined to apprehend that we might perhaps find our university members too much connected with Congress aspirations, and I think that their influence should be balanced by representatives on the Council nominated, for instance, by the Taluqdar Association and other such associations representing the landed interest."<sup>288</sup> It is significant that this portion of the letter was omitted by Lady Minto from the official version of the letter which was published by her.<sup>289</sup>

The fear of the Congress that Minto entertained was not so much of persons like Gokhale, but of persons like Tilak and Bipin Pal, though in one of his letters Minto had said that he did

not want to promote anyone even of the purely Gokhale type. In a private letter to Morley written on 4 November 1906, Minto said: "Tilak, as you no doubt know, has an evil reputation, and if he and his party gained control of the Congress, knowing what we do, we could not look upon them otherwise than as irreconcilably hostile to British rule. Gokhale's letters are very remarkable. They are evidently honest, and the admission he makes as to the weakness of his own countrymen and the strength of our rule in India, has impressed me much as coming from him. Our friendly recognition of a moderate Congress might, I believe, do much good. If the extremists, such as Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal, gain the ascendancy, it will be impossible to deal with them, and the Congress itself will split up."<sup>200</sup> In this letter Minto also expressed his misgivings about parliamentary intervention in Indian affairs and his complete lack of faith in Indian nationalism. As to parliamentary interference, he said: "Whether the growth of democracy at home, and the power which better means of communication have given it of transmitting its sympathies to the uttermost parts of the world are entirely conducive to the good government of a great empire such as ours, I am not prepared to argue, though there can be no doubt that British administrators in our distant possessions are heavily handicapped, as to decisions which they may be required instantly to act upon, by their knowledge of the trend of public opinion at home, however mistaken it may be..."<sup>201</sup> As to Indian nationalists, Minto's views were still more extreme. He said: "What is going on in India is altogether peculiar in comparison with other revolutions, Gambetta and Clemenceau, and before them Cavour, Garibaldi, and Mazzini, were fighting for what they believed to be the liberties of the people and had the support of a great majority of their fellow countrymen. I have always thought the regeneration of Italy a very fine story, though it was led by extremists who were not over-scrupulous; but here the position is entirely different. There is no popular movement, from below. The movement, such as it is, is impelled by the leaders of a class very small indeed in comparison to the population of India, who, if by some miracle they obtain the reins of Government, are totally incapable of ruling and would not for an instant be tolerated by the people of India as a whole. The extremists here are aiming at impossibilities. Their success

would mean the disappearance of British administration and their own annihilation the next day."<sup>292</sup>

But Morley believed that the solution of the Indian problem lay in not merely maintaining law and order and in pursuing a policy of repression but also in simultaneously pursuing a policy of reforms which would satisfy moderates like Gokhale, though it does not seem he had a high opinion of Gokhale. On 21 October 1907 he wrote to Minto: "I have often thought during the last twelve months that Gokhale as party manager is a baby. A party manager, or for that matter any politician aspiring to be a leader, should never *whine*. Gokhale is too often whining, just like the second-rate Irishmen between Dan O'Connell and Parnell. There was never any whine about Parnell (unless may be at the bottom of the useful fire-escape). Now if I were in Gokhale's shoes—if he wear shoes, I forget—I should insist on quietly making terms with the Bureaucracy, on the basis of order *plus* Reforms."<sup>293</sup>

To counteract the influence of the Congress and of politicians of the extremist type such as Tilak, the government of India suggested the formation of an Imperial Advisory Council to be composed of ruling chiefs and territorial magnates, and of provincial advisory councils to be composed of substantial landholders, representatives of the smaller landholders, of industry, commerce, capital, and also of the professional classes.<sup>294</sup> These advisory councils would have borne not the slightest resemblance to the English Parliament. They were to be purely consultative bodies. The advisers could be consulted individually as well as collectively, and consultations as a general rule were to be private and confidential.<sup>295</sup>

The Ruling Chiefs even objected to a mixed Imperial Advisory Council on the ground that they would have to sit with the subjects of the British government who were "necessarily of an inferior status."<sup>296</sup> Ultimately the idea of creating advisory councils was dropped.<sup>297</sup> The dropping of the idea pleased Congressmen for they knew that such councils would have merely provided a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class.<sup>298</sup>

In the reform proposals suggested by the government of India it was stated that the operation of the quasi-elective system since 1893 had resulted in an excessive representative of the profes-

sional middle classes,<sup>299</sup> and that "the requisite counterpoise to their excessive influence" could be found by the creation of an "additional electorate recruited from landed and monied classes."<sup>300</sup> Congressmen, on the other hand, pointed out that the very fact that few landlords but many members of the professional classes, had been elected to the councils showed that the professional classes had a greater representative character than the landed classes.

The extent of representation granted to the landlords by the Morley-Minto reforms was considered by Congressmen to be excessive,<sup>301</sup> and many of them also criticized the provision of the separate representation of the landlords.<sup>302</sup> Pandit B. N. Dhar referred to the landlords as an extremely conservative force.<sup>303</sup> "You want in the Councils," he said, "men who are educated, . . . who have the intelligence to appreciate the ideals of British civilization and British government, and who alone are suited by their training to help the government in moulding our institutions according to the needs of the new times. The landed magnates are at best a conservative force—not in the sense in which that phrase is applicable to the landlord class in England, which is educated, intelligent, and conversant with public affairs—but a body of men who are backward in knowledge and wedded to retrospective habits of thought, and whose golden age lies behind the mists of the past."<sup>304</sup>

Apart from giving greater representation to the landlords and landed aristocrats, who were conservatives by nature and instinct, the Morley-Minto reforms also introduced separate electorates for Muslims, whose effect was to separate a considerable number of Muslims from the mainstream of Indian nationalism and whose logical development was the eventual establishment of a separate state mainly for the Muslims on the basis of religion.

Separate electorates for Muslims, which were demanded by many Muslim leaders, were introduced by the Morley-Minto reforms, but the origins of this claim can be traced to Syed Ahmed Khan, the great Muslim leader. On 22 September 1893, in a letter to *The Pioneer Mail*, Syed Ahmed said that after a study of John Stuart Mill's views on representative government and after much reflection he had been convinced that representative government, which was entirely regulated by the majority of votes, could only be successful in a country which was homo-

geneous in point of "race, religion, social manners, customs, economical conditions and political tradition of history."<sup>305</sup> He maintained that as there existed no such homogeneity in India, the interests of all the peoples of India, and particularly that of the Muslims, would suffer if Western representative institutions were introduced.

In 1896 when Syed Ahmed and Theodore Beck drew up a paper on behalf of the Muslim Anglo-Oriental Defence Association, they said that it would be useless and foolish to demand that the elective system, which had been introduced in 1893, should be abolished, for such a proposal would excite the opposition of the Hindus and would be received unfavourably in England.<sup>306</sup> They, however, asserted that as a Catholic member chosen by a Protestant constituency in Ireland would not represent the true Catholic interest, so a Congressite Muslim elected by a predominantly Hindu constituency would in no way represent the true interests of the Muslims. They suggested that the electors of Muslim councillors should consist of Muslims only.<sup>307</sup>

On 1 October 1906 an important Muslim deputation presented an address to Minto.<sup>308</sup> The address stated that representative institutions of the Western type were new to India, that great care and caution was necessary to see that the introduction of such institutions did not place Muslim "national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority." It declared that because British rulers had, in pursuance of their political instincts, given representative institutions of the European type an increasingly important place in the government of the country, the Muslims could not hold aloof from such institutions, but it maintained that in order to prevent the Muslims from being reduced to an ineffective minority in the reformed councils it was necessary that the extent of Muslim representation should be determined not merely on the basis of their numerical strength in the country, and that only Muslims should be allowed to choose Muslim members of the councils.

This Muslim deputation of 1906 to the Viceroy was later characterized as "a command performance" by Mohammed Ali.<sup>309</sup> The history of this deputation is somewhat intriguing. Colonel Dunlop Smith, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, wrote to Mr Archibald, the then Principal of the Aligarh Col-



lege, that the Viceroy would be happy to receive a Muslim deputation. The Principal asked Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Secretary to the College, to "act quickly" and to press for "introducing the system of nomination or granting representation on religious lines."<sup>310</sup> The outcome was the famous Muslim deputation in answer to whose address Lord Minto said: "You justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service that it has rendered to the Empire."<sup>311</sup> Minto assured the Muslims that their political rights as a community would be safeguarded in any reform plan, and he affirmed that any electoral representation which aimed at giving a merely personal enfranchisement, regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities of India, was bound to be utterly unsuccessful.<sup>312</sup>

The significance of these observations of the Viceroy was not missed by shrewd observers, and a member of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy wrote to Lord Minto: "I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very, very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition."<sup>313</sup> This attempt to pull back sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the broad national movement in India ultimately resulted in the emergence of Pakistan.

In a dispatch on 27 November 1908, the Secretary of State had, on the other hand, tentatively suggested the creation of joint electoral colleges.<sup>314</sup> Many Congressmen welcomed this scheme and opposed the alternative scheme of creating separate electorates for the Muslims.<sup>315</sup> About the scheme of separate representation for the Muslims, *The Bengalee* commented that the adoption of this scheme would "lay the axe at the root of the growing conception a future Indian nationality."<sup>316</sup> On 10 March 1908, R. C. Dutt wrote that the creation of electorates on the basis of creeds would teach Indians "to disunite, to vote according to religion, to nurse sectional differences, and to rekindle dying hatreds and jealousies."<sup>317</sup> By voting through separate electorates men tended to think not in terms of the nation, but of their separate creeds. The opposite result could,

perhaps, have been obtained by the creation of joint electorates with reservation of seats for the Muslims.

The establishment of constituencies on the basis of creeds resulted in the creation of political camps organized against each other and encouraged men to think as partisans or as persons belonging to different groups and not as citizens. The introduction of separate electorates was a major breach in Indian liberalism. But when Minto and Morley introduced separate electorates for Muslims, neither of them was thinking in terms of democracy or nationhood, because for them these ultimates still lay far beyond the range of practical politics. They were quite certain that what was being introduced into India must not be confused with political ideas and practices prevailing in Britain. When Curzon attacked the new councils on the ground that they would inevitably become parliamentary bodies in miniature,<sup>318</sup> Morley gave a downright answer: "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms did lead directly or necessarily to the establishment of parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it."<sup>319</sup> "Not one whit more than you," Morley wrote to Minto, "do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adapt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India."<sup>320</sup>

The establishment of separate electorates, however, became a precedent and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms continued the system. "How can we say to them [the Muslims]," asked the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, "that we regard the decision of 1909 as mistaken, that its retention is incompatible with progress towards responsible government, that its reversal will eventually be to their benefit; and that for these reasons we have decided to go back on it?"<sup>321</sup>

## VII. MODERN ISLAM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM

The leader of the Muslim renaissance in India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, welcomed Western education but he was opposed to the introduction of Western representative institutions into India because he believed that such institutions could work successfully only in a homogeneous country like Britain and not in India which suffered from deep-seated religious and other dif-

ferences. Furthermore, the introduction of representative institutions in India would have given Hindus, who constituted not only the majority community but who had also taken to Western education earlier, a distinct advantage over Muslims. Syed Ahmed said that if representative institutions were introduced into India then the Muslims would not be able to compete with the Hindus in intellect or in wealth or in numbers, and he apprehended that in a representative assembly the Bengali Hindus would come to the top. In a speech at Lucknow on 28 December 1887,<sup>322</sup> he said: "I come now to the main subject on which I wish to address you. That is the National Congress and the demands which that body makes of Government. . . . Think for a moment what would be the result if all appointments were given by the competitive examination. . . . There would remain no part of the country in which we should see at the tables of justice and authority any face except those of Bengalis. . . . The second demand of the National Congress is that the people should elect a section of the Viceroy's Council. They want to copy the English House of Lords and the House of Commons. The elected members are to be like members of the House of Commons; the appointed members like the House of Lords. . . . Now, I ask you, O Mahomedans! Weep at your condition. Have you such wealth that you can compete with the Hindus? . . . Now, I ask you to pardon me for saying something which I say with a sore heart. In the whole nation there is no person who is equal to the Hindus in fitness. . . ."

Syed Ahmed believed that if the British left India then either the Hindus would conquer the Muslims or vice versa. In a speech<sup>323</sup> at Meerut on 14 March 1888, he said: "Now, suppose that all the English and the whole English army were to leave India, taking with them all their cannon and their splendid weapons and everything, then who would be rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations—the Mahomedans and the Hindus—could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down."

Criticizing the Congress demand for more representative institutions Syed Ahmed said that while representative government could succeed in a homogenous country like Britain, where there

existed a strong national feeling, in India, where the people were not homogeneous but were divided by profound religious and other differences, the introduction of representative government, pure and simple, would be productive of much evil, because as the Indian people, unlike the British people, would vote on the basis of religious and not political differences, the majority community, the Hindus, would completely dominate the Indian parliament and establish a government English in name, but Hindu in reality.<sup>324</sup> Syed Ahmed said: "Long before the idea of founding the Indian National Congress was mooted, I had given thought to the matter whether representative government is suited to the conditions of India. I studied John Stuart Mill's views in support of representative government. I reached the conclusion that the first requisite of a representative government is that the voters should possess the highest degree of homogeneity. In a form of government which depends for its functioning upon majorities, it is necessary that the people should have no differences in the matter of nationality, religion, ways of living, customs, mores, culture, and historical traditions. Only when such homogeneity is present can representative government work or prove beneficial. It should not even be thought of when these conditions do not exist. . . .

"In a country like India where homogeneity does not exist in any one of these fields, the introduction of representative government cannot produce any beneficial results; I sincerely hope that whichever party comes into power in Great Britain—be they the Conservatives, the Liberals, the Unionists, or the Radicals—they will remember that India is a continent; it is not a small and homogeneous country like England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland."<sup>325</sup>

Syed Ahmed believed that if the demands of the Congress for more representative institutions were conceded in full, then the Congress, by means of elections and through the legislative councils, would peacefully gain control over the entire internal administration of the country, and that this would mean that by peaceful means alone as great a change in the relative importance of the different political groups and communities would be effected as was generally secured by means of a civil war. "We also like a civil war," said Syed Ahmed, "but. . . we like it with

arms... which is in truth the true pen for writing the decrees of sovereignty.”<sup>326</sup>

Syed Ahmed criticized Congressmen not merely for formulating reform proposals on the assumption that Indians were a nation,<sup>327</sup> but also for trying to import a democratic spirit which, he maintained, was totally unsuited to Indian conditions. Theodore Beck, the Principal of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, who regarded himself as a disciple of Syed Ahmed in matters political,<sup>328</sup> wrote that the Indian Muslim thought resembled the old Tory School of England far more than the Radical and that Indian Muslims were not so enthusiastic about democratic institutions as was generally believed.<sup>329</sup>

Theodore Beck's objection to the Congress was that Congress agitation would lead to a mutiny, and if the Muslims joined the Congress agitation, they would ruin their prospects of improvement under British rule. In a letter to Badruddin Tyabji, a nationalist Muslim, written on 7 May 1888, Beck said: "Our chief objection to the National Congress is one more fundamental than any objection to any specific proposal. We believe that its methods—holding public meetings, showing the ills of the people and circulating pamphlets like the one printed at the end of the Congress report, etc.—will sooner or later cause a mutiny among the inhabitants of these provinces and the Punjab. If this be joined with a Frontier War, it will be a disastrous affair." Beck explained his position thus: "In the first place, the whole Mahomedan community of Upper India is distressingly poor. If they are led to believe, as they are already inclined to do, that this is due to the British Government, they will be ready to rise. They feel passionately the loss of their glory. The old Imperial buildings of Delhi and Agra are a living sign of their degradation. The older people of Delhi remember the last Emperor of the House of Timur. Add to this their religious fanaticism, which is not dead. The cry of *Jehad* is heard now and again. And add, moreover, that the people are really excitable and love a fight, as we saw at Delhi and Etawah—and we have the gravest reasons that if this kind of agitation spreads, the whole of Upper India may one day be aflame. Personally I should dislike this for two causes: first, because I have no desire to have my throat cut, and secondly, because the cause I have given my life to, would be hopelessly ruined, and the Mahomedans would fall

perhaps never to rise again. We, therefore, do not like agitation of any sort.”<sup>330</sup>

Theodore Beck expressed himself to be a disciple of Syed Ahmed in matters political, but he and other English professors at Aligarh had also considerable influence over Syed Ahmed. Shibli Numani (1857–1914), a profound Persian and Arabic scholar, who in 1883 had joined the staff of the Mahomedan Anglo–Oriental College at the invitation of Syed Ahmed but who differed from Syed Ahmed in matters political, regretted that the English professors at the Anglo–Oriental College had such influence over Syed Ahmed. Shibli’s biographer writes: “The English professors had created the conviction in Sir Syed’s mind that opposition to the Congress and friendship for the British were in the true interests of the college and the Musalmans. He had been so charmed by their magic that his own opinions had been submerged and now whatever he saw he saw with the eyes of Mr Beck and the English staff, and whatever he heard he heard with their ears.”<sup>331</sup>

Shibli stood midway between the Aligarh School which stood for British rule and Western education and the Deoband School which stood for traditional learning. The Deoband School, like the Ulama, was opposed to British rule and was not enthusiastic about Western culture or learning, and both the Ulama and Deoband School were opposed to the Aligarh movement started by Syed Ahmed.

Syed Ahmed welcomed Western rationalism and Western learning but was politically conservative. He opposed the Congress demand that admission to the higher services or to the legislative councils should not be restricted to men of high birth but should be thrown open to able men of even “insignificant origin,” as also the Congress demand for the holding of competitive examinations for the recruitment of the civil servants simultaneously in England and in India so that poor persons, who could not afford the expenses of going to England, would have a chance of appearing for the civil service examinations. One of the reasons why Syed Ahmed was opposed to the holding of simultaneous examinations in England and in India was that men of “insignificant origin” would then become civil servants. But in England, Englishmen of “insignificant origin” were recruited for the civil service and *The Indian Mirror* was quick to point

out that it would be a strange and illogical position if while Englishmen of "insignificant origin" were recruited for the civil service, Indians of "insignificant origin" were excluded from it.<sup>332</sup> But Syed Ahmed sought to defend his position by saying that because English civil servants came from a distant country, Indians remained ignorant as to whether those civil servants were the sons of dukes or drapers, but such ignorance could not be maintained about Indian civil servants, and in India men of good family would not consent to being ruled by Indians "of low rank with whose humble origin they were well acquainted."<sup>333</sup>

Syed Ahmed further stated that the Viceroy would be specially justified in appointing persons of good family as members of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. "None but a man of good breeding," he declared, "can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainments at which he may have to dine with Dukes and Earls."<sup>334</sup> The suggestion that those who enjoyed the accidental advantages of rank and birth should be given special preference in the matter of appointment to the Governor-General's Legislative Council was criticized in the nationalist press.<sup>335</sup> "India," wrote *The Indian Spectator*, "... does not want a government managed by the native aristocracy. It requires the fittest men it can find."<sup>336</sup> *The Tribune* drew attention to the fact that even the landed gentry of Bengal had once suggested as its nominee in the Governor-General's Legislative Council the name of that fine representative of the English-educated class, Kristo Das Pal, even though Pal was born in the "low" teli or oilman caste.<sup>337</sup>

Syed Ahmed opposed representative government also on the ground that representative institutions could never be established under foreign rule.<sup>338</sup> It had never been so established in all history. The principles on which an empire was based were different from the principles that sustained a representative system of government. The method of British imperial rule in India could not be democratic, it was bound to be the same as the method that was pursued by "all kings and Asiatic Empires."<sup>339</sup> The Muslims having once established an empire in India, knew the method of running an empire, whereas the English-educated Bengalis, who were vocal in the Congress, were utterly ignorant of it because they had no such experi-

ence.<sup>340</sup> The Muslim emperors did not consult their subject-peoples when they contemplated waging war against any province and conquering it. Why then should the British rulers be required to consult the representatives of the Indian people, before they went to war against Burma?<sup>341</sup> *The Tribune* and *The Hindu Patriot*, however, pointed out that because Indians paid for those military operations, it was only natural that they should feel that they were entitled to have a voice in the determination of the broad outlines of the military policy of the government.<sup>342</sup>

But according to Syed Ahmed, Indians not only had no right to interfere with the military and financial policy of the government,<sup>343</sup> they had also no right to claim that they should be appointed to those posts where matters of foreign policy and state secrets were dealt with. He said that it was a natural law that men confided more in the men of their own race than in those of others, and that Indians could not complain if Englishmen, and not Indians, were appointed to those posts.<sup>344</sup>

Syed Ahmed, the founder of the Aligarh College, helped to spread Western education among the Muslims but politically he wanted to keep them away from the nationalist movement led by the Congress. The Aligarh College became a great centre of the educated Muslims and also began to influence them politically. The tradition of the Aligarh College was to welcome Western education and to seek for a reconciliation of modern science with Islam but politically and socially the Aligarh tradition was conservative. Eventually as a result of the efforts of the British government the Muslim League came into existence in 1906 under the leadership of Aga Khan and others. The main object of the Muslim League was to safeguard the interests of the Indian Muslims in the background of loyalty to the British government.

The Aligarh School founded by Syed Ahmed was opposed by the Ulama and the Deoband School as also by the nationalist Muslims. But Syed Ahmed's influence was very considerable among the Muslims and he had a commanding personality. Giving his impressions of Syed Ahmed, C. F. Andrews, who had been a friend both of Gandhi and Tagore, wrote: "In Sir Syed Ahmed I saw the grandeur, the lion-like strength, the high ideals, the passionate enthusiasm of a great mind. No Musalman,



whom I ever met, impressed me more by the force and dignity of his character and his commanding intellectual greatness than Sir Syed Ahmed. Wherever he went, he naturally took the lead. His personality demanded it, and men instinctively followed him. His very presence and appearance were commanding. He was a born leader of men."<sup>345</sup>

Another Muslim leader who, like Syed Ahmed, welcomed Western learning but who was even more doubtful than Syed Ahmed as to the possibility of the development of a multi-religious Indian nation, was Sir Syed Ameer Ali of Calcutta, who founded the Central Muhammedan Association in 1877 and who had been a great jurist and an author of many books on Islam and the law. Syed Ameer Ali wrote: "It is only people who are ignorant of the situation, who do not understand the situation, that talk of common citizenship. Any attempt to drive the smaller into the bigger camp will only lead to discord and strife. . . . Do you think it possible to attain that end by driving them in common to the hustings?"<sup>346</sup>

The foremost nationalist Muslim in the early days of the Congress movement was Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906). Tyabji became the President of the Congress in 1887. Answering the *London Times*, which had stated that the Muslims had kept away from the Congress which was founded in 1885, Tyabji said: "I assure you of my perfect sympathy with the movement, and the sympathies of my co-religionists at large. The *English Times*, in writing about the movement, misstated that the Muhammadan community refrained from having anything to do with it. This I deny."<sup>347</sup>

Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, wanted to dissuade Tyabji from associating with the Congress and presented Tyabji with a group photograph of himself and his family, but Tyabji did not change his views and only remarked: "I am much afraid of Donees bringing presents." Tyabji also declined the invitation of Syed Ameer Ali to join the Muhammedan Association of Calcutta. On 3 December 1887, Tyabji wrote to Ameer Ali saying: "You are no doubt aware that I have always been of opinion that in regard to political questions at large, the Muhammadans should make a common cause with their fellow countrymen of other creeds and persuasions, and I cannot help deprecating any disunion on such questions between ourselves and the Hindus and Parsees.

On this ground I have highly regretted the abstention of the Mussalmans of Calcutta from the National Congress held both in Bombay and Calcutta. If, therefore, the proposed Muhammadan Conference is started simply as a rival to the National Congress, I should entirely oppose it, as it seems to me that the proper course is to join the Congress and take part in its deliberations, . . . <sup>348</sup>

In the early years of the twentieth century in India there were two trends among the English-educated Muslim intelligentsia. One trend was represented by the Aligarh tradition, which was modern so far as acceptance of Western education was concerned but which was otherwise conservative and to a certain extent feudal. There was another trend among the Muslim intelligentsia at that time which led to a Pan-Islamic sentiment that had been encouraged by Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey. This sentiment attracted some educated Muslims to Islamic countries and particularly Turkey, the seat of Khilafat.

Syed Ahmed had warned Indian Muslims from interesting themselves in Turkey and the Sultanate. But in the early years of the twentieth century there was a section of the Muslim intelligentsia which was looking to Turkey and was eager for constitutional and social reform. One of the leaders of the new movement was Abul Kalam Azad who in 1912 started the newspaper *Al-Hilal*.

Azad had received no education in any university,<sup>349</sup> though his biographer Mahadev Desai assumed that Azad had been educated in the *Al-Azhar* university at Cairo and Nehru repeated this error in *The Discovery of India*.<sup>350</sup> But though Azad was not trained in any university, he was a profound Arabic and Persian scholar. And though soaked in Islamic tradition, Azad's outlook was nationalistic and he wanted to interpret Islamic scriptures from a rationalistic point of view. Azad had seen nationalism growing in Turkey and other Islamic countries and he welcomed the nationalist movement in India. He felt that there was no conflict between Islam and sympathy for Islamic countries, on the one hand, and Indian nationalism, on the other.

In 1905 Azad was attracted to the revolutionary movement of Bengal and he met Aurobindo Ghose and joined one of the revolutionary groups.<sup>351</sup> So little had the Muslims been drawn into the nationalist movement at that time that Azad's presence in the

revolutionary group was at first viewed with suspicion. Azad records: "In those days the revolutionary groups were recruited exclusively from the Hindu middle classes. In fact all the revolutionary groups were then actively anti-Muslim. They saw that the British Government was using the Muslims against India's political struggle and the Muslims were playing the Government's game. East Bengal had become a separate province and Bamfylde Fuller, who was the Lieutenant-Governor, openly said that the Government looked upon the Muslim community as its favourite wife. The revolutionaries felt that the Muslims were an obstacle to the attainment of Indian Freedom and must, like other obstacles, be removed."<sup>352</sup>

Azad left Calcutta in 1908 and visited Iraq and Egypt and there the Arab and Turk nationalists expressed their surprise to Azad that the Indian Muslims were not participating in the nationalist movement. Referring to his contacts with Arab and Turk nationalists Azad recorded: "I left Calcutta in 1908. When I went to Iraq, I met some of the Iranian revolutionaries. In Egypt I came into contact with the followers of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. . . . When I went to Turkey I became friends with some of the leaders of the Young Turk movement. Contact with these Arab and Turk revolutionaries confirmed my political beliefs. They expressed their surprise that Indian Mussalmans were either indifferent to or against nationalist demands. They were of the view that Indian Mussalmans should have led the national struggle for freedom, and could not understand why Indian Mussalmans were mere camp-followers of the British. I was more convinced than ever that Indian Mussalmans must cooperate in the work of political liberation of the country."<sup>353</sup>

Returning to India, Azad started the *Al-Hilal*. Azad's writings in the *Al-Hilal* created quite a stir among the young Muslims, but these writings were not looked upon with favour by the conservative leaders of the Aligarh group, for the inevitable result of his writings was to attract the Indian Muslims to nationalism and to modern ideas of constitutional and social reform and thereby undermine the Aligarh tradition of encouragement of education among the Indian Muslims but only on the basis of unswerving loyalty to the British Raj. For his militant writings Azad soon found himself in difficulties with the British government and the *Al-Hilal* press was confiscated in

1914, whereupon Azad brought out another newspaper *Al-Balagh* but this had only a brief existence because in 1916 Azad was interned by the British government. Azad took an active part in the Indian nationalist movement and for this he was imprisoned a number of times. Azad held the office of the President of The Indian National Congress for a number of years and he played a prominent role in Indian politics after the first great war, but in this work we are only concerned with political developments up to the end of the first great war.

Azad became the President of the Delhi Session of the Indian National Congress in 1923 long after the end of the great war. But even before the end of the first great war there were inside the Indian National Congress many Muslims who were dedicated to the ideal of a multi-religious national state in India and who held important offices in the Congress party. Among the Muslims who were prominent within the Congress were Badrud-din Tyabji, the president of the 1887 Congress at Madras, Mohammad Rahimtoolah Sayani, the president of the Calcutta Congress of 1896, Nawab Sayed Mohammad Bahadur, the president of the 1913 Karachi Congress, and Hasan Imam, the president of the 1918 Bombay Congress.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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4. B. C. Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, 1916, p. 34.
5. This Barindra Ghose said in a note to Dr Karan Singh. [Dr Karan Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism, A Study of the Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo (1893-1910)*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967, p. 112.]
6. Aurobindo Ghose, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 69-70
7. Aurobindo Ghose, *Speeches*, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 173-74.
8. Bepin Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, pp. xix-xx.
9. Bepin Pal, *Swaraj, The Goal and The Way*, pp. 54-55.
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11. Lajpat Rai, *India's Will To Freedom*, Madras, 1921.
12. *The People*, 20 March 1927.
13. R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, p. 496.
14. See B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 45.
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16. *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress*, p. 222.
17. *Indian Parliamentary Debates*, 1906, p. 312.
18. *Report of the Twenty-second Indian National Congress*, p. 74.
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21. *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 6.
22. Henry W. Nevinston, *The New Spirit in India*, p. 222.
23. Ibid.
24. D. V. Tahmankar, *Lokmanya Tilak*, London, 1956, p. 130.
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29. As a matter of fact, he noted with regret that the terrorists used bombs (*Tilak's Masterpiece: Being a Verbatim Report of His Address to the Jury*, p. 51).
30. *Reminiscences and Anecdotes about Lokmanya Tilak*, Vol. I, p. 26.
31. Ibid., p. 53. *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 2; B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 6.
32. Quoted in Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 173-74.
33. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 772.
34. B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 5.
35. *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 2.
36. B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 64.

37. D. V. Tahmankar, *Lokmanya Tilak*, 1956, p. 107.
38. B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 77.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
40. *Aurobindo Ghose's Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 4.
41. B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 65.
42. *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 21.
43. B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 42. B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 65.
44. See B. G. Tilak : *His Writings and Speeches*, p. 56.
45. *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 12.
46. B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, p. 42.
47. *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 121. Pal was not exaggerating when he said this. In 1897 he himself had declared : "I believe that God has placed this [British] Government over us for our salvation....I know that without the help and tuition of this Government my people shall never be able to rise to their legitimate place in the Commonwealth of civilized nations." (B. C. Pal, *The Indian National Congress*, pp. 8-9.)
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49. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.
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53. *The People*, 2 August 1925.
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55. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
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57. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
58. B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Nationalism*, p. 5.
59. *Speeches of B. C. Pal*, p. 21.
60. Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, pp. 67-68.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 107-20.
62. Aurobindo, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 71.
63. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo*, p. 168.
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65. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-83.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.
68. Dr Karan Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism, A Study of the Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo (1893-1910)*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967, p. 112.
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71. *Speeches of Aurobindo*, pp. 177-78.
72. Aurobindo Ghose, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 38.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

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75. Dorothy Macardale, *The Irish Republic*, p. 66.
76. Arthur Griffith, *The Sinn Fein Policy*, p. 20.
77. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, First Series, p. 772.
78. Aurobindo Ghose's *Open Letter to His Countrymen*, p. 4.
79. *Report of the Twenty-second Indian National Congress*, p. 98.
80. Arthur Griffith, op. cit., p. 7.
81. See speech of H. N. Datta at the 1906 Congress (*Report of the Twenty-second Indian National Congress*, p. 99).
82. See Rabindranath Tagore, *Samuha*, pp. 56-58.
83. Ibid., pp. 59-61.
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85. See letter dated 27 September 1894 (*Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, Second Series, p. 20).
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87. See D. V. Tahmankar, *Lokmanya Tilak*, London, 1956, pp. 77-78.
88. Ibid., pp. 60-63.
89. See Navinchandra Sen, *Raivataka*, p. 30.
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106. Aurobindo Ghose, *Uttarpara Speech*, pp. 12, 16.
107. Aurobindo Ghose, *Speeches*, pp. 7-9.
108. Ibid., p. 55.
109. Aurobindo Ghose, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 4.
110. Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 13.
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119. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
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130. *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para 1.
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139. This extract, which was cited in the Swaraj sedition case, is taken from *The Bengalee* of 6 August 1908.
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147. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
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150. Animananda, *The Blade*, pp. 170-71.
151. S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, p. 18,
152. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
153. *Report of the Sedition Committee*, para 29.
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was what was expressed in one of the poems of Matthew Arnold:

Murder—but what is murder? When a wretch  
For private gain or hatred takes a life,  
We call it murder, crush him, brand his name.  
But when, for some great public cause an arm  
Is, without love or hate, austere raised  
Against a power exempt from common checks,  
Dangerous to all, to be thus annull'd—  
Ranks any man with murder such an act?

155. Dhananjay Keer, *Savarkar And His Times*, p. 56.
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157. Wilfrid Blunt, *My Diaries*, II, p. 288.
158. Wilfrid Blunt, op. cit., p. 276.
159. *The Modern Review*, XI, p. 562.
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161. This extract is taken from the report of the speech of Sir Henry Adamson (*The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India: April 1908 to March 1909*, p. 10).
162. Ibid., p. 11.
163. Swami Vivekananda, *Prachya O Paschatya*, p. 24.
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167. *The Song of God: Bhagavad Gita*, tr. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (London, 1948), p. 43.
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169. Ibid., p. 98.
170. S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, pp. 62, 102.
171. Ibid., pp. 101-3.
172. See report of conversation between Khaparde who supported the terrorists and Blunt (W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries*, pp. 677-78). During the great war some terrorists, however, thought of establishing in India a federal republic on the model of the U.S.A. (S. Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha*, p. 50).
173. Speech on 21 October 1907 (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 39).
174. Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 186.
175. See record of Sir Austen Chamberlain's conversation with Morley in his *Politics from Inside: an Epistolary Chronicle, 1906-1914* (London, 1936), p. 59.
176. Speech in the House of Commons (*Indian Debates, 1908*, p. 995).
177. Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 39.
178. Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, pp. 235-36.
179. Ibid., pp. 249-50.
180. Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 172-73.
181. Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, p. 250.

182. *Debates on Indian Affairs: House of Commons*, 1910, p. 243 (Wedgwood was member of Newcastle-under-Lyme).
183. Speech on 5 August 1909 (*Debates on Indian Affairs: House of Commons*, 1909, p. 606).
184. *Ibid.*, p. 608.
185. Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, p. 300.
186. Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. 11, p. 213.
187. Speech in the House of Commons on 6 June 1907 (Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p. 18).
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191. *Ibid.*, pp. 318, 327-28.
192. *The Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India: April 1908 to March 1909*, p. 11.
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194. Speech in House of Lords on 30 June 1908 (*Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 646).
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211. J. D. Rees, *The Real India* (London, 1908), p. 162. In 1906 H. F. Provost Battersby had written that the English were manufacturing discontent in India by means of education (H.F.P. Battersby, *India Under Royal Eyes*, p. 444).
212. Speech in the House of Commons on 22 July 1908 (*Indian Debates*, 1908, p. 738). See also the speech of Sir Henry Craik (p. 747).
213. *Ibid.*, p. 737. This extract is also quoted in the article, "The Free Hindusthan," by "A Loyalist," in *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January 1909, p. 131.
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284. Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 59.
285. Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, p. 31.
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293. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.
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296. *Proposals of the Government of India dated 1 October 1908*, (Cd. 4426), 1908, paras 4-6.
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333. Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Present State of Indian Politics*, p. 9.
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335. *The Indian Mirror*, 17 January 1888; *The Hindu Patriot*, 23 January 1888.
336. *The Indian Spectator*, 22 January 1888 (*The Indian Spectator* was edited by Behramji Malabari, who was an ardent social reformer).
337. *The Tribune*, 25 January 1888.
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## CHAPTER FOUR

# *The Home Rule Movement*

### I. THE IDEAL OF COLONIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Though in the early stages of the nationalist movement the moderates asked merely for the greater Indianization of the services and the liberalization of the councils, their eventual aim was the attainment of self-government within the empire. As early as 1885 Sir Henry Cotton had spoken of this ideal.<sup>1</sup> In his 1897 Congress presidential address Sankaran Nair had also expressed the hope that "India may one day take her place in the confederacy of the free English-speaking nations of the world."<sup>2</sup>

The ideal of colonial self-government, however, became a matter of lively political controversy only after the beginning of the twentieth century. Henry Cotton in his 1904 Congress presidential address said that the Indian patriots should aspire to establish "a federation of free and separate states, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain."<sup>3</sup> Next year Gokhale in his Congress presidential address also spoke in favour of the ideal of colonial self-government.<sup>4</sup>

The moderates who wanted self-government within the British empire were steeped in English ideas, and the notion of severing every political link with Britain was repugnant to them. In 1889 a moderate Congressman had written: "We do not regard the British Government as an alien Government, but look upon it as our national government. English is our lingua franca: of English institutions we have become deeply enamoured; and, as we have been trained on lines peculiarly British, we cannot do aught but



ask for privileges of British citizenship.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly in 1895 Surendranath Banerjea in his Congress presidential address had expressed the hope that “India may find its place in the great confederacy of free states, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England.”<sup>6</sup>

But by 1905 there had grown up a new and powerful party which had no special love for institutions that were peculiarly English in their origin and English in their character. The *Bande Mataram*, an extremist paper, which wanted *Swaraj* (self-rule) outside the British empire, and not colonial self-government, wrote that it had no sympathy with those who desired “to make the government of India popular without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British.” “We desire,” continued the paper, “to make it autonomous and absolutely free of British control.”<sup>7</sup>

In October, 1906 *The Times* wrote that both the ideals of colonial self-government and of *Swaraj* were “visionary and unpractical,” and that the aim of getting rid of British control at the shortest possible notice in order to establish *Swaraj* was “openly and flagrantly seditious.”<sup>8</sup> But even the moderates could not agree with *The Times* and in his Congress presidential address in December 1905, Dadabhai Naoroji unequivocally declared that “self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies” was the political ideal of Indians.<sup>9</sup>

But the idea of remaining a member, even though a self-governing member, of the British empire did not attract the extremists, who preferred the indigenous ideal of *Swaraj*. In the National Conference of the extremists in December 1907, Tilak said: “The colonial form of government was a lower ideal, was not inspiring, and would not catch the popular mind as much as autonomy.” He added that though “it might be sedition under the Penal Code to take practical steps to realize the ideal [of complete autonomy], the mere enunciation of it as a theoretical goal would be outside the criminal law.”<sup>10</sup>

In December 1907, *The Bengalee*, the newspaper controlled by the moderate Surendranath Banerjea, remarked that it would be impractical for the Congress to accept the ideal of unqualified *Swaraj*, when any attempt to realize that ideal would bring it into direct conflict with the laws of the state. Further, it criticized Tilak’s statement that the ideal of colonial self-government

was not a sufficiently inspiring ideal, and it argued that the self-governing India of the future could combine "the love of freedom and the sentiment of nationality with a desire for international cooperation" by remaining as an autonomous unit within the British Empire.<sup>11</sup>

The moderates pointed out that British colonies, such as Canada and Australia, were autonomous in domestic matters. But then the extremists doubted whether it would be possible for India to occupy a position in the British empire similar to that which was occupied by the Canadians or the Australians. Bepin Pal referred to the existence of colour prejudices which prevented the English from cooperating with coloured races, and he invoked the authority of Lord Bryce in support of this statement.<sup>12</sup> Bryce maintained that "to the Teutonic peoples, and especially to the English and Anglo-Americans, the difference of colour means a great deal. It creates a feeling of separation, perhaps even of slight repulsion. Such a feeling may be deemed unreasonable or unchristian, but it seems too deeply rooted to be effaceable in any time we can foresee."<sup>13</sup>

The extremists also drew attention to the fact that Indians were racially and culturally different from Englishmen, Canadians, and Australians. To counter this the moderates used to say that both the English and the Indians belonged to the Aryan family of nations,<sup>14</sup> and that culturally the differences between Englishmen and Indians were somewhat reduced owing to the spread of English education in India.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, they pointed out that the French in Canada and the Boers in South Africa had shown that peoples culturally and racially different from the British could hold self-respecting positions in the British Empire.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless the extremists were not attracted to the ideal of colonial self-government. It might be, said Bepin Pal, the extremist, that colonial self-government meant that Indians would enjoy autonomy in all domestic matters but that their foreign affairs would be conducted by the British. But if the British controlled foreign affairs for India, then they would also have to look after the defence of India, and in order to meet the cost of defence they would demand an important voice in the control of the purse of the Indian nation. "What then would remain of India's domestic autonomy?" asked Bepin Pal.<sup>17</sup>

In 1907 Aurobindo Ghose, the extremist leader, wrote: "The Congress has contented itself with demanding self-government as it exists in the Colonies. We of the new school would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute *Swaraj*—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom. We believe that no smaller ideal can inspire national revival or nerve the people of India for the fierce, stubborn, and formidable struggle by which alone they can again become a nation. We believe that this newly awakened people, when it has gathered its strength together, neither can nor ought to consent to any relations with England less than that of equals in a confederacy. To be content with the relations of master and servant or superior and subordinate, would be a mean and pitiful aspiration unworthy of manhood; to strive for anything less than a strong and glorious freedom would be to insult the greatness of our past and the magnificent possibilities of our future."<sup>18</sup>

The extremist movement for *Swaraj* increasingly gained momentum. In 1908 the Congress changed its constitution to provide that its aim shall be the attainment of colonial self-government by means of constitutional methods, but it still shrank from accepting the ideal of complete independence as its goal. In fact the moderates, who then dominated the Congress, felt that complete independence could never be secured except through bloodshed and that, therefore, complete independence was an impractical ideal. In July 1909 Gokhale stated that no man could be so fallen as not to feel the humiliation of living under a foreign rule, but he maintained that as Indians, by reason of their endless divisions, feeble public spirit, and other national defects, were unfit for immediate self-government, and as British rule alone stood between order and anarchy, "only mad men outside lunatic asylums could think or talk of independence."<sup>19</sup> He characterized the argument that independence could be achieved by peaceful passive resistance as ridiculous nonsense.<sup>20</sup> "Independence never had been achieved in the history of the world," Gokhale stated, "and never would, except by force and the British would spend their last shilling and sacrifice their last man before they would suffer their rule to be overthrown."<sup>21</sup>

In the Alipore Bomb Case (1908-9), however, it was stated on behalf of Aurobindo Ghose, one of the accused, that he believed in the ideal of independence, and counsel for the Crown

conceded that there was nothing wrong in cherishing such an ideal provided it was not sought to be achieved by violent means.<sup>22</sup> In his judgment the English Judge said: "No Englishman worthy of the name will grudge the Indian the ideal of independence."<sup>23</sup>

The terrorists or revolutionaries believed in the ideal of complete independence. The terrorists believed, as *The Sandhya*, a militant Bengali newspaper which supported the terrorists, wrote: "The country cannot prosper so long as the veriest shred of the *Feringi's*<sup>24</sup> supremacy over it is left."<sup>25</sup> During the first World War the terrorists even tried to secure material assistance from the Germans in order to overthrow British rule.<sup>26</sup>

But the extremists, such as Tilak and Bepin Pal, who had previously proclaimed that India's aim was *Swaraj* or complete independence outside the British empire later changed their views and Tilak came to believe in *Swaraj* within the empire and Bepin Pal came to believe in some form of imperial federation.

In 1905 Bepin Pal had emphasized the ideal of complete *Swaraj* and not the ideal of imperial federation which he later came to cherish.<sup>27</sup> After Bepin Pal had been converted to the ideal of imperial federation, he said that in order to rouse the national consciousness of the people and to demonstrate to the British rulers the strength and force of the nationalist sentiment it was essential that in the early years of the nationalist movement the goal of complete *Swaraj* should have been emphasized. But after 1911 Pal began to argue that because the nationalist sentiment of the people had by then already been roused it was necessary to tell the people that the ideal of exclusive national sovereignty was an incomplete ideal.<sup>28</sup> He said that the empire-idea was larger and nobler than the nation-idea.<sup>29</sup> A number of nations could gain much if they formed parts of a cooperative imperial federation than if they lived their separate national lives in isolation from one another. He, however, did not fail to make it clear that India could associate with Britain in a cooperative imperial federation only if she was given as much self-government as any other British Dominion.<sup>30</sup>

Tilak who in 1907, as an extremist leader, had said that *Swaraj* was a higher ideal than colonial self-government declared, during the Home Rule movement, that "Indians did want English people, English institutions, English liberty and Empire."<sup>31</sup> "The mean-

ing of *Swarajya*," he said on 31 May 1916, "is the retention of our Emperor and the rule of the English people, and the full possession by the people of the authority to manage the remaining affairs."<sup>32</sup> Or to put it more simply: "The *Swaraj* of today is within the Empire and not independent of it."<sup>33</sup> This opinion was shared by other Home Rule leaders such as A. Besant,<sup>34</sup> Subramaniam Iyer,<sup>35</sup> and C. R. Das.<sup>36</sup>

The question as to what shall be the ultimate future of India was also exercising the minds of many people in Britain. In July 1910 Josiah Wedgwood asked in the House of Commons: "Do we actually want India some time to be free and self-governing or do we not?" If not, the British Government should, he argued, bluntly say so; if, on the other hand, it did want India to be ultimately self-governing, "whether it be in twenty or fifty or a hundred years hence again, it should say so."

Next year there was a significant development. The Government of India in a dispatch to the Secretary of State dated 25 August 1911 stated that "in the course of time, the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the Government of the country will have to be satisfied, and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General in Council." The Government of India stated that the only possible solution of the difficulty was "gradually to give the Provinces a larger measure of self-government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs with the Government of India above them all and possessing power to interfere in cases of misgovernment, but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern."<sup>37</sup> This dispatch was hailed by Indian nationalists.

The Congress interpreted this dispatch to mean not only that the provinces would be less controlled by the centre, but also that there would be more popular control over provincial administration.<sup>38</sup> Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, explained that the dispatch had merely advocated the policy of giving more power to the local governments and this, he correctly maintained, was not a new policy.<sup>39</sup> Crewe did not think that local self-government necessarily implied self-government by Indians. Referring to certain Indian statesmen who hoped that "something approaching the self-government enjoyed by those Colonies

which have of late years received the name of Dominion" could be introduced into India, he remarked: "I say quite frankly that I see no future for India on those lines."<sup>40</sup>

The *Pioneer Mail*, the Anglo-Indian journal of India, was naturally happy at this authoritative declaration of "what was certainly not to be the trend of British policy in India."<sup>41</sup> But *The Bengalee* was quick to point out that in spite of Crewe's declaration Indian nationalists would persist in demanding colonial self-government and that they would ultimately attain it.<sup>42</sup> Referring to the dispatch of the government of India Edwin Montagu, the Under-Secretary of State for India, speaking on 28 February 1912 said: "That statement shows the goal, the aim towards which we propose to work—not immediately, not in a hurry, but gradually." Montagu asserted that the British government could not allow a policy of drift to continue when the Indian nationalists asked as to what was the goal of British policy and he regretted that Curzon had been a mere administrator who had no policy and was like a chauffeur who spent the time in polishing up the machinery, screwing up every nut and bolt but did not know where to go. Speaking about what the goal of British policy should be, Montagu said: "We have never answered that and we have put off answering them far too long. At last, and not too soon, a Viceroy has had the courage to state the trend of British policy in India and the lines upon which we propose to advance."<sup>43</sup>

## II. THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

The first great war broke out in Europe in 1914. In a letter that appeared in the *Maharatta* on 30 August 1914, Tilak the extremist leader, exhorted his countrymen to rush to the defence of Britain who had "been compelled to take up arms in defence of weaker states."<sup>44</sup> In December 1914 the Congress passed a resolution declaring its "firm resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and at all costs."<sup>45</sup> In supporting this resolution Surendranath Banerjia exuberantly said: "We are loyal because we are patriotic ... because we feel that with the stability and permanence of British rule are bound up the best prospects of Indian Government ... because we feel that under the aegis of British protec-

tion we are bound in the ordering of Providence and in the evolution of our destinies, to enter that confederacy of free states rejoicing in their indissoluble connection with England and glorying in the possession of her free institutions."<sup>46</sup>

Though Indian nationalists denounced British imperial rule in India, many of them felt that India would not gain anything if British rule was replaced by German rule. N. C. Kelkar asked Indians not to forget that a prolonged process of exploitation of India had, on the one hand, satisfied to a large extent Britain's economic hunger and, on the other, had roused and awakened her moral conscience in the matter of her economic dealings with the Indian people, and that if British rule was replaced by any other foreign rule then the prolonged process of exploitation would start all over again.<sup>47</sup>

Some nationalists also declared that "the success of Germany would mean an Empire of Force,"<sup>48</sup> and that the Allies were "fighting for the emancipation of mankind." But most Indian nationalists did not believe that Britain went to war solely for the purpose of ensuring that the cause of freedom would ultimately triumph in the world, but they accepted the liberal declarations of British statesmen during the war at their face value so that they could use those declarations later in order to lend force to the arguments in favour of Indian freedom. And though many Indians did not want Britain to lose the war, they did not wish her to win by too much because they felt that it would be extremely difficult to secure political concessions from a proud and completely triumphant Britain.

Some Indians supported the war-effort because they believed that the easiest and straightest way by which self-government could be achieved was by participating in the defence of the British empire. In June 1918 Mahatma Gandhi, who later was to become the apostle of nonviolence, said that unless Indians learnt to defend themselves without the help of Englishmen they would not be admitted as equal partners in the British empire.<sup>49</sup> He asked Indians to learn the use of arms<sup>50</sup> and to crowd the battlefield of France.<sup>51</sup> India's future was to be decided on those battlefields and not in the official buildings of Simla and Whitehall. "The gateway to our freedom," wrote Gandhi in a letter to Srinivasa Sastri, "is situated on the French soil."<sup>52</sup>

Though the moderates and extremists supported the war

effort, the terrorists or the revolutionaries sought foreign assistance for effecting a military insurrection in India. Among these revolutionaries were members of the Ghadar Party. The Ghadar Party had been formed in the United States of America mainly from the sturdy peasants from the Punjab, who had migrated there towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Revolutionary ideas were preached among these peasants by the Indian students there and revolutionary papers like *Indian Sociologist* of Shyamji Krishna Varma and Madame Cama's *Bande Mataram* which had unrestricted entry into the U.S.A. used to be read out and explained to these peasants and from among them the Ghadar Party was formed in the U.S.A. in 1913.

The resolution founding the Ghadar Party laid down its aim as being the overthrow of the imperialist Raj in India and the building up in its place of a national republic. This aim was to be achieved by an armed national revolution and every member of the Ghadar Party was enjoined to participate in the fight against alien rule.<sup>53</sup> The weekly journal, the *Ghadar*, sometimes also called the *Hindustan Ghadar*, was first published on 1 November 1913 in San Francisco and the very first issue of this paper declared: "Today there begins in foreign land... a war against the British Raj... What is our name? Mutiny. What is our work? Mutiny. Where will mutiny break out? In India. The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pens and ink."<sup>54</sup>

Among the specific aims of the Ghadar Party were the seduction of Indian troops, the murder of loyal subjects and officials, the breaking of jails, the looting of treasuries and thanas, the propagation of seditious literature, the commission of dacoities, the procuring of arms, the manufacture of bombs, the formation of secret societies, the destruction of railways and telegraphs, the recruitment of young men for revolutionary work, and ceaseless work for achieving union with the enemies of the British.

When the first Great War broke out the Indian revolutionaries were mostly in Germany and the U.S.A. and they had two main objectives, one, to take steps for stirring up an armed rebellion in India so that the British would be compelled to send back the Indian army from the Western front to India, and, two, to foment anti-British feelings among the Indian soldiers in the



Western front by appealing to the nationalistic sentiments of the Hindu sepoys and by rousing the religious pro-Turkish feelings of the Muslim soldiers so that they would refuse to fight for Britain or against Germany.

Bhupendranath Datta, a revolutionary, has given an account of this period. He narrates that as soon as the war broke out a few revolutionaries in U.S.A. saw the German Ambassador and they proposed to send a Volunteer Force of Indian soldiers with an Ambulance Corps in order to demonstrate their enmity towards the British and their friendship and sympathy for the Germans. This proposal was made by Bhupendra Datta and Khanchand Varma, the Secretary of the Lahore Congress. The German Ambassador in U.S.A. accepted the proposal and communicated the same to Berlin. He undertook to make arrangements for the transport of the Volunteer Force and to bear the entire expenditure. These revolutionaries then wrote to Ram Chandra, the leader of the Ghadar Party in California, asking him to supply volunteer soldiers from among the Sikhs, but Ram Chandra did not agree saying that a more useful purpose could be served if the soldiers were sent to India. In order to persuade Ram Chandra, it was said that as the British were bound to employ Indian soldiers in the war, and thereby proclaim to the world that the Indians were loyal towards them, it would be diplomatic to send an Indian Volunteer Force to Germany to counter this view, but Ram Chandra was not convinced and the whole matter had therefore to be dropped.<sup>55</sup>

In his memoirs M. N. Roy, one of the revolutionaries, has also narrated about the activities of the Indian revolutionaries during the first great war. He recorded that at the outbreak of the first great war the Indian revolutionaries in exile looked towards Germany as the land of hope, and many of them went there full of great expectations. Towards the end of the year the news reached India that the German government had promised to the Revolutionary Committee in Berlin arms and money for the War of Independence against the British. This news spread like wild-fire, and as a result of secret conferences a General Staff of the coming revolution was set up with Jatin Mukherji as the Commander-in-Chief and a messenger was sent to Berlin with the request that the German government should deliver the arms to the Indian revolutionaries in a neutral country

nearest to India, namely, the Dutch East Indies. Towards the end of 1914, M. N. Roy left for Java and he returned within two months with some money, not much. Later, early in 1915, M. N. Roy again left India and went to Japan hoping that Rash Behary Bose who had been there on an identical mission would help him. "But I was rather surprised," wrote M. N. Roy, "to find that he now believed that our mission of liberating India would be accomplished only in consequence of the bigger mission of Japan to free Asia from white domination. . . . I looked up the Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yat Sen, who had taken refuge in Japan after the defeat of the July 1913 uprising of Nanking, called the Second Chinese Revolution. He expounded more authoritatively the doctrine of Japan's mission to liberate Asia. . . . Sun Yat Sen believed in the liberating mission of Japan. . . . He argued that it was in Japan's own interest to help other Asiatic peoples to free themselves from the domination of European powers."<sup>56</sup>

So far as the members of the revolutionary Berlin Committee were concerned Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, a brother of Sarojini Naidu, was the live-wire. As a student in England, Chattopadhyaya had been a member of the terrorist group of which Savarkar was a leader. After Savarkar's arrest and deportation to India, Chattopadhyaya sought asylum in France and there he came in contact with Madame Cama and Krishna Verma, who had been carrying on an intense anti-British campaign. Upon the outbreak of the war, narrates M. N. Roy, "Chattopadhyaya moved to Berlin either on his own initiative or at the invitation of the Germans. Madame Cama and Krishnaverma called themselves Socialists. They did not follow Chattopadhyaya to the compromising alliance with Prussian militarism as against British Imperialism."<sup>57</sup> "Barring Virendranath Chattopadhyaya," wrote M. N. Roy, "Hardayal was the most important member of the Berlin Committee. Intellectually, he was by far the superior, but eccentric in emotion and erratic politically. From an orthodox Hindu he became an anarchist—a close associate of Alexander Barkman and Emma Goldman in the United States. But anti-British nationalism was still the dominating passion. Therefore, Hardayal went over to Berlin to join the Indian Revolutionary Committee there. Before long, he clashed with Chattopadhyaya who, backed by the Germans, bossed the show."<sup>58</sup>

Early in 1915 the German Foreign Office decided to send a

mission to Afghanistan to wean it over from British influence and to establish there a centre of propaganda to incite anti-British feelings in India. Raja Mahendra Pratap of Hathras in U.P. was a member of this mission. Before the war had broken out the Raja had left India for a tour of Europe and on the outbreak of the war he was stranded in Switzerland. The Raja agreed to go to Berlin, provided that he would be received in audience by the Kaiser. With the consent of the Indian section of the German Foreign Office, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya accepted this term of the Raja and the Raja came to Berlin and was elected Chairman of the Indian Revolutionary Committee.<sup>59</sup>

The interview between the Kaiser and the Raja did not, however, materialize but the Raja proceeded with the mission and the Indo-German mission travelling through Persia reached Kabul. It was headed by Baron von Hentig of the German, Foreign Office. On 2 October 1915 the mission arrived at Kabul and a few days later they were received by the King. After hearing the members of the mission at length the King said: "You show your wares and then we shall see whether they suit us." A provisional Government of India was set up at Kabul on 1 December 1915 with Raja Mahendra Pratap as its President, Barkatullah as the Prime Minister, and Obeidullah as the Home Minister.<sup>60</sup> According to the version of M. N. Roy, however, Maulana Obeidullah and not Barkatullah was appointed the Prime Minister.<sup>61</sup>

The dream of the revolutionaries of a violent uprising or a military insurrection in India did not, materialize. The Allies won the war. The war, however, had a profound effect on the growth of nationalism in India and it considerably stimulated Congress aspirations for self-government. On 28 December 1914 Bhupendranath Basu, in his Congress presidential address, optimistically declared that the war in Europe would end the medieval domination of one man over many, of one nation over another; and he confidently asserted that the ideals of freedom and of liberty that were powerfully stirring the minds of European peoples could not longer be shut out of India.<sup>62</sup>

In the next Congress, S. P. Sinha, the President, said that the goal of Indian nationalists could best be described in Abraham Lincoln's words as "government of the people, for the people, and by the people,"<sup>63</sup> but he also maintained that this goal could

not be immediately realized. Borrowing an analogy from Edwin Bevan's book *Indian Nationalism*,<sup>64</sup> Sinha described India as a patient whose fractured limbs were in splints and bandages. India, therefore, could not dispense with the services of the British who played the part of the doctor.<sup>65</sup>

Annie Besant took objection to this analogy. "India," she declared, "is no sick man. She is a giant who was asleep and who is now awake."<sup>66</sup> Some time after the 1915 Congress Besant started a Home Rule League. Possibly it was the Irish Home Rule movement that suggested to her the idea of starting a similar movement in India. She chose the expression "home rule" instead of the word "self-government" because the English people were more familiar with the former expression.<sup>67</sup> She started a vigorous campaign for home rule through *The Commonwealth* whose "stirring articles and outspoken directness" was, she wrote, "new in Indian politics. It was an English political agitation."<sup>68</sup> Early in 1915 Besant also set up what she called the "Madras Parliament," because she felt that those who wanted democratic home rule should familiarize themselves with parliamentary procedures. The Madras Parliament was a debating society which observed, as far as possible, English parliamentary forms. The Parliament had a Speaker, a Leader of the House, a Prime Minister, and other Ministers.<sup>69</sup>

In demanding home rule or self-government, India derived considerable inspiration from the history of the struggle for constitutional liberties which Englishmen had waged in their own country. "India," said Besant, "was deeply grateful for the inspiration she had breathed in from English literature, from Milton, from Burke, from Shelley, from Mill."<sup>70</sup> Indians admired England not only for her ordered freedom, but also for the sympathy she had shown for the oppressed nations of Europe when they struggled against their despotic rulers, and for the shelter she had offered to political refugees.<sup>71</sup> In a speech in London on 11 June 1914 she told Englishmen that it would not be proper for them—who had crowded the streets of London to welcome Garibaldi after he had fought against the despotic ruler of Italy, who had given shelter to Mazzini when all the tyrants in Europe sought to seize him, and who had given shelter even to Stepniak, the terrorist from Russia, and Kropotkin, the exile

and rebel—to imprison Indian patriots who fought for their country's freedom.<sup>72</sup>

Besant knew that it would be easier to convince the British public of the justice of the Indian claim for self-government at a time when that public was deeply impressed by the help that India had rendered to British war-effort, but she also pointed out that Indian nationalists asked for home rule as a natural right and not as a reward for their war-services.<sup>73</sup> Referring to the allegation that self-government was being claimed as a reward for India's loyalty, Besant said: "But India does not suffer with the blood of her sons and the proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much liberty, so much right. India claims the right, as a Nation, to justice among the peoples of the Empire. India asked for this before the War. India asks for it during the War. India will ask for it after the War; but not as a reward, but as a right does she ask for it. On that matter there must be no mistake."

In her presidential address at the 1917 Congress Besant said: "In the East, the swift changes in Japan, the success of the Japanese Empire against Russia, the downfall of the Manchu dynasty in China and the establishment of a Chinese Republic, the efforts at improvement in Persia, hindered by the interference of Russia and Great Britain with her growing ambition, and the creation of British and Russian 'spheres of influence' . . . and now the Russian Revolution and the probable rise of a Russian Republic in Europe and Asia, have all entirely changed the conditions before existing in India. Across Asia, beyond the Himalayas, stretch free and self-ruling Nations. India no longer sees as her Asian neighbours the huge domains of a Tsar and a Chinese despot, and compares her condition under British rule with those of their subject populations. British rule profited by the comparison, at least until 1905, when the great period of repression set in. But in future, unless India wins self-government, she will look enviously at her self-governing neighbours, and the contrast will intensify her unrest. . . . As the War went on, India slowly and unwillingly came to realize that the hatred of autocracy was confined to autocracy in the West, and that the degradation was only regarded as intolerable for men of white races; that freedom was lavishly promised to all except to India; that new powers were to be given to the Dominions, but not to India.

India was markedly left out of the speeches of statesmen dealing with the future of the Empire, and at last there was plain talk of the White Empire, the Empire of the Five Nations, and the 'coloured races' were lumped together as the wards of the White Empire, doomed to an indefinite minority."<sup>74</sup>

Indian soldiers fought in the war of 1914-18. Nationalists in India claimed that men who could stand side by side with the free men of Europe in the trenches were also fit to stand side by side with Europeans in the government of their own country. Further, the emphasis placed during the war and immediately thereafter upon national self-determination in Europe and the ideas propounded by President Wilson did not fail to encourage similar ambitions in India. And after the war if the Poles and the Alsatians and the Danes were to be left free to determine their own polity, how could India be refused what the conscience of the world had conceded to the smallest of European nations? And if Australia and New Zealand and Canada and South Africa were to get a larger share of self-government because they had sprung to arms, why should India be made an exception? There was a contradiction involved in fighting Prussianism in the battle-fields of Europe and in maintaining it in the heart of Asia.

The war-services of the Dominions had encouraged people to speculate about the readjustment of the relations of the Dominions to their mother country. After two years of the war Indian politicians found that the place that India would occupy in any scheme of post-war imperial reconstruction had not been clarified.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, in October 1916, nineteen elected members of the Indian Legislative Council drew up a memorandum in which a scheme of post-war reforms was suggested.

After stating that, at the end of the war, the world, and particularly the British empire, "which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small nationalities," would witness a great advance in the ideals of government, the signatories of the memorandum declared that, in future, the ideal of Indian government should be not merely good government but also self-government, that is, government which was responsible to the people and therefore acceptable to them.<sup>76</sup> They suggested that after the war in all the legislative councils the elected members should be in a substantial majority, and that in all the exe-

cutive councils, imperial as well as provincial, half the members should be Indians who would be selected by the elected members of the legislative councils.<sup>77</sup>

These proposals were naturally criticized by the British bureaucrats in India. Lord Sydenham, a former Governor of Bombay, criticized these proposals saying that their adoption would weaken the authority of the government of India. He declared that under no circumstances should any surrender or weakening of paramount British power be tolerated and he asked the government to announce that the constitution of the legislative councils would remain unchanged.<sup>78</sup> He also deplored the formulation of "revolutionary proposals" of reform when the British empire was fighting for its very existence.<sup>79</sup>

Some Indian nationalists started a home rule movement during the war primarily because they were guided by the maxim of the Irish Home Rulers that "England's difficulty is the opportunity of her enemies."<sup>80</sup> Replying to the criticism that the raising of the controversial political question of home rule might embarrass the government during the war, Besant said in the 1916 Congress that by asking for self-government Indian nationalists were only following the example of the self-governing Dominions and acting on the advice of Bonar Law, the late Colonial Secretary, who had asked the Dominions to strike while the iron was still hot. Besant asked Indians to strike before the iron was cold, because she knew that India's silence during the war might be construed as a sign of contentment with her existing political status so that unless Indians clearly stated their political demands during the war nothing might be done in any post-war imperial reconstruction to raise the political status of India.<sup>81</sup>

There were apprehensions in the minds of Congressmen that if certain schemes of post-war imperial reconstruction were realized then India would find herself in a position of subordination not only to Britain but also to all the British Dominions including the Dominion of South Africa which denied the Indian settlers their ordinary human right.<sup>82</sup>

During the war years, among the world events and movements which, along with profoundly important internal causes, strengthened the faith of Congressmen in the immediate need of a rapid constitutional advance in India were the discussions on the neces-

sity of improving the status of the Dominions in any post-war imperial reconstruction, and the impassioned advocacy by President Wilson of the ideal of national self-determination.

Indian nationalists attentively listened to Lloyd George when he said that as in the eighteenth century Frenchmen who went to America to fight for American freedom, after living in an atmosphere of freedom in America, came back to France only to fight against the autocratic French government, similarly during the great war the Russians, after fighting for the freedom of Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania came back to Russia in order to fight against the Tzarist autocracy.<sup>83</sup> Indian nationalists felt that the position of Indians was not very different from that of the Russians because both had fought outside their country for a freedom which they did not enjoy within their own countries. In April 1918 Tilak said that though India could claim home rule as a matter of right or on the ground of her fitness for it, it was essential that Britain should realize that it was necessary to grant home rule to India as a war-measure, that is, on the ground that Indians could fight wholeheartedly on the side of freedom in Europe only if they knew that the freedom for which they fought outside their country was not denied to them inside their country.<sup>84</sup>

Towards the end of the war political leaders in Britain came to realize that the peoples of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, who had fought on the side of liberty, would not, after the war, be satisfied merely with the readjustment of the map of Europe or with the destruction of German militarism, but that they would insist on a full recognition of their Dominion nationhood and would seek to become equal partners with Britain in a cooperative association of nations. Indian nationalists also claimed that Indians who had fought for the defence of freedom should be given an equal status in the British empire with the other British Dominions.<sup>85</sup>

During the war the progress of the Irish nationalist movement was also closely watched by Indian home rulers. It was known that President Wilson desired a settlement of the Irish question, and it was widely believed in nationalist circles in India,<sup>86</sup> that "the armed support of the United States was delayed until the President could reassure the American people as to the direction of English policy in Ireland."<sup>87</sup> Wilson's sympathetic interest in



the solution of the Irish question impressed Indian nationalists profoundly, and G. Subramaniam Iyer addressed a letter to Wilson on 24 June 1917 stating the case in favour of home rule for India and asking his support for it.<sup>88</sup>

Wilson said that his desire was to make the world safe for democracy and to ensure that governments were based on the consent of the governed.<sup>89</sup> He declared that in future every political question should be settled on the basis of the free acceptance of the settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest of any outside nation which might desire a different settlement more suited to its own selfish desire.<sup>90</sup> Lloyd George similarly said that the wishes and interests of the people of the German colonies ought to be the primary consideration in settling the character of their future administrations, and he added that one of the chief aims of those administrations would be to prevent the exploitation of those colonies by European capitalists and governments.<sup>91</sup> Though these statements by Allied leaders were not made with reference to India, they were frequently quoted by Congressmen who urged that the same principles should be applied to India.<sup>92</sup> Freedom is the birthright of every nation,<sup>93</sup> declared Annie Besant in her presidential address at the Calcutta Congress of 1917, and the following year the Congress President Malaviya also declared that the right of self-determination must be extended to India.<sup>94</sup>

After the first great war the theory that Asia and Europe were different and that what applied in Europe did not apply to Asia could no longer be sustained. Events had long ago dispelled the idea of an inevitable Western superiority. The disasters that overtook an Italian army at Adowa in 1894 at the hands of obscure Abyssinians were not forgotten. Further, two small South African republics had strained nearly to breaking-point the resource of the British Empire. And in 1905 the Japanese victory over Russia was looked upon as the overthrow of a European Goliath by an Asiatic David. Even the remote villager talked of the victory of Japan, and by this one event Asia was stirred from one end to the other. The myth of the invincibility of the West was shattered in Asia's mind, never to return. In India, since the "Mutiny," or the great rebellion, no event had been so soul-stirring. The news of the military victory

of Japan over Russia in 1905, wrote *The Bengalee*, was discussed not only by the educated classes but also by the masses in the Indian bazars,<sup>95</sup> and this victory was popularly interpreted in Asia as the victory of Asia over Europe, of the East over the West. Hyndman, the British Socialist, said that if he had been an Indian and if he had felt himself a man before, he would feel it five times more so after the Japanese triumphs.<sup>96</sup>

"We feel," declared *The Bengalee*, "that we are not the same people as we were before the Japanese successes." It wrote: "For the first time in modern history Asia has triumphed over Europe and has vindicated its equality in the knowledge of those arts which have their cradle in Europe and which have made Europe what she is."<sup>97</sup> It is argued that just as the success of a few European nations had convinced the Europeans of their superiority over Asians, so the victory of Japan would dispel from the minds of the Asians their belief about the inevitable superiority of the West.<sup>98</sup> It may be recalled that in 1894 Alfred Lyall had written: "The English dominion once firmly planted in Asia is not likely to be shaken unless it is supplanted by a stronger European rival. Henceforward the struggle will be, not between Eastern and Western races, but between the great commercial and conquering nations of the West for predominance in Asia."<sup>99</sup> Later Lyall admitted that the Japanese victories of 1905 had materially altered the political situation and prospect in Asia.<sup>100</sup> Writing some time after the Japanese victories, C.F. Andrews observed that comparing extracts from the newspapers of Teheran, Cairo, and Peking he had found that the sentiments expressed therein were almost identical with those that were expressed in *The Bengalee* and *The Hindu*, and that those sentiments could be summarized "as a desire for Western institution and scientific training . . . and a race longing for freedom from European control."<sup>101</sup>

### III. THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

At a time when for various reasons, some of which have been set forth above, the hopes of Congressmen for greater self-government had been raised considerably, the *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* was published (July 1918) by Montagu,

the Secretary of State, and Chelmsford, the Governor-General. This Report rejected the Congress-League scheme of reform on the ground that under it the elected legislature, which would be responsible to the people of India, and the irremovable executive, which would retain its responsibility to the Secretary of State and the British parliament, might, owing to racial and political differences, often come into conflict, and that the scheme did not provide any satisfactory method of resolving such conflict.<sup>102</sup> Replying to the argument that the device of an irremovable executive and a popular legislature had not proved altogether unsuccessful in the United States of America, the Report pointed out that under the constitution of the United States, unlike the Congress-League reforms scheme, both the legislature and the executive were ultimately responsible to the people.<sup>103</sup>

From the speeches of Surendranath<sup>104</sup> and Tilak<sup>105</sup> and others it is clear that Congressmen wanted to make the irremovable executive a virtual agent of the popular legislature. But Montagu did not think that it was possible to introduce responsible government in the centre, and he knew that Indian aspirations would not be satisfied by the grant of full responsibility only in local matters.<sup>106</sup> In fact by his famous declaration of 20 August 1917 Montagu had been committed to the adoption of a policy for taking steps for the progressive realization of responsible government in India.

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord," Montagu had declared on 20 August 1917 in the House of Commons, "is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the cooperation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, on the basis of which the Government of India Act, 1919 was passed in December 1919, favoured the introduction of a limited measure of responsible government in provincial matters. It suggested the introduction of "dyarchy" or the division of provincial administration into two parts, "reserved" and "transferred," so that the irremovable executive would continue to retain ultimate responsibility for the administration of "reserved" subjects, while in the matter of "transferred" subjects the Governor was normally to act on the advice of ministers chosen from, and responsible to, the majority in the provincial legislature.<sup>107</sup> By the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms law, order, and finance were made "reserved" subjects while education, agriculture, public health, and local government were made "transferred" subjects in the field of provincial government. Under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms no basic changes were, however, introduced in the Central government and the Government of India still remained responsible to the British Parliament through the Secretary of State.

The conclusion that in order gradually to introduce responsible government, it was necessary to devolve specific functions to ministers responsible to elected bodies, had been reached by Lionel Curtis and some Indian officials, in the course of discussions on a paper that was to be submitted for circulation among the study group connected with the "Round Table." Early in 1917, Lionel Curtis, a member of the Round Table Group, had publicly explained his plan of introducing partial responsible government into India.<sup>108</sup>

Towards the end of 1917 the outline of his plan was adopted in a Joint Address presented to the government by a number of Indians and Europeans. The Joint Address affirmed that real provincial self-government could only flourish in homogeneous territorial units, and it suggested that the territorial jurisdiction of the provinces should be reconstituted with reference to history, race, language, religion, and other relevant considerations.<sup>109</sup> The authors of the Joint Address stated that many of the provinces of India, which were almost as populous as any great European state, were too big.<sup>110</sup> They asserted that in the United States, because there were not five or six giant states but forty-eight small states, the people of none of the states believed that their state was big enough to form a separate

sovereign state. But if the United States had been composed of only five or six giant states then many would have sought to establish sovereign independence for their big states, as a result of which the United States, instead of remaining what it was, the home of perpetual peace, would have become what Europe was, the theatre of perpetual conflicts. The Joint Address suggested that the formation of smaller and more homogeneous provinces or states was essential for the ultimate development of a real United States of India within the British Empire.<sup>111</sup>

The question of the territorial reconstitution of the provinces was a very controversial one and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report did not recommend any such reconstitution.<sup>112</sup> But the Report more or less agreed with the Joint Address in suggesting that the field of government should be divided into a responsible and a nonresponsible part. This idea was, as was to be expected, opposed in a Majority Minute that the five heads of the provinces submitted on 15 January 1919. The Majority Minute regretted that the Report, in accordance with English constitutional theory, had suggested the introduction of responsible government for which Indians by their history and tradition were said to be totally unfitted.<sup>113</sup>

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report boldly affirmed that for the development of Indian nationhood it was necessary deliberately to disturb the placid, pathetic, contentment of the masses."<sup>114</sup> Reginald Craddock, a signatory of the Majority Minute, believed that the peasant lived contentedly under British rule, and that it would be unwise to stir up discontent among the peasants or to replace the rule of British officials by the rule of Indian middle-class lawyers.<sup>115</sup> O'Dwyer, another signatory of the Majority Minute, similarly denied that the peasant had any political aspiration, he affirmed that the peasant would not gain by the grant of political concessions, and he maintained that the prominence given to politics and politicians under the operation of the new reforms would lower the standard of administration.<sup>116</sup> The disturbance of the contentment of the people had no place,<sup>117</sup> asserted O'Dwyer, in the old ideal of British policy in India which was stated, in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, thus: "It is our earnest desire to . . . administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security. . . ."<sup>118</sup> Though

Victoria desired the contentment of her subjects she said nothing about their "placid, pathetic contentment."

Craddock wrote that the Report was based on the assumption that "a tiny novitiate of electors out of the vast mass of illiterate India, bristling with its racial feuds, its religious antagonisms, its castes, its social exclusions, its babel of tongues, its fierce communal controversies, would start functioning in response to a system absolutely alien to them in the same way that the experienced electors of educated England today respond to a system which the people have gradually developed for themselves in the course of many centuries."<sup>119</sup> He lamented that Montagu, whom he accused of having failed to realize the differences between Indian and English political environment, had placed more reliance on the constitutional theories formulated largely on the basis of analogies from the Dominions by the politicians of the Round Table group than on the practical advice tendered by the heads of the provinces.

George M. Chesney, in *India under Experiment*, similarly attacked Montagu's reform scheme on the ground that the Western ideal of democratic self-government was altogether unsuited to Indian conditions. He maintained that the operation of representative institutions in the socially backward Eastern countries, such as China, Persia, and Turkey, had proved completely unsuccessful, and remarked that if the British public believed that the Indian people were oppressed because there did not exist in India an English form of democratic self-government then one could only conclude that a democracy was not capable of ruling a dependency.<sup>120</sup> Curzon, once a believer in paternal rule for India, said in June 1917 that political concessions for India were being thought of because allied leaders had talked freely about the ideals of democracy and national self-government and because Britain was expected to apply those ideals in the management of her "own domestic household."<sup>121</sup> Curzon was an important member of the British Cabinet which approved and issued the announcement of 20 August 1917. Indeed it was Curzon himself who had inserted the words "responsible government" in that announcement.<sup>122</sup> But it appears that Curzon did not realize the full significance of those words, because when Montagu and Chelmsford drew up a scheme for realising a measure of responsible government in India, he ex-

pressed his disapproval of the scheme on the ground that the scheme sought to introduce parliamentary government which Morley had repudiated in 1909 and that it sought to establish a kind of provincial autonomy which Crewe had disavowed in 1912.<sup>123</sup> Curzon ultimately supported, though not very enthusiastically, the Government of India Bill of 1919, which was drawn largely on the basis of the Montagu–Chelmsford Report. On 12 December 1919 Curzon asserted that the system of government that would be introduced under the reforms would lower the standards of administration, but he remarked that in an age in which the ideal of national self-determination was extremely popular, it was natural that Indians would prefer self-government to good government.<sup>124</sup>

The European community in India generally believed that the grant of home rule would transfer the control over Indian administration from the hands of an efficient bureaucracy to that of an inefficient oligarchy,<sup>125</sup> and they asserted that the large majority of the Indian people did not want home rule.<sup>126</sup>

It cannot be said that as a result of the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms some power was transferred from the hands of an efficient bureaucracy to that of an inefficient oligarchy, for dyarchy, as Sir Reginald Coupland records, was not a failure in administrative or legislative achievement in the “transferred field.”<sup>127</sup> The opposition by Anglo–Indian bureaucrats to the transfer of some power into the hands of Indians was based not only on the assumption that the Western educated Indians were not efficient, but also on the supposition that they did not represent the interests of the Indian masses. As to this supposition Abdul Rahim, one of the members of the Royal Commission on the Public Services of India<sup>128</sup> appointed in 1912, said: “As for the representation of . . . [the] interests [of the masses], if the claim be that they are better represented by European officials or nonofficials, it is difficult to conceive how such a reckless claim has come to be urged. The inability of English officials to master the spoken languages of India and their different religions, habits of life and modes of thought so completely divide them from the general Indian population that only an extremely limited few possessed with extraordinary powers of intuitional insight has ever been able to surmount the barriers. . . . With the educated

Indians, on the other hand, this knowledge [of Indian life and culture] is instinctive."<sup>129</sup>

Montagu records that at a meeting on 24 January 1918, the heads of the local governments expressed to him their grave concern about the spread of political agitation in the villages. Remembering the fact that English-educated Indians were often told that India could not have self-government because the masses did not want it, Montagu could not agree that the spread of political agitation in the villages was dangerous or that it was wrong for the English-educated nationalists to teach politics to Indian villagers. He clearly perceived that if the point of view of the heads of the local governments were right then the "announcement of 20 August was wrong; the Morley-Minto reform scheme was wrong; and India ought not to have any political institutions."<sup>130</sup>

On 5 June 1919 Montagu declared in the House of Commons that it would be natural for the Indian civil servants to dislike any alteration of the system under which they had grown up.<sup>131</sup> He realized that in India, as in Britain, political reforms could not originate with the civil servants.<sup>132</sup> Because quite a large number of bureaucrats were opposed to the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme, *The Hindu* wrote that if the reforms succeeded, they would succeed not because of, but in spite of, the bureaucrats.<sup>133</sup>

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report did not satisfy most Congressmen. A small minority of old Congressmen, however, welcomed in a separate Moderates' Conference on 1 November 1918, the broad outlines of the reforms suggested in the Report.<sup>134</sup> Progress on the path of reforms that were suggested by Montagu and Chelmsford could only be gradual, but then Surendranath Banerjea who convened the separate Moderates' Conference argued that the early pioneers of the Congress believed that only through a period of laborious apprenticeship could Indians be trained to work a form of responsible government.<sup>135</sup> He said that a separate Moderates' Conference had to be convened because the leaders of the Congress did not recognize that the angle of vision of the British rulers had changed.<sup>136</sup> He was afraid that the Congress might adopt a revolutionary programme.<sup>137</sup> Banerjea, who was a reverent student of Burke,<sup>138</sup> had a great horror of revolutions. "We are the friends," he told the Moderates' Conference,



"of evolution and the enemies of revolution. . . . We have witnessed the nameless horrors of revolution in France, in Russia . . . how too often they have been followed by reaction and repression and the enthronement of despotic authority. The Execution of Charles I was followed by the autocracy of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The French Revolution was the precursor of the military despotism of Napoleon Bonaparte."<sup>139</sup> Banerjea, however, did not forget to add that "reforms indefinitely postponed or inadequate in their scope . . . prepare the ground for revolution."

The special Congress at Bombay in 1918 considered the reforms suggested by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report to be inadequate.<sup>140</sup> Expressing disagreement with the conclusion of the Report that no measure of responsible government could immediately be introduced at the centre, it asked that at the centre apart from Foreign Affairs (excepting relations with the Colonies and the Dominions), Army, Navy, and relations with Indian Ruling Princes, which should be "reserved," all other subjects should be "transferred" subjects; and in the provinces, apart for the first six years for the departments of Law, Police, and Justice (prisons excepted) which were to be "reserved," all other departments should be "transferred."<sup>141</sup> The Congress demanded from the government a statutory guarantee that full responsible government would be established in British India within a period not exceeding 15 years.<sup>142</sup>

When the Congress again met in December 1918, the war had ended and the victory of the Allies had been complete. One of the arguments by which the Congress supported the demand for self-government was that India was entitled to benefit from the principle of national self-determination which the Allied statesmen had theoretically accepted.<sup>143</sup> The Congress claimed that, like the self-governing British Dominions, India should be represented in any conference that may be held to decide the terms of peace and reconstruction by the elected representative of the people, and it selected Tilak and two other leaders to represent India in such conference.<sup>144</sup> After he could not secure the necessary passport to go to the Peace Conference, Tilak wrote to Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference, stating the case for Indian self-government and arguing that a self-governing India, with her vast population and enormous resources, could

"be a powerful steward of the League of Nations in the East for maintaining the peace of the world, and the stability of the British Empire against all aggressors and disturbers of peace, whether in Asia or elsewhere."<sup>145</sup> In this connection it is interesting to note that in a memorandum submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S.A. on 29 August 1919 by Malone, a Senator of the United States, it was urged "that the covenant of the League of Nations be so amended as to make it obligatory upon all its signatories to immediately recognize the right of India, and other dependencies of the British Empire like Ireland and Egypt to determine their own form of government."<sup>146</sup>

Though the Congress was not fully satisfied with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, in December 1919 it asked the people so to work the reforms as to ensure the early establishment of full responsible government in India and it thanked Montagu for his work in connection with the reforms.<sup>147</sup> But by the time that the next Congress met at Calcutta in September 1920, the spirit of Congressmen had undergone a profound change particularly as a result of the agitation over the Rowlatt Act, the Khilafat question and the tragedy of Amritsar.<sup>148</sup> The Calcutta Congress passed a resolution approving the adoption of a policy of progressive nonviolent non-cooperation with the government for the purpose of obtaining redress for the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat grievances and for the ultimate attainment of *Swaraj*.<sup>149</sup>

In the next Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, the old constitution of the Congress, which asserted that the Congress should seek to realize its goal of self-government within the British empire by all constitutional means was changed in order to enable Congressmen to work for "the attainment of *Swaraj* by all legitimate and peaceful means."<sup>150</sup> M. A. Jinnah, who later became the architect of Pakistan, opposed this change of the Congress constitution and he said that the ideal of *Swaraj* or of complete independence was an impracticable ideal.<sup>151</sup> M. K. Gandhi, who at that time dominated the Congress, however, wanted "*Swaraj* within the Empire if possible, and without if necessary."<sup>152</sup> He said that he would sever the British connection if it proved to be inconsistent with national self-respect, but not otherwise.<sup>153</sup>

In 1920 Congressmen, under the influence of Gandhi, also

accepted the policy of nonviolent non-cooperation as a legitimate and peaceful means by which *Swaraj* could be attained. While sanctioning the policy of non-cooperation with the Government, the Calcutta Congress of 1920 approved of the boycott of the law-courts, the government educational institutions, and the elections to the reformed councils. Later in the Nagpur Congress of 1920, the resolution on non-cooperation, under Gandhi's leadership, was again reaffirmed.<sup>154</sup>

#### IV. GOKHALE, TILAK, AND GANDHI

Tilak, the extremist leader, was in favour of contesting the elections to the councils reconstituted under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms but the Congress eventually adopted the policy of non-cooperation with the reformed councils which was adumbrated by Gandhi. Tilak died in 1920, soon after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, and the vacuum in the leadership that was created by Tilak's demise was filled up by Gandhi. In this study we are concerned with the political developments in India up to the time of the emergence of Gandhi or up to the time of the death of Tilak in 1920. We may, however, briefly consider here the approach of Gandhi, who came to dominate the Congress from 1920, towards the policy of constitutionalism of the moderates led by Gokhale, who had died in 1915, and towards the policy of boycott of the extremists led by Tilak, who died in 1920.

Finding that the results achieved by the constitutional agitation advocated by Gokhale and others were not striking or impressive, a section of the youth of India was converted to the cult of violence, so often practised in Western national movements, and another section to the policy of boycott as advocated by the extremists, such as Tilak, Pal, Aurobindo, and Lajpat. But an organization of force powerful enough to overcome the entrenched might of the British empire in India appeared well-nigh impossible and the cult of violence died down in individual terroristic activities. Gandhi's method, on the other hand, involved the rejection of the constitutionalism of the moderates as also of the cult of violence of the terrorists.

Gandhi believed in passive resistance and in non-cooperation.

In this he continued and perfected the method of passive resistance and boycott which the extremists had preached. It may therefore be said that the mantle of Tilak rather than of Gokhale fell on Gandhi. But again Tilak had no faith in non-violence as a creed and Gandhi differed from Tilak, Lajpat, and other extremists in the approach to the question of nonviolence. Lajpat said: "I have no faith in nonviolence as a creed but I accept it was a policy best under the circumstances."<sup>155</sup> Lajpat started his weekly journal, *The People*, with an open criticism of Gandhian methods. "Melodrama, and an excess of sentimentality," he wrote, "have no place in politics. For some time we have been busy making experiments with schemes which could not possibly be carried out without an immediate radical change in human nature. A campaign of political emancipation of a nation under foreign rule imposed and maintained at the point of bayonet cannot be based on the attempt to change human nature quickly. Such attempts are bound to fail and end in disastrous action."<sup>156</sup>

Though in a sense Gandhi's method of non-cooperation was closer to the policy of passive resistance, preached by Lajpat, Tilak, and others, Gandhi claimed that Gokhale was his political Guru or Master. In so far as Gokhale believed in the spiritualization of politics or in the purity of means and in the urgent need of effecting social reforms in India for making her fit for attaining political *Swaraj*, Gandhi was Gokhale's disciple but in so far as political methods were concerned Gandhi's policy of *Satyagraha* was nearer the method of direct action and passive resistance than Tilak advocated than the method of constitutionalism that Gokhale pursued.

Personally Gandhi, however, was attracted more to Gokhale than to Tilak. Recording his impressions of Lokamanya Tilak, Gokhale, and Pherozeshah Mehta, Gandhi wrote: "Next I met Gokhale. Sir Pherozeshah had seemed to me like the Himalayas, the Lokamanya like the ocean. But Gokhale was as the Ganges. One could have a refreshing bath in the holy river. The Himalayas was unscalable and one could not easily launch forth on the seas, but the Ganges invited one to its bosom. It was a joy to be on it with a boat and an oar. . . . In the sphere of politics the place that Gokhale occupied in my heart during his life-time and occupies even now was and is absolutely unique."<sup>157</sup>

On 13 July 1921 Gandhi wrote: "I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of the late Lokmanya. . . . I fell at Dadabhai's feet in 1888, but he seemed to be too far away from me. I could be a son to him, not disciple. In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African mission. Justice Ranade awed me. I could hardly talk in his presence. Badruddin Tyabji fathered me, and asked me to be guided by Ranade and Sir Pherozeshah. The latter became a patron. His will had to be law. He taught me to take orders. He did not make me his disciple. He did not even try. . . . I worshipped Dr Bhandarkar with his wise face. But I could not find for him a place on that little throne. It was still unoccupied. I had many heroes, but no king. It was different with Gokhale. . . . And as I parted from him, I said to myself, 'You are my man.' In 1901, on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply 'took me in hand' and began to fashion me. . . . We discovered differences in our estimate of western civilization. He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on nonviolence. But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me."<sup>158</sup>

Gokhale in his turn had discovered Gandhi's spiritual depth from the very beginning. Gokhale said: "In all my life I have known only two men who have affected me spiritually in the manner that Gandhi does—our great patriarch, Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, and my late master, Mr Ranade." In 1909 Gokhale paid a handsome tribute to Gandhi saying: "I know Mr Gandhi intimately and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver, and more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. He is a man who may be well described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot among patriots, and we may well say that in him Indian humanity at the present time, has really reached its highest watermark."

Gokhale confided to the liberal leader M. R. Jayakar, who was then a young man, that he was convinced that Gandhi was the leader of future India. "Yes, I think," said Gokhale about Gandhi, "this personality is going to play a great part in the future history of India." "Mark my words," he added, "you are much younger than I am. I may not live to see the day, but I visualize it clearly before me that Gandhi is going to be in the vanguard of a great movement when some of us are gone."<sup>159</sup>

Though Gokhale had at an early stage recognized the great-

ness of Gandhi, it is an irony of fate that Gokhale could not find a place for Gandhi in his Servants of India Society though Gokhale had asked Gandhi to take the preliminary steps for being admitted to the Society. The fact that Gandhi was refused admission to the Society shows that Gokhale knew that Gandhi's methods and approach were very different from his. Srinivasa Sastri, a member of the Servants of India Society and a disciple of Gokhale, has explained the circumstances why Gandhi was refused admission. He wrote: "Mr Gandhi having completed the year of travel prescribed by Gokhale knocked at our door for admission. . . . We saw deep differences between him and us and felt, though none of us could have given clear expression to it, that his political . . . evolution would take him farther from us. Still our hearts trembled as well as grieved when we told him that it was best for both of us to remain apart and pursue our several courses. . . . Still so curious and contradictory is human relationship that sharply contrasted as Mr Gandhi and the Society are in outward action, they would be found near of him where motives were weighed and the spirit were taken into account."<sup>100</sup>

Gokhale told Gandhi: "But whether you are formally admitted as a member or not, I am going to look upon you as one." But the fact that Gandhi was refused admission to the Society shows that there were basic differences between Gokhale and Gandhi. Gokhale was a constitutionalist but Gandhi, the *satyagrahi*, was not. Gokhale functioned within the limits of the law. Gandhi functioned within the limits of morality or truth as he conceived them, and if laws conflicted with morality or truth, Gandhi felt that he was at liberty to break them. But the moderates, like Gokhale, believed that the evolution of parliamentary democracy required the development of faith in legality and in compromise and in the persistent adoption of legal, constitutional, and moderate methods so that the constitutional habit could become internalized as a fixed habit of mind, whereas constant resort to methods other than constitutional, even though peaceful, would undermine faith in legality and compromise which was the true basis of the functioning of a parliamentary democracy.

Gandhi's *satyagraha* was akin to Tilak's method of direct action and passive resistance though Gandhi used to say that the difference between *satyagraha* and passive resistance was the same as between the North Pole and the South Pole. It is

however interesting to note that Gokhale commended the method of passive resistance pursued by Gandhi in South Africa, though he did not approve of its adoption in India. At a meeting in Bombay on 9 September 1909, Gokhale said: "I think, and I say this deliberately, that in the circumstances of the Transvaal, passive resistance such as that organized by Mr Gandhi is not only legitimate, but is a duty resting on all self-respecting persons. What is this passive resistance? Passive resistance to an unjust law or an oppressive measure and a refusal to acquiesce in that law or measure and a readiness to suffer penalty instead which may be prescribed as an alternative. If we strongly and clearly and conscientiously feel the grave injustice of a law, and there is no other way to obtain redress, I think refusal to acquiesce in, taking the consequence of such refusal, is the only course left to those who place conscience and self-respect above their material or immediate interests. I am sure we all think that Mr Gandhi is perfectly justified in resorting to passive resistance when all other means of redress have failed."<sup>101</sup>

"What is the passive resistance struggle?" Gokhale asked at the Lahore Congress, and replied: "It is essentially defensive in its nature and it fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by undergoing suffering in his own person. He pits soul force against the brute in man, he pits suffering against oppression, he pits conscience against might, he pits faith against injustice, right against wrong. A passive resister deliberately and openly violates the requirements of an unjust law or order for the simple reason that he cannot conscientiously submit to that law or order. He does not seek to evade the consequences of that law but invites them and he glories in them. It is a spiritual struggle, essentially in keeping with the highest traditions of Indian spirituality."

But according to Gokhale the policy of passive resistance was wholly inappropriate so far as India was concerned. Referring to the policy of the extremists in India, who advocated the adoption of a policy of passive resistance, Gokhale said: "They [the countrymen] were being told that they should have nothing to do with the government of the country and that by the simple process of universal boycott, they would be able to achieve everything they had in view."<sup>102</sup> But such a policy Gokhale considered as utterly impracticable in the circumstances prevail-

ing in India. "I consider it a preposterous thing," said Gokhale, "that anybody should imagine such a thing to be feasible in the present stage of the country." Gokhale warned the advocates of the policy of boycott and passive resistance in India thus: "Non-payment of taxes was the most effective form of passive resistance and it had moreover the merit of bringing to each man the responsibility of his own action. If some of those who were talking of employing passive resistance to achieve self-government at the present stage of the country's progress would adopt that form of passive resistance, they would soon find out where they stood and how far they were supported."

But though Tilak's method of passive resistance was closer to Gandhi's policy of *satyagraha* as compared to Gokhale's constitutional methods, there were basic differences between Gandhi and Tilak. Tilak did not believe in nonviolence as a creed or dogma and considered that it may not be possible to avoid a certain element of violence or bloodshed when there was a mass movement in support of a *hartal* or other form of passive resistance. Further, Tilak considered Gandhi's adherence to absolute nonviolence to be in keeping only with the Jain and not with the Hindu religion. Referring to his differences with Gandhi, Tilak said: "I was under the impression that Gandhi was a Jain, because all his opinions and teachings savour of the Jain religion, nonviolence, *satyagraha*, fasting, etc. All these are more in keeping with Jain teachings than the Hindu religion. But these means are of no use in politics. . . . Exalted religious principles or abstract doctrine about truth are not of much value in the present political game. I do not think that *satyagraha* and fasting will have the least effect upon the mind of our rulers who are adepts in political warfare. We must use against them the same means as they use against us and as their tactics change so must ours. Take for instance, one of Gandhi's weapons, viz. '*hartal*.' Gandhi shudders at the word 'bloodshed' but who can guarantee that it will not lead to bloodshed contrary to his wishes. Because *hartal*, if successful, diminishes the prestige of government. Therefore, officials will try every means to break the *hartal*. They will use domination and force upon shopkeepers. This will cause altercation with other shopkeepers, who do not open their shops. People will gather to watch the quarrel and the police on the watch will interfere, break the crowd and if people do not disperse by



peaceful means shooting will occur and a few people would be wounded.”<sup>163</sup>

Gandhi himself was acutely conscious of his differences with Tilak. In answer to an anonymous letter where Gandhi, the civil resister, had been charged with being a hypocrite in claiming to be a disciple of Gokhale, the constitutionalist, Gandhi wrote in the *Young India* in July 1921: “But I am conscious that my method is not Tilak’s method. And that is why I have still difficulty with some of the Maharashtra leaders. But I sincerely think that Tilak did not disbelieve in my method. I enjoyed the privilege of his confidence. And his last word to me in the presence of several friends was, just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent method if people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts. I know no other method. I can only hope, that when the final test comes, the country will be proved to have assimilated the method of nonviolent non-cooperation.”<sup>164</sup> But about Gokhale, Gandhi said: “He was and remains for me, the most perfect man on the political field. Not, therefore, that we had no differences. . . . But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me. Nothing could part us asunder. It were blasphemous to conjecture what would have happened if he were alive today. I know that I would have been working under him.”

Gandhi’s political views, however, were very different from those of Gokhale. Gandhi began life as a pure revivalist and in the *Hind Swaraj*, written about 1908, he had denounced Western civilization in its entirety. Gokhale had been deeply influenced by Western civilization and he wanted that Western knowledge should spread in India so that Indians may be freed “from the thralldom of old world ideas,”<sup>165</sup> and his ultimate aim was the establishment of a parliamentary democracy in India on the British model. But Gandhi had little love either for Western civilization or for British parliamentary institutions.

In the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi told Englishmen: “We consider our civilization to be far superior to yours. . . . We consider your schools and law courts to be useless. We want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. The common language of India is not English but Hindi. You should, therefore, learn it. We can hold communication with you only in our national language.”<sup>166</sup> “In order to restore India to its pristine condition,”

Gandhi declared, "we have to return to it. In our own civilization there will naturally be progress, retrogression, reforms, and reactions; but one effort is required and that is to drive out Western civilization. All else will follow."<sup>167</sup> These views of Gandhi stood in striking contrast with those of Gokhale who declared that "in the present circumstances of India all Western education is valuable and useful. . . ."<sup>168</sup>

Gokhale stood for Western knowledge and Western science and he believed in cooperating with the British rulers for developing India into a modern and progressive nation. But Gandhi wrote (1909) that the salvation of India lay in unlearning most of the things she had learnt from the English.<sup>169</sup>

While Gokhale stood for parliamentary democracy and colonial self-government, Gandhi's ideal was the establishment of *Swaraj* in India. And again, for Gandhi, *Swaraj* did not mean freedom or independence according to the Western conception but it meant the revival, purification, and regeneration of ancient Indian institutions. Gandhi's repugnance to Western institutions was so great that he was a most trenchant critic of the parliamentary system of government. In the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi said that "the mother of Parliament is a sterile woman and prostitute." "It is generally acknowledged," wrote Gandhi, "that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the binding motive. . . . Today it [the British Parliament] is under Mr Asquith, tomorrow, it may be under Mr Balfour. Carlyle called it the talking shop of the world. Members vote for their party without a thought."

Gandhi had written *Hind Swaraj* at the age of forty. After reading *Hind Swaraj* Gokhale considered that it was so crude and hastily conceived that probably Gandhi would himself destroy the book after he had spent a year in India. But Gandhi later said that "the views expressed in *Hind Swaraj* are held by me" and he declared that in holding such views he "endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson, and other writers, besides the masters of Indian philosophy. Tolstoy has been one of my teachers for a number of years."<sup>170</sup> And again many years after *Hind Swaraj* had been written, Gandhi said that "except for withdrawing the word 'prostitute' used in connection with the British Parliament which annoyed an English lady, I wish to make no change at all."<sup>171</sup>

While Gokhale wanted India to assimilate and incorporate British political ideas and institutions, Gandhi believed that India would be ruined if she copied England.<sup>172</sup> To have self-government similar to what the Canadians and South Africans had would be only to have English rule without Englishmen, in fact, "the tiger's nature, if not tiger," and this was not the kind of *Swaraj* Gandhi envisaged.<sup>173</sup> These views Gandhi expressed in the *Hind Swaraj* in 1908 but finding that the educated section of the Indian community almost universally sought to introduce into India a parliamentary form of government, Gandhi eventually modified his opposition to parliamentary government. "I feel," wrote Gandhi in *Young India* in January 1921, "that if India would discard 'modern civilization,' she can only gain by doing so. But I would warn the reader against [thinking] that I am today aiming at the *Swaraj* described therein [*Hind Swaraj*]. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary *Swaraj* in accordance with the wishes of the people of India."<sup>174</sup>

What Gandhi really continued to aspire for till the end was not parliamentary democracy which the moderate leaders like Gokhale aspired for, but *Swaraj* or self-rule when everything would be self-regulated and the state, though it may not wither away, would govern the least. "If national life," wrote Gandhi in *Young India* in July 1931, "becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement that that Government is the best which governs the least."<sup>175</sup>

Gandhi's ideal of *Swaraj* was not so much termination of foreign rule, which was the ideal of extremist leaders like Tilak, Pal, and Aurobindo (though all of them also on certain occasions spoke of *Swaraj* as meaning self-regulation and self-dependence),<sup>176</sup> but self-rule or transformation of the self. And the termination of foreign rule was to be achieved merely as a by-product of such self-rule. It is this *Swaraj* or self-rule that Gandhi

thought could be attained in a year. Annie Besant bitingly criticized Gandhi's declaration in 1920 that *Swaraj* could be attained in a year, and said: "*Swaraj* was to arrive on 30 September or 1 October; on 31 October; on 31 December, at the Congress; it is as far off as ever." Gandhi replied: "I am unable to accept any blame for having set the time-limit. I would have been wrong not to do so, knowing as I did that if the people fulfilled the conditions which were capable of easy fulfilment, *Swaraj* was certainly inside of twelve months. The time limit was not fixed in order to rouse the teeming millions, but it was fixed in order to rivet the attention of Congressmen and Congresswomen on their sense of immediate duty and on the grand consequence of its fulfilment."<sup>177</sup>

For Gandhi *Swaraj* did not mean colonial self-government of the moderates or purely Indian rule of the extremists, but it meant self-regeneration, self-control, and self-rule. Writing in *Young India* in 1921, Gandhi said: "*Swaraj* does consist in the change of Government and its real control by the people, but that would be merely the form. The substance that I am hankering after is a definite acceptance of the means and, therefore, a real change of heart on the part of the people. I am certain that it does not require ages for Hindus to discard the error of untouchability, for Hindus and Muslims to shed enmity and accept heart friendship as an eternal factor of national life, for all to adopt the *charkha* as the only universal means of attaining India's economic salvation, and finally for all to believe that India's freedom lies through nonviolence, and no other method. Definite, intelligent, and free adoption by the nation of this programme, I hold, as the attainment of the substance. The symbol, the transfer of power, is sure to follow, even as the seed truly laid must develop into a tree."<sup>178</sup>

In so far as Gandhi laid stress on social reform and the eradication of the evils of the caste system and the abolition of the outrage of untouchability Gandhi was nearer to Gokhale than to Tilak. Tilak considered that the pursuit of a policy of social reform by a political party such as the Congress would split the Congress and that to forge a unity of national will and endeavour against an alien rule, political agitation must precede social reform. Gandhi, on the other hand, considered that the Congress, even though a political body, should condemn and fight the outrage

of untouchability, and he used to say that unless the social evils of Indian life were removed, real *Swaraj* would remain unattainable.

Real *Swaraj* for Gandhi was a spiritual state where the individual ruled himself, and Gandhi sought to attain the same not through the adoption of Western institutions but by the revival and purification of indigenous institutions and ideals. Whereas Gokhale also wanted to reform Indian polity and society, he aspired to build up India into a strong, progressive, and industrialized modern state. The extremists, such as Tilak, also wanted India to develop into a modern industrial state. But Gandhi rested his faith neither on modern industrialization nor on Western institutions but on ancient Indian ideals and on indigenous institutions. While in South Africa, Gandhi had written: "Our *Swaraj* must be real *Swaraj*, which cannot be attained by either violence or industrialization. India was once a golden land, because Indians then had a heart of gold. The land is still the same but is a desert because we are corrupt. It can become a land of gold again only if the base metal of our present national character is transmuted into gold. The philosopher's stone which can effect this transformation is a little word of two syllables, *Satya* [truth]. If every Indian sticks to truth *Swaraj* will come to us of its own accord."<sup>179</sup>

For Gandhi *Swaraj* meant not mere political freedom but a condition where we learn to rule ourselves, and to attain such *Swaraj* each individual had to realize that the good of the individual was contained in the good of all, that is to say, reach the stage of *Sarvodaya*.<sup>180</sup> And for obtaining political *Swaraj* Gandhi devised the method of nonviolent non-cooperation and rejected the constitutionalism of the moderates and the cult of violence of some of the militant nationalists.

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95. *The Bengalee*, 14 June 1905.
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97. *The Bengalee*, 14 June 1905.
98. *The Bengalee*, 17 June 1905.
99. Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India*, p. 355.
100. *Ibid.*
101. *The Bengalee*, 21 November 1907.
102. *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Cd. 9109), 1918, paras 167 and 174. Though in a speech on 12 December 1917, Bipin Pal said that the Congress-League scheme was designed to create deadlock and to make administration impossible (Pal, *Responsible Government*, pp. 93-94) this was not the general view of Congressmen.
103. *Montagu-Chelmsford Report*, 1918, para 166.
104. He said that the elected legislature could create conditions under which the "irremovable" executive, if it supported unpopular policies, would be compelled to resign (*Report of the Thirty-second Indian National Congress*, p. 94).
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