THE PHASES OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

THE PHASES OF INDIAN NATIONALISM
and other essays

DIETMAR ROTHERMUND

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PREFACE

TEN YEARS AGO my wife Indira and I arrived in India. For her it was a return to her home, for me it was a first encounter with this country which was to absorb my attention for many years to come. Four years out of these ten we spent in India, and one year at the India Office Library in London. During the rest of this time I wrote my books on India in Germany and taught Indian history at Heidelberg University where I joined the staff of the newly founded South Asia Institute in 1963 and was appointed Professor of Modern History in 1968.

The papers included in this volume provide a record of an incessant concern with the development of modern India. When I first came to India I was mainly interested in the history of the freedom movement, the interaction of Indian nationalism and constitutional reform, and the emergence of modern India with its complex political heritage. This interest found its expression in my book *Die Politische Willensbildung in Indien, 1900-1960* which I wrote in 1963 and which was published in 1965. The papers in the first part of this book reflect this interest and highlight various aspects of this theme.

In dealing with India's political history I became increasingly aware of the importance of agrarian relations which provided the social base for the political development of the country, and, therefore, I turned my attention to the history of agrarian legislation. Returning to India in 1964 I began to work on this second theme and completed the manuscript of a book on this

subject in 1966. This manuscript will be revised and enlarged for publication in the near future. In thinking about the problems of landlords and tenants, and of revenue administration, I had to take note of the wider implications of India's economic history as well as of the intricacies of colonial finance and of India's currency which was the medium for the payment of revenue. The papers contained in the second part of this volume show this trend of my work which I hope to continue.

Some of the papers in this volume are published here for the first time, others were available only in German, and the rest appeared in various journals or were contributed to volumes edited by other authors. I am grateful to Professor G. D. Parikh and Nachiketa Publications for enabling me to submit these papers to a wider audience in India. In this way, I hope to pay a debt of gratitude to my friends in this country and to contribute to an understanding of India's recent past. I also wish to express my appreciation of the help and support of the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) which sponsored my research in India.

DIETMAR ROTHERMUND

Poona
March 1970

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The Phases of Indian Nationalism, a hitherto unpublished paper, was first presented to a seminar at Cambridge University arranged by Mr B. H. Farmer and Prof N. Mansergh, in 1965.

Emancipation or Re-integration—The Politics of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Herbert Hope Risley, was a chapter in D.A. Low (ed), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, London 1968, and I am grateful to the editor for the permission to include it in this volume. The paper emerged from a very fruitful term which I spent as a Visiting Fellow in History at the Australian National University in 1962 when we also planned the joint venture of the *Soundings*.

Traditionalism and Socialism in Vivekananda's Thought is the text of my Vivekananda Memorial Lecture at the University of Chicago, 1967; it is published for the first time in this volume

Nehru and Early Indian Socialism was first presented at a seminar at Oxford University arranged by Dr S. N. Mukherjee in 1964, and later included in the volume *The Movement for National Freedom in India*, (St. Antony's Papers No. 18, South Asian Affairs Number Two, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1966) edited by him. I wish to thank the editor and the publishers for the permission to reprint this paper here.

Reform and Repression, 1907-1910, a paper contributed to the Indian History Congress at Delhi, 1961, was first published in the proceedings of that Congress.

The Punjab Press and Non-Cooperation, 1920, was presented at the Indian History Congress at Aligarh, 1960, and published in its proceedings. I wish to thank the Indian History Congress for giving me an opportunity of presenting these papers to my Indian colleagues at that time and for permitting me to reprint them here.

Gandhi as a Creative Politician is a paper which was first presented to a Gandhi Seminar organized by me at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University in 1969 and which was then revised and enlarged for a lecture at the Nehru Museum, New Delhi, in 1970; it is published for the first time in this volume.

Constitutional Reform versus National Agitation in India, 1900-1950, was first published in the *Journal of Asian Studies,* August 1962, and I wish to thank the editor of the journal for the permission to include this paper in this volume.

The Role of the Western Educated Elite in the Political Mass Movements in India in the 20th Century was my contribution to the International History Congress in Vienna in 1965, and a German version was printed in the proceedings of that Congress (XIIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Rapports, II, Histoire des Continents, pp. 163-176).

Feudalism in India is the revised and enlarged version of the text of a lecture which I first gave to the Faculty of Heidelberg University in January 1967 and then to members of the staff and students of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, U.S.A., in October 1967; it is published for the first time in this volume. I am greatly indebted to the work of Irfan Habib and R. S. Sharma for my understanding of these earlier phases of Indian history.

Government, Landlord and Tenant in India, 1875-1900, was my contribution to the panel on Nineteenth Century Indian Economic History at the 27th International Congress of Orientalists, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., 1967; it was revised for publication in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* December 1969, and I am grateful to the editor of this journal for permitting me to reprint it here.

The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and its Influence on Legislation in Other Provinces was first published in the Diamond Jubilee Number of *Bengal Past and Present,* July-December 1967, and I am grateful to the editor of this journal, Prof N. K. Sinha, first, for asking me to contribute this article to this special issue of *Bengal Past and Present* and secondly, for permitting me to reprint it here.

Impediments to Development from below in India's Economic History, a paper contributed to a symposium on Development from below in South and East Asia, which was organized by the Institute of African and Asian Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in memory of Dr Franz Oppenheimer in May 1969, and published in the proceedings of this symposium, edited by Dr M. Rudner, is reprinted here with the permission of the editor, for which I am particularly grateful in view of the fact that the two publications will appear in the same year.

India's Silver Currency, 1876-1893, was contributed originally to the Fourth International Asian History Conference, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, in August 1968, and then presented at various stages of revision to a staff seminar of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Poona in October 1968, and of the Delhi School of Economics in August 1969. It was finally once more revised and rewritten and published in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review* in March 1970. I am grateful to the editor of this journal for permitting me to include this paper in this volume.

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Part 1 NATIONALISM TRADITIONALISM AND SOCIALISM

THE PHASES OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

INDIAN NATIONALISM, the evolution of a national consciousness in one of the world's most populous regions, has been an important force in the history of the nineteenth and twentieth century. It originated in the vision of those Indians who had learnt to look at India from a new point of view after experiencing the political, educational and missionary impact of the West. It was nurtured by the increasing opposition to the autocratic rule of the alien colonial power. With every generation nationalism gained more votaries, new regions of India and other strata of her complex society were drawn into the movement. In the course of this development there was much scope for generational and regional tensions due to the differentiated structure of India's sub-cultures which had been affected by British penetration in several phases of conquest, revenue settlement, judicial administration and educational policy. The continuity of old traditions was interrupted but no new continuity of life and thought could easily replace it. Individual reformers were often unable to transmit their aspirations to the next generation, radical movements drifted into sectarian isolation, new modes of thought were ever so often imported from outside rather than being developed within the country by means of a critical evaluation of the ideas of the previous generation. Only nationalism could serve as a common denominator. Even those nationalists who were opposed to each other in their own time were enshrined in a national pantheon after their contemporary controversies had been forgotten.

CALCUTTA AND BOMBAY: FOCAL POINTS OF EARLY INDIAN NATIONALISM

The first phase of Indian nationalism in the early nineteenth century was dominated by those who had first come in contact with British education in Calcutta and Bombay. The contrast between these two centres was remarkable. The literary castes of Bengal, the *Bhadralok*, had emerged as the shrewd collaborators of the Company's servants. British rule proved to be much more profitable than Muslim rule to those who knew how to adapt to the new circumstances. However, the process of adaptation posed its own problems. The rise in wealth and status and the usefulness of British education were welcome but the missionary challenge was resented. Therefore it was necessary to define one's own position either in terms of a patriotic liberalism like De Rozio and his disciples or qualify one's acceptance of the new order by emphasizing the importance of the Hindu tradition as Radhakanta Deb did. The masterly synthesis of Ram Mohan Roy remained an individual achievement which was less relevant for subsequent developments than later nationalists may think. The ideas for which men like De Rozio and Deb stood were reflected by a society which was given to factious infighting but developed a keen sense of coherence and solidarity towards outsiders. Calcutta became the metropolis of this society which was for the most part based on absentee-landlordism. In fact, the *Bhadralok* lived in this city but were never really of this city. They made it the showpiece of their newly acquired wealth and the platform of their political activities, but they never developed an urban community. The European businessmen and the government servants who lived in a world of their own could not act as a catalyst, and thus Calcutta remained throughout a house divided.

Bombay set a different example. Even in its early days it was a cosmopolitan commercial centre, a law unto itself, neither tied to a dominant group nor weighed down by an overbearing alien business community. Since Bombay had come under British rule much earlier than its Maharashtrian hinterland, it

had developed this distinctive character over a long period of time. Thus it could enter into a dynamic relationship with the newly conquered centres of Maharashtrian power on the Deccan. The dominant minority of Maharashtra, the *Chitpavan* Brahmins, went to Bombay in order to come to terms with the new power. They had been a ruling group, their memories of dominance were still fresh. Unlike the *Bhadralok* they had no reason to look upon the British as liberators from Muslim rule. Their language, Marathi, had been the official language of administration in a large part of India for many decades and therefore they could express their ideas even more vigorously than the *Bhadralok* who had learnt the art of political writing from British journalists. Within Bombay city, the efforts of the *Chitpavan* Brahmins were well matched by the achievements of the versatile *Parsis,* who had prospered like the *Bhadralok* as skilful collaborators of the British, but as they had no connections with the Maharashtrian hinterland they became a truly urban community and in this way a powerful interest group which introduced into early Indian nationalism an element of sober and businesslike pragmatism. Bombay could not boast of a radical group of young men like the Derozians of Calcutta but in trenchant criticism it was certainly a match to Calcutta journalism.

In 1849 Gopal Hari Deshmukh whose popularity was attested by the name *Lokhitwadi,* which had been bestowed upon him, praised American democracy in his Bombay journal and said that India would have to go the way of America and rebel against the British. This was written in the year when the conquest of the Punjab added the coping stone to the British Empire in India. However, such utterances which would have been considered to be highly seditious in a later period were taken very lightly by British administrators in these days of aggressive confidence when native nationalists could be regarded with tolerant curiosity. It was only after this confidence was rudely shaken by the experience of the Mutiny that British officers came to see in every criticism and every local disturbance a potential signal of deeper forces which might be at work beneath the vast surface of this complex society.

THE EFFECT OF THE MUTINY AND A NEW BEGINNING

The mutineers of 1857 were certainly not Lokhitwadi's American rebels. They could not fight a "national war of independence" because they were not motivated by a common cause. Most of them were pursuing their own private vendetta. Except for a few rare cases there was no concerted action. The educated Indians remained aloof from the activities of the mutineers, as many of them could still remember the unsettled conditions before the establishment of British rule when only the man with armed retainers could hold his own and the man with literary qualifications could at the most attain a humble position in the service of the high and mighty. Both the British and the educated Indians therefore emerged from the mutiny with ambiguous feelings about the position of British power in India. In reconstructing the government under the Crown the "aristocratic school" of British civil servants emphasized the importance of those forces in Indian society which, so they believed, still commanded the allegiance of the people. The educated Indians, who realized that the government was trying to placate the very forces whose reassertion they feared, were facing a dilemma and lost the courage of precocious liberalism. Except for some criticism of local administration there was not much that could arouse the enthusiasm of young nationalists in those two decades after the mutiny. Political organizations which had been founded before the mutiny like the Bombay Association, the Madras Native Association and the British Indian Association of Bengal became inactive or hibernated. They had had their great day at the time of the last renewal of the charter of the East India Company in 1853 when petitions were sent to Parliament which embodied the reformist aspirations of the first phase of Indian nationalism. Under the government of the Crown there were no such occasions for a periodical review of each and every aspect of British administration in India which could provide a rallying point for national opinion. With the Indian Councils Act of 1861 much of the responsibility had been shifted to the Governor-General's legislative council, but several decades had to pass before this council could serve as a focal point of national politics.

The second phase of Indian nationalism began after 1870, when famines and agrarian unrest, trouble between landlords and tenants, between indebted peasants and money-lenders, the agitation for jobs in the civil service, the criticism of British revenue policy in India, the charges of exploitation and of wasteful expenditure on railways and frontier wars provided ample scope for nationalist criticism. The economic changes which had been brought about by several decades of stable British rule now showed their cumulative effect. The pressure on the land had increased and landlords who had to treat their tenants leniently in earlier times when cultivators were scarce, could now enhance their rents as cultivators were competing for the land. Monetization and better communications encouraged the export of foodgrains and the depletion of stores would cause famines in bad years. British laws favoured the expansion of rural credit, but the peasants often became permanently indebted to money-lenders and did not understand the process of law which would then drive them off their land or reduce them to servitude under their creditors. When the British administration gave up its earlier laissez-faire doctrines and embarked upon a programme of restrictive legislation in order to forestall large-scale agrarian unrest, it was bound to antagonize all those who had prospered under the prevailing circumstances. The nationalist criticism that a reduction of wasteful expenditure, a lighter revenue assessment and less official interference would restore the equilibrium of rural India sounded plausible enough.

The increasing involvement of the government as an arbiter between landlord and tenant, creditor and debtor led to a proliferation of government machinery and an emphasis on bureaucratic control. This control could not be easily shared with Indian colleagues. The admission of Indian candidates to the covenanted civil service was therefore a very controversial issue just at this time when the activities of the government were expanding and the results of British educational policy began to bear fruit as more and more young Indians were qualified for a position in government service. This was a focal point of nationalist criticism and the agitation could be spread throughout India.

The nationalists of the second phase were of the generation

born in the years around 1840. The days of the mutiny were at the most a boyhood memory for them. They had had the full benefit of a formal British education, they had lived up to the standards set by Macaulay to an extent which bewildered their British contemporaries who had to deal with them. They were skilful journalists, they entered the municipal councils, revived the regional political organizations, campaigned in London, and founded the Indian National Congress. The groups from which these nationalists came were still very much the same as in the first phase: the *Bhadralok* in Bengal, the *Chitpavan-Parsi* combination in Bombay. However some other regions were also activated by now. In Madras the Tamil Brahmins emerged as the dominant force whereas in earlier days the *Chettiar* traders had been the main element in the now defunct Madras Native Association. In Northern India some of the Kashmir Brahmins who had settled there under the Moghul regime emerged as nationalist spokesmen. But this province was preoccupied with its own problems. Advocates of Hindi tried to break the hold which the dominant Urdu culture had over the minds of men in this area. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, extended his missionary activity to this province as well as to the Punjab and provided a message which combined an adoption of certain features of Western thought with a vigorous assertion of indigenous cultural values. For Bengal and Maharashtra this was a time of great literary and intellectual activity which prepared the ground for the aspirations of the next generation.

Politically this phase of Indian nationalism terminated with the councils reform of 1892 which admitted several of the prominent members of this generation to the legislative council of the Governor-General. Their modes of thought were attached to the constitutional evolution of India's political life. Most of them were Victorian liberals, who believed in the gradual reform of British government in India and in its beneficial effect on nation-building. They thought that much had been achieved by an expansion of the legislative council which seemed to guarantee a greater participation of the Indian people in the government of their country. The Indian National Congress lost much of its earlier interest as some of its stalwarts

were absorbed by the reformed legislature. The road towards the gradual constitutional emancipation of India appeared to be clearly demarcated and further agitation was at the most of a remedial nature but could not be conceived of as a challenge to the whole system of government.

TERRORISM AND RADICAL AGITATION

The radical section of the next generation challenged these liberal hopes and aspirations. The "angry young men", born around 1870, regarded the worthy gentlemen who dominated the National Congress as stooges who were impeding national progress by associating themselves with the alien rulers. The ideas of the recent religious and literary revival among the Hindus of Bengal and Maharashtra were now projected into the political field. The liberation of the spirit by means of self-realization was easily converted into the analogy of the awakening nation which must only realize its own innate strength and unity in order to free itself from alien rule. However, this reconstruction of national solidarity on the basis of the Hindu tradition provided the new generation only with an ideology but not with the mass-contact which they would have needed for their revolutionary plans. The Indian masses had very little in common with the esoteric monism of this high-caste revivalism, and even though some of the young revolutionaries roamed through rural India in the garb of holy men they did not make much headway with the common people, but they managed to establish conspiratorial links with others of their kind. Terrorism was the last resort of this new nationalism. The assassination of two British officers in Poona in 1897 and the gun running in the first world war mark the beginning and the end of this exciting but ephemeral phase of Indian nationalism, which was also the last phase dominated by the literary castes of Bengal, Maharashtra, and the Punjab.

The rapid rise and the sudden eclipse of the Punjab in national politics was especially dramatic, as it was encompassed in this single phase of Indian nationalism. This province which had been the last to come under British rule and was then governed by an efficient and autocratic school of British adminis-

trators could only produce a somewhat coherent urban educated group by the end of the nineteenth century. This group was deeply stirred by the militant message of the Arya Samaj which provided at once a rationale for the adaptation to certain elements of the Western impact, a militant rejection of its missionary challenge, and a version of Hindu traditionalism which appealed to the Punjabi mind. The communities from which the educated group in Lahore originated had been discriminated against by the Punjab Land Alienation Act, the most successful piece of social engineering designed by the British administrators in India. They had, therefore, a keen sense of relative deprivation, an uncanny feeling that the future was not theirs unless they asserted themselves boldly here and now. The *Bhadralok* of Bengal faced at about the same time the challenge of the partition of their province and reacted with a vigorous agitation. The opportunity for an agitational campaign presented itself to the radical Punjabis when the Canal Colonies Bill of 1907 created a genuine grievance. The subsequent deportation of the leading nationalist of Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai, marked the clash between Punjab nationalism and an autocratic administration which could not tolerate such a challenge. However, here, as in Bengal, the agitation did not result in a permanent assertion of the dominance of the nationalist group. And every constitutional advance in the Punjab as well as in Bengal had to bring the large Muslim masses of these two provinces into political prominence. Therefore nationalism in the Punjab and in Bengal tended to become inward-looking and communal. As early as 1924 Lala Lajpat Rai suggested that the Punjab ought to be partitioned into a Hindu and a Muslim province. The *Bhadralok* of Bengal who had fought against the partition of Bengal into a Hindu and a Muslim province would have considered it to be defeatism if anybody would have made a suggestion like Lala Lajpat Rai's for their province, but their days as a politically dominant force in an undivided province were also numbered.

The Parsis of Bombay and the *Chitpavan* Brahmins of Maharashtra did not have to contend with a large Muslim population in their province, but they were on their way out, too. The Parsi influence did not survive the radicalization of na-

tionalist politics. As a marginal minority the Parsis were bound to remain moderate. Their earlier monopoly of political skills and organizational assertiveness could now no longer be maintained. The *Chitpavan* Brahmins isolated themselves, most of their active leaders and writers had died, the style of later movements did not appeal to them, and as the lower castes of the region came into their own, the ingrained prejudice against the Brahmins was bound to grow.

This eclipse of dominance, this exodus from the mainstream of the national movement drove many members of these groups later on to the opposite extremes of Communism or reactionary Hindu communalism. The individual choice of the one extreme or the other seems to have been in most cases rather fortuitous.

THE GANDHIAN ERA

The Gandhian era of Indian nationalism gave rise to a very different combination of forces. Gandhi did not belong to any of the dominant minorities which had been prominent in nationalist politics so far. He was a Gujarati *bania* and his religious background was the popular *Vaishnava* tradition which provided him with an intimate knowledge of the legends and the symbolism of the religious folk heroes of India. *Vaishnavism* was a creed of personal devotion and less esoteric and abstract than the monistic *Shaivism* which had provided the substance of the traditionalism of the earlier nationalists. Gandhi was a contemporary of these earlier nationalist leaders, but his political experience had been that of a minority leader in South Africa. He tried to use in India the same methods of passive resistance which he had successfully applied in South Africa. But the situation of an oppressed minority which could resist specific discriminatory laws was different from that of a vast nation. Gandhi's "non-cooperation" campaign after the first world war was therefore not very successful and his rash promise of "*Swaraj* within one year", which gave a kind of chiliastic tinge to the movement, was not in keeping with his rigorous self-discipline. The attempt to establish an agitational Hindu-Muslim unity by means of the unfortunate *Khilafat* issue was another flaw in this campaign. But the general emo-

tional effect of the campaign was rather striking. For many who participated in it, the experience was something like a religious conversion, they changed their style of life, their mode of dress, their ways of speech, because Gandhi imparted to Indian nationalism the strong emphasis on individual commitment in action.

The new regions which became prominent in the Gandhian era were his own home province Gujarat and the United Provinces and Bihar, the Hindi heartland which had hitherto not responded to the message of modern nationalism. In Madras Gandhi was supported by the Tamil Brahmins who were faced by the rising tide of political Non-Brahminism and had been crowded out of the constitutional arena to which their skills were otherwise more adapted than to agitational politics. The Punjab, Bengal and Maharashtra supported Gandhi only reluctantly and for want of an alternative programme after having decided to boycott the elections under the new constitutional reforms.

When the campaign came to an end in 1922 Gandhi was soon regarded as a spent force by most nationalists who hurried back to the constitutional arena. Agitational prominence was converted into success at the polls. But then there ensued a fight for the control of the Congress organization which had become a much more coherent body under Gandhi's leadership. Gandhi had also paid much attention to Congress finance. Unlike earlier nationalists who had given little thought to the financial side of nationalist politics, Gandhi was a good fund raiser. The Indian business community which had hardly taken any interest in nationalism before the first world war, had now discovered their nationalist heart as they had prospered during the war but were also made to realize by British post-war measures what it meant to be subject to colonial control. Nationalism was a sound and necessary investment.

After the waning of agitational fervour, the Congress resumed its constitutional activity although this activity was described as "non-cooperation within the Councils". Gandhi was temporarily eclipsed by other leaders. He emerged again when the Congress had to resort to agitation once more due to the lack of adequate constitutional progress.

The Civil Disobedience campaign of 1930-32 which was inaugurated by Gandhi's famous Salt March recruited the younger generation of many groups who had not so far participated in nationalist politics, as for instance the Non-Brahmins of Madras and Maharashtra. It also highlighted the problem of untouchability, and Gandhi's epic fast in 1932 demonstrated that nationalism and untouchability were incompatible. However, with a few exceptions the Muslims kept aloof from the Civil Disobedience movement and some of Gandhi's old *Khilafat* allies had become openly hostile. In fact, some Muslim politicians resented the solicitude of the caste Hindus for the untouchables as they had hoped to find allies in the untouchables when pressing their constitutional claims against the caste Hindus. Everything came to be regarded under the aspect of the future balance of power of different communities.

The younger generation of Indian nationalists, those born in the early years of the twentieth century turned to socialism when they found out that freedom was not yet anv nearer at the end of this second Gandhian campaign. Socialism provided them with an explanation for the problems of the Indian nation in the grip of imperialism, it showed them a way to transcend communalism which appeared to them as a bourgeois preoccupation, and it summoned them to probe the revolutionary potential of India's workers and peasants. In the course of time much of this brave new thought proved to be ephemeral and the revolutionary potential of the workers and peasants was not yet very significant. However, the most important inspiration derived from socialism was a secular nationalism. This type of nationalism had much in common with that of the founding fathers of the Congress, but those were by now mere shadows in the national pantheon and hardly anybody cared to remember their ideas.

THE TWO NATIONS

The second world war precipitated India's achievement of independence but it caused the partition of the country. After the Congress had accepted office in the provinces in 1936 and resigned again at the declaration of the war in 1939, it had

to find its way back to an agitational mode of politics. This was done half-heartedly because the leading nationalists were in no way interested in seeing Britain's enemies win the war. At the same time the Congress while in office had provided the Muslim League with sufficient grievances against Congress rule, and being out of office it had absolved the League from coming to terms with national politics in this crucial period. This enabled the League to consolidate its position and to gain many tactical advantages by closely following every agitational move of the Congress. Once the liquidation of British rule was decided upon it became increasingly necessary to speed up the process in order to avoid chaos. Under these circumstances the League's veto at each and every step seemed to make a partition inevitable. The Indian nationalists were ready to pay the price because they despaired of fitting the League into a viable political system. They did not then realize how high the price would be and that it would have to be paid in instalments over a long period of time.

In this way two incompatible nationalisms were institutionalized in India and Pakistan. India emphasized its secular nationalism which was permanently challenged by the presence of a communal state on its borders. Pakistan was entrapped in an Islamic nationalism which it could not afford to outgrow as it provided the only rationale for its precarious existence, its two halves separated by thousands of miles of Indian soil. The Kashmir conflict clinched this issue and made the fixation complete. No evil design could have worked with such vicious precision as the unfortunate sequence of events which placed the two states in this position.

POST-INDEPENDENCE NATIONALISM

Nationalism in independent India was taken for granted. The stable continuity of the government, the existence of the Congress as a national coalition based on a broad section of the society, a population which was obviously not on the verge of a revolution, and the absence of a severe external threat did not call for a special appeal to nationalism. The agitation for linguistic provinces proved to be a transitory disturbance. The

emerging leadership of the regional majority groups was accommodated in the political system. Sacrifices for economic development were either not demanded or obviated by foreign aid, or if they had to be made, they were made by a patient population which did not quite know where normal suffering ended and special sacrifices began.

It is only now that India may enter a new phase of nationalism as it finds itself surrounded by hostile neighbours and has embarked on a large scale defence programme while at the same time maintaining its economic development and solving the problems inherent in Indian federalism. So far India's nationalism has retained its secular quality and it is to be hoped that this secular nationalism will stand the test which has been set for it by adverse circumstances. This depends first of all on the new generation that has grown up in independent India and does not know much about the controversies and problems of earlier phases of nationalism. This generation will have to define its own nationalism and we do not yet know what definition they will choose.

2 / EMANCIPATION OR RE-INTEGRATION *

NATIONAL LIBERTY and imperial order were the contending ideas that influenced the minds of men in India at the turn of the nineteenth century. Indian nationalists cherished the vision of India's bright political future; British administrators emphasized the precarious situation of the Indian society which could be saved from chaos only by an orderly reconstruction within the framework of imperial government. These conflicting views were brought into clear focus by the discussion about the representation of the Indian people in the course of the first major constitutional reform in India in 1909. Gopal Krishna Gokhale,** the leading spokesman of the Indian nationalists in those crucial years, and Herbert Hope Risley,† the Home Secretary to the Government of India, who piloted the constitutional reforms through the various stages of draft proposals, committees and debates, were excellent representatives of these

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** G. K. Gokhale, 1866-1915, Professor, Fergusson College, Poona. Member of the Legislative Council, Bombay Presidency, and of the Imperial Legislative Council. Secretary and President (1905) of the Indian National Congress.

† Sir H. H. Risley, 1957-1911, Civil Service career in Bengal. On special duty: survey of the tribes and castes of Bengal (1888). Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Census Commissioner of India (1901). Secretary to Government of India, Home Department. Appointed Permanent Under-Secretary, India Office, London (1911).

two contending schools of thought. They were not only among the main actors of the contemporary political scene in India, but they were also its best analysts and commentators. In this chapter an attempt is made to outline their ideas as well as to trace their influence on the actual development of the constitutional reforms. The first part of this chapter is devoted to their different assessments of India's social and political situation; these assessments are described within the conceptual framework of alternative directions of social development. The second part contains an analysis of Gokhale's and Risley's role in the preparation of the constitutional reforms of 1909 with special reference to Gokhale's advocacy of territorial representation and Risley's emphasis on a representation of interests. The last part, taking Gokhale's 'Political Testament' as a point of departure, provides a survey of the subsequent constitutional development of India, emphasizing the predominant problems of nationality and representation.

I

The standards and values by which men identify their role in a social context and the type of authority which they exercise or acknowledge depend on the general course of social evolution. Sir Henry Maine tried to characterize this course of social evolution by pointing out that the foundations of social relations change from status to contract. But this formula bears the stamp of a legal mind and emphasizes the symptoms rather than the causes of social change. The terms integration and emancipation may indicate in a more comprehensive manner the alternatives of social organization. Integration, as defined in Talcott Parsons'[1] 'pattern variables', stands for a social system which is governed by ascribed and particularistic values, as against the universalist and achievement-oriented value system of an emancipated society. The role of an individual in an integrated system is determined by a code of conduct which provides him with a well-defined identity at every stage and station of life. The Indian system of *varnashramadharma* which regulates the duty (*dharma*) of every man according to his caste (*varna*) and age grade (*ashrama*) is an ideal example of

integration. The emancipated individual, however, is not provided with such a blue-print of the good life. His identity has to be established again and again under varying circumstances and his individuality may be severely strained by the very fact that it is the only common denominator of a random selection of diverse identities. The relationship between authority and identity which moulds the style and consensus of social and political life, is very different in an integrated society from that in an emancipated society. In an integrated system the degree of authority which is wielded or accepted by the individual is directly related to his identity, or, if one may say so, every individual is authorized by his identity and identifiable by the social, religious or political authority vested in him. In an emancipated society, however, the authority exercised by an individual may concern only one of his many identities, e.g. his roles as a father, a citizen, an employee, etc. are distinct and compartmentalized. From this it follows that there will be different codes of conduct for different roles. In the field of public authority this means the rule of law and not of men, which may nevertheless manifest itself in a rule of men who represent the law, i.e. the bureaucrat and the elected representative.

In British India the transition from the indigenous integrated pattern to a new system of public authority in an emancipated society was beset with many problems. In general, social systems develop as a whole, and even in cases of cultural borrowing, assimilation, migration, conquest, and other instances of interference, the impact enters into the system and becomes one of the factors of change or retardation, but does not remain a distinct phenomenon for any length of time. The colonial rule of European powers over Asian and African peoples, however, is a striking example of system-symbiosis, as one may call it, because as in a symbiotic relationship, two different systems maintained a constant but limited contact over a long period of time without losing their distinctive features. The members of an emancipated society came to play a crucial role in the control and development of societies which had still retained most of the elements of integration. As Gokhale once put it when speaking of the British administrators in India:

> ... man for man they are better men than ourselves, they have a higher standard of duty, higher notions of patriotism, higher notions of loyalty to each other, higher notions of organized work and of discipline, and they know how to make a stand for the privileges of which they are in possession. We have no right to complain that they are what they are.[2]

This generous and realistic appraisal did not prevent Gokhale from deprecating the forces of "racial ascendancy" and from deploring the "continuous dwarfing or stunting of our race"[3] that was taking place under British rule. The crux of the matter was that the emancipated men who had entrenched themselves in the positions of power and privilege in India were in no position to emancipate the Indians. The system-symbiosis could only be maintained if everybody remained in his place.

The political control which was exercised by the British-Indian government over a vast territory with a relatively small cadre of officials was embedded in the indigenous pattern of authority. In the traditional social order of India, government was a sectional and a transient matter, limited in its scope by the autonomous structure of communal life. The foreign control of government was not therefore very obtrusive as long as the government did not challenge or undermine the established order. But by being and remaining foreign the government was bound to be both more consistently aggressive and more rigid and inflexible than an indigenous government would have been. Its conduct was informed by alien values, its officers were inspired and united by a sense of integrity that had its point of reference beyond the seas, and its laws and policies effected a cultural change which upset the old pattern of authority. At first this was hardly perceived, because the change was of generational dimensions, and its manifestations, wherever they were noticed, appeared to the contemporary observer as isolated instances of disorder. But at the end of the nineteenth century social and economic forces produced a kind of cumulative effect which could not be ignored. Famines, peasant indebtedness, a growing population, the rise of an indigenous educated class, problems of administrative efficiency and over-centralization were seen as symptoms of a fundamental change.

The perception of social and cultural change gives rise to different interpretations of its merits. An advance toward social emancipation may be regarded as a step towards disintegration. The most acute observers of social change are often those who would prescribe a therapy of re-integration. The enemies of the open society are usually its best analysts, because it is apprehension rather than appreciation that sharpens the vision. By the end of the nineteenth century the official mind in India was very apprehensive indeed. Many of the officials were prepared to abjure everything for which British rule had stood so far. Freedom of contract, the doctrines of political economy, liberal education, were now considered to be unsuitable to the Indian empire. In the face of mounting population pressure many officials wasted their time on historical disquisitions on customary agrarian relations as a guide to remedial legislation. Custom reigned supreme as the lodestar of bewildered alien "guardians". They were even more irritated therefore when they found themselves challenged by an indigenous educated élite that did not fit into the customary cultural background. As this background was no longer static any attempt at putting the upstart educated élite in its place had to be based on some idea of what this place ought to be. Nationalists and "guardians" would agree that a reconstruction of the Indian body politic was required but they would differ with regard to their recommendations.

This was the setting for the thoughts and actions of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Herbert Hope Risley. These two men were never actually confronted in a political debate. They rarely met. Their spheres of action were separated by the prevailing code of conduct. Both of them were outstanding men and as such they did not represent the average Indian and British attitudes of their day. But they were perhaps the most perceptive and articulate participants in the interaction of the two social systems at that time. Their opinions and decisions provide a focus for the analysis of this interaction in the realm of imperial policy. Neither Gokhale nor Risley had a complete grasp of the social reality of India at their time. They had to some extent a common background because their thought was based on Western political ideas. John Stuart Mill and the

whole spectrum of nineteenth-century British political philosophy were parts of their universe of discourse. Gokhale was the more orthodox British liberal, whereas Risley was deeply affected by the conservatism of the German historical school to which he owed his appreciation of traditional patterns of social and political life. Both Gokhale and Risley therefore did not look at India in terms of indigenous standards. Their vision was determined by conflicting Western theories. Consequently they often appeared to be out of touch with the reality of their environment. Even so they made a major impact on the political development of India at a crucial time.

Gokhale emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century as the main spokesman of the Indian National Congress and the leader of the permanent opposition in the Imperial Legislative Council, while Risley reached at the same time the peak of his civil service career as Home Secretary to the Government of India and trusted adviser to the Viceroy in constitutional affairs. Both men were not true to their type in their respective spheres. Risley was an intellectual in a service in which an overdose of intellectual ability made a man suspect since it was considered to be an impediment to that virile stamina and decisiveness which was the mark of the genuine colonial administrator.[4] As Gokhale attested: 'Risley approached every question from the standpoint of a scholar and a thinker.'[5] His closely reasoned notes are some of the best state papers produced under the British Raj in India, and the weight of his arguments could not easily be resisted. Gokhale was known for a similar thoroughness, and as the first full-time politician of modern India, he set a high standard. He was not an orator and agitator who would rouse his own people but rather an eloquent pleader for the good cause of Indian aspirations, trying to influence British official and public opinion. His case could not rest on political power. He had to rely on whatever impression he could make by marshalling incontrovertible facts and figures and presenting convincing arguments which would captivate the minds of those in power. In this respect the political worlds of Gokhale and Risley were very much alike. They both operated in a restricted sphere; but while the restrictions of bureaucratic policy making were the natural elements

of Risley's career, Gokhale suffered from the stunting effect of the colonial straitjacket.

Gokhale belonged to a dominant minority, the *Chitpavan* Brahmins of Maharashtra. He came from a poor family, but he inherited the ambitions and the claim to leadership of his community. Yet he himself did not derive the right to leadership from this claim but rather from the hard-earned merit of a long political apprenticeship under his great master Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. From him he had learnt not to cast his ambitions in a narrow communal mould but to devote his life to a rational and universalist patriotism. Ranade was opposed to all facile forms of revivalism even if they appeared under the respectable guise of Vedanta or Theosophy, because they tended to blunt the feeling for right and consistent action which could only emanate from a burning puritanism.[6] This type of puritanism was the mainspring of Gokhale's political convictions. To him the emancipation of the Indian people was an arduous process of political education. It was not to be achieved by simply breaking the spell of foreign rule and asserting the birthright of national independence, but by a slow progress toward social and economic as well as political maturity. The Western impact was the foundation of this progress, and the British Empire was the framework for the construction of a modern political society in India. The principal political questions were how to co-ordinate the growth of this political society with the evolution of the Empire; how to prevent disparities and how to ward off reactionaries at home and abroad. In this spirit Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society which was designed to provide a band of selfless patriotic workers, disciplined by a long political apprenticeship, which would be able to give coherence and continuity to the public life of India. Gokhale's vision was directed towards the future and not towards the revival of some glorious past. This vision could be challenged by nationalists like Tilak[7] to whom the Indian nation was a living presence, and by those observers of the Indian scene who saw the heterogeneity of India's communities, and therefore rejected the dreams of the educated élite and denied the national unity of India.

Risley was one of the keenest observers of India's infinitely

complex social structure. He was the founder of Indian ethnology.[8] While serving the Bengal Government he did the field work for his first major publication on the castes and tribes of Bengal. Later, as Census Commissioner, he was able to collect data on an all-India scale. He also devoted much attention to physical anthropology and tried to arrive at some theory of the racial structure of Indian society. These preoccupations entered into his general assessment of social and political life in India. As early as 1890 he had stated his political views in a terse form in an article on "The Race Basis of Indian Political Movements".[9] He stressed the role of caste in Indian history and the imitative transmission of culture, the lower castes always trying to adapt themselves to the rules of the higher ones. He emphasized the relationship of caste and monarchy, the king acting as an arbiter and keeping the claims of different castes in balance; and he feared that under a democratic system the castes might serve as a caucus, and rival castes might compete for power as political machines, imposing discipline by social ostracism. At the same time he diagnosed the growing national sentiment as a preoccupation of the upper castes, and while appreciating the aspirations of the educated class he warned against the creation of a literate oligarchy which would not foster genuine self-government. Having visited Prussia on behalf of the Bengal Government in order to study local self-government[10] Risley praised the Prussian example in the concluding part of his article and reported:

> There a bureaucratic system bearing a surprisingly close resemblance to that prevalent in India has been leavened by the infusion of an elective element. . . . The elective village headmen whose powers had fallen into disuse have been revived with the best effect and a system of communal and provincial councils has been introduced. . . .

Accordingly he recommended a revival of the Indian village councils (*panchayats*),[11] which should have quasi-judicial powers and their own revenue. In this way he hoped the officially discredited panchayat would rise once more in dignity and influence. And he added:

> The personal law of a large number of castes is at present administered

solely by their councils and much interesting custom has by this means been preserved. Once let the village council be made a reality and the leading men of these caste councils will seek election to it. It will thus assume the representative character which at present is wanting . . . [and] the villagers would cease to be a mere mob of individuals.

This association of existing social institutions at the village level with the advance towards representative government was Risley's main concern. He saw that representative institutions must be granted to India since Britain had decided "to govern India by British rather than by Asiatic methods", but he felt that the basic problem was the construction of the political society on which such representative institutions could be built. Who should be enfranchised so as to create a truly representative cross-section of Indian political interests? Risley was sceptical about the use of those electorates that existed at that time:

Anyone with a turn for constitution making can construct abundant voting apparatus out of municipal institutions, but a franchise framed on this basis would leave the landed interests practically unrepresented, on the other hand a wider franchise may give undue leverage to caste organisations. . . .

These caste organizations he considered to be dangerous on a larger territorial scale because of the absence of an informed public opinion in India which could keep political bosses and machines in check. At the most this type of public opinion could operate within the narrow confines of the village community. Accordingly Risley stressed the functions of caste organizations at that level but deprecated their activities in a wider sphere. "Government by social ostracism" seemed to be tolerable in small communities which should be rescued from the fate of being "mere mobs of individuals". It would become dangerous only when it transcended these limits and entered the realm of large-scale political strife.

Risley adopted the general attitude of the "guardian" towards political emancipation which he saw as being accompanied by a disorderly and indecent struggle for power. To him representative government did not mean an arena in which various forces should contend for leadership. He wanted it to be a

faithful replica of the complex social structure. In this respect his thought reflected the theories of John Stuart Mill who had conceived of representative government as a microcosm of the society. But as an administrator who was primarily interested in the efficiency of government, Risley had additional reasons for deprecating the struggle for power and looking at the strata of society which ought to be represented from a functional point of view. When he had to deal with new legislation for the Calcutta Municipal Corporation in the early days of Lord Curzon's régime he expressed his disapproval of the narrow oligarchy of the educated class which treated the municipality as a "Bengali Parliament", and he did not think that "practical considerations are to be subordinated to the supposed educational influence of local self-government". He deplored the way in which the European merchants of Calcutta and other commercial groups held aloof from the corporation because it was a close preserve of the educated Bengalis.[13] This strengthened his conviction about the necessity of the representation of "real interests". The identification and constitutional reconstruction of these "interests" was to become his main preoccupation when he was put in charge of the constitutional reforms during the Viceroyalty of Lord Minto.

II

The definition and enfranchisement of "real interests" in a colonial context was a delicate problem. Because of the lack of an independent and fully differentiated public life, every representative institution was avidly captured by the most active group. As there was more prestige than power attached to these institutions, the "real interests" often did not care to project themselves into this political arena and preferred to exercise direct pressure on the executive whenever some important issue was at stake. This posed a peculiar problem for the executive. A purely autocratic government might dispense or withhold favours and respond to pressures from various groups *ad hoc* and without concern for the continuity and interdependence of political interests. The very idea of representative government, however, presupposed an institutionalized

give-and-take of favours and support, whereby a concession to one group today would constitute a claim on its political support at some other time. This was one very important reason which compelled the colonial executive to aim at a representation of different interests in councils and corporations once the principle of representative government was introduced. The other strong motivation for the representation of "interests" was provided by the conservative trend towards a re-integration of the Indian society. India was seen as a conglomeration of castes, classes, and tribes. A representation of this kaleidoscopic pattern was theoretically desirable and practically convenient. But the administrators who were responsible for the constitutional evolution of India did not always think of Machiavellian plots. For most of them the quest for the "natural leaders of the people" and for the "real interests" was not conceived of as a technical necessity of representative government in a colonial empire. It was meant to lead to a restoration of a sense of order and proportion in Indian society. But whether the motivation was Machiavellian or conservative, representation soon became a piece of social engineering. Previously the colonial government had taken it upon itself to define the interests of "agricultural" and "non-agricultural" communities for the purpose of the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. Why should it not delimit the representation of political interests in a similar fashion? In this way the re-integration of Indian society and the construction of the body politic could be co-ordinated. Social and political considerations converged: the educated class was thought to be socially unrepresentative and politically undesirable, and the one because of the other. The British bureaucrats were well prepared to resist any improvement in the constitutional position of the educated class. If they were to lose some ground in a first round of constitution-making they were sure to recover it when they had to frame the rules and regulations, the natural weapons of bureaucratic rule.

The was the position in 1906 when the victory of the Liberal Party in Britain opened the way for fundamental constitutional reforms in India. The new Secretary of State, the liberal philosopher, John Morley, was a man revered by the educated class-

ses of India. He was known for his criticism of imperialism. Gokhale had visited Morley several years before and he had conveyed to him this appreciation of India's educated élite. But in his conversation with Morley at that time, he had found him to be rather pessimistic about the political development of India. Morley had told Gokhale that he feared India would have a fate similar to that of Ireland.[13] As Secretary of State for India Morley was not impelled by a reforming zeal when he took office. He actually thought that very little work would be connected with it, and he obviously had no plans of his own.[14] But he was a stern advocate of parliamentary control of imperial affairs and he considered the Viceroy to be his agent just as much as the messengers at his doorstep.[15] He was, therefore, bound to become deeply involved in the duties of his office as time went by. The new Parliament had many radical members who professed to be friends of India and could be relied upon to keep a watch on the policy of the cabinet. In India Lord Curzon had been replaced by Lord Minto who was a conservative and owed his appointment to the previous cabinet but was nevertheless inclined to view Indian aspirations in a more liberal way than his predecessor. In general the Minto-Morley constellation seemed to augur well for those Indian politicians who were eager to obtain a generous dose of constitutional reform. But the political atmosphere in India after the partition of Bengal was vitiated by the radicalization of Indian politics. The moderate nationalists who thought in terms of constitutional reforms were challenged by a growing school of thought which felt that constitutional advance would side-track the main issue of Indian national freedom and corrupt Indian politicians who would glory in a more intimate association with the colonial power and thus forget about the birthright of their nation.

Gokhale reached the peak of his political career at this critical juncture. In 1905 he was elected president of the Indian National Congress which he had served as a general secretary for several years. He was only thirty nine years old, but he had already been a member of the Imperial Legislative Council for the past four years, and in this capacity he had impressed Lord Curzon as an extremely well-informed and able

leader of the permanent opposition.[16] The Congress at Benares in 1905 was, however, at least as much of a challenge to Gokhale as an encounter with Lord Curzon. A few weeks before the Congress met Gokhale had returned from London where he had interviewed several Liberal politicians. He was hopeful that a definite step toward constitutional reform was imminent. For some time he had even thought of getting himself elected to the House of Commons in order to be able to submit a reforms bill to Parliament from the floor of the house. But the great political boss of the Congress, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, convinced him that even a sizeable number of Indian members of Parliament would be of no avail and that a private member's bill would do more harm than good because it would not commit the cabinet.[17] He had, therefore, dropped the idea, but he was determined to continue his work for the reforms. In Benares he was faced with an audience excited by the Bengal anti-partition agitation, and in no mood to be carried away by vague promises of impending reforms. He satisfied his audience by condemning Lord Curzon and the partition and he then outlined a reform programme which he hoped could be implemented. He suggested that the number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council should be raised so as to form one-half of the total number, and that they should have the power to pass the budget and move amendments; three Indian members should be appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State in London; there should be District Advisory Councils with more comprehensive powers than the existing Local Boards; judicial and executive functions should be separated, and the judicial branch of the Civil Service should be recruited from the members of the legal profession in India; while primary education should be extended on a large scale.[18]

Soon after the Benares Congress Gokhale left again for England in order to promote these reforms. Morley granted him a series of interviews and Gokhale reported home: "I am pleased that I have come here at a time when Mr Morley's mind is in a fluid condition and his opinions on India are in the process of forming."[19] Morley was interested in Gokhale's ideas, but what was even more important, he knew that Gokhale

acted as political adviser to the Friends of India group of radical parliamentarians, a large but incoherent body which would be rather harmless unless it were roused by some untoward event. Morley, who did not like to be asked too many questions in Parliament was anxious to keep Gokhale on the right side in order to be able through him to influence the radical members of Parliament. He freely described his own difficulties to Gokhale, and Gokhale suggested that Morley should appoint a Royal Commission on Decentralization in order to seize the initiative and gain time for a thorough preparation of the reforms.[20] Morley accepted this advice, but this initial move did not establish a firm lead for the Secretary of the State in the further development of the reforms. The India Office faded into the background and the Government of India soon dominated the discussions about constitutional reform.

Lord Minto's mind, unlike Morley's, was not "in a fluid condition" as far as his opinions on India were concerned. Minto wanted first of all a representation of communities and interests.[21] He thought in terms of a synthesis of British and Moghul traditions of government and intended to build a "constitutional autocracy", which would provide for a better association of the people with the government, but would not enable them to control the executive by means of powerful legislative councils. Risley, who was in charge of the details of the reforms scheme, assisted Minto very ably and knew how to interpret this British-Moghul plan, because it corresponded with his own ideas. Within this frame of reference of the greater association of the Indian people with the government Minto was willing to go very far. In fact, he was eager to demonstrate this principle by a suggestion which he thought would capture the imagination of political India, and he therefore asked for the appointment of an Indian member to his executive council, which had always been a close preserve of the most senior civil servants. This suggestion came as a surprise to Morley who thought it to be a rather bold step and feared that the India Council in London would reject it in the same way as the Viceroy's executive council had rejected.[22] But in the end this unexpected proposal was the first item of the constitutional reforms that could be put into practice. The appoint-

ment of an Indian to the Viceroy's executive council had not even been mentioned in the Congress reforms programme. Gokhale and his friends knew that it would be a dubious boon; they were much more interested in an increasing legislative control of the government than in an association with its executive responsibilities. It was in keeping with this point of view that they had asked for Indian representation on the India Council of the Secretary of State, and for an extension of the powers of the non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council, but had not demanded a reform of the Viceroy's executive council. Nevertheless when this reform was granted they welcomed it and persuaded the great Calcutta lawyer Satyendra Sinha to accept the position of Law Member on the Viceroy's council. But it soon became quite obvious that the acceptance of this position meant responsibility without power, and Sinha wanted to resign his office almost within a year of his appointment.[23]

The other items of the reforms programme did not materialize so quickly. Gokhale had a hard time in persuading his friends again and again to withhold their criticism and put their trust in Morley who would see to it that the reforms were not whittled away. But the tide had turned against Gokhale who had been so sanguine about the prospects of an early and comprehensive reform at the time of his visit in 1906. The following year saw a rapid polarization of political forces in India, and the scene in London changed as well. In 1907 it was not Gokhale but Risley who had a series of interviews with Morley. Risley appeared to Morley somewhat mephistophelian,[24] but he was impressed with his intellectual brilliance and wrote about him to Minto in an enthusiastic vein.[25] Morley had been impatient with the long delay of the reform proposals of the Government of India, but he was now convinced that Risley could handle all reform problems very well. Risley also left a copy of his article on the race basis of Indian political movements with Morley who read it with great interest and noted that it was a remarkable forecast of so much that had happened since.[26] On his return to India Risley drafted a reforms circular which embodied the whole scheme of the representation of communities and interests and relegated ter-

ritorial representation and the educated class to a marginal position. This greatly discouraged Gokhale and his friends who felt that Indian opinion was in a mood "to leave these reforms severely alone". Gokhale complained about Risley who had adopted "a sneering attitude towards the educated classes", and he hoped that the Government of India would realize the mistake of permitting Risley to draft the circular in this vein.[27] The impending defeat of the reforms by the Government of India could perhaps be forestalled by another intervention in London, and Gokhale thought of going there. In this he found some encouragement in a remark by Lieutenant-Governor Baker, a member of the Viceroy's executive council, who had been outvoted in the council because of his liberal views. Baker agreed that Gokhale should shift the scene of his activities to London once more in order to canvass for support among members of Parliament. Morley was furious when he came to know about this advice and upbraided Baker for this "hint to Mr Gokhale to set in motion parliamentary opposition to [his] official superior".[28] But for the time being Morley was not disturbed by the Indian nationalists, because they could not agree among themselves what course they should follow. The political atmosphere became more and more tense towards the end of 1907. Gokhale was afraid that fratricidal struggles of an Irish type would wreck the incipient public life of India, and that fissiparous tendencies would increase the vulnerability of a political society which was anyhow characterized by an excessive indiscipline and had no instinct for united action. Gokhale also predicted that the British officials would not do anything to rally the moderate politicians to their side, but would rather utilize the opportunity that presented itself to put down both sections of Indian politicians at once.[29]

The lack of consensus among the educated class and the dramatic split of the Congress in December 1907 confirmed these fears. Since there could be no agreement about the way towards emancipation, the official doctrine of the re-integration of the Indian society within the framework of a British-Moghul constitution could gain ready acceptance. Risley started a correspondence with Morley in April 1908 because Minto was unable to read all the reforms files and authorized him to keep

Morley informed about everything. In his first letter Risley made out a convincing case for not giving up the official majority in the provincial legislative councils. He argued that otherwise subordinate governments such as the Government of Bombay would practically become independent not only of the Government of India but also of the Secretary of State and of Parliament. For instance, an instruction about cotton duties or the restriction of factory labour, which must rest upon a parliamentary mandate, would unite all Bombay non-official members, Indians and Europeans, in one solid body; and if the provincial government sympathized with their views and refused to veto a majority vote the authority of Parliament would be superseded. Risley knew that such concrete examples appealed to Morley.[30] In his next letter to Morley he commented on the recent bomb outrages and blamed the Congress politicians, who had started the practice of drawing students into politics, and who had "thus demoralized a hysterical and imitative class with no traditons and no backbone". He also added an outline of the entire reforms scheme, which would contain an Imperial Advisory Council of seven Indian princes, and eight representatives of the different provinces of British India; provincial advisory councils of seven to twelve members representing interests, and provincial legislative councils of thirty-five to forty-five members with separate electorates for landholders and Mohammedans, and territorial representation, through district boards and municpalities, of the educated class. Risley emphasized that the latter point was an adaptation of Gokhale's proposals "only changing the scale". The advisory councils should remain small bodies, their note should be distinction; large bodies of this type would be "either dummies or Dumas" he added. Provincial advisory councils would be very useful to the governors, because even at present they consulted all kinds of people but they could never say "I have consulted my advisory council". These councils would consist of specially selected representatives of important interests, and therefore they fitted well into Risley's scheme. He was more diffident about the usefulness of the Imperial Advisory Council with its native princes and could not cite any cases in which their advice would be useful. But he was convinced that this association of the Government

of India with the native rulers would serve at least one good purpose: "Suppose for example that bomb throwing spreads, British officials will not be the only victims, and if concerted measures are to be taken the Native States must co-operate with us."[31] The policy of associating natives with the "constitutional autocracy" was thus designed to extend the front and confound the forces that were attacking it. In general this line was followed very successfully by the Government of India, but the idea of the advisory councils was soon given up, because Minto was afraid that in London "an attempt may be made to enlarge them on a more representative basis to meet the views of the Indian extremists, who are at home accepted as patriots, and of the present House of Commons".[32]

Soon after this correspondence had been exchanged between Risley and Morley, Gokhale reached London for another round in the campaign for constitutional reform. The proposals of the Government of India were now before the India Council and in due course Morley would have to issue his reforms despatch which remained the only hope for the moderate nationalists who had been sorely disappointed by the Government of India. Gokhale came to England with fewer illusions than in 1906 when he had had his first series of interviews with Morley, and his days in London were overshadowed by the course of events in India. The political murders, the wave of repression initiated by the government, and particularly the trial in Bombay of the great nationalist leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, his old colleague and antagonist, created tensions which affected his negotiations with the Secretary of State and the members of his council. But nevertheless he reported home that he had covered a good deal of ground in these discussions. In September 1908 he submitted a note on the reforms to Morley and sent a copy of it to Risley for inclusion in the reforms papers of the Government of India.[33] The main issue in these discussions was territorial representation versus separate electorates for different communities and interests. Gokhale tried his best to rescue the principle of territorial representation, because political emancipation and national unity would suffer if this principle had to be given up. The Government of India insisted on the principle of communal representation in separate electorates which was

in tune with the idea of the association of diverse interests with an autocratic government. Gokhale was willing to accept separate electorates for certain communities and interests if they were supplementary to territorial electorates so as to give some weightage to groups which otherwise would not have been properly represented. But the Government of India did not conceive of separate electorates as a supplementary device; to them communal representation was the foundation of their constitutional plan and territorial representation was the exception which would be granted only to the educated class which represented nobody but themselves as the government saw it. Morley and his council tried to arrive at a compromise between these two incompatible principles of territorial and communal representation by evolving a scheme of electoral colleges. These colleges would provide a level on which separate and territorial representation could be merged. Each territorial unit would have an electoral college whose members were to be elected by separate electorates of communities and interests. The representatives elected by the college would represent the territorial unit as a whole. This was the main point of Morley's great reforms despatch of 27 November, 1908.[84] Risley, however, was able to undermine the whole scheme by pointing out that it might give adequate representation to minorities of opinion (e.g. Free Traders *v.* Tariff Reform) but not to minorities of sect (e.g. Hindus *v.* Mohammedans). In order to prove his contention he cited the following example: [85]

> . . . let us suppose that there are six candidates, four Hindus and two Mohammedans for the five seats on the council. H1 a Hindu pleader, H2 a Hindu journalist, H3 a Hindu barrister having just enough land to qualify as a land-holder of the novus homo type, H4 a Hindu landholder of standing, M1 a really representative Muslim, M2 a Congress Mohammedan supported by the Hindus; assume further that the landholders vote solidly for H4 and the Mohammedans for M1, that leaves 60 Hindu votes to be cast (of an electoral college of 100 which includes 20 representatives of landholders and 20 of Mohammedans). How should these (remaining votes) be given so as to carry the Congress ticket? I suggest that they might be distributed thus: H1—5, H2—5, H3—25, M2—25. M1 and H4 would be defeated by Congressmen with merely nominal qualifications, as the college can elect only one Mohammedan and one land-holder. The votes cast for M1 and H4 are valueless and the 10

votes still left to the Congress are sufficient to secure the election of a pleader and a journalist, H1 and H2.

The political types which Risley mentioned in this example, which he had copied to a large extent from a Mohammedan newspaper, showed a definite bias. Gokhale (who of course did not know about this confidential note), however, wrote in the same month an optimistic letter to Sir Lawrence Jenkins in which he reported a general change of heart among the leading officials: [36]

> Take Sir Herbert Risley. I know Sir Herbert Risley of Lord Curzon's time, and never wanted to meet him more than I could help. His whole bearing then was . . . a sneer at our aspirations. Well, I saw him the other day at Calcutta and had a long talk with him. He always was brilliant and scholarly . . . but I noticed a new desire in him to be recognised as a friend and I could not help being touched by his evident anxiety to be understood.

Even if this may not have been a case of dissimulation on Sir Herbert Risley's part it was certainly a rather hasty judgement on Gokhale's part. Risley was thinking ahead and he was even scanning the files for issues that might be brought up by the non-official members in the reformed councils.[37] He was preparing himself for new lines of defence, and for the present he was advocating the same political views which he had held consistently over a long period of time, and which he thought were in accordance with the realities in India. His sneer may have disappeared, but his line of reasoning was more effective than ever. Morley was forced to withdraw his suggestions, and when doing so in a speech in the House of Lords, he paraphrased Risley's note and adopted his arguments, substituting Protestants and Catholics for Risley's Hindus and Mohammedans in order to elucidate the matter to his fellow peers. The situation provided an opening for the communal spokesmen of the Mohammedans who could use some of Morley's statements for extracting more concessions than they could have hoped for at any earlier stage. Morley was aware of this fact and he was glad that nobody took the opportunity of raising a question in Parliament which would have greatly embarrassed him.[38]

The only major point which Morley was able to defend against the Government of India was the right of the elected members to take their seats in the reformed councils on the basis of election only, without the prerequisite of a nomination by the government; the government would have preferred the continuation of the existing practice of nomination upon election, so as to be able to discourage the election of undesirable politicians. Morley also objected to the disqualification of all politicians who had been deported in the course of the previous year.[39] But in the end he had to grant to the Government of India a general power of disallowing candidatures in certain cases. For this he was applauded by Risley who wrote to him (while sending him a copy of the Bhagavadgita with some appreciative comments), that he had all along pleaded for this power of disallowing candidatures, instead of having to submit a catalogue of political disqualifications, because he felt that Parliament would be willing to condone such restrictions rather than permit explicit discrimination. Risley added: [40]

> In this as in other matters I have found difficulty in getting people here to realise that Parliament has to be reckoned with. Their tendency is to say: 'this is right, if Parliament choose to upset us, let them do so', —instead of trying to attain their object by means which Parliament are likely to agree to.

After having crossed the hurdles of parliamentary solicitude for India's constitution, the bureaucrats could cut down the reforms to proper size by framing the rules and regulations to the act of 1909. The registration of voters was conducted in such a way as to further reduce the weight of the educated class and strengthened the ranks of those "who had a stake in the country". In April 1909 Morley had remarked to his private secretary that he felt the reforms were going a bit too far after all. But at the end of that year his fear proved to be unfounded. "The triumph of constitutionalism" as the reforms had been called at the Congress of 1908 had turned into a victory of the bureaucracy. In commenting on the regulation for the representation of different communities on the Bengal Legislative Council, Risley stated: [41]

We did not aim at a numerical balance. . . . The Hindu professional middle class ought to have a bare majority of elected members by virtue of their numbers and intellectual superiority, but they ought not to have things all their own way.

In keeping with their motto "association but no control" the officials carefully produced a pattern of representation which would provide them with a system of checks and balances. While pretending to be disinterested umpires they loaded the dice against the educated class and made sure that they would not "have things all their own way". At the Congress of 1909 the Indian politicians could only bewail the innumerable instances of arbitrary disenfranchisement and gerrymandering with which the bureaucracy had secured a representation of those "interests" that had found official approval and an exclusion of those who were undesirable to those in power.[42] Gokhale who had been so closely associated with the progress of the constitutional reforms received all the brickbats of the nationalist press. Insult was added to injury when the *Mahratta* surmised that Gokhale was secretly in league with the bureaucrats and had betrayed the national cause.[43]

The final structure of the reformed legislatures under the Morley-Minto reforms showed an overall increase of the elective element, but this element was introduced in such a tortuous and guarded manner, that the executive was thoroughly protected against direct attack by a solid phalanx of elected representatives. Even in the provincial legislatures where the statutory official majorities had been abandoned, the non-official seats were parcelled out in such a way that joint action by the non-official members was rather unlikely. In the central legislature the official majority had been retained so as to safeguard the ultimate control of the Government of India. This combination of provincial concessions with central autocracy became a permanent feature of constitutional reform in India. The central legislature had been enlarged from 16 to a maximum of 60 seats, 33 of these were occupied by nominated members of whom 28 were officials of the Government of India. The elective element was composed of representatives of various electorates, 13 of them had to be elected by the legislative councils of the provinces, whereby the elected members of the councils were the

electorate for these seats, 6 were elected by special electorates of landholders, 5 by the separate Muslim electorates of the provinces, one by the Muslim landholders, and 2 by the Chambers of Commerce. The provincial legislatures of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies were composed of the 3 executive council members and the advocate general ex-officio, 21 nominated members of whom only 16 ought to be officials, 2 experts, and 21 elected members. In Bengal the number of elected members was even higher; 28 elected members were confronted with only 21 nominated members. But many of the elected members owed their seats to electorates which could not but produce faithful camp-followers of the official side. The scope of the elected members' activity in the new councils was anyhow rather limited. The budget was presented to them and they could ask questions and sponsor resolutions, but in the last resort they could not change the course of government.

When the reformed councils met they were at once faced with an unpleasant task. The wave of terrorism that had swept India since the split of the Congress had sorely tried and nearly exhausted the traditional means of repression that were at the disposal of the government. The deportation of prominent leaders proved to be abortive. It added to their stature and gave rise to embarrassing questions in Parliament.[44] The executive was therefore eager to place the responsibility for the repression of revolutionary activities squarely on the shoulders of the Indian legislature, and soon after the opening of the reformed legislative council it was Risley's duty as acting Home Member to introduce a Press Bill which was intended to curb the freedom of the radical newspapers; because, as Risley put it, "sedition has the monopoly of its audience".[45] His speech contained a good analysis of Indian unrest. Gokhale, however, could only deplore "the cruel irony of fate that the first important measure that comes before the Reformed Council is a measure to curtail a great and deeply cherished privilege, which the country has enjoyed, with two brief interruptions, for three-quarters of a century".[46] This was the last time that Gokhale's and Risley's paths crossed. The day before Gokhale gave his speech in the council Risley had been given a farewell dinner by Minto.[47] His term of service in India had come to an end

and before he could take up his new position of Permanent Undersecretary in the India Office he died in London in September 1911.

III

Gokhale was to survive Risley only by three and a half years and within that short period he did not witness any progress beyond the established political framework. The beginning of the first world war indicated that further reforms might be due, because India's loyalty would have to be rewarded. Gokhale was therefore asked by Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay, to outline a minimum demand that would satisfy Indian aspirations and he finished a draft of this demand a few days before his death in February 1915.[48] Later on this draft was published by the Aga Khan and became known as "Gokhale's Political Testament". This designation was somewhat misleading because it tended to obscure the fact that the draft was prepared for a particular purpose, and therefore could not contain any long-range plans for India's constitutional progress. Nevertheless the draft showed Gokhale's realistic appraisal of the potentialities of constitutional advance within the peculiar framework fashioned by the Government of India. He suggested a large extension of provincial autonomy with non-official majorities in the provincial legislatures and Indian members on the executive councils of the governors, counterbalanced by the retention of an official majority in the central legislature and special powers for the Viceroy. Later reforms demonstrated that Gokhale had gauged the main trend correctly. But his plan did not contain any reference to responsible government of the parliamentary type and he stated in his draft: [49]

> The relations between the Executive Government and the Legislative Council . . . should be roughly similar to those between the Imperial Government and the Reichstag in Germany . . . the members of the Executive Government shall not depend individually or collectively, on the support of the majority of the council for holding their offices.

This combination of an irremovable executive with a Reichstag-type legislature was in keeping with the spirit of the

Morley-Minto Reforms which did not afford a good point of departure for the introduction of a parliamentary type of government. The representation of "communities and interests" was incompatible with responsible government. It required an irremovable executive in the same way as the "functional representation" which was suggested by some constitutional planners in the course of later discussion before and during the second world war.[50] The draft of the nineteen members of the Imperial Legislative Council and the constitutional proposals embodied in the subsequent pact between the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916 closely paralleled the suggestions made in Gokhale's "Testament".[51] None of these proposals contained any reference to a "responsible government" which according to the famous declaration of August 1917 the British war cabinet was prepared to grant to the Indian people. British commentators were quick to emphasize that the government was prepared to go much beyond the boldest demands of the Indian nationalists and was willing to grant them a boon of which they had not even thought as yet. But Indian politicians had not lost sight of "responsible government" out of sheer force of habit or lack of imagination. They had asked for a greater amount of control of the executive by the legislature, and had consciously refrained from asking for any share of the executive responsibility of government. Partial executive responsibility to councils elected along the lines of the established system of representation of communities and interests would make confusion worse confounded. Politicians like the Aga Khan and V. S. Srinivasa Sastri recognized this problem and pointed to the Swiss and the American federal constitutions as models which would be more appropriate for India.[52] But nobody would listen to these suggestions and responsible government of a peculiar type was wished upon the Indian people at the next constitutional reform.

The fateful term "responsible government" was inserted in the declaration of August 1917 by Lord Curzon, after the British war cabinet had repeatedly hesitated to use the more general but emotionally loaded term "self-government".[53] But, whereas self-government could have implied even non-parliamentary

forms of government, responsible government had a technical meaning which could not be disregarded. This technical meaning was exploited by constitutional experts who had taken a leaf out of Lord Durham's report on Canada and emphasized the inevitable deadlock which would result from the encounter of an irremovable executive with an enlarged legislature of the type which the Indian politicians had demanded.[54] They could demonstrate that the proposals of Gokhale's testament and similar suggestions of other politicians would soon lead to a point of no return whereas responsible government could be established in convenient instalments. The bureaucrats were quick to grasp the potentialities of this new device. Like the control of representation the guarded transfer of responsibility gave a great deal of scope to the skilful manipulator, and the combination of both multiplied the number of checks and balances. The debates on responsible government and on the reconstruction of the Indian polity highlighted once more the problem of the symbiosis of the two social systems. The emancipated system of the imperial power provided the model of political progress, whereas the subject people lived in a half-way house, and their political destiny was to be shaped by whatever new construction the imperial power chose to impose upon them. Responsible government demands an emancipated electorate among which a free party system will operate towards an aggregation of interests. The representation of permanently defined sectional interests is the very antithesis of this system, and yet the imperial government managed to combine these two principles in an utterly confusing synthesis of separate electorates and dyarchic responsibility when the next constitutional reforms were granted. The impact of such constructions on the Indian body politic did not contribute to the development of a united nation. But, of course, the imperial rulers could always argue that this nation was only a dream in the heads of a small minority of Indian nationalists, and that if it did in fact exist it should be able to assert itself in spite of some ephemeral political constructions. When defending the introduction of separate electorates Risley had taken precisely this line: [55]

> As for the argument from nationality it is too indefinite to be taken seriously . . . if the growth of nationality can be stopped by what is after all a piece of electoral mechanism, nationality in India is not the force that it pretends to be.

This point of view was very close to that of the extremists in Indian politics who spurned the efforts of the moderate reformers and claimed political freedom as the birthright of the nation. The extremists, like Risley, conceived of nationality as of an innate force which may be submerged, but which would always remain a living reality. The extremists tried to find this living reality in the traditions of Hindu culture and religion and established a solidarity which did not include the Muslims of India. Risley, who was a keen observer of the new traditionalism, knew about this problem, and because of his intimate acquaintance with the intricacies of India's social structure, he was very sceptical about her claim to nationality. But because of the conservative nature of his thought he was basically unable to share the hopes of moderate reformers like Gokhale who trusted that the continuous operation of a progressively emancipated political system would help India to overcome the traditional divisions of its social system and create the conditions for the growth of a nation. Unlike the earlier British liberals, who had much confidence in the emancipating impact of British rule, and who saw the symbiosis of the two systems in terms of a dynamic transfusion of new blood, Risley, and those who thought like him, knew that the corps of imperial rulers was a small entity encapsuled in a vast and complex body over which it retained a precarious control. The providential rule of the British in India in which the Indian liberals still believed at that time was no longer the cherished ideal of those imperial guardians who had come to look at India with the innate pessimism of the conservative mind. Their attempts at reintegrating rather than emancipating Indian society were motivated by their interest in the traditional forms of authority as well as by their awareness of the foundations and limitations of British power in India. They did not think of any special mandate of British rule but only of its survival, and for this purpose they felt they had to adapt British rule to India rather than work for a progressive adaptation of India to British rule. This

is why they had to foist what they themselves called a British-Moghul constitution upon India, thus bitterly disappointing the Indian liberals who had been led to believe by an earlier generation of British guardians that it was the mission of Britain to liberate India from Moghul autocracy, and instruct Indians in the art of democratic self-government. But even though old fashioned Liberalism had died out among the guardians in India, it was still in vogue in the British Parliament, a fact, which gave rise to constant tensions. Parliamentary politics at home and the bureaucrats' struggle for the maintenance of imperial rule in India were ever so often at variance. In all important decisions, Parliament had to trust "the man on the spot" and that man in turn had to obey the orders of Parliament. The result was a hybrid mixture of parliamentary precedent and bureaucratic practice which left its imprint on India's political life for a long time to come. In this context Indian politicians could only plead for a larger amount of parliamentary precedent and less bureaucratic practice. In doing so they had to demand a closer approximation of the Indian government to the parliamentary model at home. For this they have often been wrongly blamed, because they appeared to advocate a slavish imitation of an alien model while they should have thought of a more adequate constitutional form that would reflect the genius of the Indian people. In fact, several Indian politicians did try their hand at drafting an Indian constitution in the course of later years. C. R. Das, for instance, elaborated a hierarchy of panchayats, with the village panchayats at the base and the national panchayat at the top of the constitutional pyramid, the different levels to be connected by a system of indirect elections.[56] A similar plan was proposed by Jayaprakash Narayan in independent India. Gandhi regarded the constitution of the Indian National Congress as it evolved under his guidance as a suitable model for an Indian constitution.[57] This constitution contained three tiers of committees connected by indirect elections, and a highly centralized executive. The erratic radical, M. N. Roy, drafted a very interesting "Constitution of Free India",[58] in which he provided for provincial government by People's Committees with no division of legislative and executive functions and a federal government consisting of a

directly elected Governor-General and a legislative asembly to be elected by electoral colleges composed of the representatives of the People's Committees of towns and villages. He also conceded separate electorates to minorities. However, all these drafts and proposals were of purely academic interest; the official constitutional reforms took no notice of them. Independent India emerged with a constitution which was the product of the interaction of parliamentary tradition and the administrative exigencies of a gradual devolution of power. In this way the Indian constitution was a product of system-symbiosis; it was alien and yet closely related to India's political experience. In spite of frequent setbacks, bureaucratic subterfuges and the many obstacles to the development of territorial representation of the Indian people, the progress of constitutional reform contributed to the emancipation of India's political society. All constitutional nostrums which were supposed to reflect customary relationships and the traditional structure of Indian society in due course disappeared. The progress of constitutional reform vindicated all those, like Gokhale, who had worked for it, even if many of their efforts were frustrated in their own time. Gokhale was a Moderate who had once adopted the motto "one step enough for me", but he was also an ardent patriot and a true liberal who hoped that this step would be in the direction of the emancipation of his nation. He knew what this emancipation would mean to the Indian people: [59]

> I recognize [he said] no limits to my aspirations for our Motherland . . . I want our men and women without distinction of caste or creed to grow to the full height of their stature.

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[2] Gokhale, *Speeches*, 2nd edn., Madras, 1916, p. 1064.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 1080.

[4] Risley was not made a governor for these reasons; see comments on Risley by Morley in John Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, London 1917, p. 229; also Gokhale Papers, National Archives of India (hereinafter GP),

Gokhale to Sir Lawrence Jenkins, 29 January 1909, and Hirtzel Diary, India Office Library, Home Miscellaneous Series 864, 26 August 1907. Sir Frederick Hirtzel was private secretary to Lord Morley from 1906 to 1909.

[5] Gokhale, *Speeches*, 2nd edn., p. 678.

[6] Ranade to Gokhale, 24 May 1899, GP.

[7] For a comparison of the policies of Tilak and Gokhale see Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale—Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*, Berkeley, 1962.

[8] See the following works of Risley: *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, 4 vols, Calcutta 1891; Census Report of India 1901; *The People of India*, London, 1908, 2nd edn., 1915.

[9] Published in the *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 57, May 1890.

[10] For Risley's own reference to this visit see National Archives of India, Home Department Proceedings, Political A (hereinafter HDP), October 1908, No. 116-48, Vol. I, p. 556.

[11] Risley tried later on to convince Lord Curzon of the usefulness of the panchayats, but Curzon was not inclined to revive institutions which he considered to be dead and gone; see HDP, December 1903, No. 53-8.

[12] Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, No. 383 T.M., 17 June 1897; see also John Roy McLane, 'The Development of Nationalist Ideas and Tactics and the Politics of the Government of India, 1897-1905', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1961, pp. 270 ff.

[13] Gokhale to Morley, 9 May 1897, GP.

[14] Hirtzel Diary, January 1906, Hirtzel's summary of his talk with Morley at the time of Morley's accession to his new office.

[15] Hirtzel Diary, 4 July 1906 and 26 March 1908.

[16] See T. V. Parvate, *Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, Ahmedabad, 1959.

[17] Gokhale to Krishnaswami Iyer, 10 March 1906, GP.

[18] Gokhale, *Speeches*, 2nd edn., pp. 838 f.

[19] Gokhale to N. A. Dravid, 25 May 1906, GP.

[20] See Hirtzel Diary, 9 May 1906, also Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 171; on Royal Commission see Gokhale to N. A. Dravid, 6 July 1906, GP. and Hirtzel Diary, 12 August 1907.

[21] See Minto's note, HDP, October 1908, No. 116-48, Vol. I, p. 509.

[22] Hirtzel Diary, 3 April 1907; also Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 209.

[23] T. V. Parvate, *op. cit.*, p. 291, about Sinha's intention to resign over the Press Bill.

[24] Hirtzel Diary, 16 July 1907.

[25] Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 229.

[26] See Morley's handwritten note appended to the copy of Risley's article preserved in the India Office Library (P/V 323).

[27] Copy of a letter of Gokhale to Sir William Wedderburn, 15 November 1907. Morley Papers, India Office Library (hereinafter MP).

[28] Morley to Lieutenant-Governor Baker, 6 December 1907, and Baker to Morley, 23 January 1908, MP.

[29] Gokhale to Wedderburn, 15 November 1907, MP

[30] Risley to Morley, 30 April 1908, MP.

[31] Risley to Morley, 7 May 1908, MP.

[32] HDP, October 1908, No. 116-48, Vol. I, p. 509.

[33] Gokhale to Vamanrao Patwardhan, 23 July 1908, and 25 September 1908, GP; also Parvate, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

[34] See Gokhale, *Speeches*, 2nd edn., pp. 844 ff.; see also Files on Indian Councils Reforms, Proposals by Sir William Lee-Warner and T. Morrison, MP.

[35] HDP, February 1909, Nos. 205-44, Note of 5 January 1909, the Mohammedan paper referred to was the *Observer*, Lahore, of 23 December 1908.

[36] Gokhale to Sir Lawrence Jenkins, 29 January 1909, GP.

[37] See Risley's comments on resolutions that would probably be moved in reformed councils in Risley to Morley, 13 May 1909, MP.

[38] Hirtzel Diary, 25 April 1909; see also Morley, *Speeches on Indian Affairs*, Madras, n.d., pp. 174-5.

[39] HDP, February 1909, No. 205-44, p. 251, Morley's telegram of 12 February 1909; see also Hirtzel Diary, 19 April 1909.

[40] Risley to Morley, 13 May 1909, MP.

[41] HDP, December 1909, No. 70-162, p. 3.

[42] See Report of the 24th Indian National Congress, Lahore 1909.

[43] See Reports on Native Newspapers, Bombay, *Kesari*, 21 December 1909.

[44] See the notes of Minto and the members of his council in HDP, March 1910, No. 33-44.

[45] See HDP, July 1910, No. 5-32.

[46] Gokhale, *Speeches*, 2nd edn., p. 400.

[47] See the biographical note on Risley in *People of India*, 2nd edn., p. xv.

[48] Lord Willingdon to Gokhale, 26 January 1915, GP; see also Parvate, *op. cit.*, 392 ff. [49] *Ibid.*, p. 394.

[50] For a discussion of the irremovable executive and functional representation see K. T. Shah, *Federal Structure*, Bombay 1937, p. 521.

[51] See V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, *The Congress-League Scheme*, Allahabad, 1917.

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[56] See C. R. Das, National Convention Memoranda No. 2 of 1923.

[57] See Gandhi, *Young India*, 30 March 1921, and 29 June 1921; see also *Indian Annual Register*, 1936, Vol. II, p. 238.

[58] M. N. Roy, *Constitution of Free India—A Draft*, Delhi, 1944.

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3 / TRADITIONALISM AND SOCIALISM IN VIVEKANANDA'S THOUGHT

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

By the end of the nineteenth century Young Bengal had become disillusioned with earlier currents of thought and was looking for new inspirations. In three generational phases Bengal had passed through a stage of avid interest in Western ideas, and a period of synthesis and had finally reached a point where dissatisfaction with Western influence blended with a new interest in India's past. European critics who reflected the mood of the Fin de Siècle in their assessment of Western civilization and European Indologists who praised India's literature and philosophy provided a study in contrasts which had to have its effect on Indian readers. The cultural revival which was stimulated in this way found its expression first of all in a new quest for religious experience. The new generation was no longer satisfied with the high-minded philosophy of a Debendranath Tagore, but wanted to get in touch with the mainstream of Indian religion. A poet like Rabindranath Tagore found this mainstream in *Vaishnava* folk-religion and the songs of the Bauls, whose simple and touching melodies corresponded to his lyrical inclinations. The dynamic and fervent Narendranath Datta, who soon adopted the name Vivekananda, found his religious experience at the feet of the ecstatic saint Ramakrishna who gave him the strong conviction and the sense of mission which were characteristic of his work. In founding the Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda set an example to others who later on founded organizations such as the Servants of

India Society or the Servants of the People Society in order to provide bands of devoted workers who would prepare the ground for India's resurrection. In representing India at the World Parliament of Religions he showed how the complexes created by foreign rule and foreign prejudices could be overcome. In his speeches and writings he tried to break the hold of prejudice and custom at home and abroad. His style and his mode of thought were conditioned by his dynamic temperament, his ecstatic religious experience and the subtleties of Indian philosophy, and his influence on the minds of men was mainly due to the strange blend of these elements.

THE IMPACT OF VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE

In 1897 Vivekananda returned to India after having stayed in the West for four years. His success in the West had stirred the imagination of his Western educated countrymen. They were eager to listen to his message which reflected their own ambiguities and aspirations. His self-assured approach to the West gave them courage and hope, his bold proclamation of the values of Hinduism—as he saw it—gave a new meaning to Indian tradition. He voiced the feelings of the new Indian élite and for many years to come his ideas left their mark on the thought of Indian nationalists. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was himself deeply influenced by Vivekananda's thought, characterized this impact very well when he wrote in his *Discovery of India*:

> ... Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present ... he came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance. . . . He preached the monism of the Advaita philosophy of the Vedanta and was convinced that only this could be the future religion of thinking humanity. For the Vedanta was not only spiritual but rational and in harmony with scientific investigations of external nature. . . . The Vedanta ideal was of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature. ... He wanted to combine Western progress with India's spiritual background.[1]

Traditionalism, Vedanta monism as a source of solidarity, and

the quest for equality and freedom—these are the central themes of Vivekananda's thought. But these three themes are in fact one theme as a more detailed analysis will show.

TRADITIONALISM AND SOLIDARITY

Traditionalism is a phenomenon that can be observed in many nations in a transitional phase of cultural and political development. Tradition is a many splendoured thing, it encompasses a variety of social structures and ideas which are frequently contradictory. Traditionalism, however, is a conscious attempt at streamlining tradition so as to fit a particular need for a useful past. This need arises when a people wants to acquire a national identity and looks for some common denominator. This common denominator is usually found in a reconstructed tradition of social, cultural and religious solidarity. Therefore, traditionalism is first and foremost solidarity traditionalism, and national identity is seen as the essence of tradition as defined in these terms.

In order to serve its purpose traditionalism must be both flexible and discriminating, like a filter it must separate the desirable elements of tradition from those which should be rejected as accretions. The desirable elements have to be praised as pure and fundamental, the accretions are to be explained in terms of a corruption of the original purity. Vivekananda provides an excellent example of this method when he says:

> In matters of religious duty the Vedas are the only capable authority, all other scriptures are only valuable as far as they follow the Vedas. The authority extends to all ages, climes, and persons.... The Vedas are divided into Jnanakanda (knowledge portion) and Karmakanda (ritual portion). Social laws and customs being based on this Karmakanda have been changing and will continue to change. There has been a corruption of usage, and a degradation of Hinduism—split into sects....[3]

Here we have all the essential elements of traditionalism: the emphasis on the pure source of tradition, the discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral aspects of this tradition, the denunciation of corruption and of divisive tendencies, and the implicit call for the restoration of unity and solidarity.

However, traditionalism must not only be discriminating, it must also be accommodating and inclusive. Even if it is consciously selective it must claim to be in the mainstream of tradition and emphasize the continuity of the ancient heritage so as to win over the orthodox and encourage the timid who may fear that they have to give up their old belief. Vivekananda explains how one should deal with them:

> This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude....[3]

This inclusive traditionalism tries to establish a wider solidarity by pointing to a deeper one which exists already and which needs only to be realized in order to be achieved. In this way solidarity was both a process directed towards the future and an eternal quality to be discovered in the past. This double nature of solidarity traditionalism has its inherent problems. Traditionalists were often caught on the horns of a dilemma. They could not conceive of the achievement of solidarity as a task of the present and the future without denying the national identity which they believed to be a heritage of the past. They also found it difficult to account for conflict among the people of a common heritage as they had to emphasize harmony.

ASCRIPTIVE SOCIALISM AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The ideals of solidarity and social harmony which were cherished by traditionalists like Vivekananda could easily give rise to an ascriptive socialism, which stressed the inherent equality postulated by a philosophy of the identity of all life and the practice of renunciation and selfless service. Vivekananda did conceive of such an ascriptive socialism in no uncertain terms. He defined socialism in the following way:

> The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of individual freedom to the social supremacy is called socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is called individualism.[4]

And he applied this definition to Indian conditions when he asserted:

> Born in the caste the whole life must be lived according to caste regulations. In other words . . . the Western man is born individualistic, while the Hindu is socialistic, entirely socialistic.[5]

Of course, he also realized that the caste system did not exactly provide an ideal blueprint for a socialist society. Indeed, he once stated emphatically "all caste, either on the principle of birth or merit is bondage". But as a traditionalist he could not afford to simply denounce the caste system, he had to account for it. The way out of this dilemma was the raising of all castes to the level of the highest one and this was what Vivekananda advocated in his eloquent plea for a Brahmanization of Indian culture. He praised the Brahmin values of renunciation and service, and made the Brahmin appear to be the ideal socialist, who worked for the uplift of his fellow-men.

However, Vivekananda was not too sure of this harmonious process of gradual Brahmanization and occasionally proved to be a prophet of revolution, contradicting many of his traditionalist statements he ventured to predict the future course of events and asserted:

> Yet a time will come when there will be a rising of the Shudra class with their Shudrahood. That is to say not like the present when the Shudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaishyas or of the Kshatriyas, but a time will come when the Shudras of every country with their inborn Shudra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaishyas or Kshatriyas but remaining Shudras will gain absolute supremacy in every country.[6]

This was, no doubt, a striking vision of a proletarian revolution though it was expressed in terms of the Indian caste system. The reference to "Shudras of every country" indicated that Vivekananda was using the Indian caste terminology only metaphorically in this instance. He also did so when he once complained that India's Brahmins are now the foreign professors, its Kshatriyas the ruling Englishmen, and even its Vaishyas the English traders so that only the Shudraness—the beast-of-burdeness was left to the Indians themselves. In identifying all

Indians with the international brotherhood of oppressed Shudras he probably hoped that the proletarian revolution would also imply the liberation of India from foreign rule.

The Brahmanization of Indian culture as an evolutionary process and the revolutionary liberation of India posed a problem which Vivekananda could not solve by means of concrete historical analysis but for which he could only provide an explanation in the transcendental terms of Indian philosophy.

THE VEDANTIC FORMULA: EQUALITY AS SELF-REALIZATION

The pure monism of Vedanta philosophy enabled Vivekananda to reconcile the conflicting ideas of evolution and revolution by reducing them to problems of the individual soul and its self-realization. Salvation and the true spirit of equality can both be attained by this Vedantic self-realization which was the core of Vivekananda's message. This is how he put it:

> They speak of democracy, of the equality of all men these days. But how will a man know he is equal with all? He must have a clear mind.... He must pierce through the mass of superstitions. Then he will know that all perfections, all powers, are already within him, that these have not to be given to him by others. When he realizes that, he becomes free, that moment he achieves equality. He also realizes that everyone else is equally as perfect as he, and he does not have to exercise any power, physical, mental or moral over his brother. Then we can talk of equality, not until then.[7]

In these terms the Brahmanization of Indian culture and the Shudra revolution can be reconciled as everything depends on individual self-realization and insight. All potentialities are already within every individual soul. The Vedantic message thus becomes an equivalent to the traditionalism to which Vivekananda adhered in the social and cultural sphere. As a traditionalist Vivekananda looks to the eternal elements in the heritage of the past, as a Vedantic philosopher he emphasizes the potentialities which are common to all men and which only need to be realized. These eternal elements of the heritage of the past and the innate potentialities of all men must be in harmony with each other, all conflict will vanish if this eternal

heritage is separated from its later corruptions and accretions and if every man pierces through the mass of superstitions with his clear mind. Traditionalism, socialism and Vedanta philosophy thus form a coherent theme in Vivekananda's thought.

A PHILOSOPHY FOR THE INDIAN ELITE

Vivekananda's message was of crucial importance to the Indian élite of his time. A theory which establishes social harmony by insight is specifically suited to the intellectual needs of an élite which wants to liberate itself from foreign rule and cannot afford to pay attention to conflicts within its own society. Self-realization then implies the consciousness of one's own strength arising from an inherent solidarity with one's countrymen who are all equally suppressed by the foreign power. Self-realization means an assumption of the identity of the interests of all except for the foreign rulers who obstruct it. This theory gives legitimacy to élite leadership, as those who are closest to self-realization are not in conflict with others who have not yet achieved this goal, but are free to act according to the potentialities which they have realized in themselves.

Young Bengal was in need of such a theory. The Bengali élite belonged to a parasitical, pseudo-bourgeois class with a quasi-feudal economic base, but excluded from a participation in capitalist production by the colonial power. This élite was thus a product of an economic situation which was not of its own creation but had been fahsioned for it by the foreign rulers. Its ideas were derivative, its style of life was to some extent conditioned by an imitation of the foreign rulers. In this artificial setting the members of the élite were not confronted with any real resistance of the lower strata of Indian society. Believing themselves to be exploited by the foreign rulers they did not want to admit that they themselves were exploiting these lower strata. A philosophy of social harmony which suggested that there was a national solidarity of common interests served them well.

Vivekananda was not unaware of this attitude of his own class and in a flash of enlightening anger he criticized the *Bhadralok* (gentlemen) of his time, when he said:

> Travelling through various places these last ten years I have found the country full of social reform associations. But I do not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as 'gentlemen' have become and continue to be gentlemen.[8]

But Vivekananda provided these very same gentlemen with a philosophy which enhanced their self-esteem and their complacency. The traditionalist element of his thought with its urge for harmony and solidarity was stronger than the socialist and egalitarian aspirations which he asserted occasionally in very forceful terms, setting the style for that verbal radicalism which characterized the speeches of Indian leaders for many years to come. In trying to harmonize and traditionalize these radical aspirations by demanding the Brahmanization of Indian culture he conjured up an ascriptive socialism that could be used so as to avoid the issue of social conflict and its practical resolution.

Vivekananda's thought reflected in a most acute manner the predicament of Indian society under foreign rule. Faced with the many impediments to the emancipation of the Indian society he internalized this problem and hoped for a new dynamism resulting from self-realization. He carried the freedom struggle into the minds of men, but he also provided an excuse for its remaining there without leading to concrete and sustained action in the social world because his traditionalism led people to believe that the solidarity which they wanted to achieve was, in fact, their heritage, which they had only forgotten. His call for action lost much of its urgency because of the very method with which he wanted to make it more convincing.

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[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 373.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 488.
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[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 482.

NEHRU AND EARLY INDIAN SOCIALISM

THE CONNECTION OF Jawaharlal Nehru with the socialist movement in India cannot be described in institutional or ideological terms, because Nehru's political loyalties and doctrines were always highly personal. He was the enthusiastic agitator and the detached mentor who influenced a generation of Indian patriots and gave their thought a socialist tinge. This process may be analysed by looking at three aspects of Nehru's socialism. The first aspect is the element of Vedanta philosophy in Indian socialism, the message of Vivekananda, which influenced Nehru in his interpretation of the Brahmanical ideal of service and in his skilful use of socialism as an instrument of diagnosis and therapy. The second aspect is Nehru's role as a radical mediator who conjures up a new vision of the political development in the important decade of 1927-37. The third aspect is seen in the evolution of the economic programme of the Indian National Congress in those years of the intensive political agitation for national freedom.

With Nehru, socialism was more of a sentiment and an attitude than a system. His emotional commitment was stronger

* *Note on Interviews*: Several interviews with Indian political leaders have greatly helped the author in reconstructing this image of Nehru and Early Indian Socialism; first of all two interviews with Nehru in 1962, and furthermore discussions with E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, M. R. Masani, Y. B. Chavan, and many others.

than his intellectual convictions. But this also implied a constant quest for an Indian expression of socialist thought. Marxist *mantras* would not suffice. For socialism to be meaningful to India it ought to be related to some fundamental ideals of Indian life. This relation Nehru found in the Brahmanical tradition of service, in the spurning of the profit motive as a value which ranked very low in the scale of India's social values. The Brahmanization of Indian culture was most eloquently advocated by Swami Vivekananda,[1] who influenced Nehru in this respect. Nehru was aware of this influence and considered it to be one of the most important elements of his thought.[2] Like Gokhale, who once admitted that Vivekananda had voiced his own feelings,[3] Nehru was inspired by Vivekananda's vision of India's unity, by his emphasis on *karmayoga* as a means of redeeming the poverty-stricken people of India, and by his self-assured approach to the West. In a passage of his autobiography which in many ways reads like similar passages of Vivekananda's discourses, Nehru portrayed this attitude succinctly:

> Right through history the old Indian ideal did not glorify political and military triumph, and it looked down upon money and the professional money-making class. Honour and wealth did not go together, and honour was meant to go, at least in theory, to the men who served the community with little in the shape of financial reward.
>
> The old culture managed to live through many a fierce storm and tempest, but though it kept its outer form it lost its real content. Today it is fighting silently and desperately against a new and powerful opponent—the *bania* civilization of the capitalist West. It will succumb to this newcomer, for the West brings science, and science brings food for the hungry millions. But the West also brings an antidote to the evils of this cut-throat civilization—the principles of socialism, of co-operation, and service to the community for the common good. This is not so unlike the old Brahman ideal of service, but it means the brahmanization (not in the religious sense, of course) of all classes and groups and the abolition of class distinctions. It may be that when India puts on her new garment, as she must, for the old is torn and tattered, she will have it cut in this fashion, so as to make it conform both to present conditions and her old thought. The ideas she adopts must become racy to her soil.[4]

In this way socialism emerges as a means of cultural regeneration and the purity of the Brahmanical ideal will be revived

in the classless society. The Vedantic concept of self-realization, which was used by an earlier generation of militant nationalists in order to equate the quest for *moksha*[5] with national liberation, now suffused the new message of socialism so as to add a peculiarly Indian flavour to it. The dilemma of Marxist revolutionary doctrine, the definition and realization of class-consciousness, which led many of Marx's ideological heirs to a re-Hegelianization of their master's system, was obviated by the Vedantic element in Indian socialism, since the system of Vedanta was attuned to all subtle problems of consciousness.

In the Vedantic system, the diagnosis of the spiritual disease is at the same time its therapy. *Jnanayoga*, the contemplative method of self-realization, makes knowledge itself the means and the end of salvation. It is in keeping with this tradition that Nehru used socialism mainly as a means of analysis, hoping that this analysis itself would clear the fog of false consciousness and thus contribute to social and political progress. Many of his speeches sounded like verbal radicalism in the face of forces which he was neither able nor willing to subvert, and in many instances he actually developed a great skill of concealing a practical compromise behind a barrage of radical statements, which had the ring of sincerity. However, while a clever operator could hardly have maintained the ring of sincerity on such occasions, Nehru's faith in the ultimate truth of his assertions enabled him to reconcile the sincerity of his words with the art of the possible in his political actions. Socialist analysis also helped him to have a detached view of political decisions and to identify and classify the forces which he saw ranged against India's emancipation. By emphasizing the world-wide aspect of these forces he could always transcend the level of petty tactics of the national movement and refer to the grand strategic alignments and to the inevitable progress toward a socialist future.

His analysis of the international situation reinforced his striving for national unity. He did not think that the socialists could achieve any progress in isolation from the national movement, and he stressed in most speeches that socialism could be achieved only afer national independence. This was an additional

reason for restricting socialism during the freedom struggle to the field of diagnosis and postponing the therapy. But seen from the point of view of the identity of diagnosis and therapy, this was only a postponement of the final consummation. The socialist, due to his better insight, was bound to be the spearhead of the national movement. Therefore the cause of both socialism and of national liberation was best served by those who would strive for the one by working for the other.[6]

The identity of the socialist diagnosis with the quest for national unity was most obvious in Nehru's approach to the problem of communalism. To him Hindu and Muslim communalism were products of middle-class infighting utterly divorced from the consciousness of the Hindu and Muslim masses.[7] In this case diagnosis and therapy seemed to be most closely connected. If everybody would realize that economic interests were the one and only reason for communal jealousies, communalism would be deprived of its religious garb and thus appear as a non-entity, the *maya* of false consciousness, and national unity would be restored. This was also the line of reasoning which led him in later years to the equation: anti-communal = secular = egalitarian. An egalitarian society would serve as a stable foundation for a secular state and only the secular, national state could transcend the claims of communalism and prepare the ground for an egalitarian society.[8]

However, there are some inherent contradictions in Nehru's vision of national unity. He has not based his definition of this unity on purely economic terms, and he often referred to cultural values which are capable of arousing communal feelings even if treated in a secularized manner (his reference to "Brahmanization", which I have quoted earlier, is a case in point). Thus even his way of connecting socialism with the Hindu tradition may not appeal to Muslim socialists, who would rather relate socialism to the corporate ideal of the *millat*, which is altogether alien to Hindu thought.[9] Nehru's socialist diagnosis of the communal problem was therefore bound to be challenged and he blurred his own vision by oversimplifying the issue.

The relationship of the middle class to the masses, which was so crucial to Nehru's analysis of communalism, preoccupied his

mind in many respects, because it also affected his own role in national politics. Orthodox Marxist doctrine with its dialectical polarization does not provide a definite place for the middle class in its system. At the most this class is a transitory phenomenon which fades out of the picture with the intensification of the class struggle. The middling will have to join the one or the other. Nehru made very skilful use of this model, when analysing the psychology of the vacillating Indian bourgeoisie, who participates in the national freedom movement, but cannot be relied upon for any length of time. But he also admitted that the national leadership and even the leadership of the peasants' and labourers' organization had so far emerged only from this middle class, and that many of these leaders had proved to be of remarkable integrity, willing to sacrifice their interests and their lives.[10]

In the final resort he was unable to solve this problem theoretically and he restricted himself to a personal equation: a man who loved the Indian people and who was abundantly loved by them.

II

Nehru was in many respects the ideal type of the radical mediator, a kind of politician whom we encounter in many transitional societies, slightly alienated and detached but deeply in love with his country, a man who wants to transcend the limitations of his political environment both in terms of a new political vision and in a quest for untapped sources of power, and who must achieve in his own personality the emotional synthesis of the prevailing forces and the impact of modern trends.

Nehru was very well suited for this role. Even the date and place of his birth were very advantageous for his later career. He belonged to a province which emerged into the political limelight at the very moment when he started his political career; twenty years younger than Gandhi, he was the bright young man of the older leaders and the senior of the generation of young radicals who were born in the first years of this century.

Nehru's home province, the vast United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, a sprawling, disunited state, was an ideal breeding ground for agitational politics. Nehru as a Kashmir Brahmin belonged to a small minority which was intimately related to the vanished court culture of the Muslim rulers of this region, a minority which was socially respected but culturally marginal and was therefore doubly inclined to adapt to the Western impact, while maintaining a detached but profitable relationship with its environment. There was a dearth of leadership in this province, and in the early years of national politics the marginal minority of the Kashmir Brahmins dominated the scene. Respectable marginal minorities are usually rather moderate in their politics, and among the Kashmir Brahmins it was only the Nehru family that plunged into the more radical movement of the Gandhian era and thereby acquired almost a monopoly of radical leadership in this province. There were hardly any organizations which one had to capture in order to attain leadership in this province, but there was a vast store of inarticulate peasant populism which provided the small group of radical leaders with an enormous backdrop of potential unrest—an inexhaustible fund of goodwill, or should one say ill-will, which could be drawn upon so as to endorse any political programme. This vague populism accommodated a spectrum of leadership which would include the militancy of a radical Hindu like Purushottamdas Tandon as well as the secular socialism of Nehru.[11] A pronounced conflict between indigenous capitalists who financed the national movement, and radical politicians, could not arise in the United Provinces, since the radicals directed their attacks against the badly organized landlords; in fact, the combination of a city-financed national freedom movement with agrarian populism was an ideal solution for the nationalist businessmen as well as for the radical politicians, even though there were occasional doubts on both sides as to how long this partnership would last.

For Nehru this provincial background meant an easy acceptance of radical views and an assured access to national leadership. When he left India for Europe in 1926 he was already an all-India figure and a seasoned politician who would look

at the West in a different manner from the student who had left London in 1912.

A stay of almost two years in Europe gave Nehru a good deal of time to absorb new ideas and to place his political experiences in India in a world context. He participated in the Congress of the Oppressed Nations in Brussels and helped to start the League Against Imperialism; he also visited Moscow and was impressed by the achievements of the Soviet Union. The formative experience of U.P. radical leadership with its vague populism was now surcharged with the exhilarating air of socialist internationalism. Again, in spite of all the intellectual overtones, this was first of all an emotional stimulus for Nehru. In his report to the Indian National Congress, as whose delegate he attended the Brussels conference, there is very little of ideological comment, but many references which show how new vistas opened up before Nehru's eyes: the problems of the Latin Americans about which he had not known much before attending this conference, the Sanskrit names of the Indonesians —a striking symbol of India's cultural influence beyond the seas—the revolutionary fervour of the young Chinese delegates, the problem of Indian troops being used against the Chinese by the British, and the solidarity of British labour movements with the Chinese national movement.[12]

It is more by way of empathy than by means of ideological considerations that Nehru perceives a world on the march to socialism in those years of the European interlude. And it is this socialist empathy which enables him to communicate this feeling to the younger generation in India. Thus it comes naturally to him to avoid ideological jargon and to convey the message of socialism in terms of a personal appeal.

Popular radicalism, refined by the ennobling touch of internationalism, made Nehru an ideal national leader, but in the years after his return from Europe his socialist conscience was often in conflict with his claim to leadership. He was in office but not in power, as Gandhi put it,[13] and often he had to swallow his pride and endorse political decisions of which he disapproved. He believed that national unity and freedom could be achieved only if the unity of the national movement was

preserved and therefore he chose to abide by the party discipline. The older Congress leaders permitted him to preach socialism as his personal creed but prevented him from committing the Congress to a radical programme. This he accepted freely and whenever he spoke he openly stated these restrictions.[14] But it was frustrating for him that he frequently had to support in his official capacity certain measures and pacts which he had condemned previously. He had to break with the League Against Imperialism when they attacked his stand on the issue of Dominion Status.[15] He was unable to get the Congress constitution revised so as to admit radical representatives of trade unions and peasant organizations to the ranks of the All-India Congress Committee.[16] He was often forced to resort to equivocation or to adopt strange face-saving devices in order to have his say without breaking the party discipline. When he had to concede his final defeat over the issue of office acceptance under the Government of India Act of 1935, he wrote his speech for the convention of all newly elected Congress members of provincial legislatures, before the All-India Congress Committee voted on the crucial resolution. After announcing that the speech had been written before he could know the decision by which he would, of course, abide, he used this opportunity to launch a final attack against the idea of office acceptance, and in this way he avoided commenting on a resolution which he knew only too well would seal the fate of his policy.[17] But in spite of all these humiliating reverses he served the Congress as a general secretary and thrice as its president in this important decade. He paid the price of leadership, but was it worth paying so much for being in office and not in power? This question must be answered in the wider context of the political trends of that time.

In the years after his return from Europe Nehru missed no opportunity of exploring all avenues of radicalism with a view to spreading the message of socialism and to strengthening the national movement while giving it a leftist slant at the same time. He presided over many conferences of the newly founded Youth Leagues, he addressed the Kisan Sabhas (peasant organizations) and the Trade Union Congress. As a practical politician, he knew that it was neither possible nor perhaps

desirable to merge all these organizations with the national movement, but he wanted to achieve some degree of joint action and advocated some kind of affiliation of these organizations with the Congress, preferably by means of functional representation.[18] For this he could only work if he held high office in the Congress. He was also aware of the complete disarray of the forces on the left. The Communists held aloof from the national movement, because they were under orders from Moscow. Much of their strength had been sapped when the government arrested most of their prominent labour leaders. The labour movement was splitting up: Nehru had the doubtful privilege of presiding over the Trade Union Congress of 1929 which saw the withdrawal of the reformist right wing from the T.U.C., because this right wing was sick and tired of getting mixed up in the strikes organized by the revolutionary left.[19] Seen against this chaotic background Nehru's one-man campaign for socialism emerges as about the only consistent strand of socialist activity in those years.

As far as revolutionary potentialities were concerned, Nehru was quite sure that Gandhi and the Congress were the only force that could be relied upon. But he also knew that the Congress right wing was bound to lapse into halfheartedness after the end of a Gandhian campaign. The advance of fascism in Europe made him very apprehensive of similar developments in India. and from 1933 onward the connection between fascism and imperialism preoccupied his mind.[20] Through his persistent warnings most leftist nationalists were soon obsessed with the idea that the imperial power would strike a bargain with the Indian capitalists and thus detach the right wing from the national movement. Nehru was therefore even more determined than ever before to work for the unity of the Congress and to sacrifice his own convictions to party discipline in order to prevent a split.

Nehru spent most of the early 1930s in prison. At the same time many leaders of the younger generation made use of their stay in prison for analysing their political position and discussing new points of departure. Marxism of a more determined brand than Nehru's emotional socialism was bred in these prison days. Young Bengal found the way from "terrorist

individualism" to "disciplined communism".[21] At Nasik, Maharashtra, a group of socialists in their early thirties arrived at the conclusion that they should establish a truly socialist party as soon as they got out of jail. This party, the Congress Socialist Party, was founded in 1934 at Patna. The friend, philosopher and guide of the new party was Acharya Narendra Deva, a scholarly Marxist who was about Nehru's age, and thus about ten years senior to the group of founding fathers of the new party.[22]

Nehru was released from prison long after the new party was founded. Since his stay in prison had relieved him of the responsibility of participating in the establishment of the new party, he found it now less difficult to remain aloof from it while sympathizing with its programme. He included some of its members in the Working Committee of the Congress when he became the Congress president once more,[23] but he preferred to continue his individual crusade for socialism rather than identifying himself with the new party.

The Congress Socialist Party increased the leverage of the left wing in the Congress but it also heightened the apprehensions of the right wing and made it close its ranks. Nehru was apparently watching the trend of affairs in order to find out which of these two tendencies would assert itself more intensively.

The main issue was obviously the establishment of an alternative leadership in the Congress, but it was doubtful whether this aim could be achieved by the left wing in terms of an organized group like the Congress Socialist Party, or by means of a slow process of informal consolidation. M. N. Roy, who had been released from prison in 1936, advocated the latter method. Nehru's point of view was not entirely clear. He emphasized the analogy between the Congress Socialists and the extremists of pre-Gandhian days. Like the Moderates who seceded from the Congress and turned into the innocuous Liberal Party after 1919, the right wing of the Congress might shrink and isolate itself until it could be dispensed with.[24] But this vision of a decaying right wing did not tally with Nehru's apprehensions of the dangerous right wing which might enter into a fascist compact with the imperial power. These conflicting projections may explain Nehru's ambivalent attitude to-

wards the C.S.P. This was matched by an equally ambivalent attitude of the C.S.P. towards Nehru, who was their mentor but not a member of their party. Actually they left much of their work to him and trusted that he, as the Congress president, would accomplish more in the crusade for socialism than any of the party members. Sampurnanand complained in 1936 that the C.S.P. was hibernating, leaving its work to Nehru, who was not a member of the party and therefore could not speak for it.[25]

So it was once more Nehru who carried the message of socialism to the Indian people while the avowed representatives of socialism tried hard to keep up with him and often failed to match his efforts, even though they may have surpassed him in ideological rigour.

III

The most important of Nehru's socialist achievements was undoubtedly his success in getting the Congress to adopt a rudimentary economic programme at a fairly early stage. This programme was by no means revolutionary, but when independence was achieved, these early commitments had almost acquired the dignity of an ancient heritage. Nehru's main difficulty was to convince Gandhi of the necessity of such a programme, because Gandhi disliked generalities unless they could be linked with an immediate plan of action. However, as Gandhi had listed eleven points in 1929 which he considered to be "the substance of independence", Nehru could seize upon these points and elaborate a catalogue of fundamental and economic rights which was adopted by the session of the Indian National Congress at Karachi in 1931.

Gandhi's eleven points were carefully selected planks of an agitational platform on which "the classes and the masses" could unite. The important economic points of Gandhi's demands were: the devaluation of the rupee from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d.; the reduction of the land revenue by 50 per cent; the abolition of the salt tax; the reduction of the expenses for the army by 50 per cent; a cut in the salaries of the higher ranks of the civil service; and a protective tariff on imported textiles.[26]

Most of these points corresponded to the demands of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, whose spokesman, G. D. Birla, endorsed Gandhi's views.[27] There was no socialism in this "substance of independence". The very cautiously phrased demands of the Karachi resolution were therefore a definite advance. In particular the right of a living wage, the introduction of an inheritance tax and of a graduated income-tax on agricultural income, rent reduction, and state ownership or control of basic industries, were demands which reflected socialist influence. These demands were amalgamated with the list of fundamental rights contained in the Nehru Report of 1928 and with Gandhi's eleven points.[28] In this way the whole list came to be known as a catalogue of fundamental rights, although only some of the points correspond to fundamental rights in the constitutional sense of the term. The emphasis on fundamental rights was also supposed to assure the minorities and act as an antidote to communal apprehensions. As a mildly socialist and decidedly anti-communal programme the Karachi resolution became the basis of the Congress election manifesto of 1936[29] and the main contribution of Indian nationalism to the Indian Constitution of 1950, which otherwise retained most of the paragraphs of the Government of India Act of 1935. For the purposes of the constitution the heterogeneous catalogue had to be divided into justiciable and non-justiciable rights, the latter being called directive principles of state policy.[30] Thus the Karachi resolution with all its shortcomings was a milestone on the way of India's political development.

Compared with the economic programme of the Congress Socialist Party the Karachi resolution appears, of course, rather insipid. The Congress Socialists demanded the transfer of power to the producing masses, socialization of all key industries with a view to the progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange, the state monopoly of foreign trade, the elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters, the encouragement of co-operative and collective farming by the state, and the liquidation of debts owned by peasants and workers. In order to create the political conditions for this programme they de-

manded adult franchise on a functional basis and a constituent assembly, to be convened after the capture of power and elected by local committees of deputies of workers, peasants and other exploited classes.[31] In many of these points they were sure of Nehru's support, as Nehru himself constantly emphasized the need of a constituent assembly based on adult franchise and as he was also in favour of functional representation But he felt that it was more important to induce the vast Congress organization to adopt an economic point of view than to enhance the ideological integrity of a small left-wing group.

The introduction of an economic element into the mainstream of Congress nationalism was a rather frustrating endeavour, because the rank and file of the members and even many of the leaders had no idea of economic affairs and were satisfied with old slogans like "Drain of Wealth" and other simple theories which reduced economic exploitation to something that was exclusively practised by the foreign colonial power. They were also not very attentive as to the content of general resolutions and passed them without giving much thought to them. From the time of his return to India in 1927, Nehru noticed that he could get many radical resolutions passed which were not understood by those who adopted them. Often he found that ideas which had been embodied in earlier resolutions were vigorously opposed at a later date. As early as 1929 the All-India Congress Committee had stated:

> In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of India but also to the economic structure of the society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities.

But when Nehru spoke of revolutionary changes in 1936 in his address as Congress president at the Lucknow session, many people thought that he was introducing dangerous new ideas.[32] But in spite of these experiences, Nehru felt that he could register some progress; the Congress was not socialistic but it

had ceased to be an organization thinking in political terms only and ignoring economic issues, and now conducted enquiries into peasant grievances and worked on an agrarian programme. So the many years of half-understood propaganda and the scores of absent-mindedly adopted resolutions did not seem to be altogether wasted. The main question which Nehru had to answer again and again was, of course, why there should be any discussion about economic matters before the achievement of political independence, because such discussion would only split the ranks of the nationalists and create confusion. Nehru's attitude toward this question was ambivalent. In his answers he shifted his emphasis from time to time. In 1933 when he wrote his famous article "Whither India?" he pointed out that nationalism in Asia was appearing now in a socialist garb, and that the national struggle for political freedom was slowly turning into a social struggle for economic freedom. He concluded that because of the world situation some nations in Asia might achieve political and social emancipation simultaneously. In later years he stressed once more the primacy of political independence and did not emphasize the idea of simultaneous emancipation in the political and economic spheres. Socialism was seen as a corrective of the political struggle, but not as its driving force: "The socialist state may be a dream of the distant future", but "socialism is a beacon light of the present, lighting up the path which we have to tread." [33]

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Part 2 / AGITATION AND CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

I REFORM AND REPRESSION, 1907-1910: THE DILEMMA OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

CONFRONTED WITH a rising tide of national aspirations in India and a liberal Parliament at home the colonial rulers had to find new ways of maintaining their power. They designed constitutional reforms so as to disperse and mollify the forces of unrest and to associate such elements of Indian society with the colonial government which would help to stem the tide of national aspirations. At the same time they armed themselves with repressive measures which were supposed to "frighten the waverers".[1] However, there was a basic dilemma in this combination of reform and repression: the forces which were dispersed and isolated by the reforms were rallied by the repressive challenge, and the secret sympathies of the "frightened waverers" were bound to be with the extremist nationalists who had the courage of their convictions.

Rigorous centralization had made the British-Indian government formidable and efficient but also very vulnerable, because the rising forces of nationalism were encouraged by the very structure of the state to flow into the same unitarian mould. At the same time centralization restricted the influence and the discretionary powers of the "man on the spot", and the government lost touch with grassroot-politics. The "microscopic minority" of the educated class, however, had gained more and more knowledge of local as well as of national affairs, and had thereby enhanced its influence. But the British rulers held that the educated class represented nobody but themselves. The colonial apprentices did not know how to undo

the spell that they had cast when they found themselves surrounded by those gentlemen "Indian in blood, but English in taste" whom Macaulay's magic formula had produced and they deeply resented the aspirations of this new élite.

In order to reduce its own vulnerability the Government of India pursued a policy of decentralization and devolution of executive power combined with a diversification of the non-official element in the legislatures. This diversification was meant to associate with the government the "natural" leaders of the people of a traditional character, and, therefore, of conservative inclinations, in order to balance the "artificial" radical leadership of the educated class. In assuming that such "natural" leadership still existed in India the colonial rulers showed rather romantic tendencies, and it was left to the "man on the spot" to disillusion the higher authorities by pointing out that under British rule the power of the big landholders had been reduced to that of "a rent collecting machine",[2] and that "a Tahsildar wields, as the representative of the paramount power, greater authority than a territorial magnate with an income of a lakh of rupees a year."[3]

The liberal Secretary of State, John Morley, insisted on the application of the elective principle to the extension of constitutional reforms and, therefore, the Government of India could not arrive at the desired representation of interests by nominating suitable members of the Councils.

The principle of territorial representation and even the elective principle itself remained a crucial issue throughout the preparation of the reforms. In his various public utterances Lord Morley always tried to keep up the appearance of a harmonious unanimity between himself and the Viceroy.[4] Behind the scenes, however, the Government of India put up a fight in order to defeat Morley's attempt to salvage the principle of territorial representation with his scheme of electoral colleges, while Morley had to protest against last minute attempts of the Government of India to pervert the elective principle by the continuation of the old method of "nomination upon election."

In the course of this battle Lord Minto was apprehensive of deviating opinions in his own camp, particularly if they came

from the influential governors of the presidencies, Madras and Bombay, because he feared that such opinions might be taken up immediately by the liberal India-lobby in the House of Commons.

The Governor of Madras, for instance, had his own ideas about the proposed Provincial Advisory Councils. These advisory councils were purely deliberative bodies according to the original reform proposals. They were not supposed to supersede the legislative councils, but they were intended to provide additional facilities for discussion and consultation. Their character was rather ambiguous and lent itself to diverse interpretations. Some of the bureaucrats may have welcomed these councils with a view to using them for consultation only and to set them up against the legislative councils. The educated class, therefore, feared that these councils would be used to stultify their aspirations.[5] The Governor of Madras thought of the large deliberative council which by that time had been in existence in the native state of Mysore for a number of years. This Mysore council consisted of a large number of peasant representatives and contained hardly any oppositional elements of the educated class. Therefore the Government of Madras recommended the establishment of such a council in their despatch to the Government of India. Later on, however, the Governor had second thoughts about this matter. He feared that such an advisory council of an elective nature could easily become a platform for "Congress Vakils" rather than a meeting ground of docile ryots. Lord Minto was very glad to note these second thoughts of the Governor of Madras and he wrote to him:

> Personally my object has been in the proposed reforms to secure the representation of landed proprietors and of those who have a stake in the country, and of communities. I have never been enthusiastic over Provincial Advisory Councils . . . I was surprised to find the strong support they met with in official circles here. What I am afraid of is that when our final proposals go home an attempt may be made to enlarge them on a more representative basis to meet the views of the Indian extremists, who are at home accepted as patriots, and of the present House of Commons.[6]

In keeping with this point of view Minto worked out his scheme of separate electorates for the Muslims. Morley, however,

in his despatch of November 27, 1908, readily shelved the plan for advisory councils, but made elaborate counter-proposals as far as communal electorates were concerned.[7] His scheme of electoral colleges would have guaranteed a fixed percentage of Muslim representatives elected by general electorates. It was therefore welcomed by the Indian National Congress at its session in December 1908. But the Government of India was dead set against this scheme. A circular letter, drafted by Sir H. H. Risley, was sent to the provincial governments, and in a despatch of February 1909, the Government of India could triumphantly tell Morley that his scheme of electoral colleges had been universally condemned.[8] However, before this universal condemnation was achieved there were some anxious moments for Lord Minto, because Sir George Clarke, the Governor of Bombay, seemed to have taken a fancy for Morley's scheme,[9] and Lord Minto feared that Sir George might find some workable solution for Morley's scheme by basing it on the municipalities. Risley, who was sure that all the other provincial governments would reject Morley's scheme noted:

> We can then make out an overwhelming case in favour of communal representation as proposed in our despatch.[10]

And Minto added impatiently: "We cannot allow Sir George Clarke to dictate a machinery to us." [11]

A few days later, however, Sir George Clarke sent a telegram to Lord Minto in which he pointed out:

> I feel strongly that we should recognize the Mohammedans as a community. This is already done to some extent as we do (secretly) favour Mohammedans in the matter of appointments whenever a promising candidate presents himself.[12]

Thus unanimity was achieved in India while Morley at home still believed that some variation or other of his scheme might be acceptable even to the Muslims. On January 27, 1909 he addressed a Muslim deputation at the India Office [13] and suggested among other things an election by separate electorates to local boards which would then send representatives to the legislative council, or direct communal elections to an electoral

college which would send a proportionate group of representatives to the legislative council. However, he assured the Muslims that even entirely separate electorates were not strictly ruled out by the proposals made in his despatch. He also told the deputation that the Bill was ready and that he would submit it to Parliament as soon as possible.[14] On February 8, 1909, he received the telegram from the Viceroy in which he was informed that his scheme of electoral colleges had been universally condemned, it was further stated that the Government of India disapproved of mere elections, the candidates should be nominated so that undesirable though elected candidates could be kept out.[15] With regard to this latter point Morley decided to stick to his guns and he wired back on February 12 indicating his strong disagreement and insisting on the right of the elected candidates to take their seats without further restrictions.[16] But as far as the electoral colleges were concerned, Morley admitted his defeat and called his own proposals "ambiguous".[17]

In this way the principle of territorial representation was defeated by the principle of separate communal electorates. The Government of India was all along eager to prove that the representation by "interests" was by no means a novel departure and the territorial representation had never existed under the previous reforms. Sir H. H. Risley delved into the old files in order to vindicate this point:

> We are now told by the advanced party that territorial representation has been in force in India since 1893, and we are charged with introducing for the first time the idea of representation by interests in order to set class against class and retard national unification and progress. Sir Charles Crossthwaite's draft shows how far this allegation is from the truth. It is perfectly clear that the Municipalities and District Boards which are now described as embodying the European principles of territorial representation were introduced into the Government of India's scheme in order to afford a means of representing the urban and rural classes respectively. No doubt the plan failed, both sets of bodies have elected middle class pleaders and not the people they were intended to elect.[18]

The educated class could not fail to notice that this time the Government of India had taken better care to see that the electorates would be formed in such a way as "to elect the

people they were intended to elect." The enthusiasm, which prevailed after Morley's proposals had been published at the time of the Congress of 1908, changed into resentment after the regulations of the Government of India became known.[19]

The Government of India had realised its aim of a diversification of "interests" in the legislative councils. Simultaneously the Decentralization Commission tried to find out ways and means of administrative devolution. Both these measures were intended to reduce the vulnerability of the central government and to disperse the sources of friction and opposition. However, at the same time the government found it necessary to arm itself with a number of repressive laws.[20] The old policy of deporting political leaders without trial under the ancient regulations of 1818 proved to be both insufficient and inconvenient, because it would lead to embarrassing questions in the British Parliament. Moreover, the unrest was so widespread and deepseated that the removal of a few leaders would often be of no avail. Sir H. H. Risley stated:

> Hindu mythology, ancient and modern history, and more especially the European literature of revolution are ransacked to furnish examples that justify revolt . . . the side of the Government is feebly represented by a few inconspicuous papers which as a rule are not read by the persons whose minds are prejudiced by the attack. Sedition has the monopoly of its audience and that audience is large and increasing daily. . . .[21]

But the repressive legislation which was supposed to remedy the situation was central legislation and attracted nation-wide attention. The repressive legislation thus served as a focal point of public opinion at the very moment when representation by interests and administrative decentralization were supposed to diffuse agitation and opposition. Furthermore the repressive legislation discredited the Moderates who were willing to cooperate with the government in order to make the constitutional reforms a success.

The Government of India was in a difficult position. They had to pay attention to adverse criticism in the House of Commons, where the liberal India lobby would be prepared to ask questions about each and every political prisoner, while the

conservative opposition would advise that under the prevailing circumstances no reforms should be granted to India. The Government of India also suffered from a lack of accurate information about the extent and the nature of revolutionary unrest. Lord Minto noted in despair: "Do we know anything of the physical force party? Do we know their leaders . . . As far as I can judge the Government of India knows practically nothing. . . ."[22]

The colonial rulers were very ill at ease in 1910 when there was a high tide of political crime, a vigilant Parliament at home, and a reformed council in India. The detention of nine Bengali leaders had attracted particular attention. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal recommended their further detention[23] and later on submitted an additional list of 53 men who should be deported in the interest of law and order.[24] These 53 men belonged mostly to the generation of Aurobindo and Gandhi (i.e. they were born around the year 1870), a generation that had grown up as "angry young men" and that had little in common with the older Moderate leaders.

The Government of India, however, had come to the conclusion that the policy of deportation had failed, and therefore the Viceroy did not permit the deportation of these 53 men and also ordered the release of the nine detenus. But this was done only after the elections to the reformed council were over so that the nine Bengal leaders were unable to contest the elections.

The motivations for this new policy were debated within the Government of India.[25] One member of the government felt that the Viceroy had succumbed to pressure from the liberal home government and that this implied a humiliation of the Government of India. Lord Minto held that this contention was not justified and that he had been most careful to avoid this very position of humiliation of the Government of India at the hands of the home government. He stated that he had gained his point with the Secretary of State that the detenus should be released after the elections to the reformed councils. He also pointed out that the release of the detenus made a favourable impression on the reformed council, the council being prepared to pass a repressive measure in which the government were very much interested. The Viceroy was also aware of the

fact that a deputation backed by influential Muslim support was under way to ask for the release of the detenus.

In commenting further on the release of the detenus Lord Minto, however, conceded that he was very much aware of the mounting pressure at home which came first of all from the Labour Party on the support of which the liberal home government had to rely. He knew that if the Government of India would be overruled in a matter of internal administration out of deference to the position of political parties in England British power in India would suffer. He was, therefore, wise enough to forestall such dangerous consequences by a well timed release of the detenus.

However, the policy of deportation had anyhow proved to be a failure as a measure for the repression of widespread unrest. The Government of India decided that it would be better to perfect the repression of the symptoms of unrest, i.e., seditious meetings, the seditious press and the schools set up by the national education movement.[26] But even in such cases the Government of India had to watch its step. When Aurobindo was prosecuted for a seditious article "To my countrymen" which had been published in his paper *Karmayogin*, the Secretary of State telegraphed for a full copy of the article, because he suspected that the article might prove to be a rather weak foundation for the prosecution.[27]

The action against certain schools of the national education movement was not such a difficult problem, first of all if it could be shown that the schools had set "seditious question papers" or had prescribed seditious text-books. Thus some national schools were proscribed as unlawful association.[28] But the national education movement as a whole could not be attacked that easily, because it was liberally endowed and, its central organs were under Moderate leadership. Indeed, the co-operation of Moderates and Extremists in the national education movement irritated the Government of India considerably, because in all other fields of activity the government had been able to drive a wedge between the Moderates and the Nationalists. The policy of driving a wedge between Moderates and Nationalists was also applied in the "Hindu Punch" defamation case. This paper had attacked the Moderate leader

G. K. Gokhale and the Government of India stated with regard to this case : "We have often been charged with deserting our friends, here we shall come forward in defence of our most effective critic." [29]

For the time being this policy was highly successful and much of the energy of the nationalists was diverted into the channels of in-fighting between Extremists and Moderates. Gokhale who had once been a universally respected national leader became the object of bitter invectives in the extremist press.[30]

Party politics at home and the national awakening in India put the Government of India to a severe test. The old autocratic methods were challenged in the House of Commons and in the nationalist press in India. Therefore, the Government of India resorted in this era of reform and repression more and more to a policy of manipulation of "interests" at home as well as in India. Constitutional reform, administrative decentralization and repressive legislation were made to serve the purpose of a manipulative maintenance of power. Lord Curzon had cherished the ideal of social and administrative efficiency and had antagonized people in India as well as in England. Lord Minto was more successful because he was able to gauge the trends of the time and in manipulating these trends he could give them a twist which made the political developments more amenable to his influence. He kept the Secretary of State on his right side without intending to adhere to the liberal principles of the political philosopher John Morley. He left to India the legacy of separate communal electorates, but this twist which he gave to Indian constitutional reforms became a Gordian knot only due to the subsequent Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which built responsible government on the unsuitable foundations of the Morley-Minto Reforms.

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THE PUNJAB PRESS AND NON-COOPERATION IN 1920

THE DEVELOPMENTS from the Amritsar Congress of 1919 to the Nagpur Congress of 1920 encompassed the most striking changes in the conduct of national politics in India. In retrospect this beginning of a new era assumes the character of a necessary and inevitable step in the evolution of the Indian freedom movement. To the contemporary observer, however, this was a period of suspense.

The heartsearching and the fluctuations of political opinion are mirrored in the press of this period. In this time of rapid transition when the masses were drawn into the current of national agitation, the press was not always very representative of public opinion, because it was edited by men whose ideas had been formed during the preceding epoch of the national movement. The political reforms granted in the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme meant to many of these editors and political leaders the fulfilment of a good deal of the political demands made in the preceding decades. Nevertheless most of these editors tried their best to portray the developments of this fateful year. Their editorial statements reflected the varying phases of the nationalist dilemma as it presented itself to the educated middle class at that time.

The Punjab press of this year is of special interest, because, the Punjab was one of the storm centres of the political developments after the first world war. Furthermore the Punjab had been since the days of the co-operation between Lal, Bal and Pal (Lala Lajpatrai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal)

a province with a nationalist tradition of its own. Lala Lajpatrai returned to India and to his home province in 1920. He regained his hold on the political opinion of Lahore and played a crucial role in the criticism and final acceptance of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation programme.

His Urdu Daily *Bande Mataram* was paralleled in circulation (about 5,000 copies) only by the English Daily *Tribune*, edited by K. N. Roy who stood for a mellowed extremism like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta. Next to these two most important nationalist papers of the Hindu upper and middle classes of the Punjab there were a number of minor Urdu dailies and weeklies which represented a moderately nationalist point of view. The Sikh papers took a cautious and reticent line, and the Muslim papers were pre-occupied with the Khilafat issue, though some of them warned against the consequences of agitation and predicted an early eclipse of the Hindu-Muslim unity which had been achieved by means of the Khilafat agitation.

The Punjab was at that time politically not very well organized, and even the tragedy of Jallianwalla Bagh could be attributed to a lack of articulation and organization. There was a Provincial Congress Committee but District and Tahsil Committees did not exist. It was suggested that the Punjab delegates to the Amritsar Congress should put the political organization of the province on a sounder footing.[1] The social cleavages in the Punjab continued to be of major importance for the political developments. Ever since the Punjab Land Alienation Act had been passed, the Hindu middle classes felt that they had been discriminated against, while the rural Muslim and Hindu Jat population thought that the Act had bestowed not only economic benefits, but even social distinctions upon them.[2] A subsequent Insolvency Act made it harder for the creditor to recover loans from the debtor, and the Hindu moneylenders drifted into the cities in order to take up urban trades and professions. However, new avenues of employment were difficult to find. Shopkeepers felt the keen competition of cooperative trading which was encouraged by the government, and the communal quotas for admission to the government services operated also against the educationally more advanced

Hindu middle class. Discontent and radical political opinions found their exponents therefore mostly among the members of the Hindu middle class.[3] The Amritsar Congress revitalized the political life of the Punjab.[4] However, the basic dilemma of national politics also emerged clearly in the discussion of the results of this Congress. The *Tribune* stated: [5]

> So long as the problem before us was that of wresting power from a bureaucracy alien to all of us, perhaps the strongest incentive to unity was afforded by our very opposition to that bureaucracy. Now this incentive must cease more and more to be the determining factor of Indian unity. . . ."

Among the nationalists there was a feeling that only continued agitation could prevent the whittling down of the reforms and could force the British to grant further reforms, alhough the press of the landholders claimed that the reforms were not a fruit of agitation but had been achieved by the loyal services of the British Indian army during the war, an army which had been recruited to a great extent from the Punjab peasants.[6]

Unity and progress depended on agitation. A demobilization of the national movement, a degradation of the Congress to the role of one party among others would have been a boon to the bureaucracy.[7] However, if the reforms had to be worked an obstructionist attitude seemed to be detrimental.[8] But agitation without obstruction was a contradiction in terms. What should be the further programme of agitation? This was the dilemma which became more pronounced as time went by.

High prices and the Bolshevik menace beyond the northern borders were much discussed and created a spirit of unrest in the country.[9] The unsatisfactory rules framed for the implementation of the reform scheme, first of all the inadequate representation of urban interest and the residential qualification which prevented urban residents from being elected by rural constituencies greatly disillusioned the Hindu middle class and the nationalist papers reflected this disappointment.[10]

The striking contrast between the Congress Sub-Committee Report on the Punjab martial law period, circulated in April, and the Hunter Committee Report published in May added to

the general discontent, and highlighted the callousness of the British government.[11] Liberal contributions to the Jallianwalla Bagh monument from among the poorest of the population indicated the trend of public opinion in the Punjab.[12]

In April Lala Lajpatrai returned to India and in May he started editing the influential Urdu Daily *Bande Mataram* of Lahore. He advocated the Khilafat agitation and gave qualified support to Gandhi's programme of Non-Cooperation.[13] He advised the Muslim leaders who had not yet descended into the arena to join the agitation and to select those points of Gandhi's programme which they may find practicable.[14] But soon after giving this advice he expressed doubts as to whether Hindus and Muslims had enough moral courage to act upon Gandhi's programme.[15]

After the publication of the Hunter Report Lajpatrai wrote that it was incompatible with the self-respect of the Punjabis to co-operate with the executors of the Punjab martial law in the reformed councils. He, therefore, recommended a boycott of the elections and of the councils. He even suggested that the voters should surrender their votes to a Punjab Defence Committee which should see to it that every candidate who did not agree with the decisions of the Congress would be defeated.[16]

The *Tribune* disagreed with him on this point, and contended that non-cooperation was bound to prove a retarding factor and a disintegrating rather than a unifying force.[17] Nevertheless the *Tribune* gave Lala Latpatrai an opportunity to explain his views in their columns. In this letter Lajpatrai pointed out, that the Government of India and the Secretary of State were engaged in undoing what they had promised by the reform scheme. He also stressed that the European civil servants had a much stronger position under the reform scheme than ever before and that the bureacracy was determined to defeat the reforms while the Secretary of State had placed them in a position to do so.[18] In his own paper *Bande Mataram* Lajpatrai wrote at about the same time that non-cooperation was the only weapon and that he regretted that the Moderates were opposed to it and that the Nationalists remained in a state of uncertainty.[19] Three other Urdu dailies recommended non-cooperation, and the *Vedic Magazine* for July endorsed Lajpatrai's

views.[20] The secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, Lala Govind Ram, however, disagreed with both Lajpatrai's and Gandhi's reasons for non-cooperation. In a letter published in *Bande Mataram* he pointed out that it was not very likely that one of the martial law officers would be on the reformed council, and consequently Lajpatrai's argument did not convince him. "Gandhi preaches non-cooperation because of the Khilafat wrong, but the Indians do not want to do anything for the British government in the councils; they have to do their own work there." [21]

A new factor was introduced into the debate by the Secretary of State's announcement, that Punjab martial law prisoners had been released but not pardoned, i.e. that they were disqualified from standing for elections under the reform scheme. Since this meant practically the exclusion of all political leaders of the Punjab from the councils, those papers that had been hitherto for the working of the reforms like the *Tribune* and *Desh* strongly condemned this announcement, and came closer to the views of Lajpatrai who had advocated the boycott of the councils.[22] At this juncture the special Congress met in Calcutta. It was obvious even to the contemporary observer that this Congress marked the beginning of a new epoch, and the *Tribune* commented wistfully: [23]

> It is not for men who have spent the best part of their lives in awakening the public judgement and the public consciousness in educating public opinion and increasing the strength, the intensity and the volume of public life in India to complain that the public so awakened . . . has outgrown their teaching, that the lead of the national movement has passed out of their hands. . . .

Nevertheless, the resolution on non-cooperation was subjected to procedural and substantial criticism by the nationalist press. The *Tribune* pointed out, that "the momentous resolution was adopted by less than a third of the total number of the registered delegates, themselves without any clear and definite mandate from their constituents on the subject of that programme." [24]

And *Bande Mataram* remarked: ". . . the resolution cannot be said to be the country's decision." [25] *Desh* wrote: "This re-

solution is either the forerunner of important events or of extremely ruinous results."[26] Both *Tribune* and *Bande Mataram* however came to the conclusion that they should respect the present resolution for the same reason as they would want others to respect a possible reversion of the resolution by the next Congress.[27]

This conclusion did not settle the affair. On returning from the special Congress, Lala Lajpatrai stated in an interview with the *Tribune* that everybody should boycott the councils because this was demanded in the resolution. The *Tribune* disagreed and said that the resolution was a recommendation and not a mandate. They found a justification for this opinion in Lajpatrai's own view that the other important parts of the resolution were not immediately binding upon any one.[28]

Lajpatrai published in his paper *Bande Mataram* an appeal entitled "My message to the people of the Punjab" in which he once more strongly advocated the boycott of the councils without stressing the other points of the non-cooperation resolution.[29] A few days later in a letter to the *Tribune* he reasserted his view that the points of the resolution relating to the boycott of the councils stood on a different footing than those points referring to the boycott of schools and law-courts.[30] For making these distinctions between different kinds of boycotts Lajpatrai came in for a good deal of criticism, and one paper remarked:[31]

> . . . . the people of the Punjab were ready to carry into effect the complete Congress programme of non-cooperation. But the province has been thrown into suspense by the popular leaders, especially Lala Lapatrai.

The *Vedic Magazine* for October wrote:

> . . . . We must register our emphatic protest against the attempt of Lala Lajpatrai, who declared in his concluding speech at the Calcutta Congress that everybody should try to make non-cooperation a success, to whittle down the Congress resolution.

In the meantime the non-cooperation movement had gained so much popular support that one of the Sikh papers, the *Khalsa Akhbar* felt constrained to remark:

. . . . Will the Sikhs side with the authorities and oppose 29 crores of their brothers? They committed a serious mistake in 1857 but the Hindus and Mohammedans have overlooked it. A new era of national unity has now set in and the Sikhs should side with their fellow countrymen in the matter of non-cooperation. The prestige of the present ruling party is daily on the decrease, while the Hindu-Muslim influence is increasing. If the Sikhs stand aloof from the Hindus and Mohammedans at this juncture they will have to suffer the consequences for centuries to come. . . .

The nationalist papers, however, adopted an even more critical attitude towards certain aspects of the non-cooperation movement when Gandhi appealed to the students of Aligarh University to withdraw from their studies. The boycott of educational institutions was the least popular point of the non-cooperation programme as far as the Hindu middle class leaders of the Punjab were concerned, and Gandhi's early success in this particular issue added to their apprehensions.[33] But it was obvious that the leaders of the older nationalist school of thought were fighting a rear-guard battle. The *Tribune* voiced the complaints of this group:[34]

. . . . some of us have come to believe in non-cooperation as a sort of panacea . . . . those who do not believe in it in that sense though accepting it as a legitimate and useful instrument find themselves absolutely paralysed. . .

This statement resembles the resentful lines of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* paraphrasing the attitude of the typical non-cooperator of the day:[35]

Are you a whole-hogger? If so you are a non-cooperator. Do you contend that some of the items in the programme are calculated to do more harm to the people than to the bureaucracy? Well, damn you, you are no non-cooperator but a renegade.

The varied reception of the different points of the non-cooperation programme also affected the Hindu-Muslim unity. Suspicion had never completely subsided, and the *Vedic Magazine* spoke of "a lurking fear that the Hindu-Muslim unity is but a passing phase, and that the Hindus will have to yield

yet some more ground as they have been doing so long to the detriment of their own interests.[36]

On the other hand the *Aftab* predicted even in January 1920 that "the present Hindu-Muslim unity will disappear in 1921, and that self-government will prove inauspicious to the Muslims." [37]

Towards the end of 1920 these doubts and apprehensions became more concrete. One Muslim paper stated:[38]

> The Hindus . . . made swaraj part of the Khilafat agitation and subsequently separated this question from that of swaraj. And now Hindu newspapers make absolutely no mention of the Khilafat and speak only of swaraj.

Vakil pointed out, that non-cooperation had dealt a severe blow to Muslim institutions of education, and that Muslims had surpassed the Hindus in closing down schools while the Hindus have been very careful in stepping into the arena.[39] The *Gulzar-i-Hind* added to this, that the Hindus had attained positions of influence under the British, while the Muslim element was exceedingly small in government departments, and this was why the Muslims were poor. They had just begun to aspire to the honour and position which Hindus had been enjoying for the past two generations.[40] Counter-allegations by the Hindu press referred mostly to the inadequate response of the Muslims to the programme of the boycott of the councils. *Bande Mataram* asked: "Hindus have almost all given up standing for elections, but what about the prominent Muslims?" [41]

In November and December the circulation of a petition to outlaw the killing of cows aggravated the tensions. In the course of the Khilafat agitation the Muslims had voluntarily renounced cow sacrifices, but a petition to prohibit cow-killing by law seemed to take undue advantage of the conciliatory attitude of the Muslims. One paper suspected that the petition had been circulated deliberately in order to create a rift between the two communities.[42]

Non-cooperation persisted nevertheless, and the boycott of the elections for the reformed councils was almost complete. The Sikh League had adopted the resolution on non-coopera-

tion, too, and after the elections the *Khalsa Advocate* reported grudgingly:[43]

> Whatever the defects of the non-cooperation movement may be . . . it cannot be denied that it has reduced the council elections to nothing but a mere farce ... a very short percentage of the voters dared to present themselves at the polling stations. Not because all the voters holding back were non-cooperators or were under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, but because of the threatened social ostracism and excommunication and the vigorous campaign of intimidation and hooliganism carried on throughout the country.

Lala Lajpatrai, however, who had pleaded for the boycott of the councils was not satisfied with the results, and *Bande Mataram* was "sorry to report that about 35 per cent of the Punjab graduates voted at the Council election ... and brought disgrace on the province." The report went on to say: "Can anyone venture to assert . . . that the present official or semi-official education is in any way useful for Indians as a nation?"[44]

The disappointing attitude of the Punjab graduates was not the only reason for Lajpatrai's second thoughts on the prevailing educational system. He had founded the Tilak School of Politics towards the end of 1920. This venture was hailed by the *Tribune* as "the one attempt to impart steadiness to the present political movement".[45] But the principal of the Government College of Lahore slighted Lajpatrai and prevented his students from attending the school of politics. Lajpatrai, therefore, wrote in *Bande Mataram* on the "Present System of Education":[46]

> .... generally speaking rulers and the ruled cannot be friends .... the first object of the Education Department is to add strength to the Government and all other educational objectives are subservient to this... they are intended to inculcate loyalty, subservience and obedience. Students have to suppress their views for the sake of bread and degrees. They acquire even meaner habits .... those of backbiting, spying, sycophancy etc. ... (The order of) the Principal of Government College prohibiting students from attending lectures of the Tilak School of Politics is an order of this type. . . .

Thus Lajpatrai was prepared to accept non-cooperation in

the field of education, too. And at Nagpur he seconded the motion of Gandhi's non-cooperation resolution without further reservations. However, the controversies of the year 1920 were to emerge again after the eclipse of Gandhi's first great campaign. The basic issues, therefore, remained alive. Lala Lajpatrai drifted more and more into the opposition within the Congress. The nationalist's dilemma had not yet been solved but the circle of those who participated in national politics had been greatly widened by the non-cooperation movement. This fact was only indirectly reflected by the press. The circulation of some papers increased, and some editors found it profitable to convert their weeklies into dailies.[47] This was an indication of the increasing pace of political developments.

The press had helped to enhance the political awareness of the people by discussing the pros and cons of the non-cooperation programme. Except for some Muslim papers which sponsored non-cooperation because of the Khilafat issue, most of the Punjab papers were initially not at all enthusiastic about Gandhi's programme. However, as the year went on they found themselves compelled to take a more radical stand, and therefore Gandhi's programme appeared more and more acceptable to them.

The press of the Punjab, and first of all Lala Lajpatrai's *Bande Mataram* thus provides an interesting record of this development which culminated in the "conversion" that ushered in the Gandhian era of the Indian freedom movement.

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[1] Cf. Letter of Dr. Gokul Chand Narang in *Liberal*, December 1919.
[2] Cf. Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Land Alienation Act XIII of 1900, Report for 1902, pp. 4, 13.
[3] Cf. *Himala* (ed. Dina Nath), December 12, 1919. (This and all other references to newspapers are taken from the *Reports on Native Newspapers*, Punjab, 1920.)
[4] Cf. *Parkash* (ed. Radha Kishen), January 4, 1920.
[5] Cf. *Tribune*, January 6, 1920. [6] Cf. *Tribune*, January 7, 1920.
[7] Cf. *Liberal* (ed. Jai Gopal), December 22, 1919.
[8] Cf. *Tribune*, March 2, 1920.

[9] *Sidaqat* (ed. Ghulam Haider Khan), July 1, 1920. *Bande Mataram*, July 18, 1920 and *Desh*, February 11, 1920.

[10] Cf. *Leader* (ed. Shamlal), February 14, 1920, and *Desh*, February 11, 1920. *Tribune*, March 19, and July 15, 1920.

[11] Cf. *Liberal*, April 5, 1920, *Tribune*, May 28, 1920, *Bande Mataram*, May 29, 1920, *Dard* (ed. Dina Nath), May 31, 1920; further *Pratap*, *Akali*, *Vakil*, *Liberal*, end of May, 1920 for comments on Hunter Report.

[12] *Tribune*, May 1, 1920.

[13] *Bande Mataram*, June 9, 1920.

[14] *Bande Mataram*, May 18, 1920.

[15] *Bande Mataram*, May 21, 1920.

[16] *Bande Mataram*, May 29, 1920.

[17] *Tribune*, June 25, 1920; cf. also *Desh*, June 25, 1920.

[18] *Tribune*, July 3, 1920.

[19] *Bande Mataram*, July 13, 1920.

[20] *Aftab*, a Muslim paper, published a letter by Dr Kitchlew recommending Gandhi's programme: *Akhbar-i-am* (ed. Gopi Nath), July 7, 1920; recommended non-cooperation, *Siyasat*, a Muslim paper, July 9, 1920 demanded non-cooperation in the name of the prophet.

[21] *Bande Mataram*, July 25, 1920.

[22] *Tribune*, August 14, 1920, *Desh*, August 15, 1920.

[23] *Tribune*, September 10, 1920.

[24] *Tribune*, September 11, 1920.

[25] *Bande Mataram*, September 11, 1920.

[26] *Desh*, September 12, 1920.

[27] *Tribune*, September 17, 1920, *Bande Mataram*, September 16, 1920.

[28] *Tribune*, September 19, 1920.

[29] *Bande Mataram*, September 19, 1920.

[30] *Tribune*, September 24, 1920.

[31] *Virat* (ed. Dyal), October 4, 1920.

[32] *Khalsa Akhbar*, October 8, 1920.

[33] *Tribune*, October 30, 1920.

[34] *Tribune*, October 24, 1920.

[35] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, November 24, 1920.

[36] *Vedic Magazine*, May 1920.

[37] *Aftab* (ed. Wajahal Hussain), January 15, 1920.

[38] *Al Munir* (ed. Ghulam Hussain), November 24, 1920.

[39] *Vakil*, November 27, 1920.

[40] *Gulzar-i-Hind*, November 20, 1920.

[41] *Bande Mataram*, October 1, 1920.

[42] *Paisa Akhbar*, November 27, 1920.

[43] *Khalsa Advocate*, December 14, 1920.

[44] *Bande Mataram*, December 14, 1920.

[45] *Tribune*, December 5, 1920.

[46] *Bande Mataram*, December 5, 1920.

[47] Cf. the quarterly list of newspapers in the *Reports on Native Newspapers*, Punjab, 1920.

7 GANDHI AS A CREATIVE POLITICIAN

CREATIVITY IS usually attributed to artists who go beyond the beaten track, giving expression to human feelings which others have been unable to express although they will understand these feelings once they are expressed. Politicians are not normally thought of as being creative, at the most they are credited with that enigmatic quality of charisma which enables them to command the allegiance of their followers. Both creativity and charisma are believed to be innate gifts and not acquired abilities. But whereas the creativity of the artist can be judged in terms of the style, form and content of his work, the politician's charisma is more elusive, its existence is asserted, but its effect is hardly ever analysed. Perhaps we should look upon the charismatic politician as the creative artist and analyse the style, form and content of his actions to understand the impact he has made.

The actions of the politician are for the most part closely circumscribed by the institutions which he is taking for granted, the interests which he is supposed to represent, the universe of discourse established by his predecessors and by the society he lives in. He is successful to the extent that he lives up to the norms and expectations of his environment. In this respect he must be a conformist, following the beaten track so as not to lose touch with the people he wants to lead. But sometimes new institutions have to be formed and new sources of power to be tapped, it is then that the politicians must rise to the occasion and be creative.

Gandhi was such a creative politician. But nobody might have ever found out about this if Gandhi had not been forced to enter the political field in a strange environment and under peculiar circumstances which made him creative from the very beginning of his political career. As a young and somewhat shy British educated lawyer in South Africa, an outsider in every sense of the term, he seemed to be in no way predestined to become a great political leader. But as the Indian minority in South Africa had no other leader he was called upon to defend his countrymen when they had to face discrimination. Except for the pressure exerted by the alien government the political situation was unstructured. There were no institutions, no adequate channels of communication, there was not even much solidarity in the ranks of the minority itself. Gandhi had to create almost everything: a political organization, the means of communication, the ways and means of articulating political protest, and the solidarity of the people whom he was supposed to lead. This was a challenge and a blessing in disguise; here was a canvas on which he could sketch the outlines of political life undisturbed by the conventional wisdom of other politicians. He could derive his political strategy and style from his own "experiments with truth". He actually inverted the normal style of politics. Whereas usually the secret dealings of a ruling in-group and the acquiescent allegiance of an indifferent or intimidated out-group go together in politics, Gandhi bound his followers by freely accepted vows and obligations and replaced secrecy with publicity. He pitted truth and nonviolence against discrimination and coercion and was remarkably successful in instilling confidence and self-reliance in his followers. But he did not do this by giving speeches, he created situations in which his followers could test in action to what extent they would be able to emancipate themselves from fear and oppression.

Gandhi's creativity became manifest first of all in his designs for political action. He set up these actions almost like a scientific experiment in which he could control all the variables leaving both his followers and their adversaries only a limited choice of moves which would have to be made in a predictable sequence, the whole process being open to scrutiny for

both sides at every stage of the experiment. Instead of letting things happen it was he who designed the happening. This was a new style of politics. Hitherto politicians would try to run with the hare and hunt with the hound or seize power and dictate their terms but none of them had thought of devising a kind of socio-drama in which conflicts could be acted out openly. Of course the democratic process and democratic institutions also serve the purpose of keeping conflict-resolution open. But Gandhi was faced with a denial of the full participation in this process and an outright assertion of the dominance of the white majority over the Indian minority in South Africa and he had to look for an alternative way of fighting for the civil rights of this minority. His methods were, therefore, geared to the expression of the political will of the minority in a pseudo-democratic state. He revealed the contradictions between the theory and the practice of this state through his political actions and compelled the government to make concessions to the minority. But it was not only his design for political actions which led to this success, it was also his great ability as a political organizer which helped him to prepare the ground for these actions. Patient daily work for the political organization of the minority, the recruitment and training of members, the raising of funds, the editing of papers, the stream of correspondence—these were the elements of Gandhi's success which were often overlooked by those who saw in him only the great agitator. He had to build his own voluntary institutions in order to be able to challenge the institutions of the state which were monpolized by others, his creativity was apparent in his devotion to organizational details just as much as in his more spectacular political actions.

When Gandhi returned to India in 1915 after spending more than twenty years of his life in South Africa his political style was fully developed, he would adapt it to the Indian scene but he was certainly not going to change it fundamentally just as an artist would rarely adopt a new style in the midst of his life. In India Gandhi was both benefited and handicapped by his special experience in South Africa. He was an expert minority leader, in India, however, he was not dealing with a minority under majority pressure, but with a vast nation under alien

bureaucratic rule. The solidarity of the self-conscious minority was missing and there were hardly any specific instances of discrimination which could be singled out for political action. The Indian National Congress was a flabby organization in which various groups of politicians tried to assert their influence. The government did not claim that India was a democratic state although a few constitutional concessions had been made to the Indians. There seemed to be no way in which Gandhi could make use of his political talent under such adverse circumstances. He therefore devoted his attention to a series of specific local conflicts in which definite instances of injustice could be pinpointed, revealed and remedied as in South Africa.

He sensed the emotion provoked by the first world war and said as early as January 1917: "There is a tide of great political enthusiasm now running all over the country, nearly as big and wide as the Ganges in flood. But the tide is running to waste for want of people's control." But it was only after the war when the tide was even higher that he could harness the forces of political enthusiasm and lead a nation-wide agitation. By introducing a new style of political action into Indian politics Gandhi came into his own and emerged as a national leader. He was then 50 years old, not a young radical but a seasoned politician faced with the challenge of shaping India's political life. Due to his South African background he was the only Indian leader who could offer a concrete programme of action. He also drafted a new constitution for the National Congress, pruning and tightening it up so as to change this flabby body into a disciplined organization streamlined for political action. He saw to it that there would be a clearly circumscribed number of delegates, the majority of whom should represent rural India. He also introduced a powerful working committee, the cabinet of the Congress president, providing guidance and continuity of the day-to-day political work of this national organization. In fact this working committee was an agitational high command and the Congress became under Gandhi's leadership a permanent organization whereas it had only been an annual assembly with intermittent activities in certain periods before this time. In this

transformation of the National Congress, Gandhi followed in many respects certain suggestions made by earlier leaders, but the final design was his own work, and he was so convinced of the merits of the new Congress constitution that he frequently asserted that even by working this constitution properly India would be able to attain independence.

In his first design for political action on a national scale he was less successful than in his reorganization of the National Congress. His non-cooperation campaign lacked a proper focus and his decision of joining forces with the Khilafat movement of the Indian Muslims got him involved in a lost cause which finally did not contribute to Hindu-Muslim unity but enhanced communal feelings. His misjudgment of this issue was deeply related to his creative approach to politics. To him the Khilafat movement was a highly attractive symptom of intense political feeling shared by a great number of people. A clear expression had to be found for such a feeling so that it would not become destructive and lead to frustration and hatred. It was not his fault that it led to such a result, nevertheless, because the course of events was beyond his control. He terminated his first national campaign as it showed a tendency to erupt into uncontrolled, sporadic violence. His political colleagues did not understand him, however, he knew that such violent incidents were not marginal events but serious symptoms of the dissolution of the campaign.

Ten years later when he was called upon to design another national campaign he carefully perfected his strategy of symbolic action and selected the salt monopoly of the government as the point of attack. Salt was needed by everybody and the salt acts could be broken by simply picking up salt at the beach. There were no conflicts among Indians themselves which could be touched by such a campaign and there was a clear confrontation between the people and the government. This was the most elegant and effective of Gandhi's designs for political action and the response of the masses was amazing. The action was clearly defined, it was not aimed at a specific goal but served as a kind of national plebiscite for Gandhi and the Congress. The crowning event was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact: Gandhi, the half-naked *Faqir*, as Churchill put it, negotiating

on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor. And Gandhi was, indeed, mainly interested in this demonstration of equality rather than in any of the details of the pact.

Under the terms of this pact, Gandhi attended the Second Round Table Conference in London where a new constitution for India was under consideration. At this conference Gandhi was out of his depth. Constitutional technicalities had never interested him unless they were related to political action. He recommended the Congress constitution as a blueprint for India's future constitution and was at a loss when he was confronted with the intricacies of federal structure and safeguards for minorities. The main result was that Gandhi came home with a firm resolve not to tolerate the introduction of separate electorates for the untouchables which the British intended to grant to them under the new constitution. In resisting this move which was going to widen and perpetuate the cleavages in India's political society, Gandhi showed a keen awareness of the essential problems of India's constitutional future. He announced a fast unto death in order to force the leader of the untouchables to come to terms with him. In doing this he introduced for the first time fasting as a substitute for a national campaign. He had fasted earlier for various reasons but it was only from now on that he made the fast a political weapon of nationwide importance, a one-man-campaign, calling upon the nation as a witness, and drawing on the accumulated fund of national respect which he had earned in earlier campaigns. In later years he resorted more and more to such one-man-campaigns which were easy to control as they did not involve problems of group discipline and needed no special preparation. The response of the nation could almost be taken for granted, but this, in fact, condemned Gandhi's followers to the role of a passive chorus echoing the words of the master instead of being trained for political action.

The younger generation in the Congress turned away from Gandhi looking for other ideas to guide their actions, the older generation tried to make use of Gandhi. He himself felt ill at ease in the Congress where he would have to take sides in factional quarrels. Therefore, he left the Congress in 1934, but

before doing so he drafted once more a new Congress constitution which stabilized the position of the old guard and enabled his disciples to control the Congress without his constant intervention. Most contemporary observers were puzzled by the fact that Gandhi devoted so much attention to the Congress constitution at the very moment when he was leaving the Congress. But Gandhi knew what he was doing. He made the Congress into an organization which he could influence by remote control without being drawn into its internal conflicts. He had by now become a national institution in his own right, and he did not want to subject all his actions to the decision making process of the Congress. The Congress should be free to own or disown his actions but should not be able to interfere with them as this would cramp his political style. In 1920 he had captured the Congress, but he never wanted to become a captive of the Congress. In 1934 there was a danger that this would happen, and, therefore, Gandhi severed his formal ties with the organization while retaining his informal hold on it. From this point of view both the Congress constitutions drafted by him, the one when he captured the Congress and the other when he left it, can be taken as evidence for his political acumen. Gandhi's attitude to the Congress was strangely ambivalent, but it was basically in tune with the principles of his leadership. He was a great institution-builder but he was not a political boss who identifies himself with the political machine which he is running. Gandhi made the Congress into a representative institution with an almost authoritarian high command, thus combining a democratic spread of his field of action with a firmly controlled central focus of decision-making. He believed in party discipline, but the very essence of the discipline he preached—satyagraha—was individual conviction and a firm adherence to truth as perceived by oneself. Satyagraha was the great corrective for the inherent rigidities of institution-building. Everybody was entitled to challenge the institution or to leave it if he felt that it deviated from the norms which he had set for himself.

Gandhi as the institution-builder was, of course, in a unique position as he could not challenge the institution which he himself had built. But he could emancipate himself from his

own creation so as not to be tied down by the force of circumstances which he had helped to bring about. In fact, this process of emancipation started soon after he had captured the Congress with the non-cooperation movement. When he called off this movement against the wishes of many of his associates he realized the danger of being caught in the trap of a majority decision which would go against his convictions. Later on he tried to "purge" the Congress by means of the spinning franchise, but when he finally gave in to the Swaraj Party he adopted a course of detachment which he pursued increasingly in later years. In the very year in which he led another national campaign, in 1930, he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru telling him how glad he was that Nehru was in charge of the Congress so that he himself could follow his own line of action. Giving up even the "four-anna membership" of the Congress in 1934 was only the last step in this direction. After 1934 the ambivalence which had been implicit earlier became an explicit one as Gandhi, who was not even a member of the Congress, continued to be its philosopher and guide.

Between 1934 and 1940 Gandhi was not called upon to design another plan for political action, as the Congress made the transition to the parliamentary path to power in the era of provincial autonomy. It was only after the fateful resignation of the Congress ministries at the outbreak of the second world war that he was once more in demand as an agitational leader. But this time he had to operate under very difficult circumstances. On the one hand the Congress was bound to return to the agitational mode of politics after leaving the parliamentary path, on the other hand most of the Congress leaders and Gandhi himself were anti-fascist and did not want to play into the hands of the enemies of the British. Gandhi was also aware of the government's ability and will to crush the Congress if it could get a good excuse for doing so. Therefore he had to watch his step and plan for a cautious symbolic protest without exposing the Congress to massive retaliation. He chose the technique of "individual satyagraha" as the most suitable form of action under these circumstances. This technique had actually emerged as the most appropriate form of his own activity after his emancipation from the Congress but he

now designated others to adopt this method—first and foremost Jawaharlal Nehru and Vinoba Bhave—and refrained from joining the campaign himself as he did not want to force the government to arrest him as yet. Such a premature confrontation would have benefited the government rather than the national movement. Gandhi must also have been aware of the fact that the popular response to a war-time campaign was bound to be conditioned by the course of events in the theatres of war. In retrospect most of Gandhi's campaigns and actions look like perfect acts of his own creation, just as a good poem leaves an impression on the mind that whatever it expresses could not be expressed differently. But like the poem which depends on the whole universe of discourse of the society in which the poet lives so Gandhi's design depended on the currents of popular emotion which he could articulate and transform into specific actions. He himself was very much aware of this inherent limitation of his work, and in 1942 he recalled his experiences in the first world war when he had revisited Khaira district (where he had earlier conducted a successful agrarian campaign) in order to recruit soldiers for the British and had experienced a humiliating defeat as the same people who had followed him before remained indifferent to his appeal at that time:

> I used to walk miles in the hot burning sun in order to collect recruits and make impressions on the people about the urgency of it. But I could not. You will see, therefore, that my influence, great as it may appear to outsiders, is strictly limited. I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for the redress of popular grievances, because people are ready and need a helper. But I have no influence to direct people's energy into a channel in which they have no interest (*Harijan*, 26-7-1942).

In 1942, however, the people seemed to need a helper once more. The Japanese storm which had swept through the Pacific and had now entered the Indian Ocean had swept away the bastions of the British Empire and the colonial rulers had lost the "mandate of heaven" which had so far given them the semblance of invincibility. British evacuation and Japanese occupation appeared to be imminent. Gandhi became more and more radical in the face of this threat, he recommended that

the British should withdraw from India in an orderly fashion as long as they were still able to do so, and as far as the Indians were concerned they should leave them to God, or anarchy if they would like to believe that that would be the result of their withdrawal. With the lapse of the "mandate of heaven" colonial law and order seemed to be a pretentious excuse for staying on in India. Gandhi was certainly in tune with the feelings of the people when he expressed these views. He only waited for the Congress leaders to be disappointed by the Cripps offer in order to launch a new national campaign which was to articulate popular emotions in terms of the urgent appeal to the British to "Quit India".

Gandhi may even have hoped at this time that he could recapture the Congress in the same way in which he had captured it in 1920 after all the other leaders were at the end of their tether. The parliamentary path to power seemed to be discredited once and for all with the breakdown of the negotiations between the Congress leaders and Cripps and the imminent arrival of the Japanese who would destroy the foundations of India's political institutions which had been sponsored by the British. A revival of the Congress as a self-reliant organization independent of these parliamentary institutions appeared to be the only hope for the future.

Just as in previous campaigns the Congress once more conferred dictatorial powers upon Gandhi and gave him the freedom to choose the time and style of action. However, Gandhi and all the other Congress leaders were arrested soon after the Congress had passed the Quit India Resolution and, therefore, we shall never know what Gandhi would have done if he had been able to develop his campaign freely. There are indications that he planned a combination of all his earlier tactics, including non-cooperation, breaking of the salt laws etc. and that he would have tolerated a certain amount of violence as long as it did not deteriorate to political murder. But as the British government relieved him of the responsibility for conducting this campaign it is impossible to tell how he would have shaped the course of events. He did not expect to be arrested and he said so a few hours before his arrest. He may have thought so for several reasons: First of all the British had given him a long

rope in his earlier campaigns and had not arrested him when he thought that they would do so or when he had even hoped for it; furthermore, the British would not want a violent and disruptive campaign under the circumstances prevailing at that time and such a campaign was bound to come in the event of his arrest, also his speech at the decisive meeting of the AICC had been radical in a general way but had not contained any specific references to immediate action. But this time Gandhi had misjudged the attitude of the British-Indian government and perhaps he had overestimated the risks involved in his arrest. Subsequent events showed that the British were able to weather the storm of the "August movement" without major difficulties. Their "mandate of heaven" may have been lost, but they still had the staying power required for suppressing such a revolt.

When the tide of the war turned in favour of the British they could afford to release Gandhi who was destined to remain politically ineffective once the Congress returned to the parliamentary path to power. As soon as the war was over the Congress resumed its work in the provincial ministries and finally joined an interim government at the centre. In order to safeguard an undisturbed transfer of power the Congress even accepted the British partition of India against the protest of Gandhi who was unable to launch another agitational movement "because he could not direct people's energy into a channel in which they had no interest". He spent his last days with one-man-campaigns against communal violence, isolated from his former disciples who had followed the parliamentary path to power to its logical conclusions which implied a rejection of Gandhi's leadership. Gandhi's final recommendation that the Indian National Congress should be dissolved or transformed into a social service organization was in keeping with his earlier views and, therefore, incompatible with the plans of his former followers. He had never conceived of the Congress as of a parliamentary party but thought of it as a substitute for British-sponsored political institutions, deriving its legitimacy not from acts of the British Parliament but from the will of the Indian people. Now that the Indian leaders had taken over the parliamentary institutions of British India there was no

need for such a substitute any longer. But those who derived their power from having converted the Congress into a parliamentary party could, of course, not afford to listen to the logic of Gandhi's argument. Earlier Gandhi had tried to emancipate himself from the Congress, now the Congress had emancipated itself from his guidance. The loneliness of the last phase of Gandhi's political life was tragic—in the true sense of the term as it applies to the preordained course of the fate of the hero in a Greek tragedy who co-operates with the forces which bring about his doom and finally faces his destiny with a full awareness of its inevitability.

But this last phase was a proof of Gandhi's greatness, it showed that his creativity grew out of his convictions and that he stood by these convictions even at a time when the meaning of all his previous political actions seemed to be in doubt. Until his last day he tried to test whether his truth was also the truth of others. The shots of his assassin were a deadly and negative reply to this question. But Gandhi's death was also his triumph, he died fearlessly and unprotected with the name of God on his lips.

8 / CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS *VERSUS* NATIONAL AGITATION IN INDIA, 1900-50

THE POLITICAL development of India during the first half of the twentieth century was conditioned by constitutional reforms introduced by the British rulers, and by a vigorous agitation for national freedom. A constitution is a normative description of existing or intended relationships of political power; under the circumstances prevailing in India at that time, such a description was bound to be challenged again and again by an agitation for the revision of the *status quo*. In this way a peculiar relationship developed between constitutional reform and agitational advance. The constitutional reforms were designed to fulfil agitational demands on the one hand and to forestall more extreme demands on the other. Therefore they consitutional reform; the constitution of the national movement was conditioned by the particular circumstances created by each consitutional reform; the constitution of the national movement itself, i.e. of the Congress, had to be adapted to the new situation whenever constitutional reforms were at stake. Finally when independence was achieved, an Indian Constituent Assembly adopted a constitution which closely resembled the previous constitutional structure introduced by British Acts of Parliament.

In this paper an attempt is made to follow the interrelations of British reforms, national agitation, and the development of the Congress constitution in the epochs of the Morley-Minto Reform, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform, and the Government of India Act of 1935. Finally, the impact of these developments on the making of the constitution of independent India is ana-

lysed in terms of the basic question: to what extent does the Indian constitution reflect the aspirations of the Indian freedom movement?

THE MORLEY-MINTO REFORM AND TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATION

Under Lord Curzon, the Government of India had reached a peak of absolutism and centralism. If the absolutism of eighteenth-century Europe paved the way for democracy, Curzonism may have had a similar effect in India. However, since the revolutionary forces in India were too feeble and the imperial government was too powerful, a radical change from one sovereignty to the other was impossible. A long-drawn-out struggle ensued in which the Government of India had to defend itself against national agitation in India as well as against Liberal pressure at home. In the course of this struggle, the Government of India veered away from unmitigated autocratic rule and tended toward a manipulative maintenance of power.

Indian opinion insisted primarily on an expansion of the existing legislatures, a reduction of the official bloc, territorial representation, and a more popular franchise. Although the Secretary of State, John Morley, was a famous political philosopher to whom educated India looked for inspiration, he was sadly deficient in practical political thought as far as the Indian situation was concerned. In the battle that went on behind the scenes between him and the Government of India, his liberal principles were finally defeated. He had proposed a system of electoral colleges in order to adapt the demand for territorial representation to Indian conditions.[1] When the Government of India condemned this scheme, Morley retraced his steps and called his own suggestions ambiguous. In his speech in the House of Lords he followed the reasoning of the Government of India.[2] The only point in which he did not yield to bureaucratic pressure was the undiluted elective principle in the reform scheme. The Government of India had hoped to continue the old procedure of nominating the representatives after their election, a device which automatically discouraged the election of "undesirable" men.[3]

The Government of India was firmly set against territorial representation.[4] Lord Minto had promised separate electorates to the Muslims, and was apprehensive that Morley or one of the Governors would work out an electoral scheme to salvage the principle of territorial representation.[5] In Sir H. H. Risley he found an able counsel whom he asked "to boil down all reforms material."[6] Risley produced a closely reasoned note[7] in which he pointed out that every system of territorial representation, and first of all Morley's scheme of electoral colleges, would return large numbers of Congress lawyers to the expanded legislative councils.[8] He also pointed out that the preceding reforms of 1892 did not imply the principle of territorial representation, but that they had been designed to give adequate representation to urban as well as rural interests.[9] He agreed with Lord Minto, who wanted to grant representation first and foremost to those who had "a stake in the country."

The final result of the reform was accurately predicted by an I.C.S. officer, who wrote in 1908:

> Disenfranchisement is a policy that explains itself, but the proposal is to restrict the electorate to the selection of certain classes of persons... In this way the Government abandons the power of choosing whom it considers most suitable whilst it also hampers the electorate in their choice of the men whom they consider most suitable.[10]

AGITATION AND REPRESSION

The reforms thus created frustration in the electorate as well as among the elected, who had gained more privileges in the councils but who were still liable to be voted down by the phalanx of the official bloc. The most important focus of agitation, however, was the repressive legislation with which the Government of India armed itself. Unlike the previous reforms of 1892, the Morley-Minto reform appealed only to those who had no hold on the forces that had created the political unrest.[11] However, the old policy of the deportation and imprisonment of local agitators without trial was no longer tenable; criticism of such cases in the reformed councils would have repercussions in the British Parliament and thus embarrass the Liberal Government at home.[12] But repressive legislation against the press

and against seditious meetings could be defended in the interest of law and order. The burden of repression was therefore shifted from the executive to the legislative and judicial side.

The moderates among the Indian politicians who wanted to work the reforms had to witness the passing of this legislation, while the extremists were muzzled and driven underground. Extremist agitation found an outlet only in sporadic political murders. In some areas, however, the extremists were able to build up a regular network of secret local and district organizations which constituted a kind of parallel government.[13] The leadership of the extremist organizations was mostly in the hands of a new generation (born around 1870, contemporaries of Gandhi and Aurobindo) that had grown up as the "angry young men" of India at a time of rapid expansion of British education and limited opportunities of adequate advancement.[14] This generation was influenced by religious revivalism and held views which were entirely different from those cherished by the older generation of moderates.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The advent of this new generation in national politics and the polarization caused by the policy of simultaneous reform and repression put the constitution of the Indian National Congress to a severe test. In the early period of the Congress (1885-1907), the elections of delegates and the presidential elections were informal; delegates were usually elected by acclamation in public meetings,[15] and the election of the president was in the hands of the local reception committee in charge of preparing the annual congress.[16] Those who arrived early at the session were made members of the subjects committee, and up to twenty-two weighty members of the Congress were supposed to sit with the president on the platform, thus being available for consultation during the proceedings.[17] Territorial (district committees) as well as sectional (caste and professional organizations etc.) representation was recommended for the election of delegates.[18]

This loose structure was sufficient as long as the Congress remained an annual function for the ventilation of grievances;

but when the acceptance or rejection of definite policies was at stake, the Congress was bound to change. The alternating pattern of agitational unity and division over constitutional reforms was to remain a permanent feature from 1907 onward. As the years went by, this alternating current shaped a Congress constitution which provided a strong executive, a well-defined electorate, and a machinery for settling conflicts within the organization.

The first tightening of control was attempted after the split at Surat in 1907. In order to eliminate the influence of the extremists, the moderates designed a new constitution. Its main features were a moderate Congress "creed," the institutionalization of a limited caucus in the form of the All-India Congress Committee (about eighty-seven members), and the restriction of the Congress franchise to recognized local political organizations.[19] In a way these restrictions paralleled the representation by "interests" emphasized by the Morley-Minto Reform. The Congress became a kind of Liberal Party of India. The extremists complained about the discriminatory clauses of the new constitution. Territorial representation and a wider franchise were supposed to be the right cure for the ills of the Morley-Minto Reform, and extremists held that new district organizations based on territorial representation and a popular franchise would be the only acceptable basis for a new Congress.

When the extremists re-entered the Indian National Congress in 1916, it became again a more representative and less exclusive body; but at the same time, the All-India Congress Committee and most of the other features introduced in 1908 were retained and became permanent parts of the Congress constitution.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AND DYARCHY

The next round of agitation and reform was precipitated by the first world war. The British government countered the demand for a further extension of existing reforms by introducing the principle of responsible government. All the previous reforms had been concerned with the enlargement of the old

legislatures whose function was only to assist the irremovable executive in the business of legislation. Morley himself had pointed out that his reforms were by no means intended to introduce the parliamentary form of government in India.[20] But the new reforms were inspired by the theories of the Durham Report, in which the inevitable clash of popular legislatures with an irremovable executive, which was characteristic of all British colonial governments, had been described so convincingly.[21]

It was felt that the Morley-Minto Reform had been an advance in the wrong direction.[22] The corrective was the introduction of an indigenous, removable executive responsible to Indian legislatures. Only partial responsibility could be granted to begin with, since the major part of the responsibility had to remain with the British Parliament. This polarized responsibility was to be organized as a devolution of power which implied a federalist development. British political thought was preoccupied at that time with new constitutional plans for a British Commonwealth, and federal ideas were widely discussed. The roving constitutional expert Lionel Curtis proposed a scheme of dyarchy for India; in his terms, this meant a co-existence of central and provincial branches of government which derived their respective authorities from different sources (i.e. different legislatures).[23] He claimed that this system, which could be conveniently subdivided both horizontally and vertically, would provide the flexibility needed for any further devolution of power.[24]

In accordance with these proposals, Curtis prescribed a separate purse for the transferred subjects. He insisted on a clear demarcation of responsibilities so that the voter could distinguish between the control exercised by those responsible to the indigenous electorate and those responsible to the Government of India and the British Parliament.[25] Curtis's friend, Sir James Meston, who was in charge of the Reforms Office of the Government of India, sympathized with most of these proposals and emphasized particularly the principle of a separate purse, whereas the Secretary of State, E. S. Montagu, tended to favour the principle of joint consultation in financial as well as in all other subjects.[26]

Montagu and Chelmsford in their reform proposals were un-

able to adopt all the principles involved in a strict scheme of dyarchy as outlined by Curtis. They had to take into consideration the conditions created by the previous reforms. They deplored the existence of separate electorates as incompatible with responsible government, which must rest on territorial representation. Knowing the trend of popular opinion, they did not want to circumscribe the powers of the legislatures too narrowly. They wanted to reduce the hated official bloc, but at the same time they recommended a Grand Committee in which the official bloc could be restored whenever an act could not be passed in the normal course. They introduced dyarchy but blurred the lines of responsibility. Indeed, for the beginning of the scheme, they suspended the responsibility of the elected ministers to the legislatures and stated that the ministers should be responsible to the electorate but not immediately to the legislatures.[27] Montagu was painfully aware that the reform scheme in its final form was the result of a multiple compromise between Liberalism at home and the bureaucracy in India, between British interests and Indian national aspirations, political thought and administrative practice. When Curtis criticized the hybrid character of the compromise before the Joint Select Committee, Montagu retorted:

> ... your opinion might be summed up in this way, that the Viceroy and I had got hold of a principle which you think is a good one, but had damaged it by modifying it out of deference to the public opinion and the opinion of the people concerned in India, and that you would prefer to have little or no regard to what people say they want and think, if it jeopardized the application of the principle which you regard as a good one.[28]

NON-COOPERATION

The merits of the constitutional reforms did not immediately become the focus of renewed agitation. But as in the case of the previous reforms, the Government of India armed itself with repressive legislation, and the passing of the famous Rowlatt Act not only gave rise to agitation but had an adverse effect on the reforms. The bill depended so entirely on the official bloc that the Government of India took a definite stand against

any reform proposals which would affect the official majority in the central legislature.[29] The agitation against the Rowlatt Act led to general unrest which was worst in the Punjab, where the structure of political organization was relatively weak and where the government was of the most illiberal and autocratic type.[30] But more than a year passed after the Punjab unrest without any definite political agitation on a national scale. Mahatma Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation found many detractors even at the time of the special Congress held in Calcutta in September of 1920. However, in the interval between the special Congress of Calcutta and the regular session at Nagpur in December 1920, Indian opinion became more radical and even those who had opposed non-cooperation in September supported it in December.[31]

Because of the non-cooperation of the Congress, the reformed councils became a meeting ground of small factions which were not strong or well organized enough to work along the lines of responsible government. Under the impact of agitation, dyarchy degenerated into a scheme of mutual manipulation. The elected ministers functioned like brokers or agents. Their influence on the government depended on their ability to line up the one or the other faction in support of official policies, and their popularity with the members of the legislature and with the electorate depended on the favours they could obtain from the reserved side of the government.[32] This was a frustrating situation, and many dyarchy ministers felt humiliated.

The national agitation led by Gandhi was in striking contrast to the frustrations of the ministers. As a minority leader in South Africa, Gandhi had learned to focus his agitation on specific issues which meant something to the masses. He had clearly indicated in his manifesto *Hind Swaraj* that the British government in India depended entirely on Indian co-operation, which could and should be withheld. His agitation was therefore unconstitutional in more than one sense of the term: he did not focus his agitation on constitutional issues (which were in any case too technical to be easily understood by the masses), and he openly aimed at the overthrow of the government by isolating it and depriving it of the co-operation of the Indian people. Aurobindo had advocated similar ideas before he retired

from political life,[33] and, but for his insistence on absolute non-violence, Gandhi seemed to follow the true extremist tradition. But where in the earlier period the extremists had been driven underground and the moderates had dominated the Congress, Gandhi was able to capture the entire Congress organization. In this way the agitation could be maintained on a national scale.

PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

Gandhi's approach to all matters pertaining to the Congress organization and its constitution was determined by his idea of creating a kind of parallel government which could lay claim to the loyalty of the Indian people.[34] Of course, this idea of a parallel government was different from that of certain European movements which were aimed at an overthrow of the established order. In India the main idea was to challenge the simulated political society built up by the colonial rulers by rallying an agitational political society. In order to become a parallel government, the Congress needed a strong executive and a more representative foundation. The first was created by establishing the Working Committee, and the latter was achieved by reorganizing the Provincial Congress Committees along the lines of linguistic provinces.[35] In establishing these linguistic provinces, Gandhi inadvertently fulfilled what Lionel Curtis had predicted:

> The moment they (people of India) . . . appreciate what responsible government means you will have growing up a demand . . . for linguistic areas . . . so that they can have legislatures in which they can . . . conduct their public business in their own vernacular.[36]

The Working Committee and the linguistic Congress provinces were of course first of all established in order to provide national agitation with an efficient command and with the means of popular communication. But in Gandhi's mind, agitational needs became constitutional virtues. He compared the Working Committee to the Cabinet and the AICC and the annual Congress to the Parliament.[37] In later years he claimed that the Congress Constitution could easily serve as a model for an Indian constitution.[38] According to Gandhi, the Congress could not become

a political party but should provide a meeting-ground for all parties. The Working Commitee, however, should be in the hands of the majority party within the Congress.[39] Gandhi's parallel government was therefore a highly centralized responsible government. He conceived of "provincial autonomy within the Congress,"[40] but in practice he built up a machinery of efficient central control.

From 1920 onward the British policy of the devolution of power was paralleled by a centralization of power in the Congress organization. The policy of devolution was a necessary consequence of a gradual, limited, localized, and narrowly circumscribed transfer of power, but British reformers interpreted it in positive terms as federalism and decentralization. In a similar way, the centralization of the Congress followed the logic of national agitation, but it was expounded in constitutional terms by Gandhi himself. This constitutional interpretation became important whenever the agitational unity of the Congress faded away in a low ebb in national politics, as for instance in the years 1924-1928.[41] The emergence of the Swaraj Party in particular gave rise to constitutional problems. Gandhi adapted his ideas of parallel government to the new situation in order to preserve the unity of the Congress. In the first stage of the adjustment, Gandhi arrived at a compromise by agreeing to the policy of the Swaraj Party, the Party in turn agreeing to a constitutional amendment which introduced a spinning franchise.[42] This gave Gandhi and his followers an advantage as far as the Congress electorate was concerned. But in the second phase of the adjustment, Gandhi conceded full executive control of the Congress to the Swarajists and even consented to the stipulation that the spinning franchise should be an alternative one only. An All-India Spinners Association was founded, which was supposed to occupy a position analogous to that of the Swaraj Party before the transfer of executive control.[43] Throughout this period Gandhi sought to maintain the spirit of parallel government, and he warned the Congress against the passing of resolutions which could not be backed up by action, because every meaningless resolution would reduce the stature of the Congress and would deprive it of the character of a parallel government.[44]

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE—A SYMBOLIC REVOLUTION

The third instalment of constitutional reforms compounded the features of the Morley-Minto and of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. On the one hand a Communal Award extended the separate electorate and a federal super-structure seemed to reflect the old idea of a representation of "interests"; on the other hand the principle of responsible government was followed up by the grant of provincial autonomy and of a much wider franchise.

The Indian Statutory Commission headed by Sir John Simon expressed the hope that Indian nationalism could be diverted into federal channels, since "federalism is a form of nationalism."[45] But the federal part of the new constitution became the most controversial point, and Indian nationalism became more and more centralist in opposing it.

The first national response to the proposed constitutional advance was the Nehru Report of 1928, which outlined a Dominion constitution with a responsible government at the centre and in the provinces. The communal question was settled in terms of joint electorates, with a reservation of seats for minorities. A list of fundamental rights was incorporated.[46] The report was ratified by an All Parties Conference,[47] and the Congress backed it up by an ultimatum. The proposal ultimately lapsed because the British government paid no attention to it,[48] and the Congress opted for complete independence and reverted to a programme of national agitation. In order to provide a better focus for this agitation, Gandhi defined "the substance of independence" in eleven points. These points constituted a platform on which the industrialists and the masses could meet.[49] At the Congress of 1930 the points were further elaborated in a list of fundamental rights, which were supposed to ensure the protection of minorities as well as the welfare of the masses. The list was later incorporated in the election manifesto of the Congress after the Congress had decided to contest the elections under the Government of India Act of 1935. As a result of its agitational origin, this list included fundamental rights which may properly be so called, but

also included social and economic issues. The Nehru Report had added to the general catalogue of civil liberties only the right to free elementary education, but the list of fundamental rights of the Congress of 1930 included also prohibition, a living wage, abolition of the salt tax, the introduction of an inheritance tax and of a progressive income-tax on agricultural income, a reduction of agricultural rent, state control of key industries, etc.[50] The Nehru Report, as well as the fundamental rights listed by the Congress, emphasized the secular nature of the state.[51] It was hoped that the assertion of fundamental rights and the emphasis on secularism would exorcise the spirit of communalism.

The non-acceptance of the demand for Dominion status in 1929 led to a new round of intense agitation. In initiating the campaign, Gandhi concentrated on point 4 of his eleven points: the abolition of the salt tax. His refined strategy of symbolic action at first eluded the British government, and he was able to complete his famous Salt March, culminating in the solemn breaking of the salt law at Dandi. The nationwide response was amazing.

Before the momentum of the agitation had spent itself, Gandhi concluded a pact with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, and got a mandate from the Congress to attend the second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress in order to present the national demand of India to the British government in London. This second Round Table Conference centered, however, around the communal claims of diverse minorities, and Gandhi could do no more than register a protest and announce that he would resist with his life any attempt to introduce separate electorates for the depressed classes. His fast in 1932 prevented the introduction of the separate electorates granted to the depressed classes in the Communal Award of the British government. In the Poona Pact Gandhi conceded a large number of reserved seats for the depressed classes to their leader, Dr Ambedkar, who thereupon gave up the claim for separate electorates. The generous concession of reserved seats reduced the number of seats available to the caste-Hindus, who organized an Anti-Communal Award Conference.[52]

THE HIGH COMMAND AND THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

The civil disobedience movement had once more emphasized the importance of the Working Committee as an agitational command. This time, however, the inevitable low ebb after the termination of civil disobedience and the return to parliamentary politics contributed to a further strengthening of the Congress organization. Gandhi was still pledged to the idea of parallel government and he did not cherish the programme of council entry which was the object of the revived Swaraj Party. But this time he was able to influence the formation of the parliamentary wing of the Congress from its very inception, whereas in 1922-1923 he had been in jail during the crucial period of the rise of the Swaraj Party.

After Gandhi had formally suspended the civil disobedience movement in April 1934, a Congress Parliamentary Board was formed under the leadership of Dr Ansari and Pandit M. M. Malaviya. Gandhi indicated that this board would be under the direction of the AICC, but that it would operate as an autonomous body like the All-India Spinners Association.[53] Gandhi wanted thus to prevent the AICC from becoming a parliamentary body. He hoped that "the majority will always remain untouched by the glamour of council work."[54] The Parliamentary Board was to function like a parallel Working Committee; the two leaders, Ansari and Malaviya, were supposed to nominate the other members in the same way as the Congress president used to select his Working Committee, but soon afterwards the Board was made an elective body.[55]

After the suspension of civil disobedience, Gandhi reserved for himself the right to start individual civil disobedience whenever he should see fit to do so. He rejected the proposal that he should be permitted to resume civil disobedience even individually only if the AICC sanctioned it.[56] In order to retain his individual freedom, he resigned from the Congress. But before he did so he bequeathed to the Congress an amended constitution in which he incorporated most of the unwritten conventions which had grown up under his leadership. Under this new constitution, the number of the delegates was reduced and the membership of the AICC limited to 166. The presi-

dent was to be elected by the delegates and no longer by the reception committee only. Article XII specified that the president should nominate the Working Committee, a provision which Gandhi admitted he did not have the courage to include in the earlier constitution, but which had become a generally accepted convention.[57] There was a stipulation that three-fourths of the delegates should represent the rural districts. The provincial committees were put under the strict supervision of the Working Committee, which was given the power to form new provincial congress committees whenever one or the other of the existing committees should fail to function in terms of the constitution.[58]

The reason behind this streamlining of the Congress organization was Gandhi's hope that a more representative and disciplined Congress would be able to become a rival to the assemblies.[59] The idea of parallel government pervaded this new constitution. Proportional election by single transferable vote was retained in order to give the representation to all groups within the Congress.[60] In the two following years, however, the Congress was rapidly transformed into a party primarily interested in winning the elections. The double role of a party and of a parallel government introduced a certain ambiguity. An attempt was made to abolish proportional representation by single transferable vote. A system of majority vote would have strengthened the right wing of the Congress and would have made it more homogeneous as a party, but the Socialists succeeded in defeating this attempt.[61] The Socialists stood for a continuation of agitational politics and resented the programme of council entry. The right wing of the Congress, however, took charge of the parliamentary activities of the Congress, and the Parliamentary Board was replaced by a parliamentary sub-committee of the Working Committee.[62] The amalgamation of the parallel government with the parliamentary party was completed. But at this juncture the differentiation of agitational and constitutional politics was re-introduced in another way: it was stipulated that those Congressmen who would become ministers should resign from the executive organs of the Congress.[63] This decision marked the starting point of what was later on called the ministerial and the organizational

wing within the Congress. The ambiguity which beset the Congress at this time became an institution.

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

An interesting controversy centered around the re-election of Subhas Chandra Bose in 1939. He had been elected Congress President in 1938. Most of his support came from the younger generation of Congress Socialists, but after the formation of the Congress ministries he could also count on the support of the organizational wing of many Provincial Congress Committees. The organizational wing was often in the hands of those who had failed to get a ministership. In such cases personal disappointment was blended with ideological qualms about the policy of office acceptance. Since under the Congress constitution of 1934 the president was to be elected by all the delegates, Bose could appeal to a very wide electorate. He was of the opinion that the Congress president should function like the American president, and that presidential elections should be contested so that policies could be clarified.[64] The old guard of the Congress High Command thought that the Congress president should act like a constitutional monarch, and that his election should be more or less unanimous. They therefore disapproved of an open contest, and pointed out that it was a novel departure, because there had been no contests before.[65] Bose maintained that there seemed to be a tendency among the right wing elements of the Congress to arrive at a compromise with the British on the issue of federation. This deplorable backsliding could be avoided only by the election of an anti-federationist Congress president. He wanted a mandate from the Congress electorate to reject such a compromise.[66] Bose won the contest, but Gandhi, who had supported the other candidate, announced that he considered Bose's victory as his personal defeat. The old guard resigned from the Working Committee, and Bose finally submitted his resignation to the AICC, but he probably hoped that he would be able to renew and re-inforce his mandate by a new presidential election. Bose's plans were frustrated when the AICC immediately elect-

ed a new president. According to the Congress constitution, the AICC was entitled to elect a president in an emergency. In this case it would not have been obliged to do so, if it had accepted Bose's contention that there were no difficulties in requesting the Secretary General to hold a new election, but the AICC refused to recognize the Secretary General appointed by Bose and ruled that an immediate election by the AICC was necessary.[67]

Bose was subsequently elected president of the Bengal PCC, and in this capacity he organized demonstrations against two resolutions of the AICC which were bound to strengthen the hands of the ministerialists against the organizational wing of the Congress.[68] The Congress president accused Bose of a flagrant breach of discipline, but Bose contended that he did not see any other way in which he could influence the open session of the Congress, which would have to ratify or to reject those two resolutions. He pleaded that AICC resolutions were valid only *ad interim* until the next Congress session, and that dissidents should be free to protest against them openly in order to be able to carry their points in the open Congress session.[69] The Congress High Command disagreed with Bose's interpretation of the Congress constitution and took disciplinary action against him. He was dismissed from his office as president of the Bengal PCC and prohibited from holding any executive office for the next three years.[70]

Bose's case highlighted the constitutional problems of the Congress in its threefold function as a national movement, a parallel government, and a political party. The requirements of national agitation had given rise to a unified command. Since agitation had to be based on national solidarity, it was the foremost duty of this High Command to maintain a united front and to settle conflicts wihin the ranks of the movement by compromise and persuasion or, whenever necessary, by swift disciplinary action.[71]

This machinery worked well when the movement was converted into a party for election purposes. But the caucus system was incompatible with the idea of parallel government which Gandhi had propagated in order to counteract the tendency of the national movement to become a parliamentary

party within the frame of reference of the British constitutional reforms. Bose's theories fitted with the image of the Congress as a parallel government, but since he was unable to break or to win over the inner caucus, and since Gandhi himself was against him, he was eliminated from the political scene. In his exasperation Bose stated that it would be better if the Working Committee would nominate the president instead of the president nominating the Working Committee.[73] In fact the caucus system operated almost in this manner, because the members of the inner caucus settled beforehand who should be president and who should be on the Working Committee. Those who wanted to get ahead in the organization had to become members of the inner caucus and come to terms with the different personalities and forces represented there. The parallel government of which Gandhi had spoken was based in effect on a grand coalition maintained by compromises and manipulated by the inner caucus. It was in bad taste to upset this arrangement by appealing to the general Congress electorate. It was an irony of fate that Bose was able to do just that because a general appeal of this kind had become possible under the constitution sponsored by Gandhi in 1934, a constitution which contained fifteen years of Gandhi's experience, as Sardar Patel had said.[73]

The resignation of the Congress ministries at the outbreak of the second world war put an end to the tension between parliamentary and agitational orientation. A new round of intense agitation under the leadership of Gandhi unified the Congress. It was only after the war that the Congress had to face once more constitutional and parliamentary problems.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Ever since the 1930's the Congress had demanded a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise. But when this Constituent Assembly was finally granted, it was not based on adult franchise and was restricted in its terms of reference by the statement of the Second British Cabinet Mission.[74] The Cabinet Mission proposed a constitutional scheme under which the demand of the Muslim League for the partition of India would

be met by establishing certain regions and a kind of agency centre. The different provinces would have a choice of opting out of the regions to which they would be alloted.[75] Since the Muslim League boycotted the Constituent Assembly, the Congress majority in the Assembly passed a resolution on aims and objectives which put an end to the idea of provincial options and paved the way for a unitary Indian constitution.[76] In reverting to a centralist constitution, the Constituent Assembly fell back on the Government of India Act of 1935. Many other factors enhanced the dominating influence of this act on the minds of the makers of the Indian constitution. The constitutional adviser, Sir B. N. Rau, had been connected with the introduction of the constitutional reforms of 1935.[77] Dr Ambedkar, who piloted the draft constitution through the Constituent Assembly, was the Law Minister of the Interim Government, and all the articles of the draft constitution were submitted to the respective ministries concerned.[78] The ministries themselves operated under the revised Government of India Act of 1935, and since this Act, the longest ever passed by the British Parliament, was an administrative handbook as well as a constitution, the minds of the people working under it were naturally influenced by their own administrative practice. Congress ministries had again taken up office in most of the provinces after the end of the war, and they, too, operated within the frame of reference of the existing constitution. Thus the making of the new Indian constitution turned out to be nothing but a long process of reviewing amendments to the Act.

Critics in the Assembly objected to the vast emergency powers given to the President of the Indian Union, to the strengthening of the central executive, and to the curtailment of the rights of the provinces. There was good deal of heart-searching in the process of the adoption of the Indian constitution; veteran Congressmen stated that "the constitution can hardly be called a 'child' of the Indian Revolution,"[79] that the men on the Drafting Committee had not been with the freedom movement and were therefore unable to interpret its spirit,[80] and that a Gandhian constitution based on linguistic provinces and Panchayati Raj would have been a more appropriate constitution for India.[81] But all these complaints were of no avail.

Indeed, the Assembly and the makers of the constitution became more and more conservative, centralist, and disciplinarian as time went by. According to Mr Pataskar, the Assembly developed a fear complex during the second reading of the Draft Constitution, and many federal elements contained in the first draft were replaced by centralist principles.[82] The disturbances connected with the partition of India contributed to this change of mind. Thus, for instance, the position of the governor of a province, which was an elective post according to the first draft, was redefined later in terms of the Act of 1935, the governor becoming again an appointed agent of the centre.[83]

The makers of the Indian constitution came closer and closer to the letter and the spirit of the Act of 1935, which was designed to compensate the grant of provincial autonomy by an explicit assertion of the prerogatives of the centre. Even the famous Article 39, which authorized the governors to take over the government, was restored in the Indian constitution, although it had been omitted from the revised Government of India Act.[84] The powers of the President were defined almost literally in the same terms as the powers of the Governor-General under the Act of 1935,[85] and the constitutional, financial, and other emergencies were described in such general terms as to leave a wide margin for executive discretion.

AGITATIONAL DEMANDS AND THE CONSTITUTION

Under such circumstances, the chances for the incorporation of agitational demands in the Indian constitution were dim. Interest in the stability of the Union prevailed over the revolutionary aspirations which had been built up in the course of the freedom movement. The one important item that symbolized these aspirations in the Indian constitution was the extensive catalogue of fundamental rights, which comprised most of the points that the Congress had enumerated in 1930. For the purposes of the constitution, a distinction had to be made between justiciable and non-justiciable rights. The latter were at first called "Fundamental Principles of Governance"[86] and later classified as "Directive Principles of State Policy."[87] Some critics

objected to the inclusion of such non-justiciable rights in the constitution, calling them "a superfluous sermon" and "a party programme." The fundamental rights on the other hand were circumscribed by numerous provisions which enable the executive to suspend them in emergencies. In their eagerness to be on the safe side, the makers of the constitution did not want to deal with fundamental rights too generously. One critic remarked that the statement of rights had been drafted "from the point of view of a police constable." [88]

One of the characteristic points of the Congress resolutions on fundamental rights had always been the demand for the total abolition of the salt tax;[89] many veteran Congressmen thought that this abolition should be enshrined in the Indian constitution,[90] first of all since Gandhi had made the salt law the object of the civil disobedience campaign of 1931. Even the President of the Assembly, Dr Rajendra Prasad, made a plea for the inclusion of an article abolishing the salt tax.[91] But Prime Minister Nehru intervened and pointed out that it would be unwise to include this provision in the constitution; his view was endorsed by the majority of the Assembly.[92] In this case, as in so many others, sober second thoughts prevailed over agitational reminiscences.

A crucial issue was the guarantee given to the existing All-India Services that they would continue under the same conditions of service as before. The Karachi Congress of 1931 had passed a resolution that nobody holding a government office, not even the ministers, should get a salary of more than Rs. 500/-, and this resolution had been reaffirmed in 1937 when the Congress ministries were formed.[93] But the Interim Government promised to the I.C.S. officers that they would get their high salaries and retain all their privileges even after independence. Over and above these guarantees, an article was inserted in the Indian constitution which spelled out this promise in almost the same terms as in the Government of India Act of 1935. Some members of the Assembly were unhappy about the splendid promises given to "the heaven-born service of the previous regime." [94] But the Home Minister, Sardar Patel, defended the service in a remarkable speech which revealed in a striking manner the way in which the minds of the makers

of the Indian constitution were working at that time. He warned the Assembly:

> The Union will go ... if you have not a good All-India service ... If you do not adopt this course then do not follow the present Constitution. Substitute something else. Put in a Congress Constitution ... but not this Constitution. This Constitution is meant to be worked by a ring of service which will keep the country intact.[95]

This settled the issue, and no further objections were raised. It is obvious that in such an atmosphere the necessity of maintaining the status quo overruled all revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary claims.

In this respect the most sensitive spot was the attitude toward private property. Land-reform and the abolition of *zamindari* were important points of the Congress programme. This raised the question of compensation. In terms of specific agrarian legislation, this crucial problem could be confined to limited measures and limited groups. By the time the Constituent Assembly took up the relevant article in the draft constitution, some Congress ministries in the provinces had already passed certain laws which were designed to benefit a broad base of small peasant proprietors while antagonizing only a powerless group of big landlords.[96] For constitutional purposes the question of expropriation and compensation had to be phrased in more general terms. Any general terms were likely to arouse the suspicion of the powerful business interests, and even of the smaller landholders on whose support the Congress depended. On the other hand, a conservative attitude was bound to cause frustration among the more "progressive" elements of the population. Pandit Nehru, while introducing the relevant article in the Constituent Assembly, made a brilliant speech in which he concealed the fundamental conservatism of this article behind a screen of verbal radicalism.[97] Critics were quick to seize upon this ambiguity, and the tenets of socialism as well as the Gandhian concept of Ram Rajya[98] were drawn upon by those who did not want to accept the compromise as it was expressed in this article of the draft constitution. Some members deplored the "chaos and confusion of ideas" and wanted to have a clear assurance that no court should be able

to inquire into the principles and amounts of compensation as stipulated by law.[99] But the time had not yet come for such a clarification, and it was left to later amendments of the constitution to eliminate the ambiguities of the initial compromise.[100] There could be no more appropriate motto for the entire deliberations of the Constituent Assembly than the dictum of one of its members:

> We have to bear one fact in mind—that although a revolution has been going on in our country for a long time, the immediate reason for the transfer of power was not a revolution, a revolution which would justify our upsetting everything that had existed before.[101]

The sudden transformation of the "parallel government" into the Government of India, of the Congress High Command into the central ministry, brought about a change in attitudes toward agitational demands. This was due not only to the mode of the transfer of power, but also to the fact that the agitational alliance of the freedom movement had to be continued and maintained in terms of a ruling coalition. Agitational demands do not have to stand the test of legal coherence and compatibility. The makers of a constitution, however, are compelled to spell out their objectives unequivocally. Gandhi's eleven points of the Civil Disobedience days provided an excellent platform on which "the masses and the classes" could meet, but it was difficult to reconstruct this platform in the general terms of a constitution. An agitator is interested in particularizing a general issue; the maker of a constitution must generalize in order to provide for every conceivable particular issue.

THE UMPIRE

In India the bridge between agitational unity and the unity and stability of the state was built on the balance achieved within the Indian National Congress. Many factors had contributed to this balance. First of all there was the basic fact that the Congress, like any other voluntary organization, could enforce disciplinary measures only to the extent to which it was able to establish a general consensus among its members. Second, the concept of agitational unity and parallel govern-

ment made the leaders of the Congress eager to accommodate diverse trends in the ranks of the Congress. For these two reasons the minds of Congress leaders were geared to the process of mediation, tactical conciliation, and a give and take of support between different factions and interests. The peculiar interrelation between the Congress as a parallel government and the Congress as a parliamentary party, and the ensuing conflict between ministerial and organizational wings, introduced another set of factors which contributed to the inner balance: the polarization of the two wings offered a mechanism for inner-party opposition, and the High Command emerged as the universal umpire.

The role of the umpire was taken up by the central government when the High Command took office. In this respect it was of great importance that none of the national leaders had held office in the provinces before independence; under the scheme of provincial autonomy they had concentrated on running the "parallel" central government. Prime Minister Nehru was the most important of the umpires. In a way he personified the Congress compromise, because he was the living link between the right and the left, the older and the younger generation. A superb diplomat, he knew how to combine a radical outlook with conservative practice, how to voice the feeling of the masses and accommodate the classes. He was a national hero with international interests, but he was also in touch with the politics of his home province, the United Provinces, the most populous in India, which during the Gandhian era had become the fulcrum of Indian politics.

Nehru had always been the advocate of a great constituent assembly based on adult suffrage. Justice Maurice Gwyer had felt that he should warn the Indian leaders that large assemblies are never able to produce viable constitutions,[102] but this warning proved superfluous. When the Constituent Assembly finally met it was indeed a large body, but it was not based on adult suffrage and it served only as a sounding board, "a mock-assembly" as one of the members called it angrily.[103] The real makers of the constitution were the umpires of the High Command, who decided to retain the existing constitutional structure subject only to certain additions and amendments.

In this process the inner balance of the Congress was combined with the machinery of the state, and the transition from agitational unity to governmental stability was achieved by retaining and even adding to the power of the central government. The result of this amalgamation became popularly known as the "Congress Sarkar."

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[3] Government of India, *Home Department Proceedings A*, (henceforth referred to as *HDPA*), February 1909, Nos. 205-244, pp. 239, 251.

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[6] *Ibid.*, October 1908, Nos. 116-148, Vol. I, p. 509.

[7] *Ibid.*, February 1909, Nos. 205-244, note of January 5, 1909.

[8] For a detailed discussion of Risley's views see chapter 2 of this book.

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[10] *Ibid.*, October 1908, Nos. 116-148, Vol. III, p. 1398.

[11] Cf. Bipinchandra Pal's analysis: *Nationality and Empire* (Calcutta, 1916), pp. 221 ff.

[12] *HDPA*, March 1910, No. 33-44; for details see chapter 5 of this book.

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[32] Cf. *Indian Statutory Commission (Simon) Report*, Vol. I, 203, 211.

[33] Aurobindo's letter in *Karmayogin*, July 31, 1909.

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[35] *Ibid.*, March 30, 1921 and June 29, 1921.

[36] *JSCR*, p. 531 (Curtis' evidence).

[37] *YI*, June 29, 1921.

[38] *Indian Annual Register*, (henceforth referred to as *IAR*), 1936, II, 238. (Gandhi's speech at Faizpur Congress Exhibition: "... at the Round Table Conference I said I can give an Indian constitution today. Then I had the Congress constitution in mind...").

[39] *YI*, May 24, 1924 ("I am the author of the introduction into the Congress organization of the system of single transferable vote. But experience has shown that so far as the executive organizations are concerned it cannot work. The idea that all opinions should be represented on these bodies must be abandoned if the executive committees are to become bodies for the purpose of carrying out the Congress policy for the time being").

[40] *Ibid.*, April 16, 1925.

[41] Cf. *YI*, 1924-1926, ed. Ganesan (Madras, 1927), pp. 480, 499, 542, 543, 565 ff. and *YI*, 1927-1928, ed. Ganesan (Madras, 1935), pp. 530 ff.

[42] *Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1924.

[43] *Ibid.*, July 23, 1925 and October 1, 1925.

[44] *Ibid.*, January 5, 1928.

[45] *Simon Report*, Vol. II, pp. 145-149.

[46] *All Parties Conference Committee (Nehru) Report*, (Allahabad, 1928) pp. 100 ff. (Recommendations), fundamental rights, pp. 101-103. It is interesting to note that the Resolution of the Delhi Congress of 1918

which was submitted by V. J. Patel to the Joint Select Committee contained also a Declaration of Rights. Cf. *JSCR.*, Vol. II, Appendix C. p. 12 ff.

[47] *Proceedings of the All Parties National Convention* (Allahabad, 1929).

[48] *Simon Report*, Vol. I, pp. 98, 100; Vol. II. pp. 24, 56, 91, 175 refers to the Nehru Report only in passing with regard to the Army, adult suffrage, joint electorates, and the separation of Sind.

[49] The eleven points were: (1) Prohibition, (2) Reduction of the exchange ratio to 1s 4d per rupee, (3) 50% reduction of land revenue, (4) Abolition of the salt tax, (5) Reduction of military expenditure by at least 50%, (6) Reduction of the salary of the highest grade services, (7) Protective tariff for foreign cloth, (8) Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill, (9) Discharge of all political prisoners ... (10) Abolition of the C.I.D., (11) Issue of licenses to use firearms. Cf. *IAR*, 1930, I, p. 24.

[50] *IAR*, 1931, I, p. 278.

[51] *Nehru Report;* p. 102, Article xi; *AIR*, 1931, I, p. 278, Article 2.

[52] *IAR*, 1934, II, p. 300 ff.

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[55] *Ibid.*, II, p. 205 (Resolution of the 48th Congress, Bombay, October 26-28, 1934).

[56] *Ibid.*, I, p. 283 (AICC at Patna, May 18, 1934).

[57] For the new constitution see *AIR*, 1934, II, p. 208 ff. For Gandhi's statement on the cabinet system see *AIR*, 1934, I, 291 (Gandhi's speech on the resolution concerning the Parliamentary Board).

[58] *Ibid.*, II, p. 211, Art. VII, c (ii).

[59] *Ibid.*, II, p. 257, (Gandhi moving the resolution on the amendments to the Congress constitution).

[60] *Ibid.*, II, p. 210, Art. VI, Proviso II, g (iv) and p. 211, Art. VII, b.

[61] *IAR*, 1936, I, p. 288 (Lucknow Congress).

[62] *IAR*, 1937, I, p. 179; (Working Committee Proceedings, Delhi, March 15-22, 1937). Prior to this a resolution of the Lucknow Congress, April 1936, had stipulated that the functions of the Parliamentary Board should be discharged in future by the Working Committee; in a subsequent session the Working Committee had appointed a Parliamentary Committee which included all PCC presidents and several leading Congressmen. The convener was G. B. Pant, but this committee was replaced after the elections by the three-man sub-committee mentioned above. Cf. *IAR*, 1936, I, pp. 249 and 255.

[63] *Ibid.*, I, p. 179.

[64] *IAR*, 1939, I, p. 314.

[65] *Ibid.*, I, p. 315.

[66] *Ibid.*, I, p. 316.

[67] *Ibid.*, I, p. 349.

[68] *Ibid.*, II, p. 220.

[69] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 212-213.

[70] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 221-223.

[71] Sardar Patel stated the case for the caucus in the following unmistakable terms: "I wholly dissent from the view that the President has any powers of initiating policy save by consent of the Working Committee. More than once the Working Committee has asserted itself in the teeth of opposition of Presidents." *IAR*, 1939, I, p. 316.

[72] *Ibid.*, I, p. 315.

[73] *IAR*, 1934, II, p. 257.

[74] Cf. B. N. Rau, *India's Constitution in the Making* (Bombay, 1960), Appendix A, p. 465 ff. (Statement of Cabinet Mission).

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 474, Paragraph 20, v and viii.

[76] *Constituent Assembly Debates* (henceforth referred to as *CAD*), I, No. 4 ff.

[77] Rau, p. xvi, (biographical sketch).

[78] Cf., e.g. *CAD*, X, Nos. 2, 4.

[79] Speech of Shankarrao Deo, *Ibid.*, No. 7, p. 730.

[80] Speech of K. Hanumanthaiya, *Ibid.*, No. 4, p. 616.

[81] Speech of T. Prakasam *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 697.

[82] Speech of H. V. Pataskar, *Ibid.*, No. 5, p. 671.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 672.

[84] *CAD*, IX, No. 4, p. 143.

[85] The following are the articles of the Indian Constitution and of the Government of India Act of 1935 as amended by the Independence of India Act of 1947, which refer to the powers of the President and the Governor-General respectively:

Pres:	53	72	74	75(2)	77(3)	85	86	143	258
G.G.:	7	—	9(1)	10(1)	17(3)	19	20	213	124

Art. 74 of the Constitution mentions the Prime Minister; this is the only provision which establishes responsible government.

[86] Cf. *CAD*, V. No. 11, p. 375 ff.

[87] Cf. *Constitution of India*, Art. 36-51.

[88] Speech of Somnath Lahiri, *CAD*, III, No. 2, p. 404.

[89] See Gandhi's eleven points, point no. 4 in footnote 49.

[90] See *CAD*, IX, No. 6, p. 233 ff.

[91] Statement of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 239.

[92] Speech of Prime Minister Nehru, *Ibid.*, No. 7, p. 241.

[93] Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay 1947) II, p. 52.

[94] Speech of Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, *CAD*, X, No. 3, p. 42.

[95] Speech of Vallabhbhai Patel, *Ibid.*, No. 3, p. 51.

[96] Speech of S. L. Saksena, *CAD*, IX, No. 31, pp. 1202, 1203.

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[100] Cf. *Constitution of India*, Amendments of Article 31(2), 1951, 1955.

[101] Speech of R. K. Chaudhuri, *CAD*, X, No. 3, p. 38.

[102] Cf. Speech by Sir Maurice Gwyer in *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921-1947*, ed. by Gwyer and Appadorai (Oxford, 1957).

[103] Speech of Prof. S. L. Saksena, *CAD*, XI, No. 6, p. 705.

THE ROLE OF THE WESTERN EDUCATED ÉLITE IN POLITICAL MASS MOVEMENTS OF INDIA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE WESTERN educated élite of the colonies was the vanguard of decolonization. At an earlier stage of its development this élite had prospered by collaborating with the colonial power but when it grew up it could claim the right of self-determination and struggled for freedom. The growth of this educated élite was severely restricted in the nineteenth century. The colonial rulers made all essential decisions with regard to educational policy in the course of the nineteenth century but the number of pupils and students who attended government sponsored schools and colleges was very limited. An increase in numbers could be registered only by the end of the century. In 1885, 2,50,000 pupils attended secondary schools in which English was the medium of instruction but only 4,000 students passed the matriculation exam in that year, only 1,000 passed the intermediate exam, and about 500 obtained a B.A. degree and 23 an M.A. degree.[1] At the turn of the century these figures looked somewhat different, there were more than 1,200 B.A.s and more than 150 M.A.s.[2] The census report of 1901 lists 707,000 persons who said that they could read and write English, ten years later there were 1.7 million who stated this.[3] But in spite of this rapid expansion the educated élite remained a tiny minority as compared to the total population. Colonial education alienated the privileged members of this élite from their own cultural background and yet they had to mediate between the foreign culture and their own. This mediation was the source of their

power and of the respect accorded to them. Alienation and mediation were therefore connected in a peculiar way. They gave to those members of the élite a special position of power and influence and they were able to endure the tensions of alienation and could articulate the feelings of the tradition bound masses.

A RUDIMENTARY BOURGEOISIE

The consciousness of the élite was conditioned by its recruitment and composition. There was no uniform middle class or national bourgeoisie in India.[4] Before the age of colonial rule such a class could not rise due to the prevailing pattern of society. Indigenous capital accumulation by those who traded with the East India Company was soon stopped by the industrial revolution in England. India could only produce a rudimentary bourgeoisie which provided the services which the bourgeoisie of the colonial power was unable or unwilling to render. This rudimentary bourgeoisie could not perform the normal functions of a bourgeoisie. Capital was not siphoned off from agriculture and invested in industries because industrial development was not permitted by the colonial rulers. The capital accumulated by Indian landlords and moneylenders by means of rent or usury could only be invested by buying further control over land, indulging in conspicuous consumption or financing the education of the next generation. But this investment in education did not result in a growth of productivity. The educational system was geared only to employment in government service or in the professions. The rudimentary bourgeoisie was condemned to produce a parasitical educated élite.

THE HALF-EDUCATED

Every educational system has a certain amount of educational wastage. Students drop out or fail or their education is not good enough for the job which they wanted to get. In a fully developed society with a highly differentiated pattern of economic activity even those who drop out will soon find their

own level at which they can contribute to economic growth. But in India the half-educated products of Western schools and colleges who could not find a job in government service or in the professions could only hope to find odd jobs for which a smattering of English and a nodding acquaintance with the liberal arts were deemed to be sufficient. Journalists, translators, unemployed intellectuals and, soon enough, political agitators came from the ranks of this half-educated élite. In fact, the half-educated were frequently the most avid mediators between the foreign culture and their own, they enriched their vernacular languages by translating English books into them or by writing articles which were indigenous in language and content but imitated Western prose style and journalism. The half-educated kept more in touch with the people than those who passed their exams with good results and obtained lucrative jobs and tried to conform as much as possible to the standard set by the colonial rulers. Some of them became exceedingly British in style and form and lost all fluency in their own language.[5]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century even those who had completed their college education found it difficult to get good jobs as there was a touch competition for the few good positions available. At the same time there was an inflation and dilution of Western education in India. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the British-Indian government had adopted a policy of grants-in-aid to private schools and colleges instead of extending the network of government colleges. This led to a proliferation of second-hand education. In government colleges the students had been in contact with British teachers, in private colleges they learned their English from poorly paid compatriots who went into college teaching because they had failed to get better jobs. Private institutions had to conform to certain standards set by the government in order to qualify for grants-in-aid. But this did not necessarily guarantee a high standard although it certainly introduced rigidity in the design of the curriculum and of the syllabus and put a premium on routine imitation of the pattern set by the colonial administration. The whole system was now geared to the production of half-educated B.A.s. Second-hand education,

the lack of jobs, and the intellectual discomfort created by these circumstances caused more and more dissatisfaction among the ranks of the new generation of the educated élite. At the same time legislation against land alienation and the enhancement of rent affected the class from which most of the educated young men came. Buying control over land as well as investment in education became less profitable and the rudimentary bourgeoisie felt that it was approaching the end of a dead alley.

DOMINANT MINORITIES AND THE MANDATE FOR POLITICAL ACTION

In some parts of India the educated élite had achieved some regional solidarity and could make a bid to speak for the whole region when expressing its dissatisfaction with the policy of the British-Indian government. India's social structure and the pattern of British penetration had contributed to the rise of regional élites consisting of members of dominant high castes or of very articulate minorities such as the Kashmir Brahmins of Northern India or the Parsis of Bombay. These groups had taken to Western education because they saw in it a means of retaining or gaining privileged positions. Groups who had experience of government service under earlier regimes or who had played a prominent role in trade were particularly aware of the merits of an education sponsored by the government of the day. None of these dominant or articulate minorities were in close touch with the broad masses of the people who belonged to other castes or communities. Therefore the dissatisfaction of the educated élite could not be easily transformed into a mass movement. The educated élite could project its dissatisfaction only when the broad masses were suffering from famine and economic distress and could be stirred by intelligent agitators. A. O. Hume, a retired British officer, saw this danger and founded the Indian National Congress in order to create a forum for the educated élite where grievances could be ventilated before frustrated members of the élite would explore the political potential of the Indian masses. It was quite natural that the educated leaders of arti-

culate minorities like the Parsis would be prominent among those who attended the early sessions of the National Congress. The educated élite was almost entirely urban and gained much of its experience in municipal politics. It was therefore quite fitting that the political boss of Bombay, the Parsi P. M. Mehta, dominated the Indian National Congress for many decades. Mass movements under Parsi leadership would have been a contradiction in terms and until the early years of the twentieth century the National Congress could certainly lay no claim to a mass base.

The young politicians of the dominant minorities of Bengal and Maharashtra criticized this state of affairs at the beginning of the twentieth century. They questioned the wisdom of the older generation which thought that British rule had been bestowed on India by divine providence. They reinterpreted the religious ideas of Hinduism so as to arrive at a national solidarity. They made use of the transcendental monism of Indian philosophy and derived from it an inner identification with the Indian masses in this world. They turned the Indian idea of salvation through self-realization into the political message of national liberation. This ideology provided the dominant minority with an immanent claim to leadership which could be derived from an insight into the fundamental unity of all life. Mass contact in practical terms was not necessary due to this mystical mandate. Political terrorism, exclusive conspiracy or the purely spiritual concentration on national liberation were in tune with this mystical mandate and reflected the social position of the dominant minority which acted for the masses but did not act with them. Aurobindo Ghose, the brilliant representative of the dominant strata of Bengali society demonstrated the varieties of political experience in his own career: he was brought up in England, failed in his civil service exam, became a philosopher and guide of the young terrorists and finally fled to Pondicherry and won great fame due to his powers of spiritual concentration.

THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF THE BENGALI ELITE

The partition of Bengal in 1905 was an affront to an impor-

tant section of the educated élite and accentuated its frustration. This province, which was too large, was partitioned for administrative reasons, but the way in which this was done revealed a political bias. Calcutta, the capital, was cut off from its East-Bengal hinterland. Many members of the Western educated élite of Bengal lived and worked in Calcutta, but were born in East-Bengal where the land they owned was cultivated for them by Muslim tenants. The élite was alarmed by the fact that the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, praised the new province of East-Bengal as a Muslim province. The lawyers, who were the leading lights of the élite, were particularly shocked to hear of a limitation of the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court to the Western part of the province. The agitation against partition was widespread and it evoked the sympathies of the educated élite of other provinces. But the participation in this agitation was more or less restricted to the dominant minority. One of the most important aspects of this agitation was the boycott of foreign goods which was, however, not very successful because the dominant minority had little influence on the trade of the province. There were many bold terrorists among the younger generation of the dominant minority, but they could not achieve much. The movement declined within a short period of time and left Bengal with a feeling of disappointment and a self-conscious awareness of its impotence which was bound to influence the Bengali attitude to all later mass movements.

The rules and regulations that governed the elections which were held after the constitutional reforms of 1909 contributed to this feeling of frustration, because the dominant minority was unable to hold its own under the conditions imposed upon it by these rules. Thus the educated élite was humiliated even in the constitutional arena which it had regarded as its special field of achievement. The political power of a dominant minority in a major region of India which contained the greatest number of Western educated people was shown to be rather spurious and ineffective. There had been no genuine mass movement. The colonial rulers had been able to foil the attack which was aimed at them by an astute policy of repression and reform.[6]

THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A broader basis for mass movements was created by the first world war. India profited from this war, although its profits were restricted due to colonial rule. The indigenous bourgeoisie was stimulated and benefited by this development. Indian troops participated in the war on many fronts. Their demobilization after the war was bound to cause problems. In many places the demobilized soldiers were hardly less influential than the educated élite. This élite had also grown much faster. By the end of the war about one million pupils attended secondary schools in which English was the medium of instruction. The number of B.A.s (about 4500 per year) and M.A.s and M.Sc.s (about 800 per year) was much higher than that at the turn of the century. However, the restrictive measures inaugurated during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon had diminished the flow of candidates who passed university exams, otherwise the number of B.A.s and M.A.s would have been much higher.[7] The leading role of the dominant minority of a few major regions was reduced to the extent that other regions also made some headway in the field of Western education and challenged the monopoly of opinion held by the established élites. These established regional élites, which had by now a certain tradition of political leadership found themselves to a great extent isolated by the course of events after the world war.

GANDHI'S BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

The economic depression after the end of the war affected the bourgeoisie which had grown during the war years and it also affected peasants and tenants in many rural areas. There was an urgent need for the political articulation of the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction and unrest. At this stage Mahatma Gandhi became the leader of a mass movement composed of heterogeneous elements which were united only by the common programme of non-cooperation with the colonial rulers. Gandhi had developed his political strategy as a minority leader in South Africa. He belonged to the Western edu-

cated élite, but he had overcome its inherent limitations. He was an isolated educated Indian unaffected by the group solidarity which enhanced and restricted the role of his educated compatriots in India, and he did not hesitate to expose the parasitical role of this élite in his political manifesto *Hind Swaraj*. He advocated non-cooperation even before returning to India. After the war his political creed corresponded closely to that of the leaders of the Khilafat movement of the Indian Muslims who resented the British treatment of the Turkish Caliph. For these Indian Muslims India had become a *Dar-ul-Harb*, dominated by unjust and irreligious rulers, a land which ought to be abandoned in search of a *Dar-ul-Islam*. And there was, indeed, a movement of pilgrims from India to Afghanistan.[8] Gandhi was able to convert this urge for emigration into an inner emigration by his precepts of non-cooperation which were immediately comprehensible to the Muslim leaders. Orthodox Muslims praised Gandhi and followed him enthusiastically but he was also bitterly criticized by the small Western educated élite among the Indian Muslims who felt that Gandhi was undermining the orderly progress of their community along the lines determined by the British rulers. The Muslims had stayed aloof from Western education for a long time and those who had finally acquired this education were unwilling to surrender the advantages which they had gained, they were afraid that their community which was anyhow far behind the Hindu community in terms of education would suffer a severe setback if it followed Gandhi's call. Therefore Gandhi had to rely on the orthodox and traditional Muslim leaders.

Gandhi was also criticized by some of the leading lights among the educated Hindus who were sceptical about non-cooperation. But, nevertheless, many members of the educated élite were prepared to participate in the boycott of educational institutions, law courts and legislatures. In almost all provinces thousands of students left the schools and colleges and joined the newly founded national educational institutions. However, most of these newly established institutions did not survive the end of the campaign, because their examinations were not recognized by the authorities and their students

could not take up a normal career.[8] The boycott of law courts and legislatures was also only a temporary success. It meant that the educated élite had to withdraw from the arena in which it had achieved its earlier successes. This withdrawal led many members of the élite to a radical break with their past, a break which almost corresponded to a religious conversion and expressed itself in a change of the style of life and the wearing of handspun and handwoven clothes. This challenge of a new life was, of course, a very ambiguous experience for all those who were unable to keep it up and who relapsed into their normal routine after some time. The lawyer who attended the courts again after a few months of brave boycott or the student who returned to his college after he had participated in demonstrations and had been to one of the new national colleges, could not get over a feeling of disappointment and regret for not having been able to sustain their efforts. All critics of the movement had predicted this, but nevertheless many members of the educated élite had been drawn into Gandhi's movement step by step. The first and most important step in this respect was the boycott of the elections which were to be held under the new constitution of 1920. The radical leaders of the educated élite had rejected this constitution and had, therefore, advocated the boycott of the elections. Once this was done they had to look for a further programme of agitation in order not to lapse into inactivity after having left the legislatures to their moderate rivals. Gandhi's programme offered them the necessary agitational alternative and, therefore, they adopted it although they disagreed with many of its aspects. Gandhi's programme was criticized particularly by the élite of the provinces which had evolved a certain political coherence at an earlier stage whereas those provinces in which a political consensus was still in the making were more easily attracted to Gandhi's leadership. Gandhi's symbolic language and his creative interpretation of Hinduism, which was closer to the religion of the people than the Vedantic monism of the radical elements of the educated élites of Bengal and Maharashtra, pointed a new way to the identification of the élite with the masses. The cult of handspinning which was propagated by

Gandhi in order to instill the spirit of self-help in the rural masses as well as to give a positive turn to the boycott of foreign textiles, was eagerly taken up by the élite. Famous lawyers took pride in turning out the required amount of well-spun yarn. Gandhi, who, like Ruskin, believed in the virtue of bread labour even for the educated élite, made handspinning into a kind of therapy which would redeem the Western educated Indians from their parasitical existence. But though many imitated the gesture only a few understood its meaning.[10] The non-cooperation campaign which Gandhi started with the chiliastic slogan "Swaraj within one year" did not have a well defined aim. Gandhi changed the emphasis of the agitation several times in the course of the campaign. Unlike in South Africa there was no specific law which could be broken by Gandhi's volunteers, and, therefore, this campaign lacked the sense of purpose which had made the South-Africa campaigns so successful.[11] Only the general repressive measures of the government added some fuel to the fire, but the government avoided a clear confrontation and deliberately refrained from arresting Gandhi himself.

A LIMITED FRANCHISE AND TENSIONS AMONG THE ELITE

Many moderate politicians of the educated élite who had left the Congress because they did not want to reject the new constitution which the British had granted were nevertheless impressed by the spirit of sacrifice and endeavour of Gandhi and his followers. The Congress politicians were aware of this and knew that the goodwill acquired in agitational campaigns could be useful at the polls later on. They had positive proof of this in local and municipal elections which did not come under the general boycott of elections. When the non-cooperation campaign was stopped and the Congress politicians returned to the constitutional arena they were bound to clash with the moderate politicians who had occupied this arena during the time of the boycott. The first elections contested after the end of the campaign caused a bitter fight in the ranks of the educated élite. Almost everywhere radical Congressmen were able to oust moderate incumbents. The arena

in which this fight took place was defined by the limited franchise granted under the constitutional reforms. About five million Indians had been given the right to vote. The franchise was defined in terms of property qualifications and weightages for certain special interests and minorities. This implied that the electorate was not a sufficient social base of political power for the more radical elements in the Congress. The limited franchise dictated the limitations of the political appeal.

The Congress politicians who were eager to return to the constitutional arena had devised the formula of "non-co-operation within the legislative councils" so as to reconcile agitation with participation in elections and in the deliberations of the legislatures. They intended to obstruct the proceedings of the legislatures and thus project agitation into the constitutional arena. But they did not have a majority in any of the legislative councils and were therefore unable to obstruct the work of these councils effectively. They were, therefore, faced with the alternative of either arriving at a compromise with the governmment or of launching a new mass-campaign.[12] This situation gave rise to tensions within the ranks of the Congress élite, everybody suspected everybody else of getting ready for a compromise with the government so as to anticipate the moves of potential rivals. This suspicion greatly lowered the morale of the Congress rank and file. The younger generation turned away from this game in disgust and looked for a new message of political progress.

SOCIALIST INSPIRATIONS AND THE COLONIAL MIND

Student congresses and newly founded trade unions offered a forum for renewed agitation. The labour movement which emerged in those years was completely dependent on the leadership of the educated élite. But there were many members of this élite who were enthusiastically serving this cause. The younger generation was affected by socialist ideas which came to India via the London School of Economics but also through Communist agents despatched to India by the Communist Party of Great Britain.[13] These new ideas found a good reception because they contrasted with the views of the older politi-

cal leaders who seemed to be at the end of their tether by that time. Hindu-Muslim conflicts had become more serious in those years due to the struggle in the constitutional arena which was manipulated by the colonial rulers. But to the younger politicians who were inspired by socialist ideas these conflicts appeared to be bourgeois shadow boxing and totally irrelevant in view of the common class interest of the Hindu and Muslim masses. Socialist ideas introduced a new vision. Earlier Indian nationalists had prepared the ground for a socialist philosophy. But their ideas had remained vague and indistinct. There was no systematic development of political ideas in India. The colonial situation prevented Indian intellectuals from developing their ideas in an indigenous context and from passing on their insights to the next generation. New trends in the distant metropolis made always a more powerful impact on the younger generation than the ideas of their elders. Furthermore, the views of the older generation appeared often out of date within a short period of time, as yesterday's radicalism seemed moderate and irrelevant at present. Therefore, the younger generation could easily disregard the thought and actions of politicians who had been in the forefront of national politics in the recent past. Many basic questions were discussed over and over again, each time in terms of a new political vocabulary but not necessarily with a deeper insight.

Gandhi was the only exception to this universal predicament of the captive colonial mind, because he had had the unique chance of working out his own political destiny in the years of political isolation and self-reliance in South Africa. As he led all important campaigns after 1920 the younger generation could not avoid a confrontation with his thought and action. Of course, after every campaign there was a feeling that Gandhi was now a spent force and that his strategy and thought was a thing of the past. But whenever a new campaign was to be planned Gandhi was asked to take over once more, because only he could design a strategy for mass agitation. In order to preserve national unity in agitational movements Gandhi always selected the points of attack in such a way that Indians would not be fighting Indians, he therefore avoided any cause which would have implied a move against

vested interests in India. He even refrained from criticizing the Indian princes who frequently mismanaged the internal affairs of their states.[14] His approach to the labour movement was devoid of the idea of class struggle, though he had founded some unions in Gujarat. These unions were quite successful in their own way, they attempted mediation between workers and employers, forwarded individual petitions and acted as welfare organizations, but they were by no means a militant vanguard of the working class.[15]

Many members of the educated élite disagreed with Gandhi's attitude toward the princes, with his approach to the labour movement and his leniency as far as all vested interests were concerned. They wanted to follow a more militant line in one field or another. The moderate "Servants of India Society", for instance, was much more radical in its criticism of the Indian princes than Gandhi's Congress.[16] Members of this society also took an active part in the labour movement, but in this field they adopted a more cautious line.[17] The movement against the princes as well as the labour movement was soon dominated by the younger socialist politicians who advocated a radical attack on all vested interests as these interests were assumed to be necessarily in league with the colonial rulers. Princes, landlords and capitalists were common enemies of workers and peasants who should combine in order to overthrow the political system which protected both foreign and indigenous exploiters.

SYMPATHIES FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

India's educated élite could afford to be radical. In the colonial context there was no genuine bourgeoisie and no community of interest of capitalists and of the educated élite, there was no "establishment". The educated élite was condemned to a parasitical existence and for this reason it could also be radical, although this radicalism was frequently not much more than verbal radicalism. Therefore, the labour movement had much more support from the educated élite in India than in Western countries. The movement itself was not very strong in India, but it had a good press and an excellent public

image.[18] There was another reason for the educated élite's sympathy for the labour movement: it may sound paradoxical —but it was the caste system which ensured the working class of the support of the educated élite. Most members of this élite belonged to the higher castes who were not necessarily averse to earning a good deal of money but looked down upon the profit motive of the trading castes. Gandhi, who belonged to a trading caste and who had the confidence of his caste fellows, had a different approach to this problem although he himself had adopted the ideal of voluntary poverty. But Brahmin radicals whose philosophical bent of mind made them receptive for economic theories and ideologies and who had an innate claim to leadership eagerly joined the labour movement. They were its greatest asset but also its liability, because they were articulate and intelligent but they were not really in touch with the masses whom they were supposed to represent.

The radicalism of the educated élite could take different turns according to the context of regional culture, caste structure, and the differential impact of colonial rule. In Bengal, for instance, the educated élite was almost entirely composed of urbanized big or small absentee landlords, whereas trade and industry were dominated by Marwaris, who had come to Calcutta from the desert of Rajasthan, and by European businessmen. The educated Bengalis had, therefore, radical sympathies for the labour unions but they would certainly not want to stir up the peasants. However, even in the labour movement the Bengali intellectuals were often unreliable and could not be subjected to party discipline, their radicalism was emotional and they were inclined towards "terrorist individualism" [19] because the intimacy of closed groups of conspirators was more akin to their way of thinking than the rigorous discipline of Communist cadres or the contact with the masses. For many Bengali intellectuals the identification with the labour movement was only a rhetorical gesture which was supposed to support their claim to leadership which had been greatly reduced by the course of political development. By striking a revolutionary attitude [20] they wanted to recapture the mandate which they were going to lose. Similar tendencies prevailed

among the educated élite of Maharashtra which had earlier set the pace of national politics in close association with the Bengali élite. The radical turn was very ambivalent, it could lead to a Communist identification but also to a recourse to militant Neo-Hinduism (Hindu Mahasabha). It depended to a great extent on individual dispositions whether radicalism expressed itself in terms of "left" or "right" extremism.[21]

POPULISM IN THE HINDI HEARTLAND

In the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the populous Hindi heartland, ambivalent radicalism did not lead to a polarization, instead of this a peculiar blend of populism emerged which contained socialist elements as well as an undercurrent of Hindu communalism. The educated élite in this area had a much smaller base and was mostly recruited from urban Hindu high caste families. On the other hand there was an influential group of conservative Muslim landlords. Socialist and popular politics were bound to have a communal tinge as far as they implied an attack on the vested interests of the Muslim upper class. There was a great deal of agrarian unrest, first of all in the years of the depression, and the relations between landlords and tenants deteriorated very rapidly. This unrest coincided with Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign against the Salt Acts. Later on leading politicians tried to dissociate the agrarian question from the national cause. But in practice the agitation encompassed both issues.[22] It is significant that the great wave of strikes in India's metropolitan centres during the period from 1928 to 1929 was not synchronized with a national campaign whereas the agrarian unrest of the subsequent years coincided with a campaign. Some Congress politicians had pleaded for a national campaign at the time of the great strikes which were inspired to a great extent by Communist organizers.[23] But a national campaign which would have been based on this movement would have alienated the Indian capitalists who supported Gandhi's movement and did not mind agrarian radicalism as it did not affect their interests. The Bengali élite did not see this point and was more and more isolated. The dominant combination of Indian

politics was the Bombay-Northern India axis: Bombay financed the freedom movement and Northern India's agrarian populism provided the agitational support. Even the Congress Socialist Party which was founded in 1934 by a group of dissidents of the younger generation of Congress politicians mainly reflected this relationship. Its leading lights came from Bombay and Northern India. There were only a few Southern Brahmins, like E. M. S. Namboodiripad, in this new party but most of them later on joined the Communist Party and after left wing unity disintegrated Southern radicalism became almost exclusively a Communist prerogative.[24]

THE AUGUST MOVEMENT : NEW POLITICAL RECRUITMENT

The second world war necessitated a new agitational campaign. The Congress had renounced its co-operation with the government soon after the declaration of the war. Agitation was the only alternative to complete inactivity, but Gandhi as well as the Congress Socialists were anti-fascists and were in no mood to support the enemies of the British by starting a mass campaign in India. Furthermore, war-time emergency regulations enabled the government to crush a campaign immediately and it was therefore unwise to challenge the government under such circumstances. Gandhi designed individual protest campaigns which were not meant to give rise to mass agitation. But Gandhi's arrest in 1942 precipitated a widespread campaign of sabotage and resistance which came to be known as the "August Movement" and, in fact, did not last much longer than that month. This movement went beyond the narrow confines of earlier terrorist activities and combined the broad sweep of Gandhi's mass campaigns with activities such as attacks on police stations, dismantling of railway tracks, cutting of telegraph wires etc. Most of the participants belonged to the younger generation and subscribed to a vague socialism which was, however, strongly anti-communist, as the Communists had joined hands with the colonial rulers after the Soviet Union had become an ally of Great Britain.

The August Movement was less important in terms of its immediate results which were negligible than in terms of the

political recruitment of a new generation of Congress politicians. Many members of the educated élite reached a point of no return when they committed themselves to this movement. The more prominent among them had to go underground. Most of them became professional politicians who later on obtained important positions in the state and central governments of independent India.

THE RISE OF THE MINORITY GROUPS

Many of the newly recruited politicians did not belong to the old dominant minorities but were members of regional majority caste groups which had benefited from Western education much later than the dominant minorities. These majority groups came into their own after adult franchise was granted by an independent government. The colonial rulers had enfranchised only about 10 per cent of the Indian people, administrative and political reasons prevented them from extending the franchise any further. The extension of the franchise after independence shifted the balance of power towards the regional majority groups. The old élites remained dominant in the administrative services and in academic life but politics became the domain of the representatives of lower strata of the society. However, these new politicians represented to a large extent the interests of the middle peasantry and were, therefore, by no means revolutionary in their aims and ideas. Radical views found their sponsors still in the ranks of the dominant minorities. They had an added reason for their radical views because they felt that they had been dislodged from their place in national politics by the representatives of the majority groups.

AFTER INDEPENDENCE: THE STRUGGLE FOR LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

For some time the members of new and old regional élites found a common denominator in their agitation for the establishment of linguistic provinces. The development of regional languages and literatures had been greatly encouraged by the

freedom movement, and the members of the Western educated élite had increasingly turned to their regional languages as media for the expression of their views. The pride of one's own language which was often combined with antagonistic feelings towards neighbouring language groups created a strong sense of solidarity among the classes and the masses of the respective regions. The Hindi heartland was not touched by this movement, and the central government which was dominated by the Hindi heartland rejected the demands of the Southern provinces for a re-drawing of boundaries along linguistic lines, because this was thought to be incompatible with the idea of national unity.[25] Due to the resistance of the central government the regional movements for linguistic provinces became more and more virulent and there were mass agitations in many states. Finally the government had to concede all the regional demands and the agitation stopped after it had attained its aim. The members of the regional élites became loyal citizens once more and supported the government which they had fought for a considerable period of time.

Except for the agitation for linguistic provinces the educated élite did not sponsor any major agitation against the independent Indian government, in fact, the educated élite became part of the establishment after the transfer of power. This élite tries to retain the power which has been transferred to it, but it will be successful in this only to the extent that it does not disappoint the mass of the people.

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Part 3 / GOVERNMENT, LANDLORD AND TENANT

10 / FEUDALISM IN INDIA

FEUDALISM IS a concept which has been derived from specific phenomena in Western European history. The use of this concept in a comparative study of different cultures is beset with many problems. The question what constitutes feudalism has ideological implications, and the term is loaded with value judgements, but nevertheless an attempt should be made to use this concept of feudalism for a comparative study rather than to discard it.

THE INTERPRETATIONS OF FEUDALISM

The philosophers of the age of enlightenment described feudalism as a stage of development in the universal history of mankind. They analysed feudalism only in order to condemn it, but they conceived of it as a phenomenon which was not restricted to European historical experience. Karl Marx followed the tradition of the age of enlightenment when he included feudalism in his theory of universal historical stages, but he emphasized mainly the economic aspects of the feudal relationship and did not show much interest in the legal and constitutional structure of feudalism. The legal institutions of the feudal age, however, were of great importance to the historians of the late nineteenth century who saw in feudalism a negative force which had retarded the growth of the modern state by undermining public authority. As a reaction against this method of judging feudalism not in its own right but only in

terms of later political ideas, a new generation of historians set out to study feudal institutions in the context of medieval culture. In this way feudalism was given a positive connotation. Some scholars made it a point to trace the feudal origins of representative institutions and the growth of public law in its medieval form of rights and privileges. But this deepening of the concept of feudalism also implied a certain narrowing of its scope. The emphasis on the specific cultural context and on the legal and constitutional peculiarities of different historical regions made it more and more difficult to establish a common denominator for the purpose of comparative study. If one wanted to be very strict about the definition of feudalism no area beyond the narrow confines of the Loire and the Rhine could be considered to have been properly feudalized.

This refined Western European concept of feudalism which is mainly based on an analysis of the institution of vassalage stands in great contrast to the Marxist concept of feudalism which has retained the universal approach and is related to the agricultural base of the feudal order rather than to its constitutional apex. These two approaches to feudalism also differ with regard to the problem of the delimitation of feudalism as a historical phenomenon. Whereas the Marxists are mainly concerned with the sequence of their historical stages, the other analysts of feudalism discuss the regions to which their concept of feudalism can be applied.

INDIAN MARXISTS AND THE ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

The history of Asia does not fit easily into the Marxist theory of stages, and it poses great problems to those who have perfected their concepts in a European context. The fate of Asia was, therefore, often summed up by the convenient term Oriental Despotism. This despotism seemed to exclude the study of any contractual relationships such as the Western historian would look for in his study of feudalism. Despotic rule also seemed to presuppose a different social base from that envisioned in Marx' stages of historical development. In order to deal with this problem, Marx had invented a special category, "the Asiatic mode of production", which was neither

related to slavery nor to feudalism and capitalism. This category has been a source of embarrassment to Modern Asian Marxists, because if they accept it with all its implications they must adopt the same attitude as Marx did when he praised the impact of the Western colonial powers that crushed the old social order, that was stagnant and had no inherent potential for further development. From an Indian nationalist point of view such a statement could not be accepted, and Indian Marxists would find themselves in isolation if they could not reinterpret Indian history in a more positive fashion. They were thus compelled to show that Marx' historical stages could be traced in Asia, too, and their researches in Indian feudalism are motivated by this ideological quest for an emancipation from the "Asiatic mode of production".

In recent years the theory of the "Asiatic mode" has been revived in a new fashion by Karl Wittfogel in his treatise on Oriental Despotism. To Wittfogel it is not merely small-scale peasant agriculture but the despotic control of the means of irrigation which determined the fate of Asia. He derived this theory from his reading of Chinese history and explains with it the rise of a centralized bureaucracy which leaves no room for feudalism. Following a similar notion of Max Weber he equates despotic bureaucracy with modern totalitarianism. The image of Oriental Despotism was probably conjured up for the first time by the ancient Greeks who had to fight their Eastern neighbours, and it has ever since played an important role in European thought. Wittfogel has only added a new dimension to this old image by describing what he terms the "hydraulic society" which provides the social base of this despotism. It is doubtful whether this theory fits the facts of Chinese history, and it is definitely not applicable to India where irrigation has usually been under local control. The highly differentiated structure of Asian society has been neglected in the study of Oriental Despotism.

Indian mythology and classical literature with its emphasis on the role of the king and its normative approach to social relations does not provide much information about the actual distribution of power, and it is therefore not surprising that

some scholars have seen the despot in the exalted figure of the Indian king or have held that the caste system established the kind of social stratification which would have otherwise been achieved by feudalism. Static and rigidly stratified as it appeared to be the Indian social order was thought to be incompatible with feudalism. It was only when scholars turned to the inscriptions and documents concerning land grants with their detailed account of property rights and offices and their lists of donors and witnesses that a new image of social relations emerged. These relations can very well be described in terms of feudalism if the cultural differences are taken into account.

THE FUNCTIONS OF FEUDALISM

A functional definition of feudalism would help to establish a common denominator for similar developments in different cultural contexts. Feudalism is first of all a process of assimilation, a widening of social space. It curbs the power of central authorities but it also multiplies the exercise of authority and thus helps to fit untapped sources of power into the existing moulds of governance. The mainstay of the feudal power is the solidarity of the ruling élite, as expressed in a common style of life, an identity of religious and cultural ideals. Feudalism further implies that this privileged élite has a claim on goods and services provided by a settled agricultural population.

Feudalism, so defined, can be traced all over India and in those parts of South East Asia which were influenced by Indian culture from the 6th to the 13th century A.D. The spread of settled agriculture, the evolution of Hinduism as a religion embracing numerous regional cults and the establishment of a more or less uniform style of authority in most parts of Southern Asia can be attributed to this feudalism. In this way many tribes and different ethnic groups were drawn into the mainstream of Indian culture. Like in Europe the fiction of blood relationship was often used to re-inforce feudal ties. Thus an Indian prince of the eighth century A.D. asked his vassals to abstain from a war against a rebellious tribal chief-

tain, because this chieftain had been a vassal of his father and he therefore regarded him as his elder brother.

THE BRAHMINS AS AGENTS OF FEUDALISM

The first agents of feudalism were the Brahmins, who sponsored settled agriculture and were at the same time the interpreters of religious and cultural values. Land grants to Brahmins meant the accumulation of spiritual merit as well as cultural progress for his realm to every Indian ruler. The path of the Brahmins through all of India and beyond it can be traced by means of the copper tablets on which their land grants were recorded. A king of the Kalachuri dynasty of the 6th century A.D. boasted that the world was deafened by the sound of the engraving of copper tablets with which he granted land and privileges to the Brahmins. In a document of the Javanese Kingdom of Majapahit of the 13th century A.D. the Hindu and Buddhist clergy is assured of its rights and immunities, the property of its domains, the right to punish those who are obliged to serve the clergy and the privilege to wear the same dress and have the same food as the noblemen.

Immunities and the exercise of jurisdiction are important elements of European as well as of Indian feudalism. Almost all Indian land grants contain a paragraph assuring the recipients that no soldiers or other official messengers, are to trespass on their property. The surrender of rights on behalf of the higher authorities is very remarkable. In many instances the recipients of land grants were also entitled to collect the fines for crimes committed in their area.

The scale of feudal land grants in India reaches from the bestowing of unsettled wasteland on Brahmin families in the first century A.D. to the endowment of temples with hundreds of villages including the services of their inhabitants. Grants given to secular dignitaries were styled like those of the Brahmins. Even the phrase that the donor expected spiritual benefits from his grant and the ceremonial curses directed against those who would want to defraud the grantee were copied from the Brahmin precedent.

SECULAR LAND GRANTS

The village was more important as a unit of feudal grants in India than it was in Europe. It was particularly important in the first phase of feudalism from the 6th to the 12th century A.D. The idea of privileged "enjoyment" (*bhoga*) was applied to whole provinces (*bhukti*). A governor "enjoyed" his province, and every office was connected with such "enjoyment". But the actual payment or reward for services rendered was settled in terms of village grants. The grants of secular dignitaries were usually not recorded on copper tablets like those given to Brahmins but inscribed on perishable material much of which has been lost. As the sources for secular land grants are scarce it is of great importance to pay attention to the references to secular dignitaries who appear as donors or witnesses in the fully recorded Brahmin grants. These references show with progressive feudalization more and more donors who mention their own feudal lords, thus indicating that they acknowledge superior authorities but can nevertheless grant land in their own right. There is also much evidence for an inflation of honorific titles of the donor, such as *Mahasamantadhipati*, great protector of lords, a term which no longer referred to an office but to a rank in the nobility. Names and titles also indicate that the members of royal and princely families were incorporated in the feudal hierarchy.

Not only the names of donors but also the names of those who should be informed of the grant contribute to an understanding of feudal development. In the early grants of uncultivated land there are neither accurate boundaries mentioned nor is there any reference to those who ought to be informed of the grant. But when whole villages are transferred to a grantee the boundaries are listed in detail and there are passages exhorting the population of the village to serve the grantee and the village headmen of the respective village and of the neighbouring villages are informed about the extent of the grant.

In addition to such land grants there were also conditional military fiefs whose grantees had to supply the donor with a certain number of soldiers, horses and elephants in case of war.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF FEUDALISM

Almost at the same time when Europe experienced the beginning of its second feudal age in the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. there was also a change in the character of feudal relationships in India. Compulsory labour (*vishti*) which was in vogue in most parts of India in the previous centuries, particularly in those areas where there was much uncultivated land and the population would not have worked for the privileged élite unless it was forced to do so, was now no longer required. The village became less important as a unit of land grants and larger areas were given as a fief. Sale and mortgage of land was mentioned more and more frequently. Temples as corporations emerged as recipients of land grants instead of individual Brahmin families. The revival of trade and the wider circulation of money created new possibilities. Princes could grant the right of collecting revenue to guilds of merchants in order to be able to count on a regular income. Rich donors who wanted to support a temple could give money to such a guild with the stipulation that the capital should not be repaid but the interest should be devoted to the maintenance of the temple. The co-existence of feudalism and merchant-capitalism did not herald the end of feudalism but only indicated its transformation. Even the fact that occasionally fortunate dynasties were able to transcend the limitations of feudal power by combining the control of trade with a command over agricultural surplus close to their capital did not lead to a demise of feudalism, because these fortunate circumstances were of a precarious nature whereas the feudal pattern prevailed.

REGIONAL CONDITIONS

The pattern of feudal control was, of course, subject to regional conditions. Ecological differences were of basic importance: rice would provide an ecological foundation which would be rather different from that provided by wheat or millet. But there were also strategic considerations of the access to various regions. A brief survey of the strategic and ecological structure of the Indian sub-continent will give a better insight into

the varieties of regional conditions. The great Northern plains may be roughly divided into four major regional units: (1) The Punjab, which often became the prize of invaders from the North and was frequently linked to Central Asian empires, (2) The Doab between Jamuna and Ganges, strategically controlled by the cities on the banks of the Jamuna such as Delhi and Agra, the pivot of empire in many periods of Indian history, (3) the Central part of what is now Uttar Pradesh, in ancient times Ayodhya, and in later periods dominated by the capital city of Kanauj, and (4) the Eastern region of Bihar and Bengal, the area of ancient Magadha, and of the later Pala kingdom. The centre of an empire was usually located in one of these four fields, and the character of the empire or kingdom was determined by the choice of that field. The control of the Eastern region provided a good agricultural base in a fertile area as well as an access to the trade of the Eastern sea.

The Northwestern region was a foothold for conquerors who came across the mountain passes. The control of the banks of the Jamuna and the access to the resources of the Doab insured military dominance throughout Northern India. The intermediate zone between the Doab and the Eastern region was a fertile ground for the development of Indian culture, but it emerged into the political limelight only when there was no dominant power in the adjacent regions.

In Southern India the main division is that between the highland of the Deccan and the fertile lowlands on the East coast. The narrow strip of the West coast at the foot of the Western ghats which receives some of the most intensive rainfall in all of India was never a sufficient base for large scale political power. The highlanders of the Deccan were usually more mobile than the rice-cultivating lowlanders on the coast. They frequently attacked the coastal kingdoms and then withdrew to their highland strongholds. From the Badami of the Chalukyas to the Ellora of the Rashtrakutas one could draw a line which would indicate the location of most of the centres of the highland kingdoms. However, there were also kingdoms which tried to control both the highlands and the coastal areas, and they would establish their capitals along an intermediate

line which is marked by such names as Malkhed, Vijayanagar and Bangalore.

The central part of India from the backwoods of Orissa in the East to Malwa in the West remained to a large extent a refuge of tribes which were never quite subdued by the various systems of government nor absorbed by the mainstream of Hindu culture. Malwa, however, which straddles the crossroads from the Northern plains to the West coast was often a bone of contention as the forces of the North and of the South would vie with each other for the control of this area. The evidence which is available for a detailed regional differentiation of the feudal pattern is not yet sufficient for the kind of generalizations which would lead to a theory of the ecology of feudalism in India. But one may assume that the feudal pattern was of a more extensive character in the millet economy of the highlands, where far-flung and loosely connected armies of feudal retainers, equipped with horses, could be mobilized for various expeditions. Here feudal ties would be more tenuous, land grants larger, covering tracts which were not very densely populated, whereas the more stable areas of populated riceland would lend themselves to a system of smaller grants, a more intricate hierarchy, elaborate arrangements for defence rather than raids and expeditions etc. The central power in an East coast rice-based feudal state would more easily establish itself through the control of maritime trade and of agricultural surplus near the capital—as the Cholas did, whereas the rulers of the Deccan had to rely either on outright plunder or on the more refined forms of collecting tribute or taxes through a network of feudatories. In Northern India the Eastern rice area corresponded to the coastal pattern of the South, but the Western plains differed, of course, from the Deccan. Here there was both mobility and a greater resource base, as well as the possibility of the control of important inland trade routes. Thus a feudal lord in the Doab would generally be under the fairly strong control of powerful overlords with their headquarters on the banks of the Jamuna, demanding a good share of his surplus and supplementing it by military gains and the control of the Northern trade-routes.

THE MUSLIM CONQUEST

The impact of Muslim rule on Indian feudalism was conditioned by the fact that the Muslim rulers established their stronghold in this important North-Western region, and that they imported a system of military fiefs which they superimposed upon the Indian feudal pattern, depressing former feudatories to the level of landlords or intermediaries. It would be interesting to speculate what would have happened to India if Muslim rule would have been established as a coastal rice-based regime like in Indonesia rather than as a continental, wheatbased system. Being entirely dependent on conquest and the control of the vast North-Western plains the Muslim invaders spread a network of *iqta* or *jagir* fiefs over these plains in order to support their generals and officers of the state who were for the most part foreigners and established themselves as a small feudal élite on top of the decapitated structure of the previous regimes. Indigenous feudal lords were either swept away or reduced to the status of intermediary landholders. The patrimonial property of such landholders became subject to the rules of inheritance and it was therefore soon subdivided as one generation followed another. Where this did not happen because old traditions like the tribal custom of the Rajputs maintained memories of territorial sovereignty the new rulers had to absorb these units in their feudal system. For this purpose the paradoxical but useful institution of *watan jagir* was established by the Muslim rulers. A *jagir* was a fief given to an officer of the state instead of a salary and he was frequently transferred from one *jagir* to another as every promotion meant the assignment of a larger area. In fact, it was a matter of policy not to leave a *jagir* too long in anyone's hands. A *watan jagir*, however, which might be translated as home fief, was hereditary and non-transferable, a striking contrast to the normal *jagir*, and a good example for the flexibility of feudal relations.

The growth of a strong central government under the Moghul dynasty led to the elimination of many of the subtle distinctions of feudalism. The central government deliberately used the vague common denominator *zamindar*, landholder, for a

great variety of positions. A *zamindar* could be simply a landlord or a privileged village headman, or a descendant of former feudal lords, he could have been a petty king, or a tribal chieftain who had just come into contact with the government, he could even be a proud Rajput ruling a practically independent little state. There was, however, a distinction between a *jagirdar* and a *zamindar*, the *jagir* being usually attached to an office of the state. But as feudal relations became more complicated even under Moghul rule it could very well happen that somebody was a *zamindar* in the area of a *jagir* assigned to him or in somebody else's *jagir* and that he would continue to be a *zamindar* even if his *jagir* had been transferred. This shows that not only the super-imposition of one feudal system upon another but also the development within a feudal system tended to convert feudal lords into patrimonial landlords.

THE RISE OF PETTY FEUDATORIES: THE CASE OF MAHARASHTRA

The conversion of one type of dominance into another could work both ways as the process of feudalization of the Marathas showed. The Marathas rose to prominence by fighting against the Moghul government and finally establishing a state of their own. Their feudalization started at the village level with the increasing power of the headmen, called *patil*, who were converted into village *zamindars* by the Moghul revenue administration and thus became important mediators between the population and the government but also emerged as the organizers of resistance. The Maratha hero Shivaji who was himself a *patil* and *jagirdar* was only the most prominent among them. After Shivaji had succeeded in freeing the Maratha territory from Moghul rule, the Marathas had to face the problem how they should regulate the relations between their own central government and the local élite that had provided the backbone of Maratha power. The Maratha government created a system of conditional military fiefs, called *sarinjam*, on the model of the Moghul *jagir*, but these fiefs became soon hereditary and were amalgamated with other hereditary offices and positions. The Maharaja of Gwalior, for instance, one of

the mightiest princes of the Maratha confederacy, proudly recalled the origins of the power of his family by adding to his other titles that of Patil of Kankheri, a village of which his ancestors had been hereditary headmen.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDIAN AND EUROPEAN FEUDALISM

Feudalism had fulfilled in India its function of assimilation, but it had not produced representative institutions of the kind which grew out of feudalism in Europe. European feudalism embodied the tension between freedom and bondage in an intensely personal relationship between the lord and his vassal. The rites of feudal homage in Europe had taken their origin from old rites performed if one gave oneself up into servitude. The poignant memories of the ritual of bondage were balanced by a keen awareness of the privileges and immunities embodied in the feudal contract. In defending these privileges and immunities against encroachment by superior authorities the feudal barons were forced to co-operate and to make their claims a matter of public policy rather than of private grievance. This tension was lacking in Indian feudalism which never contained such a strong personal element and which had derived its version of the feudal contract not from the ritual of homage but from the sanctity of grants given to Brahmins.

But there was not only a lack of the internal elements which changed feudalism, there was also no external opponent of feudalism in India, such as the rising bourgeoisie in Europe. India had experienced the spread of a money economy, there were large ports and rich merchants, influential guilds and shrewd bankers. There was trade not only in luxury goods, but also in bulk commodities such as grain and textiles. But feudalism should not be equated with the lack of a money economy, it can very well co-exist with increasing monetization until the agents of the money economy create an economic system which dissolves all feudal ties. In India, the agents of the money economy were never able to do that, even if they were wealthy, skilful and influential, they could never transcend the limits

of their guild. The type of the bourgeois adventurer, as he emerged in Europe, could not prosper in India.

THE FEUDAL PATTERN UNDER CAPITALIST RULE

The enterprising European bourgeois who overthrew feudalism in his own country did not perform the same service when he appeared as a colonial ruler in Asia. In fact, British rule in India provided the remarkable example of the preservation of important features of feudalism by a capitalist power. Of course, the British did not grant fiefs to their officers as the Muslim conquerors had done, instead they maintained an efficient salaried bureaucracy. They also followed the pattern of merchant-capitalism in their dealings with their subjects, but they reserved the capitalist mode of production for themselves and did their best to prevent its growth in India. In keeping India at the level of pre-capitalist production they also maintained the stunted and ossified remnants of feudalism and fitted them into their system of colonial rule. They replaced the apex of the feudal hierarchy with their corps of civil servants, depressing the indigenous feudatories to the level of landholders and intermediaries, just as the Muslim conquerors had done before them. But unlike the Muslim rulers they really sealed off the top effectively and permitted only undergrowth, such as sub-infeudation. They organized a ruthlessly efficient revenue collection for which they would have been envied by their most despotic indigenous predecessors, and they tried to emulate these predecessors by getting as close as possible to the actual cultivator of the land in collecting the revenue, but in actual practice they also arrived at a feudal compromise by relying on intermediaries. They absolved these intermediaries from all functions of power which they had under previous regimes and turned them into parasitical rent collecting agents, converting their position of status and privilege into one of control over private property without giving them an opportunity of turning this property into capitalist investment. Feudalism which is a matter of public status was turned into a private affair under British rule. This private feudalism was not conducive to the growth of capitalist agriculture leave alone the

transfer of capital from agriculture to industry. Whenever the private feudalist had accumulated some capital he would buy control over more land thus increasing his feudal domain rather than trying to become a capitalist. This tendency was encouraged by the whole structure of the British regime which provided for the security of legal title in land but exposed all economic activities to the control of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, against which no Indian could hope to compete successfully. This bourgeoisie was well satisfied with maintaining capitalist production at home and merchant-capitalism abroad, keeping the channels of trade open by means of a colonial government embedded in a quasi-feudal structure which ensured India's existence at a low level of dependence.

11 / GOVERNMENT, LANDLORD AND TENANT IN INDIA, 1875-1900

THE RELATION OF LANDLORD AND TENANT: RENT, CUSTOM AND CONTRACT

In an agrarian society rights in land are the constitutive elements of political and economic power. The structure of this society reflects the way in which numerous interests are accommodated in a scale which reaches from the tiller of the soil to the highest authorities of the state. Landlord and tenant are designations of such interests, their position may differ according to the specific scale in which they are placed. In India these two terms were burdened with alien connotations because British revenue officers, who had to fix the responsibility for paying the revenue on somebody, streamlined agrarian relations by following their own native model. In England landlord and tenant had made the transition from feudal status to modern contract. In India the enjoyment (*bhoga*) of a part of the produce of the soil and of the labour of those who were destined to till it was still very much a matter of status. A contractual relationship tends to focus on the two partners to the contract and, as far as its economic aspect is concerned, it will be governed by competition. Rights which are based on status do not refer to two partners but are conceived of in terms of the whole status scale, the share of the produce is accordingly governed by custom. Customary rates may be affected by changes in the structure of political power but they cannot respond to economic competition, as they are normally expressed in terms of proportions which reflect social privileges. Customary

rent is, therefore, in every respect different from the kind of rent about which Ricardo said that it does not influence prices but is influenced by them. In fact, Ricardo's dictum may be reversed in the case of customary rent; it is not influenced by prices, as it is based on fixed proportions of the produce, but it influences prices, because it regulates the production and distribution of the crop.[1]

The commutation of rents, which were hitherto paid in kind, into rents payable in cash contributed more than anything else to the great change in the relation of landlord and tenant in India in the nineteenth century. This commutation was not a simple transition from a less convenient to a more convenient form of payment; it was a revolutionary change from customary to contractual rent. By accepting this commutation landlord and tenant abandoned the customary status scale in which their respective shares of the produce were fixed by the sanction of tradition, and faced each other as partners to a contract for which they were individually responsible. That this was done gradually and with great caution could be observed from the numerous stages of commutation which often existed side by side in the same area. The first step was usually to agree on a cash payment for the customary share of the produce at the current price; the next step was an annual money rent, both parties reserving the right to return to the customary produce share; the fixing of a money rent regardless of the produce might be the third step and it was only then that the rent could become a matter of bargaining between landlord and tenant, as both of them wanted to get a larger share of the value of the produce.[2]

The change from one role to another and from one type of rent to another was not very smooth. Old and new relationships between landlord and tenant, and between tenant and sub-tenant existed side by side. This complicated pattern of dependence contained elements of privilege and of economic coercion. All relationships tended to become ambivalent. In keeping with this ambivalence "rent" was neither customary nor governed by universal competition and corresponded to an arbitrarily differentiated squeeze, thus confounding

both those who looked to custom and those who believed in a market rate when dealing with Indian rents.[3]

The ambivalent rent structure did not behave in the proper Ricardian way but it had also lost its customary stability; it could combine the worst of both worlds by responding to a rise in prices and then cutting so deep into the earnings of the tenant as to leave him without a sufficient margin for the cost of production.[4] The vicissitudes of rural credit added further complication to this rent structure. The tenant had to sell the crop at a low price so as to pay the rent and repay his loan and frequently he had to buy grain later in the year at a higher price from the same grain-dealer to whom he had sold his crop and to whom he was indebted because the dealer was also a moneylender. In many places the moneylender soon became a landlord and in this case the credit-system and the rent structure merged into a perfect blend. But even where he did not become a landlord the moneylender was able to exploit the existing pattern of agrarian relations to his advantage. His activities were restricted only in those areas where the landlords provided credit to their tenants.[5]

The new rent-and-credit-structure and the remnants of customary relationships enmeshed landlord and tenant in a web of confusion and conflict. The introduction of money rents facilitated the subletting of land, sometimes referred to as "sub-infeudation", which would have been very difficult under the customary system as the levels of those who had a share in the produce were more or less fixed. The contractual relation of landlord and tenant fitted in with this development, but at the same time this concept of the relationship precluded the recognition of the rights of those who were tenants of tenants, because a tenant could not be a landlord and only a landlord could have tenants. This paradox was most striking in the ryotwari provinces where the government was supposed to be the landlord and the ryots were government-tenants. As these ryots could not be landlords their tenants did not exist as far as the government was concerned. In fact, the existence of such tenants had to be ignored even as a matter of principle, since nobody would want to be the tenant of a ryot as long

as the government was willing to give him uncultivated land. If ryots had tenants, as indeed they had, it was better not to look too closely into the matter because this might upset the whole theory of the ryotwari settlement.[6] In other provinces, where the British-Indian government did not pretend to be the landlord, the problems of sub-letting could be faced without such qualms. But even then it was difficult to cope with it and all kinds of terms like "tenure holder" and "under ryot" had to be coined in order to designate interests which did not fit into the simple pattern of landlord and tenant.[7]

Another notion which did not agree with the British concept of landlord and tenant was the customary division of an estate into *sir*, i.e. land under the immediate control of the landlord, and other land which was let to tenants. Only in those parts of Northern India where *sir* had been differentiated for the purposes of revenue assessment did this concept prevail. Both in the permanently settled areas where pure landlordism had been introduced and in the ryotwari provinces where no landlords existed this concept was obliterated.[8] Accordingly the customary right of the tenant to an undisturbed occupancy of his holding in the land allotted to tenants outside the *sir* of the landlord had also lost its meaning and all tenants could be treated as tenants-at-will if they could not prove that their occupancy was based on a contract with the landlord. As long as there was enough land and the prices were stable or falling, the problem of subletting and of the tenant's occupancy right did not disturb agrarian relations. But the combination of money rents and population pressure induced the tenant to sublet his land as soon as he could afford it and made the landlord jealous of the tenant's occupancy right. A landlord who felt that the money rent which he received did not keep up with the rise in prices would be eager to reduce all his tenants to the status of rack-rented tenants-at-will so as to enjoy the full increase in the value of his property. Once customary rent had been abandoned the other customary constraints would seem to be irrelevant.

Rising prices were the most important cause of a rapid change in agrarian relations as they provided a strong incentive for the commutation of customary rents into money rents. If

the money rent left the tenant with more than he would have retained under the customary system he could sub-let land or raise a larger family, in both cases this would contribute to an increase of the rural population.[9] With an increasing population prices would continue to rise and landlords would be tempted to raise the rent. The combined rent-and-credit-squeeze would always have some effect and it would also contribute to a further rise in prices. This system could work only if there was a steadily growing supply of money, because demonetization and deflation would have put it into reverse gear. It so happened that in the years after 1876 the development of the Indian currency showed an inflationary tendency and monetization was no problem. A stream of silver tore landlords and tenants away from their customary moorings and swept them into a new world where their relationship had to be defined in different terms.

MONETIZATION AND THE DEPRECIATING SILVER CURRENCY

Silver depreciated rapidly after 1876 due to an increase in world production of this metal. While other nations demonetized silver India absorbed the world's surplus to an amazing extent. The increase in the active circulation of silver rupees in India outpaced the growth of population considerably. Whereas the population increased at about 1 per cent per annum the currency expanded on an avarage by about 2.3 per cent per annum in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[10] This amounted to an induced inflation. Internal rupee prices were rising. India exported foodgrains in spite of a drastic fall of the gold price for this commodity at the time of the world agrarian crisis.[11] The silver screen protected the Indian agricultural market from the impact of world competition. Even when there was a glut in the world market people could starve in India while foodgrains were exported. By absorbing silver and exporting wheat at the lowest price India provided the balance at the base of the world economy of the late nineteenth century.[12] The expansion of the currency maintained a curious balance: the total value in terms of gold of the expanded silver

currency of 1893 was about the same as that of 1876.[13] For this reason one may speak of a "static expansion" of India's currency. This phenomenon was in tune with the general development of agrarian relations in the country. The rent-credit squeeze and the practices of grain dealers helped to maintain a steady rise in prices. Prices would rise due to famine or scarcity but never drop so much as to touch their previous level for any length of time. The grain-dealers were able to hold the price line even during years of a good harvest.[14] They may have bought more cheaply in a good year, but this did not mean that they would sell cheaply. Being well integrated in the rent-credit-squeeze system they were anyhow used to buying at a low price and selling at a higher price later on.[15] Due to the sufficient flow of money the system was not subjected to deflationary pressure which might have broken the catch and started an avalanche of falling prices. The flow of money was guaranteed to a great extent by the peculiar way in which the Government of India paid their home charges. These charges had to be paid in gold in London but in order to facilitate the transfer the Secretary of State would sell Council Drafts to be redeemed in silver in India.[16] As long as the Government of India could raise the money in silver the system could continue to operate. The Indian mints were open to the free coinage of silver but the government was bound to its revenue resources and these could not be augmented so as to keep up with the depreciation of the currency. This finally forced the government to close the mints in 1893, and to introduce a gold-exchange standard by which the rupee was maintained as a token coin. The currency remained a silver currency but was rated at its gold exchange value.[17]

The deflationary effect of this measure was very severe. The Government of India had put monetary development into reverse gear for purely fiscal reasons. But there was no immediate drop in prices because a great calamity befell India at the end of the century. Severe famines set in and agricultural prices remained at their previous level while the currency slowly approximated the exchange rate at which the government wanted to maintain it.[18]

THE LAND REVENUE PROBLEM: HOW TO MAKE BOTH ENDS MEET?

The land revenue was the largest single item in the budget of the Government of India.[19] The problem whether this revenue was a tax or a rent was never satisfactorily settled,[20] but for all practical purposes it was a rent because it could not be adjusted to the requirements of the budget; once assessed it remained a fixed income which more or less determined the limits of the budget. The main item of the budget being so inelastic, the government was caught on the horns of a dilemma when the home charges had to be paid in gold but the revenue was received in depreciating silver. With indirect taxation or customs duties the government would have been riding the tide of inflation but the solid weight of land revenue attached it to the soil. Earlier plans of a permanent limitation of the land revenue demand were soon shelved[21] and the new Department of Revenue and Agriculture was supposed to find ways and means of increasing the revenue.[22] In this way the government was bound to antagonize the landlords who were eager to get more rent but did not want to pay more revenue. Long periods of settlement, usually 30 years, debarred the government from taking immediate advantage of an increase in the rental assets of the landlord. But even at the time of the revision of the settlement it was deemed to be impossible to raise the assessment at once so radically as to catch up with the landlord's capacity to pay and the government's desire to receive revenue.[23] The only solution seemed to be either a shorter term of settlement or a prospective assessment which would take into account a future increase in the rental assets.[24] Other suggestions such as taking Ricardo's theory as an operational rule by tying rent and revenue to a price index were soon disregarded because they were not within the scope of administrative practice.[25] Short term settlements and prospective assessment were practicable but they could be objected to for reasons of sound revenue policy. Prospective assessments would have to be based on a projection of past trends in the development of prices and rents, and there was no reason why these past trends should continue in the

future.[26] Short term settlements would be very unpopular, particularly after everybody had become used to long term settlements and the government had at one time even proposed to make all settlements permanent. The Secretary of State rejected all these plans of the Government of India and was at the most prepared to accept higher assessments which would not be introduced at once but only in stages, the additional revenue being remitted in the early years of a new term of settlement.[27] In this way the focus was shifted from the elasticity of revenue assessment to the elasticity of revenue collection.

In comparing their own rigid methods of revenue collection with those of previous regimes British administrators had often praised the elasticity of the revenue system of indigenous rulers who had taken more when the harvest was good and less when it was bad.[28] But this nostalgia for customary revenue collection, just as the quest for customary rent, was incompatible with the conditions created by British rule. Elasticity of revenue collection in terms of British administrative practice would only mean a more refined system of rules and regulations so as to take account of the rainfall, the condition of the people, etc., and thus it could only lead to another type of rigidity.[29]

With the closing of the mints the whole problem of revenue assessment and collection receded into the background. In managing the currency the government could now use it as an instrument of indirect taxation and abstain from a direct assault on the revenue payers.[30] The methods of a pickpocket are usually less frightening and often more effective than those of a highwayman, and the highwayman may turn into a pickpocket when he finds himself without suitable weapons. If the Government of India would have been able to step up the land revenue demand so as to recover the loss incurred in paying the home charges, the mints would not have been closed and India could have absorbed the silver which America wanted to disgorge at that time. But as the mints had to be closed Britain turned a deaf ear to American pleas to re-open them and valiantly defended the integrity of the Indian currency for which it had not cared too much as long as the going was good.[31]

TENANCY PROTECTION: WHO GETS WHAT?

As the government could not get at the landlord it thought of protecting the tenant. If it was impossible to recover a larger part of the rental assets of the landlord he should at least not squeeze any more out of his tenants. In order to protect the tenant sufficiently it was necessary to fortify his customary occupancy right as well as to restrict the right of the landlord to raise the rent.[32] Prescriptive rights could be substituted for customary occupancy rights,[33] but rent restrictions were not easily accommodated in British legal concepts.[34] Customary rent was often referred to but it proved to be intractable both in legal and in practical terms. Legally it could not be defined and practically it could not be found, because wherever rents were paid in cash, custom had been obliterated, and where they were paid in kind the problem of rent restriction did not arise. Any inspection of the rents actually paid revealed a confusing pattern for which no common denominator could be found.[35] Therefore, arbitrary restrictions were adopted which placed a ceiling on rent enhancement regardless of the rent originally paid. The permissible rent enhancement which emerged in this way was a little less than 1 per cent per annum, roughly corresponding to the average rise in prices as well as to the average rate of growth of the population, though no attempt was made to define the restrictions in these terms.[36]

In restricting the rights of the landlord and augmenting those of the tenant the British administrators debated at length the concepts of custom and competition. Even if custom proved to be elusive and arbitrary restrictions had to be adopted this was thought of as somehow restoring a customary balance and reducing the harsh effects of competition. Some administrators who were very anxious to promote the good work of tenancy protection proudly stated that they had eliminated competition altogether.[37] Others warned them and demanded that at least the tenants-at-will should remain exposed to the undisturbed operation of competition because if they were also sheltered there would be no way of judging the market rate of rent.[38] In fact, those who were for and those who were against "com-

petition" could only tilt the balance of the rent-credit-squeeze either in favour of the landlord or of the tenant by conferring privileges on the one or on the other. Under the prevailing circumstances agrarian relations in India could not enter the sphere of pure contract and, therefore, there could be no real competition. As customary relations were eroded by the impact of monetization the administrators had to establish a new status scale, and this is exactly what they did even though in reasoning about it they could not escape the universe of discourse which was familiar to them. In designing the new status scale the administrators were, therefore, constantly handicapped by their own concepts. In addition to these conceptual difficulties they had to cope with another problem inherent in the determination of a status scale. Such a scale was incomplete if it did not take into account all interests in the land, but they could not go beyond a certain point without upsetting their revenue system. This is what they meant by leaving certain interests to the operation of "competition". As a result of this a very uneven scale emerged of which only the upper echelons were marked in an arbitrary fashion by government interference.[39]

The Indian economist, M. G. Ranade, suggested at that time that the government should cut the Gordian knot of agrarian relations by giving the tenants full proprietary rights and compensate the landlords by giving them equally unrestricted rights in the land under their own management to which they might add as much land as they would be permitted to resume from their tenants.[40] This suggestion foreshadowed the method of land reform adopted by independent India some seventy years later. But at the time when this suggestion was made it was definitely not in tune with the prevailing policy of tenancy protection, prevention of land alienation and relief of encumbered estates which added up to a kind of standstill arrangement imposed upon conflicting interests by a bewildered government. If the British administrators had followed Ranade's advice they would have been forced to make up their mind about the level at which full proprietary rights should be granted. But this was the very issue which they shirked for good reasons, because they were hardly able to find an answer to the question "Who is who?" in agrarian relations and, therefore, they were

of course reluctant to decide once and for all who ought to get what. Their experience with the landed interests which they had created at an earlier stage taught them not to trust their own judgement too much in these matters. They were eager to keep the channels of executive and judicial control open and not to commit the government to any final legislative verdict.[41] Shifting the pegs on the status scale by some legislative protection here or there was not as dangerous and irrevocable as going in for the new dispensation which Ranade recommended. The British had learnt by their experience in India that all legislative interference was like a shot in the dark which might hit anything but the point it was aimed at. They, therefore, preferred a tentative and remedial interference to a bold and new measure. However, even limited interference was bound to make an impact on agrarian relations. The British did not draw a bold line between different interests but as they singled out the substantial tenants for special protection and devoted less attention to those lower down in the scale they practically marked the strata of agrarian society which would benefit most from a land reform of the kind suggested by Ranade, and thus they predetermined in the nineteenth century the shape of things to come in the twentieth century.[42]

RECORD OF RIGHT: WHO IS WHO?

The only sure guide for anyone who wishes to penetrate the web of agrarian relations is a reliable record of rights. In many parts of India this guide was and still is conspicuous by its absence.[43] Those who tried to draw a line between different interests could never be sure of what they did because the rights which they wanted to distinguish were nowhere fully recorded and existed only in the minds of men. He who had the longer purse or the stronger influence could always see to it that others would accept what he had in mind.

A record of rights could only exist if it was imposed from above by the government or if it was kept as a record of division of shares among men of equal status. The ideal conditions for its maintenance would be if it existed for both these rea-

sons as in the case of the estates and villages of Northern India where the record of rights was the basis of the accounts of the proprietary body and of the revenue assessment.[44] In all other parts of India where these conditions did not prevail there was no adequate record of rights. The government would normally be interested only in a record for the purposes of revenue settlement. This record was sufficient if it provided information about those who were responsible for the payment of the revenue, and the government would hesitate to burden this record with any information which did not contribute to this aim. Settlements being of a long duration, the revenue authorities did not want to cope with the innumerable changes in property due to inheritance or alienation.[45] Strange as it may sound the revenue record in the course of time bore no relation to actual holdings and if it did then it was purely accidental. It even happened that the man whose name appeared in the revenue record did not own the land any longer but thought that this last connection with his land would help him to recover it if he could pay off the debt which had forced him to alienate the land.[46]

It was only when the government wanted to check land alienation and to protect the tenant against the landlord that a record of rights for other than revenue purposes was asked for. But as the maintenance of such a record did not correspond to any strong interests and was resented by all those who thought that obscurity in agrarian relations was to their advantage it did not make much headway.[47] In the rent-credit-squeeze system neither the landlord nor the tenant was eager to put all the facts on record, because everybody hoped to get more by cheating the other rather than fighting for some right. This was only natural in a world where customary rights dwindled under the impact of monetization and new rights of the kind which should be recorded could only be regarded with suspicion. After all who wants to put his cards on the table if he does not know what game is to be played—and in a time of change nobody can tell the rules of the game. This tendency of suspended gamesmanship was best expressed in the preference for *benami* transaction, i.e. concluding deals under a false

name. In some parts of India this was done as a matter of course, even if no harm was meant by doing it, as one may not want to cheat anybody at present but should be prepared if one is forced to do so in the future.[48]

LIMITED DEVELOPMENT: THE PROBLEM OF A HIDEBOUND SYSTEM

The problem of answering the questions "Who is who?" and "Who gets what?" is indicative of the general ambiguity which pervaded Indian agrarian relations. The changes in the nature of rent and the strange phenomenon of the "static expansion" of the silver currency are inherent features of this ambiguity. Large scale monetization did not come to India as an invigorating influence; it only helped to convert the existing patterns of dominance and dependence into a rent-credit-squeeze system. In this way more people could be accommodated less comfortably in the narrow confines of an agrarian structure which did not change. Thus monetization was not used as a means of siphoning off capital in order to invest it in industries. The only agency which could have done this, the government as collector of the land revenue, looked at this revenue only from the narrow budgetary point of view of meeting the rising expenditure for the home charges. Being alien rulers and thinking only in terms of the dichotomy of custom and competition the British were unable to take any bold, constructive action. Lord Mayo thought of the improvement of Indian agriculture and held that "the only Indian landlord who can command the requisite knowledge and capital is the State".[49] This view was shared by Indian nationalists like Ranade,[50] but it did not represent the mainstream of British opinion. The Department of Agriculture which Mayo started for constructive purposes was soon abolished and when it was re-established some years later it had to concentrate on such maters as the enhancement of the revenue assessment, tenancy legislation, and the prevention of land alienation.[51] The terrible famines which periodically overwhelmed India at that time bewildered the government and several famine commissions produced numerous re-

commendations which pointed to remedial legislation, but they never tackled the main issue why people in India should starve when a glut in the world market caused a fall in the prices of foodgrain.[52] Theories about the automatic adjustment of international trade which would prevail over all temporary dislocations caused by the means of exchange deluded the British administrators[53] and they did not recognize the structural deformation which the stream of silver caused in India by holding it down at the lowest level of the world economy and creating an internal inflation which was not related to any productive investment. The limited development which took place in India did not create the basis for future economic growth but twisted and then reinforced the existing system of agrarian relations making it totally hidebound so that it became a liability rather than an asset.

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[2] For a description of this process see the report of Major Erskine in Government of the North West Province and Oudh, *The Condition of the Tenantry in Oudh*, Vol. II, Allahabad, 1883.

[3] For an illustration of this problem see Government of Bengal, Board of Revenue, Minute by Mr Dampier of 25 June 1883 (regarding the experiments to establish a Table of Rates); see also chapter 12 of this book.

[4] For a discussion of this problem see the Minute of Lord Ripon and the Despatch of the Government of India to the Secretary of State, June, 1885 in Government of India, Legislative Dept., Oct. 1886, Pro. No. 211-270; also the Minute of Lt. Gov. Rivers Thompson, in Government of India, *Papers re. Bengal Tenancy Bill*, No. II, Calcutta, 1884.

[5] See the Note on Land Transfers in Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Oct., 1895, Pro. No. 72-73.

[6] The contrast between Ryotwari and Zamindari systems became a problem for the Government of Madras when tenancy legislation for the Zamindari areas of this province which was predominantly Ryotwari had to be taken into consideration. See Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Sept., 1904, Pro. 37-38.

[7] A tenureholder is, according to Section 5 of the Bengal Tenancy Act

VIII of 1885, a tenant who holds more than 100 bighas; a ryot could acquire an occupancy right in land held by a tenureholder; an under-ryot is the tenant of a ryot.

[8] For a discussion of the distinction between land under the management of the landlord and land let to tenants see Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May, 1898, Pro. No. 11-16; also the Memorial of the Madras Landholders Association of 4 July 1898 in Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Sept., 1904, Pro. No. 37-38; for Bengal see Peary Mohan Mookerjea, *Opinions of Mofussil Landholders on the Bengal Tenancy Bill*, Calcutta, 1883.

[9] See the minutes of Lord Ripon and Rivers Thompson referred to in footnote 4.

[10] The figures for the total active circulation are based on the calculations of Fred Atkinson, "Rupee Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LXVI, 1903, pp. 110-112; the census data are taken from Govt. of India, Census Reports 1881 and 1891.

[11] For the fall in gold prices see the index numbers of Augustus Sauerbeck published in his article on "Prices of Commodities and the Precious Metals", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. XLIX, 1886, reprinted in E. M. Carus-Wilson, ed., *Essays in Economic History*, Vol. III, London, 1962, pp. 68-127.

[12] See Fred Atkinson, "Silver Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LX, 1897, p. 117.

[13] The total active circulation, as calculated by Atkinson (see footnote 10) was 1890 million rupees in 1893. If reduced by 36 per cent (depreciation) this would amount to about Rs. 1186 million; the total circulation in 1876 was Rs. 1250 million.

[14] See F. Atkinson, "Rupee Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LXXII, 1909, p. 566.

[15] A good indication of the changes in the price level in the course of the year is given by the tables of monthly prices compiled by F. Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, 1903, p. 106.

[16] See J. M. Keynes, *Indian Currency and Finance*, London, 1913, p. 102 ff.

[17] On the gold-exchange standard which does not imply a gold currency, see Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 15 ff. cf. also David Barbour, *The Standard of Value*, London, 1912, Ch. XVII: "The Establishment of a Gold Standard in India and the Results of that Measure".

[18] For the prices in the famine years 1896-97 see F. Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, 1903, p. 106; for a discussion of the effects of the famines see B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India, 1860-1945*, London, 1963.

[19] Govt. of India, *Reports of Currency Committees*, p. 1. The remittances of the Govt. of India amounted to 140 million rupees in 1873-74 and to about 265 million rupees in 1892-93; in 1873-74 the gross revenue of the Govt. of India was about 550 million rupees of which about 230 million were land revenue, cf. R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History*

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[20] For a discussion of the question "Is land reform a tax or rent?" see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, June, 1920, Pro. No. 41 (B).

[21] R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 273 ff.

[22] See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, April, 1909, Pro. No. 11 (Memorandum by J. O. Miller, summarizing the evolution of revenue policy).

[23] See, for instance, Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, August, 1892, Pro. No. 17-19.

[24] See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, June, 1895, Pro. No. 25-29.

[25] See the suggestion of Justice Field as member of the Bengal Rent Law Commission, C. D. Field, *Landholding and the relation of Landlord and Tenant in Various Countries*, Calcutta, 1885, p. 792 ff.

[26] See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May, 1895, Pro. No. 31-32.

[27] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Dec., 1895, Pro. No. 44-46.

[28] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Feb., 1906, Pro. No. 7-9, and the earlier file on "Elasticity of Assessment and Collection of Land Revenue" in Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Jan., 1899, Pro. No. 15-20.

[29] *Ibid.* ("Elasticity of Assessment . . .") cf. the suggestions of Denzil Ibbetson who wanted to base the revenue collection on the eleven-years cycle of the sun spots which are supposed to influence the average rainfall.

[30] See the remarks of Mr Moses in the Bombay Legislative Council, quoted in Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Dec., 1901, Pro. 26-27.

[31] See Lord Farrer, *Studies in Currency*, London, 1898, especially Chapter XI, "Bimetallism and the Indian Mints".

[32] See chapter 12 of this book; for the Irish precedent see Lord Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland*, London, 1912.

[33] See Radharomon Mookerjee, *Occupancy Right*, Calcutta, 1919.

[34] On the incompatibility of rent restrictions with British economic thought see Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 66, 69.

[35] The experiments conducted by the Government of Bengal in order to establish a table of rates are an instance of this problem (cf. footnote 3).

[36] The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 provided for a restriction of rent enhancements to two annas in the Rupee (12½ per cent) in fifteen years and the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 mentioned one anna in a Rupee 6¼ per cent(for the statutory period of seven years.

[37] See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May, 1898, Pro. 11-16, and Sept., 1904, Pro. No. 37-38.

[38] *Ibid.*, Sept., 1904, Pro. No. 37-38, remarks by Ibbetson on rent and competition.

[39] For a debate on administrative interference and rights in land see Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 53, 1907, Punjab Tenancy.

[40] M. G. Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics*, Madras, 1920 ("Prussian Land-legislation and Tenancy Bill", 1883).

[41] Both the judges who preferred precedent to new legislation and the administrators who thought that executive action was the best remedy for the settlement of disputes between landlord and tenant were against legislative experiments. It was the existence of these vested interests as much as political prudence that curbed the activities of legislators in India and made them pay due respect to judicial or executive decisions as a means of adjusting agrarian relations.

[42] The profile of agrarian relations as it has emerged after several decades of tenancy protection is revealed in the interesting report by Wolf Ladejinsky who visited a few Indian districts which participated in an intensive agrcultural programme, see W. Ladejinsky, *A Study of Tenurial Conditions in Package Districts*, Govt. of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1965.

[43] For the discussion of the establishment of a record of rights in different Indian provinces see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, July 1897, Pro. No. 1-12; see also Govt. of India, Papers re. Land Records Maintenance Act III of 1895, Calcutta, 1896, for the lack of an adequate record of rights; see also Ladejinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 12, 24, 32.

[44] See B. H. Baden Powell, *Land Systems of British India*, London, 1892, Vol. II, p. 88 f., 275 ff.

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[48] See Sir George Campbell, "Tenure of Land in India", in *Systems of Land Tenure in Various Countries*, London, 1870.

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[50] For Ranade's view of the responsibility of the State in India see his essay "Indian Political Economy", 1892, in *Essays on Indian Economics*.

[51] See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Central, Jan. 1882, Pro. No. 1-6 (Constitution of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture). The department was first established in 1871, then merged with the Home Dept. and was re-established as a full department in 1882; for the further history of the department see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue, May, 1890, Pro. No. 13-15.

[52] For a summary of the findings of the Famine Commissions see B. M. Bhatia, *op. cit.*

[53] The theory of automatic adjustment found a very influential proponent in Walter Bagehot, whose collected essays on currency in the

Economist were published under the title *Some Articles on the Depreciation of Silver*, London, 1877. Similar views were expressed by economists like Giffen and Goschen; their views prevailed for a long time over those held by the defenders of a universal gold standard like Farrer and Welby; for a further analysis of the currency problem see chapter 14 of this book.

12 / THE BENGAL TENANCY ACT OF 1885 AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LEGISLATION IN OTHER PROVINCES

THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF TENANCY PROTECTION

Modern economists may wonder why land reforms and agrarian legislation in South Asia are primarily political and seem to neglect economic considerations like productivity.[1] These economists forget the colonial heritage of agrarian legislation which provides the foundation for all legislative efforts even after independence. The colonial rulers did not legislate in the interest of economic planning but in order to forestall political unrest. They had to keep an even balance of different interest groups so as to protect the social base of colonial rule. Of course, they usually did not reveal these motives and preferred to think in terms of social justice. They also had ambivalent feelings about legislative interference, because the doctrines of political economy which they had absorbed made them reluctant to tamper with economic forces. These doctrines, which had been evolved in the context of the economic development of England were incompatible with tenancy protection, rent control, and the like, which could only distort but not reverse the course of economic development. Those who wanted to change the course of events by legislative interference, so the economist thought, might just as well try to legislate against the law of gravity.

The Irish experience had led the representatives of political economy to second thoughts about their doctrines. But even then they found it very difficult to derive concepts from these

second thoughts which could stand the test of the first principles that they defended. John Stuart Mill who did not hesitate to advocate tenancy protection and rent control in Ireland, had a hard time trying to convince his contemporaries of the soundness of these propositions.[2] Faced with the Irish and the Indian challenge the British economists infused a dose of relativism into their teachings and readily agreed that what was true for England was not necessarily true for other countries, but they did not go on to reconstruct political economy on a more universal foundation. Those who had to deal with Irish and Indian problems could invoke this relativism but they did not find any guidance in a new economic theory. The result of this was a kind of political economy which was more political than economy. Administrators who were left in the lurch by the economists had to justify their political decisions with some eclectic economic thought of their own. But this was not always a case of simply finding some convenient reasons for a predetermined course of action. Very often the administrators were really at a loss as to what to do and tried to derive from their understanding of political economy some suggestions for legislative action. No wonder that the result was a hybrid of expediency and dogmatism.

In the absence of a new theory which could have taken account of different economies such as India's and Ireland's the resort to custom became very important. If people did not behave in accordance with the laws of political economy they obviously did so because their customs were different and, therefore, all these customs should be either destroyed or respected. Political prudence recommended that they should be respected. But custom proved to be a most illusive phenomenon. For the purposes of legislation some definite features of customary relations had to be isolated from the universe of custom. The very fact of isolation, however, proved to be fatal to the customary relation. The dimension of custom when added to political expediency and economic dogmatism made confusion worse confounded.[3]

The pattern of legislation which developed in this way following the method of trial and error showed an unusually

high rate of error, because as soon as some custom was singled out as a mainstay of legislative action it broke down under the weight of this undue attention. After such frustrating experiences the legislators slowly gave up their adherence to custom; in their attempts at finding a way out of the dilemma they had basically three alternatives: they could entrust the protection of all interests to executive action, they could emphasize judicial control, or they could enact more or less arbitrary provisions which placed a check on eviction and the raising of rents. In due course, most legislative efforts showed a combination of all these three features. Custom and economic dogmatism receded and plain expediency prevailed. The ambition to settle the matter for all time to come faded away and legislators were ready to admit that their measures were only of a temporary nature. The administration was bound to a policy of tenancy protection without having worked out the economics of it. Even a measure which led to a stalemate between landlords and tenants was satisfactory as far as the administration was concerned because in the last resort the administration was neither interested in the landlords nor in the tenants, nor for that matter in the economics of agricultural productivity, but only in its own political fortune.

IRISH LESSONS

Before the great spurt of tenancy legislation in India at the end of the 19th century there had been several experiments in Ireland and, therefore, Irish precedent had a great impact on India. The Irish question had troubled Britain for a long time and as the British parliament had to legislate for Ireland, Irish affairs were much more in the limelight than Indian problems could ever hope to be. The first valiant effort to solve the Irish tenancy problem was made by Gladstone in 1870. However, the tenancy act of that year was almost a model of mistakes which should be avoided in tenancy legislation. Its only merit was that it provided a point of departure and that it made it perfectly clear that the matter could not rest there. The act provided in addition to a compensation for improve-

ments also a compensation for disturbance which the landlord had to pay to the tenant if he wanted to evict him. In the original draft the tenant was entitled to this compensation even if he was in arrears with the payment of his rent, but the House of Lords had deleted this clause and, therefore, the landlords could get rid of their tenants with impunity as soon as they failed to pay the rent in a bad year. The act also codified the Ulster custom according to which the tenant could not be deprived of his occupancy right as long as he paid his rent. However, as the act did not contain any restrictions on the raising of rents the provision about the Ulster custom proved to be worthless. In fact, the combination of a compensation for disturbance with the Ulster custom forced the landlords to raise the rents, because the lower the rent, the higher was the value of the tenant right and accordingly the compensation which they had to pay for it. The working of the act showed clearly that all indirect measures of tenancy protection are useless if one does not define the occupancy right and puts no restrictions on the raising of rents. When Gladstone's government placed another tenancy act on the statute book in 1881 these mistakes were amended and the tenant got the famous "Three Fs" (Fixity of Tenure, Fair Rent, and Free Transfer). These three Fs were inter-dependent, because fixity of tenure had no value without a fair rent and only the freedom of sale guaranteed the tenant an adequate compensation for his improvements. According to the act the tenant had three alternatives, if his landlord wanted to raise the rent: He could pay the new rent which could then not be raised for fifteen years, he could refuse and would then get a compensation for disturbance or he could apply to a commission established under the act for a judicial settlement of his rent. This third course was only conceived of as an exception but against all expectations it soon turned out to be the rule. The guiding principle for the judicial settlement of rents was to be, that an increase in the value of the soil or of the produce should not only accrue to the landlord but should be divided equitably between the landlord and the tenant. This was in fact a recognition of co-ownership which had so far been denied under English common law.[4]

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BENGAL TENANCY ACT OF 1885

When the Irish act was passed in 1881, the discussions on a new Bengal Tenancy Bill were already in full swing. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859 had many drawbacks which were similar to those of the Irish Act of 1870. The occupancy right as defined in that act in terms of a prescriptive right of the tenant after twelve years of holding the particular piece of land could be easily violated by the landlord by shifting the tenant from one plot to another. Furthermore, a High Court decision of 1862 had made this occupancy right worthless by declaring that the landlord could ask for the full market value of the rent, which in fact meant that there were no restrictions on rent enhancement. A reversal of this ruling by a High Court decision of 1865, which established that the rent could only be enhanced in proportion to the previous rent and the increased value of the produce, did not solve the problem either, because landlord and tenant would never agree on the period and on the data which should serve as a base for these proportional calculations. The actual settlement of rents was never governed by such rational considerations. It was a matter of bargaining between a landlord who often did not know how much land his tenant held and what he cultivated and who tried to collect as much rent and illegal exactions as the tenant could be made to pay, and a tenant who preferred to keep his landlord in the dark about his affairs and tried to pay as little as he could get away with. No revenue officer disturbed this rural harmony because under the permanent settlement only the foremost landlords were in contact with the revenue authorities.

This peace was rudely disturbed by Sir George Campbell who imposed a road cess on Bengal in 1872 which was to be collected by the landlords from their tenants on the basis of the existing rent rolls. The cess was a minor matter but the attention which the government now paid to the rent rolls was very disturbing. Many landlords tried to enhance and consolidate the rent charges before they would come under government scrutiny. This brought them into conflict with their tenants. In the district of Pabna the tenants refused to pay their rent and there was violent unrest. Campbell who felt that the landlords

had deserved this did not interfere. He also turned a deaf ear to the demands for a revision of the existing tenancy law because he knew that they were made by the landlords who wanted a rent recovery act rather than a tenancy act.[5] His successor Sir Richard Temple was more amenable to these demands. He turned his attention first to the procedural side of the question as he had to deal with the proposal of the Government of India which wanted to entrust a judicial commission with a speedy trial of all rent cases. Temple was sceptical about judicial decisions in these matters and wanted these cases to be re-transferred to the executive even more so because they had only been transferred from the revenue officers to the courts in 1869. In discussing this point with the Government of India Temple had to deal with the substantive law of landlord and tenant, too. Here he suggested a formula according to which tenants with occupancy right should pay 25 per cent less of rent than those tenants who did not have such a right. Finally he recommended that tenants without occupancy right should pay 20 per cent of the value of the gross produce as rent and tenants with occupancy right accordingly only 15 per cent of this value.[6] At this stage of the debate Temple was transferred from Bengal to Bombay, but the gross produce rule which he had sponsored was bound to come up again and again in future discussions.

After these preliminary debates a more comprehensive proposal was made by the Rent Law Commission which submitted its report in 1880. If the landlords had hoped to have their hands strengthened by the government they were now sorely disappointed. The commission did not concentrate its attention on the problem of rent recovery, it rather tried to deal with the problem of tenancy protection. Due to the many grades of sub-infeudation in Bengal it was a difficult problem to decide where tenancy protection should begin and where it should stop. The commission proposed to solve this problem by making a basic distinction between large tenants called tenure holders who had more than hundred bighas of land and normal tenants with an occupancy right which would accrue to them after only three years of holding their plot. This distinction was made so that subtenants of large tenants should also be in a position

to acquire an occupancy right. However, the commission subsequently decided to protect this latter class of tenants by the provision of a compensation for disturbance rather than by an occupancy right. Subletting was to be discouraged by fixing a maximal rent rate so that a tenant would have no profit if he let his land to another. The landlord was to be deprived of the power of distraint for arrears of rent, instead of this the commission recommended a summary procedure for rent cases.[7]

The resistance of the landlords caused the government of Bengal to modify their proposals. Sir Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, submitted a new bill which proved to be a half way house between the suggestions of the Rent Law Commission and the act which was placed on the statute book some years later. Eden dealt with the matter like a chess player who takes over someone else's game, trying to make the best out of it by boldly following up the last moves of his predecessor. He gave up the two classes of tenants as well as all prescriptive rights, proposed to make all tenants occupancy tenants and to give them the right of free sale of their holdings; this he thought would also enable the landlords to recover arrears of rent by compulsory sale. Then he staked everything on the provision for a maximal rent rate which had emerged as a main feature from the deliberations of the Rent Law Commission. These maximal rent rates were to be settled by revenue officers who would publish periodically a table of rates which would be binding for their district. This, Eden thought, would also have the advantage of flexibility because the preparation of tables of rates could first be limited to those districts where this proved to be necessary. Eden's method would have been an equivalent of the simultaneous settlement of rent and revenue in Northern India, with the exception that in Bengal only the rents were to be settled. But this exception made a difference: In Northern India the revenue officer based his settlement on a measurement of the fields, an estimate of the crops, and a classification of the soil, but Eden did not mention how, in the absence of revenue settlements, his officers were supposed to get the data for their tables of rates.[8]

The point of departure for Eden's suggestions can be found

in Justice Field's contributions to the debates of the Rent Law Commission. Field presented a revised version of Ricardo's rent theory. He eliminated all assumptions about wages and capital from Ricardo's theory as they were irrelevant to Indian peasant agriculture. He only insisted on Ricardo's basic proposition that rent does not influence prices, but prices do influence rent. On this premise he based the recommendation to link enhancement directly with the increase in prices. The way in which the two were to be linked, however, could neither be left to custom nor to competition but would have to be determined by the state. Accordingly, rent was to be the proportion of the gross produce that the government would grant to the landlord after officially ascertaining the movement of prices.[9]

Eden's suggestions, to give all tenants an occupancy right and to settle all rent questions by a table of rates, were bound to lead to an even more radical attempt at a solution of the tenancy problem. If the tenants should all have an occupancy right, why not declare that such a right should be attached to all land at present occupied by tenants? And if the revenue officers are supposed to prepare tables of rates why not authorize them to make a regular rent settlement on the North Indian pattern? This was the line of argument which was pursued by the Government of India and the Viceroy, Lord Ripon. The Government of India recommended that the land occupied by tenants should be clearly delimited and separated from the land which was under the direct management of the landlord, and the occupancy right should then not be vested in the tenant but should be attached to all the land which the landlord had let. In this way there was no need for prescriptive rights or compensation for disturbance or any other measure of tenancy protection. This proposal was rejected by the Secretary of State who held that it was not in accordance with Indian custom. Eden himself, who had now become a member of the Secretary of State's Council was also against these bold new suggestions which had been derived from his proposals. Henry Maine, also a member of the council, who was greatly in favour of prescriptive rights did not like these suggestions either. Ripon replied that the prevailing twelve years rule for the acquisition of an occupancy right had equally no basis in Indian tradition,

but he preferred not to pursue his suggestions against the will of the Secretary of State.[10]

The landlords of Bengal could only welcome this defeat of the Government of India at the hands of the Secretary of State, because they would have found it very difficult to draw a line between the land under their own management and that which they had let to the tenants. Unlike in Northern India where the land under the direct management of the landlord was demarcated for the purposes of a more favourable revenue assessment, there was no such distinction in Bengal, where due to the permanent settlement such differentiations had long since been forgotten. Most landlords had let all their land to tenants, many of whom had acquired an occupancy right, and it would have been very embarrassing for them if this right which was vested in the tenant were to be projected on to the land.[11] But the government did not completely withdraw this idea of the projection of the occupancy right even after the rebuff from the Secretary of State. The next draft contained a provision whereby a landlord could buy out an occupancy tenant but as soon as he let the land again, he had to concede the occupancy right to the new tenant. In this way a latent occupancy right was attached to the land which would be revived whenever the landlord let the land. The new tenant would thus enjoy the prescriptive rights which had accrued to his predecessor.

The bill which was introduced into the legislative council by Courteney Ilbert in 1883 showed the traces of many previous proposals and debates. The prescriptive rights of twelve years occupation remained a major feature of the bill, they had been strengthened by the provision that they would accrue to a tenant not only due to the holding of one particular plot but even after holding several plots under the same landlord. The idea of a latent occupancy right had also found its way into the bill. The maximal rent rate and the table of rates as suggested by Eden had been included. Here the Government of India had added a paragraph which empowered a revenue officer to prepare a complete rent settlement for the estate of a landlord. This addition which fitted in very well with Eden's suggestions was to be of great consequence, because it was the point of departure for a major revision of the bill which finally found its

expression in the famous Chapter X of the Bengal Tenancy Act.[13]

A few months after the introduction of the bill the Government of Bengal was shocked to find out that the mainstay of their proposals, the table of rates, would prove to be utterly useless. After years of deliberation about the table of rates the government had finally decided to conduct some experiments which had shown that in many villages rent rates for the same type of land differed widely, so that there was no basis for any reasonable table of rates. There was also evidence that in many instances prices had risen so fast that a proportional rent enhancement would be impossible.[13] After these findings had knocked out one pillar of the Government of Bengal's edifice, the Secretary of State knocked out another by objecting to the latent occupancy right.[14] The committee of the legislative council which revised the bill accordingly gave up the latent occupancy right and separated all the provisions about the table of rates from the main body of the bill, relegating them to a special chapter which was soon to be dropped in the next stage of deliberations. As the table of rates receded into the background the provisions about a maximal rent rate lost their importance and the committee struck them off. But now the problem of subletting had to be faced once more. This the committee tried to solve by framing a new provision whereby any tenant who sublet more than half of his holding would become a tenure holder so that his subtenant could also acquire an occupancy right. Then the committee went one step further and protected even those tenants who had no occupancy right. They could apply to a court in order to obtain a judicial lease and a judicial settlement of their rent. The provisions about the settlement of rents by a revenue officer and a preparation of a record of rights were now amplified and put together in Chapter X against which the table of rates in Chapter XI paled into insignificance.

It would have been in keeping with previous developments if the committee had now re-introduced a provision which would have defined rent in terms of a proportion of the gross produce, because ever since the High Court decision of 1865 and the plans of Sir Richard Temple such rules had figured prominently in the different proposals for tenancy protection until the more

comprehensive project of table of rates had displaced them. With the fading away of the table of rates a resurrection of these rules was to be expected, but the committee did not take this step. Perhaps this would have happened if the committee had decided at that time to drop the table of rates entirely. However, the table of rates still had a place in the bill, and the committee explicitly rejected the idea of a gross produce rule.

Finally, two methods of dealing with the rent question, both of which circumvented the crucial problem of finding a common denominator for diverse rent rates, emerged as the most prominent features of the bill: The first method was that of a simple and arbitrary restriction on rent enhancement whereby the same percentage would apply to high and low rents and the second method was that of a specific rent settlement by a revenue officer under the provisions of Chapter X.[15] All questions of custom or economics were excluded thereby, the interference had dropped all pretensions. However, this was not the result of a predetermined course of action, it was rather due to a process of elimination. All those who tried their hand at the various bills were in this respect more or less innocent participants in a very complicated game. This was amply demonstrated by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Rivers Thompson, who greatly deplored the arbitrary nature of the bill and set out at this late stage of the development to infuse some new lifeblood into the bill which had been drained out of it so thoroughly in the course of its long career.

Rivers Thompson quoted the latest writings of the British economists, criticized Ricardo's rent theory and even went so far as to assert that under the conditions prevailing in Bengal rent did affect the cost of production. He recommended a revival of the gross produce rule and thought the tenant should get at least half of the increase in the price of the produce. He wanted to combine the gross produce rule with the table of rates, he was also unhappy about the neglect of the tenants without an occupancy right and wanted to restore the compensation for disturbance.[16] However, none of these suggestions were accepted and thus the Government of India had to pass an act which had matured under four successive Lieutenant

Governors of Bengal in the teeth of opposition of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The committee which prepared the final draft eliminated the table of rates but also rejected the proposal of a gross produce rule. It fixed the percentage of permissible rent enhancement at 12½ per cent (Two annas in the rupee) for 15 years, a provision which was very similar to that of the Irish Act.[17]

The years which followed the passing of the act were good years for Indian agriculture. There was no flood of litigation and general unrest as predicted by the critics of the act.[18] The act soon acquired the reputation of a model of statesmanship and moderation and was therefore warmly recommended to other provinces where similar problems had to be solved.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: TENANCY LEGISLATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

It so happened that Anthony Macdonell, who as Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal was one of the main architects of the Bengal Tenancy Act, was sometime later appointed Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, and immediately set out to criticize the tenancy law of that province in the light of his experience in Bengal. For this he had good reasons, because even at the time of passing of the Central Provinces' Tenancy Act of 1883 the Secretary of State was astounded by the fact that the Government of India had obviously no concern for the patent contradictions which were embodied in the principles of this act and in those of the Bengal Tenancy Bill which was sent to him at the same time.[19] This was even more remarkable as both bills had the same point of departure, the Tenancy Act of 1859, which had been introduced in the Central Provinces in 1864. But as it often happened, the provincial governments had proceeded along their different ways undaunted by the criticism of the Government of India or of the Secretary of State.

The Central Provinces as the youngest province of British India had had a very peculiar fate. Bordering on provinces with revenue settlements as different as those of Bengal and Bombay and settled originally under the influence of the pro-landlord

tendency which prevailed in the years after the mutiny of 1857, this province was really at the crossroads of different trends in British Indian policy. The government soon regretted that it had bestowed so many privileges on landlords in the course of the first settlement of the province and began after 1875 to work on a new revenue act as well as on tenancy legislation. In looking for some guiding principles of tenancy protection the provincial government decided to adopt the Irish precedent of compensation for improvements and compensation for disturbance. There was also a provision in the government's bill that the tenants could buy the occupancy right from their landlords, but the twelve years rule of the Act of 1859 was given up. In this way prescriptive rights were eliminated from the new act. However, those tenants who had acquired an occupancy right under the twelve years rule as long as it was in operation were confirmed in their rights by the act.

On account of these different provisions there were now four classes of tenants in the Central Provinces: the so-called absolute occupancy tenants who had had an occupancy right even before the introduction of the twelve years rule, secondly those tenants who had acquired their occupancy right under the twelve years rule, thirdly normal tenants who could now no longer acquire the right of occupancy but were protected by the provisions about compensation for disturbance and, finally, the tenants at will who were unprotected. The compensation for disturbance was fixed at seven times the enhanced rent demanded by the landlord. The officials in the India Office in London were not very happy with these proposals and regretted especially the abolition of prescriptive rights. The provincial government, however, were very proud of adopting the device of compensation for disturbance and considered it to be a most universal means of tenancy protection. They pointed out that it would almost completely eliminate competition and thus protect the tenants more effectively than any occupancy right. Compensation for disturbance would also be independent of judicial decisions as it could be clearly defined once and for all.[20]

Some time after the act had been placed on the statute book the provincial government found some flaws in their legislation.

They regretted that they had given up prescriptive rights altogether. They also noted that there was no provision in the act which prevented landlords from buying out occupancy tenants. On the other hand they realized that their provisions about compensation for disturbance were a bar even to reasonable rent enhancements and this was not intended as the right of the landlord to enhance the rent had been explicitly confirmed in the act. Seen from this point of view the Bengal Tenancy Act had much to recommend itself to the Government of the Central Provinces and when Macdonell appeared on the scene his message was well received. He pointed out that the compensation for disturbance was an exotic provision and made no sense in an Indian context. He recommended a judicial decision of rent cases and a re-introduction of prescriptive rights. The new Central Provinces Tenancy Act of 1895 showed the impact of these suggestions.[21]

A TANGLED SKEIN: THE BENGAL PRECEDENT IN MADRAS

There was hardly a province in British India which was so different from Bengal and its administrative traditions as Madras. It was here that the *ryotwari* settlement was first set up against the permanent settlement of Bengal. The official mind in Madras was conditioned by the *ryotwari* approach and, therefore, tenancy legislation was a very strange subject to Madras administrators. However, there were large remnants of permanently settled areas in the Madras Presidency and the Madras Government could not avoid dealing with their problems. In doing so this government had to take into account the Bengal precedent, but this precedent was destined to play a rather unfortunate role in the history of tenancy legislation in Madras. It thoroughly confused the official mind, set different parties in the government against each other and delayed legislation for decades.

The first impact of the Bengal precedent, however, was short, decisive and abortive. This was the impact it had on the proposed tenancy legislation for the district of Malabar. In Malabar under British rule all agrarian relations had become utterly

perverse. The land was held by landlords, called *jenmis*, who according to the British revenue settlement were *ryots* as Malabar happened to be a *ryotwari* area. These *jenmis* had tenants called *kanamkars* who usually paid their rent in advance and, therefore, were looked upon as mortgagees by the British courts. These tenants had again subtenants, called *verumpattamdars* who actually cultivated the land. The pattern of landholding and the superimposed system of revenue settlement produced the strange paradox that the landlord could be thought of as an indebted *ryot* who had mortgaged his land to a moneylender, the *kanamkar*, who got it cultivated by his labourers. However, if one looked at it differently, the *kanamkar* could be considered as a tenant who should enjoy the benefits of tenancy protection. And this is just how the *kanamkars* preferred to look at themselves. Seeing the signs of the time they were quick in mobilizing official opinion in their favour and lengthy reports were prepared in order to introduce a tenancy bill for Malabar.[22]

Unfortunately for the *kanamkars*, Sir Charles Turner, the Chief Justice of Madras, took the side of the *jenmis* and defended their rights as landlords. But the most unkind turn that he did to the *kanamkars* was that he finally suggested the Bengal Tenancy Act as an appropriate model for Malabar. In doing so, he conceived of the *kanamkars* as tenureholders and recommended that the *verumpattamdars* should enjoy the protection which the Bengal Act granted to the occupancy tenants. No wonder that the *kanamkars* soon lost their interest in tenancy legislation.[23]

The Bengal Tenancy Act had a more lasting impact on the legislative efforts which finally led to the Madras Landed Estates Act of 1908. This piece of legislation was on the anvil for more than thirty years. The first cause had been, as it happened so often with British-Indian legislation, an inconvenient decision of the High Court. In 1870 the High Court of Madras had declared that the landlord had an absolute right to terminate all tenancies at the end of the revenue year unless the tenant could show a written proof that he had the customary right of occupancy. The High Court held that the Madras Rent Recovery Act of 1865 did not contain adequate provisions about the termination of a tenancy. The Board of Revenue was very

much perturbed by this decision as it extinguished the occupancy right which the legislators had intended to confer upon the tenants. But in spite of this the Government of Madras did not do anything in this matter for more than a decade.

It was only when the Government of India communicated the recommendations of the Famine Commission to the Government of Madras in which it was stated that subletting should be stopped and the occupancy right strengthened that a new impetus was given to legislative action in Madras. But it was not until the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 stimulated the imagination of the Madras administration that any serious legislative efforts were made. Thus in 1887, a draft bill was prepared which combined the main features of the Rent Recovery Act of 1865 with those of the Bengal Tenancy Act. However, it became soon evident that the imitation of the Bengal precedent did more harm than good to the course of tenancy legislation in Madras. Many officers pointed out that the Bengal pattern was irrelevant to the Madras situation. Finally the Board of Revenue suggested a delimitation of the land let to tenants as distinct from the land managed by the landlord and thereby repeated the proposal made by Lord Ripon for Bengal which was rejected by the Secretary of State. As far as rent restrictions were concerned, the Board of Revenue recommended the elimination of the freedom of contract from the existing law and the establishment of a record of rent rates and a record of tenancy rights. The Board also recommended that arrears of rent for more than three years should be written off, because Irish experience had shown that it was useless to guarantee the tenant a better future if he was still groaning under the debts of the past.

When this proposal of the Board of Revenue of 1892 was submitted to the Government of Madras it became soon apparent that there were three parties in this government, those who would rather retain the old Rent Recovery Act of 1865 with minor amendments, those who wanted to follow the Bengal precedent and finally those who agreed with the Board of Revenue that neither the old law nor the Bengal pattern were suitable for Madras and that a new way ought to be found. It so happened that at the time when the draft of the Board

of Revenue was placed before the Government of Madras the majority of the members belonged to that school of thought which preferred the Bengal precedent. Therefore, they rejected the draft of the Board and submitted to the Government of India a slightly revised version of the draft which followed the Bengal model. When this draft was returned by the Government of India to the Government of Madras for revision, the composition of that government had changed and some of the officers who had previously been on the Board of Revenue were now members of the government. They gladly accepted the criticism of the Government of India and thus a new round of legislative efforts began.[24]

The Government of Madras could not immediately go back to the original draft of the Board of Revenue, because the basis of discussions with the Government of India was now for better or worse the draft based on the Bengal precedent. The new draft which was sent from Madras to the Government of India in 1898 presented, therefore, a hybrid mixture of all previous proposals and was bound to provoke fresh criticism.

In fact, the Government of India had criticized the earlier draft not so much because it followed the Bengal precedent but because in following it, it had missed the point in many respects. It so happened that Anthony Macdonell was the member for the Government of India who had to deal with this draft. He found that the Madras provisions did not adequately protect the occupancy right of the tenant, that there was no protection for subtenants and that the essential provisions of Chapter X of the Bengal Tenacy Act were missing in the Madras draft. The revised draft which the Government of Madras sent to the Government of India in 1898 reflected to a certain extent Macdonell's suggestions. But as far as the protection of subtenants was concerned the Madras government had to reject Macdonell's recommendations because they were afraid that they would create a dangerous precedent for the *ryotwari* areas. The draft of 1898 had another serious flaw which those who had the experience of Bengal in mind quickly detected. The Madras government wanted to empower revenue officers to settle rent disputes but in doing so these officers were to act under the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code. The same mistake had

been made in the Bengal Tenancy Act and had to be corrected by later amendments. The Government of India wanted to prevent the repetition of this mistake in Madras. There were many other features of the Madras proposals with which the officers of the central government were dissatisfied but they were constrained to limit their criticism because the previous draft had been considered by their predecessors and, therefore, they could not start the whole matter all over again but had to stick to the specific points of disagreement between their predecessors' proposal and the revised draft of the Government of Madras.[35]

And yet, the whole case was thrown wide open again when the bill was finally introduced into the legislative council of the Government of Madras. The cause was not the criticism of Government of India, but the ideas of the member of the the Government of Madras who was in charge of the bill, when it was submitted to the council. The new draft which emerged from these deliberations looked very much like the one prepared by the Board of Revenue in 1892. It embodied the views of those who thought that it would be best to extend as far as possible the principles of the *ryotwari* settlement to the permanently settled tracts. But as it was impossible to revoke the permanent settlement with the landlords, the best solution of the problem seemed to be to introduce a permanent settlement for their tenants, too. This settlement was to be based either on customary rates of rent or, where these could not be ascertained, on the rates paid in 1801. This amazing bill shocked the Government of India when it was submitted to them in 1903. They were very much surprised to see that the Government of Madras which had so far most strongly insisted on the principle of freedom of contract now recommended customary rates or harking back to 1801.[36]

When the Madras legislators were faced with the rejection of their permanent settlement for tenants they finally adopted the arbitrary restrictions on rent enhancement which were the main feature of the Bengal Tenancy Act.[37] In the end the Bengal precedent had prevailed. Much work on five major draft bills and numerous preliminary proposals could have been saved if the Government of Madras had at an earlier stage simply

adopted the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 for the permanently settled tracts of the Madras Presidency. The Tenancy Act of 1859 had been freely exported from Bengal to other provinces, though not to Madras, but in the meantime tenancy legislation had become highly complicated and had to be geared to the specific problems of the province concerned. Nevertheless, the precedent of the Bengal Tenancy Act which was perhaps the most elaborate Tenancy Act ever placed on the statute book had to be taken into account by everybody who set out to draft tenancy legislation after 1885.

PROTECTION FOR WHOM?

The instruments of tenancy protection with which the government had armed itself were of a limited scope and they did not reach much beyond the first tier of tenants. This restraint was deemed to be reasonable, because there should be tenants-at-will as pawns in the game of competition in which the official mind sincerely believed. There was the additional reason that the *ryotwari*-system should not be upset. Of course, according to the text-book of the economists the ryot as government-tenant was not supposed to have sub-tenants and the whole system of revenue-settlements was based on this assumption. If the theory did no longer fit the facts, it was in the interest of sound administration not to reveal this inadvertently by hasty legislative efforts.

Politically this limited protection suited the government very well. The colonial rulers had come to realize that the landlords provided an insufficient social base for their government, but in their quest for a broader base they were quite satisfied when they reached the level of substantial tenants on whom they could confer the boon of statutory or occupancy rights thus stabilizing the position of an important social group. In this way the social conditions of Indian politics in the twentieth century were pre-determined to a great extent by British-Indian tenancy legislation in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

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[17] Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor General, 27 Feb., 1885.

[18] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Feb., 1893, Pro. No. 17, Report on the Working of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

[19] *Judicial and Public Proceedings*, India Office, Vol. 72, No. 621 of 1882, Despatch of the Secretary of State to the Govt. of India, Leg. No. 35 of 14 Sept., 1882.

[20] For a discussion of this legislation see the following volumes of *Judicial and Public Proceedings*, India Office: Vol. 72, No. 621 of 1882, Vol. 74, No. 824 of 1882, Vol. 83, No. 1716 of 1882, Vol. 89, No. 57 of 1883, Vol. 90, No. 114 of 1883, and Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor General of 20 June 1883.

[21] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, July 1883, Pro. No. 25-26.

[22] For a discussion of the plan for tenancy legislation in Malabar see: Govt. of Madras, File of Correspondence regarding the Relation between Landlord and Tenant in Malabar, 1852-1856, Madras, 1883; Govt. of Madras, Report regarding Malabar Land Tenures, Madras, 1887.

[23] Sir Charles Turner, Minute on the Draft Bill relating to Malabar Land Tenures, Madras, 1885; see also his letters to Ilbert of 17 April 1885, 15 May 1885, 22 July 1885 and 3 August 1885, *Ilbert Collection*, India Office Library.

[24] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, April, 1894, Pro. No. 6-16; on the different groups in the Govt. of Madras see the remarks of W. S. Meyer in Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, File No. 337 of 1896, 25 Sept., 1896.

[25] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May, 1898, Pro. No. 11-16; see also Judicial and Public Proceedings, India Office, Vol. 480, No. 938 of 1898.

[26] Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Sept., 1904, Pro. No. 37-38.

[27] Govt. of India, Legislative Dept., March 1907, Pro. No. 62-64 and Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Oct. 1908, Pro. No. 30.

Part 4 / IMPEDIMENTS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

13 / IMPEDIMENTS TO DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW IN INDIA'S ECONOMIC HISTORY *

INTRODUCTION: THRESHOLDS AND CONSTRAINTS

Economic development frequently comes up against thresholds which impede the smooth curve of economic growth. These thresholds are constituted by various constraints which coincide so as to create a more or less insurmountable obstacle. The constraints may be physical, technological or institutional ones. Their combination will have a cumulative effect and in many cases it will be difficult to recognize the dominant constraint. Thus thresholds created by a lack of resources or physical and technological handicaps may be wrongly interpreted as originating from social and cultural constraints or vice versa. "Crossing a threshold" means overcoming the constraints constituting it. This may be achieved either by adjusting economic activities below the threshold so that the cumulative effect of the respective constraints is reduced or eliminated or by reaching across the threshold from beyond its confines. The first approach can be termed "Development from Below", the second one as "Development from Above". Usually economic development will be fostered by a combination of both approaches. In fact, development planning would ideally aim at an adjustment of economic activities below the given threshold so as to fit in with remedial measures above the threshold—thus building the bridge from both

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sides. But the identification of impediments to "Development from Below" should precede any attempt at development planning.

In many countries agriculture is the most crucial element of economic development from below because it must provide the base for all further development. Agricultural operations are subject to many physical, technological and institutional constraints which may arrest the agriculturist at the level of mere survival. If he reaches the aim of comfortable self-sufficiency he may nevertheless not want to participate in wider economic activities by parting with a major share of his crop unless he is forced to do so or is sure of the benefit which he will derive from this participation. The money economy may encompass only a limited number of people and the distribution of income may be so uneven that most people do not have a chance of crossing the threshold of paralysing poverty. Technological innovations which could transform many activities may require an investment which is beyond the means of those who could use the new tools. Investment and technological knowhow will have a tendency to combine and establish an enclave economy, thus defying social control and integration. The political development will reflect rather than transform these economic trends and it is, therefore, the very opposite of developmental politics which would imply a conscious reduction of constraints so as to facilitate the crossing of the thresholds. The attitude towards developmental politics is deeply related to the social order and the value system. The more obvious phenomena, such as caste, may be less important in this context than the underlying assumptions of human inequality and the insignificance of human endeavour. Development from below means human mobilization which will inevitably give rise to social conflict as people cross thresholds and compete for scarce resources.

The problems confronting development from below have been outlined very briefly in this introduction in order to indicate the relations between various constraints. In the following pages these problems will be discussed in detail.

SURVIVAL AGRICULTURE, THE LAND SYSTEM, AND THE APPROPRIATION OF SURPLUS

Economists usually refer to agricultural activities which are not integrated in the money economy as "subsistence agriculture". Actually in many countries the majority of small cultivators are eking out a living at a "sub-subsistence" level. Their operations are determined by the severe constraints of survival agriculture. The survival agriculturist's main concern is to avoid risks.[1] He cannot think in terms of profit. He may make use of his family labour much beyond the so-called "marginal productivity of labour". The land he cultivates would usually yield more if it were in the hands of a richer peasant who could afford to grow the most profitable crops. The survival agriculturist, however, must think in terms of an adverse combination of the constraints under which he operates. He depends on rainfall, on draught animals, on the members of his family, on credit and on the land system. He may wish to sink a well, but he may not get the credit for it. He may want to expand or contract cultivation according to the availability of family labour but the land system will not permit this. Thus he is kept in his place by the cumulative effect of constraints and cannot cross the threshold towards comfortable self-sufficiency. At least about one acre of rice land per adult member of the family in the rice-economy of Eastern India or two acres in the millet economy of the Western Deccan and Rajasthan are required for "subsistence", all those who have less than that must work for others in addition to working on their own land. Overpopulation has greatly depressed Indian agriculture. Recent field research in Orissa has shown that only 14 per cent of the peasant families could rely on rice supply from their own land throughout the year,[2] all others would have to be termed survival agriculturists. But those who are just below the threshold of all year round self-sufficiency may be able to cross it if some of the constraints under which they operate are slightly reduced.

In addition to the physical constraints of rainfall and the quality of the soil Indian agriculture has been most seriously affected by the rigidity of the land system. Various factors in India's economic history have combined so as to "lock up" the

land.[3] Originally land was not a commodity which could be bought or sold in India. It belonged to him who first cleared it. It was inherited and also subdivided, there were practices of a limited transfer in terms of a kind of usufructuary mortgage, but in general there was always enough land at the disposal of the village community for further settlement. Feudal landgrants either conferred a right for establishing a new settlement or gave a share of the charges on settled land but they never established property rights in the modern sense of the term. Feudal revenue assignees may have used harsh methods in order to collect their revenue but they had to take care not to drive away the peasants as they would then lose their revenue.[4] For the most part the villages paid their revenue assessment jointly. The village community controlled the surrounding waste land and frequently rented it to outsiders, who may have been either migrant latecomers joining an existing village in search of land and protection or peasants from neighbouring villages who looked for some additional land which they could cultivate as long as they had the means to do so. Cultivation usually depended on the family labour and as the family expanded or contracted the peasant would want to expand or contract cultivation. The universal system of "insider" and "outsider" peasants enabled the village community to make use of the available land with some degree of flexibility while nevertheless paying its revenue regularly.[5] There were, of course, also villages in which most of the agricultural work was done by hired or bonded labourers, particularly if the landholders themselves would not touch the plough because of caste rules.[6] But genuine landlords did not exist, they were created only by the British when they took over the indigenous revenue system and added to it their own concept of landed property. They redefined Indian agrarian relations in terms of the relation between landlord and tenant and converted former revenue assignees into landlords. Frequently older customs of tribes and village communities had been superseded by feudalization, e.g. the headman becoming a feudal retainer with a service tenure, such relations were interpreted under British rule as contracts concerning private real estate. The Moghul predecessors of the British had applied the uniform term

"zamindar" to all kinds of feudal or tribal leaders in order to simplify their administrative procedure. The British completed this task by making the zamindar a landlord whose property could be sold if he failed to pay the revenue. Their harsh assessment forced many landholders to borrow money and to mortgage their land, and British law encouraged land transfers and the foreclosure of mortgages. Land became a favourite object of litigation. Due to the peculiar British practice of conveyancing and the lack of a system of public transfer based on a cadastral record of rights land titles were secure only for those who had a long purse and could afford the better lawyer. British officers had spent much time and effort on the preparation of revenue records, but these were useful only for the collection of rent and revenue, and in many provinces the revenue authorities openly stated that they were not interested in the constant variations of ownership but only in the identification of the piece of land for which revenue had to be assessed.[7] Increasing population pressure made land a more and more valuable commodity. The village community lost all control over the land even in those areas where the village remained the unit of revenue assessment. Agrarian relations corresponded more and more to the landlord and tenant pattern which the British rulers had set for India. When the administrators got alarmed because of a growing indebtedness and land transfers or because of strained relations between landlords and tenants they tried to prohibit land alienation and enacted legislation to protect tenants against eviction and an undue enhancement of rent. But they made no attempts at a land reform.[8] The system which emerged from this combination of imposed landlordism, remedial legislation and inadequate protection of small holders and subtenants was perfectly suited to an exploitation of man rather than an improvement of the productivity of the soil. Those who sought control over land simply in order to squeeze some rent out of those who had to eke out a living on this land were encouraged and protected by this system.

Rents varied greatly, they did not necessarily correspond to market rates. Several stages of transition from charges in kind to a cash rent could be observed in India in the course of the

nineteenth century. A report on Oudh in Northern India gives an interesting account of these different stages: The first stage is the traditional sharing of produce according to some fixed proportion. This may be done by a division of the produce after the harvest or in terms of an estimate of the standing crop. In this case there will be no increase of the rent as the profit of the landlord rises with the rising prices. Under the impact of the money economy and the cultivation of cash crops (sugar cane, tobacco, poppy) both landlord and tenant are eager to settle for a cash rent. The second stage is marked by an application of these cash rates to the respective land whether a cash crop is grown on it or not. At the same time the conventional share of the grain produce is commuted into conditional cash rents which are revised whenever the land has to remain fallow or does not yield a crop. The third stage consists of an agreement on an overall money rent for the entire holding of the tenant fixed for one year with an understanding that either the landlord or the tenant may ask for a return to the old produce share. But finally the fourth stage of an absolute money rent is reached and it is only at that stage that arguments about the enhancement of rent will appear.[9] Exactly the same pattern was observed in Japan.[10] And just like in Japan this meant that substantial tenants were assuming more and more of the risks of agriculture while the landlords became absentee rent receivers. But in India this did not imply that agriculture advanced to a higher level of productivity. In fact, alarming features of the destruction of the productive capacity of the soil were noticed even at that time. The same report on Oudh which contains the outline of the development of cash rents also gives a dismal account of the vicious circle of poverty. Due to the increase of population not much land remains fallow, therefore there is less pasture and accordingly less cattle and less manure. The forest has been cut and there is no firewood and cowdung is used for fuel, thus the available manure is further diminished. The reduction of the pasture also implies that fewer bullocks are available for ploughing and therefore this work is done inefficiently. There is also a great demand for water but irrigation has not been adequately expanded. The peasants have resorted to double cropping. Increasing rents force them to grow

the most remunerative crop and they are unable to follow a pattern of crop rotation which would restore the productive capacity of the soil.[11]

Side by side with cash rents share-cropping continued as an important element in agrarian relations. Actually the more oppressive features of share-cropping developed only after the spread of cash rents. As long as the landlord received the rent in kind, everybody "shared the crop", but when the tenant paid his rent in cash and got the land cultivated by share-croppers the position was changed considerably. Share-cropping became a device for paying low wages for agricultural labour and at the same time letting the labourers share the risk of cultivation.

In the Southern part of India where the British had made the revenue settlement with individual peasants (ryotwari settlement) rather than with superior holders or former revenue assignees share-cropping was less frequent and there were more agricultural labourers. But this proletarization was not a symptom of land consolidation and increasing efficiency in agricultural production, it simply indicated that the land had been "locked up" and that those who were excluded from a share in the land had to work for those who had retained a share.[12] Originally the ryotwari settlement had been designed so as to give flexibility to the land system. The peasant could expand or contract cultivation according to his needs and he was supposed to pay revenue only for the land which he actually cultivated. But with population pressure this element of flexibility had soon disappeared and nobody thought of surrendering any land. The rigid elements of the system proved to be more durable than the flexible ones.

The land reform in independent India did not break the "lock" although the political leaders indulged in a great deal of brave talk about "land to the tiller". Only the biggest rent-receivers were deprived of their privileges, but they could keep their so called "home farms" which were often quite substantial. Thus they have lost their quasi-feudal status and have joined the ranks of the agrarian bourgeoisie where they are in the good company of the more substantial of their former tenants. The right of resumption which was granted to

landlords so that they could recover a part of their land from their tenants for "personal cultivation" created much ill will. Subletting of land has been prohibited in most parts of the country but share-cropping continues nevertheless. Flexibility has not been restored, on the contrary, the legislative provisions against subletting have proved to be an obstruction for the dwarf-holder who would lease out all his land while looking for work elsewhere, whereas the more substantial peasant can make use of the lenient interpretation of "personal cultivation",[12] and get his land tilled by others.

The self-sufficient peasant who lives beyond the threshold of survival agriculture has always been the dominant force in the Indian countryside. There is, of course, a considerable degree of elasticity in the concept of self-sufficiency. The survival agriculturist may think that he has achieved it when he and his family have one square meal a day, the more substantial peasant may like to have two. He may also want to increase his leisure by getting his work done by others whom he can afford to feed. For all these reasons he may not wish to part with much of the agricultural surplus which he could otherwise contribute to other sectors of the economy. The surplus can, of course, be appropriated by taxation, or facilities for the deposit of savings may be offered and consumer goods may be produced and marketed in the countryside. The crucial constraints which have impeded the full participation of India's self-sufficient peasants in the money economy have usually been related to communication, transport, education, the supply of goods other than food, marketing and banking. The appropriation of agricultural surplus has always been the central problem of administration in India. There was, of course, the possibility to decentralize administration and to make the officers of the state live off the land, but the more ambitious political systems wanted to support a large central establishment and this could only be done by means of monetization.

INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND THE MONEY ECONOMY

Traces of a money economy can be recognized in Indian history for many centuries. But monetization seems to have varied

a great deal. Numismatic evidence shows that the currency contracted and expanded probably indicating changes in the pattern of trade and the modes of revenue collection. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries India enjoyed a certain amount of economic prosperity. The coastal areas were actively involved in maritime trade. The great Northern plains, the centre of the Moghul empire, was dotted with towns and cities which could rival their counterparts in Europe. Perhaps a higher proportion of the population lived in towns by the end of the seventeenth century as compared to the end of the nineteenth century.[14] The cash revenue demand of the Moghuls forced the peasantry to participate in the money economy. The merchant who combined graindealing and moneylending emerged as an important figure in India's economic life.[15] However, the money economy remained a marginal aspect of economic life. Many transactions (payment of wages and charges on the land) still consisted of payments in kind rather than in cash. A few big merchants might have been worth millions of Rupees and were able to issue or honour bills of exchange up to the amount of the annual revenue of a province.[16] But the per capita income of the majority of the people was not sufficient for a gainful participation in the money economy. The growth points of manufacturing industries were few and far between. There was some production of cash crops but no substantial sector of commercial agriculture did emerge at that time. The land revenue policy of the Moghuls did not act as an incentive for commercial agriculture as it was based on purely fiscal considerations, i.e. the charges varied according to investment and yield.[17] However, the government did provide agricultural credit (taccavi) with a view to enhance the revenue paying capacity of the landholders.[18] Beyond this there was little investment in agricultural production. The superior landholders, usually revenue assignees, were not really landlords but had a share in the charges on the land as a compensation for services or in order to maintain themselves and their retainers.[19] As they were no real landlords they could hardly be expected to be "improving landlords".

The "incomes policy" of the government of that time was restricted to a gradation of the emoluments of the higher mili-

tary and administrative officers, and the revenue policy was framed accordingly. "Development from Below" was only possible to the extent that the collection of revenue remained imperfect and that certain substantial peasants and village officials managed to keep some of the surplus for themselves. Such people tended to become petty "feudal" chiefs and a decline of the power of the state meant additional power for them. In this way a wider distribution of income may have been caused by a contraction of the power of the state, but at the same time such a decline was usually accompanied by a decrease in monetization and adverse changes in the pattern of trade. In a somewhat exaggerated way one may express the Indian dilemma thus: either there was a highly inequitable distribution of incomes and an expansion of the money economy or a parochial pattern of the appropriation of surplus accompanied by a contraction of the money economy.

British colonial rule did not help to solve this dilemma but it rather aggravated the problem. The British copied the revenue system of the Moghuls but "improved" upon it by raising the rates of revenue and making its collection far more efficient and inelastic. By insisting on cash payment of the revenue they greatly fostered monetization. In the nineteenth century they enhanced the revenue even more because they felt that Ricardo's rent theory justified a total appropriation of the "unearned increment".[20] In many areas they wiped out the slightest potential for development from below by their stiff revenue assessments. But they also did not use the revenue for fostering development from above. Nor did they grant any significant amount of taccavi-credit to agriculturists. Applicants for such credit were faced with numerous bureaucratic obstacles. The villagers had to turn to the indigenous moneylenders whose business greatly increased under British rule. These moneylenders and the new class of rent-receivers created by the British formed an influential stratum of Indian society. They oppressed the agriculturists without being able to contribute themselves to development from below. They neither used the capital which came into their hands for making improvements in agriculture nor did they invest their money in industry. In Japan where a similar agrarian bourgeoisie had emerged there was

an improvement of the methods of agricultural production as well as a considerable investment in industry by the end of the nineteenth century.[21] But in India this did not happen. The foreign rulers did not permit any industrialization, and there were no industrial banks which could attract deposits and channel capital into long term investment in industry.[23] Due to the depreciation of the Indian silver currency in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a wide gulf between silver and gold capitalism.[23] The indigenous silver capitalist was "rusticated" and capital for investment in Indian railways etc. was found in the London money market.[24] The "rusticated" indigenous capital was either hoarded or used for buying control over land without any intention in improving it. Credit was geared to the production of cash crops for the world market rather than of food crops for internal consumption.

Even at a time when recurrent famines caused a constant rise in the price of foodgrain the Indian peasants extended the cultivation of cash crops for the export market although they did not make a greater profit on those crops.[25] The productive capacity of India's agriculture was pre-empted by the credit network geared to the export market. Advances and other means by which the creditors controlled the debtors made it impossible for most peasants to decide on their own what they should grow. This passive and partial exposure to the forces of the world market left its mark on India's economy. The agricultural surplus was flushed out of the country and nothing was left for development from below. Income distribution fell into a pattern which stifled economic development. A small percentage of the rural population managed to derive benefits from the prevailing system by operating the local credit network, participating in grain dealing and in the marketing of cash crops, but the mass of the peasantry was relegated to the ranks of the survival agriculturists.

The negative development of the nineteenth century was not redeemed by any spectacular event in the twentieth century. Two world wars were a boon to India's economic development but they did not affect the agricultural base of the economy as much as its industrial sector, whereas the depression between the wars hit the Indian agriculturists badly. Independent

India inherited a vast impoverished peasantry. The income distribution in rural India reflects this state of affairs. A rural household survey conducted in 1962 [28] revealed that 60 per cent of the rural households were not only unable to accumulate net savings but were in fact "dissaving". The higher echelon of those 60 per cent reached an annual income of about Rs. 1000, their households had five members and two of them were earners, the house and implements they owned were worth about Rs. 600. The survey quoted here does not contain information about land holding but it would appear that these 60 per cent own less than 25 per cent of the land available for cultivation and they could be defined as survival agriculturists. If one looks more closely at these 60 per cent one finds that the lower 30 per cent are in the income class from Rs. 360 to 720 per year, their families have less than five members and less than two earners, their houses and implements are worth about Rs. 350 per family, and their "dissaving" goes on at a much higher rate. These households have not only no potential for development from below but they actually depress the economy and probably destroy the productivity of the soil.

A look at the upper 40 per cent of rural households shows that about 20 per cent would belong to the category of comfortably self-sufficient peasants. These households have an average annual income of about Rs. 1500. Their houses and implements are worth about Rs. 1000, they can save a small amount. There are about six family members and more than two earners in every household. The households in this category hold probably as much land as the lower 60 per cent together. Only the upper 20 per cent of rural households contain the rich peasants of income groups between Rs. 1800 to Rs. 7200 and above per year. They probably own about half of all cultivable land. The value of their houses and implements approximates that of one annual income, they can save substantial amounts, and there are usually more than two earners in the family. The size of their households indicates that they can afford to support a greater number of family members (about 3 in addition to every earner).

The steep pyramid of income distribution and wealth can be

more clearly delineated only if some attention is paid to the top 2 per cent of rural households. These households account for about 25 per cent of all wealth in terms of houses and implements, they probably own around 15 to 20 per cent of all available land and they have an average net income of about Rs. 10,000 per year (1962).

Several studies have shown that in India it is not necessarily the big wealthy farmer who makes the best use of his land but rather the middle peasant who owns less than 25 acres. On the other hand the survival agriculturist also does not make the best use of his land for reasons which have been mentioned earlier. Consequently attempts will have to be made to reduce the holdings of the bigger and enlarge the holding of the smaller peasants so as to add to the number of middle peasants. At the same time great efforts will have to be made to find alternative employment for a good part of the bottom 30 per cent of poor peasants.

In recent years much has been made of India's "green revolution". After the absurd experience of the import of foodgrain into one of the world's greatest agricultural countries the prospect of national self-sufficiency seemed to be almost a miracle and it has been greeted with enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm may be shortlived. Of course, national self-sufficiency may have come to stay, but the income disparities will be accentuated by the "green revolution", as only the richer peasants can participate in it while the position of the survival agriculturists may deteriorate not only in relative but even in absolute terms. The introduction of high yielding varieties is a technological innovation which increases risks and demands more resources and thus widens the gap between the poor and the rich.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND SOCIAL DEPENDENCE

The resistance to technological innovations has often been explained in terms of cultural constraints. The tradition bound Indian peasant or artisan is supposed to be unwilling to adopt new methods and even the demonstration effect of a successful

implementation of such methods is lost on him. However, the critics usually fail to recognize the threshold which limits the activities of the peasant or artisan.

Those who work at the lower level and are unable to cross the threshold are by no means unaware of the "demonstration effect" of activities at the higher level but they know their limits and, in fact, they are often afraid of being dominated by those who are beyond the threshold because they realize that any failure in their limited operations may drive them into complete dependence on someone who commands more resources. The many forms of bonded labour and serfdom for which Indian economic history provides a great variety of examples can be explained in these terms.[37] This pattern of dependence mostly crystallized into hereditary relations sanctioned by social and cultural norms of mutual obligations. However, all those who could lead an independent life by carefully minimizing their risks usually tried hard to retain their independence.

The resistance to technological change which has often exasperated observers of India's economic scene is deeply related to this quest for independence. A study of the problem why Indian silk winders rejected the use of new machinery in the nineteenth century, or why cotton growers stuck to their old methods of separating the cotton from the seed rather than adopting the cotton-gin, or why Indian iron smelters would not give up their primitive traditional methods reveals that in each case the capital required for the new implements was beyond the reach of the people concerned and the innovation would have demanded a different organization of the whole working process so as to upset the existing pattern of the division of labour.[38] In other words, the people concerned would have had to subject themselves to the direction of an entrepreneur who could control the new means of production. Of course, in the long run the entrepreneur was bound to win anyhow and the small independent operators were crowded out but they tried their best to carry on by minimizing their risks as long as they could do so. This meant that the prospect for development from below was very dim, indeed, in such cases. It frequently happened that entirely different people took over where others had failed to cross the threshold. Those who possessed traditional skills which should

have qualified them for certain occupations were often the least likely candidates for new jobs whereas others whom social and cultural constraints would have prevented from acquiring such skills in the traditional way moved into the field once technological change had provided a different setting.[29]

Limited resources and the quest for independence are not only an impediment to the crossing of the threshold by means of technological or organizational change, they prevent also development within the traditional pattern of agriculture. For example, a dwarf-holder in a rice producing area who does not get enough rice from his fields so as to feed himself and his family from this supply must work for others in order to supplement his income and is, therefore, unable to use the essential period between harvesting and sowing for improving his own rice terrace so as to get a higher yield. He may also not have enough draught animals for the frequent ploughing required for intensive rice cultivation.[30] His agricultural operations which he performs on his own account may therefore be less efficient than those to which he contributes when working for somebody else, but if he can help it he will not give up his own holding and enter permanently into the services of a bigger landowner.

THE TRIPLE ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The impediments to development from below do not only beset the agricultural sector and may prevent the adoption of even the simplest technological innovation, they also appear at the higher threshold which separates the activities of trading, moneylending and profitable agriculture from the more intricate business of industrial investment and entrepreneurship. India has an old tradition of moneylending and trading, and Indian economic history provides examples of great organizational skill in this field.[31] But the higher realm of industrial organization and finance remained inaccessible to the Indians at that time when they should have ventured into this field. India was under British colonial rule when it should have made this transition. This was unfortunate for two reasons. First of all, the British did not want to industrialize India and secondly, the British

precedent was unsuitable for India. The German, the Russian or the Japanese pattern of industrial finance and organization would have been a better example for India. The British models of joint stock companies and limited companies and the way in which capital was channeled from moneylending and trading into industrial finance via the money market were quite inimitable, whereas state initiative and industrial banking as practised in those countries which were later beneficiaries of the industrial revolution would have been more appropriate examples for India.[32] The British-Indian Government, however, was either obstructing any development or it handled matters in a singularly inept fashion even when it was under orders from London to do something.[33] The British system of banking which was introduced into India was also quite useless for developmental purposes as it was geared to the needs of trade and provided neither rural nor industrial credit.[34] In the absence of a proper money market and faced with an unsympathetic government and an unsuitable banking system Indian capital could not cross the threshold into the realm of productive investment and remained confined to the lower regions of moneylending and trade. It was only after independence that state initiative could break this barrier, but rural and industrial credit still remained underdeveloped and, therefore, India experienced a fragmented development from above rather than an integrated development from below. This development from above was encouraged by theories of unbalanced growth which stressed the importance of a strategic breakthrough in the leading industrial sector as this would have a spread effect throughout the economy. However, the spread effect was slow and not necessarily of the same dimensions as the amount of capital invested in basic industries. The modern industrial sector, therefore, tended to become an enclave economy with its own standards of life and style. In terms of productivity this urban-industrial sector forged ahead, it encompassed only about 20 per cent of the population but contributed about half of the national product whereas the other half was produced by the remaining 80 per cent in the countryside. As has been pointed out earlier 60 per cent of this rural population continue to live at the threshold of survival agriculture. This is about half of the total population, and it is a

matter of speculation how much this unfortunate half has contributed to the national product—perhaps not more than 10 per cent as this part of the population holds only about 25 per cent of the land. In summary it may be stated that 20 per cent of the population produce 50 per cent, 30 per cent about 40 per cent and 50 per cent about 10 per cent of the national product.[35]

Accordingly India witnessed the rise of a triple economy divided by two major thresholds: the industrial sector dominated by the state and a few big capitalists, the richer rural sector dominated by substantial peasants, traders and moneylenders, and the survival sector. The industrial sector was unable to offer enough employment so as to assimilate the two other sectors. The thresholds were, therefore, maintained over a considerable period of time. Due to their economic persistence these thresholds have also been socially and culturally reinforced. The illiterate survival agriculturist and landless labourer, the rich peasant, moneylender or trader literate in his regional language, and the Westernized executive or civil servant set the tone at their respective levels.

The impediments to development from below and the limitations of the spread effect of development from above have also caused regional disparities. Urban centres created at the periphery of India by the seaborne trade of the colonial power attracted industries and enhanced the characteristic features of the enclave economy.[36] The concentration of mineral resources in the North-East led to the establishment of basic industries almost exclusively in that area. Overpopulation in the fertile Eastern deltas and the scarcity of rainfall in the Western Deccan and Rajasthan have marked out special problem areas in agriculture. Alternative employment is not necessarily available where the survival agriculturist would need it most. Steel mills are first of all established for the efficient production of steel, they will have an impact on their rural hinterland[37] but this impact is, of course, not commensurate with the amount of capital invested in the mill, nor is the location of the mill planned so as to make the most of its impact on the hinterland. The triple economy and regional disparities thus reinforce each other.

The ideal pattern would be one of decentralized regional industrialization financed by the richer peasants and moneylenders and giving employment to the survival agriculturists. But this is more than one can hope for under the prevailing circumstances. The profits of usury, of hoarding and now of the "green revolution" are much greater than those of investment in small scale industries.

Community Development was a major attempt at fostering development from below and stimulating regional integration, but it has not fulfilled the high hopes of those who started it in India.[38] In the beginning the administrative structure of this new venture was very frail and not sufficiently integrated in the normal civil service network, and it suffered from the inherent difficulties of being established from above to initiate development from below. Later on the Block Development Officer with his small staff of agricultural advisers became a regular part of the administration, but in this way community development lost much of its spontaneity and flexibility. It was extended in a routine fashion to all corners of India, adequately trained staff was not available and communication with the peasantry became a problem. The peasants were after all very well aware of their own problems and the development officers could not change the basic constraints under which they were operating.

Bhoodan and Gramdan, a voluntary movement sponsored by Gandhian social workers aimed at reducing these constraints by transferring land from the rich to the poor peasants and by restoring some power to the village community, but this movement lacked the executives who could turn declarations of intent into social action.[39]

District planning and the location of funds and responsibilities to elected bodies at the district level has been one of the most encouraging innovations of recent years. The district was chosen as the most suitable unit of regional development in Maharashtra and the District Board (Zilla Parishad) has been given ample powers.[40] But other states have made different arrangements for local self-government and the success of all these measures has yet to be tested. "Planning from below" remains a problem.[41]

An intensive agricultural development programme, popularly

called "Package Programme", was introduced so as to find out what could be done in a district if all bottlenecks of credit and supply of inputs could be removed. In each state one district was selected which had already attained high targets in agricultural production in order to test to what extent a new standard of performance could be established with intensive aid. In selecting the districts in terms of the targets achieved the potential of the district for further growth was taken for granted and no special effort was made to find out why the district had attained high targets and whether some constraints may not prevent additional growth. In many of these districts tenurial conditions were so bad that they proved to be an impediment to further development.[42] None of these districts produced any spectacular new experiment in agrarian relations and the increase in productivity which has been registered in most of them has been over-shadowed in the meantime by the "green revolution" which has shown that with sufficient resources and under suitable conditions no intensive programme is required in order to make peasants step up their production. However, the problem of economic integration still remains to be solved.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT *VERSUS* DEVELOPMENTAL POLITICS

Economic integration and political development are interrelated. Political parties reflect the interaction of economic interests and political decisions make an impact on economic affairs. As long as a country is not free to rule itself this interrelation may be rather tenuous. A freedom movement would reflect economic interests only to a certain extent, and as the movement does not control the government its political decisions will have no influence on the course of affairs. Colonial governments on the other hand keep aloof from the interests of the countries they govern and are guided by political decisions which are made elsewhere. In India under British rule parliamentary democracy was introduced with a very limited franchise. The national freedom movement was moulded by the political structure which it wanted to capture. The social policy of the Indian National Congress was, therefore, not too

far ahead of the interests of the limited electorate which it wanted to impress. Organizationally the Congress did not reach below the district level which was the basic unit of British administration. Gandhi's "constructive programme" of village uplift did not become a decisive element of political structure and organization. After a peaceful transfer of power the Congress merged with the administrative "steel frame" left by the British. The maintenance of power was more important than the quest for extending the social basis of power. The heritage of the freedom movement provided sufficient social legitimacy for the ruling party and an awareness of the prevalent social constraints of political power discouraged any attempts at radical reform.[43] Adult franchise was bound to make a difference in the long run, but it did not necessarily sweep away the old constraints at once. A widening of the circle of political participation did not immediately imply a radical trend but first of all brought into the limelight the parochial conservative forces. In trying to reach the villages the ruling party established a partnership with the upper strata of rural society who would welcome an increase of their power due to development from above without contributing to development from below.[44] In other words, the benefits of the political and legal system stop just above the first threshold.

The legal system inherited from the British has also been of doubtful value for development from below. Its strong bias in favour of the creditor and against the debtor, its expensive procedure and its dependence on the technicalities of English Common Law have protected the interests of the rich and the strong. This system has, of course, assured the security of property and the availability of credit, but these benefits have not reached the small man, on the contrary, the system has been used so as to intensify his exploitation. In an advanced money economy which depends on trade and investment the easy recovery of credit is the mainstay of economic transactions, in an agrarian economy with a high percentage of survival agriculturists the legal provisions facilitating the recovery of credit were used by the strong in order to intimidate and enslave the weak. Cheaper local forms of dispensing justice could not prevail against the jurisdiction of the courts. Post-independence re-

forms which introduced village courts (nyaya panchayats) have not been successful because these courts did not have enough powers, and everybody who could afford it or who had lost his case in the village court would run to the old, established court in the district town.[45]

All these trends which characterize political development in India militate against the developmental politics which would have to aim at the implementation of a radical land reform, the maintenance of a precise record of rights, the acceptance of cheap, local courts, the social control of rural credit, the decentralized industrialization of backward areas financed by direct taxation of rich peasants and traders, the reduction of the risks of the survival agriculturists and the general availability of improved inputs such as fertilizers, seeds etc.[46]

THE SOCIAL ORDER AND THE VALUE SYSTEM

The impediments to development from below which have been described so far are much more relevant to the Indian problem than the rigidity of the social order associated with the caste system which is generally held responsible for India's economic ills. It is true that particularly in rural India the pattern of social dominance is frequently articulated in terms of caste and that in some areas permanent ties of dependence have been sanctioned by the caste system which inflicted social disabilities on certain groups making it impossible for them to hold land or to escape from servitude. But even in such cases the notion of caste expressed the relationship of dominance and dependence without necessarily being the cause of it. Most students of India's social history have been deceived by the categorical statements of Brahmanical texts which for reasons of more or less enlightened self-interest contained a persuasive description of cause and effect as far as the caste system was concerned. In fact, the caste system provides a very loose system of classification of various groups in Indian society and even the distinction between caste and tribe is a problem which puzzles the anthropologist.[47] In the face of economic or political challenges the caste system has proved to be very flexible. Many people have worked in professions which were a far cry from

their "traditional" occupations without "losing caste".[48] Local leaders may use caste in their quest for power but they do not necessarily favour members of their own caste if this would be to their disadvantage in a wider context.[49] If caste restrictions acted as impediment to development as far as one caste group was concerned there would be other groups which could step in. The caste system discouraged development from below only to the extent that it served as a justification for the solidarity of dominant groups in oppressing others and preventing individual deviations from the group norm. But such justifications have been found in other social systems as well. Only the fact that caste solidarity is based on endogamy distinguishes it from other forms of group solidarity. The other characteristic feature of the caste system, the notion of a hierarchical order of castes, is more of an ideal construction which becomes tangible only in the case of untouchability. And untouchability can, indeed, be singled out as the one great obstacle to development from below as far as India's social order is concerned.

In the sphere of values much has been made of India's otherworldly preoccupations which are supposed to preclude any interest in economic development. Here again the values of a small spiritual élite have been wrongly taken for the values of the whole people. There is, in fact, much cant in the assertion of these values, or to put it differently, many people who actually live by other values and who know that they cannot realize the values of renunciation and spirituality in their own life compensate for this by showing their devotion and deference to those who profess to adhere to these values. But this assertion of spiritual values has not proved to be an obstacle to a vigorous pursuit of worldly advantages.[50] The only impediment to development from below as far as the Indian value system is concerned is the absence of a genuine interest in social justice and a fair chance for all. Indian experience seems to teach that at least in this world such justice does not exist and there simply is no fair chance for all. This may, in fact, be a realistic appraisal of this world. However, those who think that a belief in liberty and equality is essential for development from below would nevertheless deplore this attitude. Many Indians have raised their voice against it and have tried

to assert the new values of social justice, but they will still have to convince the majority of the people whose experience has taught them a different lesson.

MOBILIZATION, CONFLICT AND EDUCATION

It has been said by some observers of the Indian scene that the "revolution of rising expectations" has not affected the majority of the people because of their "limited aspirations". After a survey of the constraints under which most Indians have to live it may be stated that these aspirations are not limited but latent because expectations cannot rise as long as these constraints exist. However, if people manage to cross thresholds in greater numbers their expectations and aspirations will increase and conflict will arise as they compete for scarce resources. The natural fatalism of the survival agriculturist and the complacency of the self-sufficient peasant are foundations of social and political stability. The great variety of patterns of physical and social dependence in agriculture makes an effective combination of interests (leave alone "classes") almost impossible. But once constraints are removed there will be conflict. Those who are serious about economic development must face the fact that they are asking for trouble. Human mobilization is challenging and dangerous.

Conflict cannot be avoided but it can be articulated so that it will contribute to its own solution and does not end in chaos. In this context education is of crucial significance, because it provides information about the alternatives of further action. People become aware of the manipulation of scarce resources and want to participate in it. This implies a familiarity with the social and political system, an access to those who wield power and authority and the knowledge of the rules and regulations which govern their decisions. Education will have to provide the skill for the articulation of demands as well as the insight that not all demands can be met simultaneously. It is the key to rational mobilization but its quality may be doubtful in a triple economy burdened with a colonial heritage which has produced an enclave economy as well as an enclave education.

The inadequacy of education is a serious impediment to development from below. A stereotyped pattern of instruction, copied from outmoded foreign precedents, and administered in a routine fashion without regard to the changing needs of the society does not contribute to a better understanding of one's own problems and how to deal with them. The anxiety to qualify oneself according to this system of education in order not to drop out of the race for jobs has a paralysing effect on the mind. The non-conformist may be disqualified and may end up in poverty, which is a haunting presence and not just a matter of relative deprivation. The survival educationist must avoid risks, he cannot think in terms of the real benefits of education. Here is another threshold which is as difficult to overcome as the more obvious ones. But in this case the dominant constraints may be a lack of imagination. New ideas are needed in order to satisfy the rising demand for education not only in terms of quantity but also as far as the quality of education is concerned. Recent field research has shown that even India's survival agriculturists want education for their children and put a higher premium on it than on additional land or other physical resources.[51] Gandhi's advocacy of "basic education" was in tune with this demand, but his programme could not be implemented because it did not fit in with the prevailing institutional pattern of education. India still awaits an educational reform which would set free the forces of development from below.

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14 / INDIA'S SILVER CURRENCY, 1876-1893

AN ASPECT OF THE MONETARY POLICY OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

The administration of colonial finance and the monetary policy of the imperial powers for their dependencies made an impact on the structure of the colonial economy. This impact has not yet been studied adequately. Critics of British-Indian finance have paid attention to the "Drain of Wealth" and some economists have studied currency problems in detail,[1] but they have not tried to relate monetary policy to agrarian relations, rural credit, revenue administration, the export of cash crops, and the pattern of foreign and indigenous investment. This neglect of the wider context of imperial monetary policy can be traced back to the dominant economic doctrine of the nineteenth century. According to this doctrine there was no monetary policy at all. The currency was regulated by economic forces and nobody was supposed to tamper with it; the very idea of having a momentary policy was anathema to the orthodox economists. These economists have influenced the interpretation of the events of this period. For all those who followed them it was difficult to prove that a policy existed in practice although it did not exist in theory.

THE CURRENCY PRINCIPLE AND MONETARY POLICY

The dominant doctrine of the nineteenth century with regard to money and banking was the currency principle which was

based on the assumption that a currency consisting of precious metal would always establish an automatic equilibrium of all economic transactions. The advocates of this principle, following their master Ricardo, reduced everything to this metallic model. Their assumptions were challenged by economists who believed that the evolution of banking and credit did not fit into this static model; their doctrine was called the banking principle. But throughout the nineteenth century the advocates of the currency principle remained the dominant party whereas those who believed in the banking principle remained a heterodox minority whose views were appreciated only in the twentieth century, particularly in the era of Keynesian economics.[2]

In keeping with its basic assumptions the orthodox school could not admit the existence of a monetary policy, but in the late nineteenth century this school was affected by a development which led to partisan quarrels within its own ranks and forced the different parties to advocate certain policies. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the rapid increase of the world production of silver caused a discrepancy of the gold-silver ratio which had shown a remarkable stability at a rate of about 1:15 over many centuries. The experts debated for some time whether they were faced with an appreciation of gold or a depreciation of silver, but they were all aware of the alarming proportions of this development. Soon they split into various camps of gold or silver monometallists and of bimetallists who hoped to keep both metals in circulation by adjusting the exchange rate by means of international agreements. The debates about these issues were of a curious kind, the interests of those who produced silver and those who sold it were deeply involved, expediency was often the final arbiter of the policies adopted, but the various parties advanced arguments so as to establish the orthodoxy of their respective proposals. The flexibility of these arguments enabled the British experts to adhere to the gold standard at home and to defend the maintenance of a silver standard elsewhere, as British bankers and merchants were eager to export America's new production and Europe's demonetized stock to the East.

India was the main victim of this "double standard" which

was defended with such orthodox rigour. Since 1835 silver had been the only legal tender in India. The mints of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras were open to the free coinage of silver. According to the currency principle the seigniorage was limited so as to pay only for the operating cost of the mints, it was not supposed to be used as an instrument of monetary policy which would have enabled the government to control the flow of silver. The government could, of course, close the mints but this would have been an even more radical violation of the currency principle than increasing the seigniorage. Under these circumstances the world's depreciating silver could pour into India unchecked. In 1876 the first drastic fall in the exchange alarmed the Government of India, but the home authorities did not permit any remedial measures.[3] In 1877 India absorbed about 84 per cent of the world production of silver[4] and the exchange continued to fall. There was a conflict of interests between the home authorities and the Government of India. The revenues of India were collected in silver but the home charges had to be paid in gold. With every fall in the exchange the Government of India found it more difficult to make both ends meet. Its main sources of income—land revenue, opium, and the salt tax—were fixed and could not be enhanced easily. The Government of India, therefore, thought of various measures such as closing the mints or regulating the exchange rate by raising the seigniorage or adopting a gold standard. Even proposals for a gold-exchange standard, i.e. a standard based on gold but not necessarily implying the circulation of a gold currency, were made at that time, anticipating the proposals which were finally adopted at the end of the century. But at this early stage of the depreciation of silver none of these suggestions found favour with the home authorities.[5]

The mints remained open, on principle, and a gold standard was denied to India, not on principle, but for practical reasons. India had an important function in supporting the world price of silver and it was not permitted to cut into the scarce resources of gold. Those who defended the British approach to this problem argued that monetization in India required an adequate supply of currency, and that India would have found it difficult to expand its currency if it had adopted a gold stan-

dard.[6] But they deliberately neglected the fact that India paid a high price for this kind of expansion of its currency by absorbing a rapidly depreciating commodity. Absorbing silver was like riding a tiger—it was difficult to stop it after having started it. If India would have decided to demonetize and to sell its silver after having absorbed a major part of the world production it would have had to sell this silver at a great loss which would have been magnified by its own decision, because the price of silver would have fallen even more the moment India stopped absorbing it. British monetary experts did not mind India's ride on the silver tiger, they were even proud of this feat which was performed under their guidance,[7] but if anybody would have told them that theirs was a clever monetary policy they would have denied it and would have maintained that they simply adhered to the currency principle. A modern economist has observed that the bankers had good reasons for subscribing to the currency principle, because it provided them with a convenient shield against closer scrutiny. By claiming that their operations were regulated by the currency principle they could deny the responsiblity for their actions.[8] This could also be said about the arbiters of India's monetary fate who invoked their orthodox creed whenever they were faced with suggestions for a new monetary policy for India.

In explaining the Indian case contemporary economists gave a dialectical twist to the currency principle. Walter Bagehot set an example in writing on the depreciation of silver in 1877 and making a plea for keeping the Indian mints open.[9] He ardently defended India's silver monometallism, and criticized all attempts at restricting the free flow of silver to India. He adhered to the orthodox axiom that trade is nothing but an exchange of goods which cannot be affected by the rate of exchange in the long run as the automatic equilibrium will always restore itself. However, he did admit that a falling exchange constituted an export boncs and a fine on imports into India. But he reconciled this admission with the general orthodoxy of his views by pointing out that the export bonus would lead to a further flow of silver to India which would help to support the silver price and thus lead to a new equilibrium.

Similar views were expressed by British delegates at international conferences which were convened so as to reach a bimetallist compromise. The British did not show any genuine interest in bimetallism but presented their own double dealing monometallism—gold for Britain, silver for India—as the ideal contribution to a better monetary world.[10]

THE EXPANSION AND DEPRECIATION OF THE INDIAN CURRENCY

India's mints remained open due to this stand taken by the British authorities, and the Indian currency expanded very rapidly. The total active circulation of rupees amounted to 1250 million in 1876, 1500 million five years later, and 1850 million in 1891.[11] At the same time the silver rupee depreciated by about one-third within 18 years. In 1874 the rupee stood at 1s. 10d, in 1892 at 1s 2d.[12] In this way the vastly expanded currency of 1893 was worth about as much in terms of gold as that of 1876 The total stock of money at the beginning and at the end of the period could be roughly compared in terms of 2:3, and as the total stock depreciated by one-third its gold value remained the same.[13]

In this period the quantity theory of money had not yet been superseded by modern theories which attribute equal importance to the velocity of the circulation of money. According to the quantity theory both the growth of the population and the increase of economic transactions would justify an expansion of the currency. The advocates of non-interference, therefore, made much of the need of India's growing population for an increase in the circulation of money. But a scrutiny of the respective figures shows that the expansion of the currency was several steps ahead of the growth of population throughout this period. The population of India was 254 million in the census year 1881, the growth rate of the population was rated at about 1 per cent per annum at that time. Ten years later the next census showed a total population of 287 million. This meant an increase of 13 per cent in a decade which would correspond to an average increase of about 1.23 per cent per

If the velocity of the circulation of the currency is assumed to be more or less the same throughout this period the increase of the currency should correspond to the growth of the population. But in India the increase of the currency outpaced the growth of the population by at least 2:1, because the currency expanded at the rate of about 4 per cent per annum for the first five years after 1876 and then at about 2.3 per cent for the following ten years whereas the population grew at the rate of 1 per cent in the earlier period and about 1.23 per cent in the subsequent years.[15]

It is difficult to get a precise idea of the increase of economic activity in this period, and, therefore, it cannot be estimated to what extent the expansion of the currency was justified by this increase rather than by growth of the population. If we look merely at the growth of the population we may state that the currency expanded at a rate which was about 1 per cent higher than the rate which would have been justified by that growth. At the same time prices rose in India by about 1 per cent per annum during the last decades of the 19th century.

While prices were actually rising in India there was a rapid decline of gold prices for agricultural produce in the world market. Experts praised the remarkably stable export prices of Indian produce.[16] The expansion and depreciation of the silver currency explains this "stability". If one thinks of the silver imported by India as a commodity for which it had to export agricultural produce which was frequently in great demand inside the country and if one considers that the imported commodity was subject to a rapid depreciation these "stable" export prices may appear in a different light. The fact that people had to die of famine in India when a surplus of agricultural produce caused a glut in the world market and prices fell everywhere except in India should pose a question to all those who held that the free flow of silver was of great benefit to India and could only stimulate its economic growth.

EXPORT BONUS AND INDIRECT PROTECTION

The contemporary Indian nationalists, for reasons of their own, also believed in the benefits of the free flow of silver. They

blamed the British revenue policy for the famines, and as far as the currency was concerned they echoed the orthodox doctrine emanating from London. However, they attached unorthodox importance to the export bonus aspect of the flow of silver to India. Unlike the British experts who saw in the export bonus only a temporary phase in the restoration of the automatic equilibrium, the nationalists emphasized the advantage which India had when selling goods to gold standard countries and the indirect protection which Indian manufacturers enjoyed against the competition of those who had to pay the cost of production in gold. They stressed the incentives to investors, the relief of debtors and—in the British-Indian context of an inflexible system of taxation—even the relative reduction of the burden of land revenue. They mentioned the growth of the Indian textile industry in this period, and they resented just as much as William Jennings Bryan the "Cross of Gold" which they considered to be a common burden for the Indian peasant and the American farmer of those days.[17]

In reasoning along these lines most Indian nationalists did not raise the question whether the export of agricultural produce actually benefited India or not. Some had noticed that the area under cash crops had expanded even in famine periods when one would have expected a shift towards foodgrain, and they knew that the Indian peasant was not free to decide what he should grow because he was dependent on his creditors.[18] But they did not consider the wider context of this problem so as to find out about the adverse effects of the "export bonus". The indirect protection which India enjoyed due to the falling exchange may have been of some benefit to the tiny industrial sector but for the huge agricultural sector indirect protection became a means of direct exploitation.

FLUSHING OUT INDIA'S PRODUCE: THE DISCREPANCY OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PRICES

Keeping in mind that the gold value of the total stock of money in India remained more or less the same throughout this period of a rapid expansion of the currency we begin to

realize how depreciating silver was used to flush out India's produce. At an earlier time the Dutch had adopted a deliberate method of extracting cash crops from Java by circulating a large amount of worthless copper coins.[19] In India the British did not have to do this deliberately because by simply keeping the mints open to the free flow of depreciating silver they got practically the same result. The management of credit facilitated the extraction of cash crops. By advancing money to the peasants who grew cash crops for export the British and their agents preempted the productive capacity of India's agriculture. The area under cash crops expanded even at a time when foodgrain for home consumption would have fetched a better price. Wheat grown for export has to be rated as a cash crop in this context. The depreciation of the currency and the preemption of the productive capacity of vast parts of the country combined so as to achieve the miracle that India could export produce at "stable" export prices even at a time when severe famines tormented the country. By absorbing silver and exporting wheat at the lowest price India served as the buffer at the base of the world economy of the late nineteenth century. India was linked to the world economy in a most unfair manner. The "export bonus" provided by the depreciating currency imposed a pattern of trade on India which was not to its advantage.

The discrepancy of external and internal prices for India's agricultural produce was quite striking. The late nineteenth century witnessed a sensational fall in the gold prices of agricultural produce.[20] This led to a large scale reconstruction of the rural economy in Europe and America and to a new international division of labour. India was shielded against all that by its depreciating silver currency which provided it with its remarkably "stable" export prices. These stable prices referred only to the main export commodities like wheat and to the established export channels which were not necessarily linked with the whole internal economy of the country. Internally there was on the average a slow but steady trend of an increase in prices throughout this period.[21] Famine years and good harvests caused considerable fluctuations but the overall trend was nevertheles quite obvious. The combined impact of popu-

lation growth and continuous depreciation and expansion of the currency helped to maintain the rise in prices. The trading practices of Indian grain dealers supported this trend because they knew how to hold the price line even in years with a good harvest.[28] Due to the sufficient flow of money the system was not subjected to deflationary pressures which might have started an avalanche of falling prices.

INVESTMENT AND THE EMANCIPATION OF DEBTORS: A FALSE HOPE

Those who relied on the positive effect of the flow of silver, like the Indian nationalists who praised the export bonus, also hoped for the emancipation of debtors and the increase of investment generally associated with easy money. In other words, they hoped that the slightly inflationary trend would benefit the structure of the Indian economy. This trend and the prospect of growing export should have encouraged investment in agricultural production and freed the Indian peasant from his burden of indebtedness. But this did not happen. The increasing monetization enabled the rich to buy control over land without investing much in the improvement of its productive capacity. Population growth guaranteed that the control over land was worth buying because it meant that it would always be possible to exploit the man who tilled the soil rather than the soil itself. In keeping with this point of view the Indian creditor was not interested in the emancipation of the debtor. But unlike the conservative creditor elsewhere who insists on a stable currency in order to recover his money the Indian creditor had adjusted to the depreciating and expanding currency by perfecting his own methods of getting his pound of flesh. He saw to it that the debtor could never pay back his capital but would get caught in a web of compound interest so that he could never extricate himself from his bondage. The system of usufructuary mortgages was best suited to this kind of relationship, the creditor became a *de facto* landlord and the debtor a permanent serf.[29]

It is easy to condemn the viciousness of this system and to deplore the depraved attitude of the Indian creditor who

shirked the duties of a *bona fide* capitalist and investor and seemed to display the atavistic instincts of a petty usurer. However, we should not forget that the colonial regime and the development of the currency to a large extent predetermined this deviant behaviour. Even the richest men of India were excluded from the really substantial financial transactions which were based on the gold standard and controlled by the bankers of London. The easy access of the British-Indian Empire to the capital market of the metropolis which has often been praised as a boon to India's economic development was nothing but a curse in disguise. India's silver capitalists could not dare to enter the charmed circles of advanced imperial capitalism and they spent much of their money on landed property.[24] The often lamented Indian weavers who were driven back to the land by the powerlooms of Lancashire[25] have not been such a burden to Indian agriculture as the Indian capitalists whose attentions were diverted to the land by the City of London.

GOLD AND SILVER CAPITALISM: THE DOUBLE STANDARD AND THE DUAL ECONOMY

The Indian economy of the late nineteenth century developed a dual pattern of gold and silver investments. The loans raised directly by the British-Indian government in the London money market or the investment of the British firms to whom the government guaranteed a minimum profit belonged to the gold sector. The debt service for these loans became a burden for the Indian economy because the interest had to be paid in terms of the gold standard and the increasing depreciation of the Indian currency practically produced the same effect as the compound interest of the usurer.[26] However, only the gold standard provided a stable foundation for long term credit; the depreciating silver currency was as unsuited as quicksand for such a foundation. The silver capitalist was therefore forced to concentrate on short term profit made in trading ventures or in moneylending of the kind which is not geared to long term investment.

The Rupee and the Sterling debt of the Government of India

are of some interest in this context. In 1876 this debt consisted of 719 million Rupees and 55.2 million Pound Sterling. Indians held only 142 million of the Rupee debt, the lion's share was in British hands. In the following years the Rupee debt increased by about 30 million per year until 1884, when it reached a total of 931 million and remained more or less at that level for some years. In the meantime the Sterling debt had shown a steep increase from 59 to 69 million Pounds in 1879, had remained at that level until 1884 and then began to rise continuously from about 74 million in 1885 to 114 million in 1893. The interest rate on the Sterling debt was usually about 1 per cent less than that on the Rupee debt, which increased from about 3 to 4 per cent from 1876 to 1893 whereas the interest on the Sterling debt increased from about 2.5 to 3.5 per cent.[27] These interest rates were, of course, very low compared to those which Indian money lenders would charge, and, therefore, this kind of investment would not attract much Indian capital.

The dualism of gold and silver capitalism was not conducive to indigenous capital formation and economic growth which could only be based on a constant process of siphoning off capital accumulated by the agriculturist and investing it in industry. Monetization which is a prerequisite for this process does not necessarily induce the process if the currency is not sound and stable credit is available elsewhere. A slow inflation and indigenous investment based on an Indian money market could have gone a long way towards establishing a foundation for India's economic growth in the late nineteenth century, but the dual pattern of gold and silver capitalism under a colonial regime frustrated these hopes.

EXCHANGE BANKS AND COUNCIL DRAFTS

India had to pay her colonial rulers for the services which they rendered to the subject nation and this payment had to be made in gold. In addition to these so called home charges there was the ever increasing debt service for the loans raised in London. These obligations forced India to export more and to import less. The depreciation of the silver currency meant

that more and more silver had to be committed to the payment of those charges. This was the real "export bonus" which India obtained due to the free flow of depreciating silver.

The home charges were transferred by means of so called Council Drafts which the Secretary of State sold against sterling in London and which were cashed by the Government of India. Theoretically the Secretary of State should have been able to sell these drafts to the highest bidder but in practice he sold them through a small group of exchange banks which were not interested in outbidding each other. These banks combined so as to keep the rate of exchange comfortably low and they were even prepared to ship more silver to India if they could keep the exchange rate down in this way. They could thus claim more rupees for the gold which they paid to the Secretary of State. In other words they inflated the Indian currency in order to make a profit on the exchange rate.[28] Their business was booming as the increasing depreciation of the Indian currency made it necessary for the Secretary of State to sell more and more Council Drafts. In 1873-74 the Government of India transmitted 140 million Rupees in this way, in 1892-93 it had to send 265 million Rupees.[29] The sale of Council Drafts was immediately reflected in the relationship between exports and imports. More drafts meant more export, a suspension of the sale of drafts invariably led to an increase in imports.[30]

The whole system operated so as to inject inflation into the Indian economy and to extract a flow of cheap agricultural produce. It served the colonial power well and could have been perpetuated if it had not strained the resources of the Government of India which depended on a limited revenue.

THE CLOSING OF THE INDIAN MINTS: FISCAL EXPEDIENCY

The government of a prosperous country can find ways and means for raising a revenue which is in keeping with the general rate of economic growth. The Government of India, however, could not do so and its main income was derived from such items as the land revenue and the opium and salt monopoly which were more or less static and inflexible.[31] Taxes like excise,

sales tax, export and import duties would have enabled the government to ride the tide of inflation, but most of these taxes were explicitly denied to the Government of India because they did not fit in with the doctrines of free trade and the vested interests of Britain. The Government of India was after all a dependent government in a poor country and, therefore, its powers and resources were severely limited. The total home charges increased from 13.5 million Pounds in 1876 to 15.8 million in 1893. In the same period the land revenue, the largest single item in the British-Indian budget, increased only very slowly from about 200 to 250 million Rupees, and the gross customs revenue actually declined from an average 25 million Rupees per year during 1876-1888 to 10 million in 1884 and was still as low as 16 million in 1893. The total gross customs revenue for 1876-1892 amounted only to about 300 million Rupees, whereas the loss of exchange incurred by the Government of India during this period was more than 770 million Rupees.[32] When, therefore, the task of collecting taxes in depreciating silver and paying the home charges in gold became more and more burdensome to the Government of India, it had to think of contracting and deflating the Indian currency by closing the mints.[33]

This radical step was taken only after a long period of prevarication. During the 1880s the Government of India had shared the universal hope for an international settlement of the currency question in terms of a bimetallist compromise.[34] It was only when the hope for international settlement receded and when the American government proved to be unable to contain the flood of silver produced in its country by buying a large share of it at a fixed price that the British-Indian government resorted to the radical measure of closing the mints. This was done in 1893 and it had an immediate impact on America. Britain was pressed by America for a re-opening of the Indian mints and there were many voices in Britain and India which echoed this demand.[35] Critics pointed out that the artificial appreciation of the currency which resulted from the closing of the mints amounted to a devaluation of Indian silver metal savings and to the imposition of an indirect tax on land revenue payers.[36] But as the government was in fact interested in an

indirect tax it did well not to answer its critics and keep the mints closed.

A GOLD EXCHANGE STANDARD FOR INDIA

Those who believed in the virtue of a gold standard would have liked to synchronize the closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver with the introduction of a gold standard in India and with a gold currency. It was not easy to dispel the notion that a gold standard implied a gold currency. But the financial position of the Government of India precluded all hasty experiments with a gold standard and a gold currency and necessitated a pragmatic approach to the management of the currency. Even the introduction of a gold exchange standard at the time of the closing of the mints would have been hazardous as it would have committed the government to the establishment of a fairly substantial gold reserve and it was anybody's guess what this reserve should be. Therefore the government followed the safer course of simply watching the deflationary effect at the closing of the mints and waiting until the rupee had reached the exchange rate of 1s 4d at which the government wanted to stabilize it.[37]

The contraction of the currency took some time. In the few years immediately following the closing of the mints silver continued to pour into India and the exchange rate fell somewhat more but did not drop as much as the metal itself.[38] Soon the contraction was felt and the exchange rate rose and by 1898 reached the point where it could be supported by a gold reserve at the rate of 1s 4d. The sale of Council Drafts could now be employed as a device for the management of the currency.[39]

Putting the development of the currency into reverse gear was certainly necessary but it inevitably caused a great deal of distress. The cash commutation of rents in kind, the land revenue assessment of the peasant, the relation of creditor and debtor in the rural areas which had all been shaped by an expanding and depreciating currency were affected by the contraction and deflation which set in after 1894.[40] Two years of bad harvests added to this calamity and famine spread in India. The con-

traction of the currency was paralleled by a contraction of population growth.[41] After having been drowned in a sea of silver India was now nailed on a "Cross of Gold".

THE EFFECT ON INDIA'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

India was shielded against the effects of the world agrarian crisis behind the wall of its depreciating silver currency. Therefore, it did not have to adjust and modernize its agricultural modes of production. It was only partially exposed to the forces of an emerging world economy. It was used as a buffer and it did not get into the mainstream. At the time when the world agrarian crisis subsided at the end of the nineteenth century India was pushed into a deflationary phase for purely fiscal reasons. It was subjected to severe strain in order to achieve what British contemporary observers considered to be a sound economic basis, because they looked at it from a monetary point of view, but it did not gain any structural benefits from this new phase either. The banking principle and the currency principle provided the guiding lines for partisan arguments about Indian economic affairs at that time and the Indian economist Mahadev Govind Ranade who was groping for structural modes of analysis [42] was a lone sentinel whose voice was not heard in the councils of those who determined India's fate in the interest of British imperial policy. In the twentieth century India suffered from this heritage of the nineteenth century and could not overcome the handicap of a hidebound agricultural sector and of a stunted capitalism which was tied to trade and usury at a time when it should have laid the foundation for India's future economic growth.

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