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THE HISTORY

OF THE

Indian National Congress

(1885—1935)

BY

Dr. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD

1935

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MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS.

Bande Matram

To

Truth and Non-violence

whose embodied spirit

hath

guided the destinies

of

The Congress

and

in whose service

Innumerable sons and daughters

of

Hindusthan

have cheerfully made

heavy sacrifices

for

The Emancipation

of

Their Motherland.

FOREWORD

The preparation of the book was not undertaken by the author as of set purpose. It was the unwitting result of the scribbling of idle hours during the hot summer of the year and the notes of lessons given by him to the students of the Andhra Jatheeya Kalasala, Masulipatam, on the History of the Congress. A casual enquiry addressed to him on an allied matter by the Secretary of the A. I. C. C. from Allahabad happened to bring this little venture, through him, to the notice of the President who placed the matter before the Working Committee. The author expresses his sense of profound gratitude to the Working Committee for undertaking its publication on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the great national organisation.

The plan of the book will be evident from a cursory glance at the synopsis that precedes each part. There was not much of plot to unravel in the story of the first thirty years, the happenings in which are dealt with subject by subject and character by character. The past twenty years have been treated year by year. The resolutions of the different sessions have not been categorically quoted. That alone would cover

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half the size of the volume in hand, which has already run into unexpected proportions.

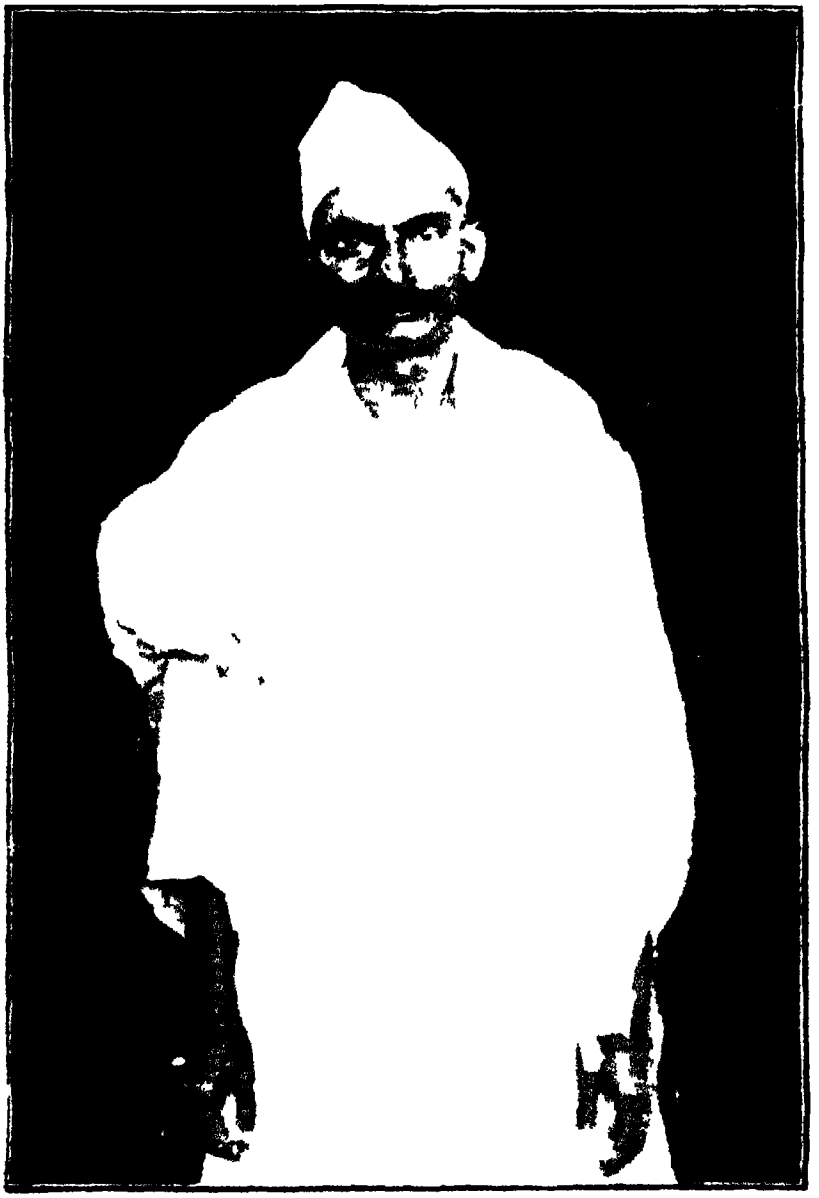
The book is abounding in defects of which the author is only too well aware, and which the readers are requested to bear with. These are defects of plan as well as penmanship which might have been partly, at any rate, avoided by greater leisure and better attention. But the work had to be put through in a hurry. And hurry never conduces to perfection. Yet, during the all-too-short period of time available, the book has been gone through by the President, twice over, and the thanks of the public, no less than of the author, are due to him for the hard work which the task of revision and correction entailed upon him. Equally exacting was the strain imposed upon Syt. J. B. Kirpalani, the General Secretary of the Congress, and Syt. Krishnadas, Secretary, on whom fell the onerous duty of priming up the whole matter for the Press, and to whom the country's thanks are due.

The author acknowledges his obligations to the printers—The Law Printing House, Madras,—who have put their whole capacity and good cheer into the task and raced against time in printing a volume which has run up to one and a half times the anticipated size. Besides the printers, several others have rendered considerable help. The Proprietors

of *The Hindu*, Madras, have kindly lent the photo-blocks of the Presidents of the Congress. Syt. T. Rama Rao, General Manager, The Hindusthan Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd., Masulipatam, has performed the laborious task of reading through the type-script and the proofs and preparing the Index. Syt. K. Ramakotiswara Rau, Editor, *Triveni*, Madras, has read through the type-script once again before passing it on to the Press, part by part. His meticulous sense of get-up has been pressed into service in the arrangement of matter and the correction of final proofs. The Notes on the Satyagraha in Khaira and the Ahmedabad Mill Strike have been prepared by Syt. Mahadev Desai; on the Gujarat floods by Swami Anand; on the Mulshi Satyagraha by Syt. T. R. Deogirikar; and those on Champaran and the Bihar Earthquake by Babu Rajendra Prasad. Our gratitude is due to them all.

MASULIPATAM,
20th Dec. 1935

B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA



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INTRODUCTION

Fifty years ago the Indian National Congress met for the first time in Bombay with a small number of delegates who could hardly be called elected representatives, but who were nevertheless true servants of the people. Ever since then it has been striving for winning freedom for the people of India. In the beginning its aim was indefinite but it has always insisted on a democratic form of Government responsible to the people of India and representative of all communities and classes inhabiting this vast country. It started with the hope and confidence that British statesmanship and the British Government would rise equal to the occasion and establish truly representative institutions giving the right to the people of India to govern India in the interest of India. The early history of the Congress is full of resolutions and speeches giving expression to this faith and confidence. The very demands of the Congress took the form of resolutions suggesting reforms and removal of objectionable measures—all having as their basis a hope that, if the British public and Parliament could be fully informed of this position in India and of the desire of Indians, they would set things right and ultimately confer on them the inestimable boon of Self-Government.

That hope and confidence have been gradually but none-the-less completely shattered by the action of the British Government in India and in England. The attitude of the British Government has become more and more stiff as the national consciousness has become more and more expressive. This initial confidence in the intentions of the British Rule received a shock during the administration of Lord Curzon who partitioned Bengal, and the great agitation that followed against that ill-fated measure was an index of the rising tide of popular national consciousness which had not a little been influenced by world events, such as the victory of Japan over Russia in the beginning of the 20th century. But India had not yet lost faith and during the great war, partly as a result of this faith resuscitated by the annulment of the partition of Bengal and partly on account of want of proper appreciation of the situation as a whole, the country responded to the call of the British Government to help the British Empire in its time of need. India's splendid help was acknowledged by all British statesmen and hope was engendered that the war, which was being ostensibly fought for the principle of self-determination of nations and for making democracy safe, would result in the establishment of Responsible Government in India. The announcement made by the Secretary of State for India on behalf of the British

Government in 1917 promising Self-Government by stages occasioned difference of opinion amongst Indians, which became more and more acute as the result of investigations undertaken by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy became known and the Bill, which ultimately became the Government of India Act in 1920, took shape and form. During this time of incubation of the Bill the war had ended in a victory for the British, and the feeling grew in India that as the pressure in Europe had relaxed on account of the successful termination of the war for Britain, the British attitude had changed for the worse towards India. This feeling was confirmed and strengthened by what was regarded as breach of faith with the Mussalmans in the matter of the Khilaphat and by the passing, in spite of the unanimous protest of the country at large, of what were known as the Rowlatt Bills, whereby the stringent provisions of the Defence of India Act which had been tolerated during the war were sought to be perpetuated, depriving the people of the elementary rights of free citizenship.

These naturally created an intensive agitation in the whole country, and Satyagraha, which had been tried in South Africa, and in a small way in Champaran and in Khaira in India, was put forward by Mahatma Gandhi for the first time as a method to be adopted by the country whereby to secure redress of these

and other grievances. There were unfortunate popular disturbances in the Punjab and Ahmedabad resulting in loss of life and property which were followed by the Jallianwala-bagh massacre and the horrors of the Martial Law regime in the Punjab. There was naturally great indignation throughout the country which was not assuaged by the Report of the Hunter Committee appointed to investigate into these happenings and was considerably intensified by the debate on the Report in Parliament. The Non-co-operation movement was inaugurated with its programme of resignation of titles of honour granted by the Government, boycott of Legislative bodies, Government-recognised educational institutions and Law Courts and of foreign cloth on the one hand, and on the other the establishment of Congress Committees, enrolment of Congress members, collection of Tilak Swaraj Fund, opening of national educational institutions, establishment of Panchayats for decision of village disputes and the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving,—all to culminate by stages in a campaign of Civil Disobedience and non-payment of taxes. The Congress Constitution was changed and its object was defined as the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. There was country-wide awakening followed by repression by Government, when thousands of men and women including some of the most reputed leaders were imprisoned towards the end of 1921. Efforts

at bringing about a settlement with the Government did not fructify and the programme of non-payment of taxes in Bardoli had to be suspended on account of serious disturbances at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces. Subsequently the other items of the Non-co-operation programme were one after another suspended or withdrawn, and Congress members entered the Legislatures.

The appointment by the British Parliament of what is known as the Simon Commission, from which Indians were excluded, for the purpose of investigating the working of the Constitution of 1920, led to another serious upheaval in the country, and the Congress in association with other public bodies framed a Constitution with Dominion Status as the objective for India for the acceptance of the Government. In the absence of any adequate response by the Government, the Congress at its session at Lahore in December, 1929, changed its objective as the attainment of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) by legitimate and peaceful means, and organised a campaign of Civil Disobedience of non-moral laws and non-payment of taxes, in the beginning of 1930. The Government of England on the one hand called a Conference in London to which it nominated certain Indians to advise it about a Constitution for India, and on the other adopted repressive measures, including the promulgation of a

number of most drastic Ordinances for suppressing the Civil Disobedience movement in India. In March, 1931, there was a Pact entered into by Lord Irwin the Viceroy representing the Government, and Mahatma Gandhi representing the Congress, as a result of which Civil Disobedience was suspended and Mahatma Gandhi attended the Round Table Conference in London towards the end of 1931. As was to be expected, nothing came out of the Conference and the Congress was forced to revive the movement early in 1932 and carried it on till 1934, when it was suspended again. In the two movements of 1930 and 1932 hundreds of thousands of men and women and even children courted imprisonment, received *lathi* blows and other kinds of torture and suffered loss of property. Many were killed as a result of firing by the Government forces on crowds. The Satyagrahis showed remarkable power of organisation and suffering and were, on the whole, completely non-violent in the face of the greatest provocation. Congress organisation showed great vitality and powers of adaptability and survived the great attack made on it by the Government. The country has come out of the fiery ordeal with credit but without achieving its great objective of Purna Swaraj.

By a resolution passed at Karachi the Congress has assured to all Indians certain fundamental rights and has drawn up an

economic and social programme. It has made it clear that, in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions and has laid down fundamental rights of citizenship, such as freedom of speech and association, of person and property, of religion and conscience. It has also laid down that the interests of industrial labour shall be safeguarded, by securing for them healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for settlement of disputes and protection against economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right to form unions. It has assured the peasants to secure equitable adjustments of the burden on agricultural land by reduction of rent and revenue and exemption from rent or revenue for uneconomic holdings, with such relief as may be just and necessary to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent. It has also provided for a graded tax on net incomes from land above a reasonable minimum, death duties on a graduated scale on property above a fixed income, and drastic reduction of expenditure on military and defence and civil administration, fixing the salary of State servants at a maximum of Rs. 500 - per month. It has also laid down an economic and social programme of excluding foreign cloth, protecting indigenous industries, prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks,

State control of key industries, relief to agricultural indebtedness, regulation of currency and exchange in the interest of the country and provision for the military training of citizens for national defence.

The last session of the Congress at Bombay in October, 1934, endorsed the policy of entering the Legislatures and laid down a constructive programme including revival of and encouragement to hand-spinning and hand-weaving, promotion of useful village and small industries, re-construction of village life in its economic, educational, social and hygienic aspects, removal of untouchability, promotion of inter-communal unity, total abstinence, national education, spread of useful knowledge among the adult population, organisation of industrial labour and peasants and strengthening of the Congress organisation. Under a revised Constitution it reduced the number of delegates and made it proportionate to the number of primary members on the Congress roll and insisted on manual labour and habitual wearing of Khadi on all elected members and office-bearers of Congress Committees.

The Congress has thus marched on from stage to stage and covers practically every sphere of national activity. It is at present engaged in constructive work which is calculated not only to improve the economic condition of the masses but also to create that self-confidence

among them which can be born of work accomplished and which can enable them to win Purna Swaraj. Starting as a small organisation it now covers the entire country with a net-work of branches and enjoys the confidence of the masses of the country. It has called forth sacrifice on an extensive scale for the attainment of Swaraj from people of all classes and has a remarkable record of work and achievement. The organisation itself is a great national asset which it should be the duty of every Indian to increase and preserve. It is bound to play an ever-increasing part in the struggle for freedom that still lies ahead. This is no time for resting on our oars. The work yet to be accomplished is great and needs much patient toil, endless sacrifice and unflinching determination. It is nothing less than the attainment of Purna Swaraj. Let us bow down our heads to all those men, women, and children, known and unknown, who have laid down their lives, who have suffered woes and privations, and who are still paying the penalty for loving their Motherland.

Let us also in grateful reverence recall the services of those who sowed the seeds of this mighty organisation, who nurtured it with their unremitting labour and sacrifice. The small seedling that was planted fifty years ago has now grown into a mighty tree with branches spreading over this vast country and has now blossomed in the sacrifice of countless men and

women. It is for those that are now left behind to nourish the tree by their further services and sacrifice, so that it may bear fruit and make India the free and prosperous country that Nature intended her to be.

The pages that follow relate the story of the growth of the Indian National Congress. The author's knowledge and experience of the men and affairs of the Congress is wide. He himself has played no inconsiderable part in the later phases of its development. He is not a detached historian writing after the events and basing his conclusions on cold recorded facts. He has seen things with his own eyes and has himself acted and re-acted on them. He is writing not only with knowledge but also with faith. His conclusions and opinions are therefore his own, and need not be treated as in every case representing the official view of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress which publishes the book and sends it out to the world. It is hoped, however, that it contains a faithful record of facts and will be found helpful to students of contemporary history.

Camp—Wardha,
12th December, 1935 RAJENDRA PRASAD



W. C. Bonnerjee
1885 Bombay
1892 Allahabad



Dadabai Naoroji
1886 Calcutta
1893. Lahore
1906 Calcutta



Budruddin Tyabji
1887: Madras



George Yule
1888: Allahabad

THE

HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

Part I

SYNOPSIS

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Our Indian Patriarchs

Dadabhai Naoroji—Ananda Charlu—Wacha—Gokhale—G. Subrahmania Aiyar—Budruddin Tyabji—K. T. Telang—W. C. Bonnerjee—Tilak—Pandit Ayodhyanath—Surendra Nath Banerjea—Malaviya—Lajpat Rai—Pherozeshah Mehta—Ananda Mohan Bose—Man Mohan Ghose—Lal Mohan Ghose—Vijiaraghavachariar—Raja Rampal Singh—Kali Charan Banerjee—Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur—D. A. Khare—Ganga Prasad Varma

—R. N. Mudholkar—Sankaran Nair—Kesava Pillai—Bepin Chandra Pal—Ambika Charan Mazumdar—Bhupendra Nath Basu —Mazar-ul-Haq—M. G. Ranade—Bishan Narayan Dhar—Ramesh Chandra Dutt—Subba Rau Pantulu—Lala Murlidhar—Sachchidananda Sinha.

THE
HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

Part I

CHAPTER I

The Birth of the Congress

The History of the Congress is really the history of India's struggle for freedom. For centuries the Indian Nation has been under foreign supremacy and the Congress has striven for half a century to free the country from this subjection, the beginnings of which in its latest phase may be traced to the advent to India of a trading concern.

The East India Company had during nearly a hundred years of commercial and political activity acquired large tracts of the country in India and had begun to enjoy the rights of a ruling power. After 1772 its activities were subject to scrutiny from time to time by the British Parliament and every renewal of its Charter was preceded by an inquiry on behalf of the British Government. As the commercial aspect of its activity had gone more and more into the background and the political aspect come more and more into the forefront, this scrutiny had become more and more searching. While it would not be right to imagine that anything like a close supervision was maintained, there were not men wanting among the British who studied the Indian problem in great detail, followed the action and programme of the East India Company with care and vigilance, and were not slow to bring them before Parliament for consideration and redress. The great interest

which Edmund Burke, Sheridan and Fox exhibited in the last quarter of the 18th century served to focus public opinion on the misdeeds of the Company's agents. Although the impeachment of Warren Hastings failed in its objective, it exposed the oppression and tyranny which used to be practised. Every periodical inquiry preceding renewal of the Charter resulted in the enunciation of some principles of far-reaching consequence, even though these principles were not followed in practice. More than once it was laid down as the policy to be followed that the agents of the Company should not attempt to extend its territorial acquisitions, but every time, an opportunity occurred or was created which enabled them to disregard the injunction, and the territories went on expanding. It is not necessary here to go into the history, full of black and treacherous deeds, full of the exhibition of low and rapacious human nature, full of the wreckages of broken engagements and treaties, of the acquisition of India by the East India Company. Nor is it necessary to go into an examination of the treachery and faithlessness of the Indians as amongst themselves, or of the ways and means employed by the agents of the Company to amass huge fortunes for themselves, apart from what they made available to the Company and its Directors. Suffice it to say that immense wealth was acquired, and formed in due course the nucleus, and perhaps the bulk, of that capital which enabled England on the advent of the steam engine and the machine to establish her industrial supremacy in the world in the nineteenth century.

When the Regulating Act was passed in 1774 and a Board of Control was appointed over the Court of Directors of the Company, and a Governor-General with a Council, the British Parliament for the first time took some responsibility for the administration of the terri-

tories already acquired. This control grew in course of time and another Act in 1785 followed. The Charter was renewed after investigations in 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853. In 1833 it was enacted that "no native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company" and the Court of Directors explained its import as follows. –

> "The Court conceive this section to mean that there shall be no governing caste in British India; that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinction of race or religion shall not be of the number; that no subject of the King, whether of Indian or British or mixed descent, shall be excluded from the posts usually conferred on uncovenanted servants in India, or from the covenanted service itself, provided he be otherwise eligible."

By the same Act the rights of the Company to trade in India were abolished and it became divested henceforth of its character as a trading concern and became entirely a ruling authority.

A controversy arose about this time regarding the introduction of English education into India. With the powerful support of Raja Rammohan Roy among Indians and Macaulay among the Britishers, it was set at rest in favour of English education as against education in Indian languages and literature. Thus were laid the foundations of that system which continues to this day.

There was no Press in those days except such as was conducted by Englishmen, some of whom had to suffer even deportation from India. Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship was remarkable for the aforesaid

reforms and was also lenient towards the Press. His successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, removed the restrictions against the Press which remained free till the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, with the exception of a brief period during the time of the Revolt of 1857.

Between 1833 and 1853 the Punjab and Sindh had been conquered, and the policy of Lord Dalhousie resulting in the annexation of the States of those rulers who died without issue, and of Oudh on the ground of maladministration by the then ruler, had added considerably to the territories of the Company, making the extent of British India what it has remained ever since The economic drain resulting in the impoverishment of the people, the loss of territory and the establishment of a foreign rule had created resentment and discontent, and the Revolt of 1857 was the last armed attempt to throw off the foreign yoke. It was undoubtedly tinged with some religious motive. but the fact that the titular Emperor of Delhi, the descendant of Akbar and Aurangzeb, and the descendant of the Peshwa of Poona were the rallying points round whom the effort to establish an Indian Raj revolved, shows that the Revolt represented not only the accumulated effect of all that had been perpetrated during a hundred years since the battle of Plassey in 1757, but also the natural desire in the human breast of every country and community to be ruled by its own people and no others. The Revolt failed but with it also disappeared the East India Company, and the Government of India directly passed into the hands of the British Crown, that is, the British Parliament. The Queen's Proclamation issued on this occasion went a great way in creating an atmosphere of calm and faith which kept the country in a condition of peace. Whatever discontent there was became absolutely helpless. The nobility, particularly the Muslim nobility, was practically crushed

for a 50 per cent. elected strength, conceded the principle of indirect election by Municipalities and Local Boards, by the Chambers of Commerce and the Universities, to the Local Councils, and by the Local Councils to the Supreme Council. It further conceded to Government the right of overruling the decisions of the Councils, but provided for appeals against Executive action to the Government of India and to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons, to which bodies the respective Executives concerned should, within a month of overruling, duly explain their action. The same resolution was repeated in 1887, 1888, 1889. In 1890 the Congress supported the Bill to amend the Indian Councils Act introduced by Charles Bradlaugh as calculated to secure a substantial instalment of Reforms. The Bill, it may be noted in passing, was dropped. In 1891 the Congress reiterated its conviction that India could not be governed well until her people were allowed, through their elected representatives, a potential voice in the Legislatures. Lord Cross's Act of Council Reform was passed in 1892, and then the Congress concentrated upon an attack on the Rules of the Government of India and the practice of Local Governments which necessitated many alterations.

We must not omit to mention the fact that the Reforms of 1892 did not provide for the election of the representatives to the Legislative Councils. The so-called right of election to the Legislatures enjoyed by Local Bodies and by other Electorates amounted merely to nomination by those bodies, and it was up to Government to accept them or to reject them. In practice, however, Government invariably accepted the nominations. The fact was that Lord Lansdowne's Government uniformly resisted the principle of election even of an indirect character. The representation to the Supreme

Council was similarly arranged, only four seats being open to be filled up by the recommendation of the non-official members of the four Provincial Legislative Councils then in existence,—Madras, Bombay, Bengal and N.W.P.

In 1892 the Congress, while accepting in a loyal spirit the Indian Councils Act, regretted that the Act itself did not in terms concede to the people the right of electing their own representatives to the Councils. In 1893 it thanked the Government for its liberal spirit in giving effect to the Act but also pointed out material alterations considered necessary, if real effect was to be given to the Act. It also reiterated the demand for a Council for the Punjab. These requests were repeated in 1894 and 1897. The Reforms of 1892 however conceded the right of interpellation for the members of Councils in 1893, and the Congress asked in 1895 for the right to preface their questions by short explanations which is not permitted even to-day.

The Morley-Minto Reforms

It was not till 1904 that the Congress reverted to the subject. In that year a demand was also made in favour of direct representation to the House of Commons, at the rate of two members to each Province, and a further expansion of the Councils in the country, with the right to divide the House on financial matters, the right of veto to the Head of the Government being of course conceded. A plea was also put in for the appointment of Indians to the Council of the Secretary of State and to the Executive Councils in India. In 1905 the Congress again pressed for Reforms and in 1906 expressed the opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing Dominions should be extended to India, and as steps leading thereto, there

should be simultaneous examinations held in England and India, adequate representation of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State, an expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing larger and truer representation of the people and larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country, and an increase in the powers of local bodies. In 1908 the Congress began to rejoice over the coming Reforms before time for it, gave a most hearty and unqualified welcome to the Reform proposals, and expressed the hope that the details would be worked out in the same liberal spirit in which the proposals were conceived. Disappointment, however, was in store for the country. Even apart from the measure of representation, there remained the fact that the Regulations passed under the Reforms Statute of 1909 were even less liberal than John Morley had indicated in his Despatch earlier. This reminds us of later events in which the pronouncements of Lord Irwin were toned down by the Round Table Conferences of 1930-33, and the plans of the Conferences were further diluted by the White Paper, which in turn was softened by the J.P.C. Report, while the Bill went lower down than the Report, and the Act finally has emerged as an attenuated form of the Bill.

It is necessary at this stage to review rapidly what the Reforms were, which were for a decade associated with the names of Minto and Morley. The Supreme Council consisted of 60 additional members, of whom only 27 were elected representatives. Of the remaining 33, not more than 28 might be officials. But the Governor-General also nominated three non-officials to represent certain specified Communities, and had at his disposal two other seats to be filled by nomination, more to represent interests than territories. The elected

seats themselves were partly shared by certain special constituencies, such as the Landowners in seven Provinces, the Muslims in five Provinces, Muslim Landowners in one Province (at alternative elections only), and two Chambers of Commerce, while the residue of open seats was filled by election by the non-official members of the nine Provincial Legislative Councils. Lord Morley made no secret of the fact that the "Governor-General's Council, in its Legislative as well as its Executive capacity, should continue to be so constituted as to ensure its constant and uninterrupted power to fulfil the constitutional obligations that it owes, and must always owe, to His Majesty's Government and to the Imperial Parliament." Of the Reforms themselves Morley stated: "If it could be said that this chapter of Reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it." But the verdict of Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu as embodied in their (Montford) Report on these Reforms is doubtless even more authoritative: "They have ceased to satisfy Indian opinion, and their continuance can only lead to a further cleavage between the Indian members and the Government and a further cultivation of criticism unchecked by Responsibility."

Before dealing with Congress resolutions on the subject, we may here anticipate events and complete the picture.

The Morley-Minto Reforms opened the next stage of the question. Two Indians (since increased to three) were appointed in 1907 as members of the India Council, one was appointed to the Governor-General's Executive Council in 1909, and one each to the Executive Councils of the Governors of Madras and Bombay

in 1910. An Executive Council was constituted in Bengal in the same year and an Indian member was appointed to it. Subsequently the Province was raised to the status of a Presidency under a Governor-in-Council. The separate Province of Bihar and Orissa was formed in 1912 under a Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council with an Indian member in it.

In 1909 the Congress passed four resolutions dealing with the Reforms. In the first it recorded its sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion; it expressed dissatisfaction at "(a) the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the followers of one particular religion; (b) the unjust, invidious and humiliating distinctions made between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty in the matter of electorates, the franchise and the qualifications of candidates; (c) the wide arbitrary and unreasonable disqualifications and restrictions for candidates seeking election to the Councils; (d) the general distrust of the educated classes running through the Regulations; and (e) the unsatisfactory composition of the non-official majorities in the Provincial Councils, rendering them ineffective and unreal." By the second resolution it urged the creation of Executive Councils to assist the Lt. Governors in the U.P., the Punjab, Eastern Bengal and Assam, and Burma. By the third resolution the Congress pointed out the unsatisfactory nature of the Reforms Regulations for the Punjab in (a) that the numerical strength of the Council was inadequate, (b) that the elected element was unduly small and altogether insufficient, (c) that the principle of protection of minorities applied in the case of Muslims in other Provinces was not applied to non-Muslim minorities in the Punjab, and (d) that the Regulations tended to practically keep out non-Muslims of the Punjab

from the Imperial Council. By a fourth resolution the Congress expressed dissatisfaction at the non-establishment of a Council for the C.P. and Berars and at the exclusion of the Berars from participation in the election of two members of the Imperial Legislative Council by the land-holders and members of District and Municipal Boards of C. P.

In 1910 and 1911 the Congress practically reiterated the objections and suggestions of 1909 regarding the Reforms and further protested against the extension of the principle of separate electorates to District Boards and Municipalities.

In 1912 the Congress expressed disappointment at the non-removal of the defects mentioned in the previous resolutions, and prayed for an elected majority in the Imperial Legislative Council and in all the Provincial Councils, the system of voting by delegates to be done away with, the franchise to be widened, removal of the disqualifications of candidates on the ground of conviction not involving moral turpitude the right of putting supplementary questions and similar other reforms. It reiterated the resolutions regarding the establishment of an Executive Council in the Punjab and condemning the extension of separate electorates to Local Bodies. Curiously enough, the Congress resolutions on the Reforms had a clause to the effect that "a person ignorant of English should be ineligible for membership." The Congress expressed satisfaction at the recognition by the Government of India of the necessity of introducing Provincial Autonomy and protested against an interpretation sought to be put upon the Despatch which was contrary to its letter and spirit. The same resolution was practically reiterated in 1913.

In 1915 the Congress was held in Bombay under the

presidency of Sir S.P. Sinha who was the first Law Member of the Government of India. Resolution XIX of the Bombay Congress (1915) instructed the All-India Congress Committee to confer with a committee of the All-India Muslim League, and as the result of the conference, a scheme was drafted embodying the aspirations of United India, and the Lucknow Congress of 1916 approved of this scheme. The Congress demanded a definite step to be taken towards Self-Government and that India should be raised in status "from the position of a Dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions." The scheme that was then elaborated, strangely enough, provided for 4/5 elected and 1/5 nominated members in the Provincial Legislative Councils, for elections being direct and being based on as broad a franchise as possible, adequate provision being made for the Muslim minorities by Separate Electorates and the following quotas:— Punjab 50 per cent. of the elected members, U.P. 30 per cent., Bengal 40 per cent., Bihar 25 per cent., C.P. 15 per cent., Madras 15 per cent and Bombay 1/3. They were not to contest in any other Election (Imperial or Provincial) than those representing special interests. It was also provided that "no Bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the Bill, or any clause thereof, or the resolution." In the Imperial Council there should be a four-fifths elected element, and a third of the Indian elected members should be Muslims elected by separate Muslim Electorates in the proportion, as nearly as possible, in which they are represented in the Provincial Councils by separate Muslim

Electorates. This is the Hindu-Muslim concordat passed at Lucknow and subsequently accepted by, and *en bloc* incorporated in, the Montford Reforms.

The scheme comprised various details which need not be gone into here. The Congress League Scheme is extracted in full in the Appendix. The Congress did not rest content with the passing of the resolution. An Executive Committee was appointed to carry on educative and propagandistic work in this behalf. The General Secretaries referred the scheme to a lawyer of eminence, Mr. S. Varadachariar, who has recently become a Judge of the Madras High Court, for preparing an Amending Bill to carry out the changes proposed in the Government of India Act in accordance with the Congress League Scheme. The Home Rule agitation led by Mrs. Besant, her internment, the scheme of Passive Resistance thought of jointly by the Congress and the Muslim League, the great speech of Mr. Montagu on the Mesopotamian muddle, the resignation of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State, and the appointment of Mr. Montagu as S. of S. for India, the famous Announcement of August 20th, 1917, adumbrating the future policy in India, Mr. Montagu's promised visit, Mrs. Besant's release and her election as President of the Congress are only enumerated here, though they are dealt with in detail elsewhere (in Part II), as they form the background for the picture of the Calcutta Congress of 1917.

In Calcutta (1917), the grateful satisfaction of the Congress was expressed over the pronouncement that the establishment of Responsible Government was Government's object, and the Congress asked that a time-limit be fixed in the Statute itself for its full realization, and that as a first step the Congress League Scheme of

Reforms should be introduced. The reader may note how the Congress had in mind an elastic and self-expanding scheme of Reforms.

Mr. Montagu arrived in India in November 1917. The Montford Report itself was published in the month of June 1918, and the scheme therein set forth was discussed at a Special Congress held in Bombay in September 1918, presided over by Mr. Hasan Imam. The Congress League Scheme was eclipsed by the scheme elaborated in the Montford Report, and Dyarchy was its central factor. A Second Chamber in the Central Legislature—namely, the Council of State—was contemplated, and "grand committees" in the Provinces in order to help the Governor-General and Governors to have effective power in respect of measures not approved of by the popular Chambers. The Bombay (Special) Session resolved, "That there shall be no Council of State, but if a Council of State is to be constituted, a system of reserved and transferred subjects similar to that proposed for the Provinces, shall be adopted for the Central Government. At least half of its total strength shall consist of elected members and procedure by certification shall be confined to the Reserved subjects." Dyarchy was accepted and a Second Chamber in the Centre was agreed to in return for an extension of Dyarchy in the Centre, which was demanded by the Congress but which the Montford Scheme had not contemplated. The Congress League Scheme was really much nearer to the Home Rule idea than the bicameral scheme which successfully puts down the popular voice of the Lower House without the odium of a veto by the Governor-General or the Governor.

Government took what was given, viz., the Council of State, and did not give what was demanded as a *quid*

pro quo, viz., Dyarchy at the Centre. The Bombay Special Congress was a complete triumph for Mr. Montagu. That it considered the Montford proposals, as a whole, disappointing and unsatisfactory, or that in reaffirming the demands of the two previous Congresses it added a section relating to fundamental rights, namely, equality of all subjects before the law, guarantees of liberty, life and property, freedom of speech or writing or of association, right to bear arms, freedom of Press, and the making of corporal punishment equally applicable to all, does not really disprove this statement. The Delhi Congress (1918) which was presided over by Pandit Malaviya also re-affirmed these conditions, but demanded full Responsible Government in all Provinces, not Dyarchy. At Delhi, Dyarchy was pleaded for in the Central Government, Foreign Affairs, the Army and the Navy being agreed to be left as Reserved subjects. On the question of the Second Chamber, the Bombay Special Congress resolution was repeated, a half of the total strength being required to be elected. The War ended by the declaration of armistice on 11-11-1918, and the Congress quoted the pronouncements of President Wilson, Lloyd George and other British statesmen, stressed that the principle of self-determination be applied to all progressive nations, and resolved that it be applied to India, and that all repressive laws be repealed. Strenuous times were ahead, however, for the Congress. Before the next session met at Amritsar, the Rowlatt Bills and the Satyagraha movement, the shootings at Virangam and Delhi and the Jallianwalabagh tragedy, Martial Law in the Punjab and Sir C. Sankaran Nair's resignation from the Government of India, the Hunter Commission and its failure,—these were the chief occurrences that engaged and even perturbed the national mind.

Public Services

The Congress has always attached great importance to the employment of Indians in the public services, and particularly in what are known as the covenanted services. It will be recalled that in 1833 the eligibility of Indians to all posts had been recognised by statute, and when in 1853 competitive examinations were introduced it was pointed out that Indians were under a great handicap. During the regime of Lord Salisbury the age of candidates for competitive examinations for the Civil Service was reduced, and this was regarded as adding to the handicap from which Indians suffered. Indians had always demanded simultaneous examinations to be held in England and India so that that handicap might be at least partially removed. The very first Congress advocated simultaneous examinations.

Let us study the subject in greater detail. It may be mentioned here that the demand for simultaneous examinations has been made by the Congress ever since 1885 when its first session was held, and that it dates back to at least eighteen years earlier, apart from the important circumstance that, as early as 1861, a committee of the India Council recommended the same as essential if justice was to be done to India and if the promises of Parliament were to be fulfilled. The resolution in support of simultaneous examinations passed by the House of Commons in June 1893 was acclaimed by the Congress and throughout the country, and the decision of Government, announced in the followig year, not to give effect to it was received with the deepest disappointment. The evidence of the Indian witnesses before the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India left no room for doubt as regards the persistence of the opinion that justice could never be done to the claims of Indians

unless this reform was accomplished, and the principal reason for the emphatic disapproval of the Majority Report of the Commissioners was that they negatived this proposal.

At the second Congress a sub-committee appointed in this behalf formulated certain details and demanded that simultaneous competitive examinations be held in India and England open to all subjects of His Majesty, that a classified list of appointments be made in order of merit, that with the holding of these simultaneous examinations, the Statutory Civil Service be closed for first appointments which, however, should be left open to the members of the uncovenanted service and to professional men of proved merit, and that all other appointments be filled by competitive examinations held in the Provinces. The practice then prevalent was that certain young men were being chosen as Deputy Collectors straightway. By the time of the fourth session the agitation met with a measure of success. The Congress appreciated the concessions proposed in the Report of the Public Service Commission but complained of their inadequacy. No doubt the age limit for the I. C. S. examination was raised from 19 to 23 as was desired by the Congress, but otherwise the position was made worse by the Government's orders on the Commission's recommendations, for the Indian officials were compelled either to remain in the position they then held in the Statutory Service or to enter the Provincial Service, the members of which were banned from all the higher Executive offices. Gokhale made an indignant speech at the 5th Congress in which he stated: "The terms of the enactment of 1833 and the Proclamation of 1858 are so explicit that those who now try to withhold the privileges then assured to us must be prepared to face the painful dilemma of hypocrisy or treachery, must be prepared to admit that

England was insincere when she made those promises or that she is prepared to break faith with us now." The position then was that first, there were competitive examinations for the All-India Services, secondly, there was the Statutory Covenanted Service in which 1/6 of the posts, by the enactment of 1861, were reserved for Indians, and thirdly there was the uncovenanted service which was wholly Indian. In 1892 the Congress regretted the resolution of the Government of India on the Report of the Public Service Commission and had a humble petition submitted to the House of Commons. Out of 941 posts under the second category, a sixth i.e. 158 posts belonged to the Indians. But the Public Service Commission said 108 *should* be given, and the Secretary of State changed the word "should" and said they *may* be given. As a matter of fact even out of the 108 posts left to the discretion of Government as against 158 which had formed the rightful claim of Indians, only 93 were given to them in 1892.

Matters soon grew worse. The Government of India Resolution on the subject was confirmed by a despatch from the S. of S. and a positive disability founded upon race was created against the Indians in 1894, for the despatch laid down that a minimum of European officials in the Covenanted Service was indispensable. It gave the go-bye to the Resolution passed by the House of Commons on 2-6-1893, that the question of holding simultaneous examinations should be speedily carried out as an act of justice to the Indian people. While India was demanding facilities through simultaneous examinations for entering the Indian Civil, Medical, Police, Engineering, Telegraph, Forest and Accounts Services, Government took a reactionary step in 1895, for, in reorganising the Educational Service which Indians could enter in any grade and on equal pay with Europeans, Government

published a Resolution stating that "in future Natives of India who are desirous of entering the Educational department will usually be appointed in India and to the Provincial Service." Thus in the field of Educational Service a new injustice was perpetrated in the scheme for its reorganization. Indians were excluded from the higher grades of that service. The scheme divided the superior Educational Service into two—the higher, the I.E.S., to be filled by persons appointed in England and the lower, the P.E.S., to be filled in India. Before 1880, in Bengal, both Indians and Europeans in the higher service received the same pay. Both began on Rs. 500. In 1880 the pay for Indians was reduced to Rs. 333 and in 1889 to Rs. 250, although the Indians had graduated in an English University. The highest pay for the Indian was to be, in 1896, Rs. 700 however long he might serve, while the Englishman had Rs. 1000 at the end of 10 years. The new scheme further barred the Indians from the Principalship of certain Colleges reserved for Englishmen. The regret at these changes was all the greater, said Mr. A. M. Bose, as they were brought into force in the year of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee (1897). It is thus that as the Congress movement became more real and more earnest, the bureaucratic reaction became more unabashed and more naked.

In 1896 and 1897, the Congress demanded a place for Indians in the Executive Councils of Bombay and Madras. The Civil Medical Service came in for some attention in these and subsequent years. In 1900, the Congress deplored the exclusion of Indians from the higher branches of the P.W.D., Railway, Opium, Customs and Telegraph Services and also the restriction of eligibility for appointment through the Cooper's Hill College of Engineering only to two. An additional invidious distinction was made in respect of guaranteed appointments

in connection with the College at Roorki. The separation of the Indian Civil Medical from the Military Medical Service became another topic of agitation and the same old grievances continued to be reiterated at subsequent sessions.

Military Problem

The Congress of the period had dealt with nearly two hundred subjects during the thirty years covered by this period. Amongst these subjects, there was one of unfailing interest which became an annual theme for years but which obtained no redress or relief in spite of repeated protests and prayers from the Congress. The very first Congress protested against the proposed increase of military expenditure and suggested that if it was inevitable it should be met by retrenchment of other expenditure and by a reimposition of Customs duties and extension of the License tax on those officials and non-officials till then exempt therefrom, taking care however to maintain a sufficiently high taxable minimum. In the next year a plea was put forward for the admission of Indians as volunteers who would be of immense assistance to Government, in view of the unsettled state of public affairs in Europe. In the third year India's claims for admission into the higher grades of military service were pressed on the plea of India's loyalty and of the Queen's pledge in her Proclamation of 1858. To this end, Congress asked for the establishment of Military Colleges in this country. The fourth and fifth Congresses confirmed the earlier resolutions, the sixth ignored the subject. The seventh resumed discussion on the subject and while urging that "Government should conciliate Indian public opinion and encourage and qualify the Indians to defend their homes and Government," demanded a certain relaxation of the rules under the Arms Act, the organisation, throughout the

more warlike races of the Empire of a system of Militia Service, and the establishment of Military Colleges and of a system of Volunteering. The abnormal increase of military expenditure in spite of these prayers and protests was made the ground by the eighth Congress for a demand that England should share a portion of this expenditure with India. The ninth Congress turned its attention to a social aspect of the question, namely prostitution and contagious disease in Indian Cantonments, and this was confirmed by the tenth session. In 1894, the Welby Commission was appointed and was to consider the question of apportionment of military expenditure between England and India. The eleventh and twelfth sessions passed over the subject but the thirteenth reverted to it on account of the Frontier policy adopted by Government and asked that the expenditure necessitated by it should be shared by England. The fourteenth session followed suit. The fifteenth Congress touched a new aspect of the matter and pointed out that inasmuch as it was thought prudent and safe to withdraw large bodies of troops outside India, the cost of 20,000 British troops be borne by the British Government. The Frontier emergency having passed, the Congress harked back to the question of a Military College at its 16th session. With this the 19th century closed, Queen Victoria passed away in 1901, a new sovereign (King Edward VII) ascended the throne, but India's military woes remained as ever before. In 1902 at its 17th session, the Congress demanded a division of expenditure between England and India on the ground urged at the 15th session. Things soon became more concrete. The Welby Commission of 1894 had reported and the small relief given to India was more than compensated by a fresh burden of £786,000 per annum imposed on the country by an increase in the pay of the British soldier. This was the subject of protest at the 18th session.

Moreover it appeared at the time that more British troops were to be saddled on India,—and this, after the Boer War and the operations in China which had drawn lots of troops from India had conclusively shown that it was quite safe and prudent to withdraw them outside the Statutory limits of British India. The 19th session took a comprehensive view of the situation and recalling how the Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1859 had worked hardship on India, attacked the Military policy of Britain in India as really an Imperial policy for which England must pay its quota, especially in view of the fact that the British troops in India, forming as they did an Imperial garrison, amounted to a third of the whole British Army. Lord Curzon's forward policy in Tibet was by this time in operation though he had described his Tibetan expedition as a "political mission" and incurred expenditure thereon without the express sanction of Parliament as was required by the Statute of 1858, under which Indian Revenues should not be spent without such sanction outside the Statutory limits of British India, except to repel foreign aggression. Now in the year 1935 we see the Indian Reform Act validating this deviation from an age-long law. The 20th Congress protested against this act of Lord Curzon's and also pointed out how the military expenditure was growing and becoming unbearable on account of Lord Kitchener's army reorganisation scheme at an additional cost of £10 millions. Towards the end of Lord Curzon's renewed term of office—1905, acute differences arose between him and Lord Kitchener on the question of Civil Control over the Military, the former upholding it, the latter upsetting it.

The Congress at its 21st session held at Benares in 1905 protested against any change in the prevailing policy which ensured the supremacy of Civil Control over

the Military authorities, and drew attention once again to the question of military policy in India being dictated by British policy in the East. It further emphasised the fact that such Civil Control could not be exercised except by representatives of the tax-payer. In 1906, in the midst of the new forces of National resurgence, this hardy annual was not given the go-bye and it was pointed out that within twenty years the military expenditure had nearly doubled from 17 crores to 32 crores a year and that during a period which synchronised with the most disastrous famines that ever raged in India causing no less than 11 million deaths for want of food.

In 1908 the Congress emphatically protested against a fresh burden of £300,000 which the British War Office had imposed on the Indian Exchequer on the recommendation of the Home Committee and urged upon the British Government the necessity of revising the Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1859 and the desirability of laying down a fair and reasonable principle which should free the Indian Exchequer from unjust exactions of this character In 1909 and 1910 the annually growing military expenditure was commented upon. In 1912 and 1913 at the 27th and 28th sessions, resolutions on the injustice of keeping the higher ranks of the Army closed against Indians were again passed.

In 1914, the Congress repeated its demand that the higher ranks of the Army should be thrown open to Indians and that Military Schools and Colleges should be established and Indians should be allowed to volunteer. His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught had urged the first two points. Lord Kitchener, it was said, was in favour of admitting Indians as far as Majors and it was fondly hoped that the King would announce this in 1911. Indians were in no way debarred from volunteering

in those days and when the question was first raised in the earlier years of the Congress, Mr. S. B. Sankaram declared that he was a volunteer. It is of interest to note that Mr. B. N. Sarma who became in 1920 a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was himself a volunteer. But in 1898, the Indian Volunteers' names were taken off and in 1914, only Indian Christians were allowed to volunteer. A partial reparation for the great damage done to Indian name and character in the military sphere was made in 1917 when the racial bar against the admission of Indians to the commissioned ranks of the Army was removed and nine Indians were appointed to such ranks. The Congress of 1917 (Calcutta) expressed its satisfaction over the matter and urged the formation of Cadet Corps for young men between 16 and 18 years of age.

Legal and Judicial Problems

The Congress, dominated as it doubtless was from its earliest days by men of high legal position and attainments in the country, was naturally punctilious about safeguarding the legal rights of the people. Neither popular experiences nor bureaucratic repression advanced far enough to compel the realisation that all legal forms and procedure are only for normal times and for submissive subjects. When once the subjects of the State become conscious of the rights that legal forms are designed to secure to them, that is, when the spacious life incidental to a nascent nationalism begins to dawn upon a country or community, the hollowness of those forms and that procedure at once will become apparent. So did it when the Government having introduced the system of trial by Jury in all its fulness, thought fit to make an innovation in 1872 in the system of such trials, by depriving the verdicts of Juries of all finality and vesting in Sessions Judges and High Courts powers of setting aside

verdicts of acquittal. The very second Congress (Calcutta, 1886) declared such an innovation injurious and asked for its immediate withdrawal and subsequently protested against further reactionary changes proposed in the system, and later Congresses repeated the request from time to time but without effect until even to-day.

Certainly more important than the curtailment of the powers of Juries, was the combination of the Judicial with the Executive functions which made the same authorities, prosecutor, judge and jury—all rolled up into one.

The movement for this reform in British India dates from the time of Raja Rammohan Roy, who died in England over eighty years ago after he had given evidence before a Parliamentary Committee, and who placed a memorandum, as we have already said, before the Parliament on this amongst other questions. It is interesting to recall that one of the reforms which he advocated was the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, for which the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League have been pleading in vain. Incidentally, the history of this question illustrates, about as well as anything can do, how unfavourable are existing conditions for the introduction of even much needed reforms. Among others, the Marquis of Dufferin as Governor-General, Viscount Cross and the Earl of Kimberley as Secretaries of State, and Sir Harvey Adamson as Home Member of the Government of India acknowledged at different times the soundness of the Congress proposal, and the last-named officer promised on behalf of Government in 1908 that it would be tried as an experimental measure. But Judicial and Executive duties are still combined in one and the same officer. A band of devoted workers, of whom Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji was the most prominent,

took up the cause of reform after Rammohan Roy, and associations were formed for the purpose in Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Of these, mention may be made in particular of the Bengal National League. With the spread of education the movement gained in volume and momentum, and the Indian National Congress took up the subject in 1885.

The second Congress opined that a complete separation of Executive from Judicial functions was an urgent necessity. The third called for this reform even though this should involve some extra expenditure. By the next year, this subject as well as the Jury question came to be bundled together and were perilously near finding a place in the omnibus resolution. The Congress repeated however this resolution year after year to the point of feeling, in 1893, that the combination of the two functions constituted " one of the gravest stigmas on British Rule in India, one fraught with incalculable oppression to all classes of the community throughout the country," and the Congress expressed its sense of "hopelessness of any other redress" and "humbly entreated the Secretary of State to order the immediate appointment in each Province of Committees to prepare suitable schemes in this behalf." How innocent the Congress was, rather how desperate it must have felt, to believe that a Government that would not initiate a reform, would appoint a Committee to work out all the necessary details for its initiation! This shows the void that was already beginning to appear in Congressmen's minds and before Congressmen's vision. Only a year later (1894) the Congress was able to quote the admission of its contentions by two former Secretaries of State (Lord Kimberley and Lord Cross). What matters really is admission by men in office and not those who are out of it. Agitation however continued in this behalf and the late Mr. Man Mohan Ghose made this

question the subject of his special study. His death in 1898 was lamented by the 12th Congress which noted with satisfaction the support of public opinion both in England and in India which the question had received. Further support came in the year 1899 in the form of a petition presented to the Secretary of State-in-Council to effect the much needed separation, by a body of eminent men like Lord Hobhouse, Sir Richard Garth, Sir Richard Couch, Sir Charles Sargent, Sir W. Markby, Sir John Budd Phear, Sir John Scott, Sir Roland K. Wilson, all Judges of eminence, Mr. Herebert. J. Reynolds and Sir William Wedderburn. In 1901, the Congress found matters had progressed further and that the question was under the consideration of the Government of India. But it was not till 1908 that any tangible progress was made, for in that year the Congress recorded its satisfaction that the proposal had received the sanction of the Government of Bengal in some definite shape for the Province of Bengal, but before 12 months elapsed, the Congress recognised its disappointment in that no effective steps had been taken in that direction and the same disappointment was repeated at two successive Congresses.

While the chronic sores of abridged Jury powers, and combined Judicial and Executive functions were still festering and showed no signs of improvement, new ulcers broke out in the body politic in 1897 which brought to light Regulation III of 1818 (Bengal) II of 1819 (Madras) and XXV of 1827 (Bombay) under which anybody could be deported without trial. This was applied to the Sirdars Natu who by the time the Congress of 1897 met had been imprisoned for over 5 months. Congress was aghast because a certain notification which even these Regulations required was not made before the imprisonment.

The year 1897 was a reactionary year in every sense. Lokamanya Tilak was convicted for sedition for publishing matter of which he was not the author. Punitive Police was quartered on Poona and the Law of Sedition 124 (a) and of spreading false alarms (505) was sought to be amended so as to make the sections even more stringent. The Congress duly protested against these invasions of popular rights and Surendra Nath Banerjea made one of his characteristic speeches which may be quoted for the eloquence of its expression:—

> "We regard the quartering of the Punitive Police at Poona as a mistake We regard the imprisonment of Mr. Tilak and of the Poona Editors as a still greater mistake. For Mr. Tilak my heart is full of sympathy, my feelings go forth to him in his prison-house. A Nation is in tears. Englishmen have won for themselves the Magna Carta and the Habeas Corpus. The principles which underlie those concessions are embalmed in their glorious constitution. The constitution, I have no hesitation in saying, is ours by birthright. Born British subjects, we are entitled to the privileges of British subjects. Who will filch away these rights from us? We are resolved and this Congress will take the pledge, you and I will enter into a 'Solemn League and Covenant.' Let it go forth from this hall, let it impregnate the public mind of India. We are resolved, by every constitutional means that may be available to us, to assert under the Providence of God our rights as British subjects, not the least important of which is the inestimable right of personal liberty."

Permanent Settlement, Water-Cess, Poverty and Famines

India being predominantly an agricultural country, it is but to be expected that the Congress should have given its early if not first attention to the hardships caused to the ryots by the periodical revision of settle-

ments, leading to ever increasing assessment. Accordingly the 4th session at Allahabad (1888) referred the matter to the standing committees and asked them to report to the Congress in 1889. Babu Baikunta Nath Sen dealt with the question in 1889 and pointed out that a famine in 1860 had led to a Commission which reported in favour of Permanent Settlement and this was approved of by the Secretary of State in a despatch in 1862. Sometimes the increase in assessment exceeded the total fresh produce of the village, as in one case dealt with by Mr. Colvin (later Sir Auckland Colvin). Dr. Besant gives the following interesting extract in her book, dealing with the allied subject:—

> "There is the same amount of water in the pot, but there are now six holes through which it runs out, when before there was but one."
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> "We had our cattle in plenty, lots of grazing free and salt to keep them healthy; now the land is all taken up by the Forest Department and we have no grazing ground, and if the starving herds stray where there is food, they are run into the pound and we are fined."
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> "We had plenty of wood for our houses, for our ploughs and for every agricultural purpose; now it is all under the lock and key of the Forest Department, and if we touch it without leave we are run in and if we want a stick we have a week's running about from one official to another before we get it, and we have to pay, pay, pay. We had arms, and we could shoot or destroy the wild beasts that ravage our crops, but now we have an Arms Act that allows a basketful of arms to every Negro rascal who lands on our shores, but takes good care that we poor cultivators, who need them to protect our subsistence from wild animals, are practically debarred from any."

In 1892 the Congress pleaded for fixity and permanence to the Land Revenue demand so as to permit "capital and labour to combine to develop the agriculture

of the country" and urged the establishment of Agricultural Banks. Next year the Congress demanded the fulfilment of the pledges given by the Secretary of State in his despatches of 1862 and 1865 for a Permanent Settlement. In 1896 the Congress adopting the usual temporizing policy prayed for at least an interval of sixty years from one revision to another. On the 22nd December, 1900, the Government of India published a Resolution on the subject through its Revenue and Agricultural Department and the Congress demanded the publication of the Provincial Governments' views on paragraph 4 thereof. In 1903 the Congress went further and sought judicial and legislative restrictions on over-assessments. In 1906, the Congress contrasted the policy enunciated by Lord Canning in 1862 and by Lord Ripon in 1882, advocating a limitation of the State demand on land, with the policy of Lord Curzon announced in his Resolution of 1902, and protested against the view that Land Revenue is not a tax but is in the nature of rent and with the repetition of a like resolution on another occasion in 1908, the Congress virtually gave up the subject in despair

We may appropriately refer to the allied topics of water-cess, famine and its remedies The Congress dealt with the question of water-cess but once, and that in 1894 in Madras, in which year the cess was raised by executive orders from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per acre. These ever increasing taxes and cesses were partly at the root of the ever recurring famines of recent times. The famine conditions of 1896 gave occasion to the Congress to review the economic policy of Government and charge them with extravagance in Military expenditure and put down the famines to excessive taxation and over-assessment. The neglect of indigenous and local arts and industries which had practically been extinguished was

put down as another cause. The Government was called upon to redeem its pledges to constitute a Famine Insurance Fund. Permanent Settlement, Agricultural Banks and Technical Schools were advocated as the real remedies. Soon after, a Famine Commission was appointed. In the meantime generous help came in aid of famine from Britain and the U. S. A. and the Congress resolved to send a £1,000 to the Lord Mayor of London to put up a Memorial in some conspicuous part of London expressing India's gratitude for help rendered. This was in 1898. The Congress nevertheless did not lose sight of the real remedies all along advocated by it for famines and urged on Government once again in 1899 to stop the drain of wealth and curtail public expenditure, to moderate taxes and develop local and indigenous industries. A wider view of affairs was taken next year and a demand was made for an enquiry into the economic condition of the people of India. We no more hear of the subject, the outlook of the Congress having considerably changed in the later years of its career.

Forest Laws

The havoc done by the Forest Laws is not sufficiently appreciated. They vied only with Land Revenue assessments and the Salt Tax in burdening the people with fetters they could not bear. With a single stroke of the pen, as Mr. Paul Peter Pillai pointed out at Nagpur in 1891, Government had extinguished the immemorial communal rights of the ryot, and village society had thus been revolutionized. There is little doubt that these laws have served, as Dr. Besant said, to alienate the peasantry from British Rule more than any other thing. In one district, N. Arcot, 3,00,000 cattle perished in nine months in 1891. The best gifts of Nature to the ryot were denied to him. "Your land is on the hills but you cannot use the forest produce thereon,

such as bush and scrub, and the very leaves of the trees grown by you, are not yours."

An earnest appeal was made in 1892-93 to the Government of India to investigate the hardships created by the Forest Laws, particularly in Peninsular India and the hilly tracts of the Punjab. The rules made by the Punjab Government were particularly cruel and unjust—"very arbitrary and unworthy of a civilized Government" as Pandit Meghan Ram pointed out at the ninth session. "An owner or occupant of land was made liable for an accidental fire caused by any one on his land and might, according to the rules, be treated as if he had been guilty of the infraction of the Rules." The hill men to whom the hill grass and wood was their very life and the life of their cattle were prevented from taking them. They could not warm themselves by kindling a forest fire. This agitation resulted in a Circular Resolution No. 2 F, dated 20th October, 1894 by the Government of India in which they had enunciated the generous principle of "subordinating fiscal interest to the needs and agricultural interests of the ryot population in the management of Forests."

The Congress urged that "in forests falling under classes 3 and 4, fuel grazing concession, fodder, small timber for building houses and making agricultural implements, edible forest products etc., may be granted free of charge in all cases under suitable restrictions and that, in any case, sufficient margin should be left in administering Forest Laws and fixing forest boundaries so as not to molest or annoy the agricultural population in the enjoyment of their communal rights." The 11th and 14th Congresses emphasised the view that Forest Laws were meant not as sources of revenue but only to conserve the forests and complained against the rules which worked

great hardship on the people. We no more hear of forests in the Congresses held after the year 1899 except as part of omnibus resolutions.

A new grievance added to existing ones diverted men's minds from the older ones to which they became accustomed and the dawn of the 20th century brought to the fore problems altogether of a different character. Moreover the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War must have changed the outlook of Congressmen and shifted their attention from forests and water-courses, from Salt and Abkari to the larger questions of Nationalism and Self-Government.

Commerce and Industry

The salient points of the Indian problem under the British occurred to the minds of the earlier politicians like flashes of light which do not sustainedly brighten the path of the political traveller. That Indian interests were subordinated to those of Lancashire was recognised, that the village crafts and arts were neglected, if not positively ruined, was equally realized. R. P Karandikar, who with Kelkar and Khaparde formed a trio of ardent and faithful followers of Lokamanya Tilak, speaking of the problem of Primary Education at the 20th Congress (Bombay, 1904), quoted Mr. Arthur Balfour's speech on Ireland, pointing out how,

> "One by one, each of her nascent industries was either strangled at its birth or handed over gagged and bound to the jealous custody of the rival interests in England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed so that the whole Nation was thrown on the land."

Even more interesting and thoughtful was the reply given by a politician comparing the English Rule with the Muslim Rule:—

"The English Rule is the better for security, Education and Railways, but, for the wealth of India, the Muslim Rule was better, for the Muslims became Indians and the riches stayed in the country while the English carried the wealth of the country away." The same observation was made by Raja Rampal Singh in sporting language when he stated in 1893 at the ninth Congress that "the English Civilians made India their happy hunting ground."

In 1894 the Congress protested against the Excise duty on the cottons manufactured in British India and put on record its firm conviction that in proposing the Excise duty, "the interests of India have been sacrificed to those of Lancashire." Of course there was always the mentality of submission to a coming reactionary Law and an attempt to mitigate its hardships. In this case, the Congress added that.

> "In case the Excise Bill became law, this Congress earnestly prays that the Government of India will, without delay, seek the sanction of the Secretary of State to exercise the powers which the Bill confers on Government to exempt all cottons from twenties to twenty-fours from the operation of the Act."

At the 11th Congress it was declared that the objection taken by Lancashire to the exemption of Indian yarns below 'twenties' from Excise duty was not well founded. At the famous session of the Congress held in Calcutta under Dadabhai's presidentship in 1906, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya laid bare the secret of our failure in regard to our industries:

> "The raw material leaves the country and comes back as manufactured goods; if we were free we would adopt protection as all countries do when Industries are nascent."

Lokamanya Tilak deplored how it was the middle classes that were the greatest consumers of foreign goods. "Self-help, determination and sacrifice," said he, "are needed." With the birth of the Swadeshi spirit, supported by the Boycott Movement of 1906 and succeeding years, India's attention turned towards the resuscitation of Indian industries. In 1910 it fell to the lot of Mr. C. Y. Chintamani,—who was a young man as yet at the time but who gave ample proof of his future eminence,—to move the resolution on Swadeshi at Allahabad and he quoted Ranade, who said:—

> "India had come to be regarded as a plantation of England, growing raw products to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to India by British merchants in India through their British agents."

This Judge of the Bombay High Court who was a great Economist and a leading Social Reformer was the real power for years behind the Congress and was the one source of inspiration to Congressmen on matters economic and industrial.

The village and its perishing wealth of industries and agriculture were not neglected by the Indian politicians. So early as in 1898 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya proposed that "Government ought to foster Native industries and Native arts." People had recognized even earlier (1891) that the Forest Laws imposed severe hardships on the villages and revolutionized village society, leading to the destruction of village crafts, and the death of village cattle, 3 lacs of cattle having died in September 1891. Lala Murlidhar speaking in Urdu at the Nagpur Congress (1891) made a fervent appeal to the audience and said:—

"You, you, it seems are content to join with these accursed monsters in fattening on the heart's blood of your brethren (*cries of No. No.*). I say *Yes*: look round: what are all these chandeliers and lamps, and European-made chairs and tables, and smart clothes and hats, and English coats and bonnets and frocks, and silver-mounted canes, and all the luxurious fittings of your houses, but trophies of India's misery, mementoes of India's starvation! Every rupee you have spent on Europe-made articles is a rupee of which you have robbed your poorer brethren, honest handicraftsmen who can now no longer earn a living. Of course I know that it was pure philanthropy which flooded India with English-made goods, and surely, if slowly, killed out every indigenous industry,—pure philanthropy which, to facilitate this, repealed the import duties and flung away three crores a year of a revenue which the rich paid, and to balance this wicked sacrifice raised the Salt Tax, which the poor pay; which is now pressing factory regulations on us to kill, if possible, the one tiny new industrial departure India could boast of. Oh, yes, it is all philanthropy, but the result is that from this cause, amongst others, your brethren are starving. Not 30 years ago wheat sold for 1-1'2 maunds and gram for 2 maunds for the rupee, for our grain was not exported to foreign lands. Now it is six times as dear, and six times as hard for the poor to fill their bellies, because our philanthropists have conjured up the phantasm of free trade to drain our granaries. Free trade, fair play between nations, how I hate the sham! What fair play in trade can there be between impoverished India and the bloated capitalist England? As well talk of a fair fight between an infant and a strong man—a rabbit and a boa-constrictor. No doubt it is all in accordance with high economic science, but, my friends, remember this,—this, too is starving your brethren."

Pandit Malaviya made a characteristic speech in 1893 at the ninth Congress as follows:—

"Where are the weavers, where are those men who lived by different industries and manufactures, and where are the manufactures which were sent to England and other European countries in very large quantities year after year? All that has become a thing of the past. Every one sitting here is clothed in cloth of British-make—almost every one—and wherever you go, you find British manufactures and British goods staring you in the face. All that is left to the people is to drag out a miserable existence by agricultural operations and make infinitesimal profit out of the little trade left to them. In the matter of the Services, in the matter of trade, our people are not enjoying one-hundredth part of the profit and gain which they used to enjoy fifty years ago. How then is it possible for the country to be happy?"

The importance of the subject is evident from the emphasis that Sir S. Subrahmania Aiyar laid on Village Resuscitation, and the need for loan societies, in 1914, after his retirement from the Bench. The Congress was pressed by Lala Lajpat Rai in 1899 to devote a half-day for the consideration of educational and industrial subjects, and appoint a Committee in that behalf This was done and as a direct result of their deliberations, we note that the first Industrial Exhibition in Calcutta was held in 1901 and this institution has gone on steadily improving until, in the latter-day developments, the Khaddar and Swadeshi Exhibitions have come to replace the old order of things. Attention was fixed on Industries by the Congress doubtless by the Excise duties on cotton goods levied in 1894 which had evoked a protest then and there against their imposition, and incidentally we learn that even the Governor-General's protest in this behalf was in vain. Not only was no relief granted but Lord Salisbury, it is said, "directed that steps should be taken to protect the British manufactures against the competition of the Indian manufactures." It was not merely an imaginary picture that was drawn of village

poverty and the oft repeated theme of 40 millions of people going with a single meal a day, for, Wacha and Mudholkar took care to prove it by quotations from Anglo-Indian Satraps. Did not Sir Charles Elliot say, "half the agrarian population do not know from one year's end to another what it is to have a full meal"? The rise in the Revenue assessment in one sub-district was enhanced in 1891, 66 p.c., in another 99 p.c., and in a third 116 p.c., and in a few villages 300 to 1,500 p.c., while the military expenditure rose also by leaps and bounds.

The German soldier cost Rs. 145—the French Rs. 185 and the English in England Rs. 285, but in India Rs. 775 a year. This expenditure is contrasted with the income per head in England of £42—in France £23—in Germany £18 and in India £1. These were the figures given in 1891. Famines formed the subject of repeated resolutions, and so early as in 1887, a repeal was sought of the Penal Labour Law.

Swadeshi, Boycott and 'Swaraj'

The new spirit that pervaded the country from end to end in the latter half of the first decade of this century had its birth in the Partition of Bengal, although its gestation had been progressing for some years prior to that event under the warmth of Lord Curzon's reactionary rule. The 21st session of the Congress held in the sacred city of Kasi in 1905 lodged its formal protest against the Partition of Bengal and asked for its annulment or modification so as to keep the entire Bengali community under one administration. But the resolution that was passed by this Congress on the repressive measures then enforced was a somewhat circuitous one, for it recorded "its earnest and emphatic protest against the repressive measures

which have been adopted in Bengal," and incidentally added an adverbial clause saying "after the people there had been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign goods as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public to the action of the Government of India in persisting in their determination to partition Bengal in utter disregard of the universal prayers and protests of the people." Here it is not clear—nor perhaps was it meant to be clear—whether the Congress approved of the boycott of foreign goods. A kind of academic opinion was expressed to the effect that it was perhaps the only legitimate weapon left to the people. Apparently the Nationalist element had real difficulty in passing a less equivocal resolution, but Lala Lajpat Rai in seconding the one that was passed struck a high note when he said that we must show that we are "no longer beggars and that we are subjects of an Empire where people are struggling to achieve that position which is their right." The courage that appeared wanting in 1905 was soon recovered in 1906. While repeating the formal Resolution on the Partition, the Congress resolved that "having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition was, and is, legitimate." The Congress later urged the encouragement of indigenous industries even at some sacrifice. There it stopped. The conception of Self-Government did not travel farther than the formulation of certain Reforms comprising simultaneous examinations, expanded Legislative Councils with effective popular representation, and the appointment of Indians to the Council of the Secretary of State as well as the Executive Councils in India. This was all the

national aspiration in 1906. The next year witnessed the Surat split, and the Moderate Congress of subsequent years eliminated the subject of Boycott, and adhered to Swadeshi, while the resolutions on Self-Government frankly reduced themselves to an examination of the Minto-Morley Scheme of Reforms. In 1910 there was a change of Viceroyalty and the Congress passed a resolution in 1910 appealing to Lord Hardinge, the new Viceroy, to release the political prisoners in the country. This was repeated in the succeeding year. But in 1914, the Congress that met in Madras made bold to demand that Government should redeem the pledges of Provincial Autonomy given in 1911 and recognize India "as a component part of a federated Empire, in the full and free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status."

Communal Representation

One is apt to think that communal representation is an idea of recent growth. From the days of Sir Auckland Colvin (1888) Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces (U.P.), there was an attempt to make out that the Muslims were opposed to the Congress and the position thus created was considered by Hume to be so important as to find a place in his long reply to Sir Auckland. There was no doubt that the success of the first two or three sessions of the Congress upset the mind of the bureaucracy which found its mouthpiece in this famous Lieutenant-Governor. The reaction of such a view on the Muslim community itself was sufficiently quick, and how they must have resented the patronizing attitude of the officials is shown by the fact that at the fourth Congress, held in Allahabad, in the face of the opposition offered by the European elements, Sheik Raza Hussain Khan, in supporting the election of Mr. Yule as President of the year's session, produced a Fatwa, sup-

porting the Congress, from the spiritual leader of the Sunni community of Lucknow and declared that "it is not the Muslims but their official masters who were opposed to the Congress." Those acquainted with the recent Fatwas in 1921 onwards would welcome this fact doubtless.

It was really during the time of Lord Minto that the idea of communal representation took shape. Earlier of course had Curzon kindled deliberately this baneful communal consciousness in partitioning Bengal and carving out Eastern Bengal and Assam as a separate Province with a Muslim majority. Although Lord Minto was sent to ease the horse which Lord Curzon had ridden for seven long years almost to the point of death, still, the saddle of communal separateness on which Curzon had been riding was left intact on the animal's back. Minto's scheme of Reforms provided for separate electorates for Muslims and yet their rights to vote in the joint electorates were left intact. The narrow-minded politicians pointed out that the Hindu Minorities in East Bengal and Assam and the Punjab were not given a like privilege, but this was really going off the track. What was more egregious was the different franchises set up for the different communities. To become a voter, the Muslim had to pay Income-tax on Rs. 3,000 a year, while the non-Muslim had to pay on three lakhs a year. It was enough for the Muslim graduate to have a standing of three years to become a voter, while the non-Muslim was required to have thirty years' standing. Three thousands against three lakhs of income, and three years against thirty years of standing! We hear occasionally echoes of a like demand when, in the absence of universal adult franchise, the Muslims demand varying standards of franchise for the two communities so as to maintain the proper ratios amongst the voters.

Now, the year 1910 found a critical state of affairs and Sir. W. Wedderburn presided over the Congress. The President intended holding a conference between Hindus and Muslims with a view to bringing about communal harmony. Separate electorates were just then proposed to be introduced in respect of Municipalities and Local Boards as well. In U.P. where there were none such, it was found that the joint electorates with the Muslims forming but a seventh of the population returned 189 Muslims and 445 Hindus to the District Boards, and 310 Muslims and 562 Hindus to the Municipalities and even a reactionary like Sir John Hewett, Lieutenant-Governor, U. P. was against disturbing the amicable relations of the two communities in the Province. Mr. Jinnah of course deprecated the extension of separate electorates to Local Bodies. The 'Burn' Circular in favour of Communal representation in Local Bodies advocated separate electorates for Muslims, while also allowing them to vote in mixed electorates as this would be helpful in maintaining friendly relations between the two great communities. "I will only say," added Bishan Narayan Dhar, presiding over the 26th Session, (Calcutta, 1911), "that this solicitude for promoting our unity is rather a heavy draft upon our credulity." He pointed out how "when, under the advice of Sir W. Wedderburn and H. H. the Aga Khan, the representatives of the two communities were about to meet at Allahabad a year ago, with the object of reconciling their differences, an Anglo-Indian paper which is believed to be an organ of the Civil Service, remarked: 'Why do these men want to unite the two communities, if it is not to unite them against the Government?' This one remark throws a ghastly light upon the political situation in India."

But shortly afterwards the world conditions underwent a certain change. The Balkans which had for over

a century or two been the cockpit of Europe, once again furnished the arena for a fresh outbreak of hostilities and Nawab Syed Mahommed Bahadur, who presided over the Karachi Session of the Congress in 1913, drew attention to the "subversion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and the strangling of Persia." He expressed the grief with which all the Muslims had felt the blow to the Turkish Empire. He concluded with an earnest plea that Hindus and Muslims should clasp hands and work for the Motherland. This reminds us of the Khilafat Movement of 1921 and its repercussions on the Hindu-Muslim relations in India. 'The Sick Man of Europe' (as Turkey was termed in the 19th century) has all along played a notable part in shaping the course of Indian politics. It was under these conditions that at the Karachi Congress (1913) the Hindus and the Muslims closed their ranks and the Congress "placed on record its appreciation of the adoption by the All-India Muslim League of the idea of Self-Government for India within the British Empire," and endorsed the plea of that body for harmonious co-operation between the two communities. The Congress further welcomed "the hope expressed by the League that the leaders of the different communities would make every endeavour to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on all questions of national good and earnestly appealed to all sections to help the object they had at heart"

The exaltation of spirit of Congressmen at the time was evident in the exuberant language employed by the speakers on the Resolution at Karachi in 1913, and we quote below from Bhupendra Nath Basu's speech:— "Hindus and Muslims must concentrate their attention on the one united ideal, for the India of to-day is not the India of the Hindu or the Muslim, nor of the Anglo-Indian, much less of the European, but the India in which

all have a share. If there have been misunderstandings in the past, let us forget them. The India of the future will be a stronger, nobler, greater, higher, aye, and a brighter India than was realized by Asoka in the plenitude of his power, a better India than was revealed to Akbar in the wildest of his visions." Mr. Wacha said that the Congress had entered on a new Nativity and with the New Star they would achieve new success. Communal representation, however, came to stay.

Once the sore having started, it continued to be festering. If the Hindus had quietly and willingly conceded what the Muslims wanted, the problem would have been solved earlier. Doubtless it is true that appetite grows with eating, but equally true is it that eating and more eating leads to satiety. The Minto-Morley scheme of communal representation was forced on the country. People were not consulted on the matter. So when in 1916 a new dole of Reforms was being contemplated, India thought that a concordat should be brought into existence, and for this purpose the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League met in the Indian Association rooms of Calcutta in November, 1916 to carry out the behests of the Congress in 1915 and to hammer out a scheme of representation based upon mutual understanding. Just then the Muslim League had adopted Self-Government as its object The principle of self-determination was in the air. The War itself was being waged for its application to the smaller and the backward nationalities. The Calcutta deliberations were therefore undertaken and conducted in a suitable atmosphere. But the elders on the Congress side were slow to make an offer. It was therefore left to the younger men—perhaps the youngest man present there—to take the initiative. The Hindus and the Muslims were the two eyes of India, as Sir Syed Ahmed had said, and either without the other

would deface the Mother's countenance. A spirit of give and take soon prevailed. A minimum of 15 per cent. representation in Councils was agreed to in all Provinces whose population fell short of the percentage. There remained only the Punjab and Bengal. As usual they were hard nuts to crack, but cracked they were at the Lucknow Congress of 1916, and the formula arrived at at Lucknow that December, was accepted by Mr. Montagu *en bloc* and incorporated in the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme. The consciousness of a friendly concession made by a rival community is apt to be a greater power in bringing about amicable relations than the thought that any community owed its protection to the intervention of a third party. But it must be noted that separate communal electorates came to stay. The communal and the general electorates became exclusive, and equally exclusive was the right to stand as candidates.

Indians Abroad

While the fate of Indians in India was bad enough, that of Indians in South Africa was growing from bad to worse. In 1896, it was ruled that the Indentured emigrants in Natal, South Africa, should on the termination of the term of indenture, either renew their slavery, *i.e.*, renew their indenture for labour, or pay a poll tax amounting to half their annual earnings. It is interesting to recall a remark of Dr. Moonjee in this connection, after his return from South Africa about 1903 where he had gone in connection with an Ambulance Corps in the Boer War, namely, "Our rulers do not believe that we are men." It was on the same question that Mr. B. N. Sarma warned England that there could not be, in the Empire, a permanent racial supremacy, one race dominating another. "If we are true to ourselves," said he at the 21st Congress, (Benares, 1905), "then the race that has produced the greatest philosophers, the greatest statesmen and the

greatest warriors, shall not crouch for this or that favour at the hands of other people."

Mr. Madanjit was the man who for long years brought up the South African question before the Indian Congress. There were doubtless Indian friends who were visiting South Africa from time to time and bringing first hand information to the Indian people, but he was carrying on his mission from year to year. With his orange robes and short stature and tall stick, he was not to be missed in the Congress and his recent death at a ripe old age has removed a familiar figure from the National Assembly. The first protest against the South African disabilities really began in 1894 when the President moved a Resolution asking that the Bill of the Colonial Government disenfranchising Indians be vetoed. Thereafter at Congress after Congress, South Africa figured as an important subject and it was pointed out year after year "how we were not permitted there to travel without a pass, not allowed to walk about in the night after 9 P.M., how we were consigned to locations where refuse was shot in Transvaal, how we were denied admission to the first and 2nd classes on Railways, driven out of tramcars and pushed off footpaths, kept out of hotels, and refused the benefit of public parks, and how we were spat upon, hissed, cursed, abused and subjected to a variety of other indignities which no human being could patiently bear."

By 1898 three additional disabling Acts had been passed and by that time Gandhi had begun his famous agitation. The great pity was that Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, consented to the Natal Law being passed while the Secretary of State at the time, Lord George Hamilton, was content to characterize us as "nation of savages." "The incorporation of the former Boer Republics in the British

Dominions in 1900" was referred to by the 16th session (1900) as obviating the one difficulty Government had to contend against in dealing with the independent Boers, and the Congress urged that the Immigration Restrictions in Natal and the Dealer's Licences Acts of the Colony should be done away with. It was at the 17th Congress (Calcutta, 1901), that Gandhi moved a resolution on South Africa as "a petitioner on behalf of the hundred thousand British Indians in South Africa." A deputation was to wait in 1902 on the Secretary of State in regard to the subject but nothing came out of it and the Congress repeated its resolutions in 1903 and 1904. The Congress drew attention to the statement made in responsible quarters that "one of the declared causes of the recent Boer War was the treatment meted out to Indian Subjects of the King-Emperor by the Republic, and demanded that justice and equal treatment be secured to the Indian settlers." The position became worse by 1905 and the Congress protested that disabilities not enforced under the Boer Rule should have been enforced under the British Rule, and asked for the prohibition of Indentured Labour as well as for other retaliatory measures. It is gratifying to note that Government disallowed 'for the present' the ordinance in the Transvaal, but in 1906, a Constitution having been granted to South Africa, says the Resolution, there were clear apprehensions of its renewal There was no relief even in 1908, and as the New South African Constitution was just then being implemented, the Congress urged that Indian interests should be simultaneously secured. At the 23rd Congress held in 1908 in Madras, Mr. Mushir Hasan Kidwai moved the resolution expressing the indignation of the Congress at "the harsh, humiliating and cruel treatment to which British Indians, even of the highest respectability and position, have been subjected by the British Colonies in South Africa," and giving a warning that such treatment was

likely to result in "great injury to the best interests of the British Empire."

By 1909, it was found that the endless representations that had been made proved unavailing and Gokhale in moving the resolutions of the year described the breaches of faith of the authorities and the long patient struggle of the Indians led by Gandhi. The time had come for effective action and the great Passive Resistance struggle was inaugurated. "What is the passive resistance struggle?" asks Gokhale, and he gives the answer: "It is essentially defensive in its nature and it fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by undergoing sufferings in his own person. He pits soul force against brute force; he pits the divine in man against the brute in man; he pits suffering against oppression; he pits conscience against might; he pits faith against injustice, right against wrong." A fund was called for and Rs. 18,000 was subscribed on the spot. Besides this, Ratan J. Tata, the second son of Sir Jamshedjee Tata gave a sum of Rs. 25,000 to relieve suffering in South Africa for which the 24th Congress 1909 (Lahore) thanked him publicly. By the next session of the Congress (Allahabad, 1910), the Passive Resistance struggle was at its height and the Congress expressed "its great admiration of the intense patriotism, courage and self-sacrifice of the Indians in the Transvaal, who, heroically suffering persecution in the interests of their countrymen, are carrying on their peaceful and selfless struggle for elementary civil rights against heavy and overwhelming odds." The 27th session (1911) of the Congress however met under more auspicious circumstances, for it could "cordially congratulate Mr. Gandhi and the Transvaal Indian Community upon the repeal of the Anti-Asiatic Legislation of the Province regarding Registration and

immigration." But the Congress had passed this resolution "anticipating the forthcoming legislation of the provisional settlement recently arrived at." It was discovered however next year (1913) that it had still to protest against the provisions of the Immigration Act in that they violated the promises made by the South Africa Union, and respectfully urged the Crown to veto the Act. Lord Hardinge was then the Viceroy and he took up a strong attitude in the matter and, to strengthen his hands, the Karachi Congress repeated its resolution in 1913 asking for the abolition of Indentured Labour. Soon after, it was abolished and the Congress placed on record its gratitude to Lord Hardinge for the partial settlement of the South African question, although it had to revert to the question in 1916 and 1917. The Karachi session (1913) had also passed a vote of "admiration for the heroic endeavours of Mr. Gandhi and his followers, and their unparalleled sacrifice in their struggle for the maintenance of the self-respect of India and the redress of Indian grievances."

This was the real introduction of Mr. Gandhi to India, if one may say so, for he left South Africa soon after the Great War had broken out in August, 1914, and has been in India since 1915 carrying out his 'Experiments with Truth,' and his Satyagraha Campaign in Champaran, Kaira, Borsad, Bardoli and the whole of India, with results which are now well-known and on which we shall have occasion to dwell in the appropriate chapters.

An interesting problem was created for India by a particular clause of the Canadian Privy Council's order No. 920 known as the "Continuous Journey Clause," which formed the subject of a protest by the Congress at its 28th session (Karachi, 1913), on the ground that

"The order in question has practically the effect of preventing any Indian, not already settled there (in Canada), from going to Canada, inasmuch as there is no direct steamship service between the two countries and the steamship Companies refuse through booking, and further subjects the present Indian settlers in Canada to great hardship by precluding them from bringing over their wives and children. This Congress therefore urges upon the Imperial Government the necessity of securing the repeal of the said Continuous Journey Regulaiton."

When the Great War broke out soon after, an interesting incident which has become a romantic episode in modern Indian history, happened, which the coming generations should not fail to know. In order to challenge this clause, one Sikh gentleman, named Baba Gurudutt Singh hired a steamer called the *Komagatamaru* and took 600 Sikhs in it to Canada by making a continuous voyage, without the usual halts at Hongkong or Tokyo.

The steamship—*Komagatamaru*—was of course not allowed to land her passengers in Canada and had to return to India. On her return, the passengers were directed to go from Budge Budge, where they landed, to the Punjab and prohibited from going anywhere they liked. They were, however, unwilling to board the train for the Punjab, unless they were first allowed to make a representation to Government about the injustice of such an order and the loss that they would suffer thereby. They preferred to be arrested under a warrant. The subsequent story of the *Komagatamaru* men among whom was Prof. Mansukhani (now Swami Govindanand of Sindh), how a riot took place, how several were shot and imprisoned, how Gurudutt Singh was a fugitive for seven or eight years, wandering from place to place in Orissa, the Deccan, Gwalior State, Rajputana, Kathiawar and Sindh up to 1918, how after 1918 he went to Bombay

and became the manager of a Ship-building Company at Mahal Bandar outside the Town, under the name of Valdraja, how in his exile he saw Gandhi (in November, 1921) who advised him to surrender himself, which he did, and how Government imprisoned him and he was released from the Lahore Jail on February 28, 1922 on the expiry of the term of the Ordinance under which he was imprisoned, do not really fall within the scope of this book.

Salt

The question of Salt Tax has, by virtue of the recent Salt Satyagraha movement of 1930, acquired a peculiar importance in Indian politics. Knowing as we do the genesis of the tax and the recommendations made by the Salt Commission of 1836, we cannot but feel a certain surprise that the grounds on which the tax was attacked in 1888 by the Congress were, not that it was iniquitous and meant to assist British Shipping industry and British export trade, but that it was recently enhanced and as such involved "a perceptible increase to the burthens of the poorer classes, as also the partial absorption, in a time of peace and plenty, of the only Financial Reserve of the Empire." In 1890 the Congress again demanded only the remission of the recent enhancement, not the abolition of the tax altogether. On eight other occasions did the Congress virtually repeat this prayer, only on one occasion it asked for the restoration of the rate of 1868 and on another the rate of 1888, and the last time it dealt with the question (1902), the Congress cited the causation of disease by insufficient salt consumption as an additional ground. Thereafter 'Salt' was promoted from the Congress to the Councils and became the special concern of Mr. Gokhale.

Drink and Prostitution

Purity claimed its own share of attention from the

Congress. The serious increase in the consumption of liquors led to a demand for a policy promoting sobriety and temperance. Messrs. Caine and Smith brought up the question before the House of Commons which passed a Resolution in this behalf in 1889 and the Congress urged that it be given effect to. In 1890 the Congress expressed its pleasure at "the increase in the import duty on spirits, the taxation imposed upon Indian-brewed malt liquors, the decision of the Bengal Government to abolish the out-still system and the closing of over 7,000 liquor shops by the Madras Government in 1889—90." But all the Provinces had not acted up to the instructions of the Despatch of the Government of India that "efforts should be made to ascertain the existence of local public sentiment and that a reasonable amount of deference should be paid to such opinion when ascertained." For a decade the Congress did not revert to the question. It was only in 1900 that the Congress attributed the growing consumption of liquors to their cheap supply and appealed to Government "to pass measures like the Maine Liquor Law of America and Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Bill or the Local Option Act and impose an additional tax upon intoxicants not intended to be used as medicine." It is interesting to note Kumar M. N. Choudhuri quoting at this Congress, Keshab Chandra Sen's complaint that the British Government had brought Shakespeare and Milton to them, but also brandy bottles.

The Excise Commission of 1883 having shown great increase of drunkenness among the labouring classes, the Congress pointed out that the evil would defeat the benevolent intentions of Government to help the growth of Indian arts and industries.

An allied subject relating to Social Reform was the

eradication of State-regulated prostitution. It is well-known that Government procured women for soldiers both when they were in camps as well as when they were on the move. These things when recognized for the first time looked horrible, but constant touch with them blunts the edge of resentment. The fourth session of the Congress (1888, Allahabad), under the presidency of Mr. Yule, offered co-operation with India's well-wishers in England who were putting forth exertions "for the total abrogation of laws and rules relating to the regulation of prostitution by the State in India." Captain Banon in a strong speech moved the resolution and Captain Hearsay, seconding, pointed out that over 2,000 Indian women were procured by Government "for the hideous purpose alluded to" and that this provision encouraged the boy-soldiers to loose living. The 8th Congress (1892, Allahabad) thanked the House of Commons for its vigilance "in regard to the recent purity legislation by the Government in India," and protested against "all State-regulated immorality in India."

Next year, the Parliamentary members of the India Office Committee submitted a Report on the subject of the Rules, Orders and Practices in Indian Cantonments with regard to prostitution and contagious diseases. The Congress declared that the practices and system in vogue "did not accord with the plain meaning and intention of the Resolution of the House of Commons on 5th June, 1888," and asked for "express legislation" to stop these malpractices.

Women and the Depressed Classes

The visit of Mr. Montagu to India brought to the fore the claims of women in respect of civic rights and it is astonishing to see how readily was conceded to the fair sex full equality of position with men in this country.

The Calcutta Congress of 1917 expressed "the opinion that the same tests be applied to women as to men in regard to the franchise and the eligibility to all elective bodies concerned with Local Government and Education." On the allied question of the Depressed Classes, which too claimed the nation's attention as forming an important factor in national reconstruction, the same Congress accepted a liberal proposition and urged

> "Upon the people of India the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes, the disabilities being of a most vexatious and oppressive character, subjecting those classes to considerable hardship and inconvenience."

Miscellaneous

Various miscellaneous subjects engaged the attention of the Congress from time to time during this period. The chief subject of interest was Education in its several aspects, Primary, University, Research and Technical. Provincial Finance as well as Imperial, Silver Duties, Income-tax, and Exchange Compensation Allowance form a separate and secondary group. "Local Self-Government in general and the Corporations of Calcutta and Madras in particular" roused much resentment by the reactionary legislation to which they had been subjected off and on. Sanitation, chiefly with reference to Plague and Quarantine, and Forced Labour were stray subjects. Loyalty to the Throne was avowed on many occasions. The passing away of Queen Victoria in 1901 and the demise of King Edward in 1910 were fresh occasions availed of by the Congress to proclaim its loyalty to the Sovereign. Due welcome was accorded to King Edward and to King George, to the latter as Prince of Wales in 1905 and as King in 1910.

Burma

To-day we find that a battle royal is taking place over the separation of Burma. Let us for one moment turn back to the year of the birth of the Congress and what the Congress had to say on its annexation. The first Congress (1885) "deprecated the annexation of Upper Burma," and said that "if annexation be considered inevitable, the entire country of Burma be separated from India and be constituted into a Crown Colony, as distinct in all matters from this country as is Ceylon."

The Congress Constitution

The question of the Congress Constitution has gained added interest in view of the wholesale innovations introduced into it in the 50th year of its age. It is well-known how the Congress did not start with Articles and Memorandum of Association duly registered beforehand like a Joint Stock Company, or the Rules and Regulations of a society registered under Act XXI of 1860, but that it was an informal gathering of certain well-known men, which gained, as time advanced, in volume and strength by virtue of the moral force on which it has all along relied for the achievement of its greater object. So early as in 1886, there was a "serious proposal to frame a constitution and rules for working the Congress" but the Resolution by which the Committee was appointed confined itself to rule making, deferring the constitution till the Congress had gained more experience and had visited other Provinces. Yet the need was apparent for continuing Congress work throughout the year as, at the time, little work was being done between two Congresses. By the year 1889, the number of Congress delegates began to swell in such a large measure that it was decided by the Congress of the year to limit the quota of the delegation to five per million of

population. An Assistant Secretary was appointed in India and the Committee in England was given a paid Secretary in the person of the well-known Mr. W. Digby, C.I.E.

It was at the 4th Congress (1888) that it was decided that "no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee to the introduction of which the Hindu or Muslim delegates as a body object unanimously or nearly so." It may be recalled that the same rule, with the proportion of objectors fixed at 3/4, was adopted in the constitution later passed in 1908 after the Surat imbroglio.

The reduction of delegates to 1,000 was actually carried out in 1890 a year after it was passed (1899). The work in England was considered naturally important and one can gauge the emphasis laid on it by the fact that in 1892, a sum of Rs 60,000 was voted for the expenses of the British Committee and of the publication of the Congress Journal, *India*. A like sum was voted at the 12th session (1896). There was a renewed effort made in 1898 to frame a constitution for the Congress. In fact a draft constitution was circulated by the Madras Congress (1898) and a Committee was appointed to consider it and submit a definite scheme at the next session. At Lucknow next year (1899) a full blown constitution was passed and it is interesting to compare the object of the Congress as then laid down with that accepted in 1908 and 1920 and 1929. At Lucknow it was laid down that,

> "The object of the Indian National Congress shall be to promote by constitutional means the interests and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire."

To anticipate matters let us draw the reader's attention to the 'Colonial type of Self-Government,' accepted in 1908, 'Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means' approved of in 1920, and 'Complete Independence' demanded at Lahore in 1929. Under the Lucknow Constitution the affairs of the Congress were to be managed by a Committee styled the 'Indian Congress Committee,' consisting of 45 members elected by the Congress, of whom 40 were to be elected by the Congress on the recommendation of the different Provincial Congress Committees. The Committee was to have an Honorary Secretary and a paid Assistant Secretary. A sum of Rs. 5,000 was voted for the expenses, of which one-half was to be paid by the Reception Committee of the last Congress and the other half by the Reception Committee of the next Congress. Arrangements were made for continuous work throughout the year by organizing Standing Congress Committees and holding Provincial Conferences. The nomination of the President and the drafting of the Resolutions were to be done by the Indian Congress Committee.

A permanent fund was contemplated for the Congress, to be invested in the name of seven Trustees—one from each Province in India—to be appointed by the Congress. In 1900 the Indian Congress Committee of 45 was enlarged by the addition to it of certain ex-officio members, namely, the President of the Congress, the President-elect from the day of his nomination, the ex-Presidents of the Congress, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Congress, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, and the Secretary of the Reception Committee nominated by the Reception Committee.

In 1901, work in London was organized, the newspaper *India* was placed on a firm basis by quotas of

subscribers allocated to Provinces, aggregating to 4,000, and a special delegation fee of Rs. 10 was to be paid by the delegates as from 1902 onwards, in addition to the usual fee paid by them till then. It is obvious that the Congress had no narrow views regarding the extent of finances necessary to carry on Congress work in India or in England. At the 20th Congress (1904, Bombay), it was decided to send a deputation to England on the eve of the General Election to Parliament, and to raise a fund of Rs. 30,000 for the purpose. At Benares (1905), a Standing Committee of the Congress composed of 15 members was appointed to promote the objects of the Congress and implement its resolutions during the year. In 1906 Dadabhai put the object of the Congress in a nutshell when he said, "The whole matter can be comprised in one word, Self-Government or Swaraj, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." Yet when it came to a question of a Resolution, the matter was softened, for the Congress demanded, in Resolution No. IX, "that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing British Colonies should be extended to India," and "as steps leading to it" urged certain Reforms. The atmosphere of the Calcutta Congress being undoubtedly surcharged with the spirit of Nationalism, a further step in organizing the country was adopted and each Province was to organize at its capital a Provincial Congress Committee "in such manner as may be determined at a meeting of the Provincial Conference or at a special meeting, held for the purpose, of representatives of different districts in the Province." The Committee should "act for the Province in all Congress matters and it should be its special care to organize District Associations throughout the Province for sustained and continuous political work in the Province." The method of electing the Congress President was revised. The Reception Committee was to elect one from those

nominated by the Provincial Congress Committees, by a 3/4 majority of its members, failing which the Central Standing Committee (a committee newly brought into existence composed of 49 members) was to make the final decision.

A new system of constituting the Subjects Committee was adopted. The Committee was to consist of 85 delegates, with ten extra from the Province where the Congress was being held, elected by the delegates from the respective Provinces. There were a number of ex-officio members including the President and ex-Presidents, ex-Reception Committee Chairmen, the General Secretaries, and the local Secretaries for the year.

The next phase of the development of the Congress Constitution was really epoch-making. The Surat split naturally led those who organized the Convention at Allahabad to frame a rigid constitution. So the first step taken was to declare that the election of the duly chosen President of the Congress could not be challenged, for the Surat dispute and the *causus belli* centred round Dr. Rash Behari Ghose's election. Next the real interest centred round the 'Creed' of the Congress. When the Surat Congress was split, the Convention that met a day after, i.e., on the 28th December, 1907, at Surat was composed only of those who subscribed to a view which afterwards materialized into Article 1 of the Congress Constitution. We quote the Article as finally passed:—

> "The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the Self-Governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members."

Under the Constitution of 1908, the All-India Congress Committee was to consist of:—

15	Representatives of	Madras
15	,,	Bombay
20	,,	United Bengal (including Assam)
15	,,	United Provinces
13	,,	The Punjab (including N. W. Frontier Province)
7	,,	Central Provinces
15	,,	Bihar and Orissa[1]
5	,,	Berar
2	,,	Burma

provided as far as possible that one-fifth of the total number of representatives shall be Muslims.

The Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India, and the General Secretaries of the Congress who shall also be ex-officio General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committe, shall be ex-officio members in addition.

The Subjects Committee was to be composed of the Members of the A.I.C.C. *plus* a small elected element, the electors being the delegates assembled at the Congress from each Province.[2]

[1] It was under this constitution too that Bihar, which still continued to form part of Western Bengal, was carved out into a separate Congress Province and Bihar held its first Provincial Conference in 1908 under the presidentship of Mr. (later Sir) Syed Ali Imam.

[2] The strength of the A.I.C.C. was considerably raised later, until in 1917 it stood at 14 for Madras, 11 Andhra, 5 Sindh, 25 each for Bengal (including Assam) and U.P., 5 for Delhi Ajmere-Merwara and British Rajputana, 20 Punjab, 12 C.P., 20 Bihar and Orissa, 6 Berar and 5 Burma. The Subjects Committee was to be composed of the A.I.C.C. *plus* an equal number of elected members for each Province, the electors being the delegates of the Province assembled at the Congress.

The objects of the Congress "are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organizing the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the Country." It was in the Constitution of 1908 that a clause appeared for the first time, under which any resolution that was repugnant to 3/4 of the Hindu or Muslim delegates was to be given up. On looking up old records we come across a curious application of this restrictive measure. A resolution was passed in 1899 at the 15th session of the Congress (Lucknow) condemning the Punjab Land Alienation Bill which was then before the Supreme Legislative Council with a view to restricting the alienation of land either by sale or by mortgage. We find however that at the succeeding session (16th Lahore, 1900) the Subjects Committee decided to postpone the discussion of the Punjab Land Alienation Act (apparently the Bill had been passed into Law) so as to watch its working for a year, since the Hindu and Muslim delegates disagreed on it.

Further amendments to the Constitution came in from the United Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and these were referred to a sub-committee in 1910 (Allahabad). The recommendations of this Committee were accepted at the 26th Congress (1911, Calcutta) and the A.I.C.C. was charged to send in further amendments. No material changes however took place for a time. From 1910 to 1915 the Congress was merely marking time. When the Great War broke out in 1914 and Mrs. Besant inaugurated her great political movement, it was done under the auspices of the All-India Home Rule League. It may be noted that by that time Lokamanya Tilak had organized a separate Home Rule

League in Maharashtra on the 23rd of April, 1916. It was not till the Congress of 1920 (Nagpur) after the Special Congress at Calcutta (September, 1920) had accepted Non-co-operation, that the Congress revised the Constitution, replacing the 'Creed' of 1908 by the simple statement in which it stands embodied to-day, and reorganized the whole plan of Congress work, including the re-distribution of Congress Provinces on a linguistic basis. The question of a separate Andhra Congress Province was indeed mooted earlier in 1915 and 1916 and was accepted in 1917 by the Calcutta session, after vehement opposition from the President (Dr. Besant) and from some of the leading South Indian (Tamil) delegates from Madras. Even Gandhi thought in 1917 that the question might await the Reforms, but it was the foresight of Tilak that gave the Andhras a separate Congress Circle, and in consequence a sub-committee was appointed in December, 1917, to revise and settle the extent of representation of each Congress Circle on the A.I.C.C. This was followed by Sindh asking for and getting a separate Congress Circle for itself in 1918, but the demands of Karnataka and Kerala had to wait till the general re-distribution of Congress Provinces in India into twenty-one after the Nagpur session of 1920.

Unsatisfied Demands Till the Year 1918

To prove that India's national demand was not merely sentimental, that there were weighty and practical reasons which made it imperative, that under existing conditions reform had not much chance, it is enough to mention the repeated proposals and protests of the Indian National Congress, which after 32 years had not materialised on account of the attitude of the Government of India and the various Local Governments, and they were in 1918 as follows:—

(1) Abolition of the India Council (1885)
(2) Simultaneous examinations (1885)
(3) Equitable apportionment of military expenditure between India and England (1885)
(4) Extension of trial by Jury (1886)
(5) Finality to be given to the verdicts of Juries (1886)
(6) Enabling accused persons in warrant cases, to demand that instead of being tried by the Magistrate, they be committed to the Court of Sessions (1886)
(7) Separation of Judicial from Executive functions (1886)
(8) Volunteering among Indians (1887)
(9) Establishment of Military Colleges in India for the training of Indians as officers (1887)
(10) Amendment of the Arms Act and Rules (1887)
(11) An active policy of technical education and industrial development (1888).
(12) Reform of the Land Revenue Policy of Government (1889).
(13) Re. Currency Policy (1892)
(14) Constitution of an independent Civil Medical Service in India (1893)
(15) Abolition of Exchange Compensation Allowance (1893)
(16) Abolition of *Begar* (forced labour) and *Rasad* (forced contributions of supplies) (1893)
(17) Reduction of 'Home Charges.'
(18) Repeal of the Cotton Excise Duty (1893)
(19) Recruitment of the higher Judiciary from the Bar (1894)
(20) Condition of Indians in the Colonies (1894)
(21) Repeal of the Government of India's notification of 1891 relating to the Press in Indian States (1894)
(22) Measures for the relief of agricultural indebtedness (1895).
(23) Improvement in the conditions of third class railway travelling (1895)
(24) Financial independence to Provinces (1896)
(25) Reorganisation of the Educational Services so as to do justice to Indians (1896).
(26) Repeal of the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Regulations of 1818, 1819 and 1827, respectively (1897)
(27) Re. the Sedition Act of 1898 (1897)
(28) Re. the Criminal Procedure Code Amendment Act of 1898 (1897)
(29) Re. the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1899 (1898)
(30) Re. the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 (1898)

(31) Inquiry into the economic condition of the people of India (1900)
(32) Larger employment of Indians in the minor Civil Services (1900).
(33) Restriction of the employment of Indians in the superior offices of the Public Works Department (1900)
(34) Admission of Indians to the Police competitive examination in England and their larger employment in the higher ranks of the Police (1901).
(35) Re. the increase of £ 786,000 per annum in the capitation charges borne by India on account of the British forces in this country (1902)
(36) Re. the recommendations of the Indian Universities Commission (1902)
(37) Re. the Indian Universities Act of 1904 (1903)
(38) Re. the Official Secrets Act of 1904 (1903)
(39) Cost of the India Office and the salary of the Secretary of State (1904)
(40) Revival of periodical Parliamentary inquiries into Indian affairs (1905)
(41) Advance in Local Self-Government (1905)
(42) Re. the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 (1908)
(43) Re. the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act of 1908 (1908)
(44) Free and compulsory primary education (1908)
(45) Reform of Legislative Councils Regulations (1909)
(46) Inquiry into the system of administration of the North West Frontier Province (1909)
(47) To throw open the office of Law Member to advocates, vakils and attorneys (1910)
(48) Re. the Seditious Meetings Act (1910)
(49) Re. the Indian Press Act (1910)
(50) Inquiry into the growth of public expenditure (1910)
(51) Amnesty to political prisoners (1910)
(52) Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill (1910)
(53) Governor-in-Council for the United Provinces (1911)
(54) Constitution of an Executive Council in the Punjab (1911)
(55) *Reform of the India Council* (1913)
(56) Re. Indian students in England (1915)

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY PHASE OF THE CONGRESS

Fifty years have rolled by since the Indian National Congress was founded. During this long period it has covered several stages in the course of India's national evolution, and whatever differences may have come into being in its counsels in later years, the earlier ones—from 1885 to 1915 or even 1921, were years of programmes almost common to the different shades of opinion and schools of thought that were slowly developing in Indian politics. Nor were the differences of those earlier years of a very material type.

The greatest difficulty in choosing the fight or arranging the battle lies in selecting the scene of operations and the strategy that should guide them. The contending parties are tossed about between the aggressive and the defensive, between prayer and protest, between contending programmes as to whether we should invite the enemy to our parlour and, to that end, play a waiting game, or whether we should take time by the forelock and rush on him unawares and envelope him all round. These are the issues that rack the brains of Generals on the battle-fields. These likewise are the issues in politics where the leaders should decide whether agitation should be in words or in conduct, and whether, if they should decide in favour of the latter, they should give fight by direct or indirect action. These issues are rapidly surveyed before our eyes and still more rapidly revolved in our brains. The progressive stages of a political fight take decades to evolve themselves and what appears to-day at the end of fifty years of strenuous struggle to be profoundly easy and simple would not have struck our forbears, who had

started the Congress, as anything other than unthinkable. Imagine a proposal placed before men like W. C. Bonnerjee or Surendra Nath Banerjea, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta or Pandit Ayodhya Nath, Lal Mohan Ghose or Man Mohan Ghose, Subrahmania Aiyar or Ananda Charlu, A. O. Hume or W. Wedderburn, which pleaded for a boycott of foreign goods or of councils, courts and colleges, or a scheme of Civil Disobedience of select laws. It requires no imagination to see that they would have been scandalised by such ideas. Nor could such extreme programmes be evolved before the Partition of Bengal, the reactionary policies of Curzon and Minto, or the South African experiences of Gandhiji, or the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre. During the fifteen years of strife and struggle which the Congress had put in towards the end of the last century, the leaders of thought were mostly lawyers with a sprinkling of merchants and doctors who believed, and believed sincerely, that what India wanted was a lucid and balanced presentation of her case before Englishmen and their Parliament. For this purpose they wanted a political organisation and they found in the National Congress the required organ through which to voice forth the Nation's grievances and the National aspirations.

In recounting the personal forces that shaped as well as swayed the course of Indian politics and recalling the faith that lay behind them, we cannot lose sight of the several epochs into which the Indian political agitation during the past half a century divides itself. The circumstances under which the aspirations of the people and, prior to that, their grievances called for powerful expression, have been explained and the background of the Congress has been pictured in some detail. The times and conditions would not allow in the earlier years anything else than a reasoned appeal to the authorities for the redress of grievances and a moderate demand of new con-

cessions and privileges. This frame of mind soon developed into an art. Forensic talent on the one hand and a richly imaginative and emotional eloquence on the other, were soon brought to bear on the task that lay before the Indian politicians. An irresistible statement of facts followed by irrebuttable arguments to prove the justice of the popular cause are to be met with everywhere in the speeches supporting the Congress resolutions and the addresses delivered by Congress Presidents. The burden of these utterances was that the English people are essentially just and fair, and that if properly informed they would never deviate from truth and the right, that the problem was the Anglo-Indian and not the Englishman, that what was wrong was the system and not the individual, that the Congress was essentially loyal to the British Throne and fell foul only of the Indian bureaucracy, that the English Constitution was the bulwark of popular liberties everywhere and the English Parliament was the Mother of Democracy all over, that the British Constitution was the best of all constitutions, that the Congress was not a seditious body, that the Indian politicians were the natural interpreters of Government to people and of people to Government, that Indians must be admitted into public services in larger measure, should be educated and made fit for high positions, that Universities, the Local Bodies and the public services should form the training ground for India, that the legislatures should be thrown open to election and the right of interpellation and discussion of budgets should be conceded, that the Press and the Forest Laws should be relaxed, the Police should become friendly to the people, that the taxes should be moderate, that the military expenditure should be curtailed by India's burdens being at least shared in part by England, that the Judicial and Executive must be separated, and Indians should be given a place in the executive Councils of Provincial and

Central Governments and in the Council of the Secretary of State, that India should have direct representation in the British Parliament at the rate of two members to each Province, that the non-Regulation Provinces should be brought into line with the Regulation ones, that eminent Englishmen in the public life of England should be sent over as Governors instead of members of the Civil Service, that simultaneous competitive examinations should be held in India for the Services, that the annual drain to England should be stemmed and indigenous industries fostered, that Land Revenue should be reduced and Permanent Settlement should be adopted. The Congress went the length of deprecating the Salt Tax as an iniquity, Excise Duties on cotton goods as unfair, and Exchange Compensation Allowance to civilians as an illegal gratification. So early as in 1893 Pandit Malaviya had the vision to sponsor a resolution on the resuscitation of the village industries of this ancient land.

From this rapid review of the themes that engaged the attention of the Indian politicians one can easily see how their minds should have been constituted. We cannot blame them for the attitude they adopted as pioneers of Indian political reform, any more than we can blame the brick and mortar that is buried six feet deep in the foundation and plinth of a modern edifice. They, it is, that have made possible the superstructure, storey by storey, of Colonial Self-Government, Home Rule within the Empire, Swaraj, and on the top of all, Complete Independence. Let us express our deep and abiding sense of gratitude to the great men that led the van of progress in the earlier generations of our public life. They had largely to quote English authorities in support of obvious propositions. They had laboured hard and made heavy sacrifices according to their lights and their capacities. If to-day, our course is plain and our goal is obvious, we owe

all to our forbears who did the spade work and cleared the forest.

Whatever periodical excitement and exacerbation of feelings there might have existed off and on amongst Congressmen, there is no doubt that the progress of the Congress from its inception in 1885 to 1905 was one even march based on a firm faith in constitutional agitation and in the unfailing regard for justice attributed to the Englishman. It was in that view that the Congress was represented in 1893 by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, Chairman, Reception Committee "as the greatest glory of British Rule in this country." For the obverse of the idea be added, "We happily live under a Constitution whose watchword is freedom and whose main pillar is toleration." Lord Ripon's view that "the Queen's Proclamation is not a treaty: it is not a diplomatic instrument; it is a declaration of principles of Government" was quoted by the official Representative of the fourth session of the Congress (1888, Allahabad). Lord Salisbury's dictum that "Government by representation does not suit Eastern traditions" was deeply resented and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta declared in 1890, "I have no fears but that British statesmanship will ultimately respond to the Call." Mahommed Rahimtulla Sayani's declaration as President of the 12th Congress in 1896 was unambiguous: "A more honest or sturdy nation does not exist under the sun than this English Nation." And when the nation met India's approaches and appeals with repression, Ananda Mohan Bose who presided over the Madras Congress in 1898 exhorted saying, "The Educated classes are the friends and not the foes of England,—her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her." The faith placed in the Englishman and in England by those who have gone before us may sometimes appear pathetic and even abject, but it is our duty to recognise their limita-



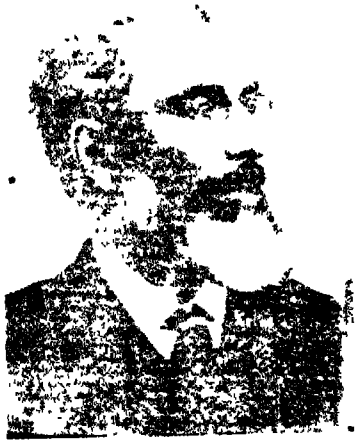
Sir William Wedderburn
1889 : Bombay
1910 : Allahabad



Sir P M Mehta
1890 : Calcutta



P. Ananda Charlu
1891 : Nagpur



Alfred Webb
1894 : Madras

tions and extend, to quote from Dr. Rash Behari Ghose's speech at the 23rd Congress in Madras, 1908, "some kindly thoughts for those who too, in their day, strove to do their duty, however imperfectly, through good report and through evil report with, it may be, somewhat chastened fervour, but I may say without boasting, a fervour as genuine as that which stirs and inspires younger hearts." The first serious agitation in the history of the Congress spread over five long years (1906—1911) and was attended with a measure of repression considered barbarous at the time, leading to a reaction in the outbreak of violence of a sporadic character, and was ultimately crowned with unqualified success in 1911 in the Royal Proclamation annulling the Partition. This led to a gushing praise of the British Government, a renewed faith in its sense of justice and a sense of profound gratitude expressing itself in unmeasured flights of oratory. "Every heart is beating in unison with reverence and devotion to the British Throne, overflowing with revived confidence in and gratitude towards British statesmanship," said Mr. Ambika Charan Mazumdar. "Some of us never faltered," he added, "no—not even in the darkest days of our trials and tribulations—in our hope, in our conviction and in our faith in the ultimate triumph and vindication of British Justice."[1] At the same time Congressmen did not lose sight of the galling laws still in operation in 1911 and in later

[1] Congressmen loved to parade their loyalty in the earlier days. When in 1914 Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, visited the Congress pandal, not only did the whole House rise and applaud the Governor, but Mr. A.P. Patro who was speaking on the despatch of the Indian Expeditionary Force was stopped abruptly and Surendra Nath Banerjea was asked to move the Resolution on the loyalty of the Congress to the Throne which he did with his usual exuberance of language.

A similar incident took place when, on the visit of Sir James Meston to the Lucknow Congress in 1916, the House rose to receive him.

years. The Patria[illegible] the Congress had doubtless concentrated on re[illegible]administration and the repeal of repressive laws, [illegible] is wrong to suppose that they were thinking only of the parts and not of the whole of the Indian problem. "Self-Government is the ordering of Nature, the will of Divine Providence," said Surendra Nath in 1886 at the Calcutta session. "Every nation must be the arbiter of its own destinies,—such is the omnipotent fiat inscribed by Nature with her own hands and in her own book." Presiding over the 20th Congress, Sir Henry Cotton visualized the ideal of "a Federation of free and separate States, the United States of India." Dadabhai spoke of "Self-Government or Swaraj like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies."

That the politicians of the earlier half of the Congress Jubilee Term were not the enemies of Government is amply proved, not only by their own unequivocal avowals made every now and then but from the marks of favour and preferment for which these sturdy patriots were singled out by Government from time to time. The Judiciary was naturally the field selected for such preferment. Sir S. Subrahmania Aiyar of Madras figured in the very first Congress; Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar was solely responsible for the first Convention Congress held in Madras in 1908 under a cut and dry Constitution and Sir Arthur Lawley, then Governor of Madras, was good enough to lend his tents for the Congress session. It was Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar that said, referring to the Nationalists and the Congress, that 'the gangrened limb' must be amputated. Sir Sankaran Nair presided over the Congress at Amraoti, 1897. Even Mr. Ramesam (Sir Vepa since) was a Congressman from the year 1898 in which he seconded the resolution on South African disabilities. Then there was Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar who appeared in the Congress in 1910 and Mr. P. R. Sundara Aiyar who

was an ardent coadjutor of Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar in 1908. All these six became Judges of the Madras High Court and two out of them became Members of the Executive Council, one of Madras and the other of Delhi. The first, who should have presided over the Congress in 1899 and was unable to do so as he was made a Judge of the High Court, reverted to the Congress in 1914 and, during the Home Rule agitation of Mrs. Besant, surrendered his Knighthood and provoked the ire of both Montagu and Chelmsford. It is said that there was a talk at the time of discontinuing his pension as a Judge, but, apparently, better counsels prevailed. Then again, both Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar were Congressmen, the former figuring at the Congress of 1895, and the latter being a more recent recruit but ever more ardent than the former, for he actually signed the Passive Resistance pledge during the internment of Dr. Besant and her coadjutors. Between 1917 and 1919, Sir C. P. was the one star on the Congress firmament flooding the horizon of Indian politics with his radiance. Both these rose to the position of Members of the Executive Council. So did Sir Mahommed Habibulla who first appeared on the Congress platform in 1898 and gave a sample of his talents and eloquence. He became a Member later of the Madras and Delhi Governments. Sir M. Krishnan Nair, a Law Member of the Government of Madras, spoke at the Congress of 1904, and his successor—Sir K. V. Reddi —was, even on the eve of the birth of the Justice Party in 1917, an ardent and well-known Congressman. Sir M. Ramachandra Rao had for long been a devoted Congressman and was actually appointed Member of the Madras Executive Council in 1921, but was passed over at the last moment. Thus we had, from Madras alone, six Judges and six Executive Councillors. Mr. G. A. Natesan's recent elevation to the Tariff Board adds an

example of preferment in some of the unusual lines, even as Sir R. K. Shanmukham's appointment as Dewan of Cochin furnishes still another deviation from the beaten track of the Judiciary and the Executive. Perhaps the earliest prizeman from the Congress ranks was Mr. C. Jambulingam Mudaliar, an elected member of the Madras Legislative Council in 1893, who was made a City Civil Court Judge. In Bombay, both Tyabji and Chandavarkar who presided over the Congress sessions of Madras (1887) and of Lahore (1900) respectively, and K. T. Telang, became Judges of the Bombay High Court. Mr. N. M. Samarth and B. N. Basu were made members of the Secretary of State's Council and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad was at a later stage made a Member of the Executive Council of Bombay.

In Calcutta, A. Chaudhuri who took a leading part in the anti-Partition (of Bengal) agitation became a High Court Judge, almost then and there. When Lord Morley wanted to select the Law Member of the Government of India in 1908, the choice, we learn from Lady Minto's biography of Lord Minto, lay between Messrs. Ashutosh Mukherjee "as the leading jurist of India, but as a sincerely orthodox man whose claims were carefully canvassed" and S. P. Sinha. It was stated by Lord Minto that Sinha was "a Congressman although a Moderate." S. P. Sinha spoke at the 12th Congress (Calcutta, 1896), on the deposition without trial of a native chief. And as we all know, the Congressman was preferred. Likewise, when a vacancy arose in the Executive Council of the Governor-General in 1920, Lord Chelmsford's choice fell on the Maharaja of Burdwan, but Mr. Montagu preferred an elected member of the Imperial Council and mentioned Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri's name. Chelmsford would not have him, as he thought Sastri had failed him at the psychological

moment and the choice fell on Mr. B. N. Sarma—a man that had not failed him at Amritsar, as we shall see later on. In Bengal, other names familiar to Congress circles, which have since been associated with high posts under Government, are those of Messrs. S. R. Das who spoke in 1905 on the question of Indians in Executive Councils, and who became the Law Member of the Government of India, and Sir Provash Chandra Mitter who became an Executive Councillor of Bengal . In U.P. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was the stalwart chosen for the Law Membership of the Government of India, and from Bihar Syed Hasan Imam became, after inviting the Congress to Patna for 1912, a High Court Judge; Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha was raised to a place in the Executive Council of Bihar.

But let us add that the governmental recognition did not always take the form of posts. Pherozeshah Mehta was raised to Knighthood in 1905 by one of the most reactionary Viceroys—Lord Curzon. Gopal Krishna Gokhale would not accept a Knighthood, and would not have accepted even a Membership of the Government of India if it had been offered to him. He preferred to be the plain, unsophisticated Servant of India that he really was, and would have been happy not to have been made a C.I.E. Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was nominated a member of the Legislative Council by Lord Pentland during the Great War. Thereafter he was nominated to the Assembly under the Montford Reforms, and in 1921, was appointed India's representative at the Imperial Conference along with the Maharaja of Kutch, and shortly after made a Privy Councillor. Then he went to America and lectured on India and the Empire. The Dominions invited him, except South Africa which declined to invite him. The Government of India voted Rs. 60,000 for his expenses. But ample amends were

made to him later when he was appointed in 1927 the first Agent-General in South Africa itself, to look after the interests of Indian settlers there. The very stone which was rejected became the corner-stone of the edifice of the Empire.

We have mentioned some instances of preferment of distinguished Congressmen. Let no one run away with the idea that these men were not fitted by their education, culture and high character to fill the posts to which they were appointed. These illustrations only show that the Government, too, if it wanted to have able Indians, had to look to Congress ranks for recruiting them, and that their politics were not regarded by the Government with such disfavour as to make them unfit for places of the greatest responsibility and trust.

CHAPTER IV

Britains' Reaction to the Congress Movement and Rise of New Forces and Parties.

The history of the British Rule in India is a continuous story of Reaction and Reform, the former always preceding the latter. Popular agitation gives birth to repression on the ground that, unless the people are thoroughly beaten, no concession should be made to popular demands. Lord Lytton's Press Act of 1870 which was however quickly withdrawn was the real forerunner of this policy. The Arms Act was another reply to the growing self-consciousness of the Nation and continued a festering sore. Later in 1886 came the Income-tax Act which was objected to seriously at the time. As the Congress grew from year to year, the officials began to eye it with suspicion. Lord Dufferin who had advised Hume to make the Congress undertake political organisation and not merely Social Reform, became an open enemy of the Congress and characterised it as seditious.

Although it was gratifying to Hume that in 1886 the Congress should have been duly received by Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, in Calcutta, and in 1887 by Lord Connemara, the Governor, in Madras, yet in later years it evoked the hostility of Provincial Satraps like Sir Auckland Colvin of the North-Western Provinces (U.P.). This gentleman advised that the Congress had better turn its attention to Social Reform, not knowing that that was the original line of action chalked out by Hume for the Congress, and that it was later altered into a political organization at the instance of Lord Dufferin. Sir Auckland Colvin thought that the movement was premature, and in its aggressive phases—assumed since the 3rd session (1887, Madras)—was even dangerous. The

denunciatory method would, he said, excite hatred and create a split between the Loyalists and the Nationalists. He added that Congress "unfairly claimed to represent the Indian population." Hume replied that "the hatred was already there and required to be assuaged, that any counter agitation would be taken up only by Anglo-Indians, uncultured men and time-servers." The "Muslims," he said, "were as intellingent as, and more democratic than, any one else and in their antipathy to Congress were only being used by a few ill-advised officials who clung to the pestilential doctrine of *Divide et Impera*." "The wretched plea that they are inferior to Hindus," was, he added, "monstrous," and he quoted the names of Sir Salar Jung, Mr. Justice Budruddin Tyabji and Mr. Justice Syed Mahmud. On the question of Congress representing the people, he quoted the ten per cent. of the population that were polling at the English Parliamentary elections, as in those of constituencies like Aberdeen, and the two seats that Weymouth was selling, of which, by the way, it may be mentioned one was purchased by his father.

As for the Congress confining its attention to Social Reform, he pointed out how the Congress sought the regeneration of India on all lines—spiritual, moral, social, and political. Meeting the charge of the Congress propaganda being premature and mischievous, he warned officialdom as to how it was surrounded by self-seekers and flatterers and kept out of touch with real public opinion. "Indians of high character and public spirit," he said, "do not willingly present themselves in official quarters where they may be met with suspicion from the authorities and insult from underlings." He concluded by saying that the real question to be asked was not "Is it premature.?" but "Is it too late?" In narrating the story Sir W. Wedderburn appropriately winds up by

quoting the parallel of the Bourbons at the close of the 18th century. "They had neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, and sudden destruction was brought upon them by the hatred of the intellectuals energizing the dull despair of the peasant masses."

The fourth Congress held at Allahabad had untold difficulties in its way. It could not get grounds whereon to put up the tents. Mrs. Besant in her book on the Congress quotes the instance of a gentleman who had attended the Madras Congress in 1887 "in defiance of his district officer and was called on to give a security of Rs. 20,000 to keep the peace." Matters rapidly became worse and Government's hostility took the shape, in 1890, of a Circular issued by the Bengal Government to all Secretaries and Heads of Departments subordinate to it "pointing out that under the orders of the Government of India, the presence of Government officials, even as visitors, at such meetings is not advisable and that their taking part in the proceedings of any such meetings is also prohibited." The seven cards of admission sent by the Congress to the Private Secretary to the Governor were returned. A Government of India Notification was promulgated on 25th June 1891 (Foreign Department) restricting the rights of free Press in Native States which was protested against by the Congress in 1891. We extract below the Notification:—

"Whereas some misapprehension has hitherto existed as to the regulations in force in territory under the administration of the Governor-General in Council, but beyond the limits of British India, with reference to newspapers published within such territory, the Governor-General in Council has been pleased to make the following orders:—

1. "No newspaper or other printed work, whether periodical or other, containing public news or comments on public news, shall, without the written permission for the time being in force of the Political Agent, be edited, printed or published after 1—8—1891 in any local

area administered by the Governor-General in Council but not forming part of British India.

2. If this is contravened, the Political Agent may by order in writing,

(a) Require him to leave such local area within seven days from the date of such orders,

(b) and prohibit him from re-entering such local area without the written permission of the Political Agent.

3. Disobedience of orders mentioned in the last foregoing paragraph shall make one liable to forcible expulsion."

The bogey of Muslim opposition to the Congress was set up quite in the early years of the Congress and it is curious to note that Sheik Raza Hussein Khan produced at the fourth session (1888, Allahabad) a *Fatwa* supporting the Congress from the Shams-ul-ulma, the leader of the Sunni Community of Lucknow, and declared that "it is not the Muslims, but their official masters who are opposed to the Congress." By 1893 the Legislative Councils were expanded and people's representatives—all too few, being seven in Madras, six in Bombay (including two for the Sirdars) and seven in Bengal—became vocal, with the result that Government thought it necessary to cut short certain privileges enjoyed by Indians in the Public Services (for further details see the Section on the summary of Resolutions on the Public Services). At first in the Educational Department Indians and Europeans were equally eligible for all offices; then, while the equality of eligibility was there, the grades were made unequal. Next the Indians were excluded from certain posts and their status was lowered while their pay suffered a still further cut. In the meantime the European officers began to receive what was called Exchange Compensation Allowance which was described by Lokamanya Tilak as "the crime of 26th June, 1893." And the drain of Home Charges increased from 7 to 16 millions of pounds in 30 years. Sections 124 (A) and 153 (A) were forged in the year 1897 and really

created disaffection towards Government. It is interesting to note that sections 108 and 144 were first applied to politicals even in the last century. Secret Press Committees were established in 1898 which evoked a vehement protest from Mr. W. A. Chambers at the fourteenth Congress (Madras, 1898) and the Resolution was seconded by Mr. N. C. Kelkar, the able and cultured lieutenant of Lokamanya Tilak. Kelkar spoke against "the hateful institution of the Press Committees which are only a thinly veiled Press censorship and as such a distinct disgrace to British India." Even more obnoxious was the statement unearthed by Mr. Mudholkar who in 1897 referred to Sir James Fitz-James Stephen's standard of Loyalty as expressed in the following words of his: "Go to the English newspapers; whatever they say, you may say; that any body should want to be more offensive than they, is inconceivable." In 1899 the Natu brothers, who had been imprisoned without trial since 1897 in connection with the plague riots of Poona, were released. Bengal was hit and was clipped of its wings. The first five years of the 20th century witnessed the strenuous days of Lord Curzon's rule. His curtailment of the powers of the Calcutta Corporation, his Official Secrets Act, his officialization of the Universities which made education costly, his tirade against the untruthfulness of Indians, his budget of twelve Reforms, and his Tibetan Expedition euphemistically called the Tibetan Mission, and finally his Partition of Bengal, broke the back of loyal India and roused a new spirit in the Nation. Even more galling to our sense of self-respect than his speech in Calcutta regarding our untruthfulness, was his sweeping charge that we Indians were, by our environment, our heritage and our upbringing "unequal to the responsibilities of high office under British Rule." In fact, by his Resolution dated 24-5-1904, Lord Curzon made race the test of qualifica-

tion not merit, so much so that the continuation of this policy made Lord Morley declare, as Secretary of State, that what India resented was racial domination, not so much political domination. Lord Curzon's term was characterized by activity, indeed breathless activity. He had a scheme of twelve Reforms and appointed several Commissions. "Commissions there are that shelve and Commissions there are that solve. But mine are of the latter category", said he. He did some lasting good, doubtless, to India. His Ancient Monuments Preservation Act is a blessing for which Indian Nationalism owes him a deep debt of gratitude. The manly way in which he punished a regiment in the Rangoon and O'Hara[1] cases remains as a tribute to his courage and sense of justice.

The period of time between 1900 and 1906 was one of a critical nature in the history of India. While the people were showing increasing signs of self-consciousness, the retrograde policy of Government could not but make itself more and more assertive and ever more naked. We shall show how one of the favourite themes of Surendra Nath Banerjea's was the Public Services. In 1893 there were only twenty Indians in the I.C.S., as against a thousand Europeans,—and this in 35 years after its introduction. The House of Commons had actually passed a Resolution on the need for simultaneous examinations in India about the year 1893, but ten years after, you have Lord Curzon's minute disparaging Indian talent. No wonder that Surendra Nath was forced to state that "the history of the Civil Services is one unbroken record

[1] The reference is to Lord Curzon's denunciation of a British battalion in Rangoon, some privates of which were believed to have outraged an Indian woman to death, but could not be detected, owing to a combination amongst the members. This took place in the year 1899. In 1900 the 9th Lancers at Sialkot were punished, because two privates were charged with having beaten an Indian cook to death for failing to procure an Indian woman for them and who too could not be detected.

of broken promises." Mr. N. M. Samarth bemoaned that Burke and Sheridan were not there to impeach Curzon and his policy. The result was a sense of helplessness which made the Congress pathetically ask for the periodical Parliamentary enquiries so late as in 1905, in a resolution at Benares moved by Ambalal Desai. While Lord Curzon's University Commission, followed by the Universities Act, "sealed up" in the words of Dr. Gour "the portals of knowledge with golden locks which would open only to golden keys," his Police Commission resulted in excluding the Indians from the special Police Services. On the top of these came Lord Curzon's speech to the merchants in which he stated that "administration and exploitation go hand in hand." All these led to what popularly was known as the National movement, intensified by the anti-Partition movement. The Partition of Bengal divided the Bengali speaking people into two Provinces against their wishes and was a signal for a most extensive and intensive agitation on the part of the people and an equally intensive repression on the part of the Government. Processions, meetings and demonstrations were organized, but erelong they were prohibited. *Hartals* came into existence and students and citizens alike were punished. Educational rules became strict and prohibited students from taking part in politics. Sir B. Fuller, Lt.-Governor of East Bengal, promulgated his threats; and his rudeness to respectable people whom he bullied saying, "Bloodshed may be necessary," was followed by the announcement of the arrival of Gurkha troops into East Bengal. All this, when there was not a trace of violence indulged in by the people, as pointed out by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the time. But like the ball that bounds the higher, the more it is hit, and the drum that sounds the louder, the more it is beaten, the newly awakened National spirit of 1905—1906 actually prospered under the oft-repeated blows of the

Two characters emerged from Bengal at the time who played a notable part in making India's history. Bepin Bapu and his work has already been referred to. Aurobindo shone for years as the brightest star on the Indian firmament. His association with the National Education movement at its inception lent dignity and charm to the cause. He was during his early years brought up and educated in the English atmosphere and English schools and Universities. He came to India much as any European would come, to join the Educational Department of Baroda, he having failed to secure a place in the I.C.S. as he did not pass the Riding test. Aurobindo's genius shot up like a meteor. He was on the high skies only for a time. He flooded the land from Cape to Mount with the effulgence of his light.

Nine deportations took place in Bengal, namely of Krishna Kumar Mitra, Pulin Behari Das, Shyam Sunder Chakravarti, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Manoranjan Guha-Thakurta, Subodh Chandra Mullik, Sachindra Prasad Bose, Satish Chandra Chatterjee and Bupesh Chandra Nag. These leaders had been organizing Bengal—the youth of Bengal in particular. Physical prowess and courage were the ideal of the time. Sir B. Fuller's ideal, on the other side, was the Gurkha soldiery and "bloodshed if necessary." Things reached their acme in 1908. Press prosecutions were to be witnessed everywhere. The *Yugantar*, the *Sandhya* and the *Bandemataram* were the organs of the New Spirit and were all suppressed. Brahma Bandhav Upadhyaya, Editor of the *Sandhya* and a strenuous patriot, died in hospital. Aurobindo himself, after undergoing many hardships and three prosecutions, left the British Territory and started an Ashram in Pondicherry.

On the 30th April, 1908, fell two bombs at Muzafferpore on two ladies—the Kennedys—which were meant for Mr. Kingsford, the District Judge of the place. Khudiram Bose, a young man of 18, was executed for the crime. His photoes were circulated broadcast in the country. The cult of violence was openly preached in the columns of *Yugantar*, edited by a young man named Bhupendra Nath Datta, a brother of Swami Vivekananda. When the young man was given a long sentence, his mother expressed her joy at the service rendered by her son, and 500 Bengali women went to her to congratulate her. The son himself declared in Court that there were 300 million Editors behind the paper to take his place. That was the faith which sustained the movement. Sedition and its punishment therefore ceased to rouse any fears in the popular mind. People preached it far and wide, but when prosecuted employed all the resources of the Law to obtain a discharge or acquittal. Aurobindo's prosecution for sedition in the *Bandemataram*, was no exception to this plan of popular campaign. In Maharashtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was arrested on the 13th July, 1908, and on the same day were arrested in Andhra, Mr. Harisarvothama Rao and two others After five days' trial, Tilak was given six years' transportation to which was added the half year remitted in his sentence of 1897. The nine months' punishment given to Harisarvothama Rao in Andhra was sought to be revised by Government and the High Court raised it to three years. Five years for sedition was quite a common affair. Soon, however, sedition disappeared from the land. It really went underground and the bomb and the revolver took its place. New measures, called the Seditious Meetings Act and the Press Act, were passed in the teeth of popular opposition in 1908, and two years later, the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Gokhale warned Government in the debate on the Seditious

Meetings Bill that the younger men were getting out of hand and that they, the elders, could not be blamed if they could not control the youth.

Sporadic murders of a political nature were taking place from time to time and the most daring of the kind was the murder of Sir Curzon Wyllie in London at a public meeting, in 1907, by a young man named Madan Lal Dhingra, who was hanged. In trying to rescue the victim, Dr. Lalkaka, a Parsee, also shared his fate Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who presided over the 24th session of the Congress at Lahore (1909), deplored these incidents as well as the murder of Mr. Jackson, Collector of Nasik. The violence movement was rapidly spreading to different Provinces in India and had its support amongst a section of Indian students in London. The tension of feeling was not relieved either by the Minto-Morley Reforms or the admission of Indians into the Executive Councils of the Government of India, and of the Madras and Bombay Governments. As Gokhale repeatedly pointed out, Reforms delayed "lost half their value and all their grace." By this time Lord Morley began to see the mischief done by Lord Curzon's policy. He repudiated Lord Curzon's interpretation of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the emphasis laid by him on the words "so far as may be" as the disqualifying factor in respect of obliterating "all distinctions of race." But there was no chance of any peace in the country until the 'settled fact' of the Partition of Bengal was unsettled. The prestige of the bureaucracy was at stake. It could not respond to agitation; for, once that was done, its rule would be at an end. A fine description of this "special creation of the Almighty—the Bureaucracy" was given by Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar who presided over the 26th Congress session in Calcutta. The essence of bureaucracy is pithily expressed by Lord Minto in one of his speeches

in which he said that Government would not yield either in response to agitation from below or in obedience to authority from above, but out of its own free will and on its own initiative. Therefore a device was found out to get out of the *impasse* created by the Partition, which, strangely enough, was disowned both by Lord Curzon who had conceived it, and by Lord Ampthill who signed it as the Acting Viceroy at the time. It was equally disowned by Lord Morley and by Viscount Middleton (Mr Brodrick) who were the two Secretaries of State concerned. Anyway, when Lord Minto gave place to Lord Hardinge as Viceroy and Lord Crewe succeeded Viscount Middleton as the Secretary of State, advantage was taken of the King's Coronation celebrations in India to annul the Partition, and to shift the metropolis of India from Calcutta to Delhi. When the King was about to leave the pavilion at the close of the ceremony on the 12th December 1911, in Delhi, he stood and said --

> "We are pleased to announce to our people that on the advice of our ministers and after consultation with our Governor-General-in-Council, we have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India, from Calcutta to the ancient Capital of Delhi, and simultaneously as a consequence of that transfer, the creation at as early a date as possible of a Governorship-in-Council for the Presidency of Bengal, of a new Lieutenant-Governorship-in-Council administering the areas of Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa, and of a Chief Commissionership of Assam, with such administrative changes and redistribution of boundaries as our Governor-General-in-Council, with the approval of our Secretary of State for India-in-Council, may in due course determine. It is our earnest desire that these changes may conduce to the greater prosperity and happiness of our beloved people."

When it is said that the Partition was annulled, let it

not be understood that the *status quo ante* was restored. The partition of Bengal into West Bengal and East Bengal (*with Assam*) only underwent a change of form, Bihar which was, in the partition, included in West Bengal, being separated into a Province, along with Chota Nagpur and Orissa. So that in place of West Bengal and East Bengal (with Assam), we have Bengal as one Province, and Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa as another Province, and Assam as a third Province. The one injustice left unredressed on the occasion of the Coronation celebrations in India has just now been repaired by Orissa being integrated into a distinctive Province. Lord Hardinge, they say, made his term memorable for the abolition of Indentured Labour in South Africa and the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, but what makes his administration memorable was that he worked for the Despatch of August 25th, 1911, which has formed the basis for all further Reforms in India and in which he unreservedly acknowledged the supreme claims of Provincial Autonomy in any scheme of National reconstruction.

With these achievements to the credit of the Congress, it is but to be expected that the highest jubilation should have prevailed over the country when the annual session met in Calcutta in 1911. Surendra Nath Banerjea made a handsome acknowledgment of the help rendered to Bengal by the whole of India and expressed the buoyant hope "that India would form part and parcel of the Self-Governing States of a Free and Federated Empire, rejoicing in our indissoluble connection with England and in the enjoyment of the inestimable blessing of new-born freedom." But there was a skeleton in the cupboard. In the midst of these wild rejoicings, people could not forget the Seditious *Meetings* Act (1908) and the Press Act (1908) and the *Criminal Law Amendment Act (1910) which cut at the*

root of popular liberties. Above all, there were the century-old obsolete Regulation III of 1818 and allied Regulations in the different Provinces, under which the deportations of 1906-1908 were freely taking place. There were, too, the Excise duties on cotton goods manufactured in India. These directly jeopardised the security of person and property and national industrial interests. There were, above all, political prisoners in jail, notably Bal Gangadhar Tilak confined in the Fort of Mandalay, suffering from diabetes,—alone and unfriended, but full of fortitude. At this time, Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill was on the tapis, with poor chances of being passed, and there was the South African situation which called forth a nation-wide agitation.

That was the position in 1911. The political tension was somewhat relaxed in 1912. But a great tragedy was enacted in the year, when an attempt was made on the life of Lord Hardinge, who was perhaps the most popular Viceroy about the time. A bomb was thrown on him—and he narrowly escaped death—while he was riding an elephant in the procession organized on entering Delhi, the new Capital. The Congress deviated from its usual practice of dispersing at the close of the Presidential address at its Patna session (1912) and resolved to send a telegram to Lord Hardinge expressing its sorrow and indignation at the outrage. The Press began to be rigidly controlled, as was expected after such incidents, and this led in turn to an insistent demand for the repeal of the Press Act in 1913. Bhupendra Nath Basu gave the history of the vicissitudes of the Press in India, and described how in 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe had liberated the Indian Press, but Lord Lytton gagged it in 1878-79 by his Vernacular Press Act, which was repealed later at the instance of Mr. Gladstone. In 1891, however, the Government of India published a Notification dated 25th June 1891 in the

Foreign Department, gagging the Press in territories under British administration in Native States, which evoked warm protests from the Congress in successive years. The latest reactionary measure was the Press Act of 1908—permanently placed on the Statute Book in 1910—which authorized Government to demand securities from new Printing Presses and newspapers up to Rs. 2,000, and from old ones up to Rs. 5,000. Sir Herbert Risley, the Home Member at the time, said that the Act would not affect existing papers and that the administration of the Law would not be in the hands of the Police, but both the assurances proved false. People lost sight of the fact—including Sir S. P. Sinha who, as the Law Member of the Government of India, was responsible for the final shape of the Bill,—that fresh declarations were necessary under the Printing Press and Newspapers Act of 1867 for various minor causes, such as change of premises, temporary absence of the printer or the publisher, death of the original owner, and change in the management. All these necessitated fresh declarations, and that meant security as for a new Press, especially under the inexorable reports of the secret Police. As soon as the Great War broke out, in 1914, a notorious instance of misuse of the Act occurred in respect of a pamphlet published by Mahomed Ali, entitled "Come over into Macedonia and help us," which was forfeited without the notification stating the grounds for Government's opinion as was required by the Press Act of 1910. The pamphlet was held to be not seditious and was outside the scope of the Penal Code. The Chief Justice of Calcutta (I.L.R. 41 Calcutta 466) stated that it would be the duty of the Court to hold, but for Section 22, that there had been no legal forfeiture. On the merits, His Lordship observed:

"The provisions of Section 4 are very comprehensive and its language is as wide as human

ingenuity could make it. Indeed it appears to me to embrace the whole range of varying degrees of assurance, from certainty on the one side to the very limits of impossibility on the other. It is difficult to see to what lengths the operation of this Section might not plausibly be extended by an ingenious mind. They would certainly extend to writings that may even command approval. An attack on that degraded section of the public which lives on the misery and shame of others would come within this widespread net,—the praise of a class might not be free from risk. Much that is regarded as standard literature might undoubtedly be caught. The Advocate-General has contended, and rightly in my opinion, that the provisions of the Press Act extend far beyond the Criminal Law and he has argued that the burden of proof is cast on the applicant, so that, however meritorious the pamphlet may be, still if the applicant cannot establish the negative, the Act requires his application must fail. And what is this negative? It is not enough for the applicant to show that the words of the pamphlet are not likely to bring into hatred or contempt any class or section of His Majesty's subjects in British India, or that they have not a tendency in fact to bring about that result. But he must go further and show that it is impossible for them to have that tendency either directly or indirectly, and whether by way of inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor or implication. Nor is that all. The legislature has added the all embracing phrase 'or otherwise'."

The C. J. added: "Mr. Mahomed Ali then has lost his book, but he retains his character and he is free from the stigma that he apprehended. And this doubtless will be some consolation to him when we dismiss, as we must, his present application." The colleague of Sir Lawrence Jenkins, the Chief Justice, was not less pronounced in his condemnation of the Press Act, for Mr. Justice Stephen observed: "So wide indeed are the powers which the Legislature has conferred on the Government, that they would

be able to confiscate a newspaper containing words that might cause one man to hate or even to condemn a class, if such there should unhappily be, who sought to embarrass the Government of the country by murder and robbery." Speaking of the pamphlet he says: "I find myself in a position which is unfamiliar to me and in which, as far as I am aware, no Judge in the British Empire has been placed since the remote days of early English jurisprudence. I have to decide a question of fact on such evidence as is supplied by one document. The side on whom the onus of proving his case is cast, is not in a position to give evidence. As the other side has not called any witness, no cross-examination has taken place."

Regarding the case of *New India* edited by Mrs. Besant, the Officiating Chief Justice of Madras remarked: "Section 3 (1) imposes a serious disability on persons desiring to keep printing presses." Mrs. Besant forfeited Rs. 20,000 altogether, in 1917, under the Press Act. A deputation of the Press Association headed by Mr. B. G. Horniman and composed of Messrs. Malaviya, Chintamani, Sachchidananda Sinha and others waited on Lord Chelmsford on March 5th, 1917, and in reply the Viceroy rebuked the deputation in unmeasured terms. But that was not all; he rebuked the Judges already quoted, saying, "The function of a Judge is not to say what the Law ought to be, but what it is. Executive action is and must always be based upon information, experience, considerations of policy which find no place in the Courts of Law. Sir Lawrence Jenkins was not entirely consistent with himself. And I cannot but think that if he had any knowledge of the statistics I have given you, he would have hesitated before describing the keeping of printing presses and the publication of newspapers as an extremely hazardous undertaking."

It was only after the Montford Reforms were in operation that the Repressive Laws were repealed (except the Criminal Law Amendment Act) about the year 1922. We have digressed into the full story of the Press Law, in the course of describing the hardships it had worked on the public in 1913, even after the Partition of Bengal had been annulled and the violence movement had become quiescent. But the comparative lull and tranquillity in the political atmosphere were seen to give place to the commotion created by the Great War of 1914-1918, and one gratifying event took place on the eve of this world cataclysm. The Muslims who ever since the Partition days, had remained aloof from National ideals and pinned their faith on the bureaucracy, saw better in 1913, and the Congress placed on record that year its "warm appreciation of the adoption by the All India Muslim League of the ideal of Self-Government for India within the British Empire, and of the belief which the League had so emphatically declared at its last session 'that the political future of the country depends upon the harmonious working and co-operation of the two great communities'"

In July 1914, the Great War broke out and when towards November, that year, the Germans were knocking at the door of France, Lord Hardinge took courage in both hands and depleted India of her soldiery. England was in great peril. The soldiers in India were meant to save India for England, but if England herself was going to the bottom of the sea, why this Standing Army in India? So he packed off the Army to Flanders, marching it from Marseilles without a day's rest to the firing line. The Indian Army saved the Allies from a disaster which should have been theirs otherwise, before the close of the first winter in the War. In the Congress of 1914, therefore, the demand for Self-Government was revived. The Congress resolved that "in view of the profound and avowed

loyalty the people of India have manifested in the present crisis, this Congress appeals to the Government to deepen and perpetuate it and make it an enduring and valuable asset of the Empire, by removing all invidious distinctions here and abroad between His Majesty's Indian and other subjects, by redeeming the pledges of Provincial Autonomy contained in the Despatch of the 25th August, 1911, and by taking such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of a Federated Empire, in the full and free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status." We have quoted the Resolution *in extenso* because it represents the high water mark of National aspiration at the time Mrs. Besant, however, did not place the Indian problem on the basis of a reward, but on the basis of a right. She boldly demanded the application of the principle of Reciprocity at the Madras Congress (1914), urging that India should exclude imports from countries from which her people were excluded. Mrs. Besant inaugurated her great Home Rule movement during the days of Lord Pentland. The same old programme was revived.—Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education and Home Rule. She disaffiliated her Theosophical Educational institutions at Madanapalle from the Madras University, established a National High School at Adyar, established other like institutions in Sindh and elsewhere, and organized a Society for the Promotion of National Education (S. P. N. E) under the headship of Dr. Arundale. The Home Rule League was being organized by Mr. B. P. Wadia. Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who had already begun to take part in the Congress, became an active participant in this movement. *New India* was the daily through the columns of which the Home Rule movement worked. The students became a great force in the agitation, and Lord Pentland promulgated the notorious G. O. 559 prohibiting them from taking part in politics. As usual, agitation led to

repression and Mrs. Besant, Mr. Arundale and Mr. Wadia were interned in Ootacamund on June 16th, 1917. These events, from the year 1915 up to September, 1920, constitute really facts and factors of a thickly crowded era,—the era of the Home Rule movement—and are dealt with in a separate Chapter in Part II of the Book.

CHAPTER V

Our British Friends

Some members of the British Parliament and certain other eminent Englishmen played a notable part in the evolution of Indian politics.

Long before the Congress was organized by Mr. A. O. Hume, we had a number of members of Parliament who interested themselves in the Indian question and brought an altruistic spirit to bear upon the Parliamentary discussions relating to India. John Bright was the earliest of these, whose activities in the cause of India are traceable to the fifties and sixties of the last century. Mr. Bright entered Parliament in 1847, and from that time to 1880 he kept up his interest in India through all the vicissitudes to which this country was subjected. Next came Mr. Fawcett who entered Parliament in 1865 and moved the resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations in 1868. He condemned in 1875 the ball to the Sultan of Turkey given by Lord Salisbury in England at the expense of India, and from that time forward his career was one continued story of a warm espousal of India's cause. It was as a result of his protests that the cost of the Abyssinian War came to be divided between England and India. He condemned the cost of the Duke of Edinburgh's presents to the Indian Princes being debited to India's account and likewise saved India a debit of £ 30,000 spent on the visit of the Prince of Wales. Lord Lytton's sacrifice of cotton import duties, the Delhi Assemblage, and the Afghan War were all protested against by Fawcett. It is interesting to recall how, so early as in 1872, an address was voted in Calcutta expressing deep gratitude to Mr. Fawcett and how when in 1874 Fawcett

lost his seat in Parliament, a purse of £ 750 was voted in this country to enable him to contest a seat.

The part which A. O. Hume played in organising an Indian Parliamentary Committee and the Congress has already been referred to. It is meet and proper that we know something more about this Scotchman who laboured for India's good, both as an official and as a non-official for over sixty years. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service and served India in various capacities. As a District Officer he laboured for "the cause of popular education, police reform, the liquor traffic, the vernacular press, the juvenile reformatories and other domestic requirements." His one interest was the village and its agriculture, his one care and concern was for the people. He had no doubt fought in the Mutiny in the district of Etawah and saved India for the British. The moment peace was restored, he began, however, to vindicate a policy of enlightenment declaring that, "Assert its supremacy as it may at the bayonet's point, a free and civilised Government must look for its stability and permanence to the enlightenment of the people and their moral and intellectual capacity to appreciate its blessings." This attitude evoked a Government circular dated 28th January 1859, in which objection was taken to the employment of native agency for the promotion of education, and the Collector was warned not to attempt to persuade the people to send their children to the schools or to contribute to their maintenance. Hume's protest against this is historic. "I cannot but found hopes of indulgence," he wrote, "on the intense interest I feel in the subject and the ceaseless attention that I have paid it. For years past, it has been the dream of my leisure moments, *the object* of my hopes, and although I have achieved little as yet, I cannot, as I watch the feeble beginnings avoid recalling an Alpine

scene of happy memories when I saw the first drops of a joyous stream trickling through the huge avalanche that had so long embayed, and feeling confidence from that augury that, day by day and month by month, that tiny rill gathering strength and size, will work out its resistless way and, at last, despite the whole chilling mass of ignorance, the accumulation of ages, pass on unobstructed to fertilise and enrich an empire." Hume's next favourite, "Police reform," was based upon a scheme which provided for the complete separation of Police and Judicial functions. Of Abkari he says, "while we debauch our subjects we do not even pecuniarily derive any profit from their ruin. All this revenue is the wages of sin; it may, in the words of the old adage, be truly said that 'ill-gotten wealth never thrives.' And for every rupee additional that the Abkari yields, two at least are lost to the public by crime and spent by the Government in suppressing it. I at this moment see no hopes of reform; yet I have no doubts whatsoever that if I be spared a few years longer, I shall live to see effaced, in a more Christian-like system, one of the greatest existing blots on our Government of India."

At the end of 1859 he helped in starting a vernacular paper called the *People's Friend*, 600 copies of which were taken by the North-West Provinces (U. P.) Government The Viceroy appreciated it and copies of the paper were forwarded with translation to the Secretary of State for submission to Queen Victoria. So early as in 1863, Mr. Hume pressed for the establishment of a juvenile reformatory where the boys would be separated from adult criminals and given a chance of amendment by discipline, by instruction, and by training in useful industries. As Commissioner of Customs, his principal achievement was the gradual abolition of the vast Customs barrier, 2500 miles long, which had hitherto been kept up to protect

the Government's salt monopoly by excluding the cheap salt produced in the Rajaputana States. "This grotesque fortification," it is said, "extended from West to East across India, from Attock on the Indus to near Cuttack on the Bay of Bengal." And Mr. Hume's success in bringing this about evoked praise from the Secretary of State.

In 1879, Mr. Hume prepared a scheme of agricultural reform and in spite of the sympathy Lord Mayo showed towards it his scheme came to nought On the question of litigation he held the "Civil Courts in the rural districts directly responsible for the bondage of cultivators to the money-lender" and he recommended that "rural debt cases should be disposed of summarily and finally on the spot by selected Indians of known probity and intelligence" who should be "sent as judges from village to village to settle up, with the aid of village elders, every case of debt of the kind referred to in which any one of its inhabitants was concerned These judges would be fettered by no codes and forms of procedure and they would hear both parties' stories *Coram Populo* on the village platform of the debtor's own village." "It is needless to tell any one who knows the country," said he, "that while, when you get him into court, no witness seems to be able to tell the truth, on his own village platform surrounded by his neighbours, no villager in personal questions like these seems able to tell an untruth. Everybody knows everybody else's affairs. Let the speaker deviate perceptibly from the facts, and immediately out go tongues all round, and hisses and cries of *'wah, wah'*, remind him that he is not in court and that that kind of thing will not go down at home." In 1879, a detailed scheme on these lines was formulated for the benefit of the distressed Deccan ryot but it was disallowed by the Bombay Government. Mr. Hume was Secretary

to the Government of India from 1870 to 1879 but he was ejected from that place for the offence that he was too honest and too independent. There was a chorus of condemnation in Indian papers, but in vain. Lord Lytton's proposal to give him a Lieutenant-Governorship was turned down by Hume himself, because he was not equal to the task of feting and feasting that it involved, and the alternative proposal to make him the Home Member was turned down by Lord Salisbury, on the ground that Mr. Hume was stiffening Lord Northbrook against the repeal of cotton duties. He retired in 1882 after spending £ 20,000 on a museum of ornithology, and £ 4,000 on the preparation of a great work on the "Game Birds of India."

The services of Sir William Wedderburn are too well-known to need recounting. He was the chief character for years together in running the British Congress Committee, for the expenses of which the Congress had been voting sums ranging from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000 annually. Sir William Wedderburn presided over the National Congress at two of its sessions,—in Bombay, (1889) and at Allahabad (1910). Mr. David Yule presided over the fourth session of the Congress at Allahabad in 1888 and was the author of the classical and oft-quoted statement which says: "The House of Commons regards India as a great and solemn trust committed to it by an all-wise and inscrutable Providence. The six hundred and fifty odd members have thrown the trust back upon the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best." In subsequent years the visit of members of Parliament to India and their presence at the Congress session became an annual event. We can recall such well-known names as those of Mr. W. S. Caine, the great Temperance Reformer, and Charles Bradlaugh, the protagonist of lost causes, Mr. Samuel

Smith, Dr. H. V. Rutherford and Dr. Clarke. In later years various other members of Parliament visited India. Ramsay Mac Donald should have even presided over the Congress of 1911 but that his wife's death prevented this event, which would have been an interesting episode in the great tragedy of this Labour Leader's career in relation to India. Keir Hardie, Holford Knight, Maxton, Col. Wedgwood, Ben Spoor, Charles Roberts, Pethwick Lawrence, are a few more of the 'Commoners' that have visited India and attended different sessions of the Congress to study India's problems. But the ovation given to Charles Bradlaugh in 1889 was royal in its style and more than royal in its cordiality. His reply contains many noble sentiments, but his definition of loyalty is remarkable. "That is no real loyalty," he said, "which is only blind submission. Real loyalty means that the governed help the Governors, leaving little for the Government to do." The bureaucracy's definition, however, is quite the opposite, for they say that the people must leave every thing to be done by Government, themselves doing nothing.

Bradlaugh prepared in 1889 a draft Bill on the Reform of the Legislative Councils and circulated it. It embodied the views of the Congress as expressed till then, and the Congress in accordance with his wishes drafted certain proposals embodying the mature opinion of the Indian people on the subject. The Bill was dropped later. But Bradlaugh's position in Parliament was so strong that Lord Cross's first Bill itself had to be dropped in 1891 owing to Bradlaugh's opposition; and his second Bill was accepted, embodying the first instalment of Reforms, with the principle of election to the Legislatures indirectly given.

A name not less dear was that of William Ewart Gladstone. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar quoted the

following declaration of the Grand Old Man of England, in Madras at the 3rd Congress (1887):—"I hold that the capital agent in determining finally the question whether our power in India is or is not to continue, will be the will of the 240 millions of people who inhabit India. The question who shall have supreme rule in India is, by the laws of right, an Indian question, and those laws of right are from day to day growing into laws of fact. Our title to be there depends on a first condition, that our being there is profitable to the Indian nation, and on a second condition, that we can make them see and understand it to be profitable." The repeal of the Vernacular Press Act relating to Lord Lytton's time was put down to Gladstone's abhorrence of it.

Gladstone's direct approval of the Congress movement was the real cause of his popularity in India. "It will not do for us to treat with contempt or even with indifference the rising aspirations of this great people," said he, in 1888. For years together his birthdays evoked congratulatory resolutions from the Congress. His 82nd birthday fell on 29th December, 1891 and was duly observed by the Congress. His advocacy of India's rights no less than Ireland's was the direct cause of such unparalleled devotion to a distant statesman. Gladstone was regarded as a friend of India and Eardley Norton quotes a statement of his at the tenth Congress (1894) regarding the Press Law, which was as follows:—"Suddenly in the dark, in the privacy of the Council chamber, I believe in answer to a telegram, without the knowledge of Parliament, without the knowledge of the country, a law was passed totally extinguishing the freedom of the Native Press. I think a law such as that is a disgrace to the British Empire." Gladstone's death was sincerely bemoaned by the Congress in 1898.

Lord Northbrook was thanked by the ninth Congress (1893) for pleading in Parliament for the reduction of 'Home' charges. In moving the proposition before the Congress, Gokhale quoted the Duke of Argyll's statement that the grievance should be remedied before the impression got abroad in India that there was such a grievance. The Duke was a great authority on public questions and Mr. Wacha quoted the following statement of the Duke at the 17th session of the Congress: "Of chronic poverty and permanent reduction to the lowest level of subsistence, such as prevail only too widely, amongst the vast population of rural India, we have no example in the Western world." The same Duke had said in 1888 that "they (the English) had not fulfilled the promises and engagements which we have made." The English friends were remembered with gratitude in their death, as they were for their services while alive. Lord Stanley of Alderley was another friend of the Nation and when he passed away in 1903, the Madras Congress recorded its grief over his death and over that of W. S. Caine. There were other Englishmen or Anglo-Indians who strove for the uplift of India year after year, who had spent their lives in this country, and whose services were memorable. At the very first Congress appeared Mr. D. S. White who wished to "stop the importation of these boys from England at great expense and to abolish the Civil Service, utilising, both from England and India, men of experience and reputation." Mr. Eardley Norton is a famous character. He was the son of John Bruce Norton who was a well-known public man in South India and whose portrait is hung in the Pachaiappa's Hall, Madras. The younger Norton spent the best part of his life in India and laboured like his father for India's uplift. In 1894, he moved the Resolution on the abolition of the India Council and formulated the conundrum: "If the Secretary of State is to be controlled by the Council,

then abolish the Secretary of State. If the Council is to be controlled by the Secretary of State, then abolish the Council. The dual existence is useless, dangerous, expensive and obstructive." He gave instances of commercial incapacity of the Secretary of State and his Council, such as sanctioning the Calcutta and S. E. Railway, against Lord Canning's protest, guaranteeing interest at 5 per cent., and when it was practically bankrupt, buying it up at ½ a million sterling. Five per cent. interest was guaranteed on a million sterling for the Madras Irrigation Co., and as the work never paid its expenses it was purchased for India at par. The Council bought at Rs. 1,000 per share, the shares of the Elphinstone Land and Press Co., selling in the market at Rs. 339. The expenses of the India Council included, we are told, "the wages of 28 housemaids, a house-keeper and 3 charwomen." Amongst other English friends who stood by India was Mr. H. Morgan-Browne who, while seconding a resolution at the 10th Congress for an enquiry by the House of Commons into Indian Finance, pointed out how out of the Famine Insurance Fund of 24 crores of Rupees, only 16 crores had been spent as promised. The 'Stores,' he said, was one of the meanest and most corrupt departments and India was made to pay Rs. 1,20,000 for a ball in Constantinople. Another English friend was Mr. John Adam, a known Educationist of Madras who stood by the Congress in the earlier days.

There remains one great public character to whom we must make a reference. It is General Booth, who urged on the Nagpur Congress (1891) a scheme by which the poor, destitute multitudes could be settled on the waste lands of the country. A fitting reply was sent to him by telegram.

An account of the services of these European friends would not be complete without a reference to the names of Captain Banon and Captain Hearsay who respectively proposed and seconded a Resolution at the fourth Congress in 1888 (Allahabad) and pointed out how over 2,000 Indian women were procured by Government "for the hideous purpose alluded to (prostitution)," how the provision encouraged the boy-soldiers to loose living and how it would be better to encourage the soldiers to marry. Nor can Sir Henry Cotton and his abiding services to the Nation be forgotten in this brief narrative. The Cottons were a family long connected with India, and no sooner had the Chief Commissioner of Assam retired from the I. C. S. than he was called on by the Congress to guide its deliberations at the Bombay session in 1904. He it was that visualized the ideal of the Federated States of India for the first time.

CHAPTER VI

Our Indian Patriarchs

Before we take up the further development in the Congress policy and programme, it is but meet and proper that we pay our tribute of praise and gratitude to the great leaders and founders of the movement for emancipation, who worked and toiled in the earlier days of the Congress. Looking at the Congress with its widespread organization and with its great National programme, we are apt to imagine that all this has come about in our time and as a result of our efforts. The programme and outlook of the progenitors of the Congress may not appeal to the Congressmen of to-day; and the programme and outlook of to-day may not have appealed to the progenitors of the Congress. But we must remember that what we are able to accomplish and aspire to-day would not have been possible without their hard pioneer efforts and great sacrifices. We would be therefore failing in a duty which we owe to the memory of those who have passed away, and to those who are still happily amongst us, if we did not devote a few pages to recording the great services and sacrifices of our patriarchs.

Dadabhai Naoroji

The first name in the list of patriarchs is that of Dadabhai Naoroji who, beginning his connection with the Congress from its very outset, continued to serve it till the evening of his life, and took it through the whole gamut of evolution, from the humble position of being a people's organ seeking redress of administrative grievances, to that of a National Assembly working for the definite object of attaining Swaraj (Calcutta, 1906). He presided over the Congress thrice, in 1886, 1893 and 1906, and

throughout his association with it, held aloft the Congress banner before India and England. Dadabhai's second selection to the Presidentship of the Congress was in appreciation of his election to the House of Commons as a member for Central Finsbury. At that time the idea of ventilating India's grievances in London was being seriously discussed. There was an earnest proposal in 1891, to suspend the Congress until a London session was held. But it was turned down Just then A. O. Hume was about to depart for England, and about the same time there was a demand for direct Indian representation to the House of Commons. It was at this juncture that Dadabhai was elected Congress President for the second time, and he took the opportunity to exhort the British "not to drive this force (the educated Indians) into opposition instead of drawing it to your own side." "This Congress," said he, "represents the aristocracy of Intellect." Dadabhai hoped that "our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fair play of the United Kingdom is not misplaced." "The day, I hope," he said, "is not distant when the world will see the noblest spectacle of a great Nation like the British holding out the hand of true fellow citizenship and of justice." To the last day, Dadabhai's faith in the British remaind unimpaired. "Indians are British citizens," he said in 1906, "and are entitled to and claim all British citizens' rights." When Dadabhai presided over the Calcutta session in 1906, India was in a seething cauldron; the Partition of Bengal which was effected on the 16th of October 1905 was followed by the uprise of the New Spirit. East Bengal was seething with discontent. Hindu-Muslim troubles were being fomented. Ordinance rule came into existence. The quartering of the Military and of punitive Police became a new development in the maintenance of Law and Order, and the Provincial Conference at Barisal was dispersed "by the Police who wantonly broke the peace in order to keep the

peace," to quote the words of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose. Dadabhai pointed out how, since 1893-94, the population grew 14 per cent., but the net Government administrative expenditure 16 per cent, while since 1884-85 the population grew 18 per cent., and the expenditure 70 per cent. The Military expenditure alone rose from 17 to 32 crores, 7 crores being spent in England. The recommendations of the Welby Commission in favour of an apportionment of the Military expenditure between England and India were honoured in letter but disregarded in spirit, for a certain contribution was made by England but the pay of the English soldier was raised so as to take away thrice the contribution made. The year that Dadabhai presided over the Calcutta Congress (1906) was the year when the Gaekwar visited the Congress. The spirit of boycott pervaded the atmosphere of the Congress. Babu Bepin Chandra Pal gave an extended application to the word boycott and interdicted all association with Government. Provinces other than Bengal sought to exempt themselves from the operation of the Resolution on Boycott. Swadeshi, which was its obverse, meant various things to various people. To Malaviya it meant the protection of indigenous industries; to Tilak it meant self-help, determination and sacrifice on the part of the Nation in order to end the sad spectacle of the middle classes using foreign goods. To Lalaji, it meant the conserving of capital. But to Dadabhai himself, the Spirit of the Times echoed itself in a cry for economic and educational reform, and the spread of Education created the craving for Swaraj. *The Englishman* fell foul of this old man of eighty coming from a distance of 6,000 miles and adding the new slogan of 'Swaraj' to the existing ones of Swadeshi, Boycott, and National Education. The way was preparing itself for the clarification of the Indian demand. In 1905, Gokhale had marked out the four lines of progress to

Self-Government which were embodied in the cardinal Resolution of 1906. We give below the four main resolutions of the Calcutta Congress passed under the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji in 1906:—

Self-Government

I. Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing British Colonies should be extended to India and that, as steps leading to it, it urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out:

(a) All examinations held in England only should be simultaneously held in India and in England, and that all higher appointments which are made in India should be by competitive examination only.

(b) The adequate representation of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State and the Executive Councils of the Governors of Madras and Bombay.

(c) The expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing a larger and truly effective representation of the peoples and a larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country.

(d) The powers of local and municipal bodies should be extended and official control over them should not be more than what is exercised by the Local Government Board in England over similar bodies.

Boycott Movement

II. Resolved that having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that Province was, and is, legitimate.

Swadeshi

III. Resolved that this Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi movement and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities, even at some sacrifice.

National Education

IV. Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls, and organise a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country on National lines and under National control.

It is impossible to recount within the short space of a few pages the services of one who lived and worked incessantly for India's uplift, whose pen knew no rest and to whom Providence gave more than the proverbial three score years and ten. Dadabhai lived and laboured and has left behind him not only the noble example of a dedicated life, but also in flesh and blood his granddaughters who are maintaining the noble traditions created by him.

Ananda Charlu

When the first Congress was held in Bombay in 1885, Editor G. Subrahmania Aiyar and Mr. Ananda Charlu, Telang and Dadabhai Naoroji, Narendra Nath Sen and W. C. Bonnerjee, S. Subrahmania Aiyar and Rangaiah Naidu, Pherozeshah Mehta and D. S. White—all eminent men, founders and patriarchs of the Congress—gave an indication, in their speeches, of the forces that were gathering strength in Indian Politics. They constituted, in the march of time, the Moderates of India, but their language, however polite, was certainly not moderate. Ananda Charlu, who later became the President of the Nagpur Congress in 1891, began with his characteristic eloquence, describing the India Council as "the oligarchy of fossilized Indian administrators" who were "superannuated for service in India."

He presided over the Nagpur (7th) session in 1891 and made a stirring speech. "Take the case of the

volunteers," said he. "We are excluded from the enrolment. Armenians, Negroes, West African Mulattoes and non-descripts of humanity who infest the back slums of Calcutta—these are all eligible as volunteers, these are our martial heroes, these are the defenders of our hearths and houses. These are invidious distinctions and I am sure they must disappear before the irresistible might of constitutional agitation. They are opposed to the spirit of British Law. They are opposed to the spirit of that law which is higher than all human laws, the law of Nature which is engraved on the hearts and consciences of the people of this country."

He was a shining light of the South Indian political firmament for nearly two decades, and though he never had a following or a school of thought behind him, he was a notable personality with a rugged eloquence all his own.

Amongst the earlier leaders, we could count a variety of men and temperaments. Men like G. Subrahmania Aiyar, D. E. Wacha, and G. K. Gokhale were of one type. Their forte was economics, their eloquence was the eloquence of facts; they never appealed to popular imagination by quoting ancient tradition or harping upon the golden age of India. Their arguments were clean cut, their logic was unassailable, their authorities above criticism.

D. E. Wacha

It is difficult to say which subject is the forte, and which the favourite, of this venerable patriarch of the Congress. His brilliant attainments showed themselves even at the first session of the Congress when he "made the first of many great speeches" and gave an able and exhaustive review of the Military position. At the

second Congress he turned his attention to the poverty of the Indian population and drew attention to the annual tribute to Great Britain which was enriching England and impoverishing India.

He referred to "the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population in India" and pointed out that "the condition of the ryot had steadily deteriorated since 1848 and that 40 millions of people had only one meal a day, and not always that." The main cause, he said, "was the tribute to Great Britain which is exported there, only to fructify and swell still further the unparalleled wealth of those distant isles, never in any shape to return here to bless the country from whose soil it was wrung, or the people the sweat of whose brows it represents."

At the fifth Congress (1889, Bombay), he dealt with the Excise policy and pointed out how the House of Commons, by a resolution, had directed the Government of India to modify their Excise policy so as to meet the wishes of the people, and after nine months, however, the Government had done nothing. He turned to the subject again at the 6th Congress, as well as to the question of Salt Tax. In 1892, the Congress at Allahabad was agitated over the Currency question and Mr. Wacha explained the effects of the demonetization of silver by Germany in 1873, the bearing of the 'Home Charges' on India, the Sherman Act of 1890, and the effect on India of a gold standard as jeopardising the interests of the masses. The 'State-regulated immorality' in India came up for severe censure at his hands at the 9th session. At the same session, Mr. Wacha moved a resolution against the stoppage of silver coinage and said:

"The hard working labourers, the overtaxed peasantry, are being impoverished in order that

Government officials and usurers may fatten at their expense. It robs the ryots; it entails an additional burden on them in order to actually compensate a microscopic minority, already in receipt of salaries which find no parallel in any part of the civilized globe."

Wacha's shrewdness led him to dwell upon the problems of Lancashire so early as in 1885, for he said, "If Military expenditure be not diminished, it should be met by a re-imposition of the import duties, the abolition of which had robbed poverty stricken India to enrich wealthy Lancashire."

Again in 1894, Wacha turned to "the injustice of imposing Excise duties on cotton goods, crippling the infant mill industry of India and sacrificing the interests of India to those of Lancashire." He praised the Government of India for its resistance to the Excise Bill and blamed the Secretary of State for this act of injustice. He deplored the helplessness of the former because "it was merely the registrar of the ukases of the Great Autocrat for the time being at Westminster." We shall not pause to mention in detail the various occasions—they are really many—on which Mr. Wacha dealt with his favourite themes, the Military problem, and the poverty of the people. Finance was still to the fore at the eleventh Congress (Poona, 1895), and Mr. Wacha exposed the serious misrepresentation of facts by Sir James Westland when he said that the increase in Civil and Military expenditure was due to the Exchange. Mr. Wacha proved the inaccuracy of the statement by quoting official figures By the 11th Congress, Mr. Wacha earned the title of the "Firebrand of Bombay" and in a vigorous speech, full of facts and an intimate knowledge of his subject, he supported the import duties on cotton. He next distinguished himself by his brilliant evidence before the Royal

Commission on Expenditure, popularly known as the Welby Commission, and elicited the praise of the Congress and of scholars like Gokhale. The Frontier policy was a source of concern in the year 1897, and at the 13th session held at Amraoti that year, Mr. Wacha protested against the policy adopted, pointing out that if the Imperial policy required these trans-frontier excursions, the British Exchequer should bear most of the cost. The Indian Currency question became once more a burning question in 1898, i.e., between the reporting of the Herschell Commission and the appointment of the Fowler Committee. Mr. Wacha dwelt upon the wrong course pursued in closing the mints to silver coinage in 1898 and pointed out that the Amended Coinage Act of 1893 passed in half an hour by the Simla Legislature, without any representative of India being summoned, was the starting point. "It was the Home Charges that were the disease," said he, "not the currency. Then came attempts to fix exchange value and to prop it up by the Gold Bill. Frontier policy, famine and plague exhausted the cash balances." He followed up his attack on the Currency question by condemning the introduction of the gold standard into India at the 15th Congress (Lucknow, 1899). "The Congress had already discussed Currency Reform thrice. He condemned Lord Curzon's idea that gold would flow into India from all gold producing countries. The root of India's poverty was the yearly drain. Only indigenous wealth was fruitful. The silver of the rupee had been depreciated while its nominal value was enhanced. Silver had sold at a rupee per tola but now only at 10 or 11 annas. So silver jewels, the reserve fund of the poor, had diminished in market value." Mr. Wacha was called upon by the Nation to preside over the 17th session (1901, Calcutta), and delivered a marvellous address which should only be read and cannot be quoted from: We have given some extracts

pointed out how Sir William Hunter in *The Times* impugned the honesty of the Government of India, and where such accusations were made enquiry was needed. Another subject of interest at that session was the deprivation of the liberty of the Press in Indian States, and Mr. Subrahmania Aiyar entered a vigorous protest against it. At the twelfth session (1896, Calcutta), he dealt with the subject of simultaneous examinations as also the question of short settlements of Land Revenue. At the Amraoti Congress next year he protested against the Frontier policy. When the Congress met for the third time in Madras in 1898, Mr. Subrahmania Aiyar reverted to the question of Frontier policy, which he condemned as "mischievous, and dangerous.....a policy prompted by that spirit of aggression abroad and repression at home." He also spoke on the currency question pointing out how "Government looked only to exchange, Anglo-Indian merchants only to trade: none considered the people. Taxes were levied in silver and the ryot would have to sell 60 per cent. more of his produce to gain the inflated value of the rupee. The great flow of English capital into the country is not an advantage, for it increases the drain. Indian capital should be invested here, and then the gain would be real." Mr. Subrahmania Aiyar's favourite subject, however, was the economic condition of India, and at the sixteenth session (Lahore, 1900), he asked for an enquiry with a view to discovering and adopting remedies for the oft-recurring famines, and he also dealt with the question of the Public Services and the exclusion of Indians therefrom. At the seventeenth session (Calcutta, 1901), the sad story of the ryot and his poverty arrested his attention. He remarked that the reason for the ryot living at all was "the tropical climate where life can linger on the scantiest of subsistence." "But," he asked, "is the life's function of the Indian ryot to live and die

Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang

He was "one of the most active founders of the Congress" and its "first hard-working Secretary in Bombay." At the very first session the Hon'ble Mr. K. T. Telang moved the resolution relating to the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils and outlined the electorates for members. At the fourth Congress, when Sir Auckland Colvin was looming large in the Congress horizon, the Hon'ble Mr. Telang effectively answered the hostile criticisms of Colvin and Dufferin. At the same session he had to intervene at a critical moment which arose in course of discussion on the subject of Permanent Settlement. Speaking at this very session Mr. Telang remarked that while Government had always money for its varied activities, it gave only one per cent. of its revenues to Education. He died a premature death in 1893 which was referred to by Dadabhai Naoroji at the ninth session

W. C. Bonnerjee

For an authoritative statement of the objects of the Congress, one must necessarily turn to the first presidential address of the Congress, and W. C. Bonnerjee was the President of the first Congress who stated clearly these objects which have already been quoted in the account of the first session. He had the honour of proposing the President of the 3rd and the 5th Congress and was himself made again President of the eighth session (Allahabad, 1892). It may be remembered that in 1891 the Age of Consent Bill was the cause of considerable public agitation and Tilak made himself conspicuous by his opposition to it. Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee referred in his presidential address at Allahabad to the reasons for the non-interference by the Congress with social

the 4th Congress at Allahabad in 1888 over which Mr. George Yule presided. It was the melancholy duty of the eighth Congress that met once again in the same city in 1892 to bemoan the loss of both these Congressmen. When a memorial was sought to be raised in honour of the late Pandit Ayodhyanath, Mr. Hume gave a piece of advice which is well worth quoting: "For God's sake, waste no money on memorials or any other minor enterprise but give every farthing you can spare to the general cause." But Pandit Ayodhyanath's best memorial and gift to the Nation is his son—Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru

Surendra Nath Banerjea

In the Valhalla of Indian politicians there lies in a prominent niche the spirit of Surendra Nath Banerjea hovering over the destinies of India—Surendra Nath who had been for over four decades connected with the Congress and whose trumpet voice, resounding from the Congress platform in India, reached the farthest recesses of the civilized world. For command of language, for elegance of diction, for a rich imagery, for emotional heights, for a spirit of manly challenge, his orations are hard to beat; they remain unapproachable. The spice of his speeches was his avowal of loyalty. He developed this into a fine art. He presided over the Congress twice, first at Poona in 1895 and next at Ahmedabad in 1902. In the kaleidoscopic display of subjects and resolutions that came up before the Congress, in successive years, there was hardly any he was not feeling himself equal to. In the domain of the Military question, for years together towards the end of the 19th century, Russia was the bogey before England, as France had been in the 18th, and Germany is in the 20th. But Surendra Nath's answer is memorable: "The true scientific frontier against Russian invasion

does not lie in some remote inaccessible mountain which has yet to be discovered, but it lies deep in the hearts of a loyal and contented people." Compare this utterance with the recent slogans which have become current from the popular side, namely, that the best safeguards for England, commercial or financial, lie in the goodwill of India and that you cannot sell British goods to Indians at the point of the bayonet. Surendra Nath went the length of suggesting that matters of Indian politics should be made party questions in the British Parliament—a consummation which even to-day is outside the pale of practical politics. "England," said he, "is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty." His ideal was to "work with unwavering loyalty to the British connection,—for, the object was not the supersession of British Rule in India but the broadening of its basis, the liberalising of its spirit, the ennobling of its character and placing it on the unchangeable foundations of a Nation's affections." "India," he hoped, "would in the fulness of time find its place in the great confederacy of free States, English in their origin, English in their character, and English in their institutions." What a contrast between this and the modern ideal of Complete Independence, with our own institutions and integrity! Protesting (in 1904) against Lord Curzon's declaration that by our environment, our heritage and our upbringing, we are unequal to the responsibilities of high office under British Rule, Surendra Nath said: "Never was a deeper affront offered to the people of India by a representative of the Sovereign. It is bad enough to repudiate the Proclamation but it is adding insult to injury to cast a slur on the people of this country." In this connection he pointed out how 14 per cent. of the posts carrying Rs. 1,000 per month and upward, and 17 per cent. of those carrying 500, represented the proportion of Indians, "although the country is ours, the money is

ours and the bulk of the population is ours." At the 18th Congress, he pleaded for the permanence of British Rule in India. On another occasion he described the English civilization as "the noblest which the world has ever seen, the emblem of indissoluble union between England and India,—a *civilization fraught with unspeakable blessings* to the people of India and unspeakable renown to the English name." So early as in 1892, he was proud to declare that "We are the citizens of a great and free Empire and we live under the protecting shadow of one of the noblest constitutions the world has ever seen. The rights of Englishmen are ours, their privileges are ours, their constitution is ours. But we are excluded from them." If the spirit of Surendra Nath is able to follow the commercial safeguards to-day, it will see how reciprocity is established with a vengeance and what a mockery it is to speak of our rights and privileges and constitution. Surendra Nath was, in spite of these beliefs and this faith, *lathi* charged in Barisal during Lord Minto's Viceroyalty, but he lived to be a Minister of Bengal.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

The next great public character whom we may justly describe as yet another patriarch of the Congress is Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who, from the day that he made his maiden speech at the Calcutta Congress in 1886, continues, with unbroken zeal and unabating passion, to serve this National institution, now as a humble worker and now as a leader, now as whole-hogger and now as a part protestor, now as an opponent of Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience, and now as a true Satyagrahi and civil resister in the British jails.

In the year 1918, the Viceroy convened a War Conference of Indian leaders on the 27th, 28th, and 29th of

April for the collection of men, material and money for the Great War. It was attended by Governors, Lieutenant-Governors, Chief Commissioners, Executive Councillors, European as well as Indian Members of the Imperial Council and the various Provincial Legislative Councils, Rulers of Indian States and various other distinguished European and Indian officials and non-officials. Sastriar, the Raja of Mahmudabad, Syed Hasan Imam, Sirdar Bahadur Sunder Singh Majithia, and Gandhi made speeches supporting the first resolution, moved by the Gackwar of Baroda, declaring India's loyalty to the King-Emperor, who had sent a message to the effect that "the need of the Empire is India's opportunity." Then Pandit Malaviya rose and asked the Viceroy "to take a lesson from recent Indian history. During the days of Aurangzeb, the Sikh Gurus contested his supremacy. Guru Govind Singh caught hold of the humblest classes of people who came forward and initiated them, obliterating all distinctions between the Guru and the disciple, and thereby won their hearts. Now, my Lord, I want you to do all that can be done to make the soldiers we enlist feel equal to any one else fighting alongside of them in the battle. It is the spirit of Guru Govind Singh that I want to be introduced at this juncture."

When the Non-co-operation movement was inaugurated, he kept himself aloof from it but never from the Congress. The Moderates had manned the Congress in their day and abandoned it; Mrs. Besant captured it and surrendered it. But through storm and sunshine, through good report and evil, Panditji has stuck to it; Panditji is the one man who has had the courage to be alone in what he considered to be the right. At one time he was on the crest of a wave of popularity, at another he was listened to with indifference on the Congress platform. He never yielded to the current forces, either by sheer

inertia or by fear of popular reprobation. When all the Congressmen resigned their places in the Assembly in 1929, he remained and had a right to remain there as a member, because he had not gone there as a Congressman. And when in less than four months the time and occasion demanded it, he resigned in 1930. In 1921 he had opposed the Non-co-operation movement, but in 1930 he found himself a wholehearted civil resister. Altogether he holds a position that is unique. As a Hindu he is progressive in his ideas and leads the van; as a Congressman he is conservative and oftentimes leads the rear. Yet the Congress feels it a privilege to yield to him an uncontested place in the Councils of the Government and the Councils of the country. Of him it may well be said, what has been said of Gandhi, that he was a devoted friend of the Empire, but that in the later years of his public life he found himself forced to resist its autocracy with all his strength and spirit. His utterances are numerous and spread over a full half-century, and on each occasion that he spoke he must have spoken for any time between an hour and two. His *magnum opus* is the Benares Hindu University, but he is an institution by himself. He epitomizes India in all her achievements and reverses, in all her hopes and delusions and disillusionments. The first time he presided over the Congress was in 1909 at Lahore over the 24th session, when he was suddenly called upon to take the place of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta who was the duly elected President but who, for certain unknown reasons, declined the honour six days before the due date. Ten years later, the Nation called upon the Pandit to preside over the 33rd session of the Congress at Delhi in 1918.

Lala Lajpat Rai

Another great public character in the older hierarchy of Congressmen was Lala Lajpat Rai. He was alike a philanthropist, social reformer and Congressman. He had appeared at the 4th Congress in Allahabad in 1888, and in seconding the main resolution of the day relating to the expansion of Councils, quoted the opinion of Sir Syed Ahmed, who was a strong opponent of the Congress, but who in his book entitled "Causes of the Indian Revolt", written in 1858, had stated that the people should have a voice in the Councils, for, that was necessary to the stability of the Government so as to "warn us of dangers before they burst upon and destroy us." Lalaji's sustained interest in the field of politics and social service easily gave him a foremost place not only in the Punjab but in the whole of India. The Benares Congress remembers him as an outstanding speaker and Nationalist. In 1907 he was deported along with Sirdar Ajit Singh under an obsolete regulation of which Lal Mohan Ghose, the President of the Madras Congress in 1903, said—"*Letters de Cachet* were abolished in France in 1789, but were introduced in India in 1818." Lalaji was the central factor round which the events of 1907 turned. The Nationalists proposed Lala Lajpat Rai as the President of the Congress of 1907, which was to have been held at Nagpur but whose venue was changed to Surat. Gokhale who was against the proposal plainly said, "if you flout the Government, Government will throttle you." Lalaji never cared for the position and magnanimously declined to have his name considered for the place. During the negotiations for a settlement at Surat, Tilak wanted a graceful reference to Lalaji's name in proposing the President of the Congress and Surendra Nath Banerjea readily agreed, but nothing materialized in the end that way.

In 1906 Lalaji was sent as a member of the Indian deputation to England along with Gokhale. In later years he was so much harassed by the C.I.D. that he preferred to stay abroad, and during the War he was in America, it was believed, under duress. Lalaji's turn to preside over the Congress came rather late. At the Special Session of the Congress in 1920 (September) he was like a fish out of water. He never saw eye to eye with the progenitors of the Non-co-operation movement and even in his concluding speech predicted only failure for it. He was a fighter, but not a Satyagrahi. To him Civil Disobedience did not mean more than Passive Resistance. He had a most arduous time of it all through. In his own Province, there was a section of younger men arrayed against him. The Council-entry programme found him back in his element, but alas, the brutality of a Police officer who laid his *lathi* on him ultimately cut short his life and carried him away from our midst. Lalaji was doubtless a man of true vision, for he spoke in Urdu at the Congress of 1888 and proposed that a half day be set apart for Educational and Industrial matters. The resolution was accepted and the industrial exhibitions since organised are a direct result of the recommendations of the Committee then appointed in that behalf.

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was one of those who had been associated with the Congress from its very inception and played a leading part in moulding its policy and programme. Mehta presided over the sixth session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1890, and in his address he criticised Lord Salisbury's view that "Government by representation did not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds" and quoted Mr. Chisholm Anstey's statement that "the East is the parent of Municipalities. Local Self-Government, in the widest acceptation of the term, is as

old as the East itself." Pherozeshah Mehta held that the Congress was indeed not the voice of the masses, but it was the duty of their educated compatriots to interpret their grievances, and offer suggestions for their redress."

"History teaches us," he pointed out, "that such has been the law of widening progress in all ages and all countries, notably in England itself. That function and that duty, which thus devolve upon us, is best discharged, not in times of alarm and uneasiness, of anger and excitement, but when the heart is loyal and clear and the reason unclouded. It is, I repeat, the glory of the Congress that the educated and enlightened people of the country seek to repay the debt of gratitude which they owe for the priceless boon of education by pleading, and pleading temperately, for timely and provident statesmanship. I have no fears but that English statesmanship will ultimately respond to the call. I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilising principles of English culture and English education."

"All the great forces of English life and society moral, social, intellectual, political, are if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly, declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves and to the whole world for countless generations..... I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go in vain."

Pherozeshah Mehta was really the power behind the Congress for a number of years, his work being largely done on the Committees, deputations and delegations of which he was elected a member. At the session of 1892 he was appointed a member of a Committee to draw up

a petition intended to be presented to Parliament, regarding the Public Service Commission and the deep disappointment caused to the country over the orders passed on its recommendations. When in 1894 the Madras Congress decided upon sending a deputation to Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, in order to present certain Congress resolutions, Mehta was appointed a member thereof and a similar honour was shown to him at the Lahore Congress in 1900 (16th session). At the 15th session held at Lucknow in 1899 he was appointed a member of the Indian Congress Committee.

It was in 1907 that he took an active part on the Moderate side at Surat. Later he was almost out of view, and when he was duly elected President of the 24th session of the Congress held in Lahore (1909), he suddenly resigned six days before he was due to take his seat, and the result was that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was elected in his place.

Ananda Mohan Bose

We have already seen how Ananda Mohan Bose was a famous social and religious reformer who occupied a foremost place in the progress of the Brahmo Samaj and how he led a protestant wing of that movement. The spirit of revolt which would not tolerate a reform movement that tends to run in a rut, would not remain subdued when in the political field the rights of the people were being daily encroached upon. That was why Ananda Mohan Bose, aptly described as "the brilliant star of East Bengal," became the first secretary of the Indian Association started in Calcutta in the year 1876 and an ardent coadjutor of Surendra Nath Banerjea. We do not hear of his having had any close connection with the Congress movement as such till the year 1896, when at

the 12th session he protested against the new injustice perpetrated in the scheme for reorganising the Educational Service, as being calculated to exclude Indians from the higher grades of that service. Mr. Bose asked indignantly if "the cause of progress in India was not only not to advance but to be put back." The details of the downward course are given in the review of resolutions dealing with the Public Services. Ananda Mohan Bose soon became the President of the 14th session of the Congress in 1898 (Madras). His speech on the occasion was a remarkable oration full of unanswerable arguments, and his closing message to the Congress embodied the Gospel of Love and Service of the Nation. He suggested the direct representation of India in Parliament. And it was the country's misfortune that, when it needed his services most, the Fates should have taken him away in 1906.

Man Mohan Ghose

We first hear of Man Mohan Ghose in connection with the 5th session of the Congress held in Allahabad in 1888. He moved the resolution on the Public Services. He was the Chairman of the 6th session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1890. In a powerful speech he defended the Congress from the various attacks made on it and defined its true position. Mr. Ghose made a special study of the question of Judicial *Vs.* Executive and when, at the 11th session held at Poona in 1895, he moved the resolution on the subject, he unearthed a statement by Mr. James, a Commissioner, that the "union was the mainstay of the British power in India." His death was bemoaned at the 12th session (Calcutta, 1896).

Lal Mohan Ghose

Lal Mohan Ghose appeared on the Congress platform at first in 1890 at the sixth session (Calcutta) and moved the resolution relating to Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill on the Government of India, emphasising the moderation of the proposals embodied therein. He was elected as the President of the nineteenth session of the Congress held in Madras in 1903, and his Presidential Address was one of the ablest addresses ever delivered from the Congress platform. He had been out of view from active politics for some years when he was summoned to this high office. We give below two extracts from his Presidential Address:—

"Coming to the case of our own country, although there is not a man amongst us who is not sincerely loyal to the British Government, yet, claiming the undoubted right of British subjects to criticise the acts of the Government, may we not respectfully ask our rulers—and in this connection I make no distinction between the different English political parties—may we not ask whether we are to believe that the policy which many years ago killed our indigenous industries, which, even only the other day and under a Liberal administration, unblushingly imposed Excise duties on our cotton manufactures, which steadily drains our national resources to the extent of something like 20 millions sterling per annum, and which, by imposing heavy burdens on our agricultural population, increases the frequency and intensity of our famines to an extent unknown in former times, are we to believe that the various administrative acts which have led to these results were directly inspired by a beneficent Providence?"

* * *

"We are not a Self-Governing Nation. We are not able, like the English people, to change one administration for another by our votes in the polling booths. We have to depend entirely upon the justice

of the British Parliament; for, unfortunately, it is only too true that, as time advances, our Indian bureaucracy, instead of coming into line with popular ideas, seems to grow more and more unsympathetic. Do you think that any administration in England, or France, or the United States would have ventured to waste vast sums of money on an empty pageant, when Famine and Pestilence were stalking over the land, and the Angel of Death was flapping his wings almost within hearing of the light-hearted revellers?

"Gentlemen, a year has now rolled by since the great political pageant was held at Delhi against the almost unanimous protests of all our public and representative men both in the Press and on the platform. On what ground did they protest? They protested, not because they were wanting in loyalty to the Sovereign, whose coronation it was intended to celebrate, but because they felt that if His Majesty's Ministers had done their duty and had laid before him an unvarnished story of his famine-stricken subjects in India, His Majesty, with his characteristic sympathy for suffering humanity, would himself have been the first to forbid his representatives in this country to offer a pompous pageant to a starving people. And the great *tamasha* was celebrated with that utter recklessness of expense which you may always expect when men, no matter how highly placed, were dealing with other people's money, and were practically accountable to no one for their acts.

"We are all familiar with the financial jugglery which, by distributing the expenses under various and sometimes under the most unexpected headings, makes it so difficult for ordinary men to find out the total cost of such pageants. Still, whether you estimate that cost by a few lacs more or less, it cannot be denied that if even half of the vast sum spent in connection with the Delhi Darbar had been made over for the purposes of famine relief, it might have been the means of saving millions of men, women and children from death by starvation."

C. VIJIARAGHAVACHARIAR

Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem is one of our earliest Congressmen, his name being found amongst those of the members of a Committee formed at the 3rd session (Madras, 1887) to draw up a constitution for the Congress. He was appointed next as a member of the Indian Congress Committee at the fifteenth session held in Lucknow in the year 1899, and the sixteenth at Lahore next year. He was at the Lahore Session in 1900 and seconded the proposition that the Hon'ble N. G. Chandavarkar should preside over the session. In 1901 and 1902, he shared the responsibility with three others for the collection of sums due for the copies of *India* assigned to the Madras circle. When in 1905 Gokhale was elected by the Congress at Benares as a delegate to England to urge the more pressing proposals of the Congress on Government, he seconded the resolution in an able speech. At the 22nd session held in Calcutta (1906) he moved the resolution relating to Permanent Settlement and protested against the view that the Land Tax was rent. His view was that "land in India had never belonged to the King; the sages had said that the world belonged to those who were born in it; private property was gained by cultivation, and the King, who was ordained for protection, received a share from the cultivators for his services. The idea that land belonged to the King was Western and feudal, not Indian."

He had virtually stood aloof from the Congress since the Surat Split. The Moderate Congress did not appeal to his judgment. He reappeared in the Congress after the Nationalists were admitted into the Congress by the Lucknow amendments of 1916, and took an active part in the Special Session of the Congress held in Bombay in 1918, and in the session at Amritsar (1919), dwelling

at the latter at length upon the Fundamental Rights of the people. He was shortly after called on to preside over the Nagpur session of the Congress and he performed his duties there with great tact and ability.

Raja Rampal Singh

Amongst other Congressmen of eminence Raja Rampal Singh's was a most outstanding name for a long time in Congress circles. It is interesting to note that Raja Rampal Singh was the mover of the resolution on Volunteering at the 2nd Congress and administered a solemn warning to India:—

> "Despite the glories of *Pax Britannica*, despite the noble intentions of Great Britain, despite all the good she may have done or tried to do us, the balance will be against her, and India will have to regret rather than rejoice that she has ever had anything to do with England. This may be strong language, but it is the truth. Nothing can ever make amends to a Nation for the destruction of its National spirit, and of the capacity to defend itself and the soil from which it springs. Look where you will around you in the world and you will see gigantic armies and armaments. There is trouble in store for the whole civilized world, and sooner or later, a tremendous military struggle will commence, in which, assuredly, before it terminates, Great Britain will be involved. Great Britain, with all her wealth, cannot put one hundred men into the field for every thousand that several Continental Powers can. Then will England regret that, instead of having millions of brave Indians trained to fling back invaders, she has only her scanty legions to oppose to them."

He pointed out how people and crops were entirely at the mercy of wild beasts. In his grandson, the young Raja of Kalakankad, who has lately passed away at a premature age, Rampal Singh was truly reborn as a sincere patriot and as a true apostle of the Congress,

at whose shrine he himself had offered incense while on earth in flesh and blood.

Kali Charan Banerjee

In the first half of these fifty years of Congress activity it used to be the prevailing practice to group together important resolutions of more than one year's standing and call them the omnibus resolution. Men of versatile talents who could deal with the several subjects comprised in this resolution used to be selected to move it year after year, and in 1889 the choice fell upon Kali Charan Banerjee. He was an Indian Christian who had taken for years keen interest in Congress affairs, and in the year 1890 formed a member of the Indian delegation to England elected "to represent Congress views before the British Public." At the 9th Congress (Lahore 1893), he moved the resolution on the separation of the Judicial and the Executive and cited the "shocking case which had just occurred in which four men were sentenced to death and three to transportation for life, after a trial in which rules of Law were disregarded and the Magistrate acted as Prosecutor and Judge combined." Mr. Banerjee handled the subject of simultaneous examinations in the year 1895 at the eleventh session, Poona, and pleaded, the next year, in Calcutta for Teaching Universities in particular and the improvement of Universities in general. Government said the matter was not urgent and he prayed the Congress to make it so. As time advanced and political consciousness grew in the people, their liberties were notably curtailed, and when the prohibition was imposed on managers and teachers in aided institutions forbidding them from taking part in political movements or attending political meetings without the consent of the Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Banerjee entered a spirited protest

against this invasion of elementary rights of citizens at the fifteenth session of the Congress (Lucknow, 1899). Two years later in Calcutta, in 1901, he urged that Indian lawyers should be added to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for Indian appeals. Babu Kali Charan Banerjee would undoubtedly have become the President of the Congress in the fulness of time if he had been spared long enough, and the Congress which had a Hindu as its first, a Parsee as its second, and a Muslim as its third President, would have had an Indian Christian also as the tribune of the people, but he was cut off before his time in 1908.

Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur

The practice of coupling a Muslim Secretary with a Hindu Secretary started with the Madras Congress of 1914 at which Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur and Mr. N. Subba Rau Pantulu were elected Secretaries. But the Nawab had already become the President of the Congress, having been called to that high office at Karachi in 1913. He was however a Congressman first and a Muslim next. So early as in 1901 he was elected to the Indian Congress Committee, and earlier still in 1898, he had taken part in the deliberations of the Madras Congress, having seconded a resolution welcoming Lord Curzon. When the Congress met in Madras in [illegible] (19th session) the Nawab was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, and at the 20th session (1904, Bombay), he was one of those elected to a Committee to draw up a constitution for the Congress. In 1906 he was elected to the Standing Committee of the Congress. When the Convention Congress sat in Madras in 1908, the honour of proposing Dr. Rash Behari Ghose to the Chair fell to the lot of the Nawab. His greatest service to the cause of the Congress was really rendered at

Karachi (1913) where he presided over the 28th session. Being a patriot not imbued in the least with communal consciousness, he struck a high note of Nationalism and urged that the various communities of India should advance together rather than in separate groups. He noted the *rapprochement* of Hindus and Muslims, as shown by the hope expressed by the All-India Muslim League that the Leaders on both sides should meet periodically "to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on questions of public good." It would be no exaggeration to say that the Hindu-Muslim concordat as well as the Congress League Scheme of Lucknow were the off-spring of the seed sown by the Nawab at Karachi in a spirit of lofty patriotism and with pure Nationalistic outlook.

Daji Abaji Khare

Permanent Settlement and fixity of tenure of land were a favourite subject in the early years of the Congress and Mr. Khare moved a resolution on the subject at the 9th session at Lahore (1893). He had been earlier selected in 1890 as a member of the Congress deputation that was to go to England. He took an intimate part in the preparation of a constitution for the Congress, which was passed in the year 1906 on his motion and most of which was later incorporated in the constitution framed in 1908. Mr. Khare was the Secretary of the Congress from the year 1909 to the year 1913 along with Mr. D. E. Wacha and in 1911 he moved the abolition of the countervailing Excise duties on Indian cotton goods handicapping the growth and expansion of the Indian cotton industry. When in 1913 the Muslim League adopted the ideal of Self-Government for India, Mr. Khare in seconding the resolution welcoming such a development said that Self-Government would be won by the brotherhood of Hindu and Muslim.

Munshi Ganga Prasad Varma

Amongst those early patriots who had graced the first session of the Congress was Ganga Prasad Varma from Lucknow. At the second session he was elected to the Committee appointed to consider the Public Service question and report to the Congress. So late as in 1906 he was elected to the Standing Committee of the Congress and in the *interim* period he had filled various positions in the Congress Committees.

R. N. Mudholkar

Amongst the hardworking Congressmen of the earlier era Mr. R. N. Mudholkar held a position second to that of none. His first association with the Congress was in 1888 at its fourth session (Allahabad) when in seconding the resolution on the Police, he pointed out "how the Policeman who ought to be loved was detested." Twenty-four years thereafter, the Nation chose him as the President of the Congress in 1912 at Bankipore, and during these long years, he was a laborious student of Indian politics covering a wide range of interests. Agricultural Indebtedness, Poverty and Economic uplift including Technical Education were his forte. It was as his co-adjutor that Mr. C. Y. Chintamani underwent the necessary probation before he shot up in Indian politics by dint of his dynamic intellect.

Sir C. Sankaran Nair

Sir C. Sankaran Nair was a power in his own day. He was a stalwart in intellect as he was in stature and to his credit stand some big achievements. His labours in the Congress cause were early rewarded by the National body calling him to preside over the Amraoti session in

1897. Like Chandavarkar and Tyabji in Bombay, Sankaran Nair too was drafted to the Bench of the Madras High Court some time after. From the Bench he was translated to the Government of India as Member of the Executive Council in 1915 and his resignation, on the question of continuance of Martial Law in 1919, of his high office made him widely popular. But like a boomerang which bursts—no one knows where—his attacks were unexpected always and they sometimes recoiled on himself. Such was his attack on Gandhi in the book 'Gandhi and Anarchy,' which led to his being sued by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieut. Governor of the Punjab and he had to pay 3 lacs of rupees altogether as damages and costs.

P. Kesava Pillai

Dewan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai's connection began with the earliest days and continued till the year 1917, since when he resigned from the Congress. In the closing years of his connection, he was a Secretary of the Congress and an ardent coadjutor of Mrs. Besant.

Bepin Chandra Pal

From Bengal we have many names to recall. Bepin Chandra Pal, Ambika Charan Mazumdar, Baikunta Nath Sen, were all men of first rate position and abilities who were popular speakers of the Congress in their day. Bepin Babu's connection began fairly early. He was an orator of renown and he swept the country from end to end by his eloquence in preaching his new cult of Boycott, Swadeshi and National Education. His extended meaning of Boycott at the Calcutta session (1906) was dissented from by speaker after speaker. His speeches in Madras in 1907 were considered by Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar, the

Advocate-General, as inflammatory but not seditious, and he was forced to quit the Presidency. He was once deported during Lord Minto's time and on another occasion when Aurobindo Ghose was being prosecuted as Editor of *Bandemataram,* Bepin Babu knowing that his evidence would be material against Aurobindo, declined to speak from the box and cheerfully took his six months' R. I. for it. Later when he returned from England he was prosecuted for his articles on 'Aetiology of the Bomb,' but he apologized. He was since feeling out of joint with the growing changes in the evolution of Indian Politics, and being an individualist of a marked type, naturally ceased to be the popular and prominent figure that he had been for years in the Congress arena. His last public appearance was at the All-Parties' Conference held at Lucknow in 1928. It must be admitted that Bepin Babu was one of the few men that exercised a magical influence, through his speeches and writings in *New India* and *Bandemataram,* on the young men of his time.

Ambika Charan Mazumdar

Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar was a lawyer who steadily worked his way up to the Presidentship of the Congress at Lucknow in 1916. His flights of eloquence were of a rare order. We have already quoted from his speech in 1911, at the Calcutta Congress. He was the author of a fine and famous book on the Congress entitled 'Indian National Evolution.'

Bhupendra Nath Basu

Not less eloquent was Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu who was called upon to preside over the Congress in 1914 in Madras. Dealing with the *raison d'etre* of Indians' demand for Self-Government, Mr. Basu said:

"The days of the lotus-eaters are gone. The world is swinging onward on the uplifting ropes of time, and in Europe, the War of Nations, now in progress, will knock off the last weights of medieval domination of one man over many, of one race over another. It is not possible to roll back the tide of wider life which is flowing like the warm gulf-stream through the gateways of the West into the still waters of the East. You may bend the Indian Universities to your will, if you like, fetter their feet with obstructive statutes, but you cannot bar the imponderable influences of an expanding world. If English rule in India meant the canonization of a bureaucracy, if it meant perpetual domination and perpetual tutelage, an increasing deadweight on the soul of India, it would be a curse to civilization and a blot on humanity."

Bhupen Babu was a successful solicitor in Calcutta with a large practice who gave his time to politics gladly and his oratory was undoubtedly of a highly cultured type. He was able almost to act his part and display considerable emotion, so much so that one big leader humorously described him as the man with a melodramatic countenance and chemical tears in his eyes. We would say the tears were physiological as well as psychological. He took up the position that the Congress should act as His Majesty's Opposition.

Maulvi Mazar-ul-Haq

Maulvi Mazar-ul-Haq is one of those stalwarts in intellect as well as in physique who gave the warmest support to the Indian National Congress from Bihar and who was a Nationalist every inch. Communalism was abhorrent to him and when at the 25th Congress in 1910 which met at Allahabad, Mr. Jinnah moved a resolution condemning communal representation, Maulvi Mazar-ul-Haq seconded it in an able speech in which he exhorted Hindus and Muslims to join hands. It will be remembered

that the Minto-Morley Reforms had just come into operation and had embodied for the first time a scheme of communal representation in the Legislative Councils. It required the utmost sincerity of purpose and courage of conviction to be able to say, as Mazar-ul-Haq did, to the Muslims who were just then elated with their achievements, that their success was really injurious to the common interests of the two great communities, and that what the country wanted was that they should join hands and not remain apart in watertight compartments.

When in 1914, a deputation was sent to England by the Congress, Maulvi Mazar-ul-Haq was elected to serve on it along with Messrs. Bhupendra Nath Basu, M. A. Jinnah, N. M. Samarth, S. Sinha, B. N. Sarma and Lala Lajpat Rai. Thereafter he did not take active interest in Congress affairs but remained a staunch Nationalist to the end. The purity of his Nationalism was only excelled by the saintliness of his character which attracted public attention and endeared him to the people of India in general and to the people of Bihar in particular, and the latter days of his life he spent not only in retirement but in renunciation as a true *Faquir*.

Mahadev Govind Ranade

Mahadev Govind Ranade, popularly known as Justice Ranade, was a towering personality in the Congress. Within the strict meaning of the term, he could not be termed a Congressman, for he was a high officer in the Judicial Department of the Bombay Government, but he was for years together the power behind the throne. He furnished the inspiration for the Congress movement. His tall stature, the statuesque cut of his face and his Maharashtra turban, with his flowing

robes of ancient Hindu style, marked him out at the various sessions of the Congress from the rest. His attainments as a scholar and savant, which have made him memorable both as an economist and a historian, have left the Nation a rich legacy in the *Rise of the Maratha Power* and in his *Essays in Indian Economics*. Social Reform was his forte, and for years the Social Conference, which had formed an adjunct of the Congress, was his pet child. When differences arose in the year 1895 at the Poona Session as to whether the Congress could concern itself with questions of Social Reform and with the Social Conferences, it was the "tolerant and wise action of Mr, Justice Ranade," as pointed out by Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, that put an end to them and smoothed matters. Justice Ranade's services to the Nation during the outbreak of plague were inestimable and it is not time yet to describe them all to posterity. After fifteen years of indefatigable labours in the field of Social Reform and in the cause of the Congress, Ranade passed away in the year 1901 leaving memories which serve to help us hold his name in high veneration.

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar is another of the earlier day politicians who made a mark on Congress history by his devotion to the National Congress.

In 1903 he moved the resolution on the Official Secrets Bill and said: "Lord Curzon is astonished that this should be described as Russianizing the administration. I am astonished that any one should be so imperfectly informed regarding the Russian Government as to think that it has got anything in its purely civil laws so arbitrary and so disastrous to the Civil Liberties of the people as Lord Curzon's Bill, if passed, would be in this country."

He was called upon to preside over the Calcutta Congress in 1911 over which it was hoped Mr. Ramsay MacDonald would preside, but the death of Mrs. Mac Donald had called him away from India and Bishan Narayan Dhar was unexpectedly asked to take his place. He presided over the Congress just at a moment when the worst blow was dealt to the bureaucracy by the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. But long anterior to his attainment of the highest National honour, he gave proofs of his capacity and eloquence which really he shared with most of the earlier day stalwarts. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar had indeed figured prominently from the earliest Congress. He made a noble appeal at the 3rd Congress (Madras, 1887) saying: "England has moved us from our ancient anchorage. She has cast us adrift, against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat; and we turn back to England and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institutions by which, amidst a thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."

Bishan Narayan Dhar's description of the bureaucracy is alike picturesque and pungent and we make no apology for quoting it at length here:

> "The root-cause of most of our misfortunes which, if not corrected, forebodes serious disasters in the future, is the growth of an unsympathetic and illiberal spirit in the bureaucracy towards the new-born hopes and ideals of the Indian people. While a New India has gradually been rising up, that spirit too has been growing, and so a critical situation has arisen. On the one hand, the educated classes filled with new knowledge and conscious of new political rights, but hampered by the bars and fetters of a system perhaps good enough for other days but now obsolete; on the other, the bureaucracy with its

vested interests, its domineering habits, its old traditions of absolute and unquestioned authority, suspicious of knowledge and adverse to innovation, like every close corporation, cut off from the people by its racial exclusiveness and wedded to a paternal system of Government under which it has so long enjoyed power and pelf but which is discordant with the moral, liberal ideals of the present day."

Ramesh Chandra Dutt

Another outstanding character in the Congress politics towards the end of the last century was Ramesh Chandra Dutt. He was not a mere political agitator even in the sense of the London *Times* which derisively described Congressmen (1886) as men with little or no stake in the country, men of straw who were place-seekers. He had closed a career, having risen to the position of Commissionership. He cast in his lot with the Congress and brought to bear his rich experience and knowledge acquired over a long course of years spent as an I.C.S. officer, on the public questions of the day. He held that the causes of famine were the heavy assessments on land and the destruction of the village industries by free competition with English machinery. He regretted that a country which had organised Village Self-Government 3,000 years ago was being virtually ruled through the Police, "the hated link between the district officers and the people." He was a great authority on Land Revenue affairs, Economic questions and Famines. He presided over the Congress at Lucknow, 1890. He has made himself memorable by the statement that "there is no better way of creating sedition than by suppressing free discussion in newspapers and meetings."

N. Subba Rau Pantulu

Another of these venerable patriarchs of the Congress is Mr. N. Subba Rau Pantulu who is an active public man to-day at the age of four score and who, though he has not been quite a whole-hogger in respect of recent Congress programmes, continues to be an ardent Nationalist. His connection with the Congress began almost from its birth, for he was present and spoke at the 4th Congress (Allahabad, 1888) and ever since figured on the Congress platform moving, seconding or supporting resolutions relating to Salt Tax, the Judicial and the Executive, the admission of Indians into the Executive Councils, Trial by Jury and the position of Legal practitioners. As a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, he moved a resolution urging the appointment of a Public Services Commission which was accepted, and in the Congress of 1912 at Bankipore he moved the resolution of thanks for the appointment of a Royal Commission on Public Services.

He has not cared to accept a title or seek a job at the hands of Government, when his contemporaries were being rewarded with the one or the other. On the other hand, his Province chose him as the Chairman of the Reception Committee in 1898 and the Congress itself elected him as the General Secretary in 1914, '15, '16 and '17. But in 1917 he declined the honour with thanks when he saw that Mrs. Besant took a third Secretary in Mr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar as the real Working Secretary. He set the example, during his term, of touring India at his own expense and enthusing the people on Congress matters throughout the country.

Lala Murlidhar

We may not forget to record the name of Lala Murlidhar of Punjab who went to the second session of the Congress in Calcutta (1886) straight from prison released on bail, convicted without evidence "because I am considered a political agitator, because I have my own opinions and speak what I think without fear." Lala Malik Bhagwan Das from Dera Ismail Khan was the first to speak in Urdu at this very session. The first lady speaker of the Congress was Mrs. Kadimbini Ganguli who moved the customary vote of thanks to the President of the sixteenth Congress in 1900 (Calcutta).

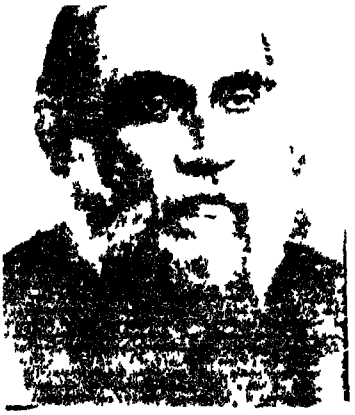
Mr. S Sinha

Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha first made his appearance at the 15th session of the Congress, at Lucknow (1899), and spoke on the separation of the Executive and the Judicial functions, "a subject worn threadbare but necessarily brought up for the 15th time," as Mrs Besant says. He reverted to the same subject at the next session, (Lahore, 1900) and gave a foretaste of his abilities and concluded by saying that "the Government must rest upon the affection of the people, and that could only be secured by conferring upon them the boon of justice, not the justice which we enjoy to-day, half milk and half water, adulterated justice, but real and righteous British justice." At the seventeenth session, an allied subject, namely, Police Reform, was handled by him. The next year too, Mr. Sinha was chosen to speak on the same subject and then he referred to the inadequacy of the representation of experienced Indians on the Police Commission which was appointed during Lord Curzon's time There was a peculiar appropriateness in his remark that, of the two non-officials on the Commission, "One was a C. I. E.

always speaking to please Englishmen and the other a Maharaja, as yet untried." The appropriateness lies in the fact that though Mr. Sinha became later a Member of the Executive Council of Bihar he remains without a title. At the twentieth session he supported a resolution that a deputation should be sent to England on the eve of the General Election of 1905. At the same session he had the honour of moving the resolution urging the election to Parliament of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Henry Cotton and Mr. John Jardine. At the twenty-first Congress (Kashi, 1905) "Police Reforms were entrusted to the old champion," Mr. Sinha, and he pointed out how bitterly the Police Commission had disappointed them, constituting a special Police Service from which Indians were to be excluded. Mr. Sinha was present as an active member at the 1st Moderate Congress of 1908. By the year 1910, in which the Congress met at Allahabad, the outlook of the Indian politicians was widened by the appointment of an Indian to the Law Membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council but the range of choice was limited to the members of the English Bar, and the Hon. S. Sinha pointed out the unwisdom of the restriction and urged that the advocates and vakils should also be eligible. Next year when the Congress met in Calcutta Mr. Sinha pleaded for an Executive Council and a Governor for the U. P. He was again present in Madras in 1914 and received the thanks of the Congress for the good work that he had done as a member of the deputation to London composed of, besides himself, Messrs. Bhupendranath Basu, M. A. Jinnah, Samarth, Mazar-ul-Haq, the Hon. B. N. Sarma and Lala Lajpat Rai.

There are scores of public workers—many of them dead and a few still alive—who have made notable contributions to the National cause by their sincerity of purpose, services and sacrifices, to whom posterity owes

a deep debt. To enumerate them would only lead to invidious distinctions, however unmeant they be, and we shall be content to recall their memory with a feeling of sincere gratitude.



Surendra Nath Banerjea
1895 : Poona
1902 : Ahmedabad



Md Rahimatullah Sayani
1896 : Calcutta



Sir C Sankaran Nair
1897 : Amraoti



Ananda Mohan Bose
1898 : Madras

Part II

(1915 TO 1919)

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I

TOWARDS RE-UNION (1915)

Mrs. Besant advocates India's claim for Justice—Position in 1915—Tilak reappears—Proposals to re-unite the two wings of Congress fail—Gokhale passes away—Tilak's constructive work—The Bombay Congress.

CHAPTER II

A UNITED CONGRESS (1916)

Tilak's Home Rule League—Tilak's triumphs and reverses—Hindu-Muslim Concordat—The Nineteen Memorandum—Mrs. Besant's All-India Home Rule League—Tilak at the Lucknow Session—The Congress Resolutions.

CHAPTER III

TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT (1917)

Agitation and Repression—Internment of Mrs. Besant, Arundale and Wadia—Siva who cut his wife into 53 pieces—Imperial War Conference—Passive Resistance—A.I.C.C.'s statement—P. C. C.'s on Passive Resistance—Montagu's Announcement of August 20th—Congress-League Memorandum of India's equality with Dominions—Mrs. Besant's change of attitude—Gandhi's achievements by Satyagraha

—Champaran, Kaira, and Ahmedabad Mill labourers—Signatures to the Congress-League Scheme—a Permanent fund for the Congress—Mrs. Besant elected President—Her Presidential address—Congress resolutions—Appointment of Rowlatt Committee—Andhra Congress Circle—National Flag.

CHAPTER IV

MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD PROPOSALS (1918)

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CHAPTER V

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Part II

CHAPTER I

Towards Re-union (1915)

The year 1915 really is a landmark in the political history of India. Mrs. Besant's publication entitled 'How India Wrought For Freedom' has covered the period intervening between 1885, the year of the birth of the Congress, and 1914, the year of the outbreak of the Great War. It may be remembered that the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War had filled the Asiatic Nations with a sense of renewed confidence in their own capacities and prowess at the beginning of this century. Likewise did the marvellous feats of endurance and bravery displayed by the Indian troops in the winter of 1914 in France and Flanders, and their successful stand against the onslaughts of German invasion in the Great European War create a new atmosphere alike in Europe and Asia and raise the Indians miles higher in the estimation of the Western Nations than ever before. Such an appreciation of the services of the Indian troops in the War who were taken abroad in anticipation of Parliamentary sanction, naturally had its repercussion on the minds of Indians. It kindled a sense of reward in the minds of some, such as Surendra Nath Banerjea, and a sense of rights in the minds of others, such as Mrs. Besant. Mrs. Besant had been working in the cause of the poor, the whole of her lifetime, and of India ever since the days of Mr. Bradlaugh. But it was in 1914 that she joined the Congress and speaking on the question of 'Reciprocity' said, "there had been talk of a reward due to India's loyalty; but India does not chaffer with the blood of her sons and the proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much

liberty, so much right. India claims the right, as a Nation, to justice among the peoples of the Empire. India asked for this before the War. India asks for it during the War. India will ask for it after the War; but not as a reward, but as a right does she ask for it. On that there must be no mistake." When Mrs. Besant jumped from Theosophy and the High Court where she had to face a litigation relating to Jiddu Krishnamurti and his brother, to the Congress and the spacious atmosphere of the Beach, she brought new ideas, new talents, new resources, and altogether a new method of organisation and a new outlook into the field of the Congress. She was already a great world character and had millions of followers in the East and the West, in the New Hemisphere as well as the Old. No wonder then that, with this mighty following and with her inexhaustible energy, she gave a new life to Indian politics.

What was the position of affairs in 1915? Gokhale had passed away on the 19th February 1915. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had already gone out of view, having declined the Presidentship of the Congress in 1909, six days before he was due to take the chair, and followed Gokhale to the grave in November 1915. Infirmities of advancing years were creeping upon Mr. Wacha who stated at the Bombay Congress of 1915 that old age had its own penalties, for his vision was fast failing. Moreover he was all along only a great scholar and a good Secretary, never a General leading his forces from victory to victory. *Sir Narayan Chandavarkar had retired as a judge and* was a spent force in politics. Heramba Chandra Maitra, Mudholkar and Subba Rau Pantulu were excellent Lieutenants, Captains or Colonels in the army of the Congress, and nothing more. Surendra Nath Banerjea, eminent as he was, was not quite in tune with the new thought.



Pandit Motilal Nehru
1919 : Amritsar
1923 : Calcutta



C. Vijayaraghavachariar
1920 : Nagpur



Lala Lajpat Rai
1920 : Calcutta (Special)



Hakim Ajmal Khan
1921 : Ahmedabad

There was no Field-Marshal, no Generalissimo to lead the army. Lokamanya Tilak was released in June 1914 from Mandalay after nearly completing his full term. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri no doubt stepped into the shoes of Gokhale as the President of that great and noble order—the Servants of India Society, but by his inherent temperament as well as by the eternal conflict raging in his breast between his Extremist inclinations and Moderate 'conviction,' between principle and expediency, between the ultimate and the immediate, he was always content to remain a back-bencher, though he loved to praise the cross-bench mind. At any rate he never occupied the Front Bench nor cared for the limelight. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was not in a position to lead the Congress on the Moderate lines, nor had he the grit to force his way forward. Gandhi himself had just arrived in India and, if we may say so, did not as yet start his public life on defined lines. He was under the advice of his political Guru—Gokhale, silently studying the conditions of the country which he had long ago left and to which he had paid two or three short visits at intervals. Lala Lajpat Rai was disgusted with the state of affairs in this country and notably in his Province, and during the War was virtually an exile in America. Satyendra Prasanna (later Lord) Sinha, who presided over the Congress of 1915 in Bombay, was altogether out of tune with the new spirit and ceased to interest himself in Congress politics after the Bombay Session. Leadership was almost passing from the Nation to the bureaucracy. Power had gone out of the Moderates. The Nationalists had not as yet come into their own. Attempts made by Mrs. Besant to bring the two wings of the Congress together failed in 1914 and 1915, and the story of the failure may briefly be studied.

In 1915 Lokamanya Tilak should have been the uncrowned king not only of Maharashtra, but of the whole of India, except for an unfortunate combination of forces to keep him out of what should legitimately have been his. He was released in June 1914 and ever since strenuous efforts were made by him to start a big Home Rule agitation, and by well-meaning friends to bring the two wings of the Congress together. Lokamanya Tilak himself wanted sedulously to avoid offending the susceptibilities of the Moderates but they did not respond to his approaches. Tilak's threefold programme was, (1) the Congress Compromise, (2) the re-organisation of the Nationalist Party, and (3) the setting on foot of a strong agitation for Home Rule. On the first of these items, Lokamanya Tilak and the Nationalists wanted the avenues to the election of Congress delegates to be widened. As things stood, the Articles of the Constitution restricted the right of election to certain organizations —"provided that no such political association or public body shall be recognized unless the said Association or Body, by a resolution of a general meeting of its members, expressed its acceptance of the principle embodied in Article I of this Constitution and makes the acceptance of the same condition precedent to new membership." The Article contemplated a Moderate creed with Colonial Self-Government as the goal. The election of Congress delegates was thus placed exclusively in the hands of the Moderate Associations and it was not to be expected that the Nationalists should seek admission, through the good-will of their opponents, to the Congress. Article XX had therefore to be widened and to this end Mrs. Besant and Mr. N. Subba Rau Pantulu, the General Secretary of the Congress, went to Poona in the first week of December, 1914 and conferred with Messrs. Tilak, Gokhale and others. An amendment was agreed upon. Then Mr. Subba Rau

went to consult Sir Pherozeshah in Bombay and returned disappointed. Then he met Mr. Tilak and Mr. Gokhale. Mr. Gokhale was convinced that Mr. Tilak's re-entry into the Congress camp would only be a signal for a renewal of the old struggle. He therefore withdrew his support to the amendment proposed, in an oral message to Mrs. Besant. In reply to a letter from the President-elect of the 19th Congress of 1914, he wrote a confidential letter explaining the reasons of his change of view. The letter became public in no time. It was stated in it that Mr. Tilak had openly avowed his intention of adopting the 'Boycott of Government' and the obstructionist methods of the Irish if he entered the Congress. When Lokamanya Tilak repudiated it, on an enquiry by Mrs. Besant, an apology was no doubt offered to him, but the reconciliation was postponed. Mr. Subba Rau Pantulu published in *New India* (8-2-1915) a statement in which he said that the Bombay Conventionalist leaders were dead opposed to Mrs. Besant's amendment.

The story of Mrs. Besant's unsuccessful attempts to bring the Moderates and the Nationalists together in the Congress has just been told. Early in the year, India sustained a great loss in the premature death of Gokhale who passed away on the 19th February. Tilak had a great regard for his political opponent, and when Gokhale passed away, delivered the funeral oration which was intensely passionate: -

> "This is not a time for cheers. This is a time for shedding tears. This diamond of India, this jewel of Maharashtra, this prince of workers is laid to eternal rest on the funeral ground. Look at him and try to emulate him. Every one of you should place his life as a model to be imitated and should try to fill up the gap caused by his death, and if you will do your level best to emulate him in this way, he will feel glad even in the next world."

In the Provincial Conference (May 4, 1915), in moving the resolution of condolence to Mr. Gokhale's family, Tilak described how he was partially responsible for introducing Gokhale into the field of public life.

During the year 1915, and the year 1916 too, Tilak worked assiduously to organize his party. He held that "a strong party needs (1) a magnetic leadership, (2) a rallying point, and (3) a war-cry. In Mr. Joseph Baptista, Tilak found an able co-adjutor and under Mr. Baptista's Presidentship a thousand Nationalists met at Poona, and this Conference stood in marked contrast with the Moderate Conference which met shortly after with a poor attendance, but was graced by the presence of Lord Willingdon at it. The Poona Conference supplied the war-cry of Home Rule and Tilak's sole pre-occupation was how to advance India's cause to this goal. It was his intention to get a Bill introduced in Parliament through the good offices of Labour leaders and then concentrate his activities on a vast propaganda. (Account taken from Mr. Athalye's 'Life of Lokamanya Tilak.')

The Congress of 1915 was to meet in Bombay, and as all proposals for a compromise had failed, it was to be essentially a Moderate Congress. On the eve of the Congress, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta passed away in the month of November. The President chosen for the year was Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha,—whose position and learning were of an unchallengeable character. His touch with the Congress movement was indeed little, but he brought to the Bombay Session all the prestige that clings round the name of an ex-Law Member of the Government of India, who had not cared to stick to his high office even for half his term. But he was new to his new duties and was largely influenced by the elderly Congressmen by whom he was surrounded.

Sir S. P. Sinha made, from the Nationalist point of view, a most reactionary speech, in which he described India as a patient whose fractured limbs were in splints. According to his conception the need was "a reasoned ideal of India's future such as will satisfy the aspirations and ambitions of the rising generation of India and at the same time will meet with the approval of those to whom India's destinies are committed." In this view he demanded an announcement of policy. He was essentially an ultra-Conservative.

At the Bombay Congress of 1915, however, the first signs of that great revival in public interest in the Congress after the Surat imbroglio became visible, which made its influence felt from, and after, the next following Congress at Lucknow. No less than 2,259 delegates attended the Bombay Session and the resolutions that were passed covered a large variety of subjects. The first four recorded the Nation's grief at the passing away of three ex-Presidents of the Congress, *viz.*, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Henry Cotton, and of a friend, Keir Hardie, who "in and outside the House of Commons rendered valuable services to this country which will be gratefully cherished by the people of India." The fifth recorded the loyalty of the people. The sixth resolution recorded the abiding sense of the Congress in the righteousness of the cause espoused by Great Britain and her Allies and expressed gratification at the splendid achievements of the British Navy. The seventh resolution asked for an extension of term of office for Lord Hardinge as Viceroy. The eighth resolution re-affirmed the numerous previous resolutions of the Congress regarding the justice and expediency of admitting Indians to commissions in the Army and Navy, their training in existing Military and Naval schools and colleges and opening fresh ones in India. It also emphasised the necessity of re-organising

the system of volunteering with due regard to the rights of the people of this country to enlist themselves as Citizen soldiers without distinction of race, class or creed. The ninth resented the unmerited slur cast upon the people by the Arms Act (XI of 1878) and the tenth regretted the existing laws affecting Indians in South Africa and Canada. The eleventh resolution thanked the Viceroy for lending his statesmanlike support to the resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council demanding representation for India on the Imperial Conference and requested the Government to allow at least two members deputed to take part in the Conference to be elected by the elected members of the Imperial Council. The twelfth resolution reiterated the demand for an Executive Council for the United Provinces. The thirteenth asked for the abolition of indentured labour and the fourteenth repeated the oft-repeated demand for the separation of Executive and Judicial functions. The fifteenth asked for the establishment of High Courts in the Punjab, Burma and the Central Provinces with the status and powers of Chartered High Courts. The sixteenth supported the Swadeshi movement and the seventeenth protested against the continuation of the Press Act. The eighteenth resolution opined that in the best interests of the people of India it was necessary that complete fiscal freedom with special reference to import, export and excise duties should be conceded to the Government of India. The nineteenth resolution was important and demanded substantial measures of reform towards Self-Government so as to secure to the people an effective control over the Government by introduction of Provincial Autonomy, expansion and reform of Legislative Councils where they existed and their establishment in Provinces where they did not exist, the reconstruction of various existing Executive Councils and their establishment in Provinces where they did not exist, the reform or abolition of the India Council, and a liberal measure of Local

Self-Government. The resolution further asked the All-India Congress Committee to frame a scheme of reform and a programme of continuous work, educative and propagandist, and it authorised the Committee to confer with the Committee of the All-India Muslim League for the same purpose and to take such further measures as may be necessary.

The twentieth resolution opined that a reasonable and definite limit should be put to the demand of the State on land and that the Permanent Settlement should be introduced in all areas, Ryotwari or Zamindari, creating fixity of tenure for occupants, and failing Permanent Settlement, a settlement for a period of not less than sixty years. The twenty-first resolution insisted on steps for industrial development of the country by making greater provision for industrial and technical education, grant of fiscal autonomy to India in regard to import and export duties, by the removal of unjust and artificial barriers like excise duties on cotton goods and differential rates for Railway consignment which favoured the foreign manufacturer at the expense of the indigenous manufacturer. The twenty-second resolution disapproved of the Indian Students' Department in England and expressed the growing discontent caused by the increasing tendency on the part of educational institutions in the United Kingdom to restrict the admission of Indian students and to accord differential and unfair treatment to them after admission. The other four resolutions were of a formal character, appointing the General Secretaries, appreciating the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee and desiring the maintenance of *India*, amending the Constitution of the Congress and fixing the next Congress to be held at Lucknow.

We thus see that the Congress resolutions of 1915 are an epitome of the resolutions which had been passed from time to time by all the Congresses held ever since its birth in 1885.

In regard to the question of Self-Government, however, as we have seen, the Congress session held in Bombay in 1915 gave the lead by its resolution XIX instructing the All-India Congress Committee to confer with the Executive of the Muslim League and frame a scheme of Self-Government. That was the culmination indeed of the goodwill that had its origin at the Karachi Session in 1913.

An interesting feature of the Congress of 1915 was that Gandhi could not be elected to the Subjects Committee, and therefore he was nominated to the Committee by the President under the powers vested in him under the Constitution.

One achievement of the Bombay Session was that the Constitution of the Congress was suitably altered so as to throw the doors of entry practically open to the ingress of Nationalist delegates who were allowed to be elected by "public meetings convened under the auspices of any association which is of not less than two years' standing on 31st December, 1915, and which has for one of its objects the attainment of Self-Government within the British Empire by constitutional means" and this was followed by a hearty response from Tilak who forthwith publicly announced the willingness of his party to re-enter the Congress through the partially opened door.

CHAPTER II

A United Congress (1916)

The year opened under more auspicious circumstances for the healthy development of Congress activities than the previous year. But the country was the poorer for the loss of two great men—Gokhale and Mehta—both of whom had passed away in 1915. Tilak had as yet no place in the Congress, for under the compromise reached at the Bombay Session he had to wait a full year before he could influence the National organ to work on his lines. He, therefore, fell back upon his idea of a Home Rule League, and well was he qualified to take up leadership at this juncture by his culture and talents, by his services and sacrifices. He tried his best to induce the Congress to send a deputation to England, but that was not to be. He then started his Home Rule League first in India on 23rd April, 1916, some six months before Mrs. Besant started hers.

But the bureaucracy was his sworn enemy. While Tilak was pleading for students joining the Defence Force, he was served with an order from the Punjab Government prohibiting him from entering Delhi or the Punjab.

He accepted the Creed of the Congress for his Home Rule League and this, it seems, pleased Sastriar much. In 1916 he completed his *Shoshtipurti* or 60 years of age, and a purse of one lac of rupees was presented to him which he dedicated to National work. The more Government repressed him, the more he was bounding up, and as a last resort "in order to silence him rather than imprison him" he was asked to be bound over for good

behaviour for one year in a sum of Rs. 20,000 in his own recognizance and in two securities of Rs. 10,000 each. The Magistrate directed him after trial to enter into a bond accordingly, but the High Court reversed it, on the 9th November, 1916. This only served to increase his popularity. Tilak met with honours, received ovations and purses wherever he went, but physically he was frail—a circumstance which stood in the way of his undertaking energetic propaganda throughout India, moving on the wings of time and electrifying the people by an appeal to their emotions. This was left to be done by one older than himself in age, frail in sex, but enjoying a better start in life, not being under a cloud in the scene of her operations, better known to the world, and endowed with that dynamic energy which knows no fatigue and seeks no rest.

Here was India then in 1916, a Nation whose cause went unheeded, and whose leader remained yet to be found.

It was at such a juncture that Mrs Besant stepped into the trench. She jumped from religion to politics, from Theosophy to Home Rule. She started a daily, *New India*, and later a weekly, *The Commonweal*. She was the first to popularise the cry of 'Home Rule' and she carried on a raging, tearing propaganda. The formation of a 'Home Rule for India League' was discussed in 1915 but was put off to see if the Congress of the year would take up work directly for Self-Government.

The Conference between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League enjoined by the Bombay Congress was duly held and the outcome was a complete agreement between the leaders of the two great communities. A Joint Committee was appointed to frame

a scheme and make all the arrangements necessary to promote the cause of Indian Self-Government within the Empire. The draft prepared by the Joint Committee was to be approved at Lucknow in 1916 by both the Congress and the Muslim League. Discussions were held at the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Allahabad on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th April, 1916 at the residence of Pandit Motilal Nehru, a member of the Committee, who at Surat had seconded the resolution proposing Dr. Rash Behari Ghose to the chair, but had not been heard of again till 1915. The proposals tentatively arrived at by the A.I.C.C. were considered at a joint meeting of the A.I.C.C. and the Council of the Muslim League in Oct 1916 in Calcutta and the Hindu-Muslim Concordat was almost fully hammered out, the quotas of Punjab and Bengal alone being left to be finally agreed upon at Lucknow during the sittings of the year's Congress. The scheme, as finally agreed to by the Joint Committee in Calcutta, was approved by the Congress. The inner circle of politicians were also aware by the time of the Congress that what later came to be widely known as the 'Nineteen Memorandum' (see Appendix I) had been sent up to the Viceroy in Nov 1916 and that it embodied the principles of a scheme of Self-Government for India, the nineteen signatories being all members of the Supreme Council. All the elected members of the Supreme Legislative Council except the two Anglo-Indians, the three who were away from headquarters and two Muslims and one Sikh, signed the Memorandum. It is believed that it was the result of information which the signatories had that the Government of India had sent up certain proposals on the subject which were reactionary.

Apparently Mrs. Besant was not satisfied with the tardy way in which Congress affairs were progressing. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress

was no doubt attending to Congress work in England, but it was only holding 'a watching brief' to use its own phrascology. Mrs. Besant wanted a more dynamic body and organized an Auxiliary Home Rule League in London on 12th June, 1916, under the Self-Government Resolution of the Madras Congress of 1914. In India her Home Rule League was definitely founded in Madras in the Gokhale Hall on 1st September, 1916 and worked well without a hitch throughout 1917 on the simple lines suggested by Mrs. Besant, who was its President elected for three years by the founding branches. The first Home Rule League in India had really been formed, as already pointed out, by Lokamanya Tilak in Maharashtra with headquarters at Poona on the 23rd April, 1916, and to distinguish hers from it, Mrs. Besant christened the former the All-India Home Rule League in 1917.

Tilak joined, in accordance with his announcement in Jan. of the year, the Congress of 1916 at Lucknow. He succeeded in securing a vast majority of his party, the Nationalists, as the delegates from the Bombay Presidency to the Lucknow session. The Constitution of the time provided that the Subjects Committee should include the members of the A.I.C.C. from each Province, and an equal number, Province by Province, elected by the delegates of the Province assembled at the session. An interesting story is told of Gandhi's being found a place in the Subjects Committee of the Congress in 1916. It will be remembered that it was in that year that Tilak rejoined the Congress after the Surat Split. A proposal that Tilak had made to the Moderates in regard to the personnel of the elected members of the Subjects Committee having failed, Tilak decided to get the delegates of Bombay who were all Nationalists to elect only those of their own party. The names were put to the House in pairs, one a Nationalist and the other a Moderate. In

every case it was the former that was elected. Likewise when a Nationalist name was pitted against Gandhi, the latter was voted down, but Tilak declared that Gandhi was elected.

The Lucknow session was presided over by Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar, a tried servant of the Nation whose services to the National cause were fittingly rewarded by the honour conferred upon him at Lucknow. His Presidential Address was of a piece with the eloquent outpourings which the Congress had been accustomed to hear with real gusto for many years, and examples of which have been quoted in these pages. The great achievement of Lucknow was the completion of the Congress-League Scheme of Reforms (see Appendix II) with a full formation of the Hindu-Muslim Concordat.

It will be remembered that the preliminaries of this concordat were gone through at Joint Conferences of the League and the Congress Executives at Allahabad in April 1916, and in Calcutta in the following November. In working out the details of this agreement, the quotas of the Punjab and Bengal in respect of Muslim representation in the Legislatures remained to be settled, and settled they were at Lucknow. A full account of this concordat is given in the section dealing with Communal Representation in Part I, Chapter II. The essentials of the Congress-League Scheme itself were the subordination of the Executive to the Legislature, but it must be noted that the Legislature itself was still to consist of a 1/5 nominated element. The Secretary of State's Council was to be abolished. Altogether it was, judging from the rapid strides since taken by the Congress, a poor show. Yet, the Government fought shy of it and pitted against it a

scheme of their own, as we shall see from the developments of the year 1917.

The Lucknow session of the Congress was altogether a unique one, for the fraternization of the Hindus and Muslims as well as for the formulation of a scheme of Self-Government. Not less important was the re-union of the two wings of the Congress which had been separated since 1907. It was truly an enlivening spectacle to see Tilak and Khaparde sitting side by side with Dr. Rash Behari Ghose and Surendra Nath Banerjea. Mrs Besant was there with her two co-adjutors—Arundale and Wadia—and the banner of Home Rule in their hands. Amongst the Muslims were men like the Rajah of Muhammadabad, Mazar-ul-Haq, A. Rasul and Jinnah. Gandhi and Polak were there too. The Congress-League Scheme which was passed by the Congress was, immediately after, approved by the Muslim League.

The Lucknow Congress, like the Congress at Bombay, was largely attended. There were no less than 2,301 delegates, besides a large number of visitors who filled the spacious Pandal to its utmost capacity. The Congress sat for four days and the resolutions dealt with the same variety of subjects, namely, India's loyalty, the Arms Act, Volunteering and Commissions in the Army, the Press Act, Indentured Labour, Indians in the Colonies, Executive Council for U.P., India and the Imperial Conference, High Courts for the Punjab and other Provinces, the Swadeshi movement, and Trial by Jury—subjects which had been dealt with year after year at successive sessions of the Congress. The Congress recorded its sense of loss at the deaths of Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar who had presided at the Calcutta Session in 1911, Mr. G. Subrahmania Aiyar, and Mr. D. A. Khare who had worked as its General Secretary for several years. The Congress

passed two resolutions about Bihar—one dealing with the relation between the Indian ryot and the European planters in North Bihar, and urging the desirability of a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into the causes of the agrarian troubles; and the other with the up-to-date Patna University Bill which was then pending before the Imperial Council.

The resolution regarding the ryots and planters in North Bihar was of great importance. Mahatma Gandhi in the following year visited Bihar for investigation into the causes of discontent among the ryots, which will be referred to later.

The resolution dealing with Self-Government for India declared that "due having regard to the ancient civilization of India, the progress made in education and the public spirit shown, His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer Self-Government on India at an early date; (b) that as a definite step in that direction the Congress-League Scheme should be granted and (c) that in the reconstruction of the Empire India should be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions."

It should also be noticed that the Lucknow Congress, in a resolution, viewed with alarm the extensive use made of the Defence of India Act and the Bengal Regulation III of 1818, and urged that in the application of the Defence of India Act, which was an emergency measure, the same principle should be followed as under the Defence of the Realm Act of the United Kingdom and the same procedure adopted in dealing with persons sought to be proceeded against under the Act, namely, that a statement

in writing of the charge should be handed over to an arrested person, and an explanation obtained from him placed before a lawyer-Judge of the High Court, a non-official practising lawyer, and a judge belonging to the Indian Civil Service, and no internment ordered before the same had been considered and the arrested persons afforded proper facilities for legal assistance. The same procedure was to be followed as far as practicable in regard to persons detained under Bengal Regulation III of 1818 and similar Regulations in other Provinces. The movers and supporters of this resolution pointed out how extensive use had been made of the drastic provisions of the emergency measures and how the belief was honestly held that many innocent young men with bright prospects in life had been ruined by the application of the Act. It was said that in Bengal above 479 persons had been interned and more than sixty persons detained under Regulation III of 1818. The rigorous enforcement of the Defence of India Act and the old Regulations had thus begun to be deeply resented by the people.

The practice of holding the sessions of the Congress and the League in the same city had been inaugurated the previous year in Bombay and was continued at Lucknow. When the scheme of Self-Government was passed at Lucknow, the Congress followed it up by a resolution calling upon the various Congress Committees and other organized bodies and associations to start a propagandist and educative campaign throughout the country. The response to this call was marvellous. One Province vied with another in carrying on propaganda, and Madras, under the immediate guidance of Mrs. Besant, created a record for itself. The Lucknow session of the Congress had no easy time. Untold difficulties had been created in Lucknow when the 15th session of the Congress was to meet at the place in 1899. But these were put an end to

by the wisdom of the Lieut. Governor, Sir Antony MacDonnell, at the time. A similar incident repeated itself in 1916. The Secretariat of the U. P. Government issued a warning to the Reception Committee against any spirit of sedition in the Congress speeches, and a copy of the letter was served upon the President-elect as well, through the Government of Bengal. The Reception Committee gave a fitting reply to this gratuitous insult while the President treated it with the contempt it deserved. Mrs. Besant just then was under orders of externment from Berar and Bombay, and not unnaturally some developments were apprehended at the Lucknow session. But once again the wisdom of Sir James Meston, the Lieut Governor, averted all complications. Sir James and Lady Meston, with staff attended the Congress session and to the welcome extended to them by the President, Sir James gave a suitable reply.

CHAPTER III

Towards Responsible Government (1917)

One great obstacle to the development of Indian polity has all along been the communal differences in India. These were inaugurated virtually during the time of Lord Minto, and when a scheme of Self-Government was about to be formulated in 1917, it was fortunate that the adjustments between the two great communities of India—Hindus and Muslims—were made not by force of authority from above, but by voluntary agreement between the two parties. This augured well for the coming political struggle, and political agitation was set on foot in 1917 with clear minds and clear hearts. The year 1917 witnessed a quickening of National consciousness throughout India and a widely popular agitation in favour of Home Rule, and this was followed by an ever increasing severity of Police repression.

The cry of Home Rule spread to the remotest corners of the land and Home Rule Leagues were established all over the country. In Mrs Besant's hands, the Press became powerful in spite of repression under the Press Law, and Lord Pentland's Government promulgated G. O. No. 559 restraining students from taking part in political agitation. He had sent for Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of *The Hindu*, who had half an hour's plain talk with the Government on the situation, and told them frankly what he thought of the political situation.

But Mrs. Besant who had a daily, *New India*, and a weekly, *The Commonweal*, was called upon to furnish security for her press and papers, and altogether she deposited and forfeited a sum of Rs. 20,000.

In the meantime the Home Rule idea was spreading like wild fire. "The strength of the Home Rule movement was rendered ten-fold greater," as Mrs. Besant herself pointed out in her Presidential Address in Calcutta (1917), "by the adhesion to it of a large number of women who brought to its helping the uncalculating heroism, the endurance, the self-sacrifice, of the feminine nature. Our League's best recruits and recruiters are amongst the women of India: and the women of Madras boast that they marched in procession when the men were stopped and that their prayers in the temples set the interned captive free. Home Rule has become so intertwined with Religion, by the prayers offered up in the great Southern Temples,—sacred places of pilgrimage—and spreading from them to village temples, and also by its being preached up and down the country by Sadhus and Sanyasins." Another factor that largely contributed to the great success of the movement was that from its inception it recognised the integrity of language areas, and in organising the country, adopted the linguistic principle as determining the provincial delimitations. In this respect it went ahead of the Congress and was its forerunner in reality.

On June 15th, 1917, Mrs. Besant, Mr. G. S. Arundale and Mr. B. P. Wadia were served with a notice to choose one of six places mentioned where they should live in internment. Coimbatore and Ootacamund were the places chosen. With the internment of the three leaders, the Home Rule Leagues became more popular, Mr. Jinnah having joined the League immediately after. It is an open secret that Mrs. Besant, despite governmental orders and surveillance, was freely writing to her paper *New India*. A new weekly called *The Commonweal* was also started. Mr. P. K. Telang went over to Madras to take up the Editorship of *New India*. Mr. A. Rangaswami

Iyengar, who later became the Editor of *The Hindu*, was assisting in the conduct of the daily. Mr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar was devoting his time and talents to the work of Home Rule organisation as well as to journalism. Every month that the internees were kept under detention, agitation was growing in the country in geometrical progression. The situation in India became tense, but the authorities in England would not relent. Mr Montagu in his *Diary* narrates a story and draws a lesson. "I particularly liked that Shiva who cut his wife into 52 pieces," says Montagu, "only to discover that he had 52 wives," and Montagu adds: "This is really what happened to the Government of India when it interned Mrs Besant."

While a political storm was thus developing in India, an Imperial War Conference met in London in co-operation with delegates from the Dominions and the Maharaja of Bikaner and Sir S. P. Sinha were sent over there as India's representatives. They made such a profound impression everywhere by the dignity of their bearing and the polish of their pronouncements that they were given public receptions, civic honours, and excellent Press, so much so that the British Committee which had earlier suggested a deputation from India, to deal with the question of Indian Reforms, revised their ideas and countermanded a fighting campaign in England just at that juncture. As a matter of fact, a meeting of the A.I.C.C. had been convened on 7-4-1917 to arrange a deputation to England and a session of the Congress in London. The following were asked to form the deputation: Surendra Nath Banerjea, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir K. G. Gupta, Raja of Muhammadabad, Tej Bahadur Sapru, V.S. Sastri, and C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. The British Committee tried hard to get Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State, to make a pronouncement of policy and grant commissions to Indians in the

Army, but he would not do either. A small Conference was held in London on 8-5-1917, when Sir S.P. Sinha was present, and it was the deliberations of this body that led to the countermanding of an accredited deputation from India.

India was however planning a campaign of Passive Resistance in order to secure the release of the Home Rule internees. A joint meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and of the Council of the Muslim League was convened in July 1917, and when it met on the 28th, the very first resolution it had to pass was one bemoaning the death of India's Grand Old Man Dadabhai Naoroji. A small deputation consisting of Messrs. Jinnah, Sastri (alternatively C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar), Sapru and Wazir Hassan was appointed to proceed to England, contingent on Sir W. Wedderburn's advice, in the middle of September to explain the general political situation in India and to promote the Scheme of Reforms adopted. On the question of adopting Passive Resistance, both as regards its principle and working, in carrying on political work, it was resolved to request the Provincial Congress Committees and the Council of the Muslim League to consider its advisability and to send their opinion to the General Secretaries within six weeks. The joint sitting also recorded its strong protest against the high-handed action of the Government of Bengal in prohibiting the public meeting which was to be held in Calcutta under the Presidentship of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, to protest against the internments of Mrs. Besant and Messrs. Arundale and Wadia and trusted "that the people of Bengal will use every lawful means to vindicate their rights." A reasoned statement regarding the situtation was prepared and it makes interesting reading to-day. It pointed out how here in India Lord Chelmsford, referring to the recommendations of the 'Nineteen Memorandum' deprecated

them as 'catastrophic changes,' and how there in England Lord Sydenham was speaking of 'the Danger in India' and condemned the 'Nineteen Memorandum' as embodying 'revolutionary proposals' and recommended repressive measures on the ground that "German intrigue was at work." Soon afterwards, the Government of India sent round a circular regarding the policy to be adopted *vis a vis* the popular agitation for Self-Government. The master's voice was echoed in the pronouncements of distant satraps like Sir Michael O'Dwyer of the Punjab and Lord Pentland of Madras, which warned the people against extravagant expectations and threatened repressive measures. The former declared that the changes proposed by the party of Reform would be as revolutionary and subversive as those of the Ghadr emissaries. What irritated Government was that while Delhi and Simla were sending secret despatches regarding Reforms, the Congress and the League and certain members of the Supreme Legislative Council should have over-reached them, the last sending up a Memorandum publicly and the first two formulating a whole scheme of Self-Government. These Provincial Governors did not see the impolicy of openly telling the public that the Reforms would be of a minor character, but if they were impolitic, they were at least honest. Then the statement protested against the internments and asked, as remedial measures, for (1) an authoritative pronouncement pledging the Imperial Government in unequivocal terms to the policy of making India a Self-Governing member of the British Empire, (2) for immediate steps to sanction the Scheme of Reforms conjointly framed, (3) for the publication of official proposals, and (4) for the reversal of the repressive policy.

The main portions of the lengthy statement were cabled to the Secretary of State, the Prime-Minister and

Sir William Wedderburn on the 30th July, and Sir William in reply cabled: "Had interview with Secretary of State; I feel justified in urging you earnestly to exercise patience. Will telegraph further when situation becomes clearer."

Let us turn our eyes once again towards India. The proposal for adopting Passive Resistance was seriously considered by the various Provincial Congress Committees in the months of August and September, 1917, and while Berar considered it advisable, and Bombay, Burma and the Punjab advised postponement in view of Mr. Montagu's expected visit to India. U. P. considered it inadvisable "in the existing situation." Bihar thought that "a date must be fixed within which the release of the Home Rule Internees as well as of the Ali Brothers and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad should be demanded: Bihar would herself intensify the demand by repeating it from different platforms, and redress failing, the public men of the Province shall betake themselves to actively preaching Passive Resistance to the people and be prepared to suffer all sacrifices and privations that it may involve." The Madras Provincial Congress Committee approved of the idea on the 14th August, 1917 in a resolution which we quote below:—

> "Resolved that, in the opinion of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, it is advisable to adopt the policy of Passive Resistance in so far as it involves opposition to all unjust and unconstitutional orders against the carrying on of constitutional agitation, and also against the prohibition of public meetings peacefully and constitutionally conducted to protest against the unjust and unconstitutional orders of internment and against the Repressive Policy of Government."

It was further resolved that "a sub-committee be appointed to formulate and report within a fortnight on the practical steps by which effect may be given to the resolution of Passive Resistance adopted this day." In the City of Madras a pledge was drafted and Sir S. Subrahmania Aiyar, retired Judge of the Madras High Court, and Honorary President of the All-India Home Rule League and an old Congressman, was the first to sign the pledge. He had renounced his knighthood as a protest against the internment of Mrs. Besant and her co-workers, and addressed a letter to President Wilson, which he sent by Mr. and Mrs. Hotchner. The next to sign the pledge was Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of *The Hindu*, a most unostentatious worker in public life, who had been devoting his talents, energies and resources to the great daily he had taken up, only to make it the greater by his assiduous work and undiluted Nationalism. A few young men then signed the pledge. Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar had not made up his mind in Madras, but signed the pledge in Bombay. While matters were thus progressing, the situation in India changed by the announcement of Mr. Montagu, and the Madras Provincial Congress Committee passed on the 28th September, 1917, a resolution running as follows:—

> "That having regard to the altered circumstances in the political situation, the consideration of the question of Passive Resistance be deferred and that the All-India Congress Committee be communicated with accordingly, and the report of the sub-committee be recorded."

What was this altered situation to which repeated references are being made? In the conduct of the Great War, the Mesopotamian Campaign was mismanaged and a debate of first class importance took place in the House of Commons in which Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the

Secretary of State, was mercilessly criticised by Mr. Montagu for the Mesopotamian muddle which had resulted from an inadequate supply of men and materials from India. It was in the course of this debate that Mr. Montagu characterized the Indian Government as "far too wooden, far too iron, far too inelastic and far too antediluvian to subserve its purposes in modern times." The result was Mr. Chamberlain's resignation and Mr. Montagu's appointment as the Secretary of State. Mr. Montagu was quite a young man then, not being older than 36, yet he had been Under-Secretary for India for four budgets in succession already, and toured India extensively in 1912. His famous Guildhall speech at Cambridge on 'Prestige' on the 28th February was a remarkable utterance. Here is an extract from it:—

> "And as for prestige, Oh! India, how much happier would have been your history if that word had been left out of the English vocabulary. But there you have Conservative Imperialism at its worst; we are not there, mark you, to repair evil, to amend injustice, to profit by experience. We must abide by our mistakes, continue to outrage popular opinion for the sake of being able to say 'I have said what I have said'. I have in other places and at other times expressed freely my opinion on Prestige (The reference was to his budget speech of 1911 in the House of Commons). We do not hold India by invoking this well-mouthed word, we must hold it by just institutions, and more and more as time goes on, by the consent of the governed."

This speech was delivered in reply to Mr. Bonar Law's criticism of the transfer of Capital to Delhi and the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, on the ground of expense and loss of prestige. This was considered a first class victory for India, for Mr. Montagu was believed to be a statesman possessing goodwill, ability, courage

and first-hand knowledge. True to public expectations, shortly after assuming office, Mr. Montagu on behalf of the Cabinet made the following authoritative pronouncement on the 20th August regarding Responsible Government as the goal of British Policy:—

> "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken in this direction as soon as possible."

"I would add," proceeded Mr. Montagu's announcement, "that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and the advancement of the Indian peoples, must be the judges of the time and the measure of each advance and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament." And as a practical token of trust in the people, he removed the racial bar which excluded Indians from the King's Commissions in the Army. Further he announced his intention to proceed to India in order to consult with the Viceroy and to give a hearing to all the interests concerned in India's advance towards Self-Government.

We have here recounted how agitation in India was growing apace and special Provincial Conferences were asked to be held throughout the country giving expression to the feeling in the country, how the various Congress Committees and the Council of the Muslim League were asked to canvass the question of Passive Resistance and send their opinions within six weeks from the 29th July, on which day the A. I. C. C. and League Council had met in Bombay. We have also noted the opinions of the Provincial Congress Committees. During the six weeks, however, much water flowed under the bridge in the Thames as well as the Jumna, the announcement of the 20th August was made, and in pursuance of the new policy, Mrs. Besant and her associates were released on the 16th of September.

There was again a joint session of the All-India Congress Committee and the Council of the Muslim League on the 6th October at Allahabad, at which there was a general consensus of opinion that the question of Passive Resistance should be dropped. Mrs. Besant herself was against the idea of Passive Resistance and the younger men were greatly disappointed at this unexpected termination of an effective programme. The joint meeting instead of pursuing Passive Resistance decided upon sending an All-India Deputation to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State with a reasoned representation in support of the Congress-League Scheme. To this end a Committee of twelve was appointed with Mr. C. Y. Chintamani as Secretary to prepare an address and the Memorandum. The deputation waited on Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu in November 1917 with the Memorandum, extracts from which may be quoted here:—

"Grateful as the people of India are for the authoritative announcement that has been made in the

name of His Majesty's Government and with the accord of the Government of India, they feel that it would be more satisfactory to them if action is taken such as is suggested here.

"At all times and in all circumstances the position of a mere Dependency is wounding to the self-respect of a people who, in the language of the Congress resolution, are the inheritors of ancient civilisations and have shown great capacity for government and administration. While this is so, there has arisen during the last two years a consideration of urgency which necessitates their insistence upon the elevation of their country to a status of equality with the Dominions in all inter-Imperial matters. It has become clear that the latter will in future have a potent voice in the settlement of Imperial problems. They are no longer to be in the position of daughter-States; they are referred to as sister-States, forming with Britain the five free Nations of the Commonwealth. If, as some writers suggest, a Parliament and (or) a Council of the Empire should be established with representation therein of the United Kingdom and the Dominions, and if all affairs of the Empire are to be disposed of by them (it), the present House of Commons and House of Lords concerning themselves exclusively with the affairs of Britain, it is obvious that there will result the Governance of India by the Dominions in conjunction with Britain. To any such development of Imperial polity, Indians cannot but offer a most resolute resistance. For even if the attitude of the Dominions towards India and Indians were unexceptionable, no assent can be given to the widening of the area of subjection which the change will involve. The indispensable condition, from the Indian standpoint, of such a 're-fashioning of the fabric of the Empire' is that India should be represented in an Imperial Council and (or) an Imperial Parliament by elected members, the extent of such representation being determined by the same criteria as will be applied to the Dominions.

"If no such Council or Parliament should be created, if all that will be done be to hold annual meetings of the Imperial Conference and to invite its

members to special sittings of the British Cabinet, again it will be necessary to secure India's representation therein by means of elected members. Indians gladly acknowledge the step in advance that was taken early this year when His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, His Honour Sir James Meston and the Hon. Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha were deputed to the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet to represent the Government of India, nor are they insensible of the value of the resolution that was passed by the former in favour of India's representation at future Conferences. Their submission, however, is that for as long as the Government of India is a subordinate Government, not representative of, nor responsible to the people of India, the analogy with the Governments of the Dominions does not hold and Indians will derive what at best must be a very qualified satisfaction from the recognition that is accorded to their Government, as distinguished from themselves. There need be no doubt that whoever may be chosen by Government to attend the Imperial Conference on their behalf, will do their very best to do their duty honestly by this country, but they will labour under the initial disadvantage of owing no responsibility to the people, which will be a great drawback indeed.

"By common consent, the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sir James Meston and Sir S. P. Sinha acquitted themselves very creditably at the last Conference, but the Memorandum on Emigration which they laid before it did very partial justice to the claim and the view-point of Indians. An elected representative who made himself responsible for that document would have found it difficult to justify himself before his constituents.

"It is not demanded that the election should be made directly by the people or even by any very large electorate. It will suffice if the elected members of the Indian and Provincial Legislative Councils are given the right to elect the representative or representatives. This, it is hoped, will find acceptance."

In the meantime the rank and file of the Congress were not idle. They were obtaining signatures to the Congress-League Scheme, as has already been stated. Mrs. Besant sought interviews several times with the Viceroy soon after her release, but she was turned away. On the other hand Mr. Montagu's *Diary* shows that Lord Chelmsford wanted to book Mrs. Besant once again, for he complained that she had 'a sharp tongue'. Mr. Montagu wrote in reply to Lord Chelmsford that he would not tender any advice in the matter, but that he would support him in whatever steps he might feel impelled to take to curb Mrs. Besant and her activities. A mystery surrounded the attitude and activities of Mrs. Besant soon after her release.

Mrs. Besant was shunned by Lord Chelmsford while Mr. Montagu showed no great regard for her leadership. Soon after her release she repudiated Passive Resistance. Was there anything behind, which justified such an attitude on the part of the Viceroy? Mr. Montagu has an interesting note in his *Diary* on page 137 which runs as follows:—

> "Chelmsford tells me that he thinks he will have to take action about Mrs. Besant's speeches and promised to tell me what he is going to do. Perhaps it is well that I should not know. I had thought of writing, regretting the strength of her language, but I fear it will be no good. There will of course be an outburst of anger at her release, and jeers that my visit has not produced a calm atmosphere, and that she has violated her pledges."

What these pledges may be, when they were given, and to whom, we do not know!

In the closing months of the year 1917, the political atmosphere was charged with the Montford current of

electricity. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford had been touring the whole country receiving deputations and granting interviews everywhere. Mrs. Besant said to certain friends towards the end of 1917, after her interview with Mr. Montagu, "We must support Mr. Montagu." The Moderates everywhere repeated the statement and added that Mr. Montagu could do nothing if he was disowned by the Extremists in India as well as the die-hards in England. Apparently Montagu's mission was to consult the conflicting interests in India and to formulate draft schemes for the consideration of Parliament in England. But the former was done by the Hindu-Muslim Concordat of Lucknow (1916) which he bodily accepted. In regard to the latter, it may be news to many that the whole of the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme, so-called, was worked out in every detail by March, 1916. The fact was that Lord Chelmsford was a Major in the Army in the Territorial Force in India, when the order reached him of his appointment as Viceroy. When he went to England in March, 1916, he was shown the full-blown scheme ready made,—a fact which we learnt only in 1934,—which was to be associated with his name. No doubt Mr. Montagu gave a hearing even to persons like Mrs. Besant, Tilak and Gandhi. He must doubtless have heard of the classical statement made by Mrs. Besant on the publication of the Montford Report, that the Reform Scheme was unworthy of Britain to offer and of India to accept.

But what Mr. Montagu did in his Indian tour was to pitch upon his future Ministers, Executive Councillors and Advocates-General. He wanted to be sure of the men that would work his scheme. This was behind the chorus of remarks we met with everywhere in the early part of 1918,—namely, "we must support Mr Montagu." The saddest event, however, associated with

Mr. Montagu's visit to India was the somewhat unceremonious treatment he gave to Mrs. Besant, in spite of her readiness to co-operate soon after her release.

During this period, in 1917, when Mrs. Besant's Home Rule movement was at its height, Gandhi, with a band of select workers—including Rajendra Babu, Brij Kishore Babu, Gorak Babu, Anugraha Babu, from Bihar, Prof. Kripalani, and Dr. H. S. Dev of the Servants of India Society—was engaged in investigating the grievances of the tenants of Champaran against the indigo planters. He kept himself and his co-workers strictly aloof from the movement for a whole period of six months, till he had finished the enquiry and given proof of the remarkable potency of Satyagraha which was destined to inaugurate a new epoch in the later history of India

Champaran is a district in the north-western corner of Bihar. Early in the nineteenth century, indigo began to be grown in the district by European planters who in course of time secured, on temporary and permanent leases, large tracts of land from the Zamindars of the districts, particularly the Maharajah of Bettiah who became involved in heavy debts. The planters, with the influence and status thus acquired, coupled with the influence which they possessed as being members of the ruling race, were soon able to get indigo grown by the tenants of the villages on portions of their holdings varying between 3/20th and 5/20th and later on they regarded this compulsory cultivation as a matter of right which they got recognised in the Bengal Tenancy Act. This system of growing indigo came to be known as *tinkathia* or the system of three *cottahs* *i.e.*, 3/20th of a bigha. It was the grievance of the tenants that growing of indigo was not

at all profitable for them and that they were forced to do it to the detriment of other cultivation and that the wages that they got for labour were nominal. Their grievances came to a head several times and their risings were suppressed with a heavy hand, but resulted now and then in some increase in the price paid for the indigo by the planter to the cultivator. Early in the twentieth century, on account of the introduction of synthetic dyes, growing of indigo even under conditions which prevailed in Champaran became unprofitable to planters, and they began to close their factories. But instead of taking the losses on themselves, as they ought to have fallen in due course, they devised means to transfer them to the shoulders of the poor tenants. They adopted two methods. In the villages which they held under permanent lease and in which any increase in the rent paid by the tenants would accrue to their benefit as permanent lessees as against the superior landlord, the lessor, they took agreements from the tenants agreeing to enhancement of rent, agreeing on their (planter's) part to release the tenants from the so-called obligation of growing indigo for the benefit of the planters.

Thousands upon thousands of such agreements were taken, as was alleged by the tenants, forcibly, from them. The enhancements would be ordinarily illegal but were saved by a provision in the Tenancy Act which had been inserted at the instance of the planters. The Government, in spite of popular protests inside and outside the Legislature, helped the planters in completing such agreements by appointing special registrars for registering them. In villages where the planters had only temporary leases, and where consequently an increase in the rent roll would accrue to the benefit of the superior landlord after the term of the lease was over, the planters adopted the device of taking, or, as the tenants alleged, extorting cash

payment or its equivalent from the tenants, and agreeing to release them from the so-called obligation of growing Indigo which, even under the special provisions of the Tenancy Act, did not exist in such villages. In this way they realised something like 12 lacs from the tenants. As the whole district had come under the planters, they had divided it into various portions or spheres of action, each indigo concern holding sway over a particular portion of the district. Their influence with the Government and officials was so great that tenants dared not approach either the Judicial or the Executive officials without serious risks to their person and property. Beating and shutting up of Hindus of high caste in *murgikhanas*, impounding cattle, and harassments in a thousand and one ways, including looting of their houses, stoppage of services by barbers, washermen, *chamars*, and even the ingress into and egress from their houses, and collecting untouchables to sit at their doors, were an ordinary everyday affair. The planters used also to extort a large number of unauthorised and illegal perquisites in the form of taxes which were counted during the inquiry to be more than fifty in number. A few illustrations may be given. There was a tax on marriage, a tax on every hearth, a tax for *kolhu* or oil-mill. If the Sahib was ill and needed a visit to the hills, the tenants had to pay a special tax called *paparhi*. If he needed a horse or an elephant or a motor car, the tenants must bear the cost and pay special taxes known as 'ghorahi' 'hathiahi' or 'hawahi.' Besides those taxes heavy fines used to be imposed and realised for anything which offended the planter or for offences against others, thus replacing civil authority and Courts in the district.

All efforts on the part of the public men of the Province to secure redress had failed. The Local Government were aware of these grievances, admitted them

and sympathised with the tenants, but found themselves helpless or unwilling to do anything substantial.

It was in this condition of things that Mahatma Gandhi was approached by some representative tenants and Bihar delegates at the time of the Lucknow Congress. He promised to visit Champaran and study the situation.

In April 1917 he reached Motihari, the headquarters of the district, and was going to see a village when he was served with a notice under Sec. 144, Cr. P. C., calling upon him to leave the district forthwith. He disobeyed this order, returned the Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal which had been granted to him by Government for humanitarian work and stood for his trial before the Magistrate. He pleaded guilty in one of those remarkable statements in Court with which the country has since become familiar, but which at the time struck an altogether new and unfamiliar note. The Government ultimately withdrew the prosecution and allowed him to continue his enquiry in the course of which, with the aid of friends, he got the statements of some 20,000 tenants and formulated their demand on the basis of those statements. The Government ultimately appointed a Commission consisting of representatives of landlords, planters, and the Government, and Mahatma Gandhi himself as representing the tenants. The Commission after an inquiry submitted a unanimous report practically accepting the complaints of the tenants as valid, and embodying a compromise reducing the enhancements of rent and refunding part of the money which the planters had taken from the tenants. The recommendations of the Committee were embodied in an act by which, among other things, growing of indigo or *tinkathia* was abolished. Within a few years after this, most of the planters sold their factories and lands and left the district. To-day one can see only the

remains of what were once the palaces of the planters, and those that are still continuing are not subsisting on indigo at all but on other crops like other cultivators, shorn of all their illegal gains and most of the prestige which made them possible.

The grievances which had failed to secure redress at the hands of both the popular leaders of the day and the Government for a hundred years were thus in a few months removed; and no wonder Champaran is ever so faithful to whatever Gandhi says or does.

Equal in importance to the Champaran Satyagraha, from the point of view of the principles involved, though not of the results achieved, was the Satyagraha in Kaira in 1918. The Indian peasants had never known, before the entry of Gandhi in the public life of India, to question the Government's right to demand assessment from them, even in years of acute famine. Their representatives made petitions and memorials and moved resolutions in the local Council, but there their protests ended. In 1918 Gandhi inaugurated a new era. A condition approaching famine had risen in the Kaira district in the Bombay Presidency, owing to a widespread failure of crops, and the peasants felt that the situation entitled them to a suspension of the assessment. The usual remedies had been tried, and had failed. The peasants claimed that the crops did not exceed four annas in the rupee but were less; the Government officials said they exceeded four annas and that the peasants had no right to suspension under the Land Revenue Code. All petitioning and prayer had failed and Gandhiji had no alternative but to advise the peasants to resort to Satyagraha. He also appealed to the public for help by contributing volunteer workers for educating the peasants. The response was prompt and spontaneous; and prominent among those who offered their voluntary

services was Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel who suspended a splendid and growing practice at the Bar and cast in his lot with Gandhi. The Kaira Satyagraha was the occasion which brought the two great men together. It was the beginning of Sirdar Vallabhbhai's public life. He burnt his boats and gave Gandhi a co-operation and allegiance which have grown with the years. The peasants signed a pledge to the effect that they would rather let their lands be forfeited than allow their case to be considered false or their self-respect to be compromised by being coerced into paying the assessment; also that the well-to-do amongst them would pay if the poor were granted suspension.

Now began a unique education of the peasants,—an education into principles that they had never before heard of. They were to understand that it was their right to question Government's authority to tax them, that the officials were not their masters but their servants, that therefore they should shed all fear of officials and stand erect in defiance of coercion, intimidation and worse. They had also to learn the primary lesson of civility without which even the highest courage would be vitiated. From day to day Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel and other co-workers went about from village to village inculcating these principles, and asking them to stand firm in spite of attachment of cattle and other moveables and penalty notices and threats of confiscation of land. No money was needed for the campaign, but the Bombay merchants lavished more contributions than the organisers of the campaign could make use of.

The Satyagraha also afforded an occasion for the first instance of Civil Disobedience in Gujarat. With a view to steeling the hearts of the peasants Gandhi advised the people, under the leadership of the late Sjt. Mohanlal

Pandya, to remove the crops from a field which had been wrongly attached. This was a good opportunity for the people to learn the lesson of courting fines or imprisonment which was the necessary consequence of Civil Disobedience. Sjt. Mohanlal Pandya removed the crop of onion from the field and a few peasants also joined him. They were arrested and convicted and sentenced to brief terms of imprisonment. This was a unique experience for the people who hailed it with delight and lionised their leaders and took them in procession after their release.

The campaign came to an unexpected end. The authorities accepted the people's contention by the grant of suspensions to poor peasants, but they did this without making a public announcement or letting the people feel that they had done anything by way of a settlement. Very few got the benefit of the belated, unacknowledged and grudging settlement, and the triumph of Satyagraha, though it was one in principle, lacked the essentials of a complete triumph. But the indirect results were great. The campaign laid the foundation of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat and of a true political education. "The lesson," says Gandhi in his Autobiography, "was indelibly imprinted on the public mind that the salvation of the people depends upon themselves, upon their capacity for suffering and sacrifice. Through the Kaira campaign Satyagraha took firm root in the soil of Gujarat."

We may next usefully add a note of the part played by Congressmen in the organisation of Labour in Ahmedabad, and the great lesson in Satyagraha taught us by Gandhi and his fellow-workers.

The story of the organisation of the textile workmen in Ahmedabad by Gandhi, who had not then assumed

the leadership of the Congress, is a romance which would adorn the history of freedom of any Nation. For the very first time in history methods based on truth and non-violence were employed for the solution of industrial disputes, and with such sound and far-reaching results that the labour organisation in Ahmedabad has successfully stood the test of many an industrial storm and has been the wonder and admiration of Western visitors. Even a brief resume of the story would occupy a number of pages in this history. One should content oneself with indicating the part played by Gandhi and with mentioning the salient features of the organisation which distinguish it from similar organisations in India and the world.

Shrimati Anasuyaben Sarabhai had been since 1916 conducting educational work in labour areas, which brought her into contact with the workers' difficulties in the mills. The first section to benefit by her guidance were the warpers, but she soon saw that if all the workmen were to be organised and given effective help, she must seek the guidance of some one who commanded her confidence. A dispute between the weavers and the millowners in 1918 led her to seek Gandhi's advice, who instead of trying to force the hands of the millowners got them to accept the principle of arbitration,—an event of the greatest importance to the labour movement. He and Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel consented to be two of the arbitrators on behalf of labour, but the arbitration fell through, as some of the workmen in a few mills went on strike. Gandhi expressed his regret and got the workmen to make amends. The breaches of understanding were on both sides, but the millowners refused to listen. Before advising the workmen to take any definite step, Gandhi went into the matter of dispute at very great length, examined the state of trade, the profits made by the mills, the rise in the cost of living on the one hand and the extent to which

the cost of production of the industry had increased on the other. A careful examination of these factors led him to arrive at the conclusion that the minimum the workmen had a right to claim was a 35 per cent. increase in their wages. The labourers who were pitching their demands much higher were persuaded to accept this, and were educated into the healthy tradition, which has since been faithfully followed, of always limiting the demands to the barest minimum which can be legitimately claimed.

The demand thus formulated was communicated to the millowners who in their turn said that they were not prepared to go beyond 20 per cent. and declared a lock-out on 22nd February 1918. Thereupon Gandhi called a meeting of all the workmen and administered to them a pledge—under a tree, which is still held sacred,—not to resume work until they had secured their demand and not to do anything in breach of the peace during the lock-out. This was followed by an intensive educative propaganda and house to house visits by Shrimati Anasuyaben, and Srijuts Shankerlal Banker and Chaganlal Gandhi and leaflets issued and huge mass meetings addressed every day. These leaflets were drafted by Gandhi who explained to the workmen in a simple homely style that the struggle in which they were engaged was not a mere industrial dispute but a moral and spiritual struggle calculated to educate and uplift and ennoble them, besides enabling them to win an increase in their wage. The struggle went on for a fortnight, but the workmen unaccustomed to a loss of wage for any length of time showed signs of exhaustion, and the unreasoning element among them even began to grumble that it may be all right for Gandhi to exhort them to keep the pledge but no easy thing for them to do so, whilst they and their children were on the brink of starvation. That, to Gandhi, was the warning voice of God and he declared at the next evening's

meeting that he would have no food and would use no conveyance until the workmen had been enabled to carry out their pledge. The news spread like wildfire throughout the length and breadth of India. It was a fast unto death, though the language used was different, but he staked his life for the great moral purpose of helping a mass of covenanters to adhere to their pledge. Critics and cavillers said that it was wrongful coercion of the mill-owners. Gandhi confessed that the fast was tainted to the extent that the millowners might be compelled to yield against their will, but that, he said, would be the indirect and not the direct result of the fast, which was aimed at helping a community of men to adhere to a pledge solemnly taken. Nothing moves Gandhi so deeply as the sanctity and faithful observance of a pledge, however small, and nothing pains him more than the violation of a pledge. The workmen pleaded with him in vain; his decision was irrevocable. But he now appealed to them not to while away their time, but to earn an honest penny by taking up any work that could be found for them. Gandhi could easily have made a successful appeal for funds in order to sustain the workmen with doles, but he would not brook the suggestion. The workmen's suffering would lose all its value if it was backed up by doles. Work was found for hundreds of workmen on the grounds of the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, where buildings were under construction, and they worked merrily with the members of the Ashram, who joined them with Anasuyaben at their head, in carrying loads of earth and bricks and mortar. The moral effect of this was tremendous. It strengthened the workmen in their resolve, and it also moved the hearts of the millowners. Appeals were made to them by leaders from various parts of the country, the most prominent among them being the late Dr. Besant who sent them an urgent wire to "yield for India's sake and save Gandhiji's life." Shrimati Saraladevi, the cultured wife of Seth

Ambalal Sarabhai, was moved as much by the suffering of the workmen as by the impending danger to one whom she revered, and she played no little part in persuading the millowners to find out a solution. On the fourth day of the fast, a solution was found enabling the workmen to keep the pledge and the millowners to concede to them justice consistently with honour. Both agreed to submit to arbitration for the ultimate settlement of the wage increase, and the arbitrator's Award gave the workmen a 35 per cent. increase as originally demanded.

This peaceful settlement of the dispute laid the foundation of an indissoluble union between Congress leaders and workmen, and of a permanent organisation called the Textile Labour Association, which has grown during these fifteen years under the fostering care of Shrimati Anasuyaben and Shankerlal Banker, both prominent members of the Congress. It has helped the workmen to tide over several crises and saved the city of Ahmedabad from industrial troubles of a serious nature. The workmen are so well organised, and the education imparted to them by the permanent staff of the Union, with Sjt. Gulzarilal Nanda at their head, is of such a solid character that the workmen have frequently rendered public service of a far-reaching character. Under Gandhi's advice the Labour Association engaged itself in the relief of distress caused by heavy rain and floods in 1927. During the Civil Disobedience campaign of 1930 the workmen conducted an intensive temperance campaign, and nearly 200 volunteers from amongst them responded to the call of the Congress by working as pickets and 162 of them were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. There have since been disputes between them and the millowners of a rather serious character, but thanks to their wonderful discipline, they kept peace during arbitration proceedings extending over a period of 16 months and

carried on by Gandhi who worked throughout the period as their permanent arbitrator. The Labour Association, Ahmedabad, is perhaps the only one in the world with a constitution which pledges it to the observance of truth and non-violence and which has as its ultimate goal the nationalization of the textile industry. The Association has at present nearly 30,000 paying members, it handled nearly 4,000 complaints in 1934 of which nearly 80 per cent. were successful, and dealt with 39 strikes of which 23 ended in favour of the workers. The Association secured maternity benefit for 1185 women, amounting to Rs. 29,000 and Rs. 18,074 as accident compensation, and Rs. 9,856 as victimization benefit to 164 operatives. Its special uplift work includes medical aid, education, physical culture and recreation, municipal facilities, temperance and social reform.

Gandhi, who had given proofs of his magical powers in Champaran, liberated the simple but effective proposal that the Congress-League Scheme should be translated into the Indian languages, explained to the people and their signatures taken in support of the Reforms outlined therein, and it was welcomed throughout the country and up to the end of 1917 over a million persons subscribed to the scheme. This was almost the first Nation-wide organization that had been attempted by the Congress, but reference may here be made to an earlier attempt to organize the country for Self-Government and, to that end, gather funds for continuous work in England and India. At the Bombay Session of the Congress in 1915 presided over by Sir S. P. Sinha, the A.I.C.C. had resolved to raise a permanent fund for the Congress on the 30th December, 1915, and appointed a sub-committee consisting of Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bhupendra Nath Basu, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Samarth, Wacha and Malaviya to devise the best means of raising a

Permanent Fund for the support of the British Congress Committee in England and its organ *India*, and for Congress work in India. It was widely talked about that Sinha himself offered to give a lac of rupees to the Fund. The Committee met in Calcutta on the 17th November, 1916, and recommended that a sum of three lacs and a half be raised and the same be invested as a Permanent Fund. A Board of Trustees with Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as Chairman was appointed at Lucknow on the 30th December, 1916 to receive and administer the same. The Board met subsequently in Calcutta in April, 1917 and appointed the Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri as the Secretary and postponed the question of allocating the Fund to the Provinces. Nothing was however done in the direction.

In this connection we may recall a similar attempt made in the early years of the Congress. So early as 1889 it was proposed to establish a permanent Congress Fund and a sum of Rs. 50,000 was voted to form the nucleus of such a fund. Out of this a small sum of Rs. 5,000 only was realised and deposited with the Oriental Bank which was then considered as the strongest Exchange Bank in India. In the Bombay crisis of 1890, the Bank, however, went into liquidation and the small sum thus credited to the Fund was lost.

Before dealing with the Congress session of the year 1917, we have to make reference to one important matter. The Congress of the year was to take place in Calcutta, and in that city opinions were keenly divided between the old Moderates for whom it was a stronghold, and the new Home Rulers and Nationalists who made Calcutta their 'stronger hold.' The old guard was represented by Rai Baikunta Nath Sen, Ambika Charan Mazumdar, Surendra Nath Banerjea and Bhupendra Nath Basu. Mr. C. R. Das began to interest himself in Congress work

and cast in his lot with the younger folks—B. K. Lahiri, I. B. Sen and Jitendralal Banerjee.

Although the majority of the Provincial Congress Committees had recommended Mrs. Besant as the President of the ensuing Congress, there was a keen division in the Reception Committee which, in those days, had to accept the majority recommendation. But the meeting of the Reception Committee held on the 30th of August, 1917 became the scene of acute controversy. The Joint Honorary Secretaries—Fazl-ul-Haq, Lahiri and Jitendralal Banerjee, claimed that the majority recommendation was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the members of the Reception Committee at the meeting. Rai Bahadur Baikunta Nath Sen and 30 others left the meeting at an early stage owing to some unpleasantness. A statement was submitted to the A.I.C.C. by the Secretaries in which it was claimed that Mrs. Besant was elected. On the contrary the Rai Bahadur sent a telegram that the Reception Committee "failed to elect President within month of August. As Chairman of Reception Committee refer the matter to the A.I.C.C." To make a long story short, Mrs. Besant was elected by the A.I.C.C. easily, by circulation, while yet she was under the heavy ban of Government displeasure. The record of the Congress of 1917 may shortly be stated.

Mrs. Besant's Presidential Address is an elaborate thesis of India's Self-Government. Her summary of the Military and Mercantile problems is comprehensive as well as detailed, and constitutes a splendid source of reference to students in quest of knowledge. In effect she demanded, "A Bill during 1918 establishing Self-Government in India on lines resembling those of the Commonwealth on a date to be laid down therein, preferably 1923, the latest 1928, the intermediate five or ten years being occupied with the transference of the

Government from British to Indian hands, maintaining the British tie as in the Dominions." At the end of the address, she gave copious extracts from Bernard Houghton's Bureaucratic Government' and a detailed Bill regarding Village Government. With Mrs. Besant, the Presidentship of the Congress was not a passing show or a three-day festivity. It was a day-to-day responsibility, and in that view Mrs. Besant was the first to claim Presidentship of the Congress throughout the succeeding year. The claim was not new but its enforcement was not known in the previous history of the Congress. The Calcutta Session was attended by 4,967 delegates and about 5,000 visitors.

The resolutions of the Calcutta Session of the Congress of 1917 were, with some exceptions, again of the same stereotyped sort and after recording the grief of the Congress at the deaths of the Grand Old Man Dadabhai Naoroji and Mr. A. Rasul of Calcutta, and India's loyalty to the Throne and welcome to Mr. Montagu, proceeded to ask for the release of Messrs. Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali who had remained incarcerated since October, 1914. The Congress again urged as usual the necessity and justice of adequate provision for giving Military training to Indians and while expressing satisfaction at the removal of the racial bar against admission of Indians to the Commissioned ranks of the Army and the appointment of nine Indians to such ranks, expressed the hope for a larger proportion of Commissioned posts to Indians and urged improvement in the pay, prospects and equipment of Indian soldiers. The Congress reiterated its protest against (a) the wide and arbitrary powers conferred by the Press Act of 1910 upon the Executive, (b) the Arms Act, (c) the treatment and disabilities of Indians in the Colonies. The Congress asked for complete abolition of the system of indentured labour and a Parliamentary Commission to inquire into the working of the special coercive legislation

restricting freedom of speech, writing, association and meetings and the use of the Defence of India Act for similar purposes. The Government had, on the 10th December, announced the appointment of the Rowlatt Committee and the Congress condemned it "inasmuch as the avowed object of the appointment is not to give relief but to introduce fresh legislation arming the Executive with additional powers to deal with alleged revolutionary conspiracy in Bengal. By the same resolution the Congress expressed alarm at the extensive use made of the Defence of India Act and Regulation III of 1818, and in view of the widespread discontent on account of the indiscriminate operations of the Act asked for a general amnesty to all political prisoners.

The Congress by a resolution asked for intervention of the Government of India to save the life of Lala Arjunlal Sethi who was in danger of death by starvation in Vellore Jail on account of his religious principles, and, by another, recommended the formation of Boy Scouts' Associations in every Province, under Indian control. The main resolution was that dealing with the question of Self-Government and ran as follows:—

> "This Congress expresses its grateful satisfaction over the pronouncement made by His Majesty's Secretary of State for India on behalf of the Imperial Government that its object is the establishment of responsible Government in India.
>
> "This Congress strongly urges the necessity for the immediate enactment of a Parliamentary Statute providing for the establishment of responsible Government in India, the full measure to be attained within a time-limit to be fixed in the statute itself at an early date.
>
> "This Congress is emphatically of opinion that the Congress-League Scheme of Reforms ought to be immediately introduced by the Statute as the first step in the progress."

A new resolution accepted by the Calcutta Congress was the one relating to Andhra being recognized as a separate Congress circle, and in this connection we may make a reference to a National or sub-national movement which was inaugurated in the Andhradesa in 1913 and which travelled on to the Congress of 1915. The movement related to the question of redistributing the Indian Provinces on linguistic lines. It had its origin really in the efforts made by Mahesh Narayan of Bihar in 1894 to get his Province separated from Bengal. The Congress created Bihar into a separate Province in 1908, and the principle was approved in the scheme of Provincial Autonomy set forth in the Government of India's Despatch of August 25th, 1911, and Bihar separated from Bengal as the result of that despatch. Wide and strong was the belief that for Provincial Autonomy to be successful, the medium of instruction as well as administration must be the provincial languages, and that the failure of the British administration, notably in the domain of Local Self-Government, is undoubtedly due to the pell-mell admixture of populations in British Provinces which are carved out on no logical or ethnological, but on a chronological basis. In 1915 the Congress was not prepared to deal with the question but it was pressed to the fore in 1916 by the Andhra Conference, and to anticipate events, we may say that on the 8th of April, 1917, the All-India Congress Committee to which it was referred by the Lucknow Congress, 1916, accepted the principle after duly consulting the Provincial Congress Committees of Madras and Bombay, and resolved that the "Telugu speaking districts of the Madras Presidency be constituted into a separate Congress Province." Sindh followed suit and Karnataka came later. The subject was hotly contested in the Subjects Committee of the Calcutta Congress (1917). Even Gandhi thought that the question might await the

implementing of the Reforms, but Lokamanya Tilak saw the point, namely, that Linguistic Provinces were an essential condition pre-requisite to real Provincial Autonomy. Mrs. Besant presided over the Calcutta Congress (1917), and the idea was opposed vehemently by her as well as by some Tamil friends from the South. The subject held the field for over two hours in Calcutta, and was ultimately accepted late at night at 10-15 p.m. Sindh was recognised as a separate Congress circle by the A.I.C.C. on 6th October, 1917. The principle which was then accepted became the guiding principle for a redistribution immediately after the Nagpur Congress, and we have now twenty-one Congress circles as against the nine British Provinces.

In Calcutta Mrs. Besant was anxious to appoint Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar as Secretary and therefore asked for three Secretaries at the point of having to amend the constitution. It was agreed to, and Mr. Subba Rau Pantulu, though re-elected, forthwith resigned his secretaryship. The Presidentship of Mrs. Besant over the Calcutta Session brought nearer together the Congress and the Home Rule League and the constitution of the League was made so rigid in Calcutta that it brought about a complete paralysis of the organization. The Calcutta session was memorable for the question of the National flag being formally raised. Indeed the Home Rule League had already adopted and popularized the Tricolour flag, and a committee was appointed to recommend a design including on its personnel Abanindra Nath Tagore. But the committee never met and the old Home Rule flag virtually became the Congress flag, with the Charkha added on it later on, until the Flag Committee of 1931 substituted the saffron colour for the red.

CHAPTER IV

The Montagu-Chelmsford Proposals (1918)

Mrs. Besant, it has already been noted, took the view that the President of the year's session of the Congress was President for the whole year. This was not a new idea by any means, but she was the first to act upon it.

At the very first meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held immediately after the Congress on 30th December, 1917, the question of raising a permanent fund for the Congress was considered, and further, Provincial Committees were called upon to appoint a Working Committee for carrying on educative and propagandist work in India and in England. The months that followed were months of incessant activity, especially in Madras where lacs of leaflets explaining the Congress-League Scheme were circulated, and more than 9 lacs signatures obtained in its support and presented to Mr Montagu when he visited Madras.

The All-India Congress Committee met again on 23rd February, 1918 at Delhi, and after recording its sense of sorrow at the death of Sir William Wedderburn, appointed a Deputation to urge on the Viceroy the cancellation of the order excluding Lokamanya Tilak and Babu Bepin Chandra Pal from the Punjab and Delhi Provinces.

The Deputation waited on the Viceroy but without any result. Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu were expected to issue their Report on Constitutional Reforms, and the A.I.C.C. resolved to have a special session of the

Congress at Allahabad or Lucknow soon after the publication of the Report and to send a Deputation to England after the special session.

A third meeting of the A.I.C.C. held on 3rd May 1918, protested against the action of the Government in turning back the deputations of the two Home Rule Leagues on their way to England, from Gibralter and Ceylon. The Committee insisted that nothing short of an authoritative pronouncement that India should have Responsible Government as the issue of the War would inspire the youth of the country to flock to the colours in sufficient numbers to ensure success.

The first five months of 1918 were a period of restless activity for Mrs. Besant. An idea of her continuous tours is given in the pamphlet on 'Home Rule Leagues' (See Appendix III). Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins and Mrs. Dorothy Jinarajadasa addressed letters to her respecting the grant of franchise to women under the Congress-League Scheme. Mr. John Scur wrote to her from England suggesting that the Congress should invite the Labour Conference in June 1918 to send a fraternal delegate to the Indian National Congress of 1918, and the A.I.C.C. did so. This idea and this language were fast becoming familiar and were peculiarly befitting the democratic organisations of the day. "The Home Rule Leagues had just then appointed Mr. Baptista as their fraternal delegate to the annual Labour Conference next month," said Mrs. Besant in her Presidential Address, "and Major Graham Pole comes to us from them." She was a great believer in the Indo-British connection. Indeed her vision had not travelled beyond the conception of Home Rule, as understood in those days; even a Dominion of those times was, in status, far behind the Dominions of 1926, and certainly could not be compared

to the Dominions of the present day with the Statute of Westminster behind them. In any case, Mrs. Besant was soon feeling out of tune both with Government and with the people. The former deprecated her forwardness, the latter, her backwardness. While she had a good following and abundant influence at the Special Congress of Bombay (Sep. 1918), it was seen that she became a back number at the Delhi Congress (December 1918). Between the two she was rapidly losing ground.

The Defence of India Act was vigorously at work everywhere. Even in 1917, orders of externment had been passed against Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal from the Punjab and Delhi. But popular agitation was not cowed down by these repressive measures. When the Governor of Bombay held a War meeting of leaders, Tilak raised the question of Self-Government, but was not allowed to speak for more than two minutes. When the Viceroy held a meeting in Delhi, Gandhi was present though he had at first declined the invitation, not merely on the ground that Tilak and Mrs. Besant were not invited but on the higher ground that there were secret treaties which Britain had entered into regarding the Cession of Constantinople to Russia and other matters. He had an interview with Lord Chelmsford who bore it in upon him that the news emanated from interested quarters (Russia) which had by that time emerged out of the War, a fact which, by the way, made the question no longer a live issue, that he himself could not believe that the Cabinet would enter into such a treaty, and finally, that, in any case, such a question could not possibly be raised or discussed in the midst of the War. Therefore Gandhi agreed to join the War Conference and he wired to the Lokamanya to go to Delhi, although there was no invitation to the latter; but Delhi being an area from which he had been externed, his

declined to go unless the orders against him were expressly cancelled. Government were too proud to do that.

In August 1918, Tilak was served with an order prohibiting him from lecturing without the previous permission of the District Magistrate. Only a week before, we are told he was engaged in a recruiting campaign and "as guarantee of good faith he had sent to Mahatma Gandhi a cheque for Rs. 50,000, the amount to be forfeited as penalty if certain conditions were not fulfilled by him. This was in the nature of a wager. The wager was that Tilak undertook to recruit 5,000 persons from Maharashtra if Gandhi could secure a promise from Government beforehand that Indians would get Commissioned ranks in the Army. Gandhi's position was that the help should not be in the nature of a bargain and therefore returned the cheque to Tilak. In 1917-1918, the Congress was suspicious of Tilak. The Bureaucracy was positively persecuting him. Mrs. Besant alone was in alliance with him.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was published in June 1918. It was a masterpiece of literature and, like other political documents produced by British Statesmen, it contained a dispassionate statement of India's case for Self-Government. Only, the obstacles to Reform are described with equal lucidity, and in the end the latter triumph. In the case of the Report in question, there was an additional circumstance. The Congress Scheme prepared by the two great bodies representing India had provided for fixed Executives responsible to the Legislature. Here was a more fascinating scheme of Responsible Government with replaceable Cabinets, possessing corporate responsibility and subject to the vote of the Legislatures, the very reproduction of the British type of Self-Government. What else should the people

of India want? Their Legislatures would no longer be the arena for the training of Indian politicians, but the forum in which ministers should justify their conduct to their constituencies and stand or fall upon the vote of their colleagues in Parliament. Many in India were taken in by such a scheme and a chorus of praise was to be heard from them. The centre of gravity shifted from the Congress-League Scheme to the Montford Scheme. We have it on the authority of Mr. Montagu's *Diary* that Mrs. Besant promised to accept anything that Sir Sankaran Nair accepted, and Sir Sankarn Nair accepted this scheme. "Extremists who do not mean well to Government must be separated from those who do." About Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Montagu says, "I asked him point-blank what he would accept. He accepted Sastri's four criteria, and I am afraid he would never accept periodic inquiries. What he wants is a time-limit, and there is much more in this time-limit than people really believe. He pathetically said that their confidence in me was everything and he begged me not to be persuaded to desert them." (P. 129). Then comes Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar: "After I had finished with Lord Pentland the Advocate-General of the Presidency, Srinivasa Iyengar, came to see me. He assured me that nobody really expected the whole of the Congress-League Scheme and if they are certain that it will develop they will not much mind. He thinks the Curtis scheme is the best. He tells me that there is great bitterness against the Government but he had nothing very much to say." In justice to Mr. S. S. Iyengar, it must be said that he was not a Congressman at the time. After these statements we need hardly be told by Mr. Montagu that "Setalvad, Chandavarkar and Rahimtoola approved of the Reservation scheme." Montagu's strategy has already been described. Government was to form a Department to help the Moderates

to organise themselves. "There was a proposal,—27th proposal." says Montagu, "in favour of a new organisation of Indians, assisted in every way by Government, for propaganda on behalf of our proposals and to send a Delegation to England and to assist us." "Proposals No. 30 and 31 contemplated," adds Mr. Montagu, "that Sir S. P. Sinha should succeed Mr. Montagu,—Montagu to be Under-Secretary." Mr. Montagu's observations on this are interesting: "It will teach the I.C.S. that a British statesman who, however undeservedly, has reached Cabinet rank, finds nothing derogatory in assisting, rather than controlling India. It will fire the imagination of India." On the other hand, the Nationalists left no doubt whatever in Mr. Montagu's mind as to what they wanted. "Motilal Nehru would be satisfied if he could get Responsible Government in 20 years." (P. 62). "C.R. Das anticipated the failure of Dyarchy and wanted real Responsible Government in 5 years hence, and promise of it now." (Page 91) Mr. Montagu had secured the support of Surendra Nath Banerjea. "Then Basu (Bhupendra Nath Basu) said that he thought the Congress would pass a resolution accepting it, leaving all my amendments to subsequent negotiation so as not to provide their enemies with a handle for saying that they had been captious."

The general belief about the Report was that it was largely drafted by Sir James (later Lord) Meston and Mr. (later Sir Wm.) Marris, while Mr. Lionel Curtis greatly assisted in the task. Mr. Curtis belonged to a group of Round Tablers who had a scholarly bent of mind and who were touring various countries in order to "serve the Empire." A letter that he had drafted on Indian Reforms miscarried and fell into the hands of Indian publicists and *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Leader* published it. This act of audacity exposed the

bureaucratic intrigues and roused the ire of officialdom against Nationalist India.

The fact was that, in a private letter to Mr. Philip Kerr, then Secretary of the Round Table, Mr. Lionel Curtis discussed the possibility of India being made subordinate, in her external and internal affairs, to an Imperial Council on which the Self-Governing Dominions would be represented, but she would not be represented. He added that this would perhaps lead to bloodshed, but if it were the right thing to do, that would have to be faced. The writer stated in his letter that his views expressed in it were generally approved by "Meston, Marris and Chirol." Copies of this letter, for circulation among the Round Table Confederates, were actually printed in the Government Press at Allahabad, and when one fell into Indian hands it was promptly published on the eve of the Lucknow Session of the Congress in 1916. Mr. Curtis later addressed "A letter to the People of India" explaining his position. He was originally an official in South Africa, and, soon after the Boer War, when the British Government borrowed the services of Sir James Meston and Mr. Marris to organise the Civil Service in South Africa, he made their acquaintance for the first time. Ever since they studied the problems of the Commonwealth of British Nations in South Africa, Canada, and India, and Sir James Meston invited Mr. Curtis to go to India in 1916 to study the Indian problems of the Empire and publish in a quarterly, *The Round Table*, their studies from time to time. The letter in question was one such study, meant for publication and for being sent to England, which unfortunately miscarried. It was alleged that Mr. Curtis was engaged in a conspiracy with Indian officialdom to place India, in a scheme of post-War reconstruction, not only under England but under the Dominions as well. "The root

of the present trouble is," says Mr. Curtis in his "Letter to the People of India," "that this insistence of mine on the doctrine that you cannot at present divide the control of India, and the control of foreign affairs, has led to a false impression here that the Dominions want to control Indian affairs: There is nothing they less desire." He finally explained from documents of earlier origin how he held "that it is the duty of those who govern the whole British Commonwealth to do everything in their power to enable Indians to govern themselves as soon as possible, and that Indians must also come to share in the Government of the British Commonwealth as a whole." The fact was that Mr. Montagu gathered around him the pick of the I.C.S. men in India besides the six colleagues that accompanied him from England. Amongst the former were Sir Malcolm Hailey, Sir James Meston and Mr. Marris, the last of whom was Inspector-General of Police in U. P. at the time.

It is therefore not surprising that soon after the publication of the Report, markedly different opinions regarding the attitude to be adopted towards it began to be expressed all over the country by various leaders, and it became apparent that the Special Session of the Congress, which the A.I.C.C. had already decided to convene, should be held. It was found that Lucknow and Allahabad would not be suitable places and the venue was changed to Bombay which made elaborate arrangements for the Congress in a short time. The differences among Congressmen had become acute. While no party was fully satisfied with the scheme as it stood, there were naturally differences in the tone of the criticism, and it seemed as if one party which was more radical in its views would press at the Special Congress for its total rejection, and the other only for amendments to improve it. Just a few days before the Congress, an attempt was

made to reconcile all the differences at a Conference, but the attempt failed and the Congress met on the 29th August 1918 under the Presidentship of Mr. Hasan Imam. It was very largely attended and there were no less than 3,845 delegates present, Mr. Vittalbhai Patel acting as the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Veteran leaders like Dinshaw Wacha, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Ambika Charan Mazumdar were absent from the Congress. After four days' discussion the Congress re-affirmed the principles of Reform contained in the Congress-League Scheme and declared that nothing less than Self-Government within the Empire would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Indian people. It dealt with the Montagu proposals at great length. It declared that the people of India were fit for Responsible Government and repudiated the assumption to the contrary contained in the Report. It asked for simultaneous advance in the Provinces and the Government of India and disagreed with the formula that the Provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps should be taken towards the progressive realisation of Responsible Government, leaving the authority of the Government of India in essential matters indisputable, pending experience in the Provinces. It conceded, however, that subject to a Declaration of Rights of the people of India,—(a) guaranteeing to them liberty of person, property, association, free speech and writing, except under sentence of an ordinary court of justice as a result of lawful and open trial, (b) entitling Indians to bear arms, subject to the purchase of a licence as in Great Britain, (c) guaranteeing freedom of Press, dispensing with licence and security, on the registration of a Press or newspaper, and (d) guaranteeing equality to Indians before the law,—the Government of India should have undivided administrative authority on matters directly concerning peace, tranquillity and defence of the country.

Another resolution was strongly of opinion that the Indian Legislature should have the same measure of fiscal autonomy as the Self-Governing Dominions of the Empire possessed. The resolution dealing directly with the Reform Scheme appreciated the earnest attempt on the part of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy to inaugurate a system of Responsible Government, and while it recognised that some of the proposals constituted an advance in some directions, it was of opinion that the proposals were 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' and went on to suggest modifications which were considered absolutely necessary to constitute a substantial step towards Responsible Government. Dealing with the proposals relating to the Government of India, the Congress desired the same system of reserved and transferred subjects for the Central Government as had been proposed for the Provinces, the subjects reserved being Foreign Affairs, excepting relations with the Colonies and Dominions, Army, Navy and relations with Indian ruling Princes, all the other subjects being transferred subjects. After the first term of the reformed Assembly, the position of the Viceroy in the Legislative Assembly in regard to transferred subjects should be the same as that obtaining in the Self-Governing Dominions. All legislation should be by bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly, provided that, in case the Legislature refused to pass any measures regarding reserved subjects which the Government deemed necessary, the Governor-General might provide for the same by regulations which would remain in force for one year but could not be renewed unless 40 per cent. of the members of the Assembly present voted for them. There should be no Council of State, but if one was constituted at least half of the total strength should be elected. The procedure by certification should be confined to reserved subjects. At least half the members of the Executive Committee (if more

than one) in charge of reserved subjects should be Indians. The Legislative Assembly was to consist of 150 members, four-fifths of whom were to be elected and it should have the right to elect its own President and Vice-President and make its own rules of business. A statutory guarantee was demanded that full Responsible Government should be established in the whole of British India within a period not exceeding 15 years.

As regards the Provinces, the Congress resolved that (a) there should be no additional members of the Executive without portfolios, (b) that after the first term of the reformed Councils the Governor should have the same relation with the Ministers in regard to transferred subjects as in the Self-Governing Dominions, (c) that the status and the salary of Ministers should be the same as that of Executive Councillors, (d) that half the Executive Committee should be Indians, and (e) that the budget should be under the control of the Legislature subject to the allocation of a fixed sum for the reserved subjects; if fresh taxation became necessary it should be imposed by the Provincial Government as a whole. The Congress while holding that the country was ripe for full Provincial Autonomy was yet prepared, with a view to facilitating the passage of the Reforms, to leave the departments of Law, Police and Justice (prisons excepted) in the hands of the Executive Government in all Provinces for a period of six years. Executive and Judicial departments must be separated at once. As in the case of the Central Legislature, the Provincial Councils would elect their Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The proposal to institute a Grand Committee should be dropped. But if it was to be instituted, no less than one-half of the strength should be elected. The proportion of elected members in the Provincial Councils should be four-fifths.

The Provincial Council should legislate in respect of all matters including Law, Justice and Police, but if the Government was not satisfied with its decisions in respect of Law, Justice and Police, the Provincial Government could refer the matter to the Government of India, which in its turn would place it before the Indian Legislature where the ordinary procedure should be followed.

The control of Parliament and the Secretary of State must only be modified and the responsibility of the Indian and Provincial Governments to the electorates increased. The India Council should be abolished. There should be two Under-Secretaries to assist the Secretary of State for India, one of whom should be an Indian.

As regards communal representation, the Congress resolved that the proportion of Muslims in the Indian and Provincial Legislatures should be as laid down in the Congress-League Scheme. Women should not be disqualified on account of sex. The Government of India should have complete freedom in all fiscal matters.

As regards the place of Indians in the Army, the Congress recorded its deep disappointment at the altogether inadequate response of the Government to the demand for the grant of commissions to Indians in the Army and opined that steps should be immediately taken so as to enable the grant of at least 25 per cent. of the commissions to Indians, to be increased to 50 per cent. within fifteen years.

The Congress decided to send a Deputation to England, and appointed a Committee of selection for the purpose.

It will thus be noticed that the Special Session, which had threatened at one time to create a schism

on the question of Reforms in the Congress, passed off successfully and after considerable discussions came to conclusions which reconciled various conflicting views and commanded the unqualified support of the large majority of Congressmen all over the country. A session of the Muslim League had been held at the same time under the Presidentship of the Rajah of Mahmudabad and had adopted a resolution on practically the same lines as the Congress with whose committee there had been complete collaboration.

One thing more, however, remained to be done to complete the Reform proposals, namely the division of functions between Provincial and Central Governments and the determination of Franchises and Constituencies. Accordingly two commissions came out from England,—the Southborough Commission to deal with Franchises, and the Featham Commission to deal with Functions. Deputations were profusely received. In the South of India the Non-Brahman movement which had been brought into existence in February 1917, became quite vocal and irresistible by November 1918, and suspecting that Mr. Sastri who was a member of the Southborough Committee was influencing Lord Southborough against separate representation to their community, the Non-Brahman leaders boycotted the Committee to mark their protest against Mr. Sastri's inclusion on the Commission and threatened to carry their case to England. Carry they did, and succeed too. But India's woes did not end. The Defence of India Act, the counterpart of the British Defence of the Realm Act (D.O.R.A.) which could call upon any one in the country to do anything or to refrain from doing anything, was vigorously at work. We have already referred to the internment of the Ali Brothers, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Ali Brothers were

never Congressmen until they appeared at the Amritsar Congress on their release in 1919. Mahomed Ali was editing a powerful and spicy weekly—*The Comrade*—and Shaukat Ali, his elder brother, was editing the *Hamdard*, an Urdu daily. Soon after the outbreak of the War and the pompous announcement of its cause as being the protection of the weaker Nationalities, Mahomed Ali published an article headed 'Evacuate Egypt.' The brothers and the Maulana were all presently interned and they remained in their confinement till, under the amnesty granted by the Royal Proclamation, they were released on the 25th December, 1919.

The methods employed for recruiting soldiers into the Army as well as collecting money for War Loans were highly objectionable. The methods of 'pressure and persuasion'—a phrase used by Lord Willingdon's Government in description of the methods employed for these purposes—was only a euphemism for the excesses which were destined to lead later to serious developments in the Punjab and elsewhere. In the country districts what was called the 'Indent system' prevailed, under which local officials had to make a return of the lending capacity of the areas in their charge, and it was left to the subordinates to maintain their reputation and obtain as much money as possible for War Loans by methods of 'pressure and persuasion.' These methods ultimately led to an angry crowd surrounding the bungalow of a Mamlatdar and after allowing his family to escape, burn it to the ground with him in it.

In the domain of pure politics, the repressive policy adopted during the days of Lord Chelmsford chiefly centred round the Press Act which was used often and with severity. Mrs. Besant was prohibited from entering the Bombay Presidency by Lord Willingdon under the Defence of India Act. In Bengal, the number of youngmen interned

ran up to nearly three thousands. Then followed the internment of Besant, and the next year witnessed the Rowlatt Bills and the agitation centering round them.

It would be recalled that in the previous year the Government had appointed a Committee of which Sir Sidney Rowlatt was President and Mr. Kumaraswami Sastri and Provash Chandra Mitter were members, "to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement, to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with them." The Committee had enquired and submitted a Report. The Report suggested legislation which was subsequently introduced into the Imperial Council and led to a widespread protest all over the country. At the time of the Special Congress, only the Report had been published and the Congress "condemned the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee which, if given effect to, would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of public opinion."

The Special Session concluded at the end of August. The ordinary session of the Congress was to be held at Delhi in the following December. The Provincial Congress Committee and the Reception Committee elected Lokamanya Tilak as the President of the Delhi Session. But as he had to proceed to England in connection with the litigation between himself and Sir Valentine Chirol, he expressed his inability to preside, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was elected instead.

The thirty-third session of the Congress was held at Delhi on 26th December with Hakim Ajmal Khan as the Chairman of the Reception Committee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as the President. The War had come

to an end with the Armistice on November 11, 1918. The Allies had been completely successful and the principle of self-determination had been declared by President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George and other allied statesmen. It was therefore but natural that the Congress should consider the Reform Scheme once again in the light of these declarations and the criticism of the Montford Report which had been made since the Special Session of the Congress. At the Delhi Congress also the attendance was very large and there were no less than 4,865 delegates present.

The Congress conveyed its loyalty to the King and congratulations on "the successful termination of the War" which was waged for the liberty and freedom of all the peoples of the world. Another resolution recorded the appreciation of the Congress of the gallantry of the allied forces and "particularly of the heroic achievement of the Indian troops in the cause of freedom, justice and self-determination." Another resolution asked for the recognition of India by the British Parliament and by the Peace Conference as "one of the progressive nations to whom the principle of self-determination should be applied," and as a first step the "immediate repeal of all laws, regulations and ordinances restricting the free discussion of political questions, and conferring on the Executive the power to arrest, detain, intern, extern or imprison any British subject in India outside the processes of ordinary civil or criminal Law, and the assimilation of the law of sedition to that of England." The Congress further demanded an Act of Parliament establishing at an early date complete Responsible Government in India and a place for India similar to that of the Self-Governing Dominions in the reconstruction of Imperial policy. The Congress also wanted to be represented by elected representatives at the Peace Conference and nominated Lokamanya Tilak,

Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Hasan Imam as its representatives.

Dealing with the Reforms, the Congress reaffirmed the resolution passed at the Special Session at Bombay regarding the Congress-League Scheme, the fitness of India for Responsible Government, and the resolution of undivided authority to the Government of India concerning the peace, tranquillity and the defence of the country, subject to the Declaration of Rights. By another resolution, the Bombay resolution regarding other points was affirmed, except that in the Provinces full Responsible Government should be granted at once and that no part of British India should be excluded from the benefit of the proposed constitutional reforms. The Rowlatt Committee's Report came up again for review, and after reiterating the Bombay resolution, the Congress also expressed the view that it would prejudicially affect the successful working of the constitutional Reforms. The Congress urged on the Government the immediate repeal of the Defence of India Act, the Press Act, the Seditious Meetings Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the old Regulations and other similar repressive measures and the release of all detenus and all political prisoners.

The Report of the Industrial Commission, of which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had been a member, also came in for consideration and the Congress passed a resolution welcoming its recommendations and the policy that the Government must play an active part in promoting the industrial development of the country, and hoping that encouragement would be given to Indian Capital and enterprise, and protection against foreign exploitation. The Congress regretted that the question of tariffs had been excluded from the scope of the Commission's enquiries. The Congress supported the recommendation of the

Committee that industries should have separate representation in the Executive Council of the Government of India and that there should be Provincial Departments of Industries. The Congress also suggested the constitution of Imperial and Provincial Advisory Boards consisting of Indians elected by Indian industrial and trade associations and Chambers of Commerce. It further was of opinion that the proposed Imperial Industrial and Chemical Services should be constituted with adequate salaries and that Universities should establish Commercial Colleges with help from Government. The Congress regretted the absence in the Report of recommendations for adequate organisation for financing industries, and urged the starting of industrial banks.

Another resolution of the Congress requested the Government to release the Ali Brothers. The Congress also asked, in view of the unprecedented economic strain and the cessation of hostilities, that India should be relieved from the burden of contributing 45 millions for war purposes. An interesting resolution related to Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine and recommended to the Government of India the desirability of securing to them the advantages vouchsafed to the Western system.

While the Congress thus practically reiterated the Special Session resolutions, it carried them further, and it was found that the harmony that had prevailed at Bombay (in September, 1918) disappeared. A split ensued on the 'narrow' issue, as Mrs. Besant said later, as to whether Provincial Autonomy must be whole and immediate, or whether the Bombay deductions should still stand. While "Madras and other Moderates" stood for the Bombay resolution, the majority favoured the rejection of the Bombay compromise. And when it came to a question of a Deputation to England, it was resolved that the

members of the Deputation must advocate and press the Delhi demand, thus excluding those who held to the Bombay compromise. Mr. Sastri moved an amendment objecting to the words 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' and asking that the 15 years' limit should be deleted. But the original resolution held the field. Finally, a resolution offering welcome to the Prince of Wales was dropped.

CHAPTER V

Non-Violence, a Reality (1919)

The Delhi Congress brought no peace to the country. The Rowlatt Bills made their appearance early in 1919 (February). They were two in number,—one of them being meant to be introduced in the Spring session. One was a temporary measure, intended to deal with the situation arising from the expiry of the Defence of India Act, six months after the formal conclusion of peace. It was framed to enable anarchical offences to be tried expeditiously by a strong Court of three High Court Judges with no right of appeal, in areas where offences of a revolutionary character were prevalent. It also provided for powers to order persons suspected to be concerned in movements likely to lead to the commission of offences against the State, to furnish security, to reside in a particular place, or to abstain from any specified act. And as a safeguard, an investigating authority composed of one Judge and one non-official was to examine the material upon which orders against any person were framed. Thirdly, Local Governments were given powers to arrest persons reasonably believed to be connected with certain offences, the commission of which threatened public safety, and to confine them in such places and under such conditions as were prescribed. Further, dangerous characters already under control or in confinement could be continuously detained under the Bill. The second Bill was meant to cause a permanent change in the ordinary Criminal Law of the land. The possession of a seditious document with the intention to publish or circulate it, was to be made punishable with imprisonment.

Promise of official protection against violence was to be allowable in the case of an accused willing to turn

'King's evidence.' District Magistrates were to be authorized to direct a preliminary enquiry by the Police in the case of certain offences for which a prosecution could not then be launched without the sanction of a Local Government. Finally, persons convicted of an offence against the State might be ordered by the Court to execute a bond of good behaviour for a term not exceeding two years after the expiration of their sentence.

Following the Rowlatt Report which had been published on 19-1-1919, the Rowlatt Bills were introduced into the Supreme Legislative Council by Sir William Vincent on the 6th of February, 1919, and while the second was dropped, only the first was passed in the 3rd week of March, 1919. Gandhi notified his intention of meeting the situation with a campaign of Satyagraha, if the Rowlatt recommendations should be embodied into Bills. To this end he had toured the country extensively and was received with great respect everywhere. What was it that had endeared this comparative stranger in the country to all Provinces and commended his equally strange programme of Satyagraha to the people all over? Let the Government answer. (*Vide* 'India, 1919'):—

"Mr. Gandhi is generally considered a Tolstoyan of high ideals and complete selflessness. Since his stand on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, he has commanded among his countrymen, all the traditional reverence with which the East envelops a religious leader of acknowledged asceticism. In his case he possesses the added strength that his admirers are not confined to any religious sect. Since he took up his residence in Ahmedabad, he has been actively concerned in social work of varied kinds.

"His readiness to take up the cudgels on behalf of any individual or class whom he regards as being oppressed has endeared him to the masses of his countrymen. In the case of the urban and rural

population of many parts of the Bombay Presidency his influence is unquestioned, and he is regarded with a reverence for which 'adoration' is scarcely too strong a word. Believing as he does in the superiority of 'Soul Force' over material might, Mr. Gandhi was led to believe that it was his duty to employ against the Rowlatt Act that weapon of Passive Resistance which he had used effectively in South Africa. It was announced on the 24th February that he would lead a Passive Resistance or Satyagraha movement if the Bills were passed. This announcement was regarded as being of the utmost gravity both by Government and by many of the Indian politicians. Some Moderate members of the Indian Legislative Council publicly affirmed their apprehension as to the consequences of such a step. Mrs. Besant, with her remarkable knowledge of the psychology of the Indian temperament, warned Mr. Gandhi in the most solemn manner that any such movement as he contemplated would result in the release of forces whose potentialities for evil were quite incalculable. It must be clearly stated that there was nothing in Mr. Gandhi's attitude or pronouncements which could have justified Government taking any steps against him before the inception of the movement. Passive Resistance is a negative and not a positive process. Mr. Gandhi expressly condemned any resort to material force. He was confident that he would be able by a process of passive disobedience to civil Laws to coerce the Government into abandoning the Rowlatt Act. On the 18th March he published a pledge regarding the Rowlatt Bills which ran as follows: 'Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill, No. 1 of 1919, and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill, No. 2 of 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming Law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee, hereafter to be appointed,

may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."

Most people did not understand why he should have chosen the petty and collateral issue of Rowlatt Bills for the inauguration of Satyagraha, although there was before India the mammoth issue of Self-Government. The same doubt was expressed in 1920 when the Punjab tragedy and the Khilaphat wrong were made by him the issue on which to inaugurate the Non-co-operation movement,—not Swaraj. But to this point we shall revert later. Nevertheless there was a good response from all parts of India except, at first, Bengal. The South responded unexpectedly well. There was some doubt whether Satyagrahis could alienate their property so as to avoid attachment and sale by Government. It was reported that Gandhi did not object to the idea, as it was up to people to fix the limit to which they could surrender their person and property. Gandhi inaugurated the movement with a fast—an idea cavilled at by the neo-social Reformers but one quite in consonance with the traditional beliefs in the country.

The idea of self-purification itself jarred on the ears of politicians, for, "what had purity to do with politics?" they asked in derision. The 30th of March, 1919, was fixed to be a day of *hartal*, a day of fasting and prayer and penance and meetings all over. The date was changed to 6th April, but the change not being notified in Delhi in time, processions and *hartals* were held in Delhi, and as the Fates would have it, shooting took place there. The procession of the day was being led by Swami Shraddhananda whom some European soldiers threatened to shoot, and he bared his chest for the promised bullets and thus paralysed the threats. But at the Delhi Railway

Station, a scuffle arose ending in shooting, causing five deaths and a score or so of casualties. The demonstrations on the 6th April were held on a country-wide scale. "One noticeable feature of the general excitement," says 'India, 1919,' "was the unprecedented fraternization between the Hindus and the Muslims. Their union, between the leaders, had now for long been a fixed plan of the nationalist platform. In this time of public excitement, even the lower classes agreed for once to forget their differences. Extraordinary scenes of fraternization occurred. Hindus publicly accepted water from the hands of Muslims and *vice versa*. Hindu-Muslim unity was the watchward of processions indicated both by cries and by banners. Hindu leaders had actually been allowed to preach from the pulpit of a (Cathedral) Mosque." The one immediate cause for such a unity was the disgust that Muslims felt at the position of Turkey being unsettled after the War and the danger to the Khilaphat, and the Hindus fully sympathised with those feelings.

The country took to the new idea readily and wholeheartedly. Gandhi was already a *persona grata* both with the country and the Congress. The omission of his name from the list of Indian delegates to the Peace Conference to be chosen at the Delhi Congress, 1918, was repaired then and there on the suggestion of Mr. B. Chakravarti and the amendment was accepted reverently and apologetically by Mr. C. R. Das, the mover of the Resolution. He had also been elected as a member of the Deputation to England. The month of April, 1919 began a new chapter in Indian History.

The scene of India's struggles and sufferings shifts now to the Punjab, the gateway of India for foreign industrial and commercial invasions. The Punjab is the

home of the Sikhs and other martial races of India. Is the Punjab to be exploited by the educated classes and their Congress movement, and all their high falutin of Self-Government? It is sufficiently hard that these educated classes should be seeking Military careers and pleading for Military Colleges as well. What should happen if the military races should seek political education and entertain political ambitions? That would be the end of the British Government in India! Had not the Indian troops just returned from the various war-fronts where, by their superior prowess and self-sacrifice, they had helped to defeat the highly disciplined troops of Germany, Austria, Russia and Turkey? The Russo-Japanese war itself had sufficiently disillusioned the Asiatics of ideas of European superiority on the battlefield. The Great War obliterated any lingering fragments of that erstwhile faith. So, the Iron Man of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was determined to prevent the contamination of the Punjab by the spread of the Congress movement, and it was a tussle between him and the Congress as to whether the Congress which was invited to Amritsar in 1919 should be held in the Punjab Dr. Kitchlew, an advocate, and Dr. Satyapal, a medical practitioner, who were organising the Congress, were sent for by the District Magistrate of Amritsar to his house one fine morning (10-4-1919) and were spirited away to some unknown place. The report soon spread far and wide, and crowds of people gathered together and wanted to meet the District Magistrate to ask for their whereabouts. They were prevented by military pickets posted at the level crossing, between the city and the Civil Lines, from marching to the Civil Lines, and of course the story of the never failing brick-bat now comes in. The crowd was fired upon, and there were several casualties with one or two deaths. The crowd turned back into the city carrying their victims in procession, and on their way set

fire to the National Bank buildings and killed its European manager. Altogether the mob violence was responsible for the deaths of five Englishmen and for the destruction by fire of a Bank, a Railway goods-shed and some other public buildings. Naturally, the officers of the place took umbrage at the events and vowed red-vengeance. The town was made over by the Civil to the Military authorities on the 10th April on the initiative of local officials and in anticipation of sanction from the higher authorities. The behaviour of the masses was not less reprehensible at Gujaranwala and Kasur.

At Gujaranwala and Kasur there was serious violence. At the latter place, on April 12th, crowds did considerable damage to the railway station, burnt a small oil shed, damaged signal and telegraph wires, attacked a train in which were some Europeans and beat two soldiers to death, a branch post-office was looted, the main post-office burnt, the Munsiff's Court set on fire, and other damage done. That is the official version summarised The popular version alleges previous provocation of the crowd.

At Gujaranwala, on April 14th, crowds surrounded and stoned a train, burnt a small railway bridge and fired another railway bridge where a calf had been killed by the police, as alleged, and hung up on the bridge as an insult to Hindus, to whom the cow is sacred. The telegraph-office, post-office and railway station were subsequently set on fire, as well as the Dak Bungalow, Kutcheri (Collector's office) a church, a school, and a railway shed.

These were the chief incidents. There were minor outbreaks elsewhere in smaller places, such as stoning of trains, cutting of wires, and setting fire to railway stations.

In the meantime there were sporadic outbreaks of violence in different parts of the country. In Lahore shootings and reprisals took place. Bad news came from far-off Calcutta. Hearing of the trouble in the Punjab, and on the invitation of Dr. Satyapal and Swami Shraddhananda, Gandhi started for Delhi on the 8th April. On his way however he was served with an order not to enter the Punjab or Delhi, and on his refusal to obey the order he was arrested and turned back from a way-side railway station, Palvel, by a special train to Bombay on the 10th April.

The news of the arrest created disturbances in Ahmedabad where some English and Indian officers were killed. Viramgam and Nadiad were also the scenes of some trouble on the 12th April. In Calcutta, likewise, the result of the disturbances was that five or six men were killed and twelve others were wounded due to firing. Gandhi after reaching Bombay helped in calming the populace and proceeded to Ahmedabad where his presence was helpful in restoring quiet. On account of these disturbances, he issued a statement suspending Satyagraha.

While matters stood thus, tragic events were fast developing in Amritsar. It may be noted that Martial Law was not declared as yet on the 13th April, though as the Government Report admits, *de facto* Martial Law was in force since the 10th April. As a matter of fact, Martial Law was formally proclaimed in Lahore and Amritsar on the 15th April, and shortly after in two or three other districts. On the 13th April, which was the Hindu New Year's Day, a large public meeting was advertised and held in the Jallianwala Bagh, which is an open ground in the midst of the city enclosed with walls which form the boundaries of houses overlooking it. It has a bottle-neck that forms the only entrance to it, and

so narrow that a carriage cannot pass along it. When twenty thousand people,—men, women and children,—gathered at the Bagh, General Dyer entered the place at the head of a force composed of 100 Indian troops and 50 British, while one Hansraj was lecturing to the audience, and gave orders forthwith to fire. His own version as given later before the Hunter Commission was that he ordered the people to disperse and then fired, but he admitted that he fired within two or three minutes of the order. In any case, it was obvious that 20,000 people could not disperse in 2 or 3 minutes especially through that narrow outlet, and when 1,600 rounds were fired,—and the firing stopped only when the ammunition had run out,—the casualties were, even according to Government's version, about 400 dead, while the wounded were estimated at between a thousand and two. The firing was done by the Indian troops, behind whom were placed the British troops,—all on an elevated platform in the Bagh. The greater tragedy really was that the dead and dying were left to suffer the whole night without water to drink, or medical attendance, or aid of any character. Dyer's contention—as it came out later—was that "the city having passed under the Military, he had tomtomed in the morning that no gatherings would be permitted and as the people openly defied him, he wanted to teach them a lesson so that they might not laugh at him. He would have fired, and fired longer, he said, if he had had the required ammunition. He had only fired 1,600 rounds because his ammunition had run out." "As a matter of fact," he said, "he had taken an armoured car but found that the passage to the Bagh would not admit it, and so he left it behind."

General Dyer's regime witnessed some unthinkable punishments. The water supply and the electric supply of Amritsar were cut off. Public flogging was common.

But the 'crawling order' surpassed the rest of his achievements. A missionary lady doctor named Miss Sherwood had been attacked while she was cycling in a lane by the people, and every one passing through the lane was ordered to crawl with belly to the ground. And all who lived in the street had to obey this order, despite the fact that Miss Sherwood was protected in that very lane by decent citizens. The incident became an object of merriment and joking at the hands of Quarter-Master-General Hudson in the Imperial Legislative Council.

The issue of third-class tickets on the railway was prohibited, which involved a general suspension of travelling by the Indian public. More than two persons were prohibited from marching on side-walks or pavements. Bicycles, "other than those owned by Europeans," were commandeered. People who had closed their shops were forced to open them, under severe penalties. Prices of commodities were fixed by military officers, carts were commandeered. A public platform for whippings was erected near the fort, and a number of triangles for floggings were erected in various parts of the city.

Let us now give some figures of the cases dealt with by the Tribunal at Amritsar On major charges 298 people were put before the Martial Law Commissioners, who tried cases unfettered by the ordinary recognised rules of procedure or laws of evidence. Of these, 218 were convicted, 51 were sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 79 for seven years, 10 for five years, 13 for three years and 11 for lesser periods. This does not take account of the cases dealt with summarily by military officers, numbering 60 persons, of whom 50 were convicted, and 105 persons convicted under Martial Law by Civil Magistrates.

In answer to a question by Justice Rankin, a Member of the Hunter Committee who asked, "Excuse me putting it in this way, General, but was it not a form of frightfulness?", General Dyer replied :

> "No, it was not. It was a horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful thing. I thought that I should shoot well and shoot strong, so that I or anybody else, should not have to shoot again. I think it is quite possible I could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but they would have come back again and laughed, and I should have made what I consider to be a fool of myself."

And General Dyer's action was immediately approved by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in a telegram sent to him with Sir Michael's approval: "*Your action correct. Lieutenant Governor approves.*"

All these facts are admissions made by General Dyer before the Hunter Commission in the early part of 1920. The full facts however were quite unknown for a year after the event, even the bare news being unknown at the time, and for months together later. The censoring of news was so strict and the ingress and egress of people to and from the Punjab was so rigidly regulated, that the All-India Congress Committee learnt, in any detail, the news of the Amritsar tragedy only when it was broken to it in July 1919 in Calcutta (at one of its meetings held at the Law Association chamber), not only with bated breath and in whispering tones but with the charge that it should be kept strictly confidential. The tragedy of the Punjab was not confined to Amritsar. Lahore, Gujaranwala, Kasur and other places shared the scenes of confusion and carnage and the gruesome details of the events and the atrocities, the barbarities and inhuman acts perpetrated by Col. Johnson, Bosworth-Smith, Col. O'Brien and other officers, both Civil and Military, are really blood-curdling.

According to the official Report contained in the White Paper issued to Parliament, the administration of Martial Law was 'more intensive' in Lahore than elsewhere.[1] The Curfew order, of course, was immediately put in force and people out after 8 p.m. were liable to be shot, flogged, fined, or imprisoned or otherwise punished. Those whose shops were closed were ordered to open them; the alternatives were either being shot or have the shops publicly opened and then contents distributed free to the public.

"Lawyers' agents and touts" were ordered to be registered and forbidden to leave the city without permit. Occupiers of premises on whose walls Martial Law notices were posted were ordered to protect them and were liable to punishment if in any way they were defaced or torn, although they could not stay out at night to watch them. More than two persons abreast were not allowed on the side-walks. Students of colleges were ordered to report themselves four times a day to the military authorities at varying places of assembly. *Langars* or public food kitchens, which had been opened by philanthropic persons for the feeding of those who could not purchase food were ordered to be closed; motor cars and motor bicycles belonging to Indians were ordered to be delivered up to the military authorities and were handed over to officials for their use. Electric *punkas* and other electric fittings belonging to Indians were commandeered and stripped from the houses for the use of British soldiers. Public conveyances were ordered to report themselves daily at places a considerable distance from the city. There was one case of an elderly man who was caught tending his cow outside his shop door in a side lane after 8 p.m. He

[1] This and the succeeding accounts are taken from *Amritsar*, by B. G. Horniman.

was seized and flogged for the breach of the Curfew order. Drivers of *tongas* (hackney carriages) had participated in the *hartal*. To teach them a lesson, 300 tongas were commandeered. Of those who were permitted to ply for hire, orders to report themselves at certain times at places distant from the busy parts of the city, and their detention at the pleasure of the military officials concerned, effectually destroyed their chances of a day's earnings. Colonel Johnson admitted that many of his orders were directed against the educated and professional classes, lawyers etc. He considered they were the classes from which the political agitators were drawn. Professional men and other residents on whose premises Martial Law orders were posted had to set servants to watch them lest they should be torn or defaced, perhaps by a police agent, one such case was detected. When they applied for permits for such guardians of the placards to be out after 8 p.m., they were told they could have passes for this purpose for themselves but not for their servants. Students, boys of 16 to 20, were the objects of special attention. The students of several colleges in Lahore, which is a large University town, were ordered to report themselves four times daily at a place, in one case four miles distant from their college. In the burning sun of Lahore in April, the hottest time of the year, when the temperature is often over 108 in the shade, these youths had to walk 19 miles daily. Some of them fainted by the wayside. Colonel Johnson thought it did them good, it kept them out of mischief. A Martial Law notice was torn from one of the walls on one college. The whole professional staff, including the Principal, were arrested, and marched under military escort to the fort, where they were kept in military custody for three days. They were given "a corner in the fort" for their accommodation and allowed to sleep on the roof. The closing of the *langars* or public kitchens which had been opened by philanthropic persons,

was explained by Colonel Johnson on the ground that they were used for seditious propaganda. Under cross-examination he could produce no justification for this assertion. He had no evidence and he could not say who gave him the information.

The headman (a person of high status in the village) was tied to a tree and publicly flogged for his own punishment and the edification of the village. There was apparently no court or pretence of judicial procedure, summary or otherwise. There was only summary flogging.

Colonel Johnson, however, was quite pleased with what he did in this respect, and the Europeans of Lahore entertained him at a farewell dinner and lauded him as the "protector of the poor"—the poor people who suffered a six weeks' agony under his rule. Colonel O'Brien who administered Martial Law in Gujaranwala, Captain Doweton who had charge of Kasur, and Mr. Bosworth Smith, a Civilian officer who was in command at Sheikhupura, particularly distinguished themselves.

Regarding the bombing at Gujaranwala, the public are asked to believe that this promiscuous dropping of bombs and the firing of altogether 255 rounds of a machine-gun, apparently at close quarters, into crowds of people, resulted in the killing of nine and wounding of only about sixteen people.

Colonel O'Brien in his evidence before the Committee said the crowd was fired on "wherever found." This was referring to the aeroplanes. Once it was 'found' by an aeroplane in charge of Lieut. Dodkins R.A.F. in the form of twenty peasants in a field. Lieut. Dodkins said he machine-gunned them till they fled. He saw another party in front of a house being addressed by a man, so

he dropped a bomb on them because he "had no doubt in his mind that they were not a marriage or funeral party." Major Carbey R.A.F. was the gentleman who bombed a party of people because he thought they were rioters going or coming from the city. Major Carbey's state of mind may be gathered from some further extracts from the report of his evidence.

> "The crowd was running away and he fired to disperse them. As the crowd dispersed, he fired the machine gun into the village itself. He supposed some shots hit the houses. He could make no discrimination between the innocent and the guilty. He was at a height of 200 feet and could see perfectly what he was doing. His object was not accomplished by the dropping of bombs alone."
>
> "The firing was not intended to do damage alone. It was in the interests of the villagers themselves. By killing a few, he thought he would prevent the people from collecting again This had a moral effect."
>
> "After that he went over the city, dropping bombs, and fired at the people who were trying to get away."

Gujaranwala, Kasur, and Sheikupura, like Amritsar and Lahore, had their Curfew order, prohibition of travelling for Indians, floggings public and private, wholesale arrests and punishments by Summary Courts and Special Tribunals

Colonel O'Brien was responsible for an order that when Indians met British officers they must salute, alight from their carriages, or dismount if they were riding or driving, and lower their umbrellas if they were carrying any. This order, Colonel O'Brien told the Committee, "was good by way of bringing home to the people that they had new masters." People were whipped, fined, and otherwise punished for disobedience of this monstrous

order. He was responsible for the arrest of numbers of people, who were kept in gaol for as long as six weeks without being brought to trial. In one case a number of leading citizens were summarily arrested, put in a goods truck, where they were huddled together after being marched several miles in the burning sun, some of them half-clad, and sent by train to Lahore. They were refused permission to answer the calls of nature, and were kept in the truck in these conditions for about forty-four hours. Their horrible plight hardly needs description. As they were marched through the streets, an ever-growing crowd of prisoners,—for Colonel O'Brien went on making arrests indiscriminately as he proceeded, —they were handcuffed and chained together. Hindus and Muslims were chained together. This was regarded by the populace as a jibe at Hindu-Muslim unity. Colonel O'Brien said it was accidental. As an example of the spirit of the whole proceeding, it may be mentioned that one of the victims, an elderly citizen, was a noted benefactor of the town, who gave a lakh of rupees (£10,000) to found the King George School in commemoration of the King's visit, and had contributed largely to War Relief Funds and War Loans.

Another example of Colonel O'Brien's methods is the arrest of an elderly farmer, as a hostage for his two sons, whom he was unable to produce. Colonel O'Brien ordered this man's property to be confiscated, and issued a warning that anybody attempting to help him with his crops would be shot. He admitted the man had committed no offence himself, but "he did not say where his sons were."

These are only incidents in Colonel O'Brien's lengthy record. Two hundred persons were convicted by Summary Courts, and received sentences of whipping, or

from one month up to two years' imprisonment. The Commission convicted 149 people, of whom 22 were sentenced to death, 108 to transportation for life, and others to sentences varying from ten years downwards. Colonel O'Brien's final achievement was to rush a large batch of cases through in about twenty-four hours, when he heard that Martial Law was to terminate the next day. The people concerned were given little opportunity of defending themselves, and cases fixed for some days ahead were rushed into the Court post-haste, so anxious was Colonel O'Brien that none should escape his justice by reason of the lapse of Martial Law.

Captain Doveton was in a sort of independent command in the Kasur sub-division, the headquarters of which is the fairly large town of Kasur. At this place a public gallows was erected for hangings, though apparently it was never used, and was taken down by order of the superior authorities. It was there, however, for some days to the terror of the inhabitants. A large public cage was also erected near the railway station, designed to accommodate 150 persons, and here suspects were incarcerated before the public gaze. The whole male population of the town was paraded for identification.

Floggings took place in public, and photographic records of these disgusting incidents are in existence, showing that the victims were stripped naked to the knees, and tied to telegraph poles or triangles. Publicity was not casual, or accidental, but designed. A sort of levee of the 'bad characters' of the town was held for the purpose by Captain Doveton's order, and on at least one occasion prostitutes were brought to witness the floggings. Just as Colonel Johnson had his 'one regrettable incident,' when a wedding party was flogged,

this flogging in the presence of prostitutes was the one thing which seemed to excite Captain Doveton's shame when he was taxed with it, while giving evidence before the Hunter Committee. His explanation was that he had ordered the Sub-Inspector of Police to round up the bad characters, and bring them to witness the floggings, but was 'horrified' when he saw these wo ien there. But he could not send them away, because he was unable to find an escort for them. So they remained to witness the floggings.

Captain Doveton was a prolific inventor of 'minor punishments.' His sole object in inventing minor punishments, he told the Committee, was to make things, "as mild as circumstances would permit." Offenders against Martial Law were set to work at loading and unloading goods waggons in the station yard. He instituted a system of making people touch the ground with their foreheads, —a sort of variation of Colonel Dyer's crawling order.

Mr. Bosworth-Smith was a civilian officer who administered Martial Law in the sub-division of Sheikupura. He admitted that Martial Law was not 'essential,' but he thought it was 'desirable' and keeping it on was 'a good thing.' He tried all the cases in his area, and, as elsewhere, sentences of flogging were inflicted, which were carried out at the rising of the Court. He tried 477 persons between May 6 and May 20.

An order was issued by the military authorities, compelling schoolboys to parade three times a day to salute the flag. The order applied to the infant classes and children of five and six years of age were included. It is actually alleged that there were fatal cases of sunstroke resulting from this, and it is admitted that children fainted from undue exposure to the sun. It is

alleged too, that in some instances the boys were made to repeat: *"I have committed no offence. I will not commit any offence. I repent, I repent, I repent."*

"Major Smith, Administrator of Martial Law in Gujaranwala, Gujrat, and Lyallpur, was asked by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad whether the order was enforced in all places in his area and whether it applied to all classes, including infant-classes. The Major replied that it applied to all places in his area where there were troops, and that even infant-class boys of the ages of five and six were required to attend the parade, but the little boys were exempted from the evening parade.

Colonel O'Brien, in his evidence, said that "one day when he was at Wazirabad, he saw a boy fainting during his march to the flag, and wrote to the military authorities." He did not know if the next day this duty was increased from two to three times. Questioned, if it was so done, would it not be hard on the boys, Colonel O'Brien said, 'No.'

The idea of repentance, however, was greatly to the fore in the mind of Mr. Bosworth-Smith. He admitted that he had suggested the erection of a 'House of Repentance' at Sangla. "His idea was good," he said, but he denied that it was his object to build this house at a cost of Rs. 10,000.

For a detailed account, however, the reader is referred to the Congress Committee's evidence and reports on the subject. The former contains nearly 1,500 affidavits given by sufferers.

Gandhi was doubtless greatly shocked by the unexpected turn events had taken and admitted that he

had made "a blunder of Himalayan dimensions which had enabled ill-disposed persons, not true passive resisters at all, to perpetrate disorders," and while declaring his readiness to assist in every possible way to restore normal conditions, he announced the suspension of Passive Resistance. Now was the turn of Government to restore order. Lord Chelmsford published a Resolution dated 14th April 1919, in which Government's intention was announced in the plainest terms to employ all available forces to put a speedy end to disaster. Meanwhile the outbreak of the 3rd Afghan War complicated the situation in the Punjab, and the mobilization of troops took place on the 4th May and Martial Law dragged on its bloody length until the 11th June, except as regards Railway land in which it was continued for long afterwards. The undue prolongation of Martial Law led to Sir Sankaran Nair resigning his membership of the Executive Council of the Viceroy on the 19th July as a protest. All this time the Punjab was isolated by a rigorous censorship of news and control of traffic. The Rev. C. F. Andrews was prohibited from setting foot in the Punjab, kept in remand for a day and then deported and arrested at Amritsar early in May, and Mr Eardley Norton, Barrister-at-Law, was prohibited from entering the Punjab to which he wanted to go in order to take up the cause of the prisoners. There was a universal cry for an enquiry into the Punjab wrongs and for the mitigation of the barbarous sentences meted out by Martial Law tribunals. Lala Harikishen Lal, a distinguished Congressman and financier, was sentenced to transportation for life and forfeiture of property (worth 40 lakhs). It was in September 1919 that the Viceroy, to anticipate later events, announced the appointment of the Hunter Committee to enquire into the Punjab disorders, but forthwith followed it up on the 18th September by the Indemnity Bill which usually comes in the wake of

Martial Law. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya vigorously pleaded for its postponement in a 4¼ hours' speech, but the defence was that the Bill only indemnified from legal, as apart from departmental penalties, actions taken "in good faith and in a reasonable belief that they were necessary for maintaining or restoring order", while it left the ordinary courts to judge, according to the usual legal standards, whether these conditions were fulfilled.

Sir Dinshaw Wacha "declared himself convinced that Government was justified in the attitude it had assumed towards the Indemnity Bill." Mrs. Besant who had all along been fighting Gandhi said that the Rowlatt Bill contained nothing which an honest citizen should object to and wrote on April 18th that "when the mob begins to pelt them (soldiers) with brick-bats, it is more merciful to order the soldiers to fire a few volleys of buckshot." This gave rise to the expression, "Bullets for Brick-bats" which since became associated with her name, and Mrs. Besant was virtually at the nadir of her popularity since that time. A definite cleavage of parties, the germs of which were already noticeable at Delhi, came thus into existence since April 1919

The All-India Congress Committee met on the 20th and 21st April and protested against the Externment orders passed on Gandhi by the Punjab and Delhi Governments and urged an enquiry into the Punjab wrongs. A Deputation composed of Mr. Vittalbhai Patel and Mr. N. C. Kelkar was appointed, to sail at once to England, in view of the seriousness of the political situation. They actually did so on the 29th April 1919. On the 8th June a second meeting of the A.I.C.C. took place at Allahabad which was occasioned by an Ordinance of the Governor-General dated 21st April, delegating powers to the Punjab Government, whereby any offence

committed on or after the 30th March could be transferred for trial to Martial Law Tribunals. Obviously this date was fixed because *hartals* began that day. Prisoners were not allowed to choose their own counsel. Mr. C. F. Andrews who had been pressed by all the leading Editors in India, including Mrs. Besant and Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, to make an independent Enquiry into the Punjab affair was arrested, as we have already related, when he tried to visit the Punjab, and Martial Law was continued. These and other matters were considered at the meeting of the 8th June, and it was suggested that the scope of the enquiry by the Committee to be appointed should include Sir Michael O'Dwyer's regime in the Punjab, with special reference to the method of recruitment for the Indian Army and the Labour Corps during the War, the raising of the War Loan, and the administration of Martial Law. Mr. B. G. Horniman had been deported for his strong condemnation of Government's policy in the Punjab in the columns of *The Bombay Chronicle*, and the A.I.C.C urged the cancellation of the orders against his return to India.

Incidentally, it may be noted that with the exit of Mr. Horniman, people felt the want of an organ and found it in *Young India*.

Young India had been originally started by Jamnadas Dwaraka Das during the Home Rule days, and later came into the hands of a Syndicate of whom Mr. Shankerlal Banker was a member. When Mr. B. G. Horniman was deported and *The Bombay Chronicle* was put under censorship, Gandhi took over charge of *Young India*.

To resume the story. A Committee was appointed to arrange for the conduct of an enquiry into the Punjab

occurrences, to take all necessary legal proceedings in India or England in relation thereto and to collect funds for the purpose. Into this Committee were co-opted later, on October 16th, Gandhi, Andrews, Shraddhananda Swami and others. In the beginning of November Mr. Andrews was suddenly called upon to go to South Africa at a critical moment. He left all the evidence he had collected with the Congress Committee. It was resolved to secure the services of Messrs. Neville and Captain, solicitors of London and Bombay respectively, to assist in the work of the Sub-Committee. A cable was sent by the Hon'ble Pandit Malaviya on behalf of the A.I.C.C. to the Premier, the Secretary of State and Lord Sinha, asking for the suspension of the "execution of all sentences passed under Martial Law, pending proposed enquiry." By this time Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha had become a member of the Privy Council, a K. C., and a Baron, as the result of which he took the name of Lord Sinha of Raipur. He was also appointed Under-Secretary of State for India, and later on, it was he that piloted the Government of India Bill through the House of Lords. The A.I.C.C. next met in Calcutta on July 19th and 20th, primarily to consider the question of the venue of the Congress, but it was resolved that the Congress should be held at Amritsar. The demand for a committee of enquiry directly by His Majesty's Government was reiterated, and legal authority was sought for it to revise, annul or suspend Martial Law sentences. It was on July 19th, it will be remembered, that Sir Sankaran Nair resigned his membership of the Governor-General's Executive Council as a protest against the continuance of Martial Law, and the A.I.C.C. recorded its grateful appreciation of his resignation and requested him to proceed to England to lay the case of the Punjab for speedy redress of its grievances. A sum of Rs. 10,000 was collected for the Punjab Committee. On the 21st July

the A.P.I. published the following statement by Gandhi dropping Civil Resistance for the time being :—

Bombay, July 21. "In the course of a letter to the Press Mr. M. K. Gandhi writes: 'The Government of India had given me, through His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, a grave warning that the resumption of civil disobedience is likely to be attended with serious consequences to public security. This warning has been reinforced by His Excellency the Governor himself at the interviews to which I was summoned. In response to these warnings and to the urgent desire publicly expressed by Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govinda Raghava Aiyar, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar and several Editors, I have, after deep consideration, decided not to resume civil resistance for the time being. I may add that several prominent friends belonging to what is called the Extremist Party have given me the same advice on the sole ground of their fear of a recrudescence of violence on the part of those who might not have understood the doctrine of civil resistance. When, in common with most other Satyagrahis, I came to the conclusion that the time was ripe for the resumption of civil resistance as part of Satyagraha, I sent a respectful letter to H. E. the Viceroy, advising him of my intention so to do and urging that the Rowlatt Legislation should be withdrawn, that an early declaration be made as to the appointment of a strong and impartial Committee to investigate the Punjab disturbances, with power to revise the sentences passed, and that Babu Kalinath Roy, who was, as could be proved from the record of the case, unjustly convicted, should be released. The Government of India deserve thanks for the decision in Mr. Roy's Case, (Mr. Roy was the Editor of *The Tribune*). Though it does not do full justice to Mr. Roy, the very material reduction in the sentence is a substantial measure of justice. I have been assured that the committee of enquiry, such as I have urged for, is in the process of being appointed. With these indications of good will, it would be unwise on my part not to listen to the warning given by the

Government. Indeed, my acceptance of the Government's advice is a further demonstration of the nature of civil resistance. A civil resister never seeks to embarrass the Government. I feel that I shall better serve the country and the Government and those Punjabi leaders who, in my opinion, have been so unjustly convicted and so cruelly sentenced, by the suspension of civil resistance for the time being. I have been accused of throwing a lighted match. If my occasional resistance be a lighted match, the Rowlatt Legislation and the persistence in retaining it on the Statute Book is a thousand matches scattered throughout India. The only way to avoid civil resistance altogether is to withdraw that legislation. Nothing that the Government have published in justification of that Bill has moved the Indian Public to change their attitude of opposition to it.' In conclusion, Mr. Gandhi advised his fellow Satyagrahis to seek the co-operation of all in the propagation of pure Swadeshi and the promotion of the Hindu-Muslim unity."

The Joint Parliamentary Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Selborne was at this time sitting in England and we may take up the question of the several Deputations that went to England, though we are primarily concerned with the Congress Deputation, which was ably represented by Mr. Vittalbhai J. Patel and Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao. These, along with Messrs. Lokamanya Tilak, B. C. Pal, G. S. Khaparde, Dr P. J. Mehta, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, N. C. Kelkar, Syed Hasan Imam, Dr. Sathaye, Mr. B. G. Horniman and Mr. P. Chenchia formed a Congress Delegation to lay India's claims before the British public. Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, ex-Dewan of Mysore, by the dignity of his bearing, his independence and straightforwardness raised the Congress in public estimation and earned the encomiums of Mr. Ben Spoor, M. P., who on behalf of the Labour

Party was looking after Congress interests in England and who was the Secretary of the British Congress Committee at the time. Other deputations that went to England were the Moderate Deputation, the Justice Party and the two Home Rule Deputations, the minority and the majority ones, for, by this time the All-India Home Rule League became split into two, composed of those who swore by the Delhi Resolution of the Congress and those who still harked back to the Bombay (Special) Congress. Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar represented the minority wing, while Mrs. Besant carved out a new organization called the National Home Rule League and represented it. It may be noted that the Maharashtra Home Rule League Deputation was turned back from Colombo and not permitted to proceed to England, though the Lokamanya had to be given passports shortly after in connection with his case against Sir Valentine Chirol. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress did not at this time see eye to eye with the protagonists of the Delhi Congress and inclined more favourably to the Bombay compromise. There was a veritable tug of war between Mr. Vittalbhai J. Patel and the Committee and a sharp exchange of letters in which "he who paid the piper claimed, and ultimately got, the right to call the tune." and the British Committee had to yield. At first the Committee took the view that each of the five Delegations then in England should send a representative and that they all should meet and define their course of conduct at an ordinary meeting of the Committee, which they were asked to attend as visitors. This provoked a sharp reply from Vittalbhai who expressed his surprise that the Committee should have recognised other Deputations than the Congress one, and who, point-blank, asked those members of the Committee who were not prepared

to carry out the mandate of the Congress to sever their connection with the Committee. The Committee was also called upon to draw up a written Constitution for itself and present it to the Congress, which it did. Opportunity was taken of the presence of Indian delegates to organize meetings of propaganda in various counties in England and a farewell dinner was given by the Labour Party at the House of Commons and a message was sent to the Indian National Congress. The Independent Labour Party at its Glasgow Conference passed a Resolution supporting self-determination for India along with Ireland and Egypt. Likewise did the National Peace Council pass a Resolution at its Annual Conference and the Labour Party, at its Annual Conference at Scarborough, demand that "the principle of democratic self-determination should be applied to the reorganization of the Indian Government with adequate protection to minorities." All the organizations condemned the Punjab atrocities equally vehemently.

Vittalbhai J. Patel and the Congress Deputation were called upon in England to face a double fight. On the one hand they had to settle up with the British Committee of the Congress, and on the other with Mrs. Besant who was indefatigable in her energies and in her opposition to the Congress.

While the Deputations were in England, an acute and unseemly controversy took place between the Congress Deputation and Mrs. Besant which led to mutual recriminations and even accusations of uttering falsehood against one another. Both the Congress Deputation and Mrs. Besant, we have already explained, looked to the Labour Party to have their views represented in the House of Commons. Mrs. Besant was for supporting the Montagu Scheme with certain modifications. The Congress Deputation was for the Delhi Resolution with its emphasis on

self-determination and full Responsible Government. Woman suffrage was intended by Mr. Montagu to be left to the decision of the Local Legislatures, but the Congress Deputation wanted its acceptance to be incorporated in the Act. Then there was the Albert Hall meeting held on the 25th of October, 1919, at which the open differences between the two wings created an awkward position for the Chairman, Mr. Lansbury. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Home Rule League for India Branch established by Mrs. Besant in London. However, the Resolution, as eventually passed, was unobjectionable in that, "this mass meeting of the British Commonwealth which insists upon the right of self-government being conferred on each of the nations within its boundaries, hereby declares that the Indian people are entitled to receive at the earliest opportunity the full right of self-determination."

Mr. Lansbury was the Chairman-Elect and his intervention brought about this form which replaced the original draft intended to support Mr. Montagu's Bill as a first step towards the fulfilment of the declaration made in the House of Commons on August 20th, 1917 Mrs. Besant, nevertheless, in her speech supported Mr. Montagu's Bill in unmistakable terms and Vittalbhai J. Patel had to contradict her. Finally, in connection with these recriminations, Mr. G. S. Khaparde with his pungent humour described Mrs. Besant as *Putana* to which she seriously objected, but which description was in detail justified by Vittalbhai. At this distance of time, and knowing as we do Mrs. Besant's great services to the Nation, we cannot help saying that the description was unfortunate and undeserved, in spite of Mrs. Besant's unconcealed antipathy to the Congress and its activities in London in 1919. It is to be feared that there was something worse which should account for this irrepressible

anxiety on Mrs. Besant's part to support Mr. Montagu in spirit and in letter. Gandhi always treated her with reverence and was always in the habit of rising from his seat to receive her, such was the regard shown towards her by Gandhi and the Congress, but she treated them contemptuously (refer to the events of 1930). Even at that, one should say that Mr. Khaparde's description of her was not only in bad form, but in bad taste and worse spirit. Let us take this opportunity to state this much.

The Punjab Enquiry

Affairs in India now demand our attention. In pursuance of the Resolution of the A.I.C.C., Swami Shraddhananda, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Malaviya went to the Punjab in the last week of June to enquire into the happenings in the Punjab. Mr. Andrews went there shortly after. Both the Pandits returned, then Motilalji visited Punjab again later. Jawaharlal and Purushottam Das Tandon joined Mr. Andrews. Gandhi joined the party on October 17th, as soon as the order against him was withdrawn. The people of the Punjab were filled with panic, but confidence came back when Gandhi was present in their midst. His arrival was nothing less than a triumph both at Lahore and at Amritsar. Meanwhile the official enquiry was announced. Its terms of reference fell short of the Congress demand. Nevertheless, it was considered advisable to co-operate with the official Committee. Mr. C. R. Das arrived from Calcutta presently and appeared on behalf of the Congress before Lord Hunter's Commission, but unexpected difficulties faced the Congress Sub-Committee and it was obliged reluctantly to withdraw co-operation from the Disorders Enquiry Committee. The history of the situation was set forth in a memorandum. The Sub-Committee wanted some of the Martial Law prisoners to be

brought under custody to attend and assist in the enquiry but was refused permission. It therefore appealed against the Punjab Government to the Government of India and the Secretary of State, but they declined to interfere. The prisoners in the gaol endorsed the decision to withdraw. Later experience only proved the wisdom of the course adopted. Amongst other things, there was this fact, that the restricted terms of reference would not have allowed the Hunter Commission to entertain matters which justly came under the events of April 1919, but which were unjustly excluded from the reference. Accordingly, the Congress undertook a separate enquiry by a Committee composed of Messrs. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Das, Fazl-ul-Haq and Abbas Tyabji with Mr. K. Santanam as Secretary. But soon after, Pandit Motilal, having been elected President of the Amritsar Congress, resigned and was relieved of his membership of the Committee, Mr. Jayakar taking his place. Mr. Neville, the London solicitor, who was in charge of the Privy Council appeals was with the Committee. It was also resolved to acquire the Jallianwala Bagh and raise a memorial, for which a committee was appointed with Pandit Malaviya as President. To anticipate matters, that Bagh has been acquired for the Nation. The non-official Report, however, could not be ready for the Amritsar Congress, and at the time it was even contemplated that a special session of the Congress might have to be held to consider it when ready, in detail and at leisure, but this much the Committee stated, namely, that "the admissions made by General Dyer before the Hunter Commission established beyond dispute that his action of the 13th April was nothing but a cold-blooded, calculated, massacre of innocent, unoffending, unarmed men and children, unparalleled for its heartless and cowardly brutality in modern times." Judged by the happenings of April and May in the Punjab, we can readily understand the

rumour prevalent at the time that it was General Dyer's intention at first to raze Amritsar to the ground as a fitting punishment for the horrors of the 10th April committed by the populace. Alogether, towards the latter half of the year 1919, the situation in India,—what with the appointment of the Hunter Committee with no Congress representative thereon, and with a Reform Bill which was but a poor performance of a vast promise,—was not merely gloomy but portentous. We extract below in full a "Manifesto on the Situation in India unanimously adopted by the Delegates from the Indian National Congress (to England) and the British Committee of the Indian National Congress in the autumn of 1919," soon after the appointment of the Hunter Commission and when the Reform Bill was before Parliament.

MANIFESTO ON THE SITUATION IN INDIA

"It is time that the British public had a clear vision regarding India, where, through the folly of the Government a cloud bigger than a man's hand has already gathered, threatening to break into a storm, the dimensions of which no one can foresee.

"In moving a Resolution conveying the thanks of Parliament to the Forces engaged in the Great War, Mr. Lloyd George said, 'As to India, by her remarkable contribution to our triumph, notably in the East, she had won a new claim to our consideration, a claim so irresistible that it ought to overpower, and must overpower, all the prejudice and timidity which might stand in the way of her progress.' So far as 'a new claim' is concerned, the Government of India since the Armistice has requited India's glorious services by legislative and administrative repression, depriving India of freedom of the Press, freedom of speech, freedom of the person, provoking public protest and riots, particularly in the Punjab, with Martial Law, deportation of leaders beloved by the people, confiscation of property,

suppression of newspapers, execution, public flogging, imprisonment of prominent and patriotic citizens on fantastic charges, refusal of permission to choose counsel for their defence before Military Tribunals, shooting by machine-guns and bombing by military planes of defenceless men and women,—a regime of blood and iron which, if practised by Germans, would have filled Englishmen with horror and indignation.

"To make matters worse, a whitewashing Commission of Enquiry has been appointed without any representation from the Indian National Congress and the Indian Muslim League, and an Indemnity Bill passed by the Government of India which will prevent those officials who may be found guilty from being properly punished. Prussianism could no further go."

If the British Committee of the Indian National Congress was, as we have seen, so deeply impressed with the seriousness of the situation in India, as to publish the Manifesto herein extracted, imagine what should have been the feeling in India. The feeling was aggravated by the inadequacy of the Reform Bill which embodied the Montford Scheme Only the Grand Committees were not there. But Dyarchy, nominated membership of Legislatures, the Council of State, powers of certification and veto, ordinance-making powers,—and all those reactionary aspects of a constitution which the country had protested against all these years, but which have been embodied in an aggravated form in the Act of 1935—these were the malformations and monsters that the Amritsar Congress was called upon to fight. It must be evident to the reader that by this time the fissiparous forces always operating in Indian politics and altogether inevitable under a foreign rule, must have been vigorously at work in India. They had manifested themselves in the Home Rule League itself. At Amritsar they appeared in their full strength. Lokamanya Tilak had by this time returned from England where he lost his

Case against Sir Valentine Chirol for defamation. The opinions that he had expressed in England were that he would take whatever was given and fight hard for the rest. They did not appear so hostile to the Scheme as those indicated by him as soon as he landed in India. Here he was sure that the Reform Scheme was quite inadequate. Nevertheless, he wired his congratulations to the King (or Cabinet) on the passing of the Reform Bill on behalf of the Indian people, while on his way to the Amritsar Congress, from a Railway Station (Gangapur) and offered 'Responsive Co-operation' in the matter of working the Reforms. The phrase was coined by Mr. Baptista and the telegram was drafted by Mr. Kelkar. This was quite unexpected in Congress circles and the Amritsar Congress became the scene of a battle royal between the contending parties.

At Amritsar, Mr. C. R. Das was greatly in evidence before the Congress. He had shot up into prominence easily even in 1917 when he had espoused the cause of Mrs. Besant for the Presidentship of the Calcutta Session. At the Delhi Congress (1918), he took a leading part in demolishing the compromise of the Bombay Special Session (1918). At Amritsar, naturally, it was a measuring of strength between the rapidly vanishing Old Guard of orators, whose ranks were by this time reinforced by Mrs Besant's accession to them, and the new Nationalists who were irrepressible. Das came to the Congress with his resolutions ready and adopted the strategy of moving his, before the official ones were even put forward. The Resolution on Reforms placed before the Amritsar Session was Mr. Das's draft as approved of by the Subjects Committee. This Resolution underwent a serious change in the open session by the incorporation of a paragraph at the end stating that "pending the introduction of Responsible Government, the people would

so work the Reforms as to secure its early establishment."

The implication here was that the co-operation offered would be responsive, in the measure in which Government would co-operate with the people. It will be remembered that the famous Announcement of August 20th, 1917, by Mr. Montagu embodies a reference to this bilateral co-operation. Mr. Das omitted all reference to it. Gandhi suggested an elaborate reference in a separate paragraph.

The Amritsar Congress (1919) was a triumph for national self-respect. At that Congress, the Indian politicians were keenly divided in views. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Gandhi wanted to work the Reforms on the basis of offering co-operation in the measure in which Government co-operated with the people. Mr. C. R. Das was for rejecting the scheme. He moved the main Resolution of the day which ran as follows:—

> "1. That this Congress reiterates its declaration of last year that India is fit for full Responsible Government and repudiates all assumptions and assertions to the contrary.
>
> "2. That this Congress adheres to the Resolution passed at the Delhi Congress regarding Constitutional Reforms and is of opinion that the Reforms Act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing.
>
> "3. That this Congress further urges that Parliament should take early steps to establish full Responsible Government in India in accordance with the principle of Self-determination."

Gandhi moved an amendment omitting the word 'disappointing' and adding a fourth paragraph which ran as follows:—

"4. Pending such introduction, this Congress begs loyally to respond to the sentiments in the Royal Proclamation, namely, 'Let the new era begin with a common determination among my people and my officers to work together for a common purpose,' and trusts that both the authorities and the people will co-operate so to work the Reforms as to secure the early establishment of full Responsible Government.

"And this Congress offers its warmest thanks to the Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu for his labours in connection with them."

Finally, a formula was evolved which was accepted by the Congress. In the final form, the Resolution embodies the original Resolution moved by Mr. Das with the replacement of Gandhi's extra paragraph by the following:—

"Pending such introduction, this Congress trusts that, so far as may be possible, the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government, and this Congress offers its thanks to the Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu for his labours in connection with the Reforms."

Mrs. Besant's alternative proposition was lost and Mr. Das's, as finally agreed to, was passed.

The compromise effected was however not an indubious one, although it must be said that Mr. Das's speech made it clear that he reserved for the Nation the right of pursuing a policy of obstruction if necessary and co-operation if possible. The Resolution was a triumph neither for Das nor for Gandhi exclusively. It was a triumph for both, the addition of the rider for Gandhi, and its amended form for Das. By that time it was clear that the stalwarts of the Indian Congress could not always see eye to eye. That was only to be expected

But the irony of the position was that while Das was inclined to obstruction and rejection—shall we say, Non-co-operation?—Gandhi was there as the apostle of co-operation. Yes, that he was. Whatever the verdict of posterity be upon the Resolution on Reforms at Amritsar, there is no manner of doubt whatever that the whole Congress was a triumph for Gandhi. He had already impressed the Congress with his personalty, his point of view, his principles and philosophy, his code of ethics, his cult of Truth and Non-violence. We shall presently see how. The Amritsar Congress passed 50 resolutions which embrace a wide variety of topics, ranging from a demand for the recall of Lord Chelmsford to the call for an investigation of the Land Revenue system, Labour conditions, and the woes of third-class passengers. The Congress itself was attended by 36,000 people, of whom over 6,000 were ordinary delegates and there were besides these some 1,200 Tenant delegates. The rest were visitors. The atmosphere of the Congress was charged with electricity. Punjab and its atrocities naturally claimed the greatest attention. Gandhi was anxious that the mob violence in the Punjab and Gujarat should be condemned. The Subjects Committee threw out the Resolution. Gandhi was disappointed. It was late at night. He firmly, but politely and respectfully, expressed his inability to be in the Congress if the Congress could not see its way to accepting his view-point. The next morning, amidst the whinings and whimperings of the bulk of delegates, Resolution V was approved which, "while fully recognizing the grave provocation that led to a sudden outburst of mob frenzy, expressed the deep regret of the Congress at, and its condemnation of, the excesses committed in certain parts of the Punjab and Gujarat resulting in the loss of lives and injury to person and property during the month of April last." Gandhi's speech on the subject was superb.

It encompassed within a short range his whole plan of campaign and his future policy.

> "There is no greater Resolution before this Congress than this one. The whole key to success in the future lies in your hearty recognition of the truth underlying it, and acting up to it. To the extent we fail in recognizing the Eternal Truth that underlies it, to that extent we are bound to fail I say if there was no violence on our part,—we have abundant proof of it, and I can produce before you, chapter and verse from Viramgam, from Ahmedabad and from Bombay that there was violence on our part intended and committed. I agree that there was grave provocation given by the Government in arresting Dr Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal and in arresting me who was bent on a mission of peace at the invitation of Dr. Satyapal and Swamiji,—these troubles would not have arisen But the Government went mad at the time, we went mad also at the time. I say, do not return madness with madness, but return madness with sanity and the whole situation will be yours."

Ringing, soul-stirring words these! Only, the wonder is whether people understood their full significance then. Really, this Resolution set the tone for the Congress. Gandhi was not willing or ready to break with Government yet That was why a Resolution was passed, offering welcome to the Prince of Wales, thus repairing the omission at Delhi. That was why the rider to the Reforms Resolution offering co-operation was passed at Amritsar, though it was greatly diluted by the compromise Of a piece with this avowal of Truth and Non-violence, or allied to it, were the Resolutions on (1) Swadeshi, "recommending a revival of the ancient industry of hand-spinning and hand-weaving" (few people would have noticed the expression 'handspinning'), (2) on the prohibition of export of milch cows and breeding bullocks, (3) on the Liquor Policy of the Provinces, and

(4) on the amelioration of the grievances of Third and Intermediate class passengers. Not far removed from this batch comes the batch relating to gratitude to Muslims for recommending the discontinuance of cow-slaughter at Bakrid and the protest against the hostile attitude of some of the British ministers towards the Turkish and Khilaphat questions. The Amritsar Congress turned its attention to the lot of peasants after a number of years. The labourers also claimed its attention equally. The Unani system as well as the Ayurvedic system were commended to the attention of Government. The British Committee was thanked for its services and so was the Labour Party in England in general, and Mr. Ben Spoor in particular. The Lokamanya had just returned from England after befriending the Labour Party to which he gave a donation of £3,000. The Lokamanya was responsible, very likely, for the assertion that a permanent mission be established in England and elsewhere for Congress propaganda. Lala Lajpat Rai was thanked for his services to the country, in America, and the Congress Deputation for their services in England. 'Indians overseas' were not to be missed, the settlers in the Transvaal were still being deprived of their rights of property and trade till then enjoyed by them. Indian agitation raised its head in East Africa. Mr. Andrews's services to Indians abroad were not less entitled to the thanks of the country, than his services in the Punjab. The Congress, for the first time and publicly, explained why it was forced to boycott the Hunter Commission. The Lieutenant-Governor had "refused permission even to a few of the Punjab leaders undergoing imprisonment to attend and sit in the Committee Rooms even as prisoners under custody, to assist and instruct counsel in the same manner as the Government Counsel was instructed by the Commission." The Congress accordingly endorsed the boycott as 'a fitting and dignified action

and called upon the Sub-Committee to make an independent Report. The Congress congratulated Sir Sankaran Nair on his resignation and demanded the recall of Lord Chelmsford, the removal of General Dyer from his command, and of Sir Michael O'Dwyer from his membership of the Army Committee. There is a story relating to the Resolution of the recall of Lord Chelmsford which may be told here. He was hoping that if the Congress should table a Resolution asking for his recall, it would be opposed by some leading Moderate Congressman such as Mr. Sastri. But on the second day of the Congress, both Mr. Sastri and Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar left for Calcutta where the first sitting of the Liberal Federation was to be held. So Mr. Sastri was not there at the Congress when the Resolution came up, and Mr. B. N. Sarma jumped into the gap. He was too forward for the Liberals and so would not go to Calcutta. But he was too backward for the Nationalists and so would not endorse the recall of the Viceroy, and amidst a hostile demonstration managed to oppose the motion before the House. He only performed what he considered to be a duty. It was but recently that he had tendered his resignation of membership of the Supreme Legislative Council as a protest against the introduction into it of the second Rowlatt Bill, but forthwith withdrew it that very evening after attending a Viceregal party. At Amritsar he opposed the recall Resolution. Altogether he did notable service to Lord Chelmsford who rewarded him handsomely by appointing him to the Executive Council six months later in June 1920[1]. Dealing with the question of the Punjab wrongs, the Amritsar Congress asked for the cancellation

[1] Lord Chelmsford had at first recommended the name of the Maharaja of Burdwan to the vacancy, but Mr. Montagu wanted a man of Legislative experience and mentioned the name of Mr. Sastri

of the indemnities levied upon the people in certain places for injuries done to person and property, as well as the punishments meted out to University and School students under the Martial Law. The Reforms Resolution was reinforced by another on Fundamental Rights which was pressed for by the Grand Old Man, Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachariar at 10 o'clock in the night. Then the Congress pleaded for the repeal of the Press Act and the Rowlatt Act and the release of various prisoners who were still in jails despite the Royal Proclamation.

Mr. Horniman's deportation was the subject of a protest and its cancellation was urged strongly . It was also urged that the Reforms should be extended to Burma and that Delhi and Ajmer-Merwara should be made full blown Provinces. Audit and accounts, and recovery of Funds from various people, formed the subjects of two other resolutions and the session terminated. It put a great strain upon its President—Pandit Motilal Nehru who lost his voice and was greatly tired by the strain of the week. The sittings of the Subjects Committee ran into the early hours of the morning, night after night, and the unbearable cold of the Punjab proved too much for many delegates and added to their difficulties.

Two incidents may be narrated here which are of interest. The Royal Proclamation granting amnesty to political prisoners, couched in the sweetest language imaginable, reached Amritsar a day before the Congress was held and with it came the Ali Brothers to the city in the midst of a tumultuous enthusiasm of multitudes of people. They had a grand procession and Mahomed Ali appearing on the platform stated that he came from the Chhindwara gaol 'with a return ticket,' an expression which has become classical since. The other incident relates to Mr. Reginald Neville, the London solicitor who

had been in India for some time and who was in Amritsar during the Congress week. The room in his hotel was broken into at dead of night on the 25th December, 1917, by some 20 European soldiers from the garrison at Jullunder, and he was insulted and asked how, being a white man, he dared to work against Dyer. One of them said "We have shot the whole seething mass of sweaty natives," and that he was one of those who formed Dyer's contingent that did this. We learnt later that the soldiers were made to apologize to Mr. Neville.

Part III

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I

The Birth of Non-co-operation (1920)

The Khilaphat wrong—Gandhi's Manifesto, Tilak's views—Gandhi on 'Tilak and N. C. O'—Gandhi's achievements—Abolition of Indentured Labour—Hunter Report—A. I. C. C. meets—Leaders and N. C. O.—Tilak passes away—Muslim Hijrat—N.C.O. inaugurated—P.C.C.'s on N.C.O.—The Calcutta Special Session—The Resolution on N.C.O.—Government's reaction—Khaparde opposes N.C.O.—Bengal's Resistance to N.C.O.—Das's Conversion—Better support for Gandhi at Nagpur—Colonel Wedgwood's warning—Congressmen's replies to Colonel Wedgwood—Other resolutions—Change of Constitution.

CHAPTER II

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—Foreign policy—Arrest of the Ali Brothers—Gandhi repeats the speech—Civil Disobedience sanctioned—Conditions prescribed—Chirala-Perala—Some details of the Moplah rebellion—The Prince arrives—Bonfire of foreign cloth—Consolidation of Volunteer Movement—Peace Negotiations in December 1921—Pandit Malaviya sees Das in Prison—Das's terms—Gandhi's terms—Negotiations fail—The Royal Message—President-elect of Ahmedabad Congress in Jail—Hakim Ajmal Khan officiates—Thirty thousand in jail under individual Civil Disobedience—Mass Disobedience under contemplation—Nation sheds fear—Notable features of the Ahmedabad Session—Rev. C. F. Andrews delivers message opposing burning of foreign cloth—The Session—Das's Address read by Sarojini Devi—The main resolution—A thesis on Non-co-operation—The resolution—Hasrat Mohani's amendment in favour of Complete Independence—Gandhi opposes—Other resolutions—The Congress and the Ulemas.

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Part III

CHAPTER I

The Birth of Non-co-operation (1920)

The year 1920 opens with a definite cleavage of parties in Indian politics. The Liberals had definitely cut themselves off from the Congress and met in Calcutta in December, 1919. In the Congress itself, the events that were fast developing themselves were tending to create a further schism amongst the Congressmen left behind. At Amritsar, the central issue was co-operation or obstruction. A few months after the new year had opened, the position of the Amritsar parties was reversed. Gandhi stood for Non-co-operation, and those who had opposed his co-operation at Amritsar ranged themselves once again against him. What brought about such a sudden change of front? The fact was that anxiety was growing in the public mind over the Punjab atrocities as well as the Khilafat question.

The events of 1920 centre round a great movement called the Khilafat movement, and it is necessary to give in outline the genesis of the Khilafat trouble. During the Great War, Mr. Lloyd George, the Premier of England, had made solemn promises to Indian Muslims who depending upon them went and fought against their brothers in Islam. When the war came to a close, a curious interpretation was put upon the promises, evidently to avoid fulfilment. If there was anything that exasperated the Indian Muslims, it was this perfidy of the British Premier. The pledges given by Lloyd George declared unequivocally in these words: "Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned

lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race." These pledges were unredeemed and the promises were heartlessly broken. The Muslim contention was that the Jazarat-ul-Arab including Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine, with all the Holy Places situated therein, must always remain under the direct suzerainty of the Khalif. But as a result of the terms of the armistice, Turkey was deprived of her homelands. Thrace was presented to Greece. Both Great Britain and France divided the Asiatic portions of the Turkish Empire among themselves under the guise of Mandatories. A High Commission was appointed by the Allied Powers, who, to all intents and purposes, were the rulers in Turkey, with H. M. the Sultan as nothing better than a prisoner. Not only the entire Muslim population in India but other communities as well were in rage against what was rightly termed as the British Premier's 'betrayal,' and it was at Amritsar that the leading Congress and Khilaphat men discussed the situation in the country caused by Lloyd George's doings, and decided to organise the Khilaphat work under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi.

In the middle of January, 1920, Mr. Mahomed Ali issued, along with his brother, a Manifesto to the country in the course of which, after formally thanking the public for their sympathy and support, he outlined his future course of action. "We expect to hear from His Excellency the Viceroy in a day or two," wrote Mr. Mahomed Ali and his brother in that Manifesto, "when he would be pleased to receive the Khilaphat Conference Deputation of Indian Muslims." A deputation waited upon the Viceroy on the 19th January, 1920, headed by Dr. Ansari and impressed him with "the necessity for the preservation of the Turkish Empire and of the Sovereignty of the Sultan as Khalif." They stated the Khilaphat issue in a word, when

they laid down the principle "that the continued existence of the Khilaphat as a temporal no less than spiritual institution was the very essence of their faith."

The Viceroy's reply to the Deputation was disappointing to a degree, and the Muslim leaders issued a statement recording their firm conviction that "should the peace terms result unfavourably to Muslim religion and sentiments, they would place an undue strain upon Muslim loyalty" and demanding that "Arabia, as delimited by Muslim authority, and the Holy Places of Islam must remain under the control of the Khalif," and that the pledge given by Mr. Lloyd George should be fulfilled. The third Khilaphat Conference met at Bombay in February, 1920, and expressed its confidence in the Deputation going to England and issued a very important Manifesto, laying down the Muslim demands and declaring that "any reduction of the claim would not only be a violation of the deepest religious feelings of the Muslims, but also a flagrant violation of the solemn declarations and pledges made or given by responsible statesmen, representing the Allied and Associated Powers and given at a time when they were desirous of enlisting the support of the Muslim people and soldiery, and warning them against the consequence of a wrong decision, particularly when not only the Muslim but also the entire Hindu population was joining them in their demand."

Lord Chelmsford's emphasis on the fact that the question did not lie in the hands of Great Britain alone was not reassuring, and virtually neutralized his 'profound sympathy' with the Muslim view point. The militant tone of certain sections of the French, English and American Press regarding the desirability of settling the Eastern Question once for all, only strengthened the apprehensions

of the Muslims. Influential sections of English and American opinion demanded that the Turks should be expelled from Constantinople, and reduced to the status of a fourth-rate Power. The Khilaphat question came more and more to the fore, during the months of February and March in Indian politics. A Muslim Deputation left for England early in March, 1920. The Deputation which was headed by Maulana Mahomed Ali was received by Mr. Fisher on behalf of the Secretary of State for India, and it also waited upon the Prime-Minister. It further requested permission to place its views before the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference but was refused.

Lloyd George's reply to the Muslim Deputation in England on the 17th March, insisting on the fact that Turkey could not be treated on principles different from those that were applied to Christian countries, and asserting the doctrine that while Turkey was to be allowed to exercise temporal sway over Turkish lands, she was not to be permitted to retain those lands which were not Turkish, struck at the root of the whole Khilaphat sentiment in India. On this, the 19th March was fixed as a day of National mourning,—a day of fasting and prayer and *hartal*. Gandhi once again appeared on the scene with the announcement that he would lead a movement of Non-co-operation if the terms of peace with Turkey did not meet the sentiments of the Muslims in India. Shaukat Ali tabled a resolution for the 19th March that if the peace terms were not acceptable, Muslims would be forced to sever their loyal connection with the British Throne. This evoked a resolution from the Government of India in the beginning of March, pointing out the impossibility of Government servants joining the celebration of the 19th March. Gandhi's ideas were embodied in a Manifesto dated the 10th March, which ran thus, and in which he

had indicated his plans of Non-co-operation for the first time:

"Now a word as to what may be done if the demands are not granted The barbarous method is warfare, open or secret. This must be ruled out, if only because it is impracticable. If I could but persuade every one that it is always bad, we should gain all lawful ends much quicker. The power that an individual or a nation forswearing violence can generate, is a power that is irresistible. But my argument to-day against violence is based upon pure expediency, is utter futility. Non-co-operation is, therefore, the only remedy left open to us. It is the clearest remedy, as it is the most effective, when it is absolutely free from all violence It becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation or humiliation, or an injury to one's cherished religious sentiment. England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Muslims means a matter of life and death. We may therefore begin at the top as well as the bottom. Those who are holding offices of honour or emoluments ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial services under Government should do likewise. Non-co-operation does not apply to service under private individuals. I cannot approve of the threat of ostracism against those who do not adopt the remedy of Non-co-operation. It is a voluntary withdrawal alone that is a test of popular feeling and dissatisfaction. Advice to the soldiers to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last, not the first step. We should be entitled to take that step when the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Premier leave us. Moreover, every step withdrawing co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. We must proceed slowly so as to ensure retention of self-control under the fiercest heat."

Let us quote Government's opinion from 'India, 1920' on this: "There was no doubt that Gandhi's advocacy of soul force commended itself to a populace who shared his

religious belief and believed in his doctrines of self-abnegation and admired his asceticism. He stood like a 'rock of salvation' before the injured national pride of many of his countrymen. His behests had the influence of semi-divine commands." Lokamanya Tilak did not share Gandhi's views at first. His subtle intellect and world-conquering will stood in contrast with Gandhi's spiritual fervour and heaven-aspiring soul. It was in the midst of an atmosphere charged with unrest that the non-official Report on the Punjab atrocities was published (25th March). The Hunter Commission's inability to examine the Congress Sub-Committee's evidence made a separate Report inevitable, and at the same time antagonized the public to the Hunter Commission and its findings yet to be published. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was the *bete noire* of the Congress Report. His studied contempt of the educated classes, his pressure for recruits and contributions by high-handed methods, and his suppression of public opinion, were naturally the subjects of popular accusation against him. The events of the year 1919 began, it will be remembered, on the 6th April and found their culmination in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on the 13th. So the week was observed as a National Week in 1920 and continues since to be so observed to this day. In the month of May the peace terms with Turkey were published and they only served to stimulate the Khilaphat agitation. Soon after, Gandhi declared his resolve to organize the Non-co-operation movement in order to get the terms modified. The Lokamanya did not sympathise whole-heartedly with this movement, but he did not oppose it.

The policies of the two great leaders may be studied side by side. Both had published valuable manifestoes in the third week of April. Gandhi had just then accepted the Presidentship of the All-India Home Rule League from

which Mrs. Besant seceded, and he published a statement in doing so. Tilak had published a Manifesto enunciating his policy in relation to the new Reforms.

GANDHI'S STATEMENT

"It is a distinct departure from the even tenor of my life for me to belong to an organization that is purely and frankly political. But, after careful deliberation with friends, I have joined the All-India Home Rule League and accepted the office of its President. Some friends whom I consulted told me that I should not join any political organization and that, if I did, I would lose the position of splendid isolation I enjoy at present. I confess that this caution had considerable weight with me. At the same time, I felt that if I was accepted by the League, as I was, I should be wrong in not identifying myself with an organization that I could utilise for the advancement of causes in which I had specialised, and the methods which, experience has shown me, are attended with quicker and better results than those that are usually adopted. Before joining the League, I endeavoured to ascertain the opinion of those who were outside the Presidency and with whom I had not the privilege to come in such close contact as with co-workers in the Bombay Presidency. The causes referred to by me are Swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim Unity with special reference to Khilaphat, the acceptance of Hidustani as the *lingua franca*, and a linguistic re-distribution of the Provinces. I would engage the League, if I can carry the members with me, in these activities so that they occupy the largest part of the Nation's time and attention.

"I freely confess that reforms take a secondary place in any scheme of national reorganization. For, I feel that the activities chosen by me, if they could but absorb national energy, would bring about all the reforms that the most ardent Extremist can ever desire, and so far as the desirability of getting full Self-Government can be best accelerated by developing the activities that I have mentioned, I

keep them in the forefront of the national programme I shall not treat the All-India Home Rule League as a party organization in any sense of the term. I belong to no party and I wish to belong to none hereafter. I am aware that the constitution of the League requires it to help the Congress, but I do not consider the Congress as a party organization, even as the British Parliament, though it contains all parties, and has one party or other dominating it from time to time, is not a party organization. I shall venture to hope that all parties will cherish the Congress as a national organization providing a platform for all parties to appeal to the Nation, with a view to moulding its policy, and I would endeavour so to mould the policy of the League as to make the Congress retain its no-party national character.

"This brings me to my methods. I believe that it is possible to introduce uncompromising truth and honesty in the political life of the country. Whilst I would not expect the League to follow me in my Civil Disobedience methods, I would strain every nerve to make truth and non-violence accepted in all our national activities. Then we shall cease to fear or distrust Government and their measures. I do not wish, however, to develop the theme any further, but I would rather let time solve the many questions that must arise from the bold statement I have here made. My purpose just now is not to demonstrate the propriety of my action or the truth of the policy herein adumbrated but to take the members of the League into my confidence and to invite their criticism of the programme therein set forth, and any suggestion they may wish to make for the advancement and the welfare of the League."

TILAK'S PROGRAMME

Here is Tilak's Manifesto:

"The Congress-Democratic Party, as the name denotes, is a party animated by feelings of unswerving loyalty to the Congress and faith in Democracy. It believes in the potency of democratic doctrines for the solution of Indian problems, and regards the extension of education and political franchise as two of its best weapons. It advocates the removal of all civic, secular, or social disabilities based on caste or custom. It believes in religious toleration, the sacredness of one's religion to oneself and the right and duty of the State to protect it against aggression. This party supports the claim of the Muslims for the solution of the Khilaphat question according to Muslim dogmas and beliefs and the tenets of the *Koran*.

"This party believes in the integration or federation of India in the British Commonwealth for the advancement of the cause of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind, but demands autonomy for India and equal status as a sister-State with every partner in the British Commonwealth, including Great Britain. It insists upon equal citizenship for Indians throughout the Commonwealth and effective retaliation whenever it is denied. It welcomes the League of Nations as an instrument for enforcing the peace of the world, the integrity of States, the freedom and honour of nations and nationalities, and for ending the exploitation of one country by another.

"This party emphatically asserts the fitness of India for Representative and Responsible Government and claims for the people of India, on the principle of self-determination, the exclusive right of fashioning the form of government and determining the most appropriate constitution for India. It regards the Montagu Reforms Act as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing" and will strive to remedy the defect by introducing, with the aid of the members of the Labour party and other sympathisers

in the British Parliament, at the earliest opportunity, a new Reform Bill for establishing full Responsible Government in India, including full Military control and full fiscal freedom, and an exhaustive Declaration of Rights with constitutional guarantees. To achieve this object, it contemplates and recommends a resolute and energetic campaign in India and in the countries represented on the League of Nations. In this matter, the party's watchword will be 'Educate, Agitate and Organize.'

"This party proposes to work the Montagu Reforms Act for all it is worth and for accelerating the grant of full Responsible Government, and, for this purpose, it will without hesitation offer co-operation or resort to constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will.

"Apart from the foregoing aims and principles, the party platform will contain the following planks, but it does not profess to be exhaustive:

IMPERIAL

1. Repeal of all repressive legislation *e.g.*, (Rowlatt Act, the Press Act, the Arms Act, etc.), the introduction of trial by Jury of one's own countrymen, especially in cases of offences against the State; the abolition of rigorous imprisonment for such offences, and jail reform with a view to placing offenders of all classes on a par with similar offenders in Great Britain.

2. Securing for the labouring classes, agricultural and industrial, a fair share of the fruits of labour, a minimum wage, relationship between capital and labour on equitable basis, and promoting organizations suitable for the purpose.

3. Control of the export of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life by tariff or by other methods, with a view to reducing the prices thereof and conserving supplies.

4. Promotion of Swadeshism and development of industries by all recognised methods, including State subsidies and protective tariff.

5. Nationalisation of railways and regulation of railway tariffs by legislation, with a view to assist industrial development and to abolish privileges and favouritism in their working.

6. Retrenchment first and foremost in every department, especially in the Military expenditure, and taxation when imperative or desirable, but taxation graduated according to the capacity of various classes, corporations or individuals, so that the burden may be proportionate to the means or wealth of the tax-payers.

7. Creation of a Citizen Army, officered by Indians; naval, aerial and military education; Commissions for Indians in all Military services without racial discrimination.

8. Recruitment of all services by open competitive examination in India.

8. Promotion of national unity by such means as the establishment of a *lingua franca* for all India, betterment of relations between followers of different religions, and especially a Hindu-Muslim *Entente*.

10. Re-adjustment of Provinces on linguistic basis.

PROVINCIAL

1. Immediately securing full popular autonomy for the Provinces.

2. Permanent Ryotwari settlement on the basis of an equitable assessment.

3. Village control over reserved and protected forests in regard to pasturage, fuel, dealwood, and use of minor products.

4. Absolute prohibition of *Veth*, *Begar* and *Sarbarai*.

5. Education through the vernacular as high as possible.

6. Free and compulsory education without distinction of sex, special contributions and increased grants-in-aid from State funds to Municipalities and Local Boards to carry out this object immediately.

7. Restoration of Village Panchayats with administrative and judicial powers.

8. Abolition of drink.

9. Extension of the franchise without sex distinction.

10. Sanitation upon a systematic basis under a Minister of Health.

11. Carrying out of departmental reforms already enunciated and approved by popular opinion, *e.g.*, agricultural development, extension of irrigation, the co-operative movement, industrial and technical education suitable to the needs of the country, organised medical relief, and encouragement to indigenous system of medicine.

"Under this programme, the party appeals for votes and support for candidates pledged to these principles, with the fullest confidence of receiving an enthusiastic response so as to ensure victories in the coming election battles."

While the Deputation was still in Europe, the proposed terms of peace with Turkey were made public on 14th May, 1920, and in India, they were accompanied with a message from the Viceroy to the Muslims of India, explaining those terms. The message recognised that the terms were such as must cause pain to the Muslims of India, but asked them to brace themselves to bear with patience and resignation the misfortunes of their Turkish co-religionists. The publication of the proposed peace terms caused the deepest indignation, and synchronising as it did with the publication of the Hunter Committee's Report, the whole country was ablaze. The Khilaphat Committee met at Bombay to deliberate upon Gandhi's Non-co-operation project and adopted it on the 28th May, 1920, as the only means now left to the Muslims. On the 30th May, the All-India Congress Committee met at Benares to discuss the Hunter Report and the Turkish Peace terms, and after a long debate decided to hold a Special Session of the Congress to consider the question of Non-co-operation.

Gandhi himself recorded his impressions of Tilak's attitude towards Non-co-operation in his reminiscences about Tilak (Vol. 1. p. 253): "About Non-co-operation Tilak significantly repeated what he said to me before. 'I like the programme well enough, but I have my doubts as to the country being with us in the self-denying ordinance which Non-co-operation presents to the people. I will do nothing to hinder the progress of the movement. I wish you every success, and if you gain the popular ear you will find in me an enthusiastic supporter.'"

Before we proceed to narrate the events of 1920 in the sphere of Indian politics, we must refer to the celebration on the 1st January, 1920 of the abolition of the system of Indentured Labour in the Colonies, which had been prevalent for well-nigh a century and by which India was directly affected. In Natal, the Indentured Labour system was brought to an end by the refusal of the Indian Government to allow any more recruiting. In Mauritius, Indentured Labour ceased in 1911 because no more labour was required. But in other Colonies in different parts of the world, the Indenture system was still being carried on. During 1914 and 1915, the Government of India made an enquiry from the Governments of those Provinces from which Indentured Labour was taken, and it was found that the villagers were already up in arms against the Indenture system which was open to the gravest abuses. In 1915, Mr. C. F. Andrews and Mr. W. W. Pearson went out to Fiji and brought back information of the most damaging character which was issued in the form of a Report. This enabled Lord Hardinge to accept Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's motion in the Imperial Legislative Council for the abolition of Indenture. But he added the ominous words that some delay must be allowed while adjustments were being made. Later in the year, it was found out

that he had privately agreed with the Colonial Office that recruiting should go on in India for another five years. Since it was clearly proved that such recruiting led to grave moral evils and even suicides, the Government of India was challenged by Mr. Andrews whether such a private understanding did or did not exist. And when it was made public that such an understanding had been signed between the two Offices at Whitehall,—Indian and Colonial,—a wave of moral indignation swept the country. And Gandhi himself took up the challenge and started the anti-Indenture campaign in the North and the West of India. Mrs. Besant carried on the campaign in Madras. This campaign was at its height in the months of March and April, 1917, and possibly Mrs. Besant's activity in this behalf was one of the governing reasons of her internment which took place on the 15th June, 1917. Lord Chelmsford called Gandhi and realised the seriousness of the situation. A deputation of Indian ladies from every Province went also to Lord Chelmsford on behalf of their Indian sisters. A date was fixed—31st May, 1917—by Gandhi, within which the system had to be brought to an end; otherwise a Satyagraha campaign would be started in order to prevent further recruitment. On April 12th (1917), Lord Chelmsford announced that all recruitment would be stopped as a special war-measure under the Defence of India Act. It was clear, however, that at the end of the war the whole question would be revived by the Colonies concerned, because vast financial interests were involved. Therefore Mr. Andrews, on the advice of Gandhi and with the cordial consent of the Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, went out to Fiji again, in order to collect further facts which could be used when the question might be resuscitated at the end of the war. He spent nearly a year in Fiji and gathered far more damaging facts than on his previous visit. He also greatly interested the women of Australia in the moral question

involved, and gained strong support for the abolition of the Indenture system. In March, 1918, he met Mr. Montagu at Delhi and was able to put before him the facts he had in his possession and to convince him that the system was altogether immoral. In 1919, the Government of India were able to announce that no further Indenture would be allowed and that all Indentured labourers whose five years' term had not expired should be set free. Therefore on January 1st, 1920, there was universal rejoicing among Indians in Fiji, British Guiana, Trinidad, Surinam, and Jamaica, where Indenture was still lingering, because on that day of emancipation every Indian labourer who had come out under Indenture was set free. It may be noted that this whole system was started as early as 1835 in order to supply labour to the old sugar plantations in the Colonies, which the African slaves had worked until slavery itself was abolished in 1833. It was thus a device to carry on the sugar plantations in a manner not far removed from slavery itself. Sir W. Wilson Hunter, the historian, called it 'semi-servile labour' and that description is accurate.

The Hunter Report was published on the 28th May 1920, and its findings filled the country with disappointment and disgust. The Report was not unanimous, the Indian members differing from the English. The difference centred round the issue whether the outbreak in the Punjab was a premeditated revolt or an accidental outburst. The English members took the former view and the Indian the latter. Accordingly the latter thought that Martial Law was not called for. Moreover they put down the outbreak to O'Dwyer's *Zulum* in collecting money and recruiting soldiers. They took Government to task for suppressing news which gave rise to misrepresentation. Government accepted the view that "the administration of Martial Law was marred in particular

instances by misuse of power, by irregularity and by injudicious and irresponsible acts; that General Dyer acted beyond what any reasonable man could have thought it to be necessary, and that he did not act with such humanity as the case permitted." His Majesty's Government also expressed strong disapproval of certain specified instances of undue severity and of improper punishments and orders during the Martial Law Regime, and instructed the Government of India to see that this disapproval "was unmistakably marked by censure or other action upon officers responsible for them". Mr. Montagu, however, remarked that "General Dyer acted to the best of his lights and with a sincerity of purpose, but that he committed an error of judgment." It was no consolation to India that instructions were issued to the Government of India to prepare a code of Martial Law regulations for future use! Nor was the fact that by the time "the cases of the officers concerned were examined with great care," many of those whose conduct had been censured by the Hunter Committee had left India or Government service, any source of comfort or satisfaction to the people of the Punjab or India.

Soon after the publication of the Hunter Commission Report, the All-India Congress Committee met at Benares on the 30th May, and recorded the country's indignant protest on all the questions and decided to have a Special Congress to consider the matter. Although Lokamanya Tilak passed Benares at the time, he did not attend the Benares meeting, for his heart was not wholly in the Khilaphat agitation. But he had the fairness and patriotism to say that he would act up to the behests of the A. I. C. C. It was about this time that Gandhi resolved to refer the question of Non-co-operation, which was mainly concerned at this time with the Khilaphat movement, to a conference of leaders of all

parties which met at Allahabad on the 2nd June, 1920. At this conference the policy of Non-co-operation was decided upon, and a Committee was appointed, composed of Gandhi and some Muslim leaders, to draw up the programme. The Committee published their programme which comprised the boycott of schools and colleges and Law Courts. As a matter of fact, the All-India Khilaphat Conference held at Delhi in November, 1919 had resolved to withdraw co-operation from Government under Gandhi's advice,—a decision which was reaffirmed by Muslim meetings in Calcutta and elsewhere, as well as by the Madras Khilaphat Conference on 17-4-1920, where the progressive scheme of Non-co-operation was further defined as renunciation of titles and posts under Government, honorary posts and memberships of the Councils, appointments in the Police and Military, and refusal to pay tax. By the summer of 1920, the situation became acute. The 'Triveni' of the Khilaphat and Punjab wrong, and the invisible flow of inadequate Reforms, became full to the brim, and by their confluence enriched both in volume and content the stream of national discontent. Everything was ripe for Non-co-operation. Even the Lokamanya promised to abide by the decisions of the All-India Congress Committee, but alas! he passed away on the midnight of July 31st, leaving Gandhi without that towering strength which would have been his if he had been by his side.

In the meantime the Muslims embarked upon a plan of *Hijrat* (flight) to Afghanistan as they felt they could not stay in India under the British after the peace with Turkey. The movement started in Sindh and spread to the N. W. F. A ghastly collision took place between the emigrants and the Military at Kacha Garhi which exasperated the people, and in the month of

August it was estimated that 18,000 people were on their way to Afghanistan.

But very soon the Afghan authorities forbade the admission of the pilgrims and a set-back was given to the idea, after considerable loss of life and sufferings. When in August the Supreme Legislative Council met, the Non-co-operation movement had already begun and some members of the Council resigned their seats. The Viceroy declared that the policy of N.C.O. must inevitably lead to disorder and asked whether anything could be more futile or ill-advised. He finally characterised the movement as the "most foolish of all foolish schemes." But the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales to India to open the new Assembly, which was opposed even by Sastriar at the Bombay Liberal Conference, was given up in the month of August and the Duke of Connaught was to take his place. It was in August too, that Dr. Sapru was appointed Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The scheme of N. C. O. was formally inaugurated on the 1st of August. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers toured the country. It was the one study of Gandhi to discipline the people and regulate their obvious enthusiasm. As usual, Gandhi's administration of a reprimand to his following was always quoted by Government as proof of the rule of the mob. This proposed departure of the Congress from the traditional, constitutional paths was considered an issue big enough for a Special Congress, and the Special Session which had been decided upon already in May was held on the 4th to the 9th of September, 1920, in Calcutta.

By this time, the various Provincial Congress Committees gave their opinions on the burning question of the day—N.C.O.

The Andhra Congress Committee and the Punjab Committee recommended to the Special Congress the adoption of the *policy* of N.C.O., but would defer the *programme* till after the Special Session. Bengal held that under the conditions N.C.O was the only effective weapon left to the people, but the Committee, in common with C.P., did not consider a boycott of the new Legislative bodies was called for. On the contrary, the presence of a large number of members who would be prepared to resort to N.C.O. within the Council was demanded. Bihar and Orissa approved of the principle and appointed a Committee to recommend a programme suitable for the Province. Bombay wholeheartedly accepted the principle and would entrust the details to a committee to be appointed by the Special Congress. Burma approved, but believed that the movement was not practicable in that Province. The Madras P. C. C. approved a policy of N.C.O. but voted against Mr. Gandhi's programme. Sindh approved and framed a programme in detail in four steps, but objected to the Military being asked to withdraw. The U. P. approved and formulated a detailed programme, adding boycott of the welcome to H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught.

Buttressed by these opinions from all Provinces, the Calcutta Session met. It was a momentous session. Bengal did not see eye to eye with Gandhi, and C.R. Das stood foursquare against Gandhi's programme of N.C.O. The boycott of Councils and Law Courts evoked no sympathy in him, nor in the majority of delegates. Yet, by a narrow though conclusive majority of seven votes, the Subjects Committee passed Gandhi's Resolution in which a graduated scale of boycott was advocated. The atmosphere then prevalent was such that Non-co-operation was inevitable. The Government of India had blindly accepted the findings of the majority in the

Hunter Committee Report and was inclined to throw a veil of oblivion over the misdeeds of officials. They had slurred over Dyer's conduct as amounting only to "a grave error of judgment which exceeded the reasonable requirements of the case," and held that "it was based upon an honest but mistaken conception of duty." Montagu himself tamely acquiesced in those recommendations and practically condoned the misdeeds of the Punjab officials and aggravated matters by adding that Dyer was actuated by "honesty of purpose and unflinching adherence to duty." The debate in the House of Commons itself turned upon the supposed wrong and injustice of the punishment inflicted upon Dyer, while in the House of Lords, Lord Finlay's motion which was accepted was inaccurate, onesided, and false in spirit and substance. Altogether, the discussions betrayed the rights and liberties of the Indian people. These and the Khilaphat wrongs and the Reforms formed the subjects of strongly worded resolutions at the Calcutta (special) Session.

The Special Session of the Congress was held in Calcutta from 4th to 9th September, 1920 in the midst of the most enthusiastic scenes. Mr. B. Chakravarti was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and Lala Lajpat Rai, who had only recently returned from America was elected the President. The first resolution placed on record the deep and profound sorrow of the Congress at the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "whose stainless purity of life, services and sufferings in the cause of his country, whose deep devotion to the welfare of the people, whose arduous endeavours in the fight for National Autonomy would enshrine his memory in the grateful recollection of our people and would be a source of strength and inspiration to countless generations of our countrymen." The Congress also recorded its grief at the

loss sustained by the country in the death of Dr. Mahendra Nath.

The second resolution was moved by Sir Asutosh Chaudhuri who had recently retired from the Bench of the Calcutta High Court as a Judge and ran as follows:—

"That the thanks of the Congress be conveyed to the members of the Punjab Enquiry Sub-Committee and the commissioners appointed by them, for the great industry and judicial care with which they have collected the evidence and written their Report, which is supported not only by the evidence recorded by them but also by the evidence given before the Hunter Committee, and expresses its concurrence with the findings of fact arrived at by the said commissioners.

(a) This Congress expresses its deep and bitter disappointment at the drift, tone and tendency, and final conclusions of the Majority Report of the Hunter Committee and begs to express its complete and total dissent from the findings and recommendations of the deliberate opinion,

(b) This Congress further places on record its deliberate opinion,

(i) that the Report submitted by the Majority of the Hunter Committee is tainted by bias and race-prejudice, based on insufficient consideration of evidence, and characterised by a too obvious desire to slur over the proved, manifest iniquities of the Government officials concerned, and to whitewash the conduct of the Punjab Government and the Government of India;

(ii) that the said Report is unacceptable and unreliable inasmuch as it is based upon evidence which is incomplete, one-sided and biassed by self-interest;

(iii) that the findings arrived at in the Majority Report are not justified even from the evidence actually on record, and in any case, their recommendations fall far short of the minimum legitimate requirements of the case;

(c) That with reference to the Government of India's review of the two Reports of the Hunter Committee, this Congress records its deliberate opinion:

(i) that the said review accepts the findings of the Majority without sifting or discrimination;

(ii) that it pays scant and inadequate consideration to the arguments and findings of the Minority Report, even when such arguments and findings are amply borne out by the evidence on record;

(iii) that the whole drift and tendency of the said review is not to arrive at a just and impartial finding on facts, but to hush up the whole affair and to throw a veil of oblivion upon the misdeeds of the officials concerned;

(iv) that the action proposed to be taken in the review with reference to the conduct of guilty officials is grossly and utterly inadequate to the gravity of the state of things disclosed, and has shaken all confidence in the fairness of British justice.

The third resolution also dealt with the Punjab and expressed the "deep sense of bitter disappointment at the British Cabinet's failure to take adequate action with reference to the atrocities of the Punjab, at their acquiescence in the recommendations of the Government of India and their practical condonation of the misdeeds of the Punjab officials. The Congress was further of opinion that "in spite of the fine and lofty sentiments expressed in their Despatch, the British Cabinet by their failure to take adequate action have forfeited the confidence of the people of India."

But *the* resolution of the session was that dealing with Non-co-operation which was moved by Gandhi, and carried by 1886 delegates against 884. It ran as follows:—

"In view of the fact that on the Khilafhat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the

Muslims of India and the Prime-Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them, and that it is the duty of every non-Muslim Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Muslim brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him;

"And in view of the fact that, in the matter of the events of the April of 1919, both the said Governments have grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them, and have exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer who proved himself directly responsible for most of the official crimes and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration, and that the debate in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India, and systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab, and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matters of the Khilaphat and the Punjab;

"This Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs, and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya.

"This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent Non-co-operation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established;

"And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented public opinion and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its Law Courts and its Legislative Councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least

sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object, this Congress earnestly advises,

(a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in Local Bodies;

(b) refusal to attend Government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials, or in their honour;

(c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and, in place of such schools and colleges, the establishment of national schools and colleges in the various Provinces;

(d) gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants, and the establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes;

(e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

(f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;

(g) boycott of foreign goods;

"And inasmuch as Non-co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress, and inasmuch as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of Non-co-operation to every man, woman and child for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of Swadeshi in piece-goods on a vast scale, and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the Nation, and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every house and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement."

The Resolution was hotly contested, and Babu Bepin Chandra Pal moved an amendment, which was supported by Deshbandhu C. R. Das, by which the Prime-Minister was asked to receive a mission from India to lay before him the statement of India's grievances coupled with a demand for immediate Autonomy, and in case of his failure to receive the mission or to replace the Reforms Act of 1919 by a measure granting full Autonomy to India, a policy of such active Non-co-operation be adopted as would leave no doubt in the minds of the British people that India could no longer be governed as a Dependency. In the meantime the country was recommended to give consideration to Mahatma Gandhi's programme through a representative Committee and carry on preparatory propaganda in that behalf.

After a long and earnest consideration, the Resolution of Mahatma Gandhi was passed.

It may be incidentally mentioned that Gandhi had at first included the boycott of Local Bodies as well, but withdrew it in deference to the wishes of friends. The Nationalist party once again remained loyal to the Congress in spite of some of their differences with the programme. Particular mention should be made of the fact that nearly all Nationalist candidates who, in obedience to the Amritsar Congress Resolution, had announced their candidature for the Reformed Councils, and spent considerable time, labour and money on the campaign, immediately withdrew from the contest. The voters themselves—at least 80%—accepted the decision of the Congress and refrained from voting, and from not a few places empty ballot boxes were sent. Government themselves admitted, "It is rather in connection with the boycott of the new Councils that Mr. Gandhi's campaign of N.C.O. seems destined to exercise a potent influence

upon the history of the next few years. It has prevented the inclusion in the new Legislatures of certain advanced thinkers who figure prominently in the public eye, and has left the Moderates a clear field."

In the beginning of November, Government found it desirable to make plain what exactly its policy was towards this movement: "They have instructed Local Governments to take action against those persons only, who in furtherance of the movement have gone beyond the limits originally set by its organizers, and have, by speech or writing, openly incited the public to violence, or have attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the Army or the Police." Government further expressed their trust and belief that "the sanity of the classes and masses alike would reject N.C.O. as a visionary and chimerical scheme, which if successful could only result in widespread disorder, political chaos and ruin of all those who have any real stake in the country." "The appeal of N.C.O. is to prejudice and ignorance," they said, "and its creed is devoid of any constructive germs."

A new atmosphere soon pervaded the country. The attitude of people to the established and age-long methods of political agitation changed. The Sub-Committee appointed by the A. I. C. C., in May, 1920, to present a Petition to Parliament on the Punjab Tragedy never moved in the matter. The Congress had stopped payment to the British Committee since 1918, owing to differences between the Congress and the Committee on the question of the Reforms. The same differences had led to an acrimonious controversy in England, in 1919, between the Congress Deputation and Mrs. Besant. The Labour Party and the English friends were lost between the contentions and view-points of the two schools of thought. The British Committee, we saw, was at last

reduced to terms and the Congress gained control. Nevertheless, the British Committee disregarded the agreement reached between the Deputation and itself,—to the effect that it should appoint an Indian selected by the A. I. C. C. on its staff, and the Committee chose an Indian direct; and despite protests from the Congress, declined to yield. It was definitely recommended that the paper *India* should, therefore, be discontinued.

While this was so in regard to work in England, affairs in India claim our attention. On the 2nd October, 1920, the A. I. C. C. met and resolved to raise two funds, (1) the All-India Tilak Memorial Fund, and (2) Swarajya Fund, but the resolution remained a dead letter till December, 1920. The new resolutions on N.C.O. were not taken to kindly either in Bengal or Maharashtra. Mr. G. S. Khaparde, a co-worker of the Lokamanya, published a short Memorandum contrasting in parallel columns how the Calcutta (special) Resolutions sought to "divert the energies of the Congress into directions of attaining soul force and moral excellence and loses sight of the political aspects of affairs." "By avoiding contact with the *de facto* Government," it proceeded, "it affords no training ground for acquiring the kind of political-mindedness and temper necessary to carry on a substantial struggle in a peaceful, and yet firm and orderly manner. The N.C.O. as preached now may develop powers of endurance, but cannot breed the energy and resourcefulness and practical wisdom necessary for a political struggle. The three boycotts at present recommended are futile and have not at all a distinct political aspect, and the tendency of the whole, as evidenced in the proceedings for alteration of the Creed of the All-India Home Rule League, now re-named Swaraj Sabha, would appear to be towards a return to autocracy and personal rule, which is objectionable and

against the spirit of the age, though entrusted to a highly developed and moral individual."

This was dated 10th December, 1920. It was published on the eve of the Nagpur Congress. It calls attention to the change of the Creed of the Home Rule League, and the formation of the Swaraj Sabha by Gandhi. The fact was that, in Calcutta, while the fate of N.C.O. was hanging in the balance, Gandhi assembled the old Home Rulers, from whom Mrs. Besant virtually seceded, under a common banner and changed the Creed of the League into a form since adopted by the Congress at Nagpur, as also the name of the League into Swaraj Sabha. But this Sabha never had occasion to function, as Calcutta accepted the cult of N.C.O. and Nagpur confirmed it. It is by a strange irony of fate and of politics that the Resolution of N.C.O. should have been accepted at two successive Congresses held in the Headquarters of the two Provinces that strenuously opposed the new movement.

Nagpur Congress, 1920

The Nagpur Congress was to be the next place where the programme of Non-co-operation was to be finally discussed and decided. The number of delegates who attended the Congress was immense, and no Congress before or after Nagpur can claim to its credit as many delegates as did Nagpur Their number was 14,582, of whom no less than 1,050 were Muslims, and 169 women. It was presided over by that veteran Congress leader from the South, Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem. Col. Wedgwood, Mr. Holford Knight and Mr. Ben Spoor attended the Congress as fraternal delegates from the Labour Party of England and conveyed the Labour Party's greetings and sympathy.

The Calcutta Special Session was presided over by an avowed opponent of N.C.O. Lala Lajpat Rai was a great Social and Educational Reformer, but his creation was the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, not the Gurukula. He never believed in cutting off from Government, though all his life he was cut off by Government, suspected, kept under surveillance and virtually externed during the war. Swami Shraddhananda, however, threw himself heart and soul into the new movement.

Likewise, it was the President of the Nagpur Congress, Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachariar, that demanded that Swaraj, not merely the Punjab tragedy and the Khilaphat wrong, should be the motive for N.C.O. Gandhi readily agreed. His point was that if once, on a moral issue, however limited it be,—be it the Rowlatt Act, the Khilaphat wrong or the Punjab atrocity,—we won on the ticket of Satyagraha, Passive Resistance or Non-co-operation, then the success would fill the Nation with self-confidence such as was generated by the success in the Transvaal and in Champaran. Intellectual India was inclined to be logically-minded; and an intellectual giant like Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar could not help being rigidly logical in his view of affairs. At Nagpur, however, Gandhi had one advantage, namely, that Mr. Achariar, in spite of his lukewarm attitude towards Non-co-operation, co-operated with Gandhi passively, and always made a point of vacating the Chair whenever a resolution came up before the open House with which he was not in agreement.

Mr. C. R. Das brought a contingent of about 250 delegates from East Bengal and Assam, bore their expenses to and fro, and spent Rs. 36,000 from his pocket to undo what was done in Calcutta. There was even a small fight between his men and those of Jitendralal

Banerjee, his opponent. Maharashtra's opposition was not less intense, nor less well-organized. Colonel Wedgwood attended the meeting of the Subjects Committee and so did Messrs. Ben Spoor and Holford Knight. Col. Wedgwood put all his force into his arguments against N. C. O. Nothing availed. The Khaddar clause was made tighter, the N. C. O. Resolution was re-affirmed, the Creed of the Congress was changed "in such a fashion as to eliminate the declared adherence of that body to the British connection and to constitutional methods of agitation." That was how Government viewed the change. The session was a personal triumph for Gandhi. It left every one of the older Congressmen,—seniors, leaders and patriarchs,—aghast, asking themselves and each other, "Who is this man that speaketh with a tone of authority and whence doth he come?" Seasoned men like Pal and Malaviya and Jinnah and Khaparde, stalwarts like Das and Lalaji were simply overpowered If the situation did not give rise to feelings of jealousy, it must be due to the splendid character of our political leaders.

Let us study the events connected with the Nagpur Congress and the radical changes it introduced into the Creed and Constitution, as well as into the ideals and outlook of the National Congress. The acceptance of the Resolution on N. C. O. was an event by itself, but the great point about it is that the Resolution was moved by Mr. C. R. Das and seconded by Lala Lajpat Rai.

The support that Gandhi obtained at Nagpur was undoubtedly greater than what he had in Calcutta. In Calcutta, the only top-notch politician that had lent a helping hand to Gandhi, and that, rather late in the session, was Pandit Motilal Nehru,—after Gandhi had accepted his amendment to make the boycott of Law Courts and colleges gradual. Else the stool of the N. C. O.

was resting on but one leg. At Nagpur, it stood on all its four legs with perfect equipoise. Gandhi and Nehru, Das and Lalaji were all for it. The Resolution itself is a long and comprehensive one, sharing the characteristic features of all Gandhi's resolutions on the subject of N. C. O., in which he would not admit of any amendment generally. It was the fashion of those days for the more intellectually-minded delegates to table verbal and other amendments to all resolutions,—and to Gandhi's resolutions as well,—but it did not take long to discover that, alike in terseness and comprehensiveness, Gandhi's drafts could not be improved. That does not mean that he would reject any reasonable suggestion. Never was he more pleased than when a bright suggestion was made, and he would readily grasp it. The N. C. O. Resolution of Nagpur virtually reaffirmed that passed in Calcutta, covering the whole field, from the renunciation of titles at one end to the refusal to pay taxes at the other. It called upon merchants gradually to boycott foreign trade relations and encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving, exhorted the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the National movement, urged the Congress to organize the Indian National Service, promote the All-India Tilak Memorial Fund which had already been resolved upon in the previous October, but which was an amalgamation of the two funds then contemplated, namely, the All-India Lokamanya Memorial Fund and Swarajya Fund, requested those elected to Councils to resign their seats and the electors to refrain studiously from asking for any political service from such Councillors, recognised the growing friendliness between the Police and soldiery and the people, appealed to all Government servants to help the national cause by importing greater kindness and stricter honesty in their dealings with the people and fearlessly and openly to attend all popular gatherings, laid emphasis on non-violence as an integral

part of the N. C. O. movement. The Resolution emphasises non-violence in word and deed as essential, "as the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of N.C.O." and finally, urged upon all public bodies to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violent Non-co-operation with the Government, and promote complete co-operation amongst the people themselves. In this changed atmosphere, arrangements were made to wind up *India*, the Weekly published in England, while recognising the necessity of disseminating correct information in India, and in foreign countries. Homage was paid to the sacred memory of the late Mac Swiney of Ireland who had met with his end after a fast unto death extending over 65 days for the sake of Irish emancipation.

Incidentally, it must be mentioned that Ireland and its grim fight, though on violent lines, and the complete boycott of the Milner Mission in Egypt, nerved India for a fight equally grim, but on the plane of non-violence. Col. Wedgwood who was at the Subjects Committee at Nagpur and obtained permission to speak, gravely warned the Congress against the cult of Non-co-operation. "You will make it difficult for your friends in England to take up your cause," said he. "You will be hampered in your work. The Police will be after you. The lawyers sign a pledge that they would be loyal to the Crown and cannot therefore work for Non-co-operation. You are going into the wilderness. You must pursue a constructive programme." In this strain did he go on for a quarter of an hour with transparent sincerity and unmistakable friendliness. Hardly had he resumed his seat when up rose a voice in reply, and, in five minutes, answered his objections: "We have no friends outside India; let there be no mistake about that. Our salvation lies in our own

hands. We must make or mar our future. We have realised that, and taken to this programme. The Police are not a new element in Indian politics. If we have opened a small school, every rupee we have collected, we have gathered only under the shadow of the red turban during the past fifteen years. Yes, the lawyers have to sign an undertaking to be loyal, so it is that they are asked to tear up their 'sanads.' We are going into the wilderness, we know, because the way to the 'land flowing with milk and honey,' the land of Canaan, from the land of our bondage, lies only through a wilderness. And we trust to the leadership of a Moses or an Aaron to lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to life."

The rise in Exchange and the 'loot' thereby effected in our Gold Exchange Standard Reserve, and Paper Currency Reserve, through Reverse Councils became the subject at Nagpur of a vigorous demand that the British Government should make good the loss. It was also stated in Resolution V that "dealers in British goods would be entirely justified in refusing to complete their contracts at the present rates of exchange." The country was asked to refrain from taking any part in functions or festivities in honour of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. Labour was encouraged and sympathy was extended to it in its struggles through Trade Unions. The export of food-stuffs was condemned. Sympathy was also offered to political workers, who were arrested and imprisoned with or without regular trial. The renewal of repression in the Punjab, Delhi and elsewhere was noted, and people were asked to bear it up with fortitude. The Congress requested all sovereign Princes to take immediate steps to establish full Responsible Government in their States. The policy of Government in still keeping Mr. B. G. Horniman removed from the Indian people was condemned and India's

gratitude was expressed to him. The Esher Committee and its recommendations were also condemned as "calculated to increase India's subservience and impotence and constituting an additional ground for N.C.O." The Muslims were thanked for their resolution against cow-slaughter; and export of cattle and hides was asked to be discouraged by the people. Free education and indigenous medicine were the subjects of two resolutions.

Finally, we come to the Constitution of the Congress. Under it, the Creed of the Congress was changed. Its object was declared to be "the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means." Congress circles were reorganized on a linguistic basis. A cardinal change was the advancing of the Subjects Committee's sittings to two or three days before the open sittings of the Congress, and the limitation of its composition to the members of the A.I.C.C., whose strength, however, was increased to 350 The appointment of a Working Committee of the A. I. C. C., composed of 15 members, including the Secretaries, the Treasurers and the President, was a feature of the new Constitution which has revolutionized the day-to-day work of the Congress and made the National Congress to-day a continuous organization for carrying out the Congress behests Before closing, let us add that the Congress offered its support to Indians in East Africa and South Africa in their heroic and noble struggle against the treatment meted out to them, approved of the policy of peaceful N.C.O. initiated by the Indians in East Africa, and deplored the inability of India to render any help to the Indians in Fiji who had been compelled to return to India, and lastly, the Congress recorded its vote of thanks to Mr. C. F. Andrews for his services to Indians Abroad.

CHAPTER II

Non-co-operation Galore (1921).

The Nagpur Congress really marked a new era in recent Indian history. The old feelings of impotent rage and importunate requests gave place to a new sense of responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance. People realized that if they would be free they must strike the blow themselves. It was a definite call to them to cross the Rubicon and burn their boats. They cheerfully agreed to the course and began to march forward. The Nagpur Congress laid a heavy duty upon the Nation, and the A.I.C.C., under the advice of the Working Committee, set itself seriously to its task. Let us, for a moment, study the position of affairs in India, towards the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921. By the end of the year 1920, the Moderates once for all cut themselves off from the Congress. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani made a grand speech at the second annual session of the Liberal Federation. Surendra Nath Banerjea became knighted. Lord Sinha became the first Indian Governor of Bihar and Orissa. Early in 1921, the new Ministers included a man like Lala Har Kishen Lal who had been condemned a few months earlier to transportation for life and forfeiture of property, in the Punjab. The Duke of Connaught, uncle of King George, was sent over to assuage feeling in India and open the new era. He made a fine speech:—

> "I have reached a time of life when I most desire to heal wounds and reunite those who have been disunited. An old friend of India, I appeal to you all —British and Indians—to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive and to join hands and to work together to realise the hopes that arise from to-day."

Later on, when the Punjab tragedy was raised by a resolution in the Supreme Council, Sir William Vincent, who led the debate on the question from the Government benches, made plain "the deep regret of the administration at the perpetration of those improper actions, and their firm determination that, so far as human foresight could avail, any repetition would be for ever impossible." Having stated this much, Government cleverly managed to get the mover of the Resolution to withdraw the third clause calling for deterrent punishment. The fact, however, was that though General Dyer was relieved of his command, and thereby perhaps lost his pension, a collection was made by the English ladies in India who looked upon him as their saviour, and £20,000 was paid to him, and more than the money, the honour publicly done to him in England and in India in the presentation of a sword was enough to compensate him for any loss otherwise sustained. Col. Johnson, the next arch-offender, secured a commercial appointment in India and found himself amply compensated for his 'losses.' Neither the appeal of the Duke nor the "regret of the administration" expressed by the Home Member, Sir William Vincent, helped to appease the feelings of Indians. N.C.O. came to stay There was however one redeeming feature, and that was that the Central Legislature appointed a Committee early in 1921 to examine the Repressive Laws which were, with the exception of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, actually repealed early in 1922, but all these palliatives left the sore unhealed. It continued to be festering and the Congress had to do its own doctoring, instead of depending upon the time-honoured remedies of Royal Pronouncements or Legislative repeals.

The response to the Nagpur Congress was ample. The No-vote campaign had been a remarkable success. Less successful was the boycott of courts and colleges, though

their prestige was greatly damaged. Numerous lawyers had left their profession throughout the country and thrown themselves heart and soul into the movement. An unexpected measure of response however was noticeable in the field of National Education. Though the number of students that non-co-operated was not large, there was an earnest move towards National Education.

The fact was Mahatma Gandhi's appeal to the finer instincts of the youth of the country to devote themselves to its service, and to shun the institutions which had been created and maintained to kill all manliness in them, was responded to with enthusiasm. Nor was the work confined to merely to boycott. National Universities, National Colleges, and National Schools of all grades were started in different parts of the country. The student movement in the U.P., the Punjab, and the Bombay Presidency was in full swing. Bengal was not behind-hand, and Calcutta witnessed one of those thrilling scenes which were not few or far between in the course of that memorable year and a half About the middle of January, on an appeal by Deshbandhu C. R. Das, thousands of students left their colleges and examinations. Gandhi visited Calcutta and opened the National College on the 4th of February. He also visited Patna for a second time and formally opened the National College and inaugurated the Bihar Vidyapith. Thus in the course of less than four months, the National Muslim University of Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapith, the Bihar Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Bengal National University, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, and a large number of National Schools of all grades, with thousands of students on the rolls, were started in all parts of the country as a result of the great impetus given to National Education. In the Andhradesa, the torch of National Education which was lighted in 1907 and which was now dim and

now luminous, once again began to shine bright and clear. The students that non-co-operated with the Regulation institutions were many, and not a few of the Provincial and District leaders of to-day are from amongst the lawyers and students who had non-co-operated in 1920-21.

In pursuance of the Nagpur Resolution, the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee met almost from month to month in the year 1921 at different centres. The first meeting of the A.I.C.C. took place at Nagpur to elect the Working Committee and to allocate seats in the A.I.C.C. to the twenty-one Provinces. Gandhi had already taken over *Young India* from the Home Rulers who were glad to part with this splendid English Weekly, which was the organ in Bombay of the Home Rule movement, for the purpose of helping the cause The Home Rule League itself had been disorganized and disrupted. In January, 1921, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Nagpur Congress and who shed his title of Rao Bahadur, donated one lac of rupees to the Tilak Swaraj Fund for the purpose of supporting non-co-operating lawyers. The Working Committee met in Calcutta on 31st January, 1921 and framed rules for the allocation of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, 25% being required to be sent to the Working Committee from the Provincial collections. No lawyer was to receive more than Rs 100 per mensem and no member of the National Service more than Rs 50. Indebtedness was made a disqualification for such service. Pending the evolution of a detailed curriculum of studies in the field of National Education, Hindustani and spinning were required to be taught, and a course of training was to be given for village workers. Mr. C.R. Das was requested to look after Labour organization and Mr. L. R. Tairsee was appointed Convener of the Economic Boycott Committee.

The Working Committee next met at Beswada on the 31st March and 1st April, 1921, as also the All-India Congress Committee. The Working Committee felt unanimously that the time had not arrived yet for non-payment of taxes. It was at this meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bezwada that collection of one crore of rupees for Swarajya Fund, enlistment of one crore of Congress members and introduction of 20 lacs of *charkas* were enjoined upon the Nation, quotas being fixed in the proportion of provincial population. The organization of Panchayats and the discouragement of drink were singled out for commendation. Even though only harmless reforms such as these were being preached by the people, Government had already begun to serve orders under Section 144 and Section 108, and the A.I.C.C. held that the country was not yet sufficiently disciplined, organized and ripe for the immediate taking up of Civil Disobedience, and called upon all to conform to orders served upon them. The Committee expressed its sense of horror over the Nankana massacre and assured the Sikhs of its sympathy with them in the heavy losses suffered by them. The fact was that even by the second week of March, the country was in a state of excitement. Orders of restraint were passed against Mr. C. R. Das entering Mymensingh, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Mazar-ul-Haq entering Arrah, Yakub Hasan entering Calcutta, and Lajpat Rai entering Peshawar. A host of other orders were passed against others. Lahore was proclaimed under the Seditious Meetings Act.

But all these were nothing compared to the Nankana tragedy. In the first week of March, peaceful pilgrims assembled in that Gurudwara were suddenly pounced upon and shot down, the casualities aggregating to 195 killed as estimated by the people, but 70

according to Government. The Mahant, a loyal subject, had stored 4,000 cartridges and 65 revolvers in his house. There was a pit dug, with a big fire burning. A conference on public affairs was to assemble there on the 5th March. A number of *budmashes* perpetrated this crime. Major Currie, who was the same officer as was in Delhi two years previously on the Clock Tower tragedy day, and Mr. King, were transferred from the locality to another district forthwith. It is not known against whom the Mahant meant to direct his wrath. But the circumstances were inexplicable. There was a motion before the Council of State regarding the incident, which was explained by Government as a fight between two sections of the Sikhs. Mr. Man Singh while speaking on Bakshi Sohan Lal's amendment hinted that the officials of the locality should have been, for sometime previously, acquainted with possibilities of the projected crime of such magnitude. At this stage in the council, Sir. William Vincent walked up to the seat of Mr. Hailey and whispered in his ear. Mr Hailey got up and, in angry tones, vehemently condemned the speaker who attempted to assert the implication of the officials in the ghastly affair. The Nankana tragedy was an unprecedented event in which the pilgrims were shot down and, while yet life was lingering, thrown into the burning pit.

In the history of the earlier years of the Congress we saw how the British Committee was the real centre of work and how expensive were its establishment and other requirements. Sums aggregating to Rs. 60,000 a year were sanctioned in several years. Now the centre of gravity had shifted to India. At Bezwada it was resolved that a sum of Rs. 17,000 be sanctioned for the remainder of the 'current year' for the expenses of the office of the President, the Secretary and the Cashier. A sum of 1,000 dollars was cabled to Mr. D. V. S. Rao of

the Indian Home Rule League of America on the recommendation of Lalaji and Mr. Kelkar. The sixth and the 13th of April were required to be observed as days of fasting and prayer. The representation of the Congress circles on the A.I.C.C. was readjusted so as, however, not to disturb the total strength of 350 members, excluding ex-Presidents. When the Working Committee next met at Allahabad in May on the 10th, there were already invitations to it from Tanjore and Sholapur. Nothing of importance transpired at this meeting. The Committee later met in Bombay on the 15th June, when Gandhi made a statement regarding his interview with the Viceroy.

At this interview which was brought about by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lord Reading who became the Viceroy in April, 1921, had an opportunity of judging Gandhi's sincerity and discovered how unwise it would be on his part to take action against the N.C.O. movement as such. But he incidentally drew attention to the speeches of the Ali Brothers as falsifying the view of the Non-co-operation movement put forward by Gandhi. These speeches, it was pointed out to Gandhi, might be construed as subtle incitements to violence, and being the scrupulously fair man that Gandhi always is, he agreed that such a misconstruction of the speeches was possible. He therefore wrote to the Ali Brothers and secured from them a statement repudiating any such intention on their part.

This 'apology' was an epoch-making event in the history of the movement. Anglo-India was jubilant over Government's victory. Lord Reading was satisfied with the 'apology' and gave up the idea of prosecution.

At the Bombay meeting of the Working Committee the position in regard to defence in political cases was made clear. The Working Committee laid down that "in the event of prosecution or a civil suit being brought against Non-co-operators, they should not participate in the proceedings beyond making before the Court a full statement of facts in order to establish their innocence before the public. Where security is demanded from them under the Criminal Procedure Code, they shall refuse furnishing such security and offer to undergo imprisonment in default." Further it was laid down that non-co-operating lawyers were precluded from appearing as counsel, with or without payment. At that time there was an apprehension of hostilities being reopened with the Turkish Government at Angora and the Working Committee was of opinion that it was the duty of every Indian to refrain from helping the British Government in the prosecution of such hostilities in direct defiance of Muslim opinion, and it was therefore the duty of Indian soldiers to decline to serve in connection therewith.

An important sitting of the A.I.C.C. took place in July, 1921, in Bombay on the 28th, 29th and 30th. The feeling of the country was one of universal jubilation at the success of the Bezwada programme. The Tilak Swaraj Fund was over-subscribed by about 15 lakhs of rupees. The membership did not reach much over half the prescribed figure but the *charkas* came up nearly to the figure of 20 lakhs. The next thing was naturally to turn the country's attention to weaving and the accessory crafts of spinning and carding. To this end, a complete boycott of foreign cloth was the subject for the country to concentrate on, coupled with the manufacture of khaddar. The A.I.C.C. further advised that "all persons belonging to the Congress shall discard the use of foreign cloth, as from the 1st day of August next." The millowners of

Bombay and Ahmedabad were requested "to regulate the prices of their manufactures so as to bear proportion to the wages of mill hands and so as to be within the reach of the poorest, and in no case to raise the price beyond the prevailing rates." Importers of foreign cloth were asked to stop all foreign orders and to endeavour to dispose of their stock outside India.

The A.I.C.C. expressed the opinion that "it was the inherent right of a citizen to pronounce his opinion upon the advisability or otherwise of Government servants leaving Civil or Military service, and that it was the inherent right of every citizen to appeal in an open manner to every soldier or civilian to sever his connection with a Government which had forfeited the confidence and support of a vast majority of the population of India." The resolution on foreign policy submitted by the Working Committee was approved of by the A.I.C.C.

On the question of anti-drink propaganda, troubles had already arisen at Dharwar, Matian and other places by undue and improper interference from the authorities with attempts to wean weak members from visiting drink shops, and the A.I.C.C. warned that it would be prepared to recommend the continuance of picketing in disregard of such interference. The Thana District Board was congratulated on its resolution re. picketing and its determination to continue it, and the A.I.C.C. called upon other Local Boards and Municipalities in India immediately to follow the splendid lead of Thana. It may be noted here that the Congress had not up to that time tabled any resolution on picketing and even then it confined itself to public bodies. An appeal was made to traders that they should discontinue trade in intoxicants. The Congress was keenly alive to the duty of the Nation to maintain perfect non-violence, but excesses having been

committed by some people in parts of the city of Aligarh even though under grave provocation, the A.I.C.C. advised Congress organizations to inculcate the spirit of complete non-violence, and congratulated the people on their self-control despite the grave provocation at Dharwar, Matian, Guntur, Chirala, Perala, Kerala, N. W. F. Province, Keonjhar and elsewhere.

Repression was going on particularly in U. P. in a serious and widespread manner. In several places people were wounded by firing. Many were under imprisonment without offer of defence, and to all congratulations were offered on the score that "only through voluntary suffering and through imprisonment of innocent people without defence or bail the way to freedom lay." The situation was such that from different parts of the country arose a demand for taking up Civil Disobedience in answer to the repressive measures of Local Governments. The administration in N. W. Frontier Province had even prohibited the entry into that Province of the members of the Frontier Enquiry Committee to enquire into the outrages alleged to have been committed by the local officials at Banu. Nevertheless, "to ensure greater stability of non-violent atmosphere throughout India, and in order to test the measure of influence attained by the Congress over the people and further in order to retain on the part of the Nation an atmosphere free from ferment necessary for the proper and swift prosecution of Swadeshi, the All-India Congress Committee is of opinion that Civil Disobedience should be postponed till after the completion of the programme referred to in the resolution on Swadeshi." Moreover a big event was about to take place in connection with the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The A. I. C. C. resolved that "it is the duty of *every one to refrain from participating in or assisting in* any functions organised officially or otherwise in connec-

tion with his visit." And with the immense possibilities ahead, the A.I.C.C. wisely decided in favour of patience on the question of Civil Disobedience. The Working Committee appointed Sjt. Bhawani Shankar Niyogi, a non-co-operator lawyer of Nagpur (now a Judge of the C. P. High Court), Abbas Tyabji, retired Judge of Baroda, and Setlur, sometimes Judge of Mysore, to enquire into the firing by the authorities on the crowd at Dharwar on the 1st July, 1921 and to make a full report thereon. Provincial Congress Circles being carved out under the Constitution on a linguistic basis, the question of bilingual districts naturally became a contentious one, and Bellary was one such as between Karnataka and Andhra. The matter was required to be adjusted by an Arbitration Board appointed in that behalf as also later in respect of Ganjam between Andhra and Utkal. Power was given in regard to applications for the Congress funds to a Committee consisting of Mahatma Gandhi, Motilalji, and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. When the Working Committee met at Patna on the 16th August, the letter of request for permission to start Civil Disobedience of orders under Section 144 from the District of Hardoi in the U. P. was adjourned to the next meeting of the Committee. For an effective boycott of foreign cloth before the 30th September, the Working Committee pointed out the necessity to collect foreign cloth from every home and to set apart volunteers under proper control for the purpose. Not less than one-fourth of the whole of the collections made in the Province for the All-India Tilak Swaraj Fund was required to be set apart, to organize the spread of hand-spinning, the collection of hand-spun yarn and the weaving and distribution of khaddar. Some Provinces not having sent 25 per cent. of the T.S.F. to the Working Committee, the latter withheld grants to defaulting Provinces. The next meeting met shortly after in Calcutta on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 11th September. It was an

important meeting. Reports on the firing at Dharwar and on the Moplah outbreak were before it. On the latter the following resolutions were passed:

"25. The Working Committee places on record its sense of deep regret over the deeds of violence done by Moplahs in certain areas of Malabar, these deeds being evidence of the fact that there are still people in India who have not understood the message of the Congress and the Central Khilaphat Committee, and calls upon every Congress and Khilaphat worker to spread the said message of non-violence even under the gravest provocation throughout the length and breadth of India.

"Whilst, however, condemning violence on the part of the Moplahs, the Working Committee desires it to be known that the evidence in its possession shows that provocation beyond endurance was given to the Moplahs and that the reports published by and on behalf of the Government have given a one-sided and highly exaggerated account of the wrongs done by the Moplahs and an understatement of the needless destruction of life resorted to by the Government in the name of peace and order.

"The Working Committee regrets to find that there have been instances of so-called forcible conversion by some fanatics among the Moplahs, but warns the public against believing in the Government and inspired versions. The Report before the Committee says: 'The families which have been reported to have been forcibly converted into Mohamedanism lived in the neighbourhood of Manjeri. It is clear that conversions were forced upon Hindus by a fanatic gang which was always opposed to the Khilaphat and Non-co-operation movement and there were only three cases so far as our information goes.'

"It has been reported to the Working Committee that the disturbances took place only in areas in which Congress and Khilaphat activities were prohibited and

that the Congress and the Khilaphat workers tried their best at considerable risk to themselves to check the mob-fury and prevent violence."

Events were moving fast. The All-India Khilaphat Conference of 1921 took place at Karachi on the 8th July at which Mahomed Ali, the President, made a daring speech which since then became known as the Karachi speech. The proceedings of the Conference formed later the subject matter of the prosecution of the Ali Brothers, Dr. Kitchlew, Jagatguru Shri Shankaracharya of Sarada Peeth, Maulana Nisar Ahmad, Pir Gulam Mujadid and Maulvi Hussain Ahmed. While reiterating the Muslim demands, the Conference also passed a resolution declaring it "unlawful for any faithful Muslim to serve from that day in the army or help or acquiesce in their recruitment." It also declared that if the British Government fought the Angora Government, the Muslims of India would start Civil Disobedience and establish their Complete Independence and hoist the flag of the Indian Republic at the Ahmedabad Session of the Indian National Congress.

Mahomed Ali's speech on the occasion was repeated on the 16th October, 1921 from thousands of platforms in India in accordance with instructions from the Congress high command as a challenge to Government who had ordered the prosecution referred to. The resolution occasioning the speech was one regarding Military service under Government, which "virtually reaffirmed the principle laid down by the Congress both in Calcutta and at Nagpur." The Working Committee of the Congress having met in Bombay on the 5th October made a statement in the course of which it said:—

"That it is contrary to the National dignity and National interest for any Indian to engage or remain in the service of a Government in any capacity whatever, a Government that has used the soldiers and the Police for repressing the just aspirations of the people, as during the Rowlatt Act agitation, and that has utilized the soldiers for the purpose of crushing the National spirit of the Egyptians, the Turks, the Arabs, and other nations."

The Ali Brothers and their comrades were ordered to be prosecuted and the Working Committee, while congratulating them on the prosecution, declared that the reason given for the prosecutions constituted an undue interference with religious liberty, and added the following rider:—

"The Working Committee has been only deterred from calling out the soldiers and the civilians in the name of the Congress, because the Congress is not yet ready to support those Government servants who may leave Government service and who may not be able themselves to find means of livelihood. The Working Committee is, however, of opinion that in pursuance of the spirit of the Congress Resolution on N.C.O., it is the clear duty of every Government employee, whether soldier or civilian, who can support himself without Congress assistance, to leave such service."

Carding, weaving and spinning were pointed to the soldiers and the Police as affording honourable means for an independent livelihood. The Congress Committees were asked to adopt the above resolution at meetings all over the country, and this was carried out on the 16th October. The boycott of foreign cloth was as yet incomplete and unless it was effected, the Working Committee said, general Civil Disobedience in any District or Province, would not be possible. Nor would it be permitted unless hand-spinning and hand-weaving were developed so as to

produce sufficient khaddar for the wants of the area, whether District or Province. The Working Committee, however, authorised Civil Disobedience by individuals who might be prevented in the prosecution of the Swadeshi propaganda, provided it was done under the authority of the Provincial Congress Committee which was to be assured of a non-violent atmosphere being retained. The detailed programme for the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales was worked out, and on the day of his landing, it was laid down, there should be general voluntary *hartal* throughout India, and as to the effective boycott of any public welcome to H.R.H. during his visit to the different cities of India, the Working Committee left arrangements in the hands of the respective Provincial Congress Committees. An important announcement was then made to all foreign States that the Government of India in no way represented Indian opinion. that India, as a Self-Governing country, had nothing to fear from the neighbouring States or any State, as her people had no design upon any of them and hence no intention of establishing any trade relations, hostile to or not desired by, the people of such States. Further, the neighbouring States not ill-disposed towards India, were warned against entering into any treaty with the Imperial power. and the Muslim States were assured that when India attained Self-Government, her foreign policy would naturally be so guided as to respect the religious obligations imposed upon Muslims by Islam. These were the views of the Working Committee and they did not want them to go forth in the name of the A.I.C.C. until they were thoroughly discussed by the public and adopted at a meeting by the former.

At this time the Ali Brothers were taken under custody, Maulana Mahomed Ali being arrested in the course of his tour, at Waltair, on his way from Assam to

Madras, on the 14th September. He was kept in the sub-jail for a few days, a release order was read to him and he was forthwith re-arrested and was taken to Karachi. Mr. Shaukat Ali was arrested in Bombay soon after Maulana Mahomed Ali's arrest. When it transpired that the Karachi speech was to be the subject of prosecution, Gandhi was at Trichinopoly and he publicly repeated the speech himself and felt so strongly on the matter as to call upon the Nation to repeat the resolution on the subject, as already referred to, by a resolution of the Working Committee. The rapid march of time leaving but a month for the Nation to establish Swaraj and the exemplary self-restraint displayed by the Nation over the arrest of the Ali Brothers and the other leaders, led the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. that met at Delhi on the 5th November, 1921, to authorise every Province on its own responsibility to undertake Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, in the manner considered most suitable by the respective Provincial Congress Committees subject to the following conditions. Every individual civil resister must have fulfilled the part of the N.C.O. programme applicable to him, should know spinning, must have discarded foreign cloth, taken to khaddar, must be a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, believe in non-violence as absolutely essential for the redress of the Khilaphat and Punjab wrongs and the attainment of Swaraj, and, if a Hindu, must by his personal conduct show that he regards untouchability as a blot upon Nationalism. In regard to mass Civil Disobedience a District or Tahsil should be treated as a unit and therein a majority of the population must have adopted full Swadeshi and must be clothed out of cloth hand-spun and hand-woven in that area, and must believe in and practise all the other items of N.C.O. No one should expect support out of public funds. It was open

to the Working ... ce to waive any condition on the application of the P. C. C.'s

Then a resolution was adopted to deal with the position in Malabar including forcible conversions to Islam and desecration of Hindu temples.

At this point, a brief reference has to be made to two important developments in the movement of non-violent Non-co-operation. In the year 1921, a spirit of resistance to authority was the dominant factor of public life, and people practised this in different parts of the country in relation to the conditions of life around them and the local and civic problems that confronted them. The All-India Congress Committee meeting of March 31st, at Bezwada in the Andhra Province, almost electrified the atmosphere of the Telugu districts and the people of Chirala shortly after were called upon to face the question of their village being converted into a Municipality. The Local Self-Government Minister was the Raja of Panagal who had antagonised the Congress party. The Congress party was only too anxious to reciprocate. The people of Chirala were not anxious to have a Municipality. When Gandhi's advice was sought on the situation, he suggested that if the people did not care for a Municipality, they might leave the precincts thereof and live outside. Gandhi further warned that it should not be taken up under the auspices of the Congress. If the movement succeeded, the glory would in part go to the Congress, but if it failed, the discredit of it should not attach to the Congress. Altogether the idea was a captivating one and there was a leader worthy of the mighty task before him. Andhraratna D. Gopalakrishnayya put his whole heart into the idea and conducted the exodus which reminds us of the earlier Hijrats of the Muslims of Sindh into Afghanistan. The

people of Chirala suffered [redacted]red long. They were in huts outside the municipal limits for over ten months. In the meantime, the leaders were arrested for one reason or another. A few who were not non-co-operators were cajoled and coaxed into submission, and after nearly a year's abandonment of hearths and homes, they returned to the village and submitted to the Municipality. Another mighty undertaking was the strike in Chittagong. Chittagong is a port in East Bengal and the labour strike, organised by Sen Gupta, cost the Congress over a lac of rupees. The difficulty in regard to such undertakings is that men in authority can wear out the energies of the strikers. The Congress cannot always remain behind these movements. Its resources of money are limited. Its man-power, however, is great but Government have a complete hold on the men that conduct the movements of the Congress. When the strong personalities of a place are once removed and put into prison under some law or other, the forces of disruption add themselves to the forces of corruption, and movements give way.

In passing, we must also state the circumstances which led to the origin of the Moplah trouble in Malabar. The Moplahs are Muslims who were originally the off-spring of Arab immigrants in Malabar that had settled in this beautiful land and contracted marital alliances locally. They are, generally speaking, petty traders and cultivating peasants. But under the stress of religious excitement, they display a certain degree of fanaticism and do not care for life or comfort. The periodical outbreaks of Moplah riots have led to special legislation known as the Moplah Outrages Act. Government were from the outset anxious that the 'inflammable' Moplahs should not be charged with the spark of Non-co-operation. Yet the movement spread into Kerala

as to any ot... ...y, Kerala received it with the added enthusiasm of a newly integrated Congress Province. In the month of February, distinguished leaders like C. Rajagopalachariar and Yakub Hassan visited the Province, with the avowed object of preaching the cult of non-violence. Yakub Hassan expressly stated that he would not speak about N.C.O. Nevertheless prohibitory orders were passed. And four leaders—Yakub Hassan, Madhavan Nair, Gopala Menon and Moideen Koya were arrested on the 16th February, 1921. This incident only gave an impetus to the cause of N.C.O. movement in Malabar. At Ottapalem, a small town, the Kerala Provincial Conference was organised and with it a number of allied conferences were held. When the main conferences had concluded, and while the students' conference was sitting, the Reserve Police laid hands on some leading Congressmen and Khilaphatists, as well as on bazaar men. But people exhibited complete non-violence in a wonderful manner. Thereafter the whole of Malabar was organised on the lines indicated by the Bezwada resolutions.

The Moplahs are chiefly concentrated in Walvanad and Ernad talukas and Government proclaimed them under Sec. 144. By the month of August, the complexion of affairs changed and the Moplahs, writhing under insults offered to their Thangals or religious priests in mosques, broke into violence. Soon hostilities developed on a military scale. The Moplahs had few fire-arms, but plenty of swords. They practised guerilla warfare to which the country round about admirably lends itself. By the middle of October, a severer form of Martial Law was introduced than in the earlier months. The Moplahs in their turn were guilty of acts of compulsory conversion, looting of Hindus, arson and murder, besides looting and destroying public offices. The lives of Englishmen

were at stake. Mr. M. P. Nara[illegible]ayana Menon[illegible], a Congressman who had done much to organise Congress Committees all over Malabar, used his influence with the Moplahs and saved the Englishmen. This very worker was later hauled up and at first made a State prisoner in November, 1921, but in 1922 was tried for treason and sentenced to transportation for life. He was released only in September, 1934 after serving his full term. He could have been released earlier if he had only given an oral undertaking that he would not enter Walvanad Taluk for three years, but he would not and, therefore, served his full term heroically and voluntarily. The further course of the Moplah rebellion or even its developments since August on violent lines do not concern us, except to the extent to which the A.I.C.C. had to protest against their excesses at its November meeting.

The Prince of Wales arrived in India on the 17th of November. The Prince was to have opened the new Assembly, but the atmosphere in India of August, 1920 led Government to replace him by the Duke. He was therefore sent in November, '21 to India, to keep up the prestige of the British Government. The Congress had already resolved upon the boycott of all celebrations connected with the Prince's visit, which was duly carried out together with bonfires of foreign cloth. The very day of his arrival in Bombay, there were not merely clashes and conflicts in Bombay but rioting and bloodshed which extended over three or four days, resulting in the death of 53 persons and the wounding of 400 approximately, and which could not be put down in spite of Sarojini Devi, Gandhi and other leaders entering into the thick of the crowds and exhorting them to disperse. Numerous people were injured in the melee and Gandhi fasted for 5 days pending the restoration of order, as a penance for the excesses of the people. It was then that

Gandhi made the statement that Swaraj stank in his nostrils. The arrival of the Prince caused the Volunteer Movement all over India to consolidate itself. Till then Congress volunteers were only a kind of social service workers, helping pilgrims at fairs and festivals, patients in epidemics and victims of local catastrophes, also providing the retinue at conferences and other national public functions. The Khilaphatist volunteers were however, more 'militant,' as Government would say, and "they drilled and marched in mass formation," and they "wore uniform." Both sets of volunteers organised *hartals* and boycott of foreign cloth. These two wings coalesced and became civil resisters, subject to the conditions laid down by the All-India Congress Committee (*vide supra*). Arrests took place by the thousand. The Prince was to visit Calcutta on the 25th December, and the Government of Bengal, unlike that of Bombay, proclaimed enrolment of volunteers illegal under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and a large number of persons were arrested, including Mr. and Mrs. Das and their son. Soon after, the U. P. and the Punjab followed suit. By the Ahmedabad Congress, Lalaji, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, C. R. Das and family, were all in jail under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, or under Secs. 144, and 108, I.P.C. These sections were discovered and their application to politicals was advised, it seems, by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who became the Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in August, 1920. While Bombay had acted under the ordinary Law, Bengal, the U. P. and the Punjab invoked the Repressive Laws.

It was at this juncture that negotiations were opened between Congress and Government. The Viceroy, under the arrangements made in shifting the metropolis from Calcutta to Delhi, resides in Calcutta for three or four

weeks every year during the Christmas season and the Prince of Wales was to spend his Christmas in Calcutta. Lord Reading's presence in Calcutta under the circumstances was taken advantage of by intermediaries like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to bring about an understanding between Government and the people, and Lord Reading was willing—if only to avoid the boycott of the celebrations on the 25th December in Calcutta. A deputation headed by the Pandit waited on the Viceroy on the 21st December. Mr. Das was in the Alipore jail in the city of Calcutta and telephonic communications took place between him and the intermediaries. Soon Gandhi had to be consulted. He was in Ahmedabad and by telegraphic communications it was agreed to by Government that the Civil Disobedience prisoners should be released and a Round Table Conference was to be held in March with 22 representatives for the Congress to consider the Reform Scheme.

Das's demand was for the release of all prisoners under the new law (Criminal Law Amendment Act). This would have left men like Lalaji in jail, besides the Karachi and the *Fatwa* prisoners who included, Maulana Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, Dr. Kitchlew and various others. The Karachi prisoners were those who were convicted on November 1, 1921, for having participated in the All-India Khilaphat Conference held at Karachi in July, 1921, where the resolution regarding Military service had been passed. Some Ulemahs endorsed this resolution in a *Fatwa*—which is a decree issued by the learned Divines amongst the Muslims prescribing or proscribing certain acts under certain conditions. (For full details relating to the peace negotiations of December, 1921, the reader is referred to "Seven months with Mahatma Gandhi" by Krishnadas,—a book well worth-reading).

But Gandhi demanded the release of the Karachi prisoners which was also partly agreed to. His demand for the release of the *Fatwa* prisoners and for the continuance of the right of picketing was refused. Before Gandhi's telegraphic reply on this position could reach Lord Reading in Calcutta,—and unfortunately this message was delayed in transit,—his colleagues had left Calcutta (on the 23rd December) and the negotiations failed. Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya were the intermediaries. Negotiations having failed, the boycott programme of the Prince's visit was observed by the rest of India. In Calcutta the *hartal* was complete, even the butchers' shops being closed, and this exasperated the Europeans. The civil resisters continued to be in jail till they were released in the usual course. The last week of December, 1921 finds us in the midst of the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress at which the Non-co-operation programme reached its acme. The political situation had not changed at all since the Nagpur Session. The inauguration of the Montford Reforms by the Duke of Connaught was made the occasion for a Royal message in the course of which it was said:—

> "For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their Motherland; to-day you have the beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire and the best scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy."

Neither this half-hearted reference to the term 'Swaraj' nor the Duke's appeal to bury the dead past and to forgive, nor the debates in the Assembly relating to the Punjab tragedy in which Sir William Vincent made plain the deep regret of the administration at the excesses of certain individual officers, and their firm determination to make any repetition impossible, assuaged the public

feeling or restored confidence in the mind of the Nation. The N.C.O. programme had, therefore, been published and at the Ahmedabad Session its details were perfected. The President-Elect, Mr. C. R. Das,—Deshbandhu Das, as he came to be known by this time,—was in jail and Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected in his place.

The atmosphere was tense. "Swaraj inside a year" was the thought uppermost in every man's mind. Gandhi had promised Swaraj inside a year, if his programme was adhered to and carried out. The year was about to close and everybody was looking up to the political firmament to see some miracle bringing Swaraj down to his feet. But every one was prepared to do his best, to suffer his worst in order to "hasten the advent of that (no longer) far-off divine event." No sacrifice would be too much for popular endurance. Every one was anxious to have a programme of mass Civil Disobedience. Over twenty thousand individual civil resisters were already in jail. Their numbers were soon to swell to 30,000. But mass disobedience was the thing that was luring the people. What was it, what would it be? Gandhi himself never defined it, never elaborated it, never visualized it even to himself. It must unfold itself to a discerning vision, to a pure heart, from step to step, much as the path-way in a dense forest would reveal itself to the wayfarer's feet as he wends his weary way until a ray of light brightens the hopes of an all but despairing wanderer. Mass disobedience was to be undertaken by competent men in a suitable area with strict regard to conditions laid down in that behalf without haste and without rest. So Gandhi wanted to organise a No-tax campaign in Gujarat, but friends in Guntur had already been preparing the District for a No-tax campaign with equal warmth, enthusiasm and preparedness for sacrifice and suffering. The state of the country at the time as

well as the duty of the Congress were aptly described in the opening paragraph of the main resolution of the Ahmedabad Session.

Fear had been cast off by the people. A sense of self-respect developed in the Nation. Congressmen realized that service and self-sacrifice were the only means of winning public confidence. The prestige too of Government was materially shaken, and people had received good lessons regarding the ideology of Swaraj.

The Ahmedabad Session is noteworthy for more than one reform. Apart from the elimination of the chairs and benches for delegates which had cost the Nagpur Session some seventy thousand rupees, the Congress had the shortest address from Vallabhbhai J. Patel, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, as also the smallest number of resolutions—altogether nine. Hindi was the language of the Congress mainly and khaddar worth over two lakhs was used for the tents pitched for the Congress.

Gandhi had asked the Rev. C. F. Andrews to be present at the Ahmedabad Session in order to give a religious message. He consented to do so but explained first of all to Gandhi that he was opposed to the burning of foreign cloth, because he feared that it would inculcate violence. Contrary to his usual custom, he appeared in European dress in order to make clear his opposition to the policy of burning. In his address he explained why he was not wearing khaddar on that occasion. It is noteworthy that he was received with the utmost respect and affection by the audience, though they could not be expected to agree with his opinion on the point at issue Mr. Andrews announced at the end of his speech that he was leaving

Ahmedabad that night at the request of Gandhi, to the Moplah area as a peace-maker.

Let us now briefly review the events that engaged the attention of the Congress. Hakimji was elected in the absence of Deshbandhu Das for he was the embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. As a matter of fact, at a conference of the Hindu Mahasabha held in Delhi he was elected its President. He had all the suavity, polish and courtesies of a Padsha, his culture was of a high order and his character was its twin-sister, which made up the excellence of his equipment in the moral no less than the intellectual and social spheres of life. He made a simple but striking speech at Ahmedabad as the *locum tenens* of the Deshbandhu Deshbandhu's own speech was read by Sarojini Devi with all the eloquence which the speech itself possessed in language and sentiment. As was to be expected Deshbandhu Das gave a correct and comprehensive review of Indian Nationalism that is primarily rooted in culture and for the recovery of which he said, "first we must have a house of our own before we can receive a guest, and secondly Indian culture must discover itself before it can be ready to assimilate Western culture." Then he examined the Government of India Act and asked in despair, "Now, is there anything in the Preamble to compel the British Parliament to recognize India, at any time, as a free and equal partner of the British Empire?" "I think not," was his brief reply. He was "quite willing to co-operate with England but on one condition only, that she recognized this inherent right of India"—freedom. "I cannot recommend to you the acceptance of the Act as a basis for co-operation with the Government. I will not purchase peace with dishonour, and so long as the Preamble to the Act stands, and our right, our inherent right to regulate our own affairs, develop our own individuality, and evolve

our own destiny is not recognized, I must decline to consider any terms of peace." After this declaration he examined the oft-repeated statement of Lord Reading that he was 'perplexed and puzzled' by the policy of the Non-co-operators and answered it by saying that Lord Reading's claim that the resistance to N.C.O. was not repression, as all the proceedings were being taken under the ordinary Law which the Sapru Committee considered and whose repeal it declined to recommend.

The noble and dignified address of the Deshbandhu provided the proper perspective for the magnificent resolutions of the Ahmedabad Session. The main resolution was really a thesis on Non-co-operation, its philosophy and programme alike, so much so that Gandhi pointed out in moving it that it had taken him 35 minutes minutely to read it in English and Hindustani and added that the resolution explained itself. This resolution, he said, "was absolutely the natural result of the National activities during the past fifteen months." The resolution did not bar, bolt and bang the door of negotiation, but kept it quite wide open if the Viceroy meant well, "but the doors closed in his face if he means ill, no matter how many people go to their graves, no matter what wild career this repression is to go through. There is every chance for him to hold a Round Table Conference, but it must be a real conference. If he wants a conference where only equals are to sit and where there is not to be a single beggar, then there is open door and that door will always remain open. There is nothing in this resolution which any one who has modesty and humility need be ashamed of." "This resolution," he added, "is not an arrogant challenge to anybody but it is a challenge to the authority that is enthroned on arrogance. It is a humble and an irrevocable challenge to authority which, in order to save itself, wants to crush freedom of

opinion and freedom of association,—the two lungs that are absolutely necessary for a man to breathe the oxygen of liberty." We give below the main Resolution on N.C.O. and the duty of the country:—

MAIN RESOLUTION

"Whereas, since the holding of the last National Congress, the people of India have found from actual experience that by reason of the adoption of non-violent Non-co-operation the country has made great advance in fearlessness, self-sacrifice and self-respect, and whereas the movement has greatly damaged the prestige of the Government, and whereas on the whole the country is rapidly progressing towards Swaraj, this Congress confirms the resolution adopted at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta and re-affirmed at Nagpur, and places on record the fixed determination of the Congress to continue the programme of non-violent Non-co-operation with greater vigour than hitherto in such manner as each Province may determine, till the Punjab and the Khilaphat wrongs are redressed and Swarajya is established and the control of the Government of India passes into the hands of the people from that of an irresponsible corporation.

"And whereas by reason of the threat uttered by His Excellency the Viceroy in his recent speeches, and the consequent repression started by the Government of India in the various Provinces by way of disbandment of Volunteer Corps and forcible prohibition of public and even Committee meetings in an illegal and high-handed manner, and by the arrest of many Congress workers in several Provinces, repression is manifestly intended to stifle all Congress and Khilaphat activities and deprive the public of their assistance, this Congress resolves that all activities of the Congress be suspended as far as necessary, and appeals to all, quietly and without any demonstration, to offer themselves for arrest by belonging to the Volunteer Organisations to be formed throughout the country in terms of the Resolution

of the Working Committee arrived at in Bombay on the 23rd day of November last, provided that no one shall be accepted as volunteer who does not sign the following pledge:

With God as witness I solemnly declare that,

(1) I wish to be a member of the National Volunteer Corps.

(2) So long as I remain a member of the Corps, I shall remain non-violent in word and deed and shall earnestly endeavour to be non-violent in intent since I believe that, as India is circumstanced, non-violence alone can help the Khilaphat and the Punjab and result in the attainment of Swaraj and consolidation of unity among all the races and communities of India whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee, Christian or Jew.

(3) I believe in, and shall endeavour always to promote, such unity.

(4) I believe in Swadeshi as essential for India's economic, political and moral salvation, and shall use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of every other cloth.

(5) As a Hindu I believe in the justice and necessity of removing the evil of untouchability and shall on all possible occasions seek personal contact with, and endeavour to render service to, the submerged classes.

(6) I shall carry out the instructions of my superior officers and all the regulations not inconsistent with the spirit of this pledge prescribed by the Volunteer Board or the Working Committee or any other agency established by the Congress.

(7) I am prepared to suffer imprisonment, assault, or even death for the sake of my religion and my country without resentment.

(8) In the event of my imprisonment, I shall not claim from the Congress any support for my family or dependants.

"This Congress trusts that every person of the age of 18 and over will immediately join the Volunteer Organisations.

"Notwithstanding the proclamation prohibiting public meetings, and inasmuch as even Committee meetings have been attempted to be construed as public meetings, this Congress advises the holding of Committee meetings and of public meetings, the latter in enclosed places and by tickets and by previous announcements at which, as far as possible, only speakers previously announced shall deliver written

speeches, care being taken in every case to avoid risk of provocation and possible violence by the public in consequence.

"This Congress is further of opinion that Civil Disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion whenever every other remedy for preventing arbitrary, tyrannical and emasculating use of authority by individuals or corporations has been tried, and therefore advises all Congress workers and others who believe in peaceful methods and are convinced that there is no remedy, save some kind of sacrifice, to dislodge the existing Government from its position of perfect irresponsibility to the people of India, to organise individual Civil Disobedience and mass Civil Disobedience when the mass of people have been sufficiently trained in the methods of non-violence and otherwise in terms of the resolution thereon of the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Delhi.

"This Congress is of opinion that, in order to concentrate attention upon Civil Disobedience, whether mass or individual, whether of an offensive or defensive character, under proper safeguards and under instructions to be issued from time to time by the Working Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee concerned, all other Congress activities should be suspended whenever and wherever, and to the extent to which, it may be found necessary.

"This Congress calls upon all students of the age of 18 and over, particularly those studying in the National institutions and the staff thereof, immediately to sign the foregoing pledge and become members of National Volunteer Corps.

"In view of the impending arrest of a large number of Congress workers, this Congress whilst requiring the ordinary machinery to remain intact and to be utilised in the ordinary manner whenever feasible, hereby appoints, until further instructions, Mahatma Gandhi as the sole Executive authority of the Congress and invests him with the full powers of the All-India Congress Committee, including the power to convene a Special Session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee, such

powers to be exercised between any two sessions of the All-India Congress Committee, and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.

"This Congress hereby confers upon the said successor, and all subsequent successors appointed in turn by their predecessors, all his aforesaid powers.

"Provided that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to authorise Mahatma Gandhi or any of the aforesaid successors to conclude any terms of peace with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Congress Committee to be finally ratified by the Congress specially convened for the purpose, and provided also that the present Creed of the Congress shall in no case be altered by Mahatma Gandhi or his successors except with the leave of the Congress first obtained.

"The Congress congratulates all those patriots who are now undergoing imprisonment for the sake of their conscience or country, and realises that their sacrifice has considerably hastened the advent of Swaraj."

RESOLUTION 2

"This Congress appeals to all those who do not believe in full Non-co-operation or in the principle of Non-co-operation, but who consider it essential for the sake of national self-respect, to demand and insist upon the redress of the Khilaphat and the Punjab wrongs, and, for the sake of full national self-expression, to insist upon the immediate establishment of Swaraj, to render full assistance to the Nation in the promotion of unity between different religious communities, to popularise carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving from its economical aspect and as a cottage industry necessary in order to supplement the resources of millions of agriculturists who are living on the brink of starvation, and to that end preach and practise the use of hand-spun and hand-woven garments, to help the cause of total prohibition and, if Hindus, to bring about removal of untouchability and to help the improvement of the condition of the submerged classes."

We must now refer to a debate initiated by Maulana Hasrat Mohani, who proposed to define 'Swaraj' in the creed as "Complete Independence, free from all foreign control." At this distance of time, one is apt to look upon it as the most natural sequence of all that had happened, and may even wonder why it should have been resisted at all by the Congress or by Gandhi. But, at the time, Gandhi was obliged to speak out frankly:—

> "The levity with which the proposition has been taken by some of you has grieved me. It has grieved me because it shows lack of responsibility. As responsible men and women, we should go back to the days of Nagpur and Calcutta."

The language employed by Gandhi may strike us now, as we read it, as strong, but strong it was meant to be. Was it also too strong?, is the question. Gandhi had evolved a new movement, shaped a new Creed and planned a new attack. It was a perfect campaign in which the objective and the strategy were all clearly defined. The troops were in the midst of skirmishes and engagements. A huge battle was about to take place. Just then for a soldier to come up to the General and the army and say that the objective should be re-defined was to disturb the forces arranged for battle. There was no doubt that the time chosen was utterly inopportune and the spirit displayed unhelpful. No wonder, then, if the General was distressed or even became indignant. But some of the arguments employed by Gandhi on this occasion sound very much, it was pointed out at the time, *mutatis mutandis* like the arguments of the opponents of the existing Creed at the time of its evolution at Nagpur. "We shall be charged by the thinking portion of the world that we do not know really what we are. Let us understand too our limitations. Let Hindus and Muslims have absolute, indissoluble unity. Who is here who can

say to-day with confidence: 'Yes, Hindu-Muslim unity has become an indissoluble factor of Indian Nationalism.' Who is here who can tell me that the Parsees and the Sikhs, and the Christians and the Jews and the untouchables about whom you heard this afternoon, who will tell me that those very people will not rise against any such idea?" The argument however that appealed was, "Let us first of all gather up our strength, let us first of all sound our own depths. Let us not go into waters whose depths we do not know, and this proposition of Mr. Hasrat Mohani leads you into depths unfathomable." This argument was clinching. A general cannot take an army into depths unfathomable to himself. And the proposition was thrown out, and to anticipate events, was pressed year after year until it was accepted as a resolution of the Congress in 1927 in Madras and was embodied in the Creed itself in 1929 at Lahore.

Of the other resolutions, one related to the Constitution and two to the appointment of office-bearers. Of the remaining, one relates to the Moplah disturbance and declares that the N.C.O. or the Khilaphat movement had nothing to do with it, that preachers of non-violence were denied opportunity of carrying the gospel for six months prior to the outbreak, and that, in any case, the movement would not have been prolonged if leading Non-co-operators like Yakub Hassan and Mahatma Gandhi himself had been permitted to visit the area. Horror and indignation were expressed at the inhumanity of confining nearly a hundred Moplah prisoners in a goods waggon on their transfer to Bellary, which ended in the death by suffocation of seventy of them on the night of November 19th, 1921. The Congress deplored the occurrences in Bombay on the 17th November and assured all parties and all communities that it was the desire and determination of the Congress to guard their rights to the

fullest extent. Congratulations were then offered to Kemal Pasha on his victory over the Greeks which led to the revision of the Treaty of Sevres, and to Baba Gurudutt Singh of the *Komagatamaru* who, after being a fugitive for seven years, had delivered himself to the Police voluntarily, and to the Sikhs who remained non-violent on this occasion, as well as on other occasions, despite the great provocation by the Police and the Military.

One notable feature of the Ahmedabad Session was the prominent part played by the Muslim Divines in advising the Congress on the political matters that came up before it. Regarding the conditions of Individual and Mass Civil Disobedience, there was considerable discussion over the question of non-violence,—whether it should be in thought, word and deed. It will be remembered that the Calcutta resolution included 'word and deed' only. The Muslims objected to the addition of the word 'thought' in the volunteers' pledge as opposed to the *Shariat* and therefore *'intent'* was substituted for the word 'thought'. In all these matters, the Ulemah played a notable part in interpreting political ideas in the light of *Al Quoran*, the *Shariat* and the *Hadis*. We shall see later on that their aid was invoked on matters of Council-entry as well, and conduct of affairs thereafter. Finally, attention has to be invited to the penultimate paragraph in which Gandhi was appointed as the sole Executive authority of the Congress with power to appoint a successor, in case the ordinary machinery broke down. Only two limitations were placed in respect of powers so conferred on him, namely, that neither he nor his successors could conclude peace or alter the Creed. That could be done only with the leave of the Congress.

A new departure took place at the Ahmedabad Session which deserves to be noted. The delegates were not willing to disperse soon after the conclusion of the sittings. Gandhi walked up to each camp and explained the technique of Civil Disobedience. In the Andhra camp, he took pains to point out how, in any area where a No-tax campaign was contemplated, volunteers must go about the villages and take the signatures of the ryots agreeing to the campaign. This was of course to be done in addition to the enforcement of the conditions of mass and individual Civil Disobedience.

CHAPTER III

GANDHI BOUND (1922)

Hardly had the year 1921 closed when well-meaning friends of the Congress, who had not, however, accepted its new programme, were anxious to bring about an understanding between the Congress and Government. On the 14th, 15th and 16th of January, before the ink of the Ahmedabad resolutions was dry, an All-Parties' Conference was convened in Bombay which was attended by about 300 persons belonging to all parties.

At the Representative Conference, the convenors planned a draft resolution embodying the terms on which a truce could be asked for. Gandhi, explaining the position of the Non-co-operators, said that while it would not be possible for him formally and officially to join the Conference, he would assist the Conference informally. The reason for not participating formally was, as given by him, that the Government were still carrying on their repressive policy and any Round Table Conference would be futile unless there was repentance on their part. The Conference appointed a Subjects Committee of twenty which Gandhi alone joined from amongst the Non-co-operators. The draft prepared by the Subjects Committee was placed before the Conference on the following day and Gandhi again explained the position of the Non-co-operators. Sir Sankaran Nair who had been acting as Chairman disapproved of the draft resolution and retired from the Conference, which proceeded under the Chairmanship of Sir M. Visvesvarayya and passed a resolution unanimously condemning the repressive policy of the Government, suggesting that, pending negotiations, the Civil Disobedience contemplated

by the Ahmedabad resolution should not be proceeded with, supporting an early convening of a Round Table Conference with authority to make a settlement on the questions of Khilaphat, the Punjab and Swaraj, and with a view to provide a favourable atmosphere, asking for withdrawal of notifications under the Criminal Law Amendment Act banning organisations, and the Seditious Meetings Act, and release of all prisoners convicted or under trial under them as also of the *Fatwa* prisoners. It further asked for a Committee to investigate the cases of persons convicted in connection with the movement under ordinary Law. After the Conference, Sir Sankaran Nair issued a statement to the Press containing some misstatements bitterly attacking Gandhi, to which Messrs. Jinnah, Jayakar and Natarajan, as Secretaries, and others had to issue contradictions.

The resolutions of the Representative Conference applicable to the Non-co-operators were virtually confirmed by the Working Committee at its meeting held on the 17th January, which postponed the starting of Civil Disobedience till the end of the month. A perusal of the correspondence reveals that Lord Reading received the communications from the Conference with apathy and nothing resulted from it. This, if nothing else, made it clear that the approaches for a settlement made in Calcutta by Government,—and even the sweet words that Lord Reading had employed in Calcutta when he said that 'neither side should claim victory for itself,—were not as sincere as the intermediaries imagined. Government were anxious to see that the sojourn of the Prince was not disturbed by the hostile demonstrations of Non-co-operators. The attempts of well-meaning intermediaries failed. The Viceroy summarily rejected the terms offered by the Conference. It was after this that Gandhi sent to the Viceroy, on

1-2-'22 a letter intimating his intention to start Civil Disobedience in Bardoli. The Congress did not regret the result, as the Congress fully shared Gandhi's belief that Government had not done its worst and the country had not shown its best in the new line of suffering and civil resistance, and it was premature to enter into a settlement.

While these negotiations were thus progressing, the country's attention was really rivetted on the campaign of No-tax, which Gandhi had decided to organize in the Bardoli Taluka in Gujarat. He was anxious to make the first experiment in mass Civil Disobedience under his own direct supervision. In that Taluka there were many South-Africa returned emigrants who were familiar with the ways of Gandhi, and it was Gandhi's earnest wish that the rest of India should watch his experiment and infuse strength and spirit into him He was anxious that nothing should be done to distract or disturb his attention or endeavours. The same position was incorporated in a resolution of the Working Committee dated 31st January, 1922. Soon after the Ahmedabad Session, however, the Andhra P.C.C. met on the 7th January at Bezwada and decided to give power to District Congress Committees to explore their respective areas with a view to carrying on a No-tax campaign. Four Districts sought and obtained permission in this behalf. Krishna, Godavari, Guntur and Cuddapah were the Districts concerned. The Executive Committee of the A.P.C.C. had passed a resolution a fortnight before the Congress, on 18-12-'21, at Guntur calling upon the Andhradesa to withhold the payment of taxes. This step was taken in advance of the Congress decision, but in anticipation of it. While the other Districts began to investigate local conditions and take signatures of ryots as desired by Gandhi in his camp-talks after the Congress session at

Ahmedabad, Guntur alone declared a No-tax campaign outright on the 12th January, 1922. Gandhi having acquainted himself with the facts of the case by personal talks with two representatives from Andhra, in Bombay during the sittings of the All-Parties' Conference, sent a letter on the 17th January to the President, A.P.C.C., and a note to the Press saying that he would be glad to hear that all taxes were paid by the 25th. The Press note was not published for some reason or other. The letter gave rise to correspondence between Gandhi and friends in Guntur. The news of Gandhi's attitude, when broken to the other Districts, led to the taxes being paid up as desired. But in Guntur the campaign was continued. In answer to pressing requests for permission, Gandhi telegraphed as follows:—

> "If the Delhi conditions of mass Civil Disobedience are satisfied, and if you think Guntur has reasonable chances of success, then all that I can say is I do not wish to stand in your way. God help you."

This was interpreted into assent incorrectly. But a Committee was appointed to tour the District and investigate how far the Delhi conditions were fulfilled and to report on the advisability of continuing the campaign. The campaign took the form of withholding the payment of Revenue taxes in the plains, and of grazing fees in the forest areas. In one of those areas a Sub-Inspector who went to a village to impound certain cattle, and in impounding separated the calf from the dame, met with some protests and shot down a leading villager. The Military quartered themselves in Guntur (town) and the Governor's cavalry (bodyguard) visited villages where the men were gathered outside the village and taxes were attempted to be collected, though in vain, under threat of distraint.

and arrest. The state of affairs under such conditions could more easily be imagined than described.

By this time the Working Committee meeting on the 31st January, 1922 had received and considered the resolution of the Bardoli Taluka Conference regarding mass Civil Disobedience, and congratulated the people of the Taluka on their self-sacrificing resolve to offer mass Civil Disobedience. The Working Committee advised all other parts of India to co-operate with the people of Bardoli Taluka by refraining from mass or individual Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character, except upon the express consent of Mahatma Gandhi previously obtained. The Working Committee further advised the people throughout the Provinces to pay up the taxes due by them to the Government whether directly, or indirectly through Zamindars or Talukdars,—except in such cases of direct payment to the Government where previous consent had been obtained from Mahatma Gandhi for suspension of payment preparatory to mass Civil Disobedience.

Let us for a moment travel to Gujarat and other Provinces. Gandhi had made up his mind to run his No-tax campaign in Gujarat,—the campaign which, after the All-Parties' Conference of Bombay, he had postponed to 31st January. Accordingly, he sent to the Viceroy a letter on the 1st February, which roused adverse criticism from Mr. Jinnah and others. Gandhi explained in his letter how the campaign should have taken place even earlier, but for the unfortunate and regrettable riots in Bombay on the 17th November, 1921, resulting in the postponement of the step contemplated by Bardoli. He referred to the looting of property, assaults on innocent people, brutal treatment of the prisoners in jails, including flogging. He admitted intimidation. He

pointed out that his task was to rescue from paralysis freedom of speech, of association and of Press. "The Working Committee of the Congress has restricted mass disobedience only to certain areas to be selected by me from time to time, and at present it is confined to Bardoli. I may, under the said authority, give my consent at once in respect of a group of 100 villages in Guntur in the Madras Presidency, provided they can strictly conform to the conditions of non-violence, unity amongst different classes, the adoption and manufacture of hand-spun khaddar and untouchability." Gandhi gave seven days' time to Lord Reading within which to release the prisoners and free the Press from administrative control. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy is given below:—

Bardoli. 1st February, 1922.

To

His Excellency
The Viceroy,
Delhi.

Sir,

Bardoli is a small Tehsil in the Surat District in the Bombay Presidency, having a population of about 87,000 all told.

On the 29th ultimo, it decided under the Presidency of Mr. Vittalbhai J. Patel to embark on mass Civil Disobedience, having proved its fitness for it in terms of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi during the first week of November last, but as I am perhaps chiefly responsible for Bardoli's decision, I owe it to Your Excellency and the public to explain the situation under which the decision has been taken.

It was intended under the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, before referred to, to make Bardoli the first unit for mass Civil Disobedience, in order to mark the national revolt against the Government's consistently criminal refusal to

appreciate India's resolve regarding the Khilaphat, the Punjab and Swaraj.

Then followed the unfortunate and regrettable riots on the 17th November last in Bombay, resulting in the postponement of the step contemplated by Bardoli.

Meantime repression of a violent type has taken place, with the concurrence of the Government of India, in Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab, the Province of Delhi and in a way in Bihar and Orissa and elsewhere. I know that you have objected to the use of the word 'repression,' for describing the action of the authorities in these Provinces. In my opinion, when an action is taken which is in excess of the requirements of the situation, it is undoubtedly repression. The looting of property, assaults on innocent people, brutal treatment of the prisoners in jails, including flogging, can in no sense be described as legal, civilised or in any way necessary. This official lawlessness cannot be described by any other terms but lawless repression.

Intimidation by Non-co-operators or their sympathisers, to a certain extent, in connection with *Hartals* and picketing may be admitted, but in no case can it be held to justify the wholesale suppression of peaceful volunteering or equally peaceful public meetings, under a distorted use of an extraordinary law, which was passed in order to deal with activities which were manifestly violent both in intention and action, nor is it possible to designate as otherwise than repression, action taken against innocent people under what has appeared to many of us as an illegal use of the ordinary law, nor again can the administrative interference with the liberty of the Press under a Law that is under promise of repeal be regarded as anything but repression.

The immediate task before the country, therefore, is to rescue from paralysis freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of Press.

In the present mood of the Government of India, and in the present unprepared state of the country in respect of complete control of the sources of violence,

Non-co-operators were unwilling to have anything to do with the Malaviya Conference whose object was to induce Your Excellency to convene an R. T. C. But as I was anxious to avoid all avoidable suffering, I had no hesitation in advising the Working Committee of the Congress to accept the recommendations of that conference.

Although, in my opinion, the terms were quite in keeping with your own requirements, as I understood them through your Calcutta speech and otherwise, you have summarily rejected the proposal.

In the circumstances, there is nothing before the country but to adopt some non-violent method for the enforcement of its demands including the elementary rights of free speech, free association and free Press. In my humble opinion, the recent events are a clear departure from the civilised policy laid down by Your Excellency at the time of the generous, manly and unconditional apology of the Ali Brothers, *viz.*, that the Government of India should not interfere with the activities of the Non-co-operators so long as they remain non-violent in word and deed. Had the Government policy remained neutral and allowed public opinion to ripen and have its full effect, it would have been possible to advise postponement of the adoption of Civil Disobedience of an aggressive type till the Congress had acquired fuller control over the forces of violence in the country and enforced greater discipline among the millions of its adherents. But the lawless repression (in a way unparalleled in the history of this unfortunate country) has made immediate adoption of mass Civil Disobedience an imperative duty. The Working Committee of the Congress has restricted it only to certain areas to be selected by me from time to time, and at present it is confined only to Bardoli. I may, under said authority, give my consent at once in respect of a group of 100 villages in Guntur in the Madras Presidency, provided they can strictly conform to the conditions of non-violence, unity among different classes, the adoption and manufacture of hand-spun khaddar and untouchability.

But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass Civil Disobedience, I would respectfully urge you as the head of the Government of India finally to revise your policy and set free all the Non-co-operating prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities, and declare in clear terms the policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country, whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilaphat or the Punjab wrongs or Swaraj or any other purpose, and even though they fall within the repressive sections of the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code or other repressive laws, subject always to the condition of non-violence. I would further urge you to free the Press from all administrative control and restore all the fines and forfeitures recently imposed. In thus urging, I am asking Your Excellency to do what is to-day being done in every country which is deemed to be under civilized government. If you can see your way to make the necessary declaration within seven days of the date of publication of this Manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character till the imprisoned workers have, after their discharge, reviewed the whole situation and considered it *de novo*. If the Government make the requested declaration, I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall, therefore, have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side, and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive Civil Disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuses to yield to the clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India.

I remain,
Your Excellency's
Faithful servant and friend,
(Sd.) M. K. Gandhi

The Government of India promptly published a reply to Gandhi's Manifesto justifying their repressive policy as being only the result of the Bombay riots and the dangerous manifestations of lawlessness in many other places, as well as a systematic campaign of violence, intimidation and obstruction by volunteer associations. The reply further pointed out that Government's policy was not at variance with that laid down by His Excellency at the time of the apology of the Ali Brothers, for, there it was made plain that Government would "enforce the Law relating to offences against the State, as and when they may think fit." Nor did the Government of India summarily reject the proposal of a conference, stated the reply, for, the fundamental condition of the discontinuance of the unlawful activities of the N.C.O. party was not amongst the proposals of the All-Parties' Conference. Only *Hartals,* picketing and Civil Disobedience would cease and other illegal activities, it was claimed, would continue. Those referred to apparently were the enrolment of volunteers in prohibited associations and the preparations for Civil Disobedience as stated by Gandhi. Moreover "Mr. Gandhi also made it apparent that the proposed Round Table Conference would be called merely to register his decrees." His demands comprised (1) the release of all prisoners 'convicted' or under trial for non-violent activities, and (2) a guarantee that the Government refrain from interference with all non-violent activities of the Non-co-operation party even though they fell within the purview of the I.P.C.

There was, however, a fatality hanging over the Congress. On the 5th February, when a Congress procession was taking place at Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur, U.P., 21 constables and a Sub-Inspector were rushed by the mob into a Police Station, and the station and the men in it were set fire to. They all perished

in the flames. Moreover, the scenes of Bombay on the 17th November, in which 53 persons died and 400 were wounded, had repeated themselves on the 13th January in Madras during the Prince's visit to the city, though on a miniature scale, and these two events were made the reason for suspending mass Civil Disobedience at a meeting of the Working Committee which met at Bardoli on the 12th February, 1922. Congressmen were asked to stop all activities designed to court arrest and imprisonment, all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of notifications. Then a constructive programme was drawn up which included the enlisting of a crore of members, the popularising of the *charka*, organising of National schools, temperance and Panchayats. Just then, the Committee that had been appointed to tour the Guntur District and report on the conditions had published its recommendation to the people to pay up the taxes, and they were duly paid by the 10th February. It must be owned that the non-payment campaign in the Andhradesa was a thorough success, so far as the campaign went, for not even five per cent. of the taxes were collected so long as the Congress ban was operative.

The Bardoli resolutions gave rise to a variety of feelings in the country. There were many who placed implicit trust in Gandhi and his decision. There were also a few who would not lose an opportunity of questioning them. When the All-India Congress Committee met in Delhi on the 24th and 25th February, it virtually endorsed the Bardoli resolutions of the Working Committee, except that it permitted individual Civil Disobedience in respect of particular places of particular laws under the authority of the P.C.C.'s and in strict conformity to the conditions laid down in that behalf by the Congress. The picketing of foreign cloth was

expressly permitted on the same terms as liquor picketing mentioned in the Bardoli resolutions. The A.I.C.C. reiterated its faith in Civil Disobedience and considered that an atmosphere of necessary non-violence could be established by the workers concentrating upon the constructive programme.

The A.I.C.C. proceeded to define Individual Civil Disobedience (I.C.D.) as "disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or group of individuals." "Therefore, a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no unauthorised admission is allowed is an instance of Individual Civil Disobedience, whereas a prohibited meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of Mass Disobedience. Such a Civil Disobedience is defensive, when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity, although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity but for arrest and imprisonment."

There was great perturbation in Delhi when the A.I.C.C. passed its resolution advocating Individual Civil Disobedience, amongst the intermediaries who were not hopeful of any readjustment of relations between Government and Congress, but now were anxious to avoid the impending disaster of Gandhi's arrest. Very likely, Government would not have taken action if the A.I.C.C. had not still harped upon Civil Disobedience as the ultimate resort and Individual Civil Disobedience as an immediate practical programme. On the other side, there was an outcry against Gandhi that he should have switched off the whole current and made the movement no longer a live wire. Long letters were written from behind the bars by Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai. They took Gandhi to task for punishing

the whole country for the sins of a place. Why should, Panditji asked, a town at the foot of the Himalayas be penalised, if a village at Cape Camorin failed to observe non-violence? Isolate Chauri Chaura and if need be, Gorakhpur, but go on with Civil Disobedience, individual and mass. That was the burden of the complaints of Panditji as well as Lalaji and two other younger friends who too made no secret of their displeasure and disappointment and disgust at the sudden termination of the movement. These letters were read to an informal gathering of friends of the A.I.C.C. at Dr. Ansari's place on the 24th February, 1922. And strangely enough, C.I.D. men got mixed with the audience and were carefully following them. In reply Gandhi had but one word to say, namely, that those who went to jail were civilly dead and could not claim or be expected to advise those outside. But the storm blew with unexampled fury when the A.I.C.C. had a regular sitting. Gandhi was assailed on all sides. He was taken to task for resiling from the movement, and for the Bardoli resolutions in general. Bengal and Maharashtra tore him to pieces. Why should Individual Civil Disobedience not be continued? "Bengal is not going to pay the Chowkidari tax, say what you will." Even devoted men like Babu Hardyal Nag raised the standard of revolt. Why should civil resisters wear khaddar? Dr. Moonje had already confronted the Working Committee on 11th January, with a resolution of the Nagpur District Congress Committee permitting reservation in untouchability and Swadeshi. These were the questions put to Gandhi. Every line of the Bardoli resolutions was subjected to a scathing attack. The meeting reduced itself to attacks from Maharashtra and Bengal. A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved by Dr. Moonje at the A.I.C.C. meeting. Some speakers supported it by their speeches, but when it was put to vote only those

who had spoken in favour voted for it, the rest of the House voting against it. Gandhi did not permit any one to oppose the motion of censure by speech. The storm blew over and Gandhi, like the proverbial reed, remained unmoved.

Gandhi's Arrest

The die was cast. Now was the turn of Government to pounce upon Gandhi. No administration would select a moment of high popularity of a leader in the country for its attack on him. It bides its time patiently, and it is when the army retreats fighting a rearguard action that the enemy comes down with all his fury "like a wolf on the fold." On the 13th March, Gandhi was arrested,—his arrest being virtually decided upon even in the last week of February,—and committed to sessions on a charge of sedition.

'The Great Trial' began on the 18th March at Ahmedabad, and, to quote from Sarojini Devi's Foreword to a little brochure bearing that title: "A convict and a criminal in the eye of the Law; nevertheless the entire Court rose in an act of spontaneous homage when Mahatma Gandhi entered,—a frail, serene, indomitable figure in a coarse and scanty loin cloth, accompanied by his devoted disciple and fellow-prisoner, Shankerlal Banker."

When you go to a big textile shop or a jewellery mart for your dress and diamonds, your puzzle is what to buy with your limited purse. Even so might the Law officers of the Crown have been 'puzzled and perplexed' as to the choice of Gandhi's articles published from week to week for their indictment against him. Which was not seditious? Gandhi always held that it was his duty to propagate sedition, and if his articles were not sufficiently seditious, it meant his pen was weak. In the end they

selected three of them, headed 'Tampering with Loyalty,' 'The Puzzle and its Solution' and 'Shaking the manes.' As soon as the charge was read, Gandhi rose to plead guilty, remarking, "I observe the King's name has been omitted from the charges, and it has been properly omitted." Mr. Banker also pleaded guilty. The trial might have ended forthwith with the pronouncement of sentence, but the Advocate-General urged a full trial. The Judge disagreed and wanted only to decide the sentence. Gandhi made a statement and prefaced it by saying that his preaching disaffection had begun long before his connection with *Young India*. He took full responsibility for the occurrences in Madras and Bombay and Chauri Chaura and added:—

> "I knew I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free, I would still do the same. I would be failing in my duty if I do not do so. It is the last article of my faith. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered has done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it; and I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what, in Law, is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, Mr. Judge, is, as I am just going to say in my statement, either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion. But by the time I have finished with my statement, you will, perhaps, have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk which a sane man can run."

The Written Statement

"I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court too, I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

"My public life began in 1893 in South Africa, in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that, as a man and an Indian, I had no rights. On the contrary, I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

"But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticising it fully where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction.

"Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1890 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps, and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion.' On both these occasions, I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa, I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly in India, when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1917 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda, and the response was being made

when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

"The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors, beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime-Minister to the Muslims of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled

"But in spite of the foreboding and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, hoping that the Prime-Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Muslims, that Punjab would be healed, and that the Reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

"But all that hope was shattered. The Khilaphat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed and the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiassed examination of the Punjab Martial Law

cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that, in nine out of every ten, the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion the administration of the law is thus prostituted, consciously or unconsciously, for the benefit of the exploiter.

"The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world, and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organised display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit that has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by Law. If one has no affection for a person or thing, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under it. I have

endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which, in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

"In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to tax the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that, as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what, in Law, is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal.

M. K. GANDHI"

The judge passed judgment sentencing Gandhi to six years' imprisonment, on the analogy of Lokamanya Tilak who had been similarly sentenced, and Mr. Shankerlal to one year's simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000, or six months' imprisonment in default of payment. Gandhi made a short reply saying that he considered it a proud privilege to have his name associated with that of the Lokamanya, and thanked the judge for his consideration in passing the sentence and for his courtesy. All those present in Court bade him good-bye, most of them with tears in their eyes.

Gandhi was thus convicted and spirited away from the Nation. That was not unexpected. On the 9th of March, he had published an article in *Young India* headed 'If I am arrested,' where he reiterated his discovery that there was a spirit of violence abroad, that Kunzru's report about Chauri Chaura was clinching, that the Congress Secretary's report from Bareilly was clear that in the volunteer procession there might not be violence, but there was the spirit of violence. Accordingly, he had ordered the suspension of Civil Disobedience and explained that disobedience under the conditions would be not 'Civil' but 'Criminal.' He could not understand, however, the Englishman's dead-set against the very theory of Civil Disobedience, as if it was something immoral, when he had glorified even armed rebellion. It would be a sad commentary if his arrest was to be a signal for a storm all over the country. Let all the workers show that Government's fears are wholly wrong. Let there be no *hartals*, noisy demonstrations, no procession. The Bardoli programme, if fulfilled, would not only release him but inaugurate Swaraj. It was with these words that he had welcomed his arrest, because it powers, disprove the theory that people had accepted would explode the superstition about his supernatural

N. C. O. under his influence, prove our capacity for Swaraj and finally give him a quiet and physical rest which perhaps he deserved. And well did the country respect his wishes and observe perfect peace on his arrest and conviction.

About the same time that Gandhi was arrested, a fairly large number of arrests took place in Andhra in connection with the No-tax campaign. But the really noticeable feature was that as the Congress relaxed its Civil Disobedience movement, Government tightened its repression. That was but to be expected, for Government having sent out the leader of the Non-co-operation movement, the General of the Army, it was but natural that they should seek to disperse or even destroy the force. It is equally natural for the forces to muster together and carry on with a substitute for the departed leader. That is one position. The other position is that with the removal of Gandhi, there was created a chasm in the public life of the country. The one experiment that should have been made on the 23rd of November but was postponed by the Bombay riots to the new year, and postponed again to the 31st January, on account of the All-Parties' Conference of Bombay (14th and 15th January, 1922), was ultimately postponed *sine die*. Who was to attempt this stupendous and novel experiment during the six years of Gandhi's absence?

The Working Committee was busy for three months after Gandhi's conviction with adjusting affairs. The khaddar department was entrusted to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and five lacs of rupees were asked to be placed in his charge. For relief in Malabar, the Committee voted Rs. 84,000. Seth Jamnálal Bajaj generously paid another lac of rupees as a donation for the maintenance of lawyers. The compulsory 'use' of khaddar was

interpreted to mean 'personal wear.' Non-co-operating lawyers were once again warned not to appear in cases, and Non-co-operators were not to enter defence. A Committee was appointed for investigating and reporting upon, (1) the causes which led to the outbreak of the Moplah rebellion, (2) the extent of the outbreak, (3) the measures adopted by Government for suppressing it, including the declaration of Martial Law, (4) Forcible conversions by the Moplahs, (5) Destruction of property, and (6) steps, if any, necessary to restore and strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity The C. P. Marathi Provincial Congress Committee already suggested certain modifications in the N. C. O. programme. A Committee was appointed to formulate a scheme regarding the removal of untouchability. All these and other recommendations were soon considered by the A. I. C. C. which met at Lucknow on the 7th, 8th, 9th, of June, 1922. The fact is that in this world, whenever there is a failure in business or death of the head of a family, the calamity is followed by an immediate bustle and excitement incidental to readjustment, which in turn gives rise to a feeling of void and vacuum. Into this void and vacuum, there is a rush of multiple thoughts and divided counsels ending in some confusion. Even so was the conviction of Gandhi followed by three months of readjustment of affairs, payments of money, collection of dues, interpretation of terms, appointment of committees, reassertion of principles, statement of policies, filling of casual vacancies, recording of services and such other things. Then came the time in June for a re-examination of fundamentals.

The task of the A.I.C.C. was really to re-assess the theory and practice, review the science and art of Non-co-operation, Passive Resistance, and Civil Disobedience. We need not make an unnecessary secret of the simple

fact that the top-notch politicians, notably Deshbandhu Das and Vittalbhai J. Patel, who were reluctant converts but warm apostles of Non-co-operation, were in favour of changing faith on its orthodox lines and professing a protestant creed that would carry Non-co-operation into the very aisles and chancel of the Bureaucratic Church. They wanted to beard the lion in its own den and carry Non-co-operation into the very citadels of Provincial Governments. Accordingly, the A. I. C. C., after placing on record Gandhi's services to the cause of humanity by his message of peace and truth, reiterated its faith in the principles of non-violent Non-co-operation, and carried the Working Committee's resolution moved by Pandit Motilal Nehru, who had just been released, as amended by Pandit Malaviya. It condemned the continued repression by Government and recognised the necessity of some form of Civil Disobedience to combat it. It held the constructive programme to be the best preparation for even mass Civil Disobedience. It adjourned, to the month of August, the consideration of the question "whether Civil Disobedience in some form, or some other measure of similar character, should be adopted," and in the meantime requested the President to nominate and authorize a few gentlemen to tour round the country and report on the situation to the next meeting. Accordingly, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Dr. Ansari, Syts. V. J. Patel, Jamnalal Bajaj, C. Rajagopalachariar and Seth Chothani were appointed by the President, Hakim Ajmal Khan, who was to be the Chairman of the Committee.

In place of Seth Jamnalal who could not accept the offer, Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was appointed. Seth Chothani could not join at all.

Before we proceed to deal with the Civil Disobedience Committee's activities and their report, let us go back to the month of March. Montagu was forced to resign his ministership on the 23rd of March, 1922, for revealing the contents of a certain document relating to the revision of the Treaty of Sevres with Turkey which scored a first class victory just then against the Greeks. Prosecutions and convictions were raging everywhere. In the Punjab it was the Lawrence Statue that was the object of the attack. In Andhra, it was the hoisting of the National Flag in Godavari that was the red rag to the bureaucratic bull. The No-tax campaign was of course there. The reign of Law reduced itself to the reign of Sections 108 and 144. The Indian Members of the Executive Councils expressed helplessness as the Collectors (Deputy Commissioners) were all-powerful in the matter, and only a Judicial appeal—which the non-co-operators would not resort to—could remedy the obvious wrong. Another source of irritation to the people of India arose from the 'steel frame' speech of Lloyd George, the Premier. It was occasioned by a circular known as the O'Donnell circular to Provincial Governments, inviting their opinions on the various considerations involved in the question of Indianization, in order that the Government of India might consider the whole position. This got wind and roused the ire of the officers in England and India, whereupon, to reassure them, Lloyd George made a speech in which he declared that "the Civil Services of India were the steel frame of the whole structure of administration." He added that he could see no period when India could dispense with the guidance and assistance of a nucleus of the British Civil Services, whose continued assistance was necessary to bring about the discharge of Britain's great trust in India, and it was not to relinquish this trust but to bring it into partnership in its discharge, that the Reforms

had been introduced. The Viceroy, however, to appease apprehensions in India, obtained at the time, from Mr. Lloyd George, a clear authorization to say that nothing in that speech was intended to conflict with earlier pledges and proclamations. One thing after another helped to keep up excitement.

We must now refer to another instance of Satyagraha with which the name of Borsad was associated. The Satyagraha at Borsad took place in the year 1922. It was organized under circumstances which seem to us almost incredible. For some time past, an arch-dacoit named Devar Baba had been carrying on his exploits in the Borsad Taluka. He would come in his usual dress to the schools in the day-time and distribute sweets to children. He hit upon this device in order to ascertain who was rich in the village, and then in the nights he would descend with his men upon his intended victim, kidnap him and negotiate a ransom for his release. This went on for a month, and there was no help. While these exploits were progressing, a rival rose in the person of a Muslim who had a quarrel with a pleader and, having murdered him, had disappeared and become an outlaw. He gathered a band of men and was carrying on his depredations in the Taluka as a rival to Devar Baba. The Police were helpless. Government posted to the place their best officer, but his labours met with no success. The Baroda Police were also interested in the detection of the criminals, as similar mischief was going on in their territory adjoining the Borsad Taluka. The Police and the Revenue officers concerned, of the State and the Taluka, put their heads together and evolved a clever plan of detecting the criminals. They entered into a pact with the Muslim outlaw, who undertook to catch Devar Baba and deliver him to the authorities, provided he was well-armed and, further, received the assistance

of four or five constables with rifles and cartridges. This was agreed to. A thief was set to catch a thief, but the new ally of the Police only used his men and munitions to intensify his campaigns in the Taluka for his own ends.

Crime increased and, as the last resort, Government thought that the villagers themselves were privy to these crimes and posted Punitive Police on the Taluka, levying a heavy punitive tax which they began to collect with the usual relentlessness that prevails under such circumstances. In the meantime, public men in Gujarat learnt about the pact between the Police and the Muslim dacoit, and Vallabhbhai J. Patel challenged Government on the matter. He went to Borsad and asked the people not to pay the punitive tax. The shots that were taken out of the bodies of persons injured in the dacoities proved to be Government shots and left no doubt that the Police rifles and ammunition were being used by the dacoits. Vallabhbhai J. Patel posted 200 volunteers in the Taluka and they kept watch day and night. He succeeded in persuading the people not to lock up their doors from the evening time, as they had been wont to, for weeks together previously, but keep them open. The villagers proved by the aid of photographs that the officers of the punitive Police posted in the Taluka were themselves locking up their doors inside, as well as getting them locked outside, in order to put the dacoits off the scent and make them believe that the houses were abandoned. On the slightest noise outside, the Police were crouching under their cots. All these allegations were proved to the hilt by photographs taken, and when the charges were publicly brought against the authorities, they had only two alternatives left to them,—either to prosecute those that had brought them forward or to plead guilty by silence.

When these revelations were made, the Baroda Police was quickly withdrawn from the villages in the State, but the British Police continued to remain and attachments of property went on merrily for collection of the punitive tax.

In the meantime Lord Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, left India and his successor, Sir Leslie Wilson, took charge of the Province. On hearing of the happenings in Borsad, he at once sent the Home Member to Borsad, who verified the allegations and withdrew the Police on the spot. Devar Baba himself had disappeared the moment Vallabhbhai and the volunteers appeared on the scene.

Two events of the year now claim our attention. The first of them was the tour of the Civil Disobedience Committee in the summer in the country. The second was the great event known as the Guruka-Bagh affair which took origin in August. We shall describe the latter first. The Shiromani Gurudwar Prabandhak Committee was a reformist group of Sikhs who called themselves Akalis—as opposed to the Udasis who were conservatives and whom the Mahants or the Abbots in power at the Sikh shrines favoured. The reformists wanted to capture the shrines by Satyagraha and some Akalis serving the shrine cut down a tree in August on the land of the Guruka-Bagh shrine. The Mahant complained to the Police, who afforded protection, but batches of Akalis pledged to non-violence passed the Police Pickets and were severely beaten as unlawful assemblies. No resistance was made to these attacks by the Police and the spectacle aroused considerable excitement in the country. It was an object lesson in non-violence displayed by a martial race of India

who had fought the Germans and won victories for the British in Europe.

The self-control exhibited by the Akalis has been freely acknowledged by Government, and Government's only regret was that "while this fact was emphasized and indeed praised to the skies as a triumph of Gandhism in various sections of the Indian Press, scarcely a word of commendation was given to the remarkable good temper and excellent discipline shown by the Police in the discharge of their peculiarly unpleasant duty." Indeed, it was at Guruka-Bagh that the Police, it was said, perfected the technique of *lathi*-charge which was destined, a decade later, to play so prominent a part in Indian politics. Even the Police abominated their thankless task and ere long Government were forced to abandon the dispersion of the Akali *jathas* and, instead, to arrest individual members and in November, 1922, a public-spirited gentleman, Sir Ganga Ram, stepped in to take on lease the lands in question from the Mahant and made no objection to the Akalis cutting the wood thereon.

The Civil Disobedience Committee undertook its tour throughout India. The spirit of the people was not dead. Wherever they went, they received a warm welcome. At Guntur, the Municipality presented an address to the Committee wishing them success in their object. On their arrival at the Railway station, 200 volunteers were arrested by the Police,—a fact worth more by way of evidence than the arguments presented to them. The Committee finished their labours and presented their Report. At first, it was the intention of the A.I.C.C. to discuss this at a meeting to be held on the 15th August. No meeting could be held but, apparently, private discussions took place about the time

when some of the prominent men of India met in Calcutta in connection with the wedding of Deshbandhu Das's second daughter. It was then, we were told at the time, that Pandit Motilal Nehru was weaned away from Civil Disobedience and converted to Council-entry. Later, when the Report was published, it transpired that all the members discussed the question whether the Congress should or should not contest Council elections. A little later, a parallel Committee appointed by the Khilaphat Committee reported predominantly in favour of continuing the Council Boycott. Without dwelling at greater length upon the forces that were at play in the production of the Report,—and there must, doubtless, have been many legitimate forces operating,—we quote below the recommendations of the Civil Disobedience Committee :

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

(a) The country is not prepared at present to embark upon general mass Civil Disobedience of a limited character *e.g.*, the breaking of a particular law or the non-payment of a particular tax for which the people are ready. We recommend that Provincial Committees be authorised to sanction such limited mass Civil Disobedience on their own responsibility, if the conditions laid down by the All-India Congress Committee in that behalf are fulfilled.

(b) We recommend the restoration of the resolution No. 2 passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Delhi on the 14th and 15th November, which gives Provincial Committees all the powers necessary to determine upon a resort to Civil Disobedience of any kind whatever, by cancelling Resolution I. Cl. 1, passed on the 24th, 25th February, to the extent it conflicts with that resolution; provided that general mass Civil Disobedience is not permissible.

2. ENTRY INTO LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS

(a) The Congress and the Khilaphat at their Gaya Session should declare that, in view of the fact that the working of the Legislative Councils during their first term has, besides proving a great obstacle to the redress of the Khilaphat and the Punjab wrongs and the speedy attainment of Swarajya, caused great misery and hardship to the people, it is desirable that the following steps should be taken in strict accordance with the principles of non-violent Non-co-operation to avoid the recurrence of the evil:

1. Non-co-operators should contest the election on the issue of the redress of the Punjab and Khilaphat wrongs and immediate Swarajya, and make every endeavour to be returned in a majority.

2. If the Non-co-operators are returned in a majority large enough to prevent a quorum, they should after taking their seats leave the Council Chamber in a body and take no part in the proceedings for the rest of the term. They should attend the Councils occasionally, only for the purpose of preventing vacancies.

3. If Non-co-operators are returned in a majority which is not large enough to prevent a quorum, they should oppose every measure of the Government including the budget, and only move resolutions for the redress of the aforesaid wrongs and the immediate attainment of Swarajya.

4. If the Non-co-operators are returned in a minority they should act as pointed out in No. 2; and thus materially reduce the strength of the Council.

As the new Councils will not assemble till January, 1924, we further propose that the Congress Session of 1923 be held during the first instead of the last week of December and the matter be again brought up for the issue of a final mandate by the Congress in view of the election.

(Recommended by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Motilal Nehru, V. J. Patel).

(b) There should be no change of the Congress programme in respect of the boycott of Councils.

(Recommended by Dr. M.A. Ansari, Syt. C. Rajagopalachari, Syt. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.)

3. LOCAL BODIES

We recommend that in order to clear the position it should be declared that it is desirable for Non-co-operators to seek election to Municipalities and District or Local Boards with a view to facilitate the working of the constructive programme, but that no hard and fast rules be at present laid down to regulate or restrict the activities of non-co-operating members beyond advising them to act in harmony with Local or Provincial Congress organisations.

(Unanimous)

4. BOYCOTT OF GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

We recommend a strict adherence to the Bardoli resolution in regard to these by suspending for the present active propaganda calling upon boys to come out of schools and colleges. As required by that resolution, reliance should be placed upon the superiority of National schools for drawing scholars from Government institutions and not upon picketing or other aggressive propaganda.

(Unanimous)

5 BOYCOTT OF COURTS BY LITIGANTS AND LAWYERS

Effort should be concentrated on the establishment of Panchayats and cultivation of a strong public opinion in their favour.

We further recommend that all existing disqualifications imposed on practising lawyers should be removed.

(Unanimous)

6. ORGANISATION OF LABOUR

Resolution No. 8 passed by the Nagpur Congress should be carried out without further delay.

(Unanimous)

7. RIGHT OF PRIVATE DEFENCE

(a) We recommend that individuals should be given full freedom to exercise the right within the limits defined by Law, except when carrying on Congress work or on occasion directly arising therefrom, subject always to the condition that it is not likely to lead to a general outburst of violence. Using force in private defence in gross cases, such as insults to religion, outrages on modesty of women, or indecent assaults on boys and men, is not prohibited under any circumstances.

(All members except Syt. V. J. Patel).

(b) Full freedom to exercise the right within the limits defined by Law should be reserved to Non-co-operators, subject only to the condition that it is not likely to lead to a general outburst of violence, and to no further conditions.

(Syt. V. J. Patel).

8. BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

(a) We accept the principle and recommend that the whole question be referred to a committee of experts for a full report to be submitted before the Congress meets.

(All members except Syt. C. Rajagopalachari).

(b) There is no objection to the collection and examination of facts by experts, but the acceptance of the principle by the All-India Congress Committee would mislead the Nation and injure the movement.

(Syt. C. Rajagopalachari).

It will be evident to the reader that the forces of orthodox and heterodox Non-co-operation were equally arrayed against each other. But both were really forces of N.C.O., neither plumping for co-operation with Government. Only with the heterodox school the bow of Non-co-operation was to work with a second string by which arrows could be better flung at the citadel of Bureaucracy from inside the Council Chamber. The

recommendation regarding Local Bodies was but to be expected. Already Congressmen and Non-co-operators had begun to contest elections of Municipalities and Local Boards and give pin-pricks to Government, as the latter thought, by advocating the use of khaddar in hospitals and for uniforms for servants, by urging the hoisting of the National Flag upon their offices, by recommending the introduction of charkha and Hindi in 'Local' and Municipal Schools, and occasionally by urging the boycott of Governors' visits and the visits of Ministers. But, except that they were indications of an attitude, there was not much in the way of real achievement.

The diversion of the national mind—be it even of a section—from the dynamic and destructive programme of boycott and the offensives of Civil Disobedience to the milder spheres of Local Self-Government and Legislatures is perhaps like a diversion from the firing line of the battle-field to the chess-board of the drawing-room. Yet, the fact must be recognized that by the winter of 1922, there was a schism which it was no longer possible to conceal, and which was destined to develop into a split at the Gaya Congress. The meeting of the A.I.C.C. which should have been held on August 15th, had necessarily to wait till the month of November. In that month, a truly historic gathering of the Committee met in Calcutta on the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th November, 1922. It was a gala session, extending over five days, much like the field-day of Budget debates in Legislative Councils, when members could speak on subjects, all and sundry, without time-limit. The Congress discussions in Calcutta were like a tournament in which the rounds were all well marked out, and pairs of opposing speakers were carefully selected. The first day's sittings were held in the Indian Association Rooms, but the atmosphere was suffocating and the next four days were spent under a *shamiana* that

was erected for the occasion on the premises of 148, Russa Road, Bhawanipore, the magnificent residence of Mr. C. R. Das, which was bearing on its forehead the marks of ten months' neglect. Nor could it be said that the Calcutta performance was a mere feat of intellectual levity. Although towering personalities like Nehru, the Elder, and Das were supporting the Council programme and were briskly aided by their old ally, Maharashtra, yet the recent incarceration of Gandhi and the spirit of loyalty and reverence which his following always bore towards him, the attractiveness of a programme of revolt, the absence of a programme of equal attractiveness, the proximity of the goal in sight, in spite of the crags and chasms that intervened but were hidden from view by the carpet green of tree-tops, and above all, the crossing of the Rubicon and the burning of the boats by most Non-co-operators,—all these constituted a formidable opposition which could not be overawed either by the intellectual eminence of Motilal or the dominating personality of Das. At the end of five days' analysis, criticism, invective and diatribe, the Committee resolved that the country was not prepared for mass Disobedience but it authorized P. C. C.s to sanction on their own responsibility limited Civil Disobedience that may be demanded by any situation, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions laid down in that behalf. The harder question of Council-entry was held over till Gaya, and likewise were postponed the questions of Boycott of British goods, the recommendation of entry into Local Bodies with a view to facilitating the constructive programme, the boycott of schools and colleges and Law-Courts, and the right of private defence within the limits of Law except when carrying on Congress work. Thus ended the deliberations of the Civil Disobedience Committee which cost the Congress Rs. 16,000.

Before we pass on to the Gaya Congress, let us bring the deliberations of the Working Committee up to date. In 1922, the Committee had met thrice in January, twice in February, once in March, once in April, once in May for four days on end, twice in June, once in July, once in September, once in November, and once in December. An influential Committee had been appointed to investigate the Guruka-Bagh affair, the grief of the Congress was expressed over the death of the venerable old patriot, Motilal Ghose of the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, a Committee was appointed to visit Multan with a view to bringing about the restoration of good feelings between Hindus and Muslims.

It was unfortunate that the Hindu-Muslim unity which was a remarkable feature of the history of the previous two years should have been broken in the Muharram of 1922, in which communal feeling in Multan reached serious heights, leading to extensive destruction of life and property. Strenuous efforts made to restore unity proved unavailing. "The structure so painfully erected by Mr. Gandhi," says 'India, 1922-23,' "had crumbled hopelessly."

In fact, the 18th of every month was being observed ever since the 18th April, throughout the country as the Gandhi Day, even as the 15th of every month was being observed in 1917 as the Besant Day, till her release in September that year. Another important event was the arrest and conviction of Jawaharlal in May, 1922, some time after his release from imprisonment in connection with the boycott of the Prince's visit. The warrant of his arrest bore the 'familiar' Section 124-A. But he was not tried under it. He stood charged with "criminal intimidation and abetment of an attempt to extort." He had really declared his intention in a public speech to

picket foreign shops. He had also presided at a Committee meeting at which letters were agreed to be sent to certain cloth merchants to pay the fines imposed by their own association under their own rules. The conviction was under Sec. 385 I.P.C. The fact was that he was really being tried for picketing foreign cloth shops. He made an exquisite statement in Court on the 17th May, 1922, in which he explained how he, who ten years before was virtually an Englishman who had imbibed all the prejudices of Harrow and Cambridge, was transformed in the space of ten years into "a rebel against the present system of Government in India." "I marvel at my good fortune," he concluded. "To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve her under a leader like Mahatma is doubly fortunate. But to suffer for the dear country! What greater good fortune could befall an Indian unless it be death for the cause, or the full realization of our glorious dream."

The Gaya Congress of 1922 was in every sense a remarkable one. The towering personality of Deshbandhu Das, the President, would, if nothing else, make it remarkable. It was not, however, merely the men who conducted the Congress, but the matters relating to the Congress which made the Congress remarkable. The fight at Gaya was really a tri-partite one,—between those that raised politics to a spiritual level and those that worked politics on the intellectual and the material plane. That the leader of the former group was not present in flesh and blood made no difference. His ideals of truth and non-violence, his philosophy of suffering and sacrifice, his religion of politics based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes,—all these were there imperfectly lisped by his followers, but perfectly shining

forth from the aureole that surrounded his benign portrait.

The question which caused the greatest excitement and difference among the delegates was the question of entry into Councils. It will be remembered that the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta had left this question over for the Congress, and the Congress had to sit for five days, to come to conclusions on this and other matters. There were those who felt strongly that the scheme of Non-co-operation would be upset if entry into Councils was permitted, and they insisted that the ban on Council-entry should not be lifted. There were a few intellectuals who would enter Councils and not take seats or Oaths of Allegiance and would, that way, beat the enemy altogether. Finally, there were the passionate politicians who would sweep the Councils and make short work of Cabinets and Ministers, who would beard the lion in his den, who would withhold supplies and move Votes of Censure, who would create deadlocks and bring the Government machinery to a standstill.

Deshbandhu Das delivered his speech, a marvel of logic, erudition and practical idealism. But the reaction against the change of direction of the ship of N.C.O. gathered volume and force, and despite the high intellectualism of S. Srinivasa Iyengar and Pandit Motilal Nehru, the ship pursued its own old course. Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar tabled an amendment to the effect that Congressmen should contest seats but refuse to take their seats, and Pandit Nehru gave his qualified assent to it. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had resigned his membership of the Madras Legislative Council, his Advocate-Generalship and his 'C.I.E.,' and come into the movement more than a year earlier in the midst of universal congratulations. The Khilafatists were under-

the influence of the Jamiat-ul-ulemah, who had published a *Fatwa* declaring Council-entry as *mamnoon*, not *haram*. But nothing availed at Gaya. The spirit of Gandhi was all-pervading. Every one took it to be an act of disloyalty to the Master to turn his back on him, the moment he was found to be absent from the Congress. After doing honour to the memory of Motilal Ghose and A. C. Mazumdar, a handsome tribute was paid to Gandhi and his principles. The unexampled bravery of the Akali Martyrs and the noble example of non-violence set by them as well as other political prisoners were admired. Kemal Pasha was congratulated on his success. Councils were asked to be boycotted. A solemn warning was administered to Government not to incur any more National Debt, and to the people not to contribute any further to National Debts floated by the bureaucracy under the authority of the so-called Legislatures. The A.I.C.C.'s resolution of November on Civil Disobedience was virtually ratified, the Nation being called upon to get ready money and men in the meantime for the purpose. The boycott of colleges and courts was to be continued, the right of private defence as already defined in November was conceded. Labour was to be organised by a Committee including Mr. Andrews, Sen-Gupta and four others with power to co-opt. Congress Bodies in South Africa and Kabul were affiliated with rights to send 10 and 2 delegates respectively to the Congress.

Deshbandhu Das really had two precious documents in his pocket when he presided over the Gaya Congress,—one was the Presidential Address, and the other his resignation of the Presidentship, together with a constitution of the Swaraj Party.

The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee had formulated some such thing in 1920. At the Special

Congress of Calcutta, Bengal and Maharashtra leaders had opposed boycott of Councils. At Nagpur, Das had spent Rs. 36,000 to undo Calcutta, and when he failed, he magnanimously moved the resolution of the day. At Ahmedabad, we know not what he would have done if he had been present in person. The Gaya Congress was a battle-royal between the two contending parties. It was not to be expected that a man of Das's personality—with the support of eminent men like Motilal and Vittalbhai—would tamely succumb to the spirit of the masses and submit to Council-Boycott. A party was, therefore, organized and a programme was drawn up. Das was to capture the Provincial Council of Bengal and Motilalji was to mountguard over Delhi and Simla. Maharashtra would look after Nagpur. If Bardoli's successful No-tax campaign would obviate similar campaigns of suffering and sacrifice in India, why not the success in Calcutta and Nagpur of the programme of wrecking the formation of Ministries set an example to and save the troubles and sufferings of the rest of India? Das had immense faith in his Province. Indeed, if the choice were given to him, he would be happy with schemes of village reconstruction, provided he had facilities therefor. His tastes and tendencies were to narrow down the sphere of activity for intensive work, and not to diffuse his energies over an extensive area. The Non-co-operation movement was shortly to be shunted to the side-line of legislative activities.

Before we close the year 1922, we have to refer to two matters, though they are not directly germane to our subject. Government was not unmindful of the growing passion of young men for volunteering. The volunteer organization was really growing in numbers and strength, and the tour of the Congress party met with reactionary orders in Jubbulpore and other places. The Khilafat

volunteers and their quasi-military equipment and dress were such as to strike the imagination of young India; and Government, as if to take the wind out of the sails of the national movement, started a territorial organization for different parts of India and Burma. A scheme was also initiated for the training of Indian lads for Sandhurst in an Indian Military College. The second matter relates to the relation of jail rules in respect of 'political prisoners.' This term was not avoided by Government then, as it was in the later years. Their treatment was sought to be regulated along certain broad lines. Of course, this category of prisoners excluded all those convicted of offences involving violence, or against property, all persons convicted of attempts to seduce soldiers or Police from their allegiance, and of offences directly involving criminal intimidation. The cases were to be considered, each on its merits and selection, for differential treatment which was to be based upon the status, character and education of the prisoner and the nature of his offence. Prisoners so selected were to be separated from ordinary prisoners, might get their own food and bedding and wear their own clothes, might possess books and magazines, receive visitors and letters at stated intervals, and enjoy exemption from labour and from menial duty. We have described at length these instructions issued by the Government of India, only to show that they had not been then or later observed by the jail authorities in relation to the vast bulk of political prisoners. Indeed, Government have latterly refused to recognize the term 'political' itself, as qualifying prisoners.

CHAPTER IV

N.C.O. FROM WITHIN COUNCILS (1923)

The political atmosphere of the country at the commencement of 1923 was beginning to get polluted once again by communal differences. The year 1922 had already witnessed the Multan riots. The Muharram of 1923 was attended with serious riots both in Bengal and the Punjab. In the year 1922, the Khilaphat question met with an unexpected end. After the signing of the Armistice at Mudania early in October, 1922, a conference of the Allied Powers was convened at Lausanne, on the 20th November, where a two months' discussion was held. It was then that representatives of the Angora Government took over the civil administration of the city, with the result that the Turkish Sultan was compelled to flee for his life secretly on a British warship which conveyed him to Malta. No sooner had he departed than he was deposed, not only as Sultan but also as Khalifa. A new Khalifa was elected in the person of his nephew Abdul Majid Effendi and the Sultan ceased to exist, Turkey having become a Republic. Thus had the Khilaphat been vaticanized.

The victory of the no-changers at Gaya was destined to be short-lived. The A.I.C.C. resolved on the 1st January, 1923, that a sum of 25 lacs be collected and 50,000 volunteers be enrolled before the 30th April, 1923, and the Working Committee was authorized to take all necessary steps. It was also empowered to relax any of the Delhi conditions for Civil Disobedience in order to meet any grave emergency that might arise out of the Turkish situation. Dr. Ansari was requested to get a

scheme of National Pact prepared for the next meeting. But the most important matter before the Committee was the President's resignation. That was inevitable, for he had already intimated to the Subjects Committee his plans regarding the new Swaraj Party. The question of the resignation was held over to the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. which was held at Allahabad on the 27th February, 1923. At this meeting a compromise was arrived at, under which Council propaganda was to be suspended on both sides till the 30th April, and both parties were to be at liberty to work the remaining items of their respective programmes in the interval without interference with each other, and each party was to adopt such course after the 30th April as it might be advised.

By this time, both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were released and the A.I.C.C. recorded their grateful thanks to both for their services in effecting the settlement.

It did not look as though Civil Disobedience would be seriously taken up as a national programme. The split itself would be a potent cause for its not being resumed. Again, a splendid opportunity arose in the budget of the year. The Salt Tax was proposed to be raised in the budget session of 1923, but the Assembly threw the proposal out. The Viceroy of course certified the higher figure. Although the members of the Assembly had urged that the imposition of the enhanced tax would only place a premium upon Non-co-operation, although the restoration of the duty by the Viceroy,—after it had been condemned by men like Mr. Montagu Webb and Mr. E. D. Sassoon,—was received with alarm and indignation, although it was felt at the time that "if only the N.C.O. party had been possessed of any thing

like its former vigour, it is quite possible that the certification of the Salt Tax might have provided it with a fresh lease of life," yet, the fact remained that this opportunity made no impression on the Congressmen's minds. It did not occur to them, as it occurred seven years later to their Master, that salt would be a splendid point at which to begin Satyagraha. In fact the author of *India*—a Government officer, twitted the Congress then and there, saying that the Viceroy's certification was not availed of to renew C. D. in some form. The autocratic action of Lord Reading had, however, a collateral result. Mrs. Besant had been talking, for some time earlier, of a National Convention to rally together all the constitutionalists. Dr. Sapru had just resigned his office of Law Member of the Government of India and a Conference was convened under his presidency to discuss a practical programme for achieving self-governing status within the Empire and the Conference appointed several committees to consider various details.

The constructive programme was vigorously preached and popularised by a deputation composed of Babu Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Devidas Gandhi, which toured the country widely and made a good collection for the T. S. Fund. They submitted a report of their work to the Working Committee that met in Bombay on the 25th, 26th, and 27th May, 1923. There took place an important meeting of the A.I.C.C. as well, at which it was decided that no propaganda be carried on amongst voters in furtherance of the resolution passed at the Gaya Congress relating to the Boycott of Councils. It was just a month previous to that, that the Deshbandhu had made a suggestion that the work of the Congress should be divided into various sections including the capture of the Councils, and that

each section be entrusted to persons interested in it and that five to six crores of rupees be collected for the purpose. This proposal was explained to the Working Committee by Messrs. C. Rajagopalachari and Babu Rajendra Prasad, but was dropped as impracticable and opposed to the Gaya Congress resolutions, so far as the Councils were concerned. The moment the A.I.C.C. passed the aforesaid resolution, and on account of it, six members of the Working Committee tendered their resignations of membership of the Committee. These were Messrs. C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai J. Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Brij Kishore Prasad, G. B. Deshpande, and Jamnalal Bajaj. After some parley for a reconsideration, at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru, the resignations were accepted and so was the President's resignation. The Committee was reconstituted and work was carried on under Dr. Ansari's chairmanship. There was nothing further of any importance done at this meeting. Only, we must pause at the Committee's congratulations offered to the volunteers of the Central Provinces carrying on their Flag Satyagraha and the call to the volunteers throughout India to be ready to join the struggle when required.

The Bombay compromise was obviously resented by a number of Provincial Committees and the A.I.C.C. that met later at Nagpur felt it necessary "to declare in express terms the adherence to, and insistence on, the propriety and validity of the compromise resolution passed by this Committee on the 26th of May and this Committee makes the said declaration." It further resolved "that the attempt of certain Provincial Congress Committees to act contrary to the said resolution is deplorable," and it hoped that such conduct would not be persisted in. The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee was sought to be condemned for indiscipline. This was

objected to by a section of the A.I.C.C. as the material was not sufficient for such condemnation. The House agreed in the latter view and this led to the resignation of Jawaharlal who had moved the proposition and those of his persuasion, from the Working Committee, including Dr. Ansari. The resignations were accepted by the A.I.C.C. and a new Working Committee was elected on the spot.

But really quite an unexpected resolution, and one in respect of which no notice was given, was sprung on the Committee at Nagpur when "a Special Session of the Congress to consider the question of the Boycott of Councils" was decided upon. It was to meet in Bombay in the month of August and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was elected President and the Working Committee was empowered to take all necessary action in this behalf.

As was to be expected, the unexpected decision at Nagpur in favour of a Special Congress naturally aroused some opposition which was strengthened by another circumstance, namely, the closeness of voting on the resolution itself, and these two reasons were cited in a requisition for a special meeting of the A.I.C.C. in the month of August at Vizagapatam. At this special meeting which was held on the 3rd of August, "the President asked," says the official Report of the proceedings, "if any member wanted to move a resolution in pursuance of the requisition. None coming forward, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari moved the following resolution which, being duly seconded, was carried."

The resolution voted for a Special Session in September (not August) and if there was any difficulty regarding the venue, the President was authorized to arrange for the session being held in any other place. There is something

striking in the mover being Mr. Rajagopalachari. It may be noted incidentally that the President was Desabhakta K. Venkatappayya, a pronounced no-changer. Was it intended to thresh out the question at a Special Session, or was it intended to facilitate the passage of the Congress train along the new direction?

Before we proceed to the Special Session which was ultimately held in Delhi—not Bombay, as originally intended—we may as well review the events of the day. The Nagpur Satyagraha claims our first attention. The movement at Nagpur arose from the Police objecting to a procession carrying the National Flag, proceeding in the direction of the Civil Lines of the City, by the promulgation of S. 144 on the 1st May, 1923.

The volunteers insisted on their right to carry the flag where they willed. They were arrested and sentenced. This developed soon into a movement earning the blessings of the Working Committee, as we have already seen, and later of the All-India Congress Committee held on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of July, 1923 at Nagpur. The Committee resolved to give assistance to the Nagpur Satyagraha Committee in carrying the campaign to a successful issue, and further called upon the country to observe the next Gandhi day (18th) as a flag day, the Provincial Committees being instructed to organize flag-processions and public display of the flag by the people. By this time Seth Jamnalal Bajaj also had been arrested in connection with this Satyagraha movement. That was really why the A.I.C.C. met at Nagpur and the Committee appropriately congratulated Sethji on his incarceration and "assured him of its whole-hearted support of the said campaign." Sethji's car was attached for realizing the fine of Rs. 3,000 imposed upon him, but the car would not sell in Nagpur; so, it was taken to Kathiawar for

sale. Numerous were the sufferings of the prisoners in the Nagpur Satyagraha who came from all the Provinces of the country in response to the call of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. to support the campaign at Nagpur.

The Nagpur Flag Satyagraha soon developed into an All-India movement and Syt. Vallabhbhai J. Patel was asked to be in charge of it as from the 10th July. Volunteers were being sent from several parts of India; some Congress Committees appealed for funds. The Working Committee met at Vizagapatam early in August and recorded "its grateful appreciation of the help rendered by Syt. Vittalbhai Patel in the conduct of the Nagpur Satyagraha and requested him to continue to be on the spot and help to guide the movement along with the member-in-charge, (Vallabhbhai J. Patel). Virtually then, the Patel Brothers were looking after the campaign, and to them is due the credit for bringing it to an honourable termination. Government's contention was that the processionists should apply for permission. Congress claimed the right to proceed along any public road without let or hindrance. A vigorous campaign was contemplated and the public were taken into confidence by Vallabhbhai who cleared all misunderstandings and proclaimed the time and route of the March for the 18th. The prohibitory section was there, in fact it had just been renewed, but on the 18th the flag procession was allowed to pass. Later, a controversy arose out of this, Anglo-Indian papers claiming victory for Government on the allegation that the Congress had applied for permission, and the Congress rightly contending that it never did so. This is not the only struggle in which a settlement has given rise to different comments by opponents of the National movement. Suffice it to say that the Delhi Congress offered its "hearty congratulations

to the organizers of the Flag Satyagraha movement at Nagpur and the Volunteers for having, by their heroic sacrifice and suffering, upheld the honour of the country by carrying the fight to a successful finish."

There remains an important development relating to Indians abroad which arrested the attention of the Congress in the months of July, August and September. Affairs in Kenya were going from bad to worse and merited a pronouncement by the A.I.C.C. early in August at its Vizagapatam sitting. The position in the years 1922-23 may briefly be reviewed. With the exception of New Zealand and Newfoundland, Indians resident in other parts of the British Empire had for long been subject to certain humiliating conditions. In 1921, the Dominion representatives assembled at the Imperial Conference of 1921, South Africa alone dissenting, passed a resolution admitting the justice of Indian claims saying "that in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, it is desirable that the rights of Indians (lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire) should be recognized." It was also agreed that thenceforth India should directly negotiate with South Africa in matters in which her Nationals were concerned. In South Africa the rights of Indians secured to Indians by the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914, were endangered early in 1920 by a decision of the Transvaal Provincial Court. In Transvaal, Indians were politically helpless. In Natal, they no doubt possessed the municipal franchise, but their position had lately been the subject of serious attack. In the Orange River Free State, Indians are not allowed at all, while in the Cape Province, Cecil Rhodes' "equal rights for every civilized man" prevails. A Commission appointed by the South African Government in 1920 to enquire into the question of Asiatics trading and holding land in the several South African Provinces,

and before which Sir Benjamin Robertson appeared as the representative of the Government of India, recommended, it is true, the retention of the law prohibiting the ownership of land by Asiatics but declined to recommend a compulsory segregation. In Natal, however, the right of Indians to acquire and own land was confined to the coast belt, but on the protest of the Government of India, the Union Government abandoned the proposal. Natal, however, issued two Ordinances shortly after, which endangered still further the position of Indians, but which were vetoed by the Governor-General of South Africa. These two and a third Ordinance were once again introduced in 1922-23, but the Union Government once again vetoed the first two and pressed for certain changes in the third. The third is the Natal Retail Dealers Licensing Ordinance. All along, Lord Reading's Government took a just view of the matter and explained the same to a deputation of the Central Legislature. Let us recall the fact that at the Imperial Conference of 1921, it was suggested that a deputation from India should visit Canada, New Zealand and Australia to assist the Governments concerned to implement the resolution of the Conference recognizing the rights of Indians. The proposal being officially endorsed by the several Dominion Governments, the Hon'ble V. S. Sastri, accompanied by Mr. G. S. Bajpai, left India in May, 1922, for the three Dominions.

We need not go into the small grievances of Indians in these places and the success that attended Sastriar's good offices. It is to Kenya that we must now turn our attention. The position of Indians there had long been most unsatisfactory. This Colony owed much to Indian labour and Indian capital. Indians were the pioneers in many directions and they outnumbered the European population.

Winston Churchill's testimony to the Sikh soldier, the Indian trader, the Indian banker who advanced financial aid even to the white settlers, and his protest against a policy of deliberately squeezing out the native of India from regions in which he had established himself under every security of public faith, were largely quoted by Moderate politicians in the Indian Central Legislature. Indians resented the prohibition against the transfer to Indians of agricultural lands in the highlands of the Colony, the region which stretches across the road to Uganda with its cotton fields, where Indian interests are already considerable. Compulsory segregation, the denial of franchise to Indians, and the prohibition of Indian immigration, it was feared, may be forced on Kenya, by the intolerance of the European community. The very Churchill who had "accepted the recognition of the Imperial Conference that there is an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the Empire and the existence of disabilities upon Indians lawfully domiciled," was the Colonial Secretary in 1921. Early in 1923, the Colonial Office sent for the Governor of Kenya and he proceeded to London along with European and Indian delegations, for the purpose of discussing the terms of a final settlement. Likewise the Indian Central Legislature sent a delegation of which Sastriar was the leader. The Kenya Indian delegation asked Mr. C. F. Andrews to accompany them as their adviser. In this capacity he rendered to the cause of Indians in Kenya notable help for which the Working Committee thanked him in April, 1923.

The problem became more urgent in view of proposals in the air to carve out one great union of Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Nyassaland, Uganda and Kenya. The position of Indians in Uganda was dependent upon the settlement of the Kenya problem. 'Segregation' was

infecting this Colony as well. In the township of Kampala, a residential site, away from European quarters, was assigned to Asiatics in Uganda. The Government of India's representations were of no avail. In Tanganyika, on the assurances of Lord Milner in 1921, Indians bought enemy property, and the equal rights promised were sought to be set aside by the three Ordinances introduced by Government "for fiscal purposes." An extensive *hartal* was organised which persisted up to the middle of April, 1922. Restrictions on travel by 1st class in Railways were imposed, but were withdrawn.

We have given all these details because the Congress took a definite step early in August, 1923 on the question. The resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. runs as follows:—

> "The decision of the British Government on the Kenya question having made it clear that it is not possible for India to have an equal and honourable place in the British Empire, the A.I.C.C. of the Indian National Congress is of opinion that there should be a solemn demonstration throughout India to mark the event."

The Committee then prescribed a peaceful *hartal* on the 26th of August with meetings everywhere calling upon people to abstain from participation in the British Empire Exhibition, the Imperial Conference, the Empire Day celebrations and all other Imperial functions.

Delhi Special Congress, 1923

Now we pass on to the Special Session of the Congress at Delhi convened in the 3rd week of September, 1923. The President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, is a great Muslim Divine who commands respect and popularity in Bengal as well as Delhi, and whose clear head and

impartial judgment were trusted to by both parties alike. There was not much difficulty in the pro-Council party getting the Congress to register their wishes in a permissive resolution which declared that "such Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objections against entering the legislatures are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections. And this Congress, therefore, suspends all propaganda against entering the Councils." Of course, a rider was added urging that redoubled efforts be put forth in behalf of the constructive programme. The death of Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Choudhri, the earthquake in Japan, forced abdication of Nabha, and floods in Bihar, Kanara and Burma were the subjects of suitable resolutions of condolence and sympathy. Then a Committee was appointed to organise an effective campaign of Civil Disobedience and to advise and regulate the action of Provinces in this behalf. Another Committee was appointed to revise the Constitution, and still another to prepare a draft of the National Pact. The Press was warned to observe great restraint in dealing with matters relating to inter-communal relations, and the appointment of District Conciliation Committees was advised. The Akalis were once again congratulated on their courageous and non-violent stand against repression, culminating in the arrest of the Enquiry Committee sent by the Siromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The boycott of foreign cloth through khaddar was urged and a Committee was appointed to determine the most feasible methods of encouraging Indian manufactures and the boycott of British goods in particular. The Flag Satyagraha campaign received congratulation on its successful finish and the released prisoners, notably Lalaji and Maulana Mahomed Ali were welcomed.

Kenya became the subject of indignation, and Turkey for jubilation. Two more Committees were appointed, one to recommend measures to prevent the Hindu-Muslim dissensions which had recently shown a recrudescence and the other to investigate allegations of force in respect of *Suddhi* and anti-*Suddhi* movements. The formation of Civic Guards and the promotion of physical culture were finally urged on the Nation for the maintenance of peace and order.

The way was cleared at Delhi for a realignment of the course of the Congress. The revolt at Gaya had nearly borne fruit. Nay, the Delhi resolutions bear testimony to a complete change in the outlook of those that had the ordering of things in their hands. The large number of Committees—altogether five, was itself an indication of leisure created anew which could not be better occupied than in a re-examination of the several questions committed to their care. "Civic Guards and physical culture" wound up the deliberations, while the question of Council-entry opened them. There was, perhaps, a tinge of a taint in that the resolution regarding Council-entry was only permissive, but the feeling of the mass of the population on the subject had to be respected. The way was, however, clear to those who were inclined to take part in the ensuing elections, and Congressmen were for the first time divided in their attention to a programme which itself was divided in its course. The principles and policy to be followed by the Swaraj party were set forth in a manifesto.

The next annual session of the Congress was to meet at Cocanada. There were lingering hopes in the minds of a few no-changers that, though Cocanada might not be able to undo what Delhi had done, for the elections would be over by that time, still the banner of orthodox

Non-co-operation should be kept raised at an annual session. Maulana Mahomed Ali was chosen as the President of the year. He had coined a phrase even at Delhi that a bird was whispering in his ears that Gandhi himself would not object to Council-entry, and the phrase was literally taken by not a few in the country. The basis for such a statement was a message, to which related the veiled reference, sent by Gandhi in prison to Mahomed Ali free, through Devidas Gandhi, which is available to the public. "I can send you no message," said Gandhi, "because I am in prison. I have always disapproved of people sending messages from prison. But I may say that I am deeply touched by your loyalty to me. I would, however, ask you not to allow your loyalty to me to weigh with you so much as your loyalty to the country. My views are very well known. I expressed them before I went to jail and there has been no change in them since. I may assure you that if you chose to differ from me, it will not affect by one jot the sweetness of the relations between you and me." Does this sound like supporting Council-entry? Mahomed Ali was anyway for peace and Shaukat Ali, who presided over the Khilaphat Conference of the year, was equally for peace. Their aged mother's exhortations in the open Congress *'ettifaq se raho'* could not be easily ignored. Yet, at Cocanada a strong resistance was put up. Only some of the pronounced No-changers had disappeared from the leadership of the party. Rajendra Babu could not attend the Cocanada Session owing to ill-health and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari cast his weight on the side of the Delhi resolution. Syt. Vallabhbhai was present, but his assent to the Delhi settlement had been wrung out of him at the Delhi Session. Shyam Sunder Chakravarti, the woe-struck man of Bengal, who had suffered years of deportation and imprisonment, of poverty and misery, was the man who moved the

mighty audience of Cocanada to tears by his speech opposing Council-entry. But the die was cast. The fate of the Council-Boycott was sealed. We give below the main resolution:—

> "This Congress reaffirms the Non-co-operation resolutions adopted at Calcutta, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Gaya and Delhi.
>
> "Since doubts have been raised by reason of the Non-co-operation resolution adopted at Delhi with regard to Council-entry, whether there has been any change in the policy of the Congress, this Congress affirms that the principle and policy of that boycott remain unaltered.
>
> "This Congress further declares that the said principle and policy form the foundation of constructive work and appeals to the Nation to carry out the programme of constructive work as adopted at Bardoli and prepare for the adoption of Civil Disobedience. This Congress further calls upon every P.C.C. to take immediate steps in this behalf with a view to speedy attainment of our goal."

The Cocanada Congress was memorable for more than one feature. It was perhaps the grandest Congress ever held,—for the lay-out of roads, for the magnificent tent which was to be permanently the property of the Congress, for the close attention paid to the smallest detail in arrangements, for the equable weather, and for the housing of Presidents and leaders on the premises. Such a Congress made itself memorable too for the interpretation that Non-co-operation could be effected as much from inside the Councils as from outside. It was the unpleasant duty of Cocanada to record the Nation's sorrow over the demise of S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, whose Nationalism was an evergrowing culture and who, like Dadabhai, was on a level with his age, and of Aswini Kumar Datta who was loved all over Bengal

and whose memory is revered all over the country. The continued incarceration of Damodar Vinayak Savarkar evoked condemnation by the Congress. The National Pact that was prepared was asked to be circulated along with the 'Bengal Pact' prepared by Deshbandhu Das. The Congress welcomed the movement for the formation of an all-India volunteer organisation into which was later merged the movement of Civic Guards.

A scheme of separate Congress Departments was called for, as also a scheme of a National Service of paid workers to work these various departments. Kenya aroused the whole-hearted—albeit powerless—sympathy of the Congress, and Srimathi Sarojini Devi and Mr. George Joseph were deputed as delegates to the Kenya Indian Congress.

The Civil Disobedience Committee appointed at Delhi and the Satyagraha Committee were absorbed in the Working Committee. An All-India Khaddar Board was formed with power to organise khaddar work. Emigration was advised to be stopped from India, and a Committee was appointed to examine Labour conditions of Indian emigrants to Ceylon. A number of amendments to the Constitution were carried, and finally the Congress took up Government's challenge to the right of free association of Indians for non-violent activities in attacking the Akali Dal of the S. G. P. Committee and resolved to stand by the Sikhs in their 'present' struggle and render all possible assistance, including assistance with men and money.

At this point, it is but meet to digress a while and give a succinct account of the birth of the Reform movement amongst the Sikhs. The Akali Sikhs with their black turbans and cries of 'Sat Sri Akal' and their

Langar Khanas had become an unfailing annexe to the Congress. When a foreign Government assumes control over the country, it is only to be expected that, octopus-like, they would extend their grasp over almost every institution in the land, economic, educational or even religious. The English annexed the Punjab in 1849, and when in the transition, the affairs of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the centre and stronghold of Sikhism, were in confusion, a Committee of baptized Sikhs was appointed as Trustee with a Government-appointed Sarbrah or guardian. They had a manager handling lacs a year, and as often happens in such cases, the Committee was dropped in 1881, and the manager became all-powerful. Want of control bred irresponsibility and corruption, and after repeated clashes between managers and priests on one side and the Sikh public on the other, with a puzzled Government in the middle, a Committee was established towards the end of 1920 which became the Gurudwara Siromani Prabandhak Committee, whose first President was Sirdar Sundar Singh Majithia who became, shortly after, a Member of the Executive Council of the Punjab Government. The Reformists were known as Akalis who brought more historic Gurudwaras under their control. A collision occurred at Tara Taran in which several Sikhs were injured and two died. We have already described at length the tragedy of Nankana Sahib early in 1921, and the cold-blooded murders of innocent pilgrims in it. The Police looked upon the movement as one designed for the capture of power and wealth associated with the Gurudwaras. This view encouraged *mahants*—even those who had settled terms with the Akalis, to resile from them and Government also pursued a "policy of wholesale repression against the Reforming Sikhs." In May, 1921, hundreds of Sikhs were thrown into prison and the discredited *mahants* were restored to power.

The S.G.P.C., therefore, passed a resolution of N.C.O. with Government, so far as this Reform was concerned, in May, 1921.

The Gurudwara Bill contemplated by Government had to be dropped, being unacceptable to any shade of opinion, including moderates and co-operators. Sikhs were prosecuted for wearing *kripans* beyond certain length. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee protested on 10th July, 1921, and the Sikhs imprisoned were released at the end of the month. Barbarous sentences of 18 years and 7 years R. I. were passed against Bhai Kartar Singh of Jhabbar and Bhai Raja Singh of Bhuchar. On the 28th August, 1921, the Sikh members of the Legislatures were called upon to resign. Sirdar Bahadur Sirdar Mehtab Singh, Barrister-at-Law, resigned his Government Advocateship and Deputy Presidentship of the Punjab Legislative Council, as a protest against the policy of Government regarding the Gurudwara movement. These two long-term prisoners and many others were released in the beginning of September, 1921. But Sirdar Sardul Singh Kaveeshar, General Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C., who had been sentenced to 5 years R. I. under S. 124-A I.P.C. in June, 1921, and other Gurudwara workers were not released. Suddenly on the 7th November, 1921, Government snatched away the keys of the *toshakhanas* of the Golden Temple. This prevented the decoration on the birthday of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. A certain manager was appointed temporarily by Government, but he was not allowed to assume charge by the S.G.P.C. and he resigned. Since then the 'keys' became the bone of contention and the subject of public meetings of protest. But Government applied the Seditious Meetings Act from the 26th November, 1921, and Sirdars Kharak Singh and Mehtab Singh were sentenced to R. I. Sri Guru Govind Singh's

birthday was coming off on the 5th January, 1922, and Government offered the keys to the S. G. P. C. pending the final decision of the civil suit filed by Government. The S.G.P.C. refused. After 200 Sikh workers were arrested, Government stopped their course and released all prisoners unconditionally, and the keys were restored on 11-1-'22. Pandit Dina Nath's continued detention gave rise to renewed agitation and Civil Disobedience of the Seditious Meetings Act, the whole Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. speaking at a public meeting on the 8th February, 1922. He was then released, as also Baba Gurudutt Singh of the *Komagatamaru* fame (1914). The S.G.P.C. was not a political body, but in a small community, politicians and Social or Religious Reformers easily get mixed up or even identified. Nor would Government allow this distinction to be maintained. The religious prestige of the Durbar Sahib was used to whitewash the crimes of General Dyer, when he was given Khila'at at the Golden Temple by the official manager, and Lord Finlay turned this event to the best account in the House of Lords when he said that the Sikhs had approved of General Dyer's action and even made him a Sikh. Again, it was in the Golden Temple that the official manager got it proclaimed that the Budge Budge martyrs were not Sikhs. Government obtained a war loan of Rs. 50,000 from the Temple funds during the Great War.

The Akalis wore black Turbans. From about the 2nd week of March, 1922, "by a well arranged *coup*, wholesale arrests of Akalis were carried simultaneously in 13 selected Districts of the Punjab and the Sikh States of Patiala and Kapurthala, and within a fortnight about 1,700 black-turbaned Sikhs were arrested." Sirdar Kharak Singh, President of the S.G.P.C. and the P.P.C.C. was given 4 years R. I. "Kripans," Government said, early

in March, 1922, "were swords and their manufacture required licenses." People were directed to wear Kripans in the manner prescribed by Government. Some Military Sikhs were imprisoned for wearing them at all and received sentences ranging from 4 to 18 years, R. I. Baba Gurudutt Singh (of the *Komagatamaru*) was rearrested and sentenced to 5 years' transportation in July, 1922, and Master Mota Singh of the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation, for 8 years.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act was the supreme master of the day and the security sections were its assistants. "The Police were the masters of the situation and they had a jolly time of it," wrote a leader. Pandit Malaviya visited the Punjab and got a Committee appointed under the Presidency of Dewan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath "to investigate the official excesses, illegalities and barbarities." The Punjab Government published a communique dated 14th May, 1922, warning the Religious Reformers against association with "the disorderly and Criminal conduct of men, who have no real connection with Reform." The reference was obviously to Congressmen. Altogether 1,900 to 2,000 Sikh workers were arrested by the 15th June, 1922.

Then occurred the Guruka Bagh affair which has been mentioned under the year 1922. Suffice it to say here that the Sikhs proved Gandhi's statement that "to face a bullet was easier than receive a *lathi* blow and those who endured it non-violently deserved their respect." The excesses committed in connection with this event were the subject of enquiry by an European of the Punjab Government. Men like Mr. Andrews bore testimony to their serious character. "It is one of the most moving and pathetic sights I ever have seen," said he, "the triumph of non-violence is so complete. It is to the men

a real martyrdom. There was a blockade, as pointed out by Pandit Motilal Nehru, and not a particle of any foodstuff was allowed to pass the barbed wire fencing for several days and those who carried such stuff were severely beaten." "My car was searched," he added "at the entrance to the Gurudwaras, before it was allowed to pass through the small opening in the fencing."

One woman was wounded because she nursed some sufferers. One bore the marks of horse's hoofs. Two were killed and when Government launched a case against the alleged culprits, they were acquitted. Some of the spectators were harassed, there were allegations of theft and robbery and looting against the Police—in the Press. Mr. MacPherson, Superintendent of Police, was the author of a book on *lathi*-exercises and bore testimony as follows:—

> "It is quite possible that some injuries, such as fractures, may have occurred. The *jathas* did not resist the Police at any time, being quite non-violent. It is possible that some of the injured became unconscious. 953 cases of injuries had been tabulated as 269 above the trunk, 300 on the front of the body, 79 brain, 60 to genitals, 19 to perinacum, 7 to teeth, and 158 contused wounds, 8 incised, 2 punctured, 40 urine trouble, 9 fractures and 2 dislocations."

There were 210 arrests in this connection. Fines to the tune of Rs. 1,27,000 were levied by a single Honorary Magistrate at 4 sittings. Swami Shraddhanand was sentenced to 18 months. On the 22nd October, a *jatha* solely composed of 101 Military pensioners, containing about 55 non-commissioned officers, the remaining being sepoys, started with Military band from Amritsar to Guruka Bagh and 50,000 men accompanied them. When the train carrying the Military prisoners after conviction

was approaching Panja Saheb, a number of people were waiting with food for the prisoners and on hearing that the train would not stop at the station, squatted on the Railway line. The train was not stopped and the result was that two died and eleven were injured. After a time, the beating stopped and arrests took place. 'Ring-leaders' were severely punished. But the worst of it was not yet over. When in response to public pressure and to a resolution of the Punjab Council on the 8th March, '23, the Akalis were released in batches, one batch of 170 Akalis released at Rawalpindi were severely mauled and injured and dispersed by force on the ground that they did not take the stated route from the Railway station. Military, Police and Cavalry combined to effect the dispersal. 128 persons received serious injuries. Pindi observed a complete *hartal* from 3rd May in sympathy. When a Committee was suggested to go into the whole affair, in the Punjab Legislative Council, the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government quietly asked the people to let by-gones be by-gones and let the memories of the unhappy events of Guruka Bagh die as speedily as possible and not to rake up old sores as the Hunter Committee had done. To knock down a fellow and ask him to forget it quickly is neither statesmanship nor sportsmanship. Yet the majority of the members of the Punjab Legislative Council were satisfied and did not press the Resolution moved by Mr. K. Rallia Ram. The troubles of the Akalis were not destined to be over yet, and we may as well give them now in a connected form, in spite of the fact that we are partly anticipating the events of the year 1924. The Maharaja of Nabha 'abdicated' in the middle of 1923, but this was interpreted by the S.G.P.C. as deposition and it began an agitation for his restoration, holding meetings at Jaito in the Nabha State, among other places. The speeches delivered

were alleged to be seditious and the speakers, while engaged in reading the *Akhand Pant*, were arrested.

Trouble thus arose over the reading of the *Akhand Pant* at Jaito in the Nabha State and *jathas* of 25 continued to be sent daily for some time to Jaito to resume the reading. Later in February, a 'Shahidi' *jatha* of 500 was sent. Dr. Kitchlew and Acharya A. T. Gidwani accompanied this *jatha* as spectators. It was fired on near Jaito and there were some deaths. Kitchlew and Gidwani were both arrested by the Nabha authorities, on attempting to render aid to the injured, but the former was released after a few days while the latter continued to be in the Nabha jail till the year-end. 'Shahidi' *jathas* continued to march and met with arrests. Thousands of these Akalis were in jail and the treatment given to them was reported to be bad. Acharya Gidwani's place on the Akali Sahayak Bureau was taken by Mr. K. M. Panikkar. The Working Committee sent an Enquiry Sub-Committee to enquire into charges of ill-treatment of Akali prisoners and also rendered substantial financial aid to the families of Akali prisoners. The whole question was settled later when an Act was passed regarding the control of the Gurudwaras.

CHAPTER V

Congress at the Cross-roads (1924)

I

The year 1924 opened, in a sense, with absolute gloom in the atmosphere, Gandhi's sudden and serious illness in jail overshadowing every thing else. Most people associate particular years with particular outstanding events. So do we, and when we think of 1924, we call to mind Gandhi's serious illness, operation and release four years before it was due, the triumph of the Swaraj party in the Legislatures, then the Akali troubles to which we have already referred, the murder of Earnest Day in the streets of Calcutta and the Dinajpur resolution on Gopinath Saha, the Juhu conversations and their failure, the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Ahmedabad and the ever-memorable scenes and strifes that occurred at it, the renewed repression in Bengal followed by the arrest of Subash Chandra Bose and other eminent Congressmen, the communal riots, Gandhi's fast of 21 days and the Unity Conference at Delhi, the threat of arrest of C. R. Das, the All-Parties' Conference in Bombay and its infructuous deliberations, the death of Bi Amma, —the aged and venerable mother of the Ali Brothers,— the Belgaum Congress with Gandhi as President and the division of the Congress activities into two distinctive fronts,—the constructive front and the Council front.

Gandhi's sudden illness with appendicitis on the 12th January, 1924 and the radical operation for appendicitis at the hands of Colonel Maddock at dead of night caused widespread anxiety in the country, but it was soon relieved by Gandhi's fair recovery and his premature and unconditional release on the 5th February.

His release brought him, however, no rest or peace. The split that occurred at Cocanada was tending to become wider and wider. On the one hand the no-changers were hoping that Gandhi's return might reverse the engine of the Congress, back along the track of Civil Disobedience. On the other, the pro-changers were naturally anxious to consolidate their victories at Delhi and Cocanada and take away from them the taint that appeared still to be clinging to them. Earnest efforts were made to reconcile the conflicting issues and standpoints in the country. Gandhi spent some time in Juhu —a sea-side resort near Bombay, and what later came to be known as the Juhu conversations between Gandhi and Messrs. Das and Nehru went on for a time raising hopes of agreement. In the month of May, 1924, Gandhi published a statement which we make no apology for extracting in full, for its sympathetic tone is as clear as its prophetic character, and side by side with it we give the statement of Deshbandhu Das and Motilalji which were simultaneously published at the time.

Before we publish these historic statements, it is but right to state the developments in the Assembly and the powerful hold which the Swarajists had attained over the forces inside the Legislature.

The Swaraj Party having been organized, the elections to the various Legislative bodies were contested by the Swaraj Party, and the Legislative Assembly presented a compact and well-disciplined party of 45 Swarajists who were pledged to carry out their programme. They could easily command a working majority in the Legislature by securing the sympathy and support of the Nationalist Party—composed of equally patriotic citizens though they had not accepted the cult of Non-co-operation. With this accession of strength, the

Swarajists secured a series of victories,—the first being on Pandit Motilal Nehru's amendment in favour of "a Round Table Conference to recommend a Scheme of Full Responsible Government in India," to a proposition tabled by Mr. T. Rangachari pressing for an immediate change in the constitutional machinery. Panditji challenged the justice of the Preamble of the Government of India Act of 1919, and at the same time declared "that his party could not be dismissed as wreckers. He was not asking for Responsible Government, to be handed over as it were, tied up in a bundle. His party had come there to offer their co-operation. If the Government would receive this co-operation, they would find that the Swarajists were their men. If not, the Swarajists would stand on their rights and continue to be Non-co-operators."

Sir M. Hailey, the Home Member, stated that the demand for Dominion Status was entirely new and it was inconsistent with the specific provision of the Government of India Act, that advance towards Self-Government was to take the form of successive stages. Government had a series of defeats and amongst the most notable of these may be mentioned the passing of the resolutions calling for the release of certain political prisoners, for the repeal of Regulation III of 1818, for the imposition of a countervailing duty on South African coal imported into India and for the appointment of a Committee of enquiry into the Sikh situation. The defeats of Government were really victories to the Swaraj Party whose strength was reinforced by the strength of the Independents, the Nationalists, and even the Moderates from time to time. We say so because the Swaraj Party had laid down in its programme that its "demand should take the shape of an ultimatum calling for the release of all political prisoners, for the repeal of all repressive laws, and for the

summoning of a National Convention to lay down the lines of the future Constitution for India."

Refusal of Supply:—The next great achievement for the Swarajists was the throwing out of the first four heads under the demand for grants. This "unprecedented course" was tantamount to the refusal of supplies. Pandit Motilal Nehru contended on the other hand "that his present motion has nothing to do with the wrecking or destroying policy of Non-co-operation, and was in effect a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of drawing attention to the grievances of the country"

We now give the statements of Gandhi and of Das and Nehru which were issued as a result of the Juhu conversations, in order to present to the reader the developments that took place by the middle of summer, 1924.

Gandhi's Statement

A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

After having discussed with Swarajist friends, the vexed question of entry into the Legislative Assembly and the Councils by Congressmen, I am sorry to have to say that I have not been able to see eye to eye with the Swarajists. I assure the public that there has been no lack of willingness or effort on my part to accept the Swarajist position. My task would be much simpler if I could identify myself with it. It can be no pleasure to me to oppose, even in thought, the most valued and respected leaders, some of whom have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the Motherland; but in spite of my effort and willingness, I have failed to be convinced by their argument. Nor is the difference between them and myself one of mere detail. There is an honest

and fundamental difference. I retain the opinion that Council-entry is inconsistent with Non-co-operation, as I conceive it. Nor is this difference a mere matter of interpretation of the word 'Non-co-operation,' but relates to the essential mental attitude resulting in different treatment of vital problems. It is with reference to such mental attitude that the success or failure of the triple boycott is to be judged, and not merely by a reference to the actual results attained. It is from that point of view that I say that to be out of the legislative bodies is far more advantageous to the country than to be in them. I have, however, failed to convince my Swarajist friends, but I recognise, so long as they think otherwise, their place is undoubtedly in the Councils. It is the best for us all.

It was hardly to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by the arguments I advanced in the course of the conversations. There are many of them who are amongst the ablest, most experienced, and honest patriots. They have not entered the legislative bodies, without full deliberation, and they must not be expected to retire from the position until experience has convinced them of the futility of their method.

The question, therefore, before the country is not an examination and distribution of the merits of the Swarajist view and mine. The question is, what is to be done now regarding Council-entry as a settled fact? Are the Non-co-operators to keep up their hostility against the Swarajist method, or are they to remain neutral and even help wherever it is possible or consistent with their principles?

NO ANTI-SWARAJIST PROPAGANDA

The Delhi and Cocanada resolutions have permitted those Congressmen who have no conscientious scruples to enter the Councils and the Assembly if they wanted to. In my opinion, the Swarajists are, therefore, justified in entering the legislative bodies and expecting perfect neutrality on the part of the 'no-changers.' They are also justified in

resorting to obstruction, because such was their policy, and the Congress laid down no conditions as to their entry. If the work of the Swarajists prospers and the country benefits, such an ocular demonstration cannot but convince honest sceptics like me of our error, and I know the Swarajists to be patriotic enough to retrace their steps when experience has disillusioned them. I would therefore be no party to putting any obstacles in their way or to carrying on any propaganda against the Swarajists' entry into the Legislatures, though I cannot actively help them in a project in which I do not believe. The purpose of the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions was to allow the Swarajists a chance of trying the method of Council-entry and that purpose can be served only if the 'no-changers,' with scrupulous honesty, allow the Swarajists full liberty to pursue their programme in the Councils, unfettered by any obstruction from them.

POLICY WITHIN COUNCILS

With regard to the method of work in the Councils, I will say that I would enter a legislative body, if only I found that I could, at all, use it to advantage. If, therefore, I enter the Councils, I should, without following a general policy of obstruction, endeavour to give strength to the constructive programme of the Congress. I should, therefore, move resolutions requiring the Central and Provincial Governments, as the case may be,

(1) To make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.

(2) To impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth.

(3) To abolish the drink and drug revenue, and at least correspondingly reduce the Army expenditure.

If the Government refuse to enforce such resolutions when carried in the Legislatures, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the Government would not dissolve, I should resign my seat and prepare the country for Civil Disobedience. When that stage is reached, the Swarajists will find me

ready to work with and under them. My test of fitness for Civil Disobedience remains the same as before.

ADVICE TO NO-CHANGERS

During the state of probation, I should advise the 'no-changers' not to worry about what the Swarajists are doing or saying, and to prove their own faith by prosecuting the constructive programme with undivided energy and concentration. Khaddar and National Schools are enough to occupy every available worker who believes in quiet, honest and undemonstrative work The Hindu-Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. The 'no-changers' can justify their opposition to Council-entry, only by showing the results of their application to the constructive programme, even as the 'pro-changers' must justify their entry by results. The 'no-changers' are in one respect in an advantageous position, for they can secure the co-operation of the 'pro-changers.' The latter have declared their faith in the constructive programme, but their contention is that, by itself, the constructive programme cannot enable the country to reach the goal. In the prosecution, however, of the constructive programme outside the Legislatures, all,—'no-changers,' 'pro-changers' and others,—can, if they will, work in union through their respective organisations, if necessary.

The statement is incomplete without an examination of the working of the Congress organisation. I hold drastic and definite views in the matter, but I must reserve their expression for a future, though early, occasion.

SWARAJIST STATEMENT

The following is the statement of Mr. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru:—

We are obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the trouble he has taken to discuss with us the various points involved in the question of Council-entry, and

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(2) To impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth.

(3) To abolish the drink and drug revenue, and at least correspondingly reduce the Army expenditure.

If the Government refuse to enforce such resolutions when carried in the Legislatures, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the Government would not dissolve, I should resign my seat and prepare the country for Civil Disobedience. When that stage is reached, the Swarajists will find me

ready to work with and under them. My test of fitness for Civil Disobedience remains the same as before.

ADVICE TO NO-CHANGERS

During the state of probation, I should advise the 'no-changers' not to worry about what the Swarajists are doing or saying, and to prove their own faith by prosecuting the constructive programme with undivided energy and concentration. Khaddar and National Schools are enough to occupy every available worker who believes in quiet, honest and undemonstrative work The Hindu-Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. The 'no-changers' can justify their opposition to Council-entry, only by showing the results of their application to the constructive programme, even as the 'pro-changers' must justify their entry by results. The 'no-changers' are in one respect in an advantageous position, for they can secure the co-operation of the 'pro-changers.' The latter have declared their faith in the constructive programme, but their contention is that, by itself, the constructive programme cannot enable the country to reach the goal. In the prosecution, however, of the constructive programme outside the Legislatures, all,—'no-changers,' 'pro-changers' and others,—can if they will, work in union through their respective organisations, if necessary.

The statement is incomplete without an examination of the working of the Congress organisation. I hold drastic and definite views in the matter, but I must reserve their expression for a future, though early, occasion.

SWARAJIST STATEMENT

The following is the statement of Mr. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru:—

We are obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the trouble he has taken to discuss with us the various points involved in the question of Council-entry, and

are indebted to his courtesy for the opportunity we have had of seeing an advance copy of the statement he has issued to the Press. The views expressed by him in the course of the conversation, and those embodied in the Press statement, have all been considered by us with the care and attention due to his great personality, but, with all the reverence we entertain for him and his opinions, we remain unconvinced by his reasoning.

COUNCIL ENTRY AND N. C. O.

We regret that we have not been able to convince Mahatma Gandhi of the soundness of the Swarajist position regarding Council-entry. We fail to understand how such entry can be regarded as inconsistent with the Non-co-operation resolution of the Nagpur Congress. But if Non-co-operation is more a matter of mental attitude than of the application of a living principle to the existing facts of our national life, with special reference to the varying attitude of the bureaucratic Government which rules that life, we conceive it to be our duty to sacrifice even Non-co-operation to serve the real interests of the country. In our view, this principle includes self-reliance in all the activities which make for the healthy growth of the Nation and resistance to the bureaucracy as it impedes our progress towards Swaraj. We are, however, anxious to end this fruitless verbal discussion, making it clear that Council-entry is, and can be, thoroughly consistent with the principle of Non-co-operation as we understand that principle to be.

IMPLICATIONS OF OBSTRUCTION

We desire further to make it clear that we have not used in our programme the word 'obstruction' in the technical sense of English Parliamentary history. Obstruction in that sense is impossible in subordinate and limited legislative bodies, such as the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislatures under the Reforms Act undoubtedly are. Possibly another word should have been found to convey our meaning.

We may state, however, that our position is really not so much that of obstruction in the Parliamentary sense as that of resistance to the obstruction placed in our path to Swaraj by the bureaucractic Government. It is this resistance which we meant to imply when we used the word 'obstruction.' This was clearly indicated in the way we defined and described Non-co-operation in the preamble to the Constitution of the Swaraj Party. It is the removal of such bureaucratic obstruction which we feel we must emphasize. This is the policy which we have hitherto followed in the legislative bodies, and it is this policy which must in future be more and more effectively directed to the varying needs and problems of our national life.

Here again we are anxious to end all verbal discussion as to whether this can be aptly described as a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction." We are content to detail our policy and then leave it to our friends to give it a more appropriate name, should they so desire.

FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK

In the light of this principle and policy, we would here state our future programme of action within and outside the legislative bodies.

Within the legislative bodies we must continue:—

(1). To throw out budgets unless and until the system of Government is altered in recognition of our rights, or as a matter of settlement between Parliament and the people of this country. In justification of this step, all that we need point out are a few salient facts connected with the Budget in the Central Government, which are more or less true of Provincial Budgets also. Out of a total of 131 crores (excluding railways) only 16 crores are votable. Further, out of the non-votable amount, as much as 67 crores, *i.e.*, more than half the amount of the Budget are for Military expenditure. It is thus clear that the people of this country have the right to vote only less than 1/7 of the total amount of the Budget, and even the exercise of this limited right is subject

to the power of restoration vested in the Governor-General. It is, therefore, clear that the people have neither any voice in the framing of the Budget, nor any control over those who frame it. They have no power either over the raising of the revenue or its expenditure. On what principle then, may we ask, is it our duty to pass such a Budget and take the responsibility of being a party to it? We have no doubt of the support of many self-respecting men in the country in holding, as we do, that it is our clear duty to throw out such Budgets in all legislative bodies, unless and until this vicious system is changed.

REJECTION OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

2. To throw out all proposals for Legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its power. It is conceivable that some good may incidentally result from a few of such measures; but we are clearly of opinion that in the larger interests of the country it is better to temporarily sacrifice such little benefits rather than add an iota to the powers of the bureaucracy, which are already irresistible.

THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

3. To introduce all resolutions, measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of our National life and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy. We heartily accept the suggestions made by Mahatma Gandhi in his statement, and we think that the resolutions mentioned by him in support of the constructive programme of the Congress should certainly be accepted by the Swaraj Party. The principle of self-reliance and resistance to bureaucratic obstruction, upon which we have hitherto acted, calls for their adoption, and if the constructive work of the Congress comes within the principle of Non-co-operation, no less do these resolutions, although they represent constructive activity within the legislative bodies.

4. To follow a definite economic policy, based on the same principles, so as to prevent the drain of public wealth from India by checking all activities leading to exploitation.

To make this policy effective, we should take and occupy every place which is open to the members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures by election. In our opinion, we should not only fill elective posts, but serve on every Committee where it is possible. We invite the attention of the members of our Party to this important question, and we call upon them to decide this matter as soon as possible.

POLICY OUTSIDE COUNCILS

Our policy outside the legislative bodies should be as follows:—

In the first place we should give our whole-hearted support to the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi and work that programme unitedly through the Congress organisations. We are decidedly of opinion that our Council work must necessarily lose much of its strength without the backing of the constructive work outside, for it is not inside but outside the Legislatures that we must look for that sanction without which the effective carrying out of our Council policy is impossible. Indeed, in the matter of constructive work, the mutual support of both inside and outside activity must, in our opinion, give strength to the very sanction upon which we rely. In this connection, we unhesitatingly accept the suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi regarding Civil Disobedience. We can assure him that the moment we find that it is impossible to meet the selfish obstinacy of the bureaucracy without Civil Disobedience, we will retire from the legislative bodies and help him to prepare the country for Civil Disobedience, if by that time the country has not already become prepared, and we will then unreservedly place ourselves under his guidance, and work through the

Congress organisation under his banner, in order that we may unitedly work out a substantial programme of Civil Disobedience.

LABOUR AND THE CONGRESS

In the second place, we must supplement the work of the Congress by helping the labour and peasant organisations throughout the country. The problem of labour is always a difficult problem to solve in every country, but in India the difficulties are greater. On the one hand, we must find out a way of organisation by which we can prevent exploitation of labour by capitalists or by landlords, but on the other hand, we must be on our guard to see that these very organisations may not themselves be the source of oppression by nursing extravagant and unreasonable demands. Labour, undoubtedly, requires protection, but so do industrial enterprises. Our organisation must protect both from exploitation, and the Trade Union Congress must be so organised as to be able to serve this useful purpose. We hold that in the long run the real interests of both and of the country at large are identical.

CONCLUSION

We feel happy that we have had this opportunity of putting our views before the country side by side with Mahatma Gandhi's opinion, for we feel certain that their perusal will make it obvious that, notwithstanding some differences of view, there is an abiding and fundamental unity amongst both parties of the Indian National Congress. Both parties feel the necessity of working the constructive programme whether within or outside the legislative bodies. In this direction, we feel confident, lies the germ of a fruitful alliance between Mahatma Gandhi and the Swaraj Party. Our joint effort, in the same or different directions, will furnish a fitting answer to the bureaucracy, unwilling to recognise the rights and liberties of the Indian people, and we

emphatically assert that, in our determination to work with the same object in the same or different spheres, is expressed the determination of the Indian Nation to bring the struggle for Swaraj to a successful issue.

The Juhu conversations paved the way for the decisions of the A.I.C.C. taken at Ahmedabad on June 27, 28, and 29th. All members of elected Congress organizations were required to send in 2,000 yards of even and well-twisted self-spun yarn every month, and a penalty clause was attached to it, by which any default in this behalf would automatically create a vacancy in the position of the defaulter. When this was being discussed, a number of members walked out of the Committee to mark their resentment of the penalty clause. Accordingly, although it was passed by 67 to 37 votes, still, in view of the possible reversal of voting "if the votes of the withdrawals had been given 'against,'" the penalty clause was withdrawn by Gandhi. The Committee recommended disciplinary action against defaulters in general.

Emphasis was laid next on the five boycotts,—of foreign cloth, Government Law Courts, schools and colleges, titles, and Legislatures, subject to the Cocanada resolution, and Congress voters were strictly enjoined not to elect to the various organizations subordinate to the Congress those who do not believe in the principle, and do not carry out in their own person, the said five boycotts. The opium policy of Government was condemned, the Rev. C. F. Andrews being requested to conduct an enquiry into the opium habits of the Assamese people. The Sikhs were congratulated on their bravery and cool courage exhibited at the time of unnecessary and cruel firing at Jaito.

The resolution of the sitting that excited much feeling was the one relating to the condemnation of the murder of Mr. Earnest Day by Gopi Nath Saha which the Committee regretted. It offered its condolence to the family of the deceased, and, though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the A.I.C.C. strongly condemned this and all such political murders and was emphatically of opinion that all such acts were inconsistent with the non-violent policy of the Congress, and was of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj and interfere with the preparations for Civil Disobedience. There was a battle-royal over this resolution. There was no concealing the fact that it was not to the Deshbandhu's taste; not that he did not swear by non-violence, but that he would change the emphasis on the different clauses considerably. Gandhi was disappointed to find some of his dearest and closest followers voting against the resolution, and that was one of the few occasions on which he wept in public. The tension of the situation was due to the fact that at the Dinajpore (Bengal) Provincial Conference a much stronger resolution had been passed applauding Gopinath Saha's selflessness and sacrifice, and paying its respectful homage to his patriotism.

The Swarajists did not secure at this meeting all that they would have liked to, and they had to wait till November before they consolidated their hard-won success. So far as the no-changers were concerned, there was a wonderful response to the Yarn-membership. In August, there were 2,780, in September, 6,301, in October, 7,741, and in November, 7,905 members.

But the bane of the year was the outbreak of communal troubles in various places,—specially at Delhi,

Gulbarga, Nagpur, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Allahabad, Jubbulpore, and, worst of all, at Kohat. The Kohat riots really broke the backbone of India. A Committee was appointed to investigate the causes and conditions of the riot—composed of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali. The two produced a report, but unfortunately they differed in respect of the parties on which they fixed the blame for the disturbances. It is a decade since the events of the 9th and 10th September, 1924, occurred, but a perusal of the reports on the Kohat outrages, printed and published for the Kohat Refugees Working Committee, by Lala Nandlal, Head-Master, Bhratri School, Kohat, immediately after the riot, sends a thrill of horror through the reader. We cannot review the events beyond saying that after the shootings and carnage of the 9th and 10th September, a special train had to remove 4,000 Hindus, of whom 2,600 were living for two months after on the charity of Rawalpindi, and 1,400 of other places.

It is no wonder that Gandhi decided to go on a twenty-one days' fast. He held himself responsible for all this fury and murderousness and felt called upon to expiate his own guilt. The fast was a critical test to one who had just emerged from a sharp and nearly fatal attack of appendicitis. The fast was commenced in Maulana Mahomed Ali's house, Delhi, but later he was removed to a house outside the city. Advantage was taken of the fast to gather the leading Indians of all communities at a Unity Conference, which was attended also by the Metropolitan of Calcutta. The Conference had prolonged sittings from September 26th to October 2nd, 1924. The members of the Conference pledged themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce the principles (of freedom of conscience and religion) and condemn any deviation from them even under provocation. A central National Panchayat was

appointed, composed of Gandhi, as Chairman and Convener, and Hakim Ajmal Khan, Lalaji, G. K. Nariman, Dr. S. K. Datta and Master Sunder Singh of Lyallpore. The Conference laid down certain fundamental rights relating to liberty of holding and expressing religious beliefs and following religious practice, sacredness of places of worship, cow-slaughter, and music before mosques, with a statement of the limitations they must be subject to. The Press was warned to be careful in its writings, and the people were requested to offer their prayers during the last week of Gandhi's fast. The 8th of October was marked out for mass meetings for thanksgiving.

Hardly had Gandhi emerged from this fast when he had to face an All-Parties' Conference in Bombay on the 21st and 22nd of November, and in continuation of it, a meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the 23rd and 24th of November, 1924. The object of the All-Parties' Conference was to consolidate opinion in India amongst all parties against the growing virulence of the repressive policy of Government in Bengal, which was directed obviously against the Swaraj Party as well as those conducting the Satyagraha at Tarakeswar. The Conference condemned the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance promulgated by the Bengal Government, and urged its withdrawal, as well as the withdrawal of Reg. III of 1818. It put down the unrest to the withholding of Swaraj, and appointed a Committee of representatives of all political parties to prepare a scheme of Swaraj including a Communal Settlement,—to report not later than the 31st March, 1925. There was no doubt that the Conference was not expected to achieve much. But very likely, Deshbandhu Das's arrest was obviated by it. The event of the year was the surrender of Gandhi to Deshbandhu Das and Motilalji on the question of

Council-entry and the lifting of the boycott. The joint statement issued by those three eminent men was accepted by the A.I.C.C. Contrast this joint statement with the separate statements published in the month of May that very year. The substance of the statement was that, in order to secure the co-operation of all parties, the programme of N.C.O. should be suspended as a National programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to wear foreign cloth, and that, while different sections should devote themselves to different fields of constructive work, the Swaraj Party should work in the Councils. In exchange for this, Gandhi got a good price. In future, Congress members must give 2,000 yards of hand-spun yarn monthly, instead of the annual subscription of annas four. Let it be marked that it is not only the members of elected committees that should pay the yarn subscription, but every member of the Congress whom we ordinarily describe as the four-anna member. The year is drawing nigh. The Congress is to be held at Belgaum with Gandhi in the Chair. What an opportunity to preside over the Congress!

The Belgaum Congress (1924)

In the history of Non-co-operation, Belgaum is a landmark. The revolt against Gandhism was almost complete. The Congress stood at the parting of ways. Should Congressmen hereafter be in rival camps or cover up their differences by an agreement, and if the latter, who better than Gandhi, who other than Gandhi could achieve this formidable task of pacifying the no-changers while withdrawing Civil Disobedience, and assuaging the feelings of Swarajists while resisting Council-entry? If great programmes can be initiated only by great men, they can also be suspended by such great men and none others. It was, therefore, in the

fitness of the times, though not in the fitness of things, that Gandhi should preside over the Belgaum Congress of 1924. At Belgaum he presented his marvellous Presidential Address, only a summary of which was delivered at the Congress. In it, he recapitulated the progress of events since September, 1920, and stated how the Congress had been principally an institution for developing strength from within. The boycotts were all taken up by the parties concerned. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them tended to diminish the prestige of the institution boycotted. The greatest of all boycotts was the *boycott of violence*. Non-violence, however, did not quite develop from a passive form of helplessness to the enlightened form of resourcefulness. The intolerance against those who did not non-co-operate became a new violence of a subtler type. Nevertheless, non-violence, such as it was, kept violence under check. There was no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for a cause must advance it. The time, however, came for a halt. People that had non-co-operated began to repent in many cases. The reaction made them worse than ever before they non-co-operated. So all the boycotts had to be lifted. The boycott of foreign cloth alone remained. That boycott was not merely a right but a duty—as much as it would be to boycott foreign water or foreign rice and wheat. Boycott is doubtless an exertion of pressure, but pressure coming from goodwill and gentleness, not anger and ill-will. The Lancashire trade was immoral, because it was raised and sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants, and one immorality led to another and many of the proved immoral acts of Britain were traceable to this one immoral traffic. Hence we had to take to hand-spinning and hand-weaving which brought us into direct touch with the villagers. Gandhi, however, did not mean that

all British goods would harm us. But cloth, whether British or foreign, did harm us.

He was not fighting against machinery. He was not presenting all his views on machinery, any more than on non-violence. But the "wanton and wicked destruction of one cottage industry of India which kept the wolf from the doors of thousands" was what he resented. An agreement in difference was reached between the Swarajists and himself. They agreed to the spinning franchise. He agreed to their work in Councils. Then he deplored the Kohat riots, gave his sympathy to the Akalis, dwelt upon untouchability, and spoke of the Swaraj Scheme. It is the end; we do not know it. The spinning wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability were the means. "For me, it is enough to know the means; means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life." This summing up of Gandhi's philosophy was just what men of other persuasions resented. With this preface, Gandhi suggested some points as relating to a Swaraj Scheme:—

> Manual labour to be the qualification for franchise; the reduction of Military expenditure, the cheapening of justice, the abolition of intoxicating liquors and drugs and revenues therefrom, reduction of Civil and Military salaries, redistribution of Provinces on a linguistic basis, examination of monopolies of foreigners, guarantee of status to Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government, repeal of arbitrary powers, abolition of race distinction in services and religious freedom to various denominations, administration through vernacular languages, and Hindi to be the National language.

The subject of Independence naturally attracted his attention. His views had softened since Ahmedabad, for, then he was hoping for things. Now those hopes

were all blasted so far as Government's position and attitude were concerned. "I would strive for Swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault." He then referred to the Swaraj Party and the constructive programme and wound up with a statement of the position in Bengal and a reiteration of his faith in non-violence. In Bengal, Lord Reading had promulgated his Ordinance 1 of '24—establishing a summary procedure of arrest and trial, before Special Commissioners, of persons who, according to the Local Government, belonged to a revolutionary association. Gandhi accepted the view that the drive was being directed against Swarajists.

The Congress expressed its sorrow over the death of Bi Amma, Sir A. Chaudhuri, Sir A. Mukherji, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subrahmania Aiyar, G. M. Bhurjie and several other Congress workers and leaders. The agreement between Gandhi, and Nehru and Das, which was passed by the A.I.C.C. in November, was ratified. Congress franchise was likewise altered. The exodus of Hindus from Kohat was deplored and the Muslim residents of Kohat were exhorted to assure their Hindu brethren of full protection of lives and property and the Hindu *Muhjarims* were advised not to return except upon an honourable invitation from the Kohat Muslims. Sympathy was likewise expressed for the sufferers in Gulbarga in the Nizam's State. Untouchability and Vaikom Satyagraha were dwelt upon. Paid National Service was declared to be perfectly honourable. The Akali movement, drink and opium traffic were all dealt with and some necessary changes in the Constitution were effected.

On the question of Indians Abroad, Mr. Vaze's and Banarsidas Chaturvedi's services in this behalf were

appreciated, as also Shrimati Sarojini's. Nor was Government inactive. The Government of India put up a strong fight in the matter of Kenya, "warning the Secretary of State that, if the decision went against the Indians in Kenya, there would probably arise a strong agitation for the severance of India's connection with the British Commonwealth and for the adoption of retaliatory measures against the Colonies." Moreover, it will be remembered that as the result of the deliberations of the Imperial Conference of 1923, at which India was represented by Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Maharaja of Alwar, not only was the position of equality of rights to Indians conceded in the Conference of 1921 confirmed, but a Committee was to be set up by the Government of India which the Dominions agreed to consult, South Africa alone dissenting. The Colonies Committee consisting of Messrs. Hope Simpson, H.H. the Aga Khan, Sir Benjamin Robertson, Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachari and K. C. Roy, assembled in London early in 1924 and dispersed towards the end of July. Their deliberations covered the standing grievances of Indians in Kenya, Fiji, and Tanganyika. Mr. Thomas, Colonial Secretary, decided in August, 1924, that on the question of immigration, the Ordinance framed on the lines of restricting it should not be enacted. On the question of franchise, and of the Highlands, there was no change in the position. As regards Indian Colonization, it was proposed to set up an area in the Lowlands for agricultural immigrants from India. In June, 1924, an East African Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Lord Southborough by His Majesty's Government and it was agreed that the Indian point of view should be heard before it. In South Africa the Class Areas Bill lapsed owing to a change of Government, while the Natal Boroughs Ordinance, preventing further enrolment of Indians as burgesses, was passed.

CHAPTER VI

Partition, or Partnership ? (1925)

The politics of 1925 largely centre round Council work. The Swarajists were no longer harassed by the No-changers. Gandhi was there to keep the balance even between the two sections. Eminent men like Das and Nehru, Patel and Lalaji, did not require to live under the shadow of others. In two Provinces had Dyarchy been brought to an end—C.P. and Bengal. Das refused to form the Ministry in Bengal on Lord Lytton's invitation, nor would he allow others to form one. That was the wrecking he had all along been visualizing. Lord Reading's Ordinance No. I of 1924 having expired, a Bill was introduced into the Bengal Legislative Council which was rejected by and through the influence of the Swarajists, in January, 1925. It had to be certified by Lord Lytton, and remitted to London for the approval of His Majesty's Government. On the 17th February, the Bengal Legislative Council passed a resolution recommending to Government to make provision in the Budget for the salaries of Ministers. This was a set-back to the Swarajists, but soon the Party made up for its loss. On the 23rd March, in the course of the Budget discussion, the salaries of the two Ministers appointed were rejected by 69 votes to 63. While Bengal was upholding N.C.O. on these declared lines, in C.P. the question was openly canvassed as to why the party should not accept Ministries and "wreck from within." In the Central Legislature, the Party was merely filling the role of a constitutional Opposition, both in 1924 and in 1925. They sat on Select Committees and co-operated in the passage of useful legislation. They walked into the lobbies now

with one party and now with another—and occasionally with Government.

When Mr. C. Doraiswami Iyengar moved a resolution urging the supersession of the Bengal Ordinance by an Act of the Legislature, it was passed by 58 against 45 votes. On February 3rd, 1925, Mr. V. J. Patel introduced a Bill to repeal the State Prisoners' Act of 1850, the Frontier Outrages Act of 1867, and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act of 1921, and it was passed except for the omission of the Frontier Outrages Act.

Mr. Neogy moved the consideration of his Bill to amend the Railway Act so as to abolish reservation of railway compartments for any particular community, and it was rejected Dr. Gour moved a resolution for abolishing appeals to the Privy Council but it was rejected, the Swarajists voting with Government against the resolution. Pandit Motilal Nehru said on the occasion that, for a time, we must have appeals to the Privy Council in London. On Mr. Venkatapathi Raju's resolution urging the immediate establishment of a Military College in India, Government were defeated. The Swarajists and the Independents "turned their big guns upon each other, rather than upon the Treasury Bench," in the debate on the Railway Budget (25-2-'25). Eventually, Pandit Motilalji's resolution for rejecting the Railway Budget was defeated by 66 votes against 41. Thus the Budget and its items were dealt with on their intrinsic merits. There was no question of "constant, continuous, uniform obstruction," as was originally foreshadowed. Pandit Motilal's motion to reject the travelling allowances of Executive Councillors was passed by 65 votes against 48, each Party voting for its own reasons. The Kohat outrages, (non) Indianization of the Army, Muddiman

Report, Round Table Conference, repression—were all to the fore. A very queer situation arose in connection with a Bill in the Assembly to provide for appeals to the High Court in cases that came under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. But the Bill had three other provisions relating to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus and the detention of accused persons in custody outside Bengal. The Swarajists and Independents wanted to support the first clause and reject the last three. This would mutilate the Bill so far as Government were concerned, and Lord Reading had to certify it after it was passed by the Council of State.

It is clear that by this time Das carved out a high position for himself in the Halls of the Congress. Moreover, just on the eve of the Belgaum Congress, a statement had been published that Das had divested himself of almost all his property—which he left as a legacy to the Nation for some charitable purpose. And this fact had raised Das miles high in the estimation of the public. In the meantime, the National Convention of Dr. Besant published the draft of a Commonwealth of India Bill. The Committee appointed at the Unity Conference was racking its brains to find a solution of the communal tangle and Lalaji published a questionnaire in February, '25 on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. The Sub-Committee of the All-Parties' Conference held in Bombay the previous November, which was charged with the duty of preparing a Swaraj scheme did not succeed in producing any thing presentable and adjourned its sittings *sine die* in March. Gandhi visited South India and Kerala in March and April, 1925. The Vaikom Satyagraha was at its height and Gandhi's presence helped to bring about a settlement. The campaign was undertaken to effect the removal of the prohibition against certain untouchables or unapproachables passing

along certain streets in Vaikom. The Travancore Government had put up certain barricades and posted certain pickets to prevent the entry of Satyagrahis. Government were made to realise that this act of theirs was lending itself to the view that they were supporting the conservatism of the Hindus of Travancore with their own physical force. And when Government removed both barricades and pickets, the only enemy remaining was public opinion and the *point di appui* for the Satyagraha disappeared for the time being. From the South, Gandhi was to visit Bengal. Das was then beginning to feel ill. Evening temperature was already causing anxiety. It was arranged that he should visit Europe for treatment.

At the same time, he was full of hope that he could effect a settlement with the British Government. Only a year previous to the time, when he was touring in South India, he had declared on the sands of the Madras Beach that Gandhi had 'bungled and mismanaged', referring to the Gandhi-Reading negotiations on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress. He further declared that the terms came to him in the Alipore Jail then. This psychology of 'success' is commonly met with in public workers who have organised big movements. Mrs. Besant was overpowered by it when Montagu visited the country in 1917—after she had convulsed the British Empire in India. Here was Das who had organised in Bengal the Chittagong strike of 1921, whose Province organised an unprecedented boycott of the Prince, who captured the Legislative Councils of Bengal and made the formation of Ministries impossible and wrecked Dyarchy. Why should not a settlement be effected?

That was the position at the time of the Faridpur (Bengal Provincial) Conference. His offer of co-operation on certain conditions was made at Faridpur under this

psychology. While Gandhi believed that there was not 'the change of heart' that was necessary for a composure of the prevailing unrest, Das believed there was. "I see signs of a real change of heart everywhere," said Das to a representative of *The Statesman*. "I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts and I think I see a real desire for construction and consolidation." This statement was made in Faridpur in the first week of May, 1925—and about the same time did Gandhi say to the same representative, "What, therefore, remains to me of non-co-operation is, as Mr. Das would put it, a matter of mental attitude. But it is an attitude that I personally prize because, claiming, as I do, to be a friend of the British, I want to tell them that I see no real trace yet, of any change of heart." Das said further, addressing the British statesmen, "You can have peace to-day on terms honourable both to you and to us." Gandhi had at this time declared Das to be his 'attorney' and always referred to the Swaraj Party as representing the Congress in the Councils. His self-obliteration was wonderful and at times went to the point of trying the patience, though not the loyalty, of his old-world orthodox adherents. At Faridpur, Das pronounced his terms of settlement. He declared violence was both immoral and inexpedient, and referring to Government's urge of co-operation by the Congress, Das said:—

> "Provided some real responsibility is transferred to the people, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with the Government. But two things are necessary—first, there should be a real change of heart, secondly, Swaraj in the fullest sense, must be guaranteed to us at once, to come automatically in the near future. I have always maintained that we should make a large sacrifice in order to have the opportunity to begin our constructive work at once and I think you will realise that a few years are nothing in the history of a Nation provided the foundation of Swaraj

is laid at once and there is real change of heart both in the rulers and in the subjects. You will tell me that 'change of heart' is a fine phrase and that some practical demonstration should be given of that change. I agree. But that demonstration must necessarily depend on the atmosphere created by any proposed settlement. An atmosphere of trust or distrust may be easily felt and in any matter of peaceful settlement a great deal more depends upon the spirit behind the terms than the actual terms themselves.

"A few suggestions may be made having regard to what is nearest to the hearts of the people of Bengal—(1) General amnesty of all political prisoners, (2) a guarantee of the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth in the near future, and in the meantime till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation of such Swaraj should be laid at once, (3) we on our part should give some sort of understanding that we shall not, by word, deed or gesture, encourage revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement."

It will be seen that the proposed settlement was linked with a National effort to wipe out anarchy; not that the Faridpur Provincial Conference had ever identified itself with revolutionary propaganda, but that a change of heart would transform the revolutionary into an apostle of real service to the people.

At this time Lord Reading was in England on a short leave, and this fact, coupled with Lord Birkenhead's exhortation to the Swarajists to co-operate and not to wreck, was largely responsible for Das's expectations. Moreover, Colonel Wedgwood and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were taking interest at the time in bringing about some settlement in India. Gandhi in one of his brief but significant revelations happened to say, after Das's death, that Das had great faith in Lord Birkenhead and that Das believed that he would

do great things for India. Das was a great lawyer and so was 'F. E.' as Birkenhead was known before he was raised to Peerage. As Mr. F. E. Smith, he was along with Lord Carson,—really Sir Edward Carson of those days, the great enemy of the Irish Free State before the settlement was effected. Das would, therefore, have naturally thought that a formidable character like 'F.E.' who was helpful to Ireland would be equally reasonable with India. Das was supposed to have within him some such ideas.

In his last letter to Pandit Motilal, which the latter referred to as "Das's last political will and testament," he wrote: "The most critical time in our history is coming. There must be solid work done at the end of the year and the beginning of the next; all our resources will be taxed, and here we are both of us ill. God knows what will happen." Shortly after, it pleased the gods in heaven to take away Das from our midst and from his residence 'Step Aside,' Darjeeling, on the 16th June 1925. Das's life constitutes by itself a chapter of Indian history. Speaking of the death of Das, Gandhi spoke at Khulna with feeling and asked: "What shall we do to perpetuate his memory! It is easy to shed tears, but no tears can help us or his nearest and dearest. Only if every one of us, Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians, all who call themselves Indians, pledge ourselves to do the work in which he lived, moved and had his being, shall we have done something. We are all believers in God. We should know that the body is ever perishing. The soul is imperishable. The body that held Mr. Das has perished, but his soul will never perish. Not only the soul; even the name of him who had served and sacrificed so much will remain immortal and every one, young and old, who follows his example to ever so little an extent will help to perpetuate his memory. We have none of his intellect,

but we can imitate the spirit in which he loved the Motherland." Let us quote Government's opinion at the other end: "Mr. Das had an unerring instinct for the weak points in an adversary's position, and a tenacious resolution in the execution of his own plans which raised him far above the level of the ablest of his lieutenants." Like Gandhi he was honoured by his opponents even while they fought him, and amongst the numberless tributes paid to his memory are many sincerely felt and frankly worded, by Europeans, including high officers of Government. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy were among those who sent messages of regret, and one of the first acts of the Legislative Assembly, when it met in August, was to give fitting expression to the loss which the Nation had suffered in the deaths of Mr. Das and another veteran, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea who died on 6th of August, 1925.

Gandhi was ever generous, forgiving, appreciative and affectionate towards Das. He stayed out in Bengal and built a great memorial in his honour. He collected ten lacs of rupees and Das's house—148, Russa Road—was saved for the Nation and was converted into a hospital for women and children in accordance with his wishes expressed in his Trust Scheme announced before the Belgaum Congress. Gandhi further put forth all his efforts in order to place the Swarajists in positions of power, and plant the Swaraj Party firmly in Bengal. Thus did he strive to make Mr. J. M. Sen-Gupta, the leader of the Swaraj Party in the Council, Mayor of the Corporation of Calcutta and President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. The 'triple crown' that Das himself had been wearing was placed on Sen-Gupta's head.

While Gandhi was doing everything in his power to put the Swarajists at ease and even asked the 'waverers' to join and join at once the Swaraj Party, the response of the Swaraj Party to all these gestures was nothing commensurate with the spirit of self-abnegation shown by Gandhi. The general council of the Swaraj Party showed itself more and more hostile to the spinning franchise which had been conceded at Belgaum, and left it to the All-India Congress Committee, where the Swarajists had a majority, to scrap it if they chose. At the conclusion of the meeting of the Working Committee of the A. I. C. C. on the 15th July in Calcutta, it was understood that Gandhi sent a note to Pandit Motilal Nehru to the effect that since the Swarajists had a majority in the Congress, and since the Pandit was the President of the Swaraj Party, he should also assume the Presidentship of the Congress Working Committee. Gandhi made it clear that he did not like any longer to remain as the President of this Body. The note created a sensation in the Swarajist circles. It was however finally decided that, for at least the rest of that year, Gandhi would be continued to be the President of the A.I.C.C., but if the spinning franchise was dropped at the next meeting, he would resign and set up a separate spinning organisation. The Working Committee itself considered at some length the question of revision of the spinning franchise and ultimately decided to convene a meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the 1st of October to consider this question. In the meantime Gandhi did everything to support the Swaraj Party to the extent of giving his joint signature with Panditji to the resolutions of that Party, associating himself with the Party in threatening to obstruct in the Councils, in case certain conditions that were put forward were not agreed to. Those who were indignant with Gandhi over these happenings understood their meaning when they knew that he had offered his

resignation. Things were developing rapidly. Soon after, the very resolution of the Congress of Belgaum and the pact between the two main wings of the Congress were to stand virtually annulled by one word of the mouth uttered by Gandhi. The spinning franchise must be cancelled and the Congress was to become a political body in answer to Lord Birkenhead's recent pronouncement. Slowly, then, Gandhi by a series of *obiter dicta* adopted Swarajists as his attorneys and political representatives, shortly after Das's demise and Lord Birkenhead's callous observations. Gandhi yielded more and more and, ultimately, so much more that he effaced himself and made a complete surrender. Gandhi wrote in August: "I must no longer stand in the way of the Congress being developed and guided by educated Indians rather than by one like myself who has thrown in his lot entirely with the masses, and who has fundamental differences with the mind of educated India as a body. I still want to act upon them but not leading the Congress. The best way in which I can help that activity is by removing myself out of the way, and by concentrating myself solely upon constructive work with the help of the Congress and in its name, and that too, only so far as educated Indians will permit me to do so." The fact is the Swarajists on the one hand denounced the principles of Gandhi and on the other demanded his leadership. They wanted his co-operation on their terms. His message is only one and that was growing stale, as Shrimati Sarojini put it at the time to many. About this time, Pandit Motilal had accepted a seat on the Skeen Committee. Panditji's acceptance of the seat, being himself a Swarajist, greatly irritated some of his own followers. He should really have accepted this place only on the vote of a three-fourths majority of the members of the Assembly belonging to the Party. This was seriously objected to. The objection was not merely technical; it went deeper, it attacked the change

of policy involved in such an acceptance, which was tantamount to positive co-operation. At the time it was said in reply that membership would afford rare opportunities of studying the Military problems of the country from inside, but the argument remained unconvincing to the critics.

It was shortly before the beginning of the Simla session of the Assembly (1925-1926) that Pandit Motilal Nehru had accepted this seat on the Indian Sandhurst Committee, popularly known as the Skeen Committee. The history of the Skeen Committee may shortly be told. For some years prior to 1925, a section of Indian opinion had been demanding the establishment of a Military College in India comparable with that at Sandhurst. The Military Budget of 1925 comprised nine lacs for Military education, and that account related chiefly to the Prince of Wales College at Dehra Dun and the King George's Military Schools, which were recently established at Jullunder and Jhelum in the Punjab. A resolution which was passed in the Delhi session of the Legislative Assembly in 1925 called upon the authorities to establish such an institution forthwith. The Government of India, accordingly, appointed a Committee consisting mainly of Indian members, including Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao, under the Presidency of Lieut. General Sir Andrew Skeen, Chief of the General Staff, to consider the problem of how suitable Indian candidates for the King's Commission can be obtained in larger numbers and of how, when they are forthcoming, they can be trained most efficiently. That is to say, the Committee was asked to consider whether it is desirable and practicable to start a Military College in India then or at some later date, and if so, whether such a college should be self-contained or should be supplemented by further training in England. The

Committee held a number of sittings in India, and in the Spring of 1926 a Sub-Committee of its members went to Europe to investigate the systems of education by which officers are at present produced in England, France, Canada and America.

Attention must now be drawn to a debate of real importance. The Muddiman Committee was a committee appointed in 1924 to examine the working of the Montford Reforms. There was a majority and a minority Report. The former was of course the official Report. Government were not prepared to accept even its recommendations. A motion was tabled in September, 1925, that it should accept the principle of the Report. What was the principle broadly? It was this,—that the machinery, wherever it was creaking, must be oiled, that the bearings must be greased, that the gear must be smoothened. Thus would it be possible to appoint Ministers without their salaries being voted at the Budgets, to carry on Government in spite of obstruction. Such things had been visualized in the Montford Reforms, only as events distantly possible, but now they were actualities of a near past. The Swaraj Party had fully realized these reactionary potentialities lying embedded in the Montford Scheme soon after entering the Assembly, and had tabled a resolution in February, 1924, as follows:—

> "This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish full Responsible Government in India, and for the said purpose, (a) to summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, a scheme of a Constitution for India; and (b) after dissolving the Central Legislature, to place the said scheme for approval before a newly elected Indian Legislature

for its approval and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a Statute."

It was as the result of this resolution that the Muddiman Committee was appointed and it sent up a majority and minority Report, which were considered on the 7th of September, 1925, by the Assembly in the form of a proposition moved by Sir Alexander Muddiman to which a long amendment was tabled by Pandit Motilal Nehru, the gist of which was that immediate steps be taken by His Majesty's Government (1) to make a declaration in Parliament embodying such fundamental changes in constitutional machinery and administration of India as would make the Government of the country fully responsible; further, (2) a Round Table Conference or other suitable agency adequately representative of all Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests was to be summoned to frame, with due regard to the interests of the minorities, a detailed scheme based on the above principle and to place the said scheme for approval before the Assembly, after which it would be submitted to the British Parliament to be embodied in a Statute. This amendment was, after two days' discussion, carried against the Government by 72 votes to 45. It will be thus seen that the 'painfully tense atmosphere' of February, 1924, gave place to the far friendlier spirit of September, 1925, and the exclusive demand of an R.T.C. in February, 1924, was relaxed in the demand of September, 1925, for an R. T. C. or other suitable agency.

Birkenhead had spoken of the Swaraj Party as the "most highly organized political party in India." This was gratifying to a degree. But Lord Birkenhead only recognized the party that had recognized his Constitution and its organ. The Swaraj Party had not only entered

the Councils and taken seats but passed budgets and sat on select committees. It had declined a seat on the Muddiman Committee but accepted one on the Skeen Committee. Lord Birkenhead himself was not without hope, nor were Das and, later, Nehru without hope that some kind of settlement could be effected. Sir Basil Blackett spoke explicitly in the Assembly of Pandit Motilal's co-operation. "What else is Panditji doing," he asked, "in passing the Steel Protection Bill, in passing last year's budget, in separating the Railway Finance?" "What else is Mr. Patel doing," he added, "in presiding over this House?" And then Sir Basil profusely complimented Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar for the valuable services rendered by him on the Public Accounts Committee. The fact was that Government were sparing no efforts to cajole the Swaraj Party into some kind of co-operation.

Before we proceed to narrate the events of September, 1925, at Patna, we must note some of the under-currents amongst the thoughts and programmes of the Swarajists themselves. Gandhi's willingness to place the whole machinery of the Congress at the disposal of Motilalji was deeply appreciated by the Swarajist leader who wrote to him:—"Lord Birkenhead seems to have spurned the honourable co-operation offered by Deshbandhu and to have made it clear that, in our struggle for freedom, we have still to face many unnecessary obstacles and many ill-informed opponents. Our plain duty at this stage is, therefore, to go ahead along lines chalked out for us and prepare the ground for an effective challenge to irresponsible and insolent authority." On July 25th, Lalaji wrote to the Press: "What is needed now is the chalking out of a middle course. We are not ready to co-operate, we must do what is best, practical and possible under the circumstances. For that, we require

vigorous thinking, thorough discussion and honest consultation amongst all parties and determination to do what is decided upon." In Bengal, the hold of the Swarajists, who had made the acceptance of Ministries impossible, was fast weakening, an Independent having defeated a Swarajist candidate for the Presidentship of the Bengal Council by 6 votes. Things were doubtful enough even at the last test of strength when Das was carried on a stretcher to the Council Chamber. Dr. A. Suhrawardy resigned from the Swaraj Party. He had seen the Governor of Bengal and Gandhi took strong objection to this saying, first, that it was a most improper act on his part, and secondly that he had thereby "sold his country." On hearing this, the Doctor resigned, saying, "I deem political *harikari* more honourable than living under the new tyranny." The day after the report of Dr. Suhrawardy's interview appeared in the Press, Gandhi gave a full statement of his attitude to a representative of an Anglo-Indian newspaper in Calcutta and said: "I cannot, therefore, help saying that it is a healthy rule to prohibit members of the Swaraj Party from meeting or seeing officials without the permission of the Party." On the 22nd August, Vittalbhai was elected as the first non-official President of the Assembly.

It was at this juncture that the A.I.C.C. met at Patna on the 21st September, 1925. When we remember that it was at Patna in 1934 (May) that Civil Disobedience was withdrawn, this meeting of 1925 does not fail to strike us as particularly interesting, because at this meeting three outstanding changes were effected in the position of the Congress. Khaddar was divested of all political significance. Yarn franchise only became an alternative to four-anna membership of the Congress which was once again restored, and finally, political work was made over to the Swaraj Party. The Party was no

longer a wing of the Congress,—a protestant wing,—a minority receiving concessions or a bare majority anxious to take the rest with it. It was the Congress itself. Thereafter elections would be run not by the Swaraj Party but by the Congress. The members of the Assembly of this persuasion would be not the 'Swarajists,' any longer, but the Congress members in the Councils. The Yarn franchise was to be no longer the sole franchise, not because the response was inadequate,—for there were 10,000 members on the rolls,—but because the Swaraj Party did not like it. Gandhi made up his mind to meet the Swarajists more than half way, as a reply to Lords Birkenhead and Reading. When the Serajgunj resolution on Gopinath Saha in 1924 jeopardised the position of Das and his liberty, and was followed up by the Bengal Ordinance Act, Gandhi decided to stand by Das. This year Das passed away and Birkenhead's bluster was in the air. Gandhi made up his mind to wind up the remnants of N.C.O. and render all assistance to the Council front. He had no answer to give to the Secretary of State and, therefore, clothed the Council Party with the full authority of the Congress to deal with the political situation. Thus was the country taken through a series of sudden and startling changes: the latter half (clause B) of the Patna resolution, making over the political work to the Swaraj Party, was not before the informal sitting of the A.I.C.C. on the 21st September, but was sprung upon the Working Committee itself on the morning of the 22nd September, and considered by it for a bare five minutes. Here is clause B of the resolution passed at Patna:—

"Whereas the Congress in the 39th session held at Belgaum endorsed an agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swaraj Party on the other, whereby the

Congress activity was restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein and it was provided *inter alia* that the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress organisation, and that for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and administer its own funds; and whereas subsequent events have shown that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country and that the Congress should henceforth be a predominantly political body;

"It is resolved that the Congress do now take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interests of the country, and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of the Congress, save and except such funds and assets as are specially earmarked and belong to the All-India Khaddar Board and Provincial Khaddar Boards, which shall be handed over with all existing financial obligations to the All-India Spinners' Association started by Mahatma Gandhi as an integral part of the Congress organisation, but with independent existence and full powers to administer these and other funds for the fulfilment of its object.

"Provided that the work in connection with the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on in accordance with the Policy and Programme laid down by the Swaraj Party under the constitution framed by the Party and the rules made thereunder, subject to such modifications made by the Congress as may be found necessary from time to time for the purpose of carrying out the said Policy."

When an amendment was tabled to the main resolution handing over the Congress to the Council Party, to the effect that clause B be replaced by a clause saying "Provided that the work in the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on in accordance with such policy and programme laid down by the

Congress as may be found necessary from time to time for the purpose," instead of allowing the Council work to be done with the Swaraj Party as an intermediary, the very thought of an amendment to a resolution agreed upon, and a remark made in moving it that the Swaraj Party had 'betrayed its trust,' set Panditji ablaze and there was a general conflagration in the House. Gandhi assuaged the feelings by asking the mover of the amendment not to proceed with his diatribe against the Swaraj Party at such a juncture.

In the mood in which we found Gandhi at the time, all that Pandit Motilal had to do was to ask and it was given forthwith, and given wholesale. Gandhi as President of the A.I.C.C. would not allow the House even to examine the record of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly,—that would disturb the harmony of the situation and deprive the gift of its grace as well as its value. When Rajendra Babu asked Gandhi whether there was a pact between him, and Nehru and Das, Gandhi replied in the negative and added that with him, personally, *it was a point of honour to concede what the other side demanded.* It was a point of honour too with his following to concede to Gandhi what he demanded of them, for they trusted to his judgment as the instinctive judgment of a pure-hearted person in all times of doubt or difficulty.

The question at and after Patna was whether it was a partition or partnership that the Patna decisions had brought about. The Congress changes had been kaleidoscopic in character. Each shift of the panes and pieces in the tube had brought about during the previous two years new dispositions, a new play of colours, new scenes and sights. At Juhu, affairs were amorphous. When we met at Ahmedabad in June, 1924, Gandhi was still

trying to hold on to the fundamentals of his position. He was in a mood to assert himself. He had tightened the rigor of khaddar and compelled the Executive to spin everywhere. The threats of the bureaucracy against Das, following the Serajgunj resolutions, impelled him to close up the ranks of the Congress. When an inch was given, usually an ell would be taken. So was it here. The equities of Belgaum were set at nought at Patna, for at Patna, the Council wing took the whole prestige of the Congress and took away the spinning franchise as well. It was, therefore, a partition of the Congress between the apostles of the Councils and those of khaddar. Whatever show of unity there was externally, people could not fail to perceive the discontent of the latter wing. For one thing, the demand of the Swaraj Party "for a Round Table Conference or *other suitable agency*" was considered inadequate. People began to feel that the Attorney went beyond or below the instructions of the Principal, but Gandhi would not countenance such arithmetical calculations. When he gives, he gives unreservedly, wholly, and without regret in himself, or generating regret in his recipient. That is what Bhishma of old prescribed in respect of all gifts. Accordingly, at Cawnpore, we had only to register what at Patna he had decreed.

The Cawnpore Congress (1925) was ahead. We are in the month of October. Shrimati Sarojini Devi was elected President according to the Constitution. Gandhi had said at Belgaum that he was stepping in where really Shrimati Sarojini should have been. Early in October the President-elect published her message for the new year:—

> "Mine, as becomes a woman, is a most modest, domestic programme merely to restore to India her true position as the supreme mistress in her own

home, the sole guardian of her own vast resources, and the sole dispenser of her own hospitality. As a loyal daughter of Bharata Mata, therefore, it will be my lovely though difficult task, through the coming year, to set my mother's house in order, to reconcile the tragic quarrels that threaten the integrity of her old joint-family life of diverse communities and creeds, and to find an adequate place and purpose and recognition alike for the lowest and the mightiest of her children, and foster-children, the guests and the strangers within her gates."

That was a fine ideal, especially for a lady to lay down. What should the no-changers do to bring about such a harmony? Gandhi exhorted them to fall in with the Patna resolution or to resign from the Congress. They had to hibernate or extinguish themselves. Gandhi's position was that he recanted his programme for the time being, while reiterating his principles.

The people are there, the mass that may develop momentum at any time as once they did, but they can develop that momentum only on the impact of a dynamic force, a living idea, a convulsing programme which must be carried to them by a body of 'educated' people. But these have failed. While, therefore, the material remained, the momentum has disappeared. The sparks from the centre would not explode the air in the chamber.

The passage for the jet of petrol is occluded somewhere, and in the absence of petrol, more air and electricity cannot cause the first explosion that starts the motor. When a motor does not start by the ordinary process, an ingenious method resorted to is to push it from behind. Within a few yards, the engine begins to work until the next halt necessitates a repetition of the process. Even so, when the dynamic force of Civil

Disobedience was for the time being held in suspense, all sorts of devices began to push themselves to the fore. The capture of Local Bodies became more and more attractive. Though the elders of the Congress might have enough legitimate preoccupations and public activities, it was a problem how to divert the energies and the enthusiasm of the younger folks. With the wine of elections before them, with the consciousness and confidence of success in their own minds and hearts, they could not be easily restrained. And too, the Mayoralty of Calcutta held with such lustre by Das and later by Sen-Gupta was captivating to a degree. Already four big corporations were captured by Congressmen. Vallabhbhai J. Patel had for sometime been President of the Ahmedabad Municipality and was the only person who would occupy that position till 1928. Vittalbhai was adorning the Mayoralty of Bombay, and when interviewed on the subject as to how he would discharge his duties if he became the President of the Assembly, said in reply, with his wonted wink in the eye and mischievous smile on the lips, "just as I have done the duties of the President of the Bombay Corporation." Jawaharlal had become the President of the Allahabad Municipality but did not take long to discover that he was a round man in a square hole, and that Local Bodies were not for Congressmen. Babu Rajendra Prasad became Chairman of the Patna Municipality and was not overpleased with his experiences and cleared out after about 15 months. But the alphabet of life, like that of letters, should be learnt by every one and will not be taken on trust. Most people would learn by their own experience, not by others'. And the lessons of Local Bodies must be learnt by Madras too. It was at this time, *i.e.*, about May, 1925, that the Madras Congress Committee began to take interest in the capture of seats in the Madras Corporation, and after an arduous campaign in which

neither energy nor expense was spared, it succeeded in capturing 7 seats out of 10. The object of one and all in thus capturing Local Bodies, was to get power with which to push the constructive programme through those bodies. It was a laudable idea and, throughout the campaign, we had the advantage of conceiving our ideas and planning their execution much in advance of Governmental preparations to resist our plans or rebut our ideas. The wheels of Government grind slow, but grind steady. Within a short time Government made it impossible for the Local Bodies to engage the services, as teachers or otherwise, of those who had gone to jail, to buy khaddar, to teach Hindi, to introduce the charkha into schools, to give addresses of welcome to national leaders or to raise the national flag over the corporation schools or offices. Anyway, there was reason for interest in Local Bodies, and the same reason brought out Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar in Madras from his comparative quiet into the *maelstrom* of politics. He assumed command in the city, spent lavishly out of his purse, being never a niggard in public or private life, and in a moment installed himself as the head of the Congress Party. New programmes bring new leaders, and must bring them, when old leaders cannot trim their sails to the new winds or disappear altogether from the winds and the boat alike.

Altogether, the year 1925 was a stormy year. When from this distance of time we survey the incidents and summarise the history, we cannot fail to be impressed by the conflicts that arose between party and party in the Congress, and between section and section in a party. If even the no-changers with their residual legacy of khaddar, removal of untouchability and communal unity, could present schisms and fissions, it is no wonder that the pro-changers with a positively new

programme, a dynamic programme as it was also believed to be, exhibited differences, too, among themselves. The revolt against the tenets of the Swaraj Party took origin in C. P. and Maharashtra, which were the worthy colleagues of Bengal, and which had kept pace with Bengal only so long as the great Deshbandhu was alive. Deshbandhu's was not the temper to 'stand any nonsense'; he would put it down with a heavy hand. He who had wrung concessions from Gandhi would not readily yield to rebels or renegades in his party. But the moment he passed away, unexpected happenings took place in Maharashtra. Mr. Tambe, the Swarajist President of the C. P. Council, accepted an Executive Councillorship under the C. P. Government. This was the subject of fierce warfare between the leaders in C.P. and Berar, in Maharashtra and Bombay. Pandit Motilal resented Tambe's conduct and the extenuation of it by men like Kelkar and Jayakar, and threatened to take disciplinary action against these two offenders apparently for being "accessories after the event." They in turn wanted the whole Swaraj Party of Bombay to repeat their sentiments. Kelkar's slogan was "Back to Amritsar: Back to the Lokamanya." Pandit Motilal Nehru was equally unbending. Speaking at Nagpur in November, 1925, he declared that Mr. Tambe's acceptance of office was not an isolated act but the culmination of a series of attempts to take office, commencing with the intrigue to form a Ministry. The retort came at once that Panditji himself showed the way by accepting membership of the Skeen Committee. Of course, the two were quite different things. When the Swarajists held a conference in C. P., animated and heated discussions took place between Abhyankar and Khare on one side and Dr. Moonje on the other. The latter was suspected to be encouraging the acceptance of Ministries. Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao and Mr. B. G. Khaparde were

for acceptance. Dr. Moonje vehemently denied the charge and was confronted with a certain letter, after which he admitted that, personally, he was for acceptance but he was loyal to the Party to which he belonged and to Pandit Motilalji, its leader.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar wrote to the Press, criticising the rigid discipline of the Swaraj Party which gave no play to the aspirations of the different sections of its members. He traced the steady deviation of the Swaraj Party away from its original programme of 'consistent and uniform obstruction' in the Central Legislature, and asked whether it would not be logical at the present stage to allow the acceptance of office. "There was a time," he said, "when in the Assembly we could make no constructive proposal, say, a motion even to refer a Bill to a select committee. Then came a time when we were allowed to make such motions, but not to take a seat on any of the committees. Then came a time when we could accept only elective seats on committees. And then came a time when we could accept nominated seats on committees under a special dispensation of executive authority. Now I grant that all these developments were natural and were symptoms of a definite new policy, that is to say, a policy of revolt from hidebound obstruction." On the 1st November, the Executive of the All-India Swaraj Party met at Nagpur and strongly condemned the action of Mr. Sreepad Balwant Tambe as being a flagrant breach of discipline and treachery to the Party. Now we come to Bombay where Motilalji hastened from Nagpur to crush the revolt of Jayakar and Kelkar. They had raised the cry of Responsive Co-operation already. Both these scholar-politicians, so well-known in India for their erudition and keen political sense, resigned their seats on the Executive of the All-India Swaraj

Party and issued, in that connection, the following statement:—

> "We find that Pandit Motilal is violating the understanding arrived at at Nagpur, by openly preaching a crusade against Responsive Co-operation while insisting on our remaining silent. We wish to exercise our right to reply to his criticisms which are causing great misunderstanding and prejudice in the public mind. We recognize the desirability of our ceasing to be members of the Swaraj Party Executive Council while we reply to the Pandit's criticism. We are, therefore, tendering our resignation of our membership of the Council so as not to embarrass our colleagues thereon, and in order to be able to exercise our right of reply to the Pandit with freedom and frankness."

That was not all. Moonje, Jayakar and Kelkar subsequently resigned their membership of the Legislature, to which they had been elected on the Swarajist ticket.

Thus they disinfected themselves of Swarajist taint, —body. soul and clothing. Panditji, replying on the 9th November, said that "the Swaraj Party stood for its own programme which included co-operation, Non-co-operation, construction, destruction, as occasion and national interests demanded." Jayakar resented the Pandit's 'hectoring tone.' In the end, on the 4th of December, it was agreed that "all public controversy on the question of the Swarajist Party's policy should cease until the Congress meets."

One other event of 1925 must be referred to here. It is not directly connected with the Congress. But Government themselves attributed the rebellion in the Gudem Agency,—Godavari and Visagapatam Districts of

Andhra,—under the leadership of Sitarama Raju, to the subversive influence of the Civil Disobedience movement. They had made a similar mistake in regard to the Moplah rebellion. The Gudem rebellion also started some time in 1922,—but later than the Moplah revolt,—but had nothing of the communal tension which characterised its predecessor. Here too, semi-military operations were necessitated and not much progress had been made by the end of the year 1923. In 1924, the Assam Rifles were sent for, consisting of about 250 officers and other ranks. The rebellion was ultimately put down after nearly three years of Guerilla warfare between the mighty and puissant forces of the British Government and Sitarama Raju with a following of two hundred. But the saddest event was the shooting of Raju, on his alleged attempt to flee from arrest. The Government were challenged on many occasions to publish details and to produce the inquest report, but they would not accept the challenge.

Now we pass on to the Cawnpore Congress. There were difficulties ahead. The Cawnpore Session was to confirm what Patna had decreed. It was a moot point even at Patna whether such cataclysmal changes as Patna had affected in franchise,—contrary to Belgaum's decree,—in partition of properties, and in division of functions could be done by an All-India Congress Committee. Then there was the larger question whether the Congress should endorse the Demand of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly which was embodied in their amendment to the resolution on the Muddiman Report. All these complex questions were before the session at Cawnpore presided over by the Poetess of India. A novel feature of the Congress was the handing over of the charge by Gandhi, the outgoing President, to Sarojini Devi, the incoming one. Gandhi spoke for but five minutes and declared that

on reviewing his five years' work, he had not one item to retrace or one statement to take back. The more he saw life, he said, the more he was convinced that he was right in every step he had taken. "To-day I would commence Civil Disobedience," he added, "if I thought that the fire and fervour are there in the people. But alas! they are not. The South African question is considered by many to be a suitable question, but I shall be overpowered by numbers that I may not care for." Sarojini Devi took charge with a few choice words. Her Presidential Address was perhaps the shortest address delivered from the Congress rostrum, while of course it was the sweetest ever delivered. She emphasised unity,—unity between the parties and unity between India and the Indians abroad. She referred to the National Demand as put forth from the Assembly, and pleaded for the obliteration of fear. "In the battle for liberty fear is the one unforgivable treachery, and despair the one unforgivable sin." Her Address, therefore, was an expression of courage and hope. With this gentle hand to exercise discipline as well as forbearance, the Cawnpore Congress had an easy time, except for certain labour demonstrations and small troubles from certain delegates which were brought under control by sturdier men like Jawaharlal.

The Cawnpore Congress naturally began with the expression of deep sorrow over the deaths of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, Dr. Sir Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar and other leaders. There was a South African Deputation in India at the time to which the Congress extended its welcome, and the Congress declared the Area-Reservation and Immigration Registration (Further Provision) Bill to be a breach of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914, and urged an arbitration to settle the interpretation of the

latter. The Congress endorsed the idea of the R.T.C. to settle the question and urged that the Imperial Government should withhold its assent to the Bill if passed. The Bengal Ordinance Act and the Gurudwara prisoners were the subjects of suitable resolutions, and the Expulsion of Non-Burman Offenders Bill, and Tax on Sea-Passengers Bill of Burma were regarded as new attacks on the liberty of the citizen. Then came the resolution of the Congress dealing with franchise, which confirmed Part B. of the resolution of Patna dated 22-9-'25 calling upon the Congress to take up such political work as was necessary in the interests of the country, and for this purpose employ the whole of the machinery and funds of the Congress except those made over to the A.I.S.A. The Congress of course reiterated its faith in C.D. and urged that self-reliance should be the guiding principle in carrying on all political work. Then the Congress adopted a detailed programme:

> (i) The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win those rights by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress, with special reference to popularising the spinning wheel and khaddar, promoting inter-communal unity, the removal of untouchability, ameliorating the conditions of the suppressed classes and the removal of the drink and drug evil, and shall include the capture of Local Bodies, the organisation of villages, the promotion of education on National lines, the organisation of Labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords and tenants, and the general advancement of the national, economical, industrial and commercial interests of the country.
>
> (ii) The work outside the country shall be directed to the dissemination of accurate information in foreign countries.

(iii) The Congress adopts on behalf of the country the terms of the settlement offered to the Government by the Independent and Swaraj Parties of the Assembly by the resolution passed on the 18th February, 1924, and having regard to the fact that the Government have so far not made any response to the said offer, resolves that the following action shall be taken:

1. The Swaraj Party in the Assembly shall, at the earliest opportunity, invite the Government to give their final decision on the said terms, and in case no decision is announced before the end of February, or the decision announced is held not to be satisfactory by a Special Committee consisting of the Working Committee of the Congress and such other members as may be appointed by the All-India Congress Committee, the Party shall, by adopting the proper procedure, intimate to the Government on the floor of the House that the Party will no longer continue to remain and work in the present Legislatures as heretofore. The Swarajist members of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, shall vote for the rejection of the Finance Bill and, immediately after, leave their seats. The Swarajist members of such Provincial Councils as may be in session at the time shall also leave their seats and all members of such Councils as are not in session at the time shall not attend further meetings of the said Councils and shall likewise report themselves to the Special Committee.

2. No member of the Swaraj Party in the Council of State, in the Legislative Assembly, or in any of the Provincial Councils shall thereafter attend any meeting of any of the said Legislatures, or any of their Committees, except for the purpose of preventing his seat from being declared vacant and of throwing out the Provincial Budget or other measure involving fresh taxation.

Provided that, prior to their being called upon to leave their seats, it shall be open to Swarajist members of the various Legislatures to engage themselves in such activities in their Legislatures as are

permissible to them under the existing rules of the Party.

Provided also that it shall be open to the Special Committee to allow the Swarajist members of any Legislature to attend the said Legislature when such attendance is in its opinion essential for some special or unforeseen purpose.

3. The Special Committee shall, immediately on receipt of the reports mentioned in sub-clause (i), call a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to frame a programme of work which shall be carried out by the Congress and Swaraj Party organisation in co-operation with each other throughout the country.

4. The said programme of work shall include selected heads of the general work mentioned in clauses I and II above, as also the education of the electorates in the policy herein laid down, and shall indicate the lines on which the next general election is to be run by and in the name of the Congress and state clearly the issues on which Congressmen shall seek election.

Provided that the policy of non-acceptance of offices in the gift of the Government shall continue to be followed until, in the opinion of the Congress, a satisfactory response to the terms of settlement aforesaid is made by the Government.

5. This Congress hereby authorises the Executive of the several Provincial Congress Committees to select candidates for the Provincial Legislative Councils and the Indian Legislative Assembly in their provincial areas for the general elections next year as early as possible.

6. In the event of the final decision of the Government on the terms of settlement offered in the resolution of the Assembly aforesaid being found satisfactory and acceptable by the aforesaid Special Committee, a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee shall forthwith be held to confirm or reject the decision of the Special Committee and to determine the future course of action.

7. Until the Swarajists leave the Legislatures as herein provided, the Constitution of the Swaraj Party

and the rules made thereunder shall be followed in the Legislatures, subject to such changes as may be made by the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee from time to time.

8. For the purpose of starting the work referred to in Sub-clauses (3) and (4), the All-India Congress Committee shall allot such funds as it may consider sufficient for the initial expenses of the necessary propaganda in this behalf, but any further funds required for the said purpose shall be raised by the Working Committee or under its directions by contributions from the public."

It was not without some bickering that the main resolution of Cawnpore was passed. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, whose very fight against Non-co-operation from inside the Congress endeared him to friends and opponents alike, moved an amendment which was seconded by Mr. Jayakar, to the effect:

"That the work in the Legislatures shall be so carried on as to utilize them to the best possible advantage for the early establishment of full Responsible Government, co-operation being resorted to when it may be necessary to advance the National cause, and obstruction when that may be necessary for the advancement of the same cause."

It was while seconding that Jayakar announced his own and Kelkar's and Moonje's resignations from the Legislatures. In the course of the discussion, Motilalji was fiercely attacked for accepting a membership of the Indian Sandhurst or Skeen Committee. "The Assembly," he said, "had asked for an Indian Sandhurst and the Government had said, 'show the way.' What they wanted was negotiation to show the Government the way to meet their demands, and if in the same way, the Government asked them to show the way to reforms, they would certainly co-operate."

Finally, Hindustani was prescribed as the language in which the proceedings of the Congress and the A.I.C.C. should ordinarily be conducted, and the A.I.C.C. was authorised to open a Foreign Department under it to look after the interests of the Indians abroad. The next Congress was to meet in Assam. Dr. M. A. Ansari and Syts. A. Rangaswami Iyengar and K. Santanam were appointed Secretaries. Shortly after the Cawnpore Congress, Mr. B. G. Horniman returned to India in the 2nd week of January, 1926.

One pleasant feature of the Cawnpore Congress was the presence of the Rev. J. H. Holmes of America, dressed in American clothes, but wearing a Gandhi cap. He rose in the midst of cheers and said:

> "Yesterday, I heard Dr. Abdur Rahman claiming Gandhiji as a South African. May I not claim him to-day for the whole world? May I not say that the Society of Friends which I represent regard him with the same reverence and believe in his work as you do? I ought to say that we have gone very far wrong in our Western Civilization. We have gone too far in the pursuit of wealth and power. It is a deep evil in our whole Western Civilization. Our love of wealth has resulted in its concentration our longing for power has brought on war after war and will likely plunge us in further wars until civilization is destroyed. So we gladly turn to you who are indicating another and better way, and we hope that while keeping the good things in nature and inventions, we should follow the brotherly spirit which is represented by the great prophet among you."

Before closing the year, we must make reference to the unfortunate Hindu-Muslim riots which occurred from time to time throughout 1925, and, as we shall see later, 1926 also. Speaking of Hindu-Muslim unity Gandhi said,

addressing a meeting at Mirzapore Park in Calcutta on May 1st:

> "I have admitted my incompetence. I have admitted that I have been found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady. I do not find that either Hindus or Muslims are ready to accept my cure, and therefore I simply nowadays confine myself to a passing mention of this problem and content myself by saying that some day or other we Hindus and Muslims will have to come together, if we want the deliverance of our country. And if it is to be our lot that, before we can come together, we must shed one another's blood, then I say, the sooner we do so, the better it is for us. If we propose to break one another's heads, let us do so in a manly way. Let us not then shed crocodile tears, let us not ask for sympathy from any quarter, if you do not propose to give any quarter."

There was tension throughout July, 1925, the principal places affected being Delhi, Calcutta and Allahabad. Another riot took place during the Bakr Id celebrations at Humnabad in the Nizam's Dominions, about 40 miles from Gulbarga where like riots had occurred the previous year. Before closing the year 1925, we have also to refer to the Sikh question which received a sort of quietus in the year 1925. A Gurudwara Bill was introduced and passed, and it was stated by Sir Malcolm Hailey that the Gurudwara prisoners would be released if they signed a condition accepting the Act and undertaking not to engage themselves in campaigns similar to previous ones. This was deeply resented by many. But in course of time feelings were assuaged. Many prisoners gave the undertaking to abide by the Act. Even the G. S. P. C. was split on the question. While most prisoners were released, a few remained in jails to serve out their terms.

CHAPTER VII

The Council Front (1926)

The year opened somewhat inauspiciously for the Council programme. The charm of novelty of the year 1923 had worn off.

A perpetual fight for the sake of fight was somewhat tiresome and signs of fatigue as well as reaction were visible early in the year.

The cult of Responsive Co-operation was indeed definitely in the air by the end of 1925. Before the opening of the Assembly on January 20th, 1926, the Bombay Council of the Swaraj Party definitely decided to extend its full support to Responsive Co-operation in their propaganda.

Let us turn once again to the activities of the Swaraj Party. Pandit Motilal Nehru had crossed the threshold of the Viceregal Lodge in the 2nd week of January (1926) with, of course, the permission of the Executive of the Party. With him were five other leaders including Lalaji, and the purpose of the visit was to discuss the South African question Though this news raised hopes for a time, it was soon discovered that there was no ray of light brightening the clouds that began to lower on the skies. What really had kindled hope in the public breast for a time was the exceedingly conciliatory speech made by Lord Reading in opening the Assembly on the 20th January, 1926, and an extract he gave from Birkenhead's speech of July 7th, 1925: "We desire and request good will; nor shall we be niggardly bargainers

if we met with that generous friendship which is near and dear to our hearts." In the month of March, the A.I.C.C. met on the 6th and 7th at Raisina, Delhi, and confirmed the Cawnpore decision. Delhi declared once again in favour of "determined resistance and obstruction to every activity, Governmental or other, that may impede the Nation's progress towards Swaraj. In particular, Congressmen in the Legislatures shall refuse to accept offices in the gift of the Government, until, in the opinion of the Congress, a satisfactory response is made by the Government." It is necessary, while we are on the subject of the A.I.C.C., to state that the Working Committee which met on March 5, voted Rs. 2,000 to the Hindustani Seva Dal and Rs. 5,000 for foreign propaganda. The Dal was the body of volunteers organised under the resolution of the Cocanada Congress. It had held two annual sessions—one under Maulana Shaukat Ali's Presidentship at Belgaum, and the second under Mr. T. C. Goswami's at Cawnpore. Foreign propaganda, hitherto only talked of, became a subject of practical importance, and we shall have occasion to trace the development of both these as years roll by. The departure of Jawaharlal Nehru for Switzerland about the time for the treatment of his wife, Kamala Nehru, as well as the expected departure of Pandit Motilal to England for the sittings of the Skeen Committee, must doubtless have given a fillip to this question of foreign propaganda which had hitherto been only in a moribund stage. In the Assembly, when the Budget was taken up, Pandit Motilal announced that he and his supporters would abstain from a division. The public galleries were crowded with visitors eager to witness the Swarajists' withdrawal which was widely known beforehand. Pandit Motilal showed how Government had spurned Deshbandhu Das's terms for honourable co-operation. He warned the Government that, unless it

took great care, it would find the whole country honeycombed with secret societies. With these words, he walked out of the Chamber accompanied by all the members of his party.

The walk-out created a little incident which may be briefly described. President Patel referred to the walk-out and declared that, as the strongest Party had vacated the Chamber, the Assembly ceased to retain the representative character required by the Government of India Act. It was, therefore, for Government to consider whether the Assembly should continue to function. He asked Government not to introduce any controversial legislation as, otherwise, he might be forced to use the extraordinary powers accorded under the Act of adjourning the House *sine die*. The next day, he gracefully took back these words and, in particular, he said: "I might add further that I felt on reflection that the Chair should not have made reference to its own powers or have used language which might perhaps be construed as a threat to the Government, but should have awaited further developments before deciding any course of action." This relieved the feelings of the Government.

The stone that began to glide down the hill of Non-co-operation from the heights of Gaya, nearly reached the bottom at Sabarmati early in 1926. We have seen how the Responsivists came near being absorbed into the fold of the Independents and Nationalists. Accordingly, they held a conference with the leaders of other parties on the 3rd April in Bombay, and the result was the formation of an 'Indian National Party' to prepare for and accelerate the establishment of Swaraj of the Dominion type, by all peaceful and legitimate means (excluding Mass Disobedience and non-payment of taxes) with liberty to resort inside the Legislature to Responsive

Co-operation. Pandit Motilal regarded the formation of the new Nationalist Party as a challenge to the Swarajists and described it as a "conglomerate in the first stage of geological formation." After some negotiations, it was decided to hold a meeting of the two wings of the Swaraj Party at Sabarmati on April 21st, to see if reunion were possible. Amongst others present at the meeting were Sarojini Devi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sjts. Kelkar, Jayakar and Aney, and Dr. Moonje. Subject to the confirmation of the A.I.C.C., it was agreed amongst the signatories to the agreement arrived at at Sabarmati, that "the response made by Government to the Swarajist Demand of February, 1924 in the Assembly should be considered satisfactory if, in the Provinces, the power, responsibility and initiative necessary for the effective discharge of their duties are secured to Ministers." The Congress members in the Legislative Councils of the Provinces were to decide the question of sufficiency of such power, but their decision was to be "subject to confirmation by a Committee consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar." "The ink on the Pact was, however, barely dry," says 'India, 1925-26,' "when Mr. Prakasam, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee expressed dissent and said that the position of the Congress had been compromised even more at Sabarmati than at Cawnpore." Numerous other prominent Congressmen expressed dissatisfaction likewise. It was generally thought, though for a while, that Swarajists would soon 'walk in' and form Ministries, but Panditji cleared the atmosphere by declaring that three conditions had to be satisfied before Office could be accepted, namely,

1. that the Ministers should be made fully responsible to the Legislature, free from all control of Government;

2. that an adequate proportion of the revenues be allotted for the development of 'nation-building' departments;
3. and that Ministers be given full control of the Services in the transferred departments.

Things were once more thrown into the melting pot. Jayakar characterised the draft placed before the Committee as a travesty of the Pact and a complete repudiation of the terms of the same, under the guise and in the name of clearing doubts and differences about the interpretation of the Pact. From this moment, the relations between the Swarajists and the Responsivists became more and more strained. The Sabarmati Pact, however, was yet to be disposed of by the A.I.C.C. which met on the 5th May at Ahmedabad. At this meeting, Pandit Motilal announced that, owing to irreconcilable differences between the signatories of the Pact regarding the interpretation of its terms, the negotiations that he had, for the past few days, been carrying on with the Responsivists had broken down and the Pact, therefore, had fallen through and was non-existent. A letter from the Responsivists was read which confirmed, in the main, Motilalji's statement. That Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar should have moved a vote of thanks to Panditji at this meeting was significant. The fact was that S. India was against the Sabarmati Pact. Motilalji was not perhaps quite wise in not having consulted them from the outset. Very often in such matters, the confidence that you can command from others is in proportion to the confidence you give to them, and when the latter is not forthcoming, the former is withheld. At this meeting, Pandit Motilal proposed a Committee to go into and report on Dr. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill but this was turned down. When Sir Moropant Joshi, who attended the meeting on behalf of the Responsivists, thanked the

President for the invitation and urged that the Sabarmati Pact be considered, Pandit Motilal explained the different view-points of the two wings. Whereas the Responsivists held that the Reforms should be worked for all they were worth, his own section thought that the Faridpur conditions of the late Deshbandhu Das should be fulfilled before any response by Government could be considered satisfactory. At the end of this controversy, it cannot be said that Pandit Motilal came out altogether unscathed. He wanted to go to England and took two months' leave. Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar took his place. For the time being, and all too suddenly, Mr. Iyengar's star shot up into the high heavens.

While this was so in respect of leadership, the following everywhere began to show fissiparous tendencies. In Bengal, there was a revolt at Krishnagar in the middle of 1926, and although J. M. Sen-Gupta had a sort of victory, still, rumblings of revolt were not altogether subdued. There were really four sections of Swarajists at the time in Bengal: Hindu Swarajists and Swarajist Hindus, Muslim Swarajists and Swarajist Muslims, the difference being the emphasis based on the adjective or the substantive. There were secessions from the ranks of the B.P.C.C. of men like Babu Amarendra Nath Chatterjee and Nirmal Chander Chander. The issue centred around the pact that was being observed in Bengal for sometime between the Hindus and the Muslims. Sen-Gupta's triple demand was (1) observe the pact, (1) ignore the Krishnagar Conference, and (3) do not accept office. The split between the two wings soon became a wide chasm. Sen-Gupta was charged with being given to cavalier methods, with neglecting village reconstruction and indifference to the fund collected for the purpose, with his rupture with the very men who had raised him aloft, and with taking powers to nominate

30 members to the Executive in addition to 30 elected ones. The Karmis took up the revolt under the leadership of Babu Nirmal Chander Chander and Sarat Chandra Bose. We have dwelt upon this at length because this rift in the lute continues to this day in Bengal.

In the middle of the year 1926, we can pause for a while to take a retrospect and prospect of the political picture. Lord Irwin stepped into India on April 6th, 1926. Almost simultaneously, there were communal riots in the streets of Calcutta of the fiercest kind ever known, only equalled if not excelled by those of Bombay in a later year. For six weeks the streets of Calcutta were the scenes of carnage and confusion. It was in May, 1925 that Gandhi, speaking at Mirzapore Park had said in solemn tones that if bloodshed was inevitable, let blood be shed in a manly spirit without any mockery of sympathy or sentiment. As if to make this statement prophetic, disturbances started in an affray between Muslims and Arya Samajists outside a mosque, and on the 5th April fire had to be opened. Sporadic street-fighting, incendiarism to the extent of 110 fires, attacks on temples and mosques,—all these destroyed the fair name of Calcutta. 44 deaths and 584 persons injured in the first bout, and 66 deaths and 391 injured in the second, represent the official figures. After 6 weeks of vandalism and massacre, the riots died down. Lord Irwin was greatly upset by these unfortunate happenings. He put all his faith and fervour, all his religious devotion and humanitarian instinct into his speeches, meant to exhort people "in the name of Indian national life and of Religion, to rescue the good name of India from the hurt which the present discords inflict upon it."

In the month of August, the Hilton Young Commission published its report on currency and exchange, and