A Comprehensive History of MODERN INDIA

A concise overview of the subject for the UPSC Civil Services Main Examination Optional Paper and for UGC NET/SLET, incorporating the latest syllabus

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A Note from the Editor

A Comprehensive History of Modern India is an attempt to cover the history of India from the beginning of the eighteenth century till nearly the end of the twentieth century in a succinct and balanced manner without ignoring important details. The book carefully analyses all aspects of modern Indian history with due emphasis on facts, clarity and lucidity of language. Each chapter incorporates the views of historians and famous people as well as a summary of that chapter for a quick revision of the facts.

Many topics which are generally studied under contemporary history pertaining to the developments in the recent past (including developments in science and technology, and environmental and ethnic movements) have been also dealt with. Over the years, the book has been revised to include topics that have gained relevance in academic discussions. Events in Science and Technology and Environmental policies are updated to almost the present.

This book covers the latest syllabus for the Civil Services (Main) Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission for modern Indian history portions in a comprehensive manner. The students appearing for state civil services examinations as well as those taking the UGC (NET) or the SLET examination will also find the book quite helpful, apart from those who have taken up history as a subject of their choice for their graduation and post-graduation courses.

All constructive comments and suggestions for improving the book are welcome.

Kalpana Rajaram

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A GENERAL NOTE ON THE NAMES OF PLACES AND LANGUAGES

The names of places and languages, as used in the book, are historical and contextual in nature and are known by different names in present times. Given below is a list of new names of places and languages which a reader would come across frequently while reading book.

	Old Name	*New Name*
1.	Amraoti	Amravati
2.	Bangalore	Bengaluru
3.	Benares	Varanasi
4.	Bombay	Mumbai
5.	Burma	Myanmar
6.	Calcutta	Kolkata
7.	Cawnpore	Kanpur
8.	Cocanada	Kakinada
9.	Dacca	Dhaka
10.	Jullundur	Jalandhar
11.	Madras	Chennai
12.	Monghyr	Munger
13.	Orissa	Odisha
14.	Oriya	Odia
15.	Oudh	Awadh
16.	Pondicherry	Puducherry
17.	Poona	Pune
18.	Seringapatam	Srirangapatnam
19.	Tanjore	Thanjavur
20.	Trichinopoly	Thiruchirapalli
21.	Trivandrum	Thiruvananthapuram

CHAPTER 1

Sources and Historiography of Modern India

INTRODUCTION

The Indian historiography underwent a drastic change not merely in approach, treatment and technique but also in volume of historical literature with the coming of the Europeans in India. Perhaps no other period or country can boast of such a rich harvest of historical material as India from the mid-18th century to the mid-20th century. In constructing the history of modern India, top priority needs to be given to official records, i.e., the papers of the government agencies at various levels. The records of the East India Company provide a detailed account of trading conditions during the periods 1600-1857. The fact that a commercial company of Britain established its political supremacy over vast areas, in a region thousands of miles away from its seat of power, necessitated a kind of administration which was all paperwork. Every policy had to be put down in writing, every opinion expressed in minutes and every business of the state transacted through despatches, consultations and proceedings, and through secret letters and other correspondence, resulting in the growth of an inconceivable volume of historical material. The official records cover all levels of administration, from the district to the supreme government, apart from those relating to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. When the British Crown took over the reins of administration, it also kept a large variety and volume of official records. By examining these records, we can trace every important development stage-by-stage and follow the processes of decision-making including the psychology of the policy-makers.

Abundance of Historical Materials

Official Records

Moreover, the establishment of British power in India witnessed enormous changes almost in every sector of Indian life. The socio-religious changes of the 19th century, the new ways of thinking and criticism, the introduction of large-scale trade and industry, the promotion of sciences and arts and the reorganisation of the political, administrative, legal, educational and social institutions generated unique ideas in the country. The process of British colonisation of India and the consequent Indian response to it in the form of a national struggle offers students of history a kind of material which is voluminous in size, highly complex in nature and very revealing in information. Hence there is a need to assess modern Indian historiography in this historical setting.

Nature of Historical Materials

Apart from these records, the records of the other European East India Companies (the Portuguese, Dutch and French) are useful for constructing the history of the 17th and 18th centuries. They are primarily important from the point of view of economic history, but much can be gathered from them about the political set-up as well.

There are also many contemporary and semi-contemporary works such as memoirs, biographies and travel accounts which give us an interesting and useful glimpse into the history of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Though newspapers and journals made their appearance in the later part of the 18th century, they provide very valuable information on

Other Sources

almost all aspects of the Indian society in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Other sources of modern Indian history include oral evidence, creative literature and paintings. Though oral sources have their limitation, they help us in corroborating other historical source-materials and in comprehending a nearly complete picture of certain events, personalities and historical episodes. Creative literature, especially the new forms of indigenous literature such as novels, short story and poetry which developed in India under the influence of the West, provide vivid reflections of contemporary social realities. The new trends in paintings which appeared during the colonial period also supplement our understanding of life in that period. We shall discuss all these sources (both archival and non-archival) in detail in this chapter. However, it is not practically possible to list all sources under these categories. We shall also deal with major concerns in the historiography of modern India later in this chapter.

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Nature of Archival Materials

Archival materials are the documents which any organisation, public authority, institution, business or family, produces in the course of ordinary conduct of its affairs, and which it subsequently preserves as evidence of its rights and activities, for reference in planning future action, or for historical research. Examples of archives are deeds proving ownership of property, financial accounts registering money transactions, and minutes recording executive decisions. Records, however, are generally understood to include all the documents created by the organisation, some of which may indeed be of enduring archival quality but many others merely of temporary use.

Generally archives for ancient India are not available. Some archival materials for the medieval (especially Mughal) period are available since paper began to be used for recording public business and for correspondence during that time. But Mughal archives are not available in regular series, since they were lost or dispersed during the period of decline and disintegration of the Mughal empire. The surviving ones are scattered among a large number of libraries and manuscript repositories in India and abroad but they have immense historical value for reconstructing the history of Mughal period. However, there is a large body of rich and copious archival materials for the modern (or British) period of Indian history. In fact these archival materials are the most valuable source materials vis-à-vis other sources for illumining almost every aspect of modern Indian history from the early days of the British rule till its end in the 1940s. Both public and private archives are considered valuable repositories of Indian source material for study and research in modern Indian history. Broadly, there are four categories of official records for the modern period—(i) central government archives, (ii) state governments' archives, (iii) records of intermediate and subordinate authorities, and (iv) judicial records. Apart from these official records there are private archives and archival sources available abroad. There are also some archival publications (published archives) of the British period which provide valuable information for students of modern Indian history. Let us discuss all these archival materials in detail.

Types of Official Records

Central Government Archives

National Archives of India

The National Archives of India located in New Delhi contains most of the archives of the Government of India. These collections provide a series of unbroken records for constructing the history of modern India from mid-18th century till the present day. These provide authentic and reliable source materials on varied aspects of modern Indian history. There is a body of large source material on the rise and growth of the British empire in the Indian subcontinent, including the commercial transactions of the East India Company in the 18th century. The National Archives' records are divided among several record groups representing various branches of the Secretariat at different stages of its development. In the beginning, all the transactions (mostly commercial) of the East India Company were entered in a single set of consultation. With the expansion of its powers and responsibilities, subjects other than commerce were needed to be dealt with. This necessitated the distribution of the Company's work among various branches—Public or General, Revenue, Political, Military, Secret,

Commercial, Financial, Judicial, Education, etc.—and a separate set of records was kept for each of these branches or departments.

Public Department Records

The records of the Public Department provides detailed source materials for studying the constitutional changes since the Regulating Act of 1773, the emergence of a centralised polity and the evolution of the Company's administrative system. Apart from this, valuable materials bearing on the post-1857 administrative and constitutional developments such as organisation of public services, introduction of local self-government, the problem of Indianisation, territorial reorganisation of provinces, etc., are also found in this series. The conquest of Bengal, the tussle with the Marathas, the annexation of Burma (now Myanmar) and many other events related to the long-drawn process of expansion of the British empire in the Indian subcontinent are comprehensively recorded in the mass of original source material available in the Secret, Foreign, and Political series. The records of the Foreign and Political Department for the post-1857 period are of great importance for understanding the relationship of British rulers with the Indian princes and the neighbouring countries including inter-imperial issues. The proceedings of the Military Department and the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India provide a rich documentation of the great revolt of 1857. The Military Department records also provide a detailed account of the organisation and growth of the Indian army and its role in various fields.

Survey of India

With the appointment of James Rennell as the first Surveyor General of Bengal in 1767, the Survey of Indian began mapping scientifically the unknown regions of the country and its bordering lands. The records of the Survey of India as well as the journals and memoirs of the surveyors provide valuable information not only for geographical studies but also for studying contemporary socio-economic conditions and other important historical data.

Finance and Revenue Records

The Financial records are essential for studying the financial system in the colonial period including the growth of modern banking and credit system, currency, exchange and tariff policy of the government. The Revenue records, beginning from 1834, deal not only with revenue survey and settlement questions and land policy but many other interesting aspects of the colonial economy. The Famine records are helpful in evaluating the nature, causes, extent and impact of the recurring famines that visited India during the British period as well as the policies and programmes adopted by the government to address them. Equally important are the records of the Emigration group which provide detailed information about the emigration of Indian labour to other British colonies, their suffering, and the colonial state's policy on the issue of emigration of labour.

Proceedings of Different Departments

The proceedings of the Public, Judicial and Legislative departments provide ample evidence for studying the social and religious policies of the colonial government. The government's policy towards the Christian missionaries and the latter's activities are mentioned in these records. The government's policies on education and the growth of the education system during the colonial rule are mentioned in the Educational records of the Central archives. Initially, the papers bearing on the emergence of the nationalist movement were part of the Public series of the Home Department records but in 1907, a new series of records—Home Political—was started to deal exclusively with political and communal issues. The records of the Reforms Office are very useful for an analytical study of the constitutional developments from 1920 to 1937 in India.

Archives of the State Governments

Records of State Government

The source material in the state archives comprise the records of (i) the former British Indian provinces, (ii) the erstwhile princely states which were incorporated in the Indian Union after 1947, and (iii) the foreign administrations other than those of the British. Apart from these, the records of those Indian powers which were taken over by the British and their territories annexed are also an important source material for modern Indian history, for instance, the archives of the kingdom of Lahore (popularly known as *Khalsa Darbar* records from 1800 to 1849), now available in the Punjab State Archives at Patiala.

Written in Persian (the court language of Medieval India), the *Khalsa Darbar* records constitute a special source for the history of Punjab under Ranjit Singh and his successors, particularly the civil and military administration of the Lahore Kingdom. Another important collection of the pre-British public archives in India is the *Peshwa Daftar* covering the period from 1729 to 1818. Now housed in the Alienation Office, Pune, the *Peshwa Daftar* forms the most valuable single source for the study of Maratha history for a period of almost a century before the fall of the Peshwas, including state papers of the government of Peshwas, their correspondence with other Indian rulers and European powers or their functionaries, revenue accounts, accounts of expenditure, documents on rights and privileges, etc.

Records of Princely States

For studying the history of the erstwhile princely states and their relations with the British government, the defunct archives of these states are valuable. They are now found in the repositories of the various states in which the territories of the princes have been merged. For instance, the archives of the defunct state of Hyderabad, which is the richest and largest of this class of archives. The early records in this collection date back to the 17th century containing information on the civil and military administration of the Mughals in the Deccan. For studying the history of the princely states of Rajasthan, viz., Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur, etc., the archives of these states, now housed in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner, are valuable. Similarly the history of Dogra rule from 1846 in the state of Jammu and Kashmir can be studied in the valuable collection of state papers housed at Jammu. The important archival collections of Saurashtra states pertain to Rajkot, Junagarh, Jamnagar and Bhaunagar and the Baroda Record Office contains a large body of archives of Baroda state from 1724. The other significant archives of the princely states are those of Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal and Rewa, all in Madhya Pradesh, Travancore and Cochin in Kerala, Mysore in Karnataka and Kolhapur in Maharashtra.

Presidency Archives

The archives of the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay are the most important among the archives of the former British Indian provinces. The early records of Fort Williams were lost during the sack of Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1756, but the archives of the Bengal presidency after the British victory at Plassey (1957) have survived in more or less a complete series, which are partly available in the National Archives of India and partly in the State Archives of West Bengal. With the establishment of a separate government for Bengal, the revenue and judicial records were given to the new administration; the rest were taken over by the Government of India. The Bengal Revenue and Judicial series pertain to many areas now outside the West Bengal territorial limits. Like Bengal, the archives of Madras (now Chennai) deal with many areas now outside the erstwhile Madras state. The Madras archives possess materials of vital significance on the history of states like Travancore, Cochin, Hyderabad and Mysore. The records of the Governor and Council of Fort St. George begin from AD 1670. In these records there is copious evidence bearing on the rise of the English East India Company as a political power in the south and the Deccan, including the Anglo-French struggle and the English conflicts with other Indian powers.

Bengal Archives

Madras Archives

Bombay Archives

The archives of Bombay Presidency, now housed in the Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, Bombay (now Mumbai), are extremely useful in studying the history of Western India, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Sind and the Kannada-speaking districts of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency which were incorporated in Mysore in 1956. Among the Bombay records, the records of the first English factory at Surat form an important series, the earliest being an Outward Letter Book of the factory for AD 1630. The records of other factories and commercial residencies in western India, including Sind, are also available, though not in regular series. The records of the Governor and Council of Bombay are available from 1715. They are classified department-wise as in the case of Bengal.

Like the records of the three Presidencies, the archival collections of other states are valuable in reconstructing the history of different regions of India. In Uttar Pradesh, the government records belong mostly to the post-1857 period. Those of

the North Western Province and Awadh were lost during the revolt of 1857. The records of the former Central Provinces begin from 1861 and are held by the Madhya Pradesh government at present. Similarly, the Bihar Secretariat records begin from 1912 and those of Orissa from 1936 when it was separated from Bihar and constituted as a separate province. The Secretariat Record Office in Assam possesses a body of valuable archival material beginning from 1826, a main source for studying the history of Assam and the country's north-eastern frontier.

Archives of Other European Powers

The archives of the European possessions in India other than those of the British constitute another category of public records. The archives of Portuguese Goa, mainly belonging to the period from 1700 to 1900, are very valuable for the history of Portuguese possessions in India in particular and the history of Western India in general. The orders and despatches from Lisbon received at Goa and the responses and reports dispatched from India to Portugal constitute the most significant historical material among the Portuguese archives. The Dutch records of Cochin and Malabar are in the Madras Record Office and those of Chinsura in the state archives of West Bengal. The former are particularly rich in regard to information they contain about the Dutch relations with the Indian powers in Malabar. The French archives of Chandernagore and Pondicherry (now Puducherry) were taken over to Paris by the French authorities before they relinquished these settlements. Similarly the bulk of the archives of the Danish possessions were also transferred to Copenhagen when the Dutch sold Tranquebar and Serampore to the British East India Company in 1845. The remaining Danish records, mainly relating to Tranquebar during AD 1777-1845, are now housed in the Madras Record Office.

Records of Subordinate Authorities

Another class of valuable source material for modern Indian history are the public records emanating from intermediate and subordinate authorities in the Indian administration such as the Boards of Revenue, Financial Commissioners, Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors. These are available in all states either centralised in the state archives or in the record rooms of the various authorities. These records provide detailed evidence on local problems which is not available in the archives of the Secretariats of the states. The revenue records of different authorities are very useful for studying economic and social changes in India during the colonial rule, which can be properly studied only on regional basis. Useful information for economic enquiries region-wise is furnished by the settlement records. The village land-records provide detailed information on the changes in ownership of land and their effects on the rural communities, including the new trends in land ownership and their socio-economic implications.

Judicial Records

Judicial Archives

The judicial archives offer primary evidence on the development of judicial administration in India. These also provide significant data on the socio-economic condition of different classes of people. The archives of the Mayor's Court at Fort St. George, beginning from AD 1689, are the earliest available judicial archives. They are now housed in the Madras Record Office. The pre-Plassey (1757) records of the Mayor's Court at Fort Williams seem to have been lost; but those for the years 1757-73 are lodged in the record room of the Calcutta High Court along with the archives of the Supreme Court of Bengal, 1774-1861. Similarly, the records of the Mayor's Court at Bombay established in 1728 are available in the Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, which also has the custody of the archives of the Bombay Recorder's Court and the Supreme Court. Apart from containing the proceedings and minutes of the Mayor's Courts and Supreme Courts, this category of records contains copies of wills, probates, and letters of administration which are very useful for genealogical studies and for investigations pertaining to the state of society and economic conditions in the respective regions.

From the point of view of historical research, the judicial records of the Sadr Courts—Sadr Diwani and Faujdari Adalats—of the three Presidencies are most useful. These though fragmentary are preserved in the record rooms of the High Courts of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The High Court records of permanent value are available in the record rooms of these courts in the form of complete series.

Published Archives

Published archival materials constitute a very important source of information for constructing the history of modern India. The most significant of the archival publications are the Parliamentary Papers which include copious excerpts from the records of the East India Company and the Government of India under the Crown. An index of the Parliamentary Papers issued between 1801 and 1907 is available. The reports of the Parliamentary Select Committees appointed to examine Indian matters at different times also contain valuable material and so also the reports of various Royal Commissions constituted on specific subjects like education, civil reforms and famines. For an understanding of the attitude of the British towards the Indian problems, the Parliamentary Debates on the Indian empire are indispensable.

Parliamentary Papers

The record publications issued by the National Archives of India and various state archives are also very useful for the student of modern Indian history. The selections from the records of the Government of India and the different provincial governments, mostly issued during the second half of the 19th century, constitute a veritable mine of information on diverse questions of public interest. The annual administration reports issued by the Government of India, the provincial governments and other administrations form another important class of published archival material. The Settlement Reports, issued on the completion of the first survey and settlement operations in each district of British India, provide abundant information bearing on the social and economic life of the people. The proceedings of the Indian and provincial legislatures, the weekly Gazettes published by the Central and the provincial governments and collections of laws and regulations issued from time to time also serve as useful source material for historical research.

Record Publications

Private Archives

Private archives comprise papers and documents of individuals and families of note who played a significant role in the development of modern India, business and industrial corporations, and institutions, societies and associations devoted to political, social, religious, educational and cultural activities. Rich material pertaining to educational and cultural advancement of the country is available in the archives of old universities and educational institutions. The archives of banks, business houses and chambers of commerce are extremely useful in the study of economic changes. The papers of eminent leaders of the nationalist movement and the records of organisations like the Indian National Congress housed in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi are very useful in enriching the history of the Indian freedom struggle.

Value of Private Records

Archival Materials of Foreign Repositories

There is a vast body of historical material related to modern Indian history in the repositories abroad. For example, the archival and manuscript materials of Indian interest available in European repositories are varied and extensive. The India Office Records (Commonwealth Relations Office, London) includes several important archival groups which are not available in our country. These are: (i) the minutes of the Court of Directors and the General Court of the East India Company and various committees constituted from time to time, (ii) the Minutes and Correspondence of the Board of Control or the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India established in 1785, and (iii) the records of the Secretary of State and the India Council. Apart from these, the Records Section possesses the archives of some of the English factories in India. The India Office Library collection of the papers of several viceroys, secretaries of state and English statesmen connected with India, are extremely helpful in supplementing the original sources of Indo-British history. In the London-based Public Record Office, research scholars and historians of India can find several source material of interest in the records of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office. Many useful documents on imperial defence, military administration, foreign relations and internal developments can be found in the Cabinet Papers.

India Office Records

Several archival and manuscript repositories in Britain, especially the British Museum in London, possess in their custody collections of papers of

British viceroys, secretaries of states and other high ranking civil and military officials who served in India and whose usefulness can hardly be overestimated. Of special interest are the archives of missionary societies like the Church Missionary Society of London whose archives are full of information on the educational and social development in the country.

Records of British Museum

To study the history of the French in India, the rich resources of the Archives Nationale, Paris, and the Archives of the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Colonies and War are extremely useful. In the 'Nouvelles Acquisitions' series of the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, are a large number of papers of eminent Frenchmen who served in India or were otherwise connected with French possessions in our country. The voluminous records of the Dutch East India Company available in Rijksarchief, The Hague, are sufficient to write a comprehensive history of the Dutch in India. These records can be also used as primary sources for the economic history of India of the 17th and 18th centuries. The records of the Danish East India Company and those of the Danish Crown after 1777 pertaining to the Danish colonies in India, available at the Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, are the primary sources for information about the settlements of Tranquebar and Serampore. Similarly, the National Archives of Portugal, Lisbon houses a large collection of original letters pertaining to the Portuguese in India. Among the original sources of Indian history, Jesuit letters are of special significance as they provide a detailed account of the evangelising activities of the Christian missionaries. The Central Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome is the most prominent repository for these letters; but these are also found among the manuscript collections in the Vatican Library, the National Library, Lisbon, the National Archives of the Torre do Tombo, the Public Library of Evora, and some private libraries in Europe. To construct the history of nationalist activities of the Indians abroad, the archives of foreign offices of various countries are valuable. For instance, useful information on Indian revolutionaries in Europe are available in the records of the German Foreign Office and those on Indian revolutionaries in the USA are available in the archives of the country's State Department and Justice Department.

French and Dutch Records

Danish and Portuguese Records

However, the most significant and rich archival source for Indian history in this category pertains to the pre-1947 archives now located in Pakistan. Among these records the most important are the collections in the West Pakistan Record Office at Lahore, which, besides the records of the Punjab government from 1849, includes the records of the Delhi Residency and Agency from 1804 to 1857 and various Political Agencies that functioned in the Punjab in the pre-annexation period. The Record Office at Peshawar possesses the archives of the Commissioner of Peshawar, from 1849 to 1900, and those of the North West Frontier Province, from 1901. These records are valuable for studying the regional history of the Indian concontinent and they also provide useful information on India's relations with Afghanistan, Iran and the Frontier tribes.

Records in Pakistan

Though Sind became a separate province in 1836, its archives go back to 1831, when Henry Pottinger was deputed to the Court of Mir Murad Ali. The records from the time of 1847, when Sind became a part of Bombay Presidency, are abundant and rich in content and provide a comprehensive account of the history of the province.

BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS AND TRAVEL ACCOUNTS

There are many contemporary or semi-contemporary works such as biographies, memoirs and travel accounts which give us an interesting and useful glimpse into the history of India of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Many travellers, traders, missionaries and civil servants who came to India during these centuries have left accounts of their experiences and their impressions of various parts of the country. These accounts form a very useful source for the study of modern Indian history. The foremost among these group of writers were the missionaries who wrote to encourage their respective societies to send more missionaries to India for

Importance of Personal Records

evangelising its inhabitants. Some civil servants also represented this evangelical viewpoint. For instance, Sir John Shore and Charles Grant, both of whom had long served in Bengal, strongly supported the Christian missionaries and their activities. In fact, Charles Grant's *Observations* had a strong influence upon the missionary opinion. He urged the application of twin instruments of Christianity and western education to change, in his view, "a hideous state of Indian society". Bishop Heber's *Journal* contains a good deal of information on the state of 19th century India, including the economic conditions of the regions through which he travelled. Similarly Abbe Dubois's *Hindu Manners and Customs,* written during the period of decline of the Indian powers and the rise of the British, provides useful information on the socio-economic life of India during that period.

Travel Accounts

The travel accounts of some of the employees of the British East India Company are also very valuable. The accounts of George Forster, who in 1783 journeyed through Bengal, Lucknow, Srinagar, Nadaun, and over the mountains of Kashmir, returning to England by way of Kabul, the Caspian Sea and St. Petersburg, provide information on the political conditions of northern India. Benjamin Heyne's *Tracts, Historical and Statistical, on India, with journals of several tours through various parts of the Peninsula,* published in 1814, offers a fair idea of the economic products of the Peninsula during that period. In 1831, James Burnes published his remarks on the medical topography of Bhuj and his *Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sinde* that provides information on the history of Kachch. The accounts of Alexander Burnes—*Travels Into Bokhara*—describing his journey from India to Kabul, was published in 1834 in three volumes. This journey had the political motive of tracing the course of the Indus for the Company. Alexander Burnes's other work, *Cabool; Being a Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City in the Year 1836-37-38*, published in 1842, was also of strategic importance as it "in some degree… paved the way for the political enquirer". C.J.C. Davidson's *Diary of the Travels and Adventures in Upper India,* published in 1843, is also an useful work. John Butler's *Travels and Adventures* in the Province of Assam (1855) describes the customs, habits and memory of the hill tribes of the state. W.H. Sleeman's *Journey through the Kingdom of Oude* (1849-50) reflects the political and economic conditions of Awadh.

Accounts of Non-British Travellers

Besides the English, travellers from other European countries have also left behind interesting accounts. In this category comes Victor Jacquemont's *Letters from India describing a journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmeer during the years 1828-1829-1831*, which appeared in 1835. His account of Punjab and Kashmir, including his remarks on Ranjit Singh, is a document of importance. Jacquemont's letters give us a vivid description of several persons including Lord William Bentinck, Gulab Singh, Shah Shuja, William Prinsep, James Skinner, William Fraser, etc. Being critical of the English social life in India, Jacquemont deprecates the Englishmen's neglect to learn the Indian languages, and their lack of sympathy with the people of the country. The letters of Captain Leopold Von Orlich to his friends were translated by H. Evans Llyods and published in 1845 as *Travels in India including Sinde and the Punjab.* They present a good picture of the system of administration, justice and education in India. Leopold dwelt on the merits of the Anglo-Indian army, and also on the social life of the English officers and the Hindus in India. The English translation of the German edition of Baron Charles Hugel's travel accounts titled *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* was published in 1845. Baron Hugel who had met Ranjit Singh, gives us a vivid description of Lahore and the royal court. His work is very valuable for the study of the history of Kashmir and Punjab. Similarly, John Martin Honigberger's *Thirty-Five Years in the East* published in 1852 provides plenty of information on the history of Pubjab. Honigberger, who worked as one time physician at the Lahore Court, has depicted oriental character, and provided illustrations of Eastern manners, customs and intrigues. Another important work is *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir* by William Moorcroft and George Trebeck. Moorcroft, who came to India as a young veterinary surgeon, provides us a description of the chiefs and rajas of the hills of the Punjab, topography of the Punjab, Ladakh and neighbouring areas and their manufacturers and commercial products. These travel accounts are indispensable and reliable sources for constructing the history of modern India, especially as they supplement the official papers.

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

Newspapers and journals of the 19th and 20th centuries, published in English as well as in the different vernacular languages, constitute a very important and authentic source of information for the construction of modern Indian history. Some of the newspapers were published as early as the 1780s. The first attempts to publish newspapers in India were made by the disgruntled employees of the English East India Company who sought to expose the malpractices of private trade. In 1776, William Bolts, being censured by the Court of Directors for private trading, resigned from the Company and announced his intention to publish a newspaper by declaring that he had in his possession that too "in manuscript many things to communicate which most intimately concerned every individual". The reactionary official response to Bolts' scheme was strong and his plan ended in embryo. It was left to James Augustus Hickey to publish the first newspaper in India in 1780 entitled *The Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser*. Hickey's press was seized in 1782 owing to his outspoken criticism of government officials including the governor-general and the chief justice. However, subsequently, many publications appeared such as *The Calcutta Gazettee* (1784), *The Bengal Journal* (1785), *The Oriental Magazine of Calcutta,* also called *Calcutta Amusement* (1785), *The Calcutta Chronicle* (1786), *The Madras Courier* (1788) and *The Bombay Herald* (1789).

Early Newspapers

The newspapers and journals of the early period primarily aimed at catering to the intellectual entertainment of the Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Their circulation was very limited and there was hardly any danger of public opinion being subverted in India. The liberal policy of the Press Act of 1835, which continued till 1856, encouraged the growth of newspapers in the country. From the second half of the 19th century, many powerful newspapers appeared under distinguished and fearless journalists. Some of the publications were: *The Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* under the editorship of G. Subramaniya Iyer, *Kesari* and *Mahratta* under Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Bengalee* under Surendranath Banerjea, *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* under Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh, *Sudharak* under Gopal Krishna Gokhale, *Indian Mirror* under N.N. Sen, *Voice of India* under Dadabhai Naoroji, *Hindustan* and *Advocate* under G.P. Varma, *Tribune* and *Akhbar-i-Am* in Punjab, *Indu Prakash, Dnyan Prakash, Kal* and *Gujarati* in Bombay, and *Som Prakash Banganivasi* and *Sadharani* in Bengal were other noted newspapers of the time. Interestingly nearly one-third of the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress in 1885 were journalists. In fact, there hardly existed an eminent political leader in the country who did not possess a newspaper or was not writing for one in some capacity or the other.

Important Newspapers

Some of the newspapers and journals were also published abroad. For instance, Shyamji Krishnavarma published *Indian Sociologist* in London. Similarly, Madam Bhikaji Cama published *Bande Mataram* from Paris and Virendranath Chattopadhyay published *Talwar* from Berlin. In this context, *Ghadar* published as a mouthpiece of the Ghadar party from San Francisco during the second decade of the 20th century, and Taraknath Das's *Free Hindustan* published from Vancouver are significant journals. All these provide ample evidence and information on the revolutionary and nationalist activities in foreign countries.

Foreign Publications

[Please refer to the detailed list of newspapers and journals in the Appendix given at the end of the book for further information. Also refer to the section on Rise of Press in the chapter on Social and Cultural Developments.]

Newspapers shape public opinion and the reports published in them have a power over public imagination; they shape feelings and attitudes of people to the various events. Newspapers are a very significant source of modern Indian history and this can be ascertained from the fact that from the 1870s onwards these newspapers (both English and vernaculars) depict almost all aspects of life in colonial India till the present day without much discontinuity. The newspapers from the 1920s onwards meticulously tracked the major events during the nationalist struggle for independence under Gandhi, reported on his activities, and also represented what ordinary people thought of him.

Significance of Newspapers

However, newspaper accounts should not be seen

as unprejudiced. They were published by people who had their own political opinions and world views. These ideas shaped what was published and the way events were reported. The accounts that were published in a newspaper in London were bound to be different from the report in an Indian nationalist paper.

ORAL EVIDENCE

Oral history refers to the construction of history with the help of non-written sources. For example, personal reminiscence is one type of oral source. Oral sources allow historians to broaden the boundaries of their discipline. They help them to write richly textured, vivid accounts of what really happened in the past and how. However, many historians remain sceptical of oral history. They dismiss it because oral data seem to lack concreteness and the chronology they yield may be imprecise. Historians argue that the uniqueness of personal experience makes generalisation difficult: a large picture cannot be built from such micro-evidence, and one witness is no witness. They also think oral accounts are concerned with tangential issues, and that the small individual experiences which remain in memory are irrelevant to the unfolding of larger processes of history. Nevertheless, these sources are important as they help historians to corroborate their findings from other sources of history.

Oral History

CREATIVE LITERATURE

In the context of creative literature as a source of modern Indian history, we shall confine ourselves to the new literary forms which developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in India (both English and vernacular) under the influence of the West. The old literature in the vernacular languages consisted almost entirely of poetry and this old literature persisted through the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. Over time, this old poetical literature which bore the stamp of the mentality of a traditional age began to show the symptoms of an age of decline and there was a loss of freshness and a tendency towards repetition. The declining values appeared in the change from devotion (*bhakti)* to technique and virtuosity (*riti*). Under the influence of English literature in the 19th century, Indian poetry recaptured its freshness and there was experimentation with new forms like blank verse, the sonnet and the lyric. Above all, there was the exuberance of a new creative spirit that changed the very content of poetry. Another direction in which the creative spirit of the modern age manifested itself was the appearance of the stage. The setting up of the stage gave the impetus to the prolific growth of dramatical literature under the influence of both classical Sanskrit drama and the Western plays, especially those of Shakespeare. Further, under the influence of the West there emerged a completely new branch in Indian literature—novel and the short story—bringing in its wake a new social realism. All these works provide plenty of information on the lives of the people in colonial times.

Growth of New Literary Genre

The new trend in poetry which emerged after coming into contact with the European literature passed through two distinct phases: the phase of 'Romanticism' and the phase of 'Nationalism'. The former represented a particular attitude to nature and society whereas the latter's tone was essentially patriotic. At the beginning of the 20th century, Indian poetry witnessed the rise of Romanticism. Rabindranath Tagore was a herald of this movement, with Wordsworth and Shelley in English as its main source of inspiration. However, the difference between the poetry of the English Romantics and the Indian romantic poetry lay in the latter's inherent emphasis on anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism. In fact, the Indian romantic poetry was a vocal representation of the Indian struggle for independence. Some of the most prominent among them were: Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938) in Urdu, Nirala (1897-1961) in Hindi, Qazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) in Bengali, Keshavsut (1866-1905) in Marathi, and G. Shankar Kurup (b.1902) in Malayalam. Subramaniya Bharati (1882-1921), a distinguished Tamil nationalist poet, also belongs to the same period.

New Trends in Poetry

A new change came in the field of Indian poetry in 1936 as a result of the progressive writers' movement. The Progressive Movement appropriated certain aspects of the Romantic tradition, particularly that of social protest and the vision of an oppression-free world. It forsook the Romantic imagination,

freed itself from the notions of the bourgeois idealism and took to realism both in thought and language. The works of these poets are very valuable for understanding the ethos of colonial India.

Novels as Source

The most significant outcome of the Indo-European contact was the novel which emerged in the latter half of the 19th century. The first important writer of that period was the famous Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-94). His novels are mostly historical, the best known among them being *Anand Math* (1882), especially for its powerful national songs like '*Vandemataram*'. His last novel *Rajasimha* can be called the grand finale to his remarkable career. Icharam Suryaram Desai (1853-1912) was a fine scholar of medieval Gujarati literary history. His first novel *Hind ane Britanica* was one of the earliest Indian novels with political overtones. Tamil writers like Girija Devi and Ramatirtha Thammal, author of *Mohanra Rajani* (1931) and *Dasikalin Mosa Valai* (1936) respectively, also made the novel an effective vehicle of social experience. G.V. Krishna Rao's *Kilubommalu* (The Puppets, 1956) in Telugu was concerned about the moral aspects and behaviour of the rural people. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1910-1994) was one of the eminent writers in Malayalam whose famous novel *Balyakala Sakhi* (The Childhood Friends, 1944) was a tragic tale of love. Similarly, Thakazhi Siva Sankara Pillai became prominent for his two extremely well written works in Malayalam, *Tottiyude Makan* (Son of a Scavenger, 1948) and *Chemmin* (Shrimps, 1956). Despite having different educational background and social outlook, all these writers shared a strong sense of realism and deep interest in the life of the marginalised and oppressed sections of the society.

It was Premchand (1880-1936), a novelist and short story writer in Urdu-Hindi, who carved a distinct place for India in the world of fiction. He used novel as a medium of social change and his novels reflected the deep social concerns and understanding of the dynamics of Indian rural society. Among his novels numbering about a dozen, *Rangbhoomi* (1924) and *Godan* (1936) are immortal works. His works also included novels like *Sevasadan* (1919), *Premasram* (1924) and short stories like *Kafan, Poos Ki Raat, Shatranj Ke Khilari,* etc. The tradition of novel dealing with rural life was further accentuated by Phanishwarnath Renu's (1921-1973) *Maila Anchal* in Hindi and Bibhuti Bhushan Bandhyopadhyay's (1899-1954) *Pather Panchali* (1929), Gopinath Mohanty's Paraja in Odiya, Panna Lal Patel's *Makelajeet* in Gujarati, Bhal Chandra Nemade's *Kosla* in Marathi. Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's (1876-1938) novels talk about the middle class conflict in social and family life. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Qurratual Ain Haider's *Aag Ka Dariya* (1927) in Urdu and Yashpal's *Jhooth Sach* (1903-1973) talk about the partition of India as a historical tragedy. Anglo-Indian writers like Mulk Raj Anand in *Untouchable* (1935) and Raja Rao in *Kanthapura* (1938) recorded the social and political turmoil and transition. R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) represents a wonderful microcosm of India.

Short Story

In the field of short story writing, Rabindranath Tagore had emerged as an acclaimed writer. His stories include *Post Master* (1891), *Kabuliwala* (1892), etc., which emerged out of an authentic experience of rural India. Premchand's realistic stories mirrored the society and people's behaviour in it. Thakazhi Siva Sankara Pillai and Muhammad Basheer also wrote stories in Malayalam which represented life of the peasants and labourers, the teachers and factory workers, with vivid realism. Divakar Krishna Kelkar (1902-1973), N.S. Krishna Kelkar (1902-1973), N.S. Phadke and G.G. Limaye (1891-1971) were renowned Marathi short story writers. There were several others whose stories reflected the contemporary social reality of colonial India.

(Please refer to the section on Language and Literature in the chapter on Social and Cultural Developments for more details on creative literature.)

PAINTING

Painting as Source

Some information on the socio-economic, political and cultural life during the colonial period can be obtained from the paintings of that period. These can be used as a source for modern Indian history. One such school of painting was the "Company Paintings". The term 'Company Painting' has come to be used by anti-historians for a special type of Indian painting produced for Europeans which was heavily

influenced by European taste. Although many different Company styles evolved in different parts of India, the term covers a single phenomenon: an attempt by Indian artists to work in a mixed Indo-European style which would appeal to the Europeans who were employed by the various European East Indian Companies.

Growth of Company Painting

This was the time when the school of the Mughal and Rajput miniatures had declined, as there was a lack of patronage for these artists. Indian artists were recruited by the English East India Company for drawing blueprints for railway projects, and natural history surveys or freelancing for British civilians who wanted to take home souvenirs.

Apart from the officials and merchants of these companies, various other European travellers and adventurers made their way to India. The British soon found that the Indian subjects could be depicted far more accurately by Indian artists, to whom these subjects were familiar, than by themselves. So they hired Indian artists to paint for them. The direct influence of Europeans produced a new style of water colour painting including western perspective and shading.

Company or Patna School

Around 1760, many painters from Murshidabad migrated to Patna, now the capital of Bihar. By the end of the 18th century, Patna became the headquarters of one of the 11 areas of art centres into which the British East India Company divided Bengal. The Company School of Painting style is also known as Patna School. The Company School of Painting is known as such because its patrons belonged to the East India Company. Inspired by the trends, artist families in places such as Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Delhi, Murshidabad, Patna, Calcutta, Benaras (now Varanasi) and Lucknow, all produced paintings of subjects of local interest in distinctive local styles. Calcutta was among the important early production centres, as it was the site of one of the oldest British trade houses. The city's most enthusiastic patrons were Lord Impey, Chief Justice of the High Court from 1777 to 1783, and the Marquess Wellesley, who served as governor-general from 1798 to 1805. Both had collected large menageries and hired artists to paint each of the birds and animals in them. A Company-established botanical garden in Calcutta then undertook a similar project for the samples of plant life it had collected. Other influential painting centres were in Varanasi, a major Hindu pilgrimage site that drew many tourists, and Madras, where Lord and Lady Clive were stationed from 1798 to 1804. Delhi's market expanded after its occupation by the British in 1803. Delhi's magnificent Mughal monuments were the most popular subjects, and its artists were unique in using ivory as a base for painting. Other common subjects from this time were the residences, servants, carriages, horses, and other possessions that Company employees had amassed. Lady Impey was the patron of a number of such paintings.

Other Centres

While in the early phases of this school artists depended on a few key patrons, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, enterprising Indian artists had begun to create sets of standard popular subjects that could be sold to any tourist passing through the major attractions. Such sets depicted a range of monuments, festivals, castes, occupations and costumes of the subcontinent. These paintings offer a visual expression of life in contemporary India. Indians who worked for the British were also depicted in Company paintings. The images in these paintings serve as representations of ordinary people in India and show how they would have appeared during the 18th and 19th centuries. They also give a sense of the body language, clothing, ornaments and hairstyles that were associated with various occupations, such as *ayahs, lascars* and *soldiers.*

The British wanted images of everyday scenes such as the vendors at the market selling grain, fruits and vegetables. The paintings show that the markets of 1850 are very similar to the food markets in India today. Religious castes and occupations were also very popular subjects, especially in South India. People were usually depicted in pairs and both subject matter and style were influenced by the English representational water colour paintings and prints that were brought to India. Artists of the Company School gradually switched from heavy Indian opaque paints to light water colour paints. The bright colurs traditionally used in Indian miniature paintings were replaced with soft blue, green, and brown tones.

Company paintings can be used as historical documentation of origins of the people of India. Monuments and their surroundings as they were in the past can now only be visualised through these paintings. The Taj Mahal complex, as depicted in the 1830s, is situated among trees which can no longer be seen. Through these paintings we are able to have a glimpse of India of the 1800s through Indian eyes. Company paintings continued to be popular throughout the 19th century until the introduction of photography in India in the 1840s, which gradually took over.

Paintings on the Revolt of 1857

One important record of the great revolt of 1857 is the pictorial images produced by the British and Indians: paintings, pencil drawings, etchings, posters, cartoons and bazaar prints. The British pictures offer a variety of images that were meant to provoke a range of different emotions and reactions. Some of them commemorate the British heroes who saved the English and repressed the rebels. 'Relief of Lucknow', painted by Thomas Jones Barker in 1859, is an example of this type. When the rebel forces besieged Lucknow, Henry Lawrence, the commissioner of Lucknow, collected the Christian population and took refuge in the heavily fortified Residency. Lawrence was killed but the Residency continued to be defended under the command of Colonel Inglis. On September 25, 1857, James Outram and Henry Havelock arrived, cut through the rebel forces, and reinforced the British garrisons. About 20 days later Colin Campbell, who was appointed as the new commander of the British forces in India, came with his forces and rescued the besieged British garrison. In British accounts, the siege of Lucknow became a story of survival, heroic resistance and the ultimate triumph of British power. Barker's painting celebrates the moment of Campbell's entry. Another painting of this period, 'In Memoriam' by Joseph Noel Paton painted two years of the revolt of 1857. One can see English women and children huddled in a circle, looking helpless and innocent, seemingly waiting for the inevitable—dishonour, violence and death. 'In Memoriam' does not show gory violence; it only suggests it. It stirs up the spectator's imagination, and seeks to provoke anger and fury. It represents the rebels as violent and brutish, even though they remain invisible in the picture. In the background, one can see the British rescue forces arriving as saviours. These paintings of the mutiny period are important for the historian to interpret and understand the worldviews of the British and the Indians regarding this major event.

Art Schools

Shortly after 1857, art schools were founded in Bombay, Calcutta and Madars. Their teaching methods and syllabi were modelled after the British Royal Academy practices. Indian students started handling new art materials like oil colour on canvas and water colour on paper, and they became familiar with art practices like drawing and painting from the models in the 'studios'. While the first few generations of Indian artists started mastering European art materials and techniques, some deeper changes took place in the thinking of the English-educated urban middle class in India. There was an increasing awareness of the negative consequences of the British rule.

Influence of Nationalism on Art

The initial inspiration of the new kind of Indian art produced in the last decades of the 19th century was nationalist and patriotic—a search for the past artistic heritage and the desire to create 'Indian art' distinct from the kind of art Indian students were taught at art schools. This new art movement received its primary stimulus from emerging nationalism, from its desire to create a truly national art as against the foreign art. Artists like Nandalal Bose and Raja Ravi Varma were representatives of this new trend. In the rise of the Bengal School led by Abanindranath Tagore (nephew of Rabindranath Tagore), E.B. Havell (who joined the art school in Calcutta as principal) and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (son of an important Tamil political leader in Sri Lanka) played a vital role. The Bengal School had a great flowering of talent at Santiniketan, where Rabindranath Tagore had set up the Kala Bhavan. Though most of the paintings of this new trend primarily focused on themes of Indian methodology and cultural heritage, they are important sources for studying the modern art movement in India and for the art historians.

MAJOR CONCERNS IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historiography refers to the history of historical writing or historical interpretation. History is not information that is handed down unchanged from generation to generation. Historical situations need to be explained and explanations draw on analyses of the evidence, providing generalisations that derive from the logic of the argument. With new evidence or fresh interpretations of existing evidence, a new understanding of the past can be achieved. But interpretations have to conform to the basic requirements of using reliable evidence, analytical methods and arguments based on logic. Following from these, a sensitivity is needed towards the ways in which people from earlier times led their lives and thought about their past. Historiography therefore becomes a prelude to understanding history as a form of knowledge.

Importance of Historiography

Interpretations frequently derive from prevalent intellectual modes. These constitute shifts in the way history is read. Looking at how histories are written is part of the study of intellectual history of the period under discussion and can therefore be vibrant with ideas and explanations. The starting point in the history of a society, therefore, has to be a familiarity with its historiography—the history of historical interpretation. This provides recognition of the intellectual context of history, instead of setting this aside with a preference for just a narration of events. Familiarity with the context encourages a more sensitive understanding of the past. This awareness of historiography has contributed substantially to the change in understanding Indian history over the latter half of the 20th century.

We shall discuss the historiography of modern India in terms of some of the leading 'schools' of history in India since the beginning of the 19th century. When we talk of schools in historiography we group together various historians on the basis of some common traits: characteristics may be shared by a number of historians in this manner due to many reasons. Sometimes it is what we call the influence of the times, i.e., the fact that people sharing a common historical experience may tend to have a unity of approach. More often this unity of approach may be due to common interests of a class or a status group. A third source of a common approach to history may be due to ideological inclinations—which of course is not unconnected with perceptions of community of interests.

There are broadly four schools of history—the Colonial (or the imperialist), Nationalist, Marxist, and Subaltern—which have their distinct characteristics and modes of interpretation. However, there are two other schols of historiography—Communalist and Cambridge—which have influenced historical writings on modern India. For the major part of the 19th century the colonial school occupied a hegemonic position in India. The Colonial school focused upon the benefits of British rule while the Nationalist school pointed to the exploitative and oppressive aspects of British imperialism. The Marxist school focused upon the class exploitation that accompanied colonial exploitation. The Subaltern school, which emerged in the early 1980s, rejected all earlier existing historiography as 'elitist' and promised to write a 'new' history from the point of view of the common people based on people's own consciousness. The Communalist historians (Hindu and Muslim) distinguished themselves from the others by emphasising overwhelmingly on the differences which allegedly made it inevitable that India would be divided on communal lines; in some writings of the colonial historians, the Communalist point of view was anticipated or reinforced. The Cambridge school was characterised by what was represented as a 'revisionist' approach, critical of the Nationalist school in particular, and sometimes reviving the old ideas of the 19th and early 20th century colonialist point of view. However, the so-called Cambridge school historians often displayed a diversity in their approach and interpretative framework and one may well wonder if they ever constituted a 'school' in a rigorous sense of the term. We shall discuss all these schools separately and make a critique of them in detail.

Schools of History

Colonial Historiography

The term 'colonial historiography' has been used in two senses. One relates to the history of the colonial countries, while the other refers to the

works which were influenced by the colonial ideology of domination. It is in the second sense that most historians today write about the colonial historiography. In fact, the practice of writing about the colonial countries by the colonial officials was related to the desire for domination and justification of the colonial rule. Hence, in most such historical works there was criticism of indigenous society and culture. Simultaneously, there was praise for the western culture and values and glorification of the individuals who established the colonial empires.

The histories of India written by James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vincent Smith and many others are pertinent examples of the colonial historiographical trend. These historians established the colonial school of historiography which denigrated the subject people while praising the imperial country. In such accounts, India was depicted as a stagnant society, as a backward civilisation and as culturally inferior while Britain was glorified as a dynamic country possessing a superior civilisation and advanced science and technology. However, it is not correct to homogenise all of British historical writings as uniformly colonial, since different approaches and interpretative frameworks developed within the colonial school in the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Certain characteristics common to most of the works of this school were the following:

Colonial Historians

Features

(i) An 'Orientalist' representation of India was common, promoting the idea of the superiority of modern western civilisation; this is a theme recently brought into prominence by Edward Said and others, but the Indian nationalist intelligentsia had identified and criticised this trend in British writings from James Mill onwards.

(ii) The idea that India had no unity until the British unified the country was commonly given prominence in the historical narratives; along with this thesis the idea that the 18th century in India was a 'dark age' full of chaos and barbarity until the British came to the rescue, was propagated.

(iii) The notions of Social Darwinism were adopted by the British historians of the late 19th century about India; this implied that if history is a struggle between various peoples and cultures, akin to the struggle among the species, Britain having come to the top could be *ipso facto* legitimately considered to be superior and as the fittest to rule.

(iv) India was viewed as a stagnant society, arrested at a stage of development; it followed that British rule would show the path of progress to a higher level; hence the idea that India needed Pax Britannica.

(v) In historical narratives the mythification of heroic empire builders and 'Rulers of India' was part of the rhetoric of imperialism; as Eric Stokes has remarked, in British writings on India, the focus was on the British protagonists and the entire country and its people were just a shadowy background.

(vi) Initially, colonial historiography displayed a critical stance towards the national movement in India since it was perceived as a threat to the good work done by the British in India. At a later stage when the movement intensified the attitude became more complex, since some historians showed plain hostility while others were more sophisticated in their denigration of Indian nationalism.

In general, while some of these characteristics and paradigms are commonly to be found in the discourse of colonial historians, it must be pointed out that in the course of the first half of the 20th century historiography outgrew them or, at least, presented more sophisticated versions of them.

The basic idea embedded in the tradition of colonial historiography was the paradigm of a backward society's progression towards the pattern of modern European civil and political society under the tutelage of imperial power. The guiding hand of the British administrators, education combined with 'filtration' to the lower orders of society, implantation of such institutions and laws as the British thought Indians were fit for, and protection of Pax Britannica from the threat of disorder nationalism posed among the subject people—these were the ingredients that were felt as needed for India to make slow progress. Sometimes this agenda was presented as "the civilising mission of Britain".

In essence, colonial historiography was part of an ideological effort to appropriate history as a means

of establishing cultural hegemony and legitimising British rule over India.

Nationalist Historiography

The nationalist historiography developed as a response to and in confrontation with colonial historiography. It was an effort to build national self-respect in the face of colonial denigration of Indian people and their historical record. The historians of this school tried to prove the falsity of colonial historical narrative on the basis of analysis of existing historical sources, as also a hunt for fresh sources. The nationalist approach to Indian history can be described as one which tended to contribute to the growth of nationalist feeling and to unify people in the face of religious, caste, or linguistic differences or class differentiation.

Nationalist Approach

Nationalist historiography mainly dealt with the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history. It hardly existed for the modern period as it came into being mainly after attainment of independence. No school of nationalist historians of modern India existed before 1947. This was in part because, in the era of nationalism, to be a nationalist was also to be an anti-imperialist, which meant confrontation with the ruling, colonial authorities. This was impossible for academics since the educational system was controlled by the colonial authorities. Consequently, a history of the national movement or of the colonial economy did not exist. This of course does not completely explain the absence of nationalist historiography before 1947. After all, a sharp and brilliant critique of the colonial economy of India and its impact on the people was developed by the Indian economist during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A detailed and scientific critique of colonialism was developed in the last quarter of the 19th century by non-academic nationalist economists like Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi, R.C. Dutt, K.T. Telang, G.K. Ghokhale, and D.E. Wacha. In the first half of the 20th century, several 'academic economists' such as K.T. Shah, V.C. Kale, C.N. Vakil, D.R. Gadgil, Gyan Chand, V.K.R.V. Rao, Wadia and Merchant followed their footstep. This critique formed the core of the nationalist agitation in the era of mass movements after 1920 under the leadership of Gandhi. However, their critique did not get reflected in history books of the period. That happened only after independence and that too in the 1960s and thereafter. A few historians who referred in passing to the national movement and nationalist historians after 1947 did not see it as an anti-imperialist movement. Similarly, the only history of the national movement that was written was by nationalist leaders such as R.G. Pradhan, A.C. Mazumdar, J.L. Nehru and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Post-independence historians accepted the legitimacy of nationalism and the Indian national movement but very rarely dealt with its foundation in the economic critique of colonialism. They also tended to underplay, while not ignoring completely, other streams of the nationalist struggle.

Nationalist Economists

There were two conflicting views about the state of nationhood of India among the modern historians. Some of them like Tara Chand held that India had been a nation-in-the-making since the 19th century while others argued that India had been a nation since the ancient times. However, all of them accepted India's diversity, i.e., its the multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and therefore multi-cultural character. Nationalist historians also ignored or severely underplayed inner contradictions of Indian society based on class and caste or the oppression of and discrimination against women and tribes. They also ignored the movements against class and caste oppressions. They often indulged in a blind glorification of the national movement, seldom making a comprehensive analysis of the national movement. While adopting a secular position and condemning communalism, they did not make a serious analysis of its character or elements, causation, and development. They very often saw communalism as an outcome of the divide and rule policy of the British.

Conflicting Views

The nationalist historiography did give due space to the social reform movements but did not take a critical look at them, and often ignored the movements of the lower caste and tribal people for their emancipation. They often suffered from an upper caste and male chauvinist cultural and social bias. They tended to accept the theory of Indian exceptionalism that Indian historical development was entirely different

Limitations of Nationalist School

from that of the rest of the world. They missed a historical evaluation of Indian social institutions in an effort to prove India's superiority in historical development. One of the most notable weaknesses of the nationalist historiography was the acceptance of James Mill's periodisation of Indian history into Hindu and Muslim periods which proved harmful both for the study of India's history and the political development of modern India. As a whole, this school neglected economic, social and cultural history and at the most attached a chapter or two on these without integrating them into the main narrative.

Marxist Historiography

Marxism considerably influenced most of the trends of Indian historiography in some way or the other. In all fields of Indian history, whether we divide it by periods or by topics, the Marxist historians have made significant contributions. In several areas, their works have changed the course of historiography. Unlike the imperialist/colonial school, the Marxist historians clearly see the primary contradiction between the interests of the colonial masters and the subject people, as well as the process of the nation-in-the-making. Unlike the nationalists, they also take full note of the inner contradictions between the different sections of the people of the Indian society. However, some of them, particularly Rajni Palme Dutt, were unable to fully integrate their treatment of the primary anti-imperialist contradiction and the secondary inner contradictions and tended to counterpose the anti-imperialist struggle to the class or social struggle. They also tend to see the national movement as a structured bourgeois movement, if not the bourgeoisie's movement, and miss its open ended and all-class character.

Influence of Marxist School

The beginning of Marxist historiography in India was heralded by two classic books—Rajni Palme Dutt's *India Today* and A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism.* Originally written for the famous Left Book Club in England, *India Today* was published by Victor Gollancz in 1940 and its Indian edition was published in 1947. In his preface to a new edition of the book in the 1970s, Dutt was aware of its limitations and realised that it "can now only be regarded as a historical work of its period, constituting a survey from a Marxist standpoint of the history of British rule in India and of the development of the Indian people's struggle, both the national movement and the working class movement, upto the eve of independence, as seen at that time". Despite the book's limitations, however, its position as a foundational text of Marxist thinking on Indian history has not diminished over time. Dutt has applied Marxist analysis to various developments in the colonial economy, to the problems of peasantry, to the national movement, including communal problems, thereby covering comprehensively most aspects of Indian society, economy and politics under the British rule. At many levels, *India Today* reinforces the nationalist criticism of the economic impact of colonial rule in India. Although strident in its criticism of the colonial rule, the book views colonialism both as a 'destructive' and a 'regenerative' force, following Karl Marx's own comments on this issue. However, Dutt categorically stated that this 'regenerating' role of colonialism was limited and that the situation had been reversed in his own times.

R.P. Dutt and A.R. Desai

R.P. Dutt's 'India Today'

For Dutt, colonialism and capitalism in India were solely responsible for the poverty of the country. The process of plundering the resources of India started quite early and was responsible for funding the capitalist development in Britain and other European countries. Dutt's division of the entire period of imperialist rule in India into three phases, i.e., the period of mercantile capitalism (1750s to 1813), industrial capitalism (1813 to 1860s) and finance capitalism (post-1860 period), with certain modifications, has been conventionally accepted by the Marxist historians. Dutt's view on the revolt of 1857 is that it was in its essential character and dominant leadership the revolt of the old conservative and feudal forces and dethroned potentates—a view supported by several Marxist historians even today. He traces the beginning of the Indian national movement from the last quarter of the 19th century. According to Dutt, the Indian National Congress arose from the "preceding development and beginnings of activity of the Indian middle class"; it was brought into existence as a safety-valve through British official initiative. He writes about Hume's role (the founder of INC) and his alarm at the impending rebellion in detail.

"Hume then contacted the colonial government officials and pleaded with them to help establish the Congress to prevent an open rebellion against the British rule that was apparently brewing." Dutt writes: "the National Congress was in fact brought into being through the initiative and under the guidance of direct British governmental policy, on a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy, as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling".

However, the Congress soon grew out of its original subservient nature under the influence of populist nationalist feelings. It gradually became a strong anti-colonial force and started leading people's movement against the colonial regime. Dutt's analysis of Indian nationalism was based on its varying class base over the years. Thus "in its earliest phase Indian nationalism… reflected only big bourgeoisie—the progressive elements among the landowners, the new industrial bourgeoisie and the well-to-do intellectual elements". Then emerged the urban petty bourgeois class in the years preceding the First World War (1914-18) who made its aspirations felt. It was only after the War that the Indian masses—peasantry and the industrial working class—made their presence felt, Dutt says.

Dutt maintained that the leadership remained in the hands of the propertied classes who were quite influential in the Congress. These elements, in order to save their own interests, were averse to any radicalisation of the movement and, therefore, tried to scuttle it. Dutt is particularly harsh on Gandhi whom he castigates as the "Jonah of revolution, the general of unbroken disasters… the mascot of the bourgeoisie" for trying "to find the means in the midst of a formidable revolutionary wave to maintain leadership of the mass movement". He cites the example of the suspension of mass movements like the non-cooperation movement and the civil disobedience movement during their agitational heights by Gandhi, saying the masses were becoming too militant (posing a thrust to the propertied classes within and outside the Congress).

Dutt criticises the so-called 'dual role' or 'dual nature' of the Congress and writes: "This twofold character of the National Congress in its origin is very important for all its subsequent history. This double strand in its role and being runs right through its history: on the one hand, the strand of co-operation with imperialism against the 'menace' of the mass movement; on the other hand, the strand of leadership of the masses in the national struggle. This twofold character, which can be traced through all the contradictions of its leadership, from Gokhale in the old stage to his disciple, Gandhi, in the new … is the reflection of the twofold or vacillating role of the Indian bourgeoisie, at once in conflict with the British bourgeoisie and desiring to lead the Indian people, yet fearing that 'too rapid' advance may end in destroying its privileges along with those of the imperialists."

This foundational statement of Marxist historiography on the Indian National Congress influenced most of the subsequent works of Marxist historians on nationalism in some measure.

A.R. Desai

Another thoroughgoing Marxist account of the colonial period and the rise of nationalism was A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism,* first published in 1948. As Sumit Sarkar writes in the 'Foreword' to a new edition of the book in 2000: "For fifty years, it has served generations of students all over the country as an introduction to modern Indian history, and one which for many also provided a highly accessible illustration of Marxist historical method." This classic book provides a synoptic account of the various aspects of economy, society and politics in colonial India in a single volume.

The book particularly focuses on the rise of Indian nationalism. Desai traces the growth of the national movement in five phases, each phase based on particular social classes which supported and sustained it. In the first phase, "Indian nationalism had a very narrow social basis" which was pioneered by the intelligentsia who were the product of the modern system of education introduced by the British. Considering Raja Rammohan Roy and his followers as the 'pioneers of Indian nationalism', Desai says the first phase ended in 1885 with the foundation of the Indian National Congress. The second phase heralded by the Congress extended till 1905, when Bengal was partitioned by Curzon in that year. The national movement during this phase represented "the interests of the development of the new bourgeois society in India". An educated middle class emerged due to the introduction of

modern western education and the development of the Indian and international trade gave rise to a merchant class. Similarly, a class of industrialists also emerged with the development of modern industries in India. During the second phase, the Indian national movement "voiced the demands of the educated classes and the trading bourgeoisie such as the Indianisation of services, the association of the Indians with the administrative machinery of the state, the stoppage of economic drain, and others formulated in the resolutions of the Indian National Congress".

The third phase of the national movement covered the period from 1905 to 1918 during which "the Indian national movement became militant and challenging and acquired a wider social basis by the inclusion of sections of the lower-middle class". During the fourth phase (1918 to 1934), the social base of the national movement was enormously enlarged. The movement "which was hitherto restricted mainly to upper and middle classes, further extended… to sections of the Indian masses". But Desai points out that the Congress leadership remained in the hands of those who were under the strong influence of the Indian capitalist class. During this phase, two other significant developments were the rise of the socialist and communist groups since the 1920s, which tried to introduce pro-people agenda in the national movement, and the consolidation of the communalist forces which sought to divide the society.

The fifth phase (1934-39) in Desai's scheme, beginning from end of the civil disobedience movement till the outbreak of the Second World War, was marked by growing disenchantment with the Gandhian ideology within the Congress and further rise of the socialists who represented the petty bourgeois elements. There were various other movements—those of the peasants, workers, the depressed classes and linguistic nationalities taking place outside the Congress. However, according to Desai, all these stirrings were not of much consequence and the mainstream was still solidly occupied by the Gandhian Congress which represented the dominant classes' interests.

These two books, particularly *India Today* of R.P. Dutt, laid the foundation of Marxist historiography on modern Indian history. The view which these two books propagated, that the Indian national movement was mostly dominated by the bourgeoisie and that although various classes, including the peasantry and the working classes, participated in it, its basic character remained bourgeois, was recently criticised by some historians. These historians, for example, Bipan Chandra, who broadly analysed the national movement within the Marxist perspective, disagrees with the Marxist paradigm established by R.P. Dutt. Bipan Chandra pleads for according a certain autonomy to ideas as significant vehicle of action and change. Even though he accepts that "social relations exist independently of the ideas men form of them", he feels that "men's understanding of these relations is crucial to their social and political action". Moreover, Bipan Chandra argues that the intellectuals in any society stand above the narrow interests of the class in which they are born. It is "sheer crude mechanical materialism" to sort out the intellectuals only on the basis of their class of origins. It is because the intellectuals are guided "at the level of consciousness, by thought and not by interests". Thus, Bipan Chandra argues, the Indian nationalist leaders were also, as intellectuals, above the interests of the narrow class or group they were born in. This does not mean, however, that they did not represent any class. He says these leaders did represent class interests, but this was done ideologically and not for personal gain.

Views of Bipan Chandra

On the basis of his analysis of the economic thinking of the early nationalist leaders, Bipan Chandra points out that their overall economic outlook was "basically capitalist". He believes that "in nearly every aspect of economic life they championed capitalist growth in general and the interests of the industrial capitalists in particular". However, this does not mean that the early nationalist leaders were working for the individual interests of the capitalists. In fact, the capitalist support for the Congress in the early phase was negligible. Nationalist support for industrial capitalism derived from the belief of the nationalists that "industrial development along capitalist lines was the only way to regenerate the country in the economic field, or that, in other words, the interests of the industrial capitalist class objectively coincided with the chief national interest of the moment". Hence, Bipan Chandra abandons the instrumentalist approach espoused by Dutt and Desai. This was

a major change in perspective in the Marxist historiography of the national movement in India.

However, despite this change in perspective, Bipan Chandra remained anchored to several points within the paradigm developed by R.P. Dutt. Many of his arguments resembled those of Dutt and Desai. Firstly, he interprets the "peaceful and bloodless" approach of struggle adopted by the nationalist leadership as "a basic guarantee to the propertied classes that they would at no time be faced with a situation in which their interests might be put in jeopardy even temporarily". This understanding of non-violence was the same as that of Dutt and Desai. Secondly, the relationship between the Indian masses and the nationalists always remained problematic for the Moderate leaders, the masses had no role of play. Even the Extremists, despite their rhetoric, failed to mobilise the masses. Although during the Gandhian phase the masses were brought into nationalist fold, they were not politicised and the lower classes of agricultural workers and poor peasants in most parts of country were never politically mobilised, "so that the social base of the national movement was still not very strong in 1947". And even when they were mobilised, the masses remained outside the decision-making process and the gulf between them and the leaders was 'unbridged'. Thirdly, the nationalist leaders in all phases of the movement stressed that the process of achievement of national freedom would be evolutionary, and not revolutionary. The basic strategy put forward to achieve the goal of independence would be pressure-compromise-pressure. It meant pressure would be brought upon the colonial rulers through agitations, political work and mobilisation of the people. When the authorities were willing to offer concessions, pressure would be withdrawn and a compromise would be struck. The political concession offered by the colonial government would be accepted and put into effect. After this, the Congress should prepare for another agitation to gain new concessions. It is in this phased, non-violent manner that several political concessions would be taken from the British and this process would lead ultimately to the liberation of the country. On the basis of his analysis of the ideology, strategy and social base of the political struggle, Bipan Chandra concluded that the nationalist movement as represented by the Congress was "a bourgeois democratic movement, that is, it represented the interests of all classes and segments of Indian society vis-à-vis imperialism but under the hegemony of the industrial bourgeoisie".

Bipan Chandra, in a later book, *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947,* published in 1988, decisively moved away from the views of Dutt and Desai on Indian national movement. In this book, co-authored with some other like-minded scholars, Bipan Chandra applies the Gramscian perspective to study the national movement. There has been a revision of most of his propositions regarding the Indian National Congress. The strategy of the Congress is no longer seen in terms of pressure-compromise-pressure; instead it is viewed in terms of the Gramscian notion of 'war of position' whereby a prolonged struggle is waged for the attainment of goals.

Bipan Chandra writes: "The Indian national movement … is the only movement where the broadly Gramscian theoretical perspective of a war of position was successfully practised; where state power was not seized in a single historical moment of revolution, but through prolonged popular struggle on a moral, political and ideological level; where reserves of counter-hegemony were built up over the years through progressive stages; where the phases of struggle altered with 'passive' phases." (*India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947)*

The national movement was not overtly violent because the nationalist leaders were seized of the twin agenda of forging the people of India into a nation and undermining the colonial hegemony. The nationalist leaders wanted and tried to expose the two important myths about the British colonial rule that it was beneficial to the Indians and that it was invincible. Bipan Chandra now considers the notion of Gandhian non-violence in this light when he says: "It was not … a mere dogma of Gandhiji nor was it dictated by the interests of the propertied classes. It was an essential part of a movement whose strategy involved the waging of a hegemonic struggle based on a mass movement which mobilised the people to the widest possible extent". (*India's Struggle for Independence, 1957-1947)*

The nationalist struggle for independence is now conceived as an all-class movement which provided space and opportunity for any class to build its hegemony. Moreover, the Congress which led "this

struggle from 1885 to 1947 was not then a party but a movement".

Bipan Chandra criticises the various schools of historiography on modern India for their failure to address the central contradiction in colonial India which was between the Indian people and the British colonialism. Although he still considers that "the dominant vision within the Congress did not transcend the parameters of a capitalist conception of society", he has made a clear break from the conventional Marxist interpretation of the Indian national movement and it appears that any study of Indian nationalism has to take his fresh views into consideration.

Another Marxist historian who made a critique of Dutt's paradigm was Sumit Sarkar. Contrary to the assertion by Dutt that the moderate phase was dominated by the 'big bourgeoisie' while the extremist phase by the 'urban petty bourgeoisie', he thinks that "a clear class-differential between moderate and extremist would still be very difficult to establish and was obviously non-existent at the leadership level". He says that, Dutt's version of Marxist interpretation suffers from the "defect of assuming too direct or crude an economic motivation for political action and ideas". In his first book, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* (1973), Sarkar terms Dutt's paradigm as a "simplistic version of the Marxian class-approach".

Views of Sumit Sarkar

Sumit Sarkar prefers to analyse the actions of the nationalist leaders by using Trotsky's concept of 'substitutism' whereby the intelligentsia acts "repeatedly as a kind of proxy for as-yet passive social forces with which it had little organic connection". Sumit Sarkar also uses Gramscian categories of 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals. According to Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist scholar and activist, the 'organic' intellectuals directly participate in the production-process and have direct links with the people whom they lead. On the other hand, the 'traditional' intellectuals are not directly connected with either the production-process or the people. However, they become leaders of particular classes by ideologically assuming the responsibility of those classes. According to Sarkar, the leaders of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal "recruited overwhelmingly from the traditional learned castes, and virtually unconnected after the 1850s with commerce or industry … may be regarded perhaps as a 'traditional' intelligentsia in Gramsci's sense". This view is quite close to that of Bipan Chandra in which he emphasises the role of ideology in the formation of the early nationalist leaders. Sumit Sarkar, however, considers that even though the nationalist leaders were not directly linked with the bourgeoisie, they "objectively did help to at least partially clear the way for the independent capitalist development of our country".

Subaltern Historiography

The subaltern studies is the title given to a series of volumes initially published under the editorship of Ranajit Guha, the prime mover and the ideologue of the project. This school of thought began in the early 1980s as a critique of the existing historiography which was accused by its initiators for ignoring the voice of the people. Right from the beginning, subaltern historiography took the position that the entire tradition of Indian historiography has had elitist bias. For the subaltern historians, the basic contradiction in Indian society in the colonial epoch was between the elite, both Indian and foreign, on the one hand, and the subaltern groups, on the other, and not between colonialism and the Indian people. They believe that the Indian people were never united in a common anti-imperialist struggle, that there was no such entity as the Indian national movement. Instead, they assert that there were two distinct movements or streams, the real anti-imperialist stream of the subalterns and the bogus national movement of the elite. The elite streams, led by the 'official' leadership of the Indian National Congress, were little more than a cloak for the struggle for power among the elite.

Ranjit Guha

Bipan Chandra says, "The subaltern school's characterisation of the national movement bears a disturbing resemblance to the imperialist and neo-imperialist characterisation of the national movement, the only difference being that, while neo-imperialist historiography does not split the movement but characterises the entire national movement in this fashion, 'subaltern' historiography first divides the movement into two and then accepts the neo-imperialist characterisation for the 'elite' stream. This approach is also characterised by a generally ahistorical glorification of all forms of popular militancy and consciousness and an equally ahistorical contempt for all forms of initiative

and activity by the intelligentsia, organised party leaderships and other 'elites'. Consequently, it too denies the legitimacy of the actual, historical anti-colonial struggle that the Indian people waged." (*India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947)*

However, the subaltern school, which initially promised to write a history from the point of view of the common people based on the people's own consciousness, has not tapped new sources that may be more reflective of popular perceptions; its 'new' writing continues to be based on the same old 'elite' sources.

OTHER HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRENDS

Communalist Historiography

Unlike nationalist historians who countered colonial stereotypes, communalist historians based themselves almost entirely on colonial historiography of medieval India and colonial era textbooks. Most of the generalisations made by Indian communalist historians can be traced to the writings of British historians and administrators.

Influence of Colonial Historiography

In the communalist view, India's medieval history was one long story of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Hindus and Muslims were permanently divided into hostile camps whose mutual relations were bitter, distrustful, antagonistic and hostile. There existed distinct and separate Hindu and Muslim cultures. Because of their belonging to different religions, Hindus and Muslims formed distinct and exclusive and mutually hostile cultural and political communities. This view was not only reflected in the writings of the historians but it also found a more virulent form in the hands of the communal political leaders.

Secondly, the view that in medieval India Muslims constituted the ruling class and the Hindus were the ruled, the dominated or 'the subject race', was propagated. As a corollary of this view, it was then argued that the 19th- and 20th-century Muslims had the 'happy' and 'proud' everpresent memory of having been the ruling class, while Hindus had the 'sad' and 'humiliating' memory of having been the subject race.

The Cambridge School Historiography

The Cambridge school of historians believed that the Indian society during the colonial period was basically characterised by horizontal and vertical divisions and that the Indian politics was marked by factional rivalries among the local and regional bosses. Thus, for them, the fundamental contradiction under the colonial rule was not between imperialism and the Indian people, but between the Indians themselves. Moreover, the Cambridge School historians say that the Indian nationalism was not the product of the struggle of the Indian people against colonial exploitation, but between the Indians for getting the benefits given to them by the British rulers. The leaders of the national movement were not inspired by great ideas but were after power and material benefits, they argued. This school of thought has been criticised by many historians on the grounds that it takes mind out of human behaviour and reduces nationalism to 'animal politics'.

Refuting Indian Nationalism

Liberal and Neo-Liberal Interpretations

The revaluation of imperialism began in the 1980s. Scholars like Cain and Hopkins (1993), Patrick O' Brien (1988), and Davis and Huttenback (1986) began to question some of the staunchly-held views of the Marxist and left-liberal intelligentsia about the nature of colonialism. According to their view, British colonialism was not as exploitative as it was perceived to be by the left-nationalist viewpoint. The proponents of this trend of historiography argued that the economic exploitation of the colonies was not beneficial to the British people as a whole. The availability of markets for British industrial goods in the colonial world and capital investment in overseas markets (like laying of railways in India) might have discouraged domestic investment and delayed the development of the 'new' industries in Britain. O' Brien in his book, *Past* and *Present* (1988), went so far as to argue that Britain would have been better off, if it had abandoned its colonies in 1846 as free traders like Cobden and Bright had been arguing at that time.

Feminist Historiography

Almost all the major trends in historiography starting from colonial to subalterns failed to note the actual status, role, position and contribution of women in history. These trends made no attempt to move into the field of the modes of social reproduction while continuing to explore modes of production where class and gender could be combined for a connection between gender structures, ideologies, and social and economic power structures. The shift in terms of the writing of women's history might be attributed to the women's movement of the 1970s which provided the context and impetus for the emergence of women's studies in India. Tanika Sarkar has pointed out that women's history as a sustained and self-conscious tradition started from the 1970s since many feminist scholars were themselves involved in the vigorous and turbulent movements against rape, dowry and domestic violence. The year 1975, celebrated as the International Women's Year, set off a wave of women's studies, beginning with works like *Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity* edited by B.R. Nanda. Very soon, women's history broadened out and assumed the more complex shape of gender history. In the past, during the colonial period, two works based upon the women's question in India attracted international attention. Highly critical of the condition of the Indian women, these two works were: *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1887), written by Pandita Ramabai, and *Mother India* (1927), written by Katherine Mayo. Other works related to the status and position of women in Indian civilisation were written by B.C. Law (*Women in Buddhist Literature,* published in 1927), I.B. Horner (*Women under Primitive Buddhism*, published in 1930) and A.S. Altekar (*The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization from the Prehistoric Times to the Present,* published in 1938).

Views

- "Day after Day, hundreds of sharp-witted *babus* pour forth their indignation against their English oppressors in very pungent and effective diatribe… In this way there can be no doubt there is generated in the minds of those who read these papers… a sincere conviction that we are all of us the enemies of mankind in general and of India in particular."

  —**Lord Dufferin** *(on the contents of Newspapers in 1886)*
- "The production of histories of India has become very frequent in recent years and may well call for some explanations… The reason is a two-fold one: changes in the Indian scene requiring a reinterpretation of the facts and changes in the attitudes of historians about the essential elements of Indian history."

  —**Percival Spear**
- "A few historians have of late initiated a new trend, described by its proponents as subaltern, which dismisses all previous historical writing, including that based on a Marxist perspective, as elite historiography, and claims to replace this old, 'blinkered' historiography with what it claims is a new people's or subaltern approach."

  —**Bipan Chandra**

Summary

- **Archival Materials**
  - (i) Archives, public as well as private, form the most valuable source material for the study of modern Indian history.
  - (i) The archives of the Government of India, mostly deposited in the National Archives of India in New Delhi, provides official records from the mid-18th century till the present day.
  - (ii) Archives of the state government comprises records of the former British Indian provinces, the erstwhile princely states and foreign administrations other than those of the British and also those of Indian powers overtaken by the British.
  - (iii) The archives of the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay are especially very useful.
  - (iv) Judicial records are very valuable as they constitute archives of judicial courts which serve as primary sources for studying the development of judicial administration in India.

(v) Private archives comprise the papers and documents of individuals and families of note who played a significant role in the development of modern India.

(vi) The archival materials of foreign repositories offer varied and extensive records useful for constructing the history of modern India, for example, the Indian Office Records in London.

(vii) Some significant archives pertaining to the pre-1947 period are available in Pakistan, for instance, the Record Office at Lahore.

► **Biographies and Memoirs**

The accounts of travellers, traders, missionaries and civil servants during the 18th and 19th centuries provide interesting insight and useful information on the contemporary period.

► **Newspapers and Journals**

(i) The newspapers and journals which appeared during the colonial period from the 1780s onwards provide a large body of information on all aspects of the then society without much discontinuity.

(ii) Some of these were published abroad such as the *Indian Sociologist* in London, *Bande Mataram* in Paris, *Talwar* in Berlin and *Ghadar* in San Francisco.

► **Oral Evidence**

Oral sources and data help historians and writers broaden the boundaries of their discipline though these oral sources seem to lack concreteness and their chronology is not precise.

► **Creative Literature**

(i) New forms of literature which emerged in the colonial period under the influence of western literature reflect the socio-economic, political and cultural landscape of the period.

(ii) The new trend in poetry passed through two distinct phases of Romanticism and Nationalism.

(iii) Another significant development was the development of the novel. The most eminent novelists whose works are useful as sources of modern Indian history were Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Premchand, etc.

(iv) There were several short story writers whose writings reflected various aspects of the colonial milieu.

► **Painting**

(i) The most important school of painting during the colonial period was the Company School of painting which provides visual images of the contemporary period.

(ii) Some European paintings of the Great Revolt of 1857 are also equally important.

(iii) Many new developments occurred in the field of painting after 1857 and a new trend in Indian art developed in the last decades of the 19th century which was nationalist and patriotic in content.

(iv) The Bengal school of painting led by Abanindranath Tagore and others primarily focused on themes like Indian mythology and cultural heritage.

► **Concerns in Modern Indian Historiography**

(i) The colonial school of historiography represented by historians and writers like James Mill, Elphinstone, V.A. Smith and others depicted India as a stagnant society and backward civilisation while at the same time projecting their own country, Britain, in glorious hues. This school tends to justify the British colonisation of India.

(ii) The nationalist school, on the other hand, refuted the claims of the colonial school and based its arguments on the central theme of British exploitation of India. The main weakness of this school is that it tended to underplay the inner contradictions of Indian society.

(iii) The Marxist school of historiography considerably influenced the art of history writing in India. The Marxist historians addressed the basic weaknesses of the colonial as well as

Summary

the nationalist school of historiography. They recognised the primary contradiction between imperialism and the Indian people, as well as the process of the nation-in-the-making. They also took full note of the inner contradictions of Indian society.

(iv) The communalist historiography which was based on colonial historiography of medieval India saw Hindus and Muslims as two distinct groups that were permanently divided into hostile camps.

(v) The Cambridge School sees and highlights the contradiction between the Indians themselves and not between imperialism and the Indian people.

(vi) The subaltern school of historiography which developed in the 1980s under Ranajit Guha accused all existing historiography as 'elitist', that is, which ignored the voice of the people. Though it claimed to write a 'new' history based on people's own consciousness, it has not succeeded in its venture.

(vii) Liberal and Neo-liberal school of historiography began in the 1980s in England. According to this school, the British rule in India was not as exploitative as propagated by the left-nationalist oriented historians. The proponents of this school were Patrick O' Brien, Cain, Hopkins and Huttenback.

(viii) The feminist historiography in India started in the era of 1970s which got the impetus from the women's movements. This school of historians attempted to move into the field of the modes of social reproduction while continuing to explore modes of production where class and gender could be combined for a connection between gender structures, ideologies, and social and economic power structures.

CHAPTER 2

Advent of the Europeans in India

THE PORTUGUESE

Arrival

Although European travellers had been coming to India in the centuries prior to the arrival of Vasco Da Gama in India in the late 15th century, the dropping of anchor by three ships under Vasco Da Gama near Calicut on May 17, 1498 profoundly affected the course of Indian history. Coming for the express purpose of doing business, the Europeans' hidden agenda apparently was to convert the Indians to Christianity and to monopolise the enormously profitable Eastern trade by excluding their competitors, mainly the Arabs. The Hindu ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin, however, had no apprehensions as to their intentions. As the prosperity of his kingdom was due to Calicut's position as an entrepot, he accorded a friendly reception to Vasco Da Gama and his party. The Arab traders, on their part, did whatever they could to thwart the progress of their new rivals. Vasco Da Gama thereafter visited Cochin and Cannanore, returning to Lisbon later in August 1499.

Advent of Vasco Da Gama

The timing of the arrival of the Portuguese in India helped them immensely in securing the Eastern trade. In Egypt, the Turks would soon begin to threaten the Mamelukes, while in Persia, a new regime was still building up its strength. Excepting Gujarat, ruled by the powerful Mahmud Begarha, the entire North India was much divided among many small powers. In the Deccan, the Bahmani Kingdom was breaking up into smaller kingdoms. None of the powers had a navy worth its name, nor did they think of developing their naval strength. In the Far East, the imperial decree of the Chinese emperor limited the navigational reach of the Chinese ships. As regards the Arab merchants and ship-owners who until then dominated the Indian Ocean trade, they had nothing to match the organisation and unity of the Portuguese.

Favourable Conditions for the Portuguese

Actually, 15th century Portugal looked with envy on the prosperity of Venice (an Italian state) and made all possible efforts to obtain a share in her profitable trade. As the Arab conquest of Egypt and Persia in the seventh century definitely closed the direct communication between Europe and India, merchandise from the East went to the European markets through Muslim intermediaries. Venice enjoyed the monopoly of this commerce from the Orient, thereby acquiring enormous wealth and influence. Prince Henry, the Navigator of Portugal, devoted his entire life to finding a sea route to India, and when he died in 1460, his enterprising captains had already sailed up to the mouth of the river Senegal in West Africa. But the circumnavigation of Africa could only be accomplished when Bartholomew Diaz, who fortuitously was impelled by a storm to go round the Cape of Good Hope, sailed up the eastern coast, and was sufficiently convinced that the long sought out route to India had at last been found. Though he returned to Lisbon in December 1488, it was after a gap of nearly 10 years that Vasco Da Gama embarked on his voyage to India. Upon Vasco Da Gama's trium-

Challenge to Venetian Trade Monopoly

Bartholomew Diaz and Cabral

phant return to Lisbon, the king of Portugal sent out a much larger fleet comprising of 13 ships and 1,200 men under Pedro Alvarez Cabral (the discoverer of Brazil) along with Bartholomew Diaz. But Cabral picked up a fight with the Arabs at Calicut, offending the Zamorin. Cabral left Calicut securing merchandise at Cochin and Cannanore. He returned to Lisbon making enormous profits.

"These early enterprises emboldened the Portuguese to think of diverting to themselves the entire trade of the East with Europe. The king of Portugal was ambitious enough to assume at this time the title of 'Lord of the Navigation'. A well-equipped fleet was organised under the command of Vasco Da Gama for trade and conquests. He arrived at Calicut in October 1502. His relations with the Zamorin were far from friendly. In their ambition to gain exclusive commercial supremacy in the Eastern seas, the Portuguese were bent on depriving the merchants of other nations, mainly the Arabs, of the benefits of trade and even molested them. On November 3, Vasco Da Gama sailed for Cochin and established a factory there." *The Gazeteer of India*, Volume Two, Publication Division, Government of India)

Rupture with Zamorin

The Zamorin, in fact, declined to exclude the Arab merchants in favour of the Portuguese when Vasco Da Gama combined commercial greed with ferocious hostility and wreaked vengeance on such Arab shipping as he could find. His rupture with the Zamorin thus became total and complete. Thereafter, a new era in the history of Portuguese India began in 1505, when the king of Portugal appointed a governor in India for a three-year term and equipped the incumbent with sufficient force to protect the Portuguese interests. Francisco De Almeida, the newly appointed governor, was asked to consolidate the position of the Portuguese in India and to destroy Muslim trade by seizing Aden, Ormuz and Malacca. He was also advised to build fortresses at Anjadiva, Cochin, Cannanore and Kilwa. What Almeida, however, encountered along with the opposition of the Zamorin, was a threat from the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt. Egged on by the losing merchants of Venice whose lucrative commerce was now at risk due to the Portuguese interference, the Egyptians raised a fleet in the Red Sea to stop the same. De Almeida, who had fought the Moors in North Africa, was quick enough to rise to this challenge. However, in 1507, the Portuguese squadron was defeated in a naval battle off Diu by the combined Egyptian and Gujarat navies, and Almeida's son was killed. Next year, Almeida avenged his defeat by totally crushing the two navies and declared triumphantly: "As long as you may be powerful at sea you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore."

De Almeida

Strategy for Expansion

Albuquerque—The Empire Builder

Alfonso de Albuquerque, who succeeded Almeida as the Portuguese governor in India, had a much bigger strategy. He wanted to establish a Portuguese empire in the East, a task he completed before his death. He secured for Portugal the strategic control of the Indian Ocean by establishing bases overlooking all the entrances to that sea. There were Portuguese strongholds in East Africa, off the Red Sea, at Ormuz; in Malabar; and at Malacca. Strongly-built, ocean-going Portuguese ships patrolled the waters and terrorised the feeble Arabian ships. They further bolstered their stranglehold by introducing a permit system for other ships and exercising control over the major ship-building centres in the region. The non-availability of timber in the Gulf and Red Sea regions for ship-building also helped them in their objectives. It was with effortless ease that Albuquerque acquired Goa in 1510, the principal port of the Sultan of Bijapur which became 'the first bit of Indian territory to be under the Europeans since the time of Alexander the Great'.

Acquisition of Goa

Malacca—A Strategic Centre

Trade from China and Japan, along with the valuable spices from Moluccas or Spice Islands, passed through the Straits of Malacca at that time. The town of Malacca, on the coast of the Malay Peninsula with its good harbour, was naturally the principal emporium for this trade. As Singapore was then in the lap of the future (it became operational only in the nineteenth century), control of Malacca was absolutely essential in order to dominate this vast and diverse trade. In 1511, Albuquerque took the city in fighting that lasted for just nine days; the Portuguese held it for the

next 130 years. Albuquerque's prophecy that "if we take this trade of Malacca out of their hands, Cairo and Mecca will be entirely ruined, and to Venice will no spices be conveyed, except what her merchants go to buy in Portugal" was thus fulfilled for a length of time.

Attack on Aden

Trading posts in the Spice Islands were established next. Having secured Malacca, Albuquerque thought of crippling the Arab trade by an attack on Aden in 1513. Though he was not successful his purpose was helped to some extent due to the threat posed by the Ottoman Turks to the Egyptians. Anyway, the raids on Arab shipping continued, which helped the Portuguese to exercise control over the approaches to Aden for some years.

Ormuz

Ormuz, which was a close rival of Malacca at that time as a centre of international trade, provided Albuquerque a foothold in the Persian Gulf. Before his death in 1515, he overran Ormuz and built a fortress there. The Portuguese held Ormuz upto 1622 when the Persians drove them out with the help of English ships from Surat. This also brought in the decline of the port of Ormuz, and its trade passed on to the neighbouring port of Bandar Abbas.

"Bitter persecution of Muslims was one serious drawback of Albuquerque's policy. This could have been due to his resolve to further the interests of his countrymen by complete extinction of Muslim commercial interests in the East. During his rule, Albuquerque did his best to strengthen the fortifications of Goa and enhance its commercial importance. In order to secure a permanent Portuguese population in India he encouraged his men to take Indian wives." (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

It was the Portuguese Crown which pushed forward the exploration of the African coast and encouraged and financed Vasco Da Gama's exploratory voyage to India despite stiff opposition. So, it was the Crown which claimed all the credit for the success of the venture. And, in consequence, also assumed the sole responsibility for issuing directions, both commercial and political. However, a division of authority, and especially the institution members of the great and wealthy religious orders and other clerics somewhat checkmated this control. Furthermore, the union of Portugal with Spain (1580-1640) led to an increase in the control of interests. Nevertheless, some good was done by the *Conselho da India* founded in 1604, but the generally prevailing financial crisis in the seventeenth century hampered the administration.

Portuguese Administration in India

"In India the head of the administration was the viceroy who served for three years, with his secretary and in later years, a council. His authority was at times weakened by conflicts with the ecclesiastical authorities, by having no say in appointments, and by preoccupation with the lining of his own pockets. Next in importance came the *Vedor da Fazenda,* responsible for revenues and the cargoes and dispatch of fleets. The fortresses, from Africa to China, were under captains, assisted by factors, whose power was increased by the difficulties of communication and was too often used for personal ends. Indeed the lack of control from Portugal and Goa when combined with the union of political and commercial control in a single office was a perpetual threat to honest administration." (V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*).

Nino da Cunha

The viceroyalty in India of Nino da Cunha who assumed office in November 1529 was also to some extent important. One year later, he shifted the headquarters of the Portuguese government in India from Cochin to Goa. Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, during his conflict with the Mughal emperor Humayun, secured help from the Portuguese by ceding to them in 1534 the island of Bassein with its dependencies and revenues. He also promised them a base in Diu. However, Bahadur's relations with the Portuguese became sour when Humayun withdrew from Gujarat in 1536.

Relations with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat

Since the inhabitants of the town started fighting with the Portuguese, Bahadur wanted to raise a wall of partition. Opposing this, the Portuguese started negotiations, in course of which Bahadur was invited to a Portuguese ship and killed. Da Cunha also attempted to increase Portuguese influence in Bengal by settling many Portuguese nationals there with Hooghly as their headquarters.

When Vasco Da Gama came on his voyage to India, the Portuguese navy led the world in the rig of ships, navigational techniques and gunnery. Their efforts to send some 800 ships to the East in the beginning of the sixteenth century, as also later, was remarkable. However, they faced no serious competition which led to a deterioration in the quality of their seamanship, particularly the ships that they constructed. The ships were now poorly-designed and unwieldy. As a consequence, the number of ships lost at sea rose alarmingly. Many sailors died aboard the ships, and at the start of each voyage fresh crews had to be recruited. While the Portuguese showed declining standards of seamanship, the Dutch and the English went on perfecting their ocean navigational techniques. As the army in Portugal could not be used in India due to the opening up of another empire in Brazil, recruitment for the Portuguese army in India itself was the only option available. No doubt, some troops came from Portugal, but reliance was placed on those who had married in India and settled here. Albuquerque was the first to recognise the strength which such settlers had commanded and encouraged mixed marriage during his tenure.

Decline of Portuguese seamanship

Religious Policy and its Implications

The Moors were the bitter enemies of the Portuguese in North Africa. Arriving in the East, the Portuguese brought with them the same zeal and hostility to persecute all Muslims. However, commercial interests gradually became predominant in India, and the Portuguese motives had always been mixed. "So, though the Portuguese Crown had been made by the Pope patron of all churches and missions in the Indies, it was not until the advent of the Jesuits in 1542 that any great missionary activity was displayed." Anyway, the good work done by the Jesuits and the Mendicant Orders was to a large extent undone when the Inquisition (a judicial institution for the persecution of heresy by special ecclesiastical courts) was introduced in Goa after 1560. It was in the court of Akbar that the Jesuits made a good impression, which helped the Portuguese to gain some advantage.

The Jesuits

Akbar met European Christians, namely some Portuguese merchants, for the first time, when he visited Cambay in 1572. The following year, at Surat, he had a meeting with them again, when Antonio Cabral, the envoy from the viceroy at Goa, came to adjust the terms of peace. Sometime later, Akbar became deeply interested in questions of religion and theology, and acquired from father Julian Pereira, the vicar general of Bengal, as also some other sources a rather imperfect knowledge of the Christian religion. This made him eager to get more accurate information, and Antonio Cabral, who visited him again at the Mughal capital in 1578, also could not answer all his questions satisfactorily. Akbar then decided to get theological experts from Goa who would be in a position to resolve his doubt and set to rest his intense curiosity. Accordingly, in September 1579, Akbar forwarded a letter to the authorities at Goa requesting them "to send two learned priests capable of instructing him in the doctrines of the Gospels. He assured his expected guests the most honourable reception and effectual protection." The church authorities in Goa eagerly accepted the invitation, seeing in it the chance to convert the emperor to Christianity, and with him his court and the people.

Akbar and the Portuguese

Jesuit fathers, Rodolfo Aquaviva and Antonio Monserrate, both members of the Society of Jesus, were the two principal missionaries selected for the purpose. They were remarkable men, eminently suitable for their tasks ahead. While father Aquaviva was well-known for his asceticism, Monserrate, a man of much learning, was sent to keep a record of the history of the mission. This he did by writing an excellent Latin treatise which is regarded as one of the principal source books on the reign of Akbar. The priests travelled long, via Daman, Surat and through the wild Bhil country of Khandesh, then Malwa, Marwar, Gwalior and Dholpur, finally arriving at Fatehpur Sikri on February 28, 1580. They were received with extraordinary honour, and the ten-year-old Prince Murad was made over to Monserrate for instruction in Christian morals and the Portuguese language. Aquaviva and Monserrate went back in 1583, belying the hopes Goa entertained of Akbar's conversion to the Christian faith. The second mission called by Akbar in 1590 also ended on a similar note in 1592. The third mission, again invited by Akbar, arrived in 1595 at Lahore (where

Aquaviva and Monserrate

the court was residing then) and continued as a sort of permanent institution, thereby extending its influence on secular politics. Fathers Jerome Xavier and Emanuel Pinheiro were the leaders of the mission, and their letters from the court became very widely known for the information they provided on the latter part of Akbar's reign.

"The missionaries, although they did not succeed in converting either the sovereign or his nobles, or indeed in making converts of any kind, won from Akbar the right to make converts if they could, and obtained from him extraordinary privileges. Both he and his son Salim (future Jahangir) professed veneration for the Virgin Mary and the Christian images. It is clear that the attention lavished upon the priests was not the outcome of genuine religious fervour, but was dictated chiefly by the desire to secure Portuguese military help. Akbar in 1600 made special efforts to obtain the loan of the foreigner's superior ordnance for the siege of Asirgarh, which he could not breach with his own guns." (*The Oxford History of India*)

While the father was contemplating borrowing the Portuguese guns to overcome his difficulties, the son (Prince Salim), meditating rebellion against Akbar, was planning to secure Portuguese military help for the purpose. Religion was of no concern to them. Dropping all pretence, Akbar sent a final embassy to Goa in 1601 for military assistance. The Portuguese authorities in Goa politely rebuffed it, having been aware of the game from the beginning. The Jesuits, on their part, brought in patriotic politics with missionary zeal and tried to gain as much advantage as possible. Acting as the unofficial agents of the Portuguese (or the Spanish, as Portugal was at that time attached to Spain), the Jesuits wielded considerable influence in the Mughal court. The Englishman John Mildenhall, seeking some favours from Akbar, visited him in the last few years of his life—an event that attests to the strong Portuguese influence.

Political motive behind Patronage to Christians

Prince Salim, on ascending the throne as Jahangir, assuaged the Muslims by neglecting the Jesuit fathers as if he had never known them. Gradually, however, his temporary estrangement from the Jesuits ended, and in 1606 he again renewed his favours to them. The elegant and spacious church at Lahore was allowed to be retained by them along with the collegium or the priests' residence. In 1608, twenty baptisms were carried out in Agra, the priests publicly acting with as much liberty as in Portugal. Jahangir was given a copy of the Gospels in Persian while he was on his way to Kabul. Upon his return to Agra, Jahangir took two of the priests with him, leaving one of them at Lahore to look after the church and the Christians. Church processions with full Catholic ceremonials were allowed to parade the streets, and cash allowances were paid from the treasury for church expenses and the support of the converts.

Jahangir and the Portuguese

Jahangir's conduct was such that the Jesuit priests were hopeful of bringing him within the Christian fold. He showed an extraordinary liking for pictures of religious subjects from the Old and New Testaments and the *Lives of the Saints*. His throne at Agra was surrounded by paintings of John the Baptist and other saints. Similarly decorated were the halls and rooms of the royal palace. It was rumoured that Jahangir had become a Christian and the priests had reasons enough to believe that they would be able to actually make him one. In 1607, Jahangir expressed the wish to send an embassy to the king of Spain, but was finally persuaded to send it to the viceroy of Goa. Father Pinheiro accompanied the ambassador Muqarrab Khan who was a keen sportsman and an intimate friend of Jahangir.

Hostility to the English

Muqarrab Khan had to wait long before he could meet the Portuguese viceroy. When the envoys reached Goa in April 1608, they could not present their credentials (as the viceroy designate had not arrived). In fact, he never arrived, and Don Mendosa in Goa took charge in 1609. Before that, in 1608, Captain William Hawkins of the ship Hector had come to Surat. He brought with him a letter from James I, King of England, to Jahangir requesting for permission to do business in India. Father Pinheiro and the Portuguese authorities did their best to prevent Hawkins from reaching the Mughal court, but did not succeed. Jahangir accepted the gifts Hawkins brought for

Visit of Captain Hawkins

him which were valued at 25,000 gold pieces, and gave Hawkins a very favourable reception. As Hawkins knew the Turki language well, he conversed with the emperor in that language without the aid of an interpreter. Pleased with Hawkins, Jahangir appointed him as a mansabdar of 400 at a salary of Rs 30,000 (apparently, he never received it). Hawkins was also married to the daughter of an Armenian Christian named Mubarak Shah (Mubarikesha).

This grant of trading facilities to Hawkins and other Englishmen was regarded by the viceroy of Goa, Don Mendosa, as infringing on the commercial monopoly claimed by the Portuguese, and therefore a hostile act. Considering the Portuguese in India as being at war with Jahangir, Mendosa refused to see Muqarrab Khan, the Mughal envoy. As that precipitate action greatly affected the merchants and their businesses, Jahangir withheld his concessions to the Portuguese. Mendosa then asked Father Pinheiro to negotiate with Muqarrab Khan the terms of peace on an official basis. The hostilities were stopped thereafter, and English ships were not allowed in the port of Surat. A baffled Hawkins left the Mughal court in 1611, unable to counter the Portuguese intrigues or check the vacillating imperial policies.

Mughal-Portuguese Patch-up

The English, however, retaliated against the Portuguese in 1612, which also marked the entrance of British naval forces into Indian waters. In November of that year, the English ship *Dragon* under Captain Best along with a little ship, the *Osiander,* successfully fought a Portuguese fleet comprising of four huge galleons in addition to other ships. Jahangir, who had no navy worth its name, learnt of the English success and was greatly impressed. The Portuguese then offended Jahangir by a foolish act. V.A. Smith says that in 1613, the Portuguese used their naval superiority as compared with the weakness of the Mughal government to seize four of the imperial ships, imprisoning many Muslims, and plundering the cargoes. The principal ship plundered was called *Remewe*, and it was said to have carried millions of treasure and two women bought for the emperor. Jahangir's mother had a large interest in the cargo, and lost heavily. An enraged Jahangir ordered Muqarrab Khan, the then incharge of Surat, to obtain compensation.

Anglo-Portuguese Tussle

"The Portuguese acts of piracy resulted in war with the imperial government, whose officers attacked Daman. All accessible Portuguese residing in the Mughal dominions were seized, and even Father Jerome Xavier was sent in custody to Muqarrab Khan 'to do with him as he shall see good.' The public exercise of the Christian religion was forbidden and the churches were closed. The Portuguese were still in 'deep disgrace with the king and people' early in 1615 when William Edwards from Surat arrived at court bearing a letter from King James I." (*The Oxford History of India*).

It was during the reign of Shah Jahan, however, that the advantages which the Portuguese enjoyed in the Mughal court were lost forever, as also the hopes of converting the royal family and Mughal India which had been somewhat encouraged by the welcoming accorded to the Portuguese and their religion by Akbar and Jahangir. Portuguese misbehaviour had been known to Shah Jahan even before his accession. When they dared to offend Queen Mumtaz Mahal by detaining two slave girls whom she claimed, Shah Jahan felt compelled to take action against them.

Shah Jahan and the Portuguese

On the basis of an imperial farman circa 1579, the Portuguese settled down on a river bank which was a short distance from Satgaon in Bengal to carry on their trading activities. Over the years, they strengthened their position by constructing big buildings which led to the migration of the trade from Satgaon to the new port known as Hooghly. They monopolised the manufacture of salt, built a custom house of their own and started enforcing strictly the levy of duty on tobacco, which had become an important article of trade since its introduction at the beginning of the 17th century. By such actions, they caused heavy losses to the collection of provincial customs revenue. Had they confined themselves to money-making only, perhaps they would have been left undisturbed. "The Mughal officers were so little skilled either in sieges or naval matters that they would have been disposed to submit to the loss of revenue rather than fight the foreigners, who were well-armed and experts in the management of ships." (*The Oxford History of India*)

Activities of the Portuguese

The arrogant Portuguese not only made money as traders but also started a cruel slave trade by purchasing or seizing Hindu and Muslim children, whom they brought up as Christians. In course of their nefarious activity, they seized two slave girls of Mumtaz Mahal as mentioned earlier. Shah Jahan thereupon instructed the governor of Bengal, Qasim Khan, to deal with the Portuguese severely and throw them out. Preparations for the action were started in 1631 and went on till June 1632. On June 24, 1632, the siege of Hooghly began, ending in its capture three months later. Situated on the open plains on the banks of the Ganga, the town was exposed on all sides. It had no fort, neither wall nor rampart, only a mud embankment of little value and no strength. Afraid of the Portuguese skill in gunnery and ship navigation, Qasim Khan is said to have engaged an army of 1,50,000 for the attack on the settlement. For exactly three months until September 24, the garrison of 300 Portuguese and 600 native Christian soldiers resisted the siege, after which they fled down the river. Most of the ships were lost, but a few managed to reach the Sagar Island where an epidemic killed most of the survivors. The Mughals suffered a loss of 1,000 men, but also took 400 prisoners to Agra. The prisoners were offered the option to convert to Islam or slavery. The persecution of Christians continued for some time after which it died down gradually. An eyewitness account of the events was written by the Spanish friar, Manrique and the priest, father John Cabral.

Capture of Hooghly

Decline of the Portuguese

The local advantages gained by the Portuguese in India were reduced with the emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia and North India and the rise of the turbulent Marathas as their immediate neighbours. (The Marathas captured Salsette and Bassein in 1739 from them.) The religious policies of the Portuguese such as the activities of the Jesuits gave rise to political fears and the Inquisition practised generated hatred of persecution. Rampant corruption, greed and selfishness made the administration weak, but the system worked even then and still produced wealth. It was, however, the Dutch and the English with their wider resources and bigger compulsions to expand overseas, who destroyed the Portuguese. V.A. Smith writes: "The follies of King Sebastian's North African campaign, the embroilment in Spain's campaigns in Europe, and after 1624, the drain of men to defend Brazil and Africa against the Dutch—all these successively weakened Portugal's ability to resist. The leakage of information about the route to the Indies to the Dutch and English, who were learning ocean navigation off Newfoundland or in the White Sea, destroyed an earlier monopoly of knowledge." (*The Oxford History of India*). All things considered, Portugal was too small a nation to be the "Lord of the Seas", a title the Pope conferred upon it on the discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco Da Gama.

Factors for Portuguese decline

Actually, the Dutch and the English almost in unison contested the Portuguese claim on the monopoly of Eastern trade. From the time these two powers appeared as contestants of the Oriental commerce in the beginning of the 17th century, the Portuguese were unable to resist their advances effectively. One after the other the Portuguese settlements fell into the hands of their rivals. Goa, which remained with them, was often blockaded by the Dutch. Furthermore, the importance of Goa as a port went down after the fall of the Vijayanagara empire in 1565 and it really did not much matter in the seventeenth century who was in possession of the port of Goa.

Rise of Dutch and English

By the 18th century, the Portuguese in India lost their commercial influence, though some of them still carried on trade in their individual capacity and many took to piracy and robbery. This decline (of the Portuguese) was brought about by several factors. The religious intolerance of the Portuguese caused resentment; this was heightened with the arrival of Franciscan missionaries in AD 1517. Goa became the centre of an immense propaganda. Their dishonest trade practices also evoked a strong reaction. The discovery of Brazil diverted colonising activities of Portugal to the West. The union of the two kingdoms of Spain and Portugal in 1580-81, dragging the smaller kingdom into Spain's wars with England and Holland, badly affected Portuguese monopoly of trade in India. Finally, the Portuguese failed to compete successfully with the other European trading companies who came to India after them. During the first half of

the 17th century, the contest was triangular—between the Portuguese and the Dutch, between the Portuguese and the English and between the Dutch and the English." (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

THE DUTCH

Brief Passage

Compared to the English, the French and the Portuguese, the Dutch presence in India was somewhat brief. Traders of those three European nations came to do business and then stayed on acquiring dominions, the English even an empire. Either by design or by accident, the Dutch traders from the beginning wanted to capture the Spice Islands' trade. Having done that, they created their dominion in Batavia or the Dutch East Indies and carried on commercial operations from there.

It was commercial enterprise which led the Dutch "to undertake voyage to the East. Cornelis de Houtman was the first Dutchman who, after doubling the Cape of Good Hope, reached Sumatra and Bantam in 1596. This gave the Dutch much encouragement for further enterprise, and in course of the next few years new companies for the Indian trade were formed. These were amalgamated by the States-General with the grant of a charter on March 20, 1602 into the East India Company of the Netherlands." (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

East India Company of the Netherlands

It is interesting to note that the Dutch Company, in addition to being vested with exclusive rights to trade in all countries between the Straits of Magellan and the Cape of Good Hope, was also empowered to carry on war, to conclude treaties, to take possession of territory and to erect fortresses. Apparently, the company followed its charter most assiduously, marking the 17th century as an era of bitter commercial rivalry with the English not only in Europe but also in the East for command of the Eastern seas and monopoly of sea-borne trade. The climax of Dutch hatred of the English in the East was reached at Amboyna (captured from the Portuguese in 1605) where they massacred ten Englishmen and nine Japanese in 1623.

Amboyna massacre

The Dutch seizure of Amboyna was followed by the gradual replacement of the Portuguese from the Spice Islands' trade, which was completed in 1619. Jacatra was taken and the famous Dutch Governor-General, Jan Pieteroovn Coen raised Batavia on its ruins as the seat of the Supreme Government. In 1639, Goa was blockaded; Malacca was captured in 1641; and the last Portuguese settlement in Ceylon was overrun in 1658. The

Rise of Dutch Power

Other Europeans

The Danes In the context of European penetration into India the advent of the merchants of Denmark (the Danes) deserve a passing reference. A Danish East India Company was established in 1616 and in 1620 a factory at Tranquebar on the east coast of India was founded. The Danes were better known for their missionary activities carried on at Tranquebar than for commerce. The principal settlement of the Danes at Serampore near Calcutta dates from 1755. The Danish factories, which were not important at any time, were sold to the British government in 1845.

Apart from the organised companies there were many other Europeans sprinkled throughout the country in Mughal India. Percival Spear says, "There were the travelers who came on their lawful occasions. Some took service in the country as did the greatest of them, Francois Bernier, with the Mughal 'Omrah' Danishmand Khan. Some practiced their professions like the jeweler Travernier who has left us an expert's description of the Peacock throne, or Dr Gemelli-Carreri who has given a classic description of Aurangzeb in later life. Some were craftsmen like Austin of Bordeaux who was responsible for the inlaid work on the throne portico at Delhi, or Geronimo Verroneo who was connected with the Taj. The Mughals welcomed foreign artists and craftsmen as they welcomed foreign poets, as tending to enhance their glory. Then there were the adventurers pure and simple. The type of these was the Venetian Niccolao Manucci who went to India at the age of sixteen. He began a colourful career as an artilleryman with Dara Shekoh; on his defeat took up doctoring (because Aurangzeb insisted that European artillerymen should load as well as aim the guns) and continued as a quack till he died in the south in the eighteenth century, leaving lengthy memoirs full of amusing and unreliable anecdotes." (*A History of India, Volume Two)*

Dutch also carried out a profitable trade in pepper and spices of the islands of Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas.

The success of the United East India Company of the Netherlands in the East was due to the very large financial resources it commanded as also its very close links with the Dutch state. From their headquarters in the East in Batavia, the Dutch actively pursued the policy of securing the trade to the Spice Islands and then the pepper trade. They tried to exclude the English who also had factories in Java and the Moluccas, and the Amboyna killings formed an incident in this process of exclusion. They were, however, unable to secure a monopoly in traditional cotton piecegoods, the staple article of trade throughout the Malay archipelago. The Mughals and the rulers of Golconda were much too powerful for the Dutch to attempt any such thing by force. Instead they established factories on Coromandel Coast, in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. In 1609, they opened a factory in Pulicat, north of Madras. Their principal factories in India were at Masulipatam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karikal (1645), Chinsura (1653), Baranagar, Kasimbazar (near Murshidabad), Balasore, Patna, Negapatam (1658) and Cochin (1663).

Dutch settlements

Throughout the 17th century, the Dutch secured a monopoly of the spice trade in the East by removing the influence of the Portuguese. Their command of the spice trade, the wealth of the company and the ability of their factors enabled them to secure a major share in the trade of all these areas, but not to exclude their English rivals." Participating in the redistributive or carrying trade, they brought to the islands of the Far East various articles and merchandise from India. They carried indigo manufactured in the Yamuna valley and Central India, textiles and silk from Bengal, Gujarat and Coromandel, saltpetre from Bihar and opium and rice from the Ganga Valley. "While the Dutch were drawn more and more to the Malay Archipelago, the English concentrated their attention on India. Dutch hostility to the English, however, continued. In the third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74), communications between Surat and the new English settlement of Bombay were constantly threatened, and three homebound English ships were captured in the Bay of Bengal. Defeat in the battle of Hooghly (November 1759) dealt a crushing blow to Dutch ambitions in India." (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

Dutch and the English

THE ENGLISH

Foundations

The spirit of adventure and exploration marking the nations of Europe in the sixteenth century was illustrated in England by Drake's voyage round the world in 1580 and the English victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. These two outstanding events generated in the British a new sense of enterprise, encouraging sailors to venture out to the East. The first significant step in respect of England's trade in the East was taken on December 31, 1600 when Queen Elizabeth I issued a charter with rights of exclusive trading to the Governor and Company Merchants of London trading into the East Indies. Initially, a monopoly of fifteen years was granted which in May 1609 was extended indefinitely by a fresh charter. In the earlier years, generally a group of merchants used to send independent fleets, the profits from such voyage being divided amongst them.

Charter of Queen Elizabeth I

"The company had to face numerous difficulties. One was the determined opposition of their commercial rivals, the Dutch and the Portuguese. In 1611, the Portuguese turned back three English ships under the command of Sir Henry Middleton who tried to make a landing at Surat. But the following year, the Portuguese were defeated in naval engagements off Swally Hole (near Surat) by Captain Thomas Best, and again, in the same waters, by Nicholas Downton (1615). The English also captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf (1622). In 1654, Cromwell forced Portugal to acknowledge formally England's right to trade in the Eastern seas". (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

The English made a definite attempt for the first time to establish a factory in India when Captain Hawkins arrived at the court of Jahangir in April 1609. As has been stated in the section on the Portuguese, the mission did not succeed due to the active opposition of the

Hawkins and Thomas Roe

Portuguese, leaving Captain Hawkins with no other option but to leave Agra in November 1611. With Captain Thomas Best's victory over the Portuguese in 1612, Jahangir granted a permission to the English in early 1613 to establish a factory at Surat under Thomas Aldworth. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe came as an accredited ambassador of James I to the court of Jahangir, staying on there till February 1619. Though he was unsuccessful in concluding a commercial treaty with the Mughal emperor, he could secure a number of privileges including permission to set up factories in various places within Mughal India. Accordingly, factories were established in Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach before his departure from India. Those factories were under the incharge of the Surat factory, which also controlled the company's trade with the Red Sea ports and Persia.

During 1652-54, the English came closer to the Portuguese on the western coast of India spurred by the hostilities of the Dutch. When King Charles II of England married Catherine of Braganza of Portugal, a secret article of the marriage treaty of 1661 guaranteed the Portuguese possessions in the east by England against the Dutch. The treaty also included the island of Bombay as part of the dowry of the new queen, which Charles II transferred to the Company in 1668 on an annual payment of ten pounds only. Bombay was made the headquarters by shifting the seat of Western Presidency from Surat to Bombay in 1687, and it gradually rose to prosperity during the administration of Sir George Oxenden (1662-1669), Gerald Aungier (1669-77) and Sir John Child (1682-90).

Bombay as Dowry

In 1611, the English had started a factory at Masulipatam on the south-eastern coast of India, where their position was improved by the 'Golden Farman' issued to them by the Sultan of Golconda in 1632. On payment of 500 pagodas a year, they earned the privilege of trading freely in the ports of Golconda. A member of the Masulipatam council, the British merchant Francis Day in 1639 received from the ruler of Chandragiri permission to build a fortified factory at Madras which became the Fort St. George. It replaced Masulipatam as the headquarters of the English settlements on the east coast. Thereafter the English extended their trading activities to the east of India and started factories at Hariharpur in the Mahanadi delta and at Balasore in Orissa (1633). Factories in Bengal were started at Hooghly (1651) and other places like Kasimbazar, Patna and Rajmahal. All these settlements in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and on the Coromandal coast were reorganised and brought under Fort St. George.

Madras and Fort St. George

The Company's powers were increased during the reigns of Charles II (1660-85) and James II (1685-1688) even as it retained its existing privileges. "The Company's policy in India underwent a change during this period. In view of the prevailing political disorders in India, the Company's officials sought to establish its influence on a strong basis through territorial acquisitions. Gerald Aungier wrote to the court of directors: '...the times require you to manage your general commerce with the sword in your hands...' Approving of this policy, the court of directors asked the chief at Madras in December 1687 '...to establish such a politie of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue...as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, secure English dominion in India for all time to come.' Sir Josiah Child, a dominant personality in the Company and his namesake, Sir John Child, who became the president of Surat and the governor of Bombay in 1682, tried to follow the new policy vigorously. But this involved him into trouble with the Mughal government. John Child had to submit and an agreement was reached in February 1690. The English restored all the captured Mughal vessels and were granted a licence for their trade on payment of one-and-a-half lakhs of rupees in compensation." (*The Gazetteer of India,* Vol. II)

Nevertheless, despite the privileges granted to the Company in 1651 by the *farmans* of Shah Suja, its business was now and then obstructed by customs officers in the local checkposts who asked for payment of tolls. In pursuance of its changed policy, the Company wanted to have a fortified settlement at Hooghly so that force could be used if necessary. William Hedges, the first agent and governor of the Company in Bengal, appealed to Shayista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal in August 1682, for redressal of the grievance. As nothing came out of the appeal, hostilities broke

out between the English and the Mughals. Four years later, Hooghly was sacked by the imperialists in October 1686. The English retaliated by capturing the imperial forts at Thana (modern Garden Reach), raided Hijli in east Midnapur and stormed the Mughal fortifications at Balasore. However, the English had to leave Hooghly and were sent to an unhealthy location at the mouth of the river Ganga. Their agent, Job Charnock, then started negotiations so as to return to a place midway between the two, a place called Sutanuti. But the process was stalled because the Company's new agent, Captain William Heath, attacked the Mughal fort at Balasore in November 1688, committing unspeakable atrocities on the people there. He also attempted to capture Chittagong but did not succeed in capturing it. He then sailed away for Madras on February 17, 1689. Charnock thereafter resumed the peace talks and, signing a treaty with the Mughals in February 1690, came back to Calcutta (Sutanuti) on August 24 as agent. The English factory at Sutanuti was established on February 10, 1691, the day an imperial farman was issued permitting the English to "continue contentedly their trade in Bengal" on payment of Rs 3000 a year in lieu of all dues.

The English and The Mughals

Job Charnock

The Beginning of Calcutta

Thus was the foundation of Calcutta laid, a city destined to grow as one of the famous (or infamous) cities of the world. A zamindar in Bardhaman district, Sobha Singh, rebelled subsequently giving the English the pretext they were looking for, to fortify their settlement at Sutanati in 1696. Two years later, they secured from the Mughal governor of Bengal, Azimush Shah, the permission to buy the zamindari of the three villages of Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata (or Kalighat) from their owners on payment of 1,200 rupees. The fortified settlement was named Fort William in the year 1700, when it also became the seat of the eastern presidency with Sir Charles Eyre as its first president.

Calcutta and Fort William

"Growing prosperity of the East India Company under Charles II and James II excited the jealousy of its enemies and after the Revolution of 1688, the Whigs, with their enhanced influence, opposed its monopoly of trade. A rival company was formed and it deputed Sir William Norris as its ambassador to the court of Aurangzeb (January 1701-April 1702) to gain trading privileges for itself. The new company, however, proved a failure. Under pressure from the Crown and the Parliament, the two companies agreed to a union in 1702. This was actually effected in 1708 after the arbitration of the Earl of Godolphin. They were amalgamated under the title of The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies." (*The Gazetteer of India,* Vol. II)

Merging of the Two English Companies (1702)

From 1708 to the middle of the eighteenth century, the Company's trade and influence in India increased when its political motives began to dominate. Also during this time, the impediments which appeared as a sequel to the disintegration of the Mughal empire were easily overcome. It was during this time that an English mission led by John Surman (in 1715) to the court of the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar secured three famous farmans, giving the Company many valuable privileges in Bengal, Gujarat and Hyderabad. The Company's imports and exports in Bengal were exempted from additional customs duties excepting the annual payment of 3,000 rupees as settled earlier. In addition, the Company was permitted to rent more lands around Calcutta. In Hyderabad, the Company retained its existing privilege of freedom from duties in trade and had to pay the prevailing rent only for Madras. Similarly, in Surat, for an annual payment of 10,000 rupees, the Company was exempted from the levy of all duties for its exports and imports. It was also decreed that the coins of the Company minted at Bombay were to have currency throughout the Mughal empire.

Farrukhsiyar's Farmans

But Murshid Quli Khan, the capable *subahdar* of Bengal, did not like the new dispensation at all. He tried to control the Company in various ways by placing it on the same footing as other traders. Even then, the Company's trade prospered, the importance of Calcutta increased and its population grew to 100,000 towards the middle of the eighteenth century. The Company maintained cordial relations with the *subahdar* of the Deccan

Steady Rise of the English

and the Nawab of the Carnatic while carrying on peaceful commerce in Madras. The governor of Madras, Thomas Pitt (1698-1709), obtained from the Nawab of Carnatic a grant of five villages near Madras in 1708 which was taken in possession nine years later. In 1734, the Madras government obtained Vepery and four other settlements. The quarrels between the Marathas and the Portuguese spilled over to Bombay as disturbances for nearly two decades. Maratha sea-captains, like the renowned Kanhoji Angria, took advantage of it and bothered the British. But here also the Company's trade and military strength increased. The Company's population rose to 70,000 in 1744 in Bombay, and its revenues to about sixteen lakhs of rupees.

The prosperity of Calcutta attracted Armenian, Hindu, Persian and Portuguese merchants 'who carried on their business under the protection of the English flag'. A contemporary Muslim historian says, "The mild and equitable conduct of the English in their settlement gained them the confidence and esteem of the natives; which joined to the privileges and immunities which the Company enjoyed, induced numbers to remove thither with their families, so that in a short time Calcutta became an extensive and populous city." Like other zamindars, the Company collected rents, functioned as police magistrate and held courts to decide petty criminal cases and civil disputes. The charter of 1726 granted under George I helped in constructing a judicial system which also provided for the appointment of a major, sheriff and aldermen.

THE FRENCH

Beginnings

Although the French harboured a wish to engage in the commerce of the East since the opening years of the sixteenth century, their appearance on the Indian coasts was late. The Dutch, in order to maintain their monopoly of Indian and Eastern trade, resisted all earlier attempts by the French to enter the zone. It was Richelieu, one of the ablest ministers of France, under whose guidance was granted in 1642, the permission to sail to Madagascar and the neighbouring islands and to establish colonies and trade there. Meanwhile, French missionaries and travellers had also found a land route to India through Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and this stimulated the urge for commercial enterprise. Thus, during the reign of Louis XIV, his famous minister Colbert laid the foundation of *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (The French East India Company) in 1664, in which the king also took a deep interest. However, the Company spent a lot of its money and resources in trying to revive the colonies of Madagascar without any success. Then in 1667, Francois Caron headed an expedition to India, setting up a factory in Surat. Mercara followed him in 1669, and, founded another French factory in Masulipatam after obtaining a patent from the Sultan of Golconda. On February 21, 1672, a French squadron under the command of De La Haye fought with a Dutch fleet near Cape Comorin, but Francois Caron failed to take advantage of the situation. In July, the same year, De La Haye wrested San Thome near Madras from the Sultan of Golconda, which the Portuguese had yielded to him in a fight a decade earlier. So this led to a teaming up of the Dutch and the Sultan against the French. As the situation was critical, De La Haye had to hand over San Thome to the Dutch (who gave it back to the Sultan) on September 6, 1674.

Francois Caron

In 1673, Sher Khan Lodi, governor of Valikondapuram, granted Francois Martin, director of the Masulipatam factory, a site for a settlement. Thus began in modest fashion the historic role of Pondicherry. After taking charge of Pondicherry in 1674, Francois Martin developed it as a place of importance 'amid the clash of arms and falling kingdoms'. In Bengal, the French laid the foundation of their famous settlement of Chandarnagar in 1690 on a site granted to them by Shayista Khan.

Pondicherry as Nerve Centre of French Power

French position in India was badly affected with the outbreak of war between the Dutch and the French. Bolstered by their alliance with the English since the Revolution of 1688, the Dutch captured Pondicherry in 1693. Although the Treaty of Ryswick concluded in September 1697 restored Pondicherry to the French, the Dutch garrison held on to it for two more years. Once again, under Francois Martin's able guidance Pondicherry flourished and turned out to be the most important settlement of the French in India. Again there was a bad turn

in the fortunes of the company in India when the War of Spanish Succession broke out in Europe. Consequent to this, they had to abandon their factories at Surat, Masulipatam and Bantam in the early 18th century. In what compounding further the woes of the French in India, Francois Martin died on December 31, 1706.

Reorganisation of the French Company

A reorganisation as the 'Perpetual Company of the Indies' in June 1720 restored the French company to health. This was further aided by the stewardship of two active and wise governors, Lenoir and Dumas, between 1720 and 1742. Due to this transformation, 'by 1740 the company could challenge comparison though not parity with the English'. Pondicherry had been fortified and subordinate stations opened at Chandarnagar in Bengal, Masulipatam on the Coromandel coast, and in Malabar. French India were backed by the French possession of Mauritius (Isle de France) and Reunion (Isle de Bourbon) in the southern Indian Ocean.

However, the French enterprise was a mushroom growth vis-a-vis the English East India venture (company). It commanded sufficient strength no doubt, but it was way behind that of its prospective rival. With three well-established seats of power, one having a dockyard and an excellent harbour, the English Company had a clear edge over the French who had only one on the exposed Coromandel shore. The French had a sea base and harbour at their eastern headquarters at Mauritius, but that was far away and ill-supplied with stores. Compared to this, the British possessed Bombay, had copious mercantile vessels and wielded considerable naval power. Making a comparative analysis, V.A. Smith writes: "Though both companies were prosperous, the French volume of trade was much less and their resources correspondingly weaker. The value of French exports from India increased between 1728 and 1740 nearly ten times, but in the same year British imports from India were more than twice as great. To the advantage of finance the English company added those of unified direction by an independent mercantile corporation, itself backed by important interests in the city of London. It possessed long traditions and much experience; it could call on capital and make its influence felt in Parliament. The French company, on the other hand, owed its existence largely to state action. It was essentially a state enterprise whose fortunes depended upon the attention or neglect of the ministers. Both companies depended upon the sea link with Europe, and here again the British held the lead. The result of a conflict must depend in the last resort upon sea power, and British naval power was not only greater than the French but backed by growing resources." (*The Oxford History of India*)

The French and The English

THE ANGLO-FRENCH STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

Need for Protecting Commercial Interests

Though they came to India for trading purposes, the British and the French were ultimately drawn into the politics of India. With the waning of the power of the Mughals, its viceroy in the Deccan also was unable to control his subordinates and to stop the depredations of the rampaging Marathas. The foreigners, namely the British and the French, then realised that it would be necessary to take up arms to protect their interests. As the followers of the ideology of Mercantilism, they were naturally looking forward to reap huge profits. One sure method of achieving this was to eliminate all possible competition and to exercise a monopolistic control over the various items of trade. Furthermore, there was the golden rule of commerce, of 'buying cheap and selling dear', which required if not a stranglehold, then substantial political control over the country, over its manufacturing centres as also its markets.

Anglo-French Rivalry

"In most of the European conflicts of the eighteenth century, England and France were ranged on opposite sides. India was one of these theatres of wars. In this country, Anglo-French rivalry began with the outbreak of Austrian War of Succession and ended with the conclusion of the Seven Years War. At the time the struggle opened in India, the headquarters of the French was Pondicherry with subordinate factories at Masulipatam, Karikal, Mahe, Surat, Chandarnagar and various other places. The principal settlements of the English were at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta with subordinate factories thereto." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*, B.L. Grover and S. Grover)

Earlier we have discussed the relative strengths and weaknesses of these two companies. Where leadership was concerned, the French company was decidedly superior to the English. Built up by Lenoir and Dumas, the French company found in Dupleix (governor-general of Pondicherry since 1741) one of those people whose insight clarified the issues of politics and whose activity often determined them. In 1740, the political situation in south India was uncertain and confused. The viceroy, Nizam Asaf Jah, was old and fully engaged in battling the Marathas in the western Deccan while his subordinates were speculating upon the consequences of his death. To the south of his kingdom lay the Coromandel coast without any strong Hindu empire to maintain a balance of power. Instead, there was the remnant of the old Vijayanagara empire in interior Mysore, Cochin and Travancore in the Malabar coast, and on the east the small states of Madura, Tanjore and Trichinopoly. The aged Nizam with his preoccupations tempted the English and the Dutch, while the weak Hindu states invited attack. The decline of Hyderabad was the signal for the end of Muslim expansionism and the adventurers got their plans ready. Also, there was the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, providing the Peshwa of Pune an excuse for interference whenever he pleased.

South Indian Scenario

The first bid for expansion was made by Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic, who became independent on the Nizam's death. His son, Safdar Ali, and his son-in-law, Chanda Sahib, captured Trichinopoly and then Madura, but had no luck in Maratha Tanjore. So, the Marathas moved down from the north in 1740-41, killed Dost Ali, overtook Trichinopoly and captured Chanda Sahib. Safdar Ali succeeded his father, but was murdered by his cousin, Murtaza in late 1742. The Nizam now intervened, got back Trichinopoly and replaced Murtaza by his officer, Anwar-ud-din, early in 1743. Anwar felt insecure due to the opposition of the families of the erstwhile Nawabs, while in the background hovered the Nizam and the Marathas. The Austrian War of Succession broke out in March 1740, when in accordance with the directors' wishes, the French proposed neutrality to the three English presidencies. The English merchants apparently welcomed it, but the merchants' decisions were not mandatory on the king's ships on either side and so the fighting started in India in 1746. The English fleet under the command of Barnett began the war by taking over some French ships. The governor-general of Pondicherry, Dupleix, thereupon sent a frantic call for help to his counterpart in Mauritius, La Bourdonnais. Bourdonnais came with a squadron consisting of 3,000 men, defeating an English fleet on his way. The French then laid a siege on Madras both by land and sea, and captured it on September 21, 1746 with Robert Clive among the prisoners of war. Bourdonnais now wanted to give Madras back to the English for cash, which Dupleix did not like. Inspite of that, Bourdonnais went ahead with his plan, having been bribed by the English. Dupleix then recaptured Madras, but failed to possess Fort St. David, a small English factory south of Pondicherry. The English retaliated by attempting to capture Pondicherry by sending a squadron under Rear Admiral Boseawen during June-October 1748 they were not successful. Then came the news of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, under which Madras was given back to the British in exchange for Cape Breton Island in America and apparently the status quo was restored.

Developments in the Carnatic

The First Carnatic War

Thereafter, politics in south India witnessed a profound change. Firstly, the British, now holding Madras by European treaty, stopped paying rent to one of the contending nawabs. Secondly, the French had gained enormous prestige due to their prowess in land-based and naval warfare. In land-based war, the French really excelled themselves by defeating the army of the Nawab of Carnatic which was ten times larger than the French force. When Dupleix drove the English out of Madras, Nawab Anwar-ud-din warned the companies not to fight within his territory (he was the overlord, after all) and disturb the peace. Dupleix pacified the Nawab saying that he would eventually give Madras back to the Nawab, a promise he did not keep. The exasperated Nawab despatched a force of 10,000 under Mahfuz Khan which was confronted and defeated at San Thome on the banks of the Adyar river by a small French army of 230 European and 700 Indian soldiers. Thirdly, from then on, the importance of naval power as an important factor

French Victories

in Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan was unquestionably established.

"There followed Dupleix's bold bid for south Indian empire. If circumstances favoured the man, here was a man fitted so make most of the circumstances. Like Clive, Dupleix began his career in commercial service. But unlike Clive, he did not find fame in deserting the counting house for the field. He rose regularly in the French company's service and reached Pondicherry by promotion from Chandarnagar. His genius was diplomatic and political rather than military. A supple mind and an active imagination easily converted a skilful merchant into a subtle politician. But Dupleix was more than a politician. He possessed that insight of statesmanship which can divine a change in the balance of political forces when it is actually taking place rather than years later, when it has become obvious to all. It was this quality which enabled him to penetrate the inherent weakness of the south Indian political system and the consequent decisive importance of the tiny European forces in the country. In the Indian politics of the time all was policy, power politics, and personal ambition; there was no emotional bar, such as patriotism might have provided against invoking the help of the foreigner. Consequently, interference could be freely indulged in, and technical advantages the Europeans possessed would bring victory to whichever side they were given. In the absence of conviction, of national and religious feeling, politics were a matter for the lords and their followers; the longest-range guns, the quickest-firing muskets, the steadiest soldiers would decide the issue. The makeweight had become the balance, the client could become the master." (*The Oxford History of India*)

Dupleix—The Master Strategist

The Downsizing of Dupleix

Dupleix, however, suffered from an over-sanguine temperament; he hoped too often for too long, which prevented him from getting advantages in critical situations. Intelligent as he was, he used cunning to outsmart his opponents. The locals were very impressed with his displays and loved him for that, but his peers had not like his autocratic behaviour and frequently quarrelled with him over this. Dupleix dazzled but he also divided. He left no school to continue his work, but only a void place which no one could fill. His impact was like that of a flood that destroys rather than the rain which fertilizes.

Dupleix's strategy was to secure a local Indian authority amenable to him by using his military advantage and diplomatic skill. This had the twin objective of satisfying the French directors of his company by ruining British trade, while by making the Indian authorities dependent on him, he could become in effect a ruler of south India. Like the British, the French directors also wanted their company to earn profits quietly, but their doubts were removed for a time by the spectacular successes of their man on the spot. Furthermore, the turn of events also helped Dupleix when the peace treaty (of Aix-la-Chapelle) was signed.

Nasir Jung succeeded the Nizam of Hyderabad who died in 1748. As he was the second son of the Nizam, Muzaffar Jung (a grandson) challenged the succession. The Marathas chose to release Chanda Sahib at that time who appeared in the Carnatic with their support. Dupleix supported both the contenders, Muzaffar and Nasir which led to the death of Nawab Anwar-ud-Din in a battle at Ambur near Vellore in August 1749. The British now started to send help to Anwar's son Muhammad Ali who had retired to Trichinopoly in October. The British in Madras had already intervened in Tanjore a few months before, but it was their action in Trichinopoly which opened-up their large-scale intervention in Indian politics.

Succession Dispute After Nizam's Death

"Dupleix who saw in this fluid political situation an opportunity to advance his political schemes, decided to support the candidature of Muzaffar Jung for the subahdarship of the Deccan and Chanda Sahib for the Nawabship of Carnatic. The English inevitably found themselves ranged on the side of Nasir Jung and Anwar-ud-Din. Astounding successes attended the plans of Dupleix. The combined armies of Muzaffar Jung, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-Din at the battle of Ambur near Vellore in August 1749. Nasir Jung lost his life in the encounter of December 1750. Muzaffar Jung became the subahdar of the

French Advantages

Deccan and amply rewarded his benefactors for their services. Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories south of the river Krishna. The Nizam surrendered some districts in the Northern Circars to the French. Further, at the request of the new subahdar, a French army under an able officer Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad. The stationing of this army ensured the security of the French interests there. When Muzaffar Jung was killed in a skirmish in February 1751, Bussy's force ensured the accession of Salabat Jung in his place and maintained him in power. Chanda Sahib became the Nawab of Carnatic in 1751. Dupleix was at the height of his political power." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*, B.L. Grover and S. Grover)

Towards the Second Carnatic War

The denouement of the French was now close by. They now tried to dislodge Muhammad Ali from the fortress of Trichinopoly with help from Chanda Sahib but had no success. The British were also not sitting quietly. Having failed to provide effective assistance to Muhammad Ali at Trichinopoly, Robert Clive in 1751 put forward the proposal for a diversionary attack on the governor of Madras, Saunders. He suggested a sudden raid on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, so as to relieve the pressure on Trichinopoly. He reasoned that in such an event Chanda Sahib would rush to save his capital. Thus, in August 1751, with only a force of 210 men Robert Clive attacked and captured Arcot. As expected Chanda Sahib hastened to his capital taking a force of 4,000 men from Trichinopoly, but failed to get back the fort even after a siege of 53 days, from September 23 to November 14. The capture of Arcot, "immortalised and somewhat exaggerated in the glowing words of Macaulay", lifted the sagging spirits of the British while demoralising the French and Chanda Sahib. Now Mysore, Tanjore and the Maratha chief, Morari Rao, came to the aid of Trichinopoly, and of Clive and Stringer Lawrence. Trichinopoly was first relieved of its siege, while the French General Law with Chanda Sahib remained cooped up in the island of Srirangam. They were forced to surrender in June 1752 when Muhammad Ali executed Chanda Sahib, the British failing to interfere.

Clive's Siege of Arcot

According to another source, Chanda Sahib was treacherously murdered by the Raja of Tanjore. Dupleix, however, refused to accept defeat and continuing the struggle at an enormous cost even besieged Trichinopoly a second time in 1753. The French directors of the company now became concerned about Dupleix's political decision and its exorbitant cost. So, early in 1754, he was directed to open negotiations with the English, and the directors also decided upon his recall. Godeheu, who was a director of the company, was asked to supercede Dupleix and to restore peace.

Recall of Dupleix

Like the first conflict (1746-48), the second (1749-54) also ended in an inconclusive manner. However, this time the English had demonstrated their superiority in land-based war by installing Muhammad Ali as the Nawab of Carnatic. The French continued with their territorial possessions as also their privileges in Hyderabad (like the annual revenue of rupees thirty lakhs from the Northern Circars), but their attempts to control the Deccan and to rival the English were not successful. The restoration of the status quo did not bring the situation back to what it was before. "The British had greatly strengthened both their position and reputation in the south and the French legend of superiority had been discredited. Above all, the relative positions of the European and Indian powers in the south had been reversed. Both European nations had actively intervened in Indian politics; it had become evident that the countenance of Indian authority was no longer necessary for European success; rather Indian authority itself was becoming dependent on European support. Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic and Salabat Jang in Hyderabad were both clients rather than patrons." (*The Oxford History of India*)

Consolidation of English Position

The Final Showdown

There is no doubt that Dupleix suffered from misfortune. His military subordinates, with the exception of Bussy, were not that good. Furthermore, Dupleix was in contention with unquestionably master strategists like Clive and Lawrence. Nonetheless, the causes of the French reverses were much deeper than these. What is of surprise was Dupleix's earlier successes rather than

The Carnatic Wars

The Carnatic, the name given by the Europeans to the Coromandal coast and its hinterland, witnessed a long-drawn contest between the French and the English for nearly 20 years from 1744 to 1763 for the supremacy over India. The struggle ended with the victory of the English over the French and decided once for all that the English and not the French were to become masters of India. The Anglo-French rivalry took the form of three Carnatic Wars in 1740-48, 1749-54 and 1758-63.

First Carnatic War (1740-48)

The First Carnatic War was an extension of the Anglo-French war in Europe. In the Austrian War of Succession (1740), the English and the French were on opposite camps. It set the scene for a confrontation between the two European forces in India. Although France, conscious of its relatively weaker position in India, did not favour an extension of hostilities to India, the English navy under Barnet seized some French ships to provoke France. France retaliated by seizing Madras in 1746 with the help of the fleet from Mauritius, the Isle of France, under Admiral La Bourdonnais, the French governor of Mauritius. Thus began the first Carnatic War.

The First Carnatic War is remembered for the Battle of St. Thome (Madras) fought between the French forces and the forces of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Carnatic, to whom the English appealed for help. A small French army under Captain Paradise defeated the strong Indian army under Mahfuz Khan at St. Thome on the banks of the river Adyar. This was an eye-opener for the Europeans in India: it revealed that even a small disciplined army could easily defeat a much larger Indian army. Further, this war adequately brought out the importance of naval force in the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan.

The First Carnatic War ended in 1748 with the signing of the Treaty of Aix-La Chapelle which brought the Austrian War of Succession to a conclusion. Under the terms of this treaty, Madras was handed back to the English, and the French, in turn, got their territories in North America.

The Second Carnatic War (1749-54)

The cause for the Second Carnatic War was provided by rivalry in India. Dupleix, the French governor who successfully led the French forces in the First Carnatic War, sought to increase his power and French political influence in southern India by interfering in local dynastic disputes to defeat the English. The opportunity was provided by the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the independent kingdom of Hyderabad, in 1748, and the release of Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic, by the Marathas in the same year. The accession of Nasir Jang, the son of the Nizam, to the throne of Hyderabad was opposed by Muzaffar Jang, the grandson of the Nawab, who laid claim to the throne saying that the Mughal Emperor had appointed him as the governor of the Carnatic. In the Carnatic, the appointment of Anwar-ud-din Khan as the Nawab was resented by Chanda Sahib. The French supported the claims of Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib in the Deccan and Carnatic, respectively, while the English sided with Nasir Jang and Anwar-ud-din. The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at the Battle of Ambur (near Vellore) in 1749. Muzaffar Jang became the subahdar of Deccan, and Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories to the south of the river Krishna. A French army under Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad to secure French interests there. Territories near Pondicherry and also some areas on the Orissa Coast (including Masulipatam) were ceded to the French.

The appointment of Saunders as the Governor of Madras in 1750 changed the situation. In 1751, the English decided to support Mohammad Ali, the son of Nawab Anwar-ud-din, who had taken refuge in Trichinopoly (now Thiruchirapalli). In the same year, the rulers of Mysore, Tanjore (now Thanjavur) and the Maratha chief, Morari Rao, also gave support to Mohammad Ali and the English. In 1752, a strong English force under Stringer Lawrence successfully occupied Arcot (capital of the Carnatic). Trichinopoly was also relieved by the English forces. Although the Nawab managed to win back Arcot after battling for 53 days, the incident demoralised the French greatly. Chanda Sahib was treacherously killed by the Raja of Tanjore. The French authorities, annoyed at the heavy financial losses that Dupleix's policy involved, decided to recall him in 1754. Godeheu succeeded Dupleix as the French Governor-General in India.

Unlike his predecessor, Godeheu adopted a policy of negotiations with the English and concluded a treaty with them. The English and the French agreed not to interfere in the quarrels of native princes. Also, each party was left in possession of the territories actually occupied by them at the time of the treaty. According to historians, the fear of serious repercussions in America prompted the French to suspend hostilities in India.

The Second Carnatic War also proved inconclusive. The English proved their superiority on land by installing Mohammad Ali as the Nawab of Carnatic.

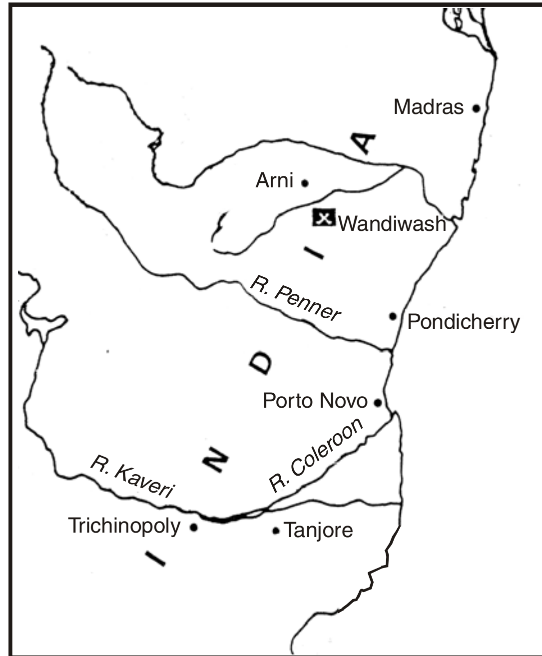
The French were still very powerful in Hyderabad. However, the predominant position of the French in the Deccan peninsula was definitely undermined in this war.

The Third Carnatic War (1758-63)

Like the First Carnatic War, the Third Carnatic War, known for the Battle of Wandiwash, was an echo of the struggle in Europe. The short peace between the English and the French ended with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe in 1756. The French army under Count de Lally succeeded in capturing the English forts of St. David and Vizianagaram in 1758. These reverses alarmed the English. They became offensive and inflicted heavy losses on the French fleet under Admiral D'Ache at Masulipatam.

The decisive battle of the Third Carnatic War was fought on January 22, 1760. The English army under General Eyre Coote totally routed the French army under Lally. The French were left with only Jinje and Pondicherry in the Carnatic. Later, Pondicherry, the French capital, and Jinje were also seized. Lally returned to France where he was imprisoned and executed.

The Third Carnatic War proved decisive. Although the Peace of Paris (1763) restored to the French their factories in India, the French political influence completely disappeared after the war. Thereafter, the French, like their Portuguese and Dutch counterparts in India, confined themselves to "country trade". Under the Paris Treaty, the French were not allowed to fortify their factories.



Wandiwash: French Ambitions Sealed

his subsequent failures. The French directors did not exactly support Dupleix, and in order to keep them away from finding fault, Dupleix needed a string of successes against the British. That was not all; he was also required to manage the ever-changing politics of south India. The instant his south Indian allies found that the British could stand up against the French, they became disorganised. Above everything, Dupleix lacked financial resources needed to sustain a long campaign as also to keep allies quiet. His bid for power was a sort of gamble which failed when the resources needed to keep it going dried up.

Dupleix's Disadvantages

There was a brief respite before the decisive and final phase of the Anglo-French struggle in India started. As in the earlier instances, this time also the cause of the hostility was a conflict in Europe. The Seven Years War broke out in Europe when Austria wanted to recover Silesia in 1756. Even though the alignment of powers was at this time different from those in the preceding times, Britain and France were once again on the opposite sides. However, in south India, neither the French nor the British were in a position to begin the proceedings. The French were too exhausted and too dispirited due to the recent loss of prestige. The British had planned to attack Bussy in Hyderabad for which Clive was recalled to Madras in 1755. However, the Governor of Bombay failed to respond to his call for help and meanwhile Clive had to go back to Bengal to attend to the crisis there. The French government in April 1757 sent a fleet under D'Ache, the overall leader of which was Count de Lally. The fleet took a long time, reaching its destination early in 1758. Clive meanwhile had defeated Siraj-ud-daula (in the Battle of Plassey, 1757), captured Bengal and acquired immense riches "whence he could send to Madras, if not men, the no less necessary financial resources. In a sense, the war was lost for the French before it began. Since both sides were supported from Europe, sea power again became vital. The French had to control both elements if they were to succeed."

The Seven Years War (1756-63)

Count de Lally was a brave but impetuous soldier who did not know when to exercise boldness and when to exercise caution thereby doing one thing while the other was needed. Being both governor and commander-in-chief, he had immense powers, yet he was unable to inspire loyalty in his subordinates. He was also unable to get along with Bussy, who was wise and very experienced in south Indian politics.

Count de Lally

Even so, things went on well in the beginning. The French fleet under D'Ache chased away the British ships under Pocock leaving the coast clear. Lally

Structure and Pattern of European Trade

When the European colonial powers began trading with India in the sixteenth century their main problem was that they had few goods to offer in return for Indian commodities. They had to struggle with the problem of financing an adverse balance of trade with Asia. They brought gold and silver into Europe from the mines of South America in the 16th century, which they used, albeit reluctantly, to pass for their imports from the East. It is recorded that between 1660 and 1699, the value of gold and silver exported to the East was always at least 66 per cent of the total exports. It was as high as 87 per cent during the 1680-89 decade. The English between 1700 and 1750 sent silver worth 270 lakhs and other goods worth only 90 lakhs to India. But with the advent of the industrial revolution in the post-1750 period the trend started reversing. Between 1760 and 1809 silver worth 140 lakhs was exported while value of other goods rose to 485 lakhs.

The European companies faced severe criticism on account of exporting bullion out of their countries which under the mercantilist belief was considered bad for the country's economy and prosperity. They were under great pressure to find other ways of paying for their trade in Eastern goods. They found a partial solution to the problem by capturing the intra-Asian trade. The Europeans made good profit by taking cloves from the Spice Islands and Japanese copper to India and China, Indian cotton textiles to South East Asia and Persian carpets to India thereby paying for some of their imports from India. However, only in the later part of 18th century, a final solution to the problem of the deficit trade was found, when the English began receiving the revenues of Bengal and started exporting opium to China.

The bulk of the profits of European companies came from the sale of commodities brought from Asia to the markets of Europe, Africa, the American continents and to the Middle East in the 16th and 17th centuries. There developed a triangular trade between Europe, the Americas with their plantation based on slavery and the West Coast of Africa and the trade with the East proceeded against this background.

Right from the beginning, spices were very high on the list of commodities Europeans demanded. Among spices it was pepper alone which dominated the trade in the 16th and 17th centuries. Commodity structure of trade started changing only towards the close of the seventeenth century when cotton textiles, silk and saltpetre steadily rose in importance in place of spices. The English and Dutch companies regularly demanded Indian textiles from the second decade of the 17th century. The importance of Indian textiles in the trade with other parts of Asia rose where it was demanded as a barter commodity. Indian textiles were famous for their range, variety and quality. For instance, Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal produced a large variety of plain, dyed, striped, chintz and embroidered cloth. Indian silks and muslin, both fine and coarse, found markets in Europe as well as in Africa and the West Indies. According to official records, the English Company's demand stood at 12,000 pieces of textiles from Surat in 1614 and in 1664, the company imported a total of over 750,000 pieces whose value accounted for 73 per cent of the entire trade of the company. By 1690, the share of textiles went as high as 83 per cent of the total value. Bengal muslins and Coromandel chintz in particular were in great demand among the upper classes in Europe.

Alarmed by this increase in imports the indigenous English manufacturers exerted political pressure on their government to prohibit import of Indian textiles. This resulted in the English government passing several protectionist regulations in 1700, 1721 and 1735.

Apart from this, raw silk also established itself in the market in the second half of the seventeenth century. Saltpetre, a necessary ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder, was increasingly demanded by the French and the English. In addition to being a strategic raw material, saltpetre, being a bulky and heavy commodity, could be used to stabilise the ships by acting as ballast material. Patna emerged as a major centre of trade in saltpetre. Similarly indigo was another article of import which was used as a dyestuff since it was cheap and easier to use compared to wood (a blue dye yielding plant), a herb traditionally used for blue colouring from its leaves in Europe.

at once marched to Fort St. David capturing it, much earlier than expected, on June 2. He planned to attack Madras when Pocock reappeared and D'Ache declined to meet him. So, Lally had to wait for the season to change when the coast would be clear of the British ships. He thought of utilising the time to recover an old debt from the Raja of Tanjore, and, in order to terrorise the populace, rashly executed six temple Brahmans. The result was the very opposite; his supplies were stopped and he had to lift the siege on hearing of D'Ache's defeat off the coast of Karikal. Lally now got ready to lay a siege on Madras, where British governor Pigot and Colonel Lawrence had used their respite to good effect. They resolutely defended Madras from October 1758 to March 1759 when a squadron of British ships came on sight forcing Lally to lift the siege.

Lally's Mistakes

Close on the heels of this debacle, the French suffered another blow due to Clive's foresight and planning. Bussy was now recalled by Lally to join him, but in order to protect the Northern Circars allowed the French garrison to remain there. Clive had meanwhile sent Colonel Forde to Visakhapatnam in the autumn of 1758 as a way of helping Madras without losing control of his troops. Forde lost no opportunity to defeat the French, to march to Masulipatam in the north and then to make peace with the Nizam during the time Lally was before Madras. Forde returned to Calcutta in October 1759 to safeguard Bengal while Lally had lost a veteran body of troops experienced in Indian warfare. It was an excellent illustration of sea power coming to the aid of the army and helping it to decisively win the war. Anyway, the campaign to capture power in the south went on by fits and starts between the two contenders until the arrival of Sir Eyre Coote with reinforcements. At the battle of Wandiwash in January 1760, Coote conclusively defeated Lally taking Bussy as prisoner. Now Pondicherry remained to be taken. Recriminations and acrimony were now rife among the French, but even then Lally gallantly withstood the blockade of Pondicherry for eight months before surrendering on January 16, 1761. With the loss of Mahe and Jinji thereafter in quick succession, the French power in India was at an end.

Setback for the French

Battle of Wandiwash (1760-61)

"Formal peace was made two years later. Pondicherry and other settlements were restored to the French by the Treaty of Paris (1763), but they were to remain dismantled and defenceless. The French returned, 'with their trade annihilated, with their influence gone, with the curse of their defeat and failure stamped upon their habitations.' By that time the English had consolidated their hold on Bengal. Mir Kasim was overthrown in the middle of 1763; the issue was finally decided at Buxar in October 1764. By 1765, the English company was the ruler of Bengal and Bihar, protector of the puppet Mughal emperor Shah Alam and a powerful ally of Shuja-ud-daula, Nawab of Awadh (discussed in the next chapter detail). At Arcot, Muhammad Ali became a subordinate ally of the English company. His principality was incorporated in its dominions in 1801. Salabat Jung was replaced and then put to death by his brother Nizam Ali who finally submitted to British suzerainty in 1798. From time to time, the French made half-hearted attempts to recover their political power in India, but they were never a real threat to the English. The defeat of Lally, leading to his trial for treason and execution in France, was symbolic of the collapse of the dream of Dupleix". (A.C. Banerjee, K.P. Bagchi, *The New History of Modern India, 1707-1747)*

Decline of French power

Causes of French Failure

The character of Lally was in part responsible for the French failure. He was headstrong, was unable to work with colleagues and failed to inspire confidence among the civilians. All these shortcomings resulted in loss of morale among the French, which was compounded further by Lally's errors of judgement and his failure to understand or conciliate the local population. To these personal faults were added the deficiencies in naval power and financial resources of the French as compared to the British. After the Wandiwash defeat, Lally could recover in no way due to the lack of finance. He could not get any finance because there was no supply from France. The British, on their part, got plentiful supply from Bengal as well as from elsewhere. Moreover, they were in a position to bring troops

Lally's Responsibility

Inadequate Military and Financial Support

by ships, an advantage the French could not utilise. No doubt, Lally made mistakes; but he was finished because he was without the aid of sea power. So, Pondicherry became an open town, and the hopes for a revival of French power consequent to sea victories of de Suffren in 1782-83 were extinguished due to cessation of hostilities. The influence of the French remained at the level of individuals without the backing of armies of fleets. Raymond at Hyderabad, de Boigne and Perron with Sindhia were causes of worry to the British but never a threat.

France's Involvement in Europe

One of the reasons why the French in India lacked resources was the continental ambitions of France in the eighteenth century. The French kings at that time were trying to acquire new territories in the Low Countries, along the Rhine and towards Italy. Due to such expansionist activities, France was getting deeper and deeper into the political muddle of Europe. It left her constantly at war with the states of Europe and consumed her energies. Caring more for a few hundred square miles of territory on the frontier, France let go bigger opportunities in North America and India. This starved her of resources and made difficult the task of facing adversaries outside Europe. England, however, was interested in maintaining the balance of power in Europe and did not covet an inch of territory there. The British ambition was mainly colonial, an objective they pursued almost single-mindedly. They were successful in their struggles in India as also in North America and got the better of France in both these regions. This was brought out by Alfred Lyall when he wrote: "India was not lost by the French when Dupleix was recalled, or because La Bourdonnais and D'Ache both left the coast at critical moments or because Lally was headstrong and intractable. Still less was the loss due to any national ineptitude for distant and perilous enterprises in which the French have displayed high qualities...It was through the short-sighted, ill-managed policy of Louis XV, misguided by his mistresses and incompetent ministers, that France lost her Indian settlements in the Seven Years War." (*The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India*)

Ill-managed Policy of Imperial France

Lack of Commercial Incentive

As a department of the state, the directors of the French company were nominated by the king and they carried on the decision of two High Commissioners, also appointed by the government. Since the state guaranteed dividend to shareholders, there was very little interest in promoting the financial health of the company. As a result, the financial position of the company became progressively acute reaching a stage when it had to sell its trading right to a group of merchants from St Malo for an annual payment. Between 1721 and 1740, the French company was doing business on borrowed capital. Regular subsidies from the royal treasury, the monopoly in tobacco and gambling in lotteries were the props which kept the company functioning. It was never in a position to support the grand political designs of Dupleix or to finance his ruinously expensive wars.

Sound Commercial Base of the English

As an independent commercial venture, the English company suffered very little governmental interference in its day-to-day affairs, even though the political upheavals of the time did not leave it entirely unaffected. The financial health of the English company was a matter of keen interest to the administration, the king and the Parliament. As opposed to its French counterpart, the English company's commerce was more widespread, its business practices far better and its financial base unquestionably sounder. At least in its earlier stages, it was content in doing business quietly and did not dabble in politics. Trade was its first priority, politics figured later on.

The English conquest of Bengal in 1757 was undoubtedly of great significance. "Dupleix," writes Marriott, "made a cardinal blunder in looking for the key of India in Madras; Clive sought and found it in Bengal." Besides enhancing the political prestige of the English company, it placed at its disposal the vast resources in wealth and manpower of Bengal. The financial resources of the Company considerably improved. At a time when Count Lally was ill at ease as to how to make payments to his troops, Bengal sent not only troops but supplies to the Carnatic. The Deccan was too poor to finance the political ambition of Dupleix or military schemes of Count Lally." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*)

Views

- "The landing of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 with three ships, guided by a Gujarati pilot, Abdul Majid, is generally regarded as the beginning of a new era in world history, especially in the relationship between Asia and Europe. Although Asia and Europe had been in commercial relations with each other since antiquity, the opening of the direct sea-relations between the two was not only the fulfilment of an old dream (according to the Greek historian, Herodotus, the Phoenicians had rounded Africa in the 6th century BC) it presaged big increase of trade between the two. This, however, was only one of the objectives of the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, the opening of a new sea-route to India would give a big blow to the Muslims, the Arabs and Turks, who were the traditional enemies of Christianity, and were posing a new threat to Europe by virtue of the growing military and naval power of the Turks. A direct sea-link with India would displace the virtual monopoly of the Arabs and Turks over the trade in eastern goods, especially spices. They also vaguely hoped by their exploration of Africa they would be able to link up with the kingdom of the legendary Prior John, and be in a position to attack the Muslims from two sides. Thus, the commercial and religious objectives supported and justified each other."

  —**Dr Satish Chandra**

- "The Portuguese entered India with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other; finding much gold, they laid aside the crucifix to fill their pockets, and not being able to hold them up with one hand, they were grown so heavy, they dropped the sword, too; being found in this posture by those who came after, they were easily overcome."

  —**Alfonso de Souza**, the Portuguese Governor in India (1542-45)

- "The Dutch rivalry with the English, during the seventeenth century, was more bitter than that of the Portuguese. The policy of the Dutch in the East was influenced by two motives: one was to take revenge on Catholic Spain, the foe of their independence, and her ally Portugal, and the other was to colonise and establish settlements in the East Indies with a view to monopolising commerce in that region. They gained their first object by the gradual decline of Portuguese influence. The realisation of their second object brought them into bitter competition with the English."

  —R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and **K. Datta** in *An Advanced History of India*

- "The struggle between Dupleix and Clive in India, the defence of Arcot and the deeds which led to the founding of our Indian Empire… all these events were part of a desperate struggle for supremacy between England and France."

  —J.R. Seeley

- "The two primary conditions of success, whether commercial or military, in India were the establishment of strong *points d'appui* on the coast, and the maintenance of a naval force that could keep open communications with Europe; but the English had gained the preponderance at sea, while the French had now lost their footing on land. The causes of their failure are to be found, not in the ill-luck or incapacity of individuals (for that might have been repaired), but in the wider combination of circumstances that decided against France her great contest with England at that period."

  —Alfred Lyall *(The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India)*

- "The principal cause which had contributed to this complete victory (of the English) was certainly the relentless pressure of sea power. Although the French fleet was never destroyed, yet the cumulative effect of the three actions which were fought established an irresistible superiority, such as later in 1783 Suffren had just established when the news of peace robbed him of the fruits of victory. While the English received supplies of food and money from Bengal, recruits of men from Europe, and grain from their northern settlements, the French could receive nothing but what came to them laboriously by land. The first were constantly strengthened, the second was constantly weakened. And this enabled Coote to establish his military superiority over Lally in the field and to hem in within the walls of Pondicherry."

  —H.H. Dodwell *(The Cambridge History of India, Vol V)*

Summary

- **The Portuguese**
  - (i) Portuguese navigator Vasco Da Gama's discovery of sea-route to India in 1498 significantly influenced the course of Indian history.
  - (ii) Alfonso de Albuquerque, (1509-1515) succeeded Almeida (1505-09) as the second governor, captured Goa from the Bijapur Sultan, secured the strategic control of the Indian Ocean for Portugal and encouraged his countrymen to worry Indians. However, he persecuted the Muslims.
  - (iii) The religious policy adopted by the Portuguese discredited them as they persecuted the Muslims in the East (apart from their crusade against the Moors in North Africa). The attempts of the Jesuits failed to convert Mughal emperors (especially, Akbar and Jahangir, who seemed apparently inclined) into Christianity.
  - (iv) The main causes for the decline of the Portuguese power in India were: (a) emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia and north India and the appearance as neighbours of the turbulent Maratha power; (b) political fears roused by the activities of Jesuit missionaries, and hatred of persecution (such as inquisition) that caused reaction against Portuguese spiritual pressure; (c) rise of the English and Dutch commercial ambitions challenging the Portuguese supremacy; (d) rampant corruption, greed and selfishness along with piracy and clandestine trade practices of the Portuguese administration in India; (e) diversion of Portuguese colonising ambitions towards the West due to the discovery of Brazil.
- **The Dutch**
  - (i) Compared to other European Powers (like the English, the French and the Portuguese), the Dutch had a brief presence in India.
  - (ii) The United East India Company of the Netherlands was founded in 1602 and it succeeded in extending its influence in the East due to the very large financial resources it commanded and the state patronage it received.
  - (iii) The Dutch secured the monopoly of the spice trade in the East by removing the Portuguese influence throughout the 17th century.
  - (iv) The main Dutch factories in India were at Masulipatam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karikas (1645), Chinsurah (1653), Cassimbazar, Baranagore, Patna, Balasore, Negapatam (1658) and Cochin (1663).
  - (v) The defeat of the Dutch in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry and the shifting or their attention towards the Malay Archipelago led to the decline of the Dutch power in India.
- **The English**
  - (i) The two events that stimulated the British commercial enterprise were Drake's Voyage round the world and the English victory over the might Spanish Armada in the late 16th century.
  - (ii) Queen Elizabeth I's Charter led to the formation of the East India Company (first titled 'the Governor and Company Merchants of London trading into the East Indies') in AD 1600.
  - (iii) With Captain Thomas Best's victory over the Portuguese (1612), the English established their first factory at Surat (1613). Subsequently Sir Thomas Roe secured permission from Jahangir to establish factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach.
  - (iv) Bombay came under the control of the Company, with Charles II (who received it as a part of the Portuguese dowry) leasing it out to the English Company for an annual rent of 10 pounds.
  - (v) Madras with the Fort St. George replaced Masulipatam as the English headquarters on the east coast, when the former was given by the Chandragiri chief to the English in 1639.
  - (vi) The city of Calcutta grew from the development of three villages Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata secured from the Mughal governor of Bengal. The fortified settlement was named Fort William (1700) and it became the seat of British power in India till 1911.
  - (vii) Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar's farmans in 1717 secured significant privileges for the company in Bengal, Gujarat and Hyderabad.

Summary

► **The French**

(i) Louis XIV's able minister Colbert laid the foundation of the French East India Company (Compagnie des Indes Orientales) in 1664.

(ii) The French developed the site of Pondicherry as their headquarters, which was granted to Francois Martin, the director of Masulipatam factory, by Valikondapuram governor Sher Khan Lodi in 1673.

(iii) Though the French encountered troubles and reverses from the Dutch and the English, their company was reorganised as the 'Perpetual Company of the India' in 1720.

(iv) Lenoir and Dumas consolidated the French power in India between 1720 and 1742 and other factories were established in Bengal, the Coromandel and the Malabar Coast.

► **Anglo-French Struggle for Supremacy**

(i) The need for protecting and expanding their commercial interests led the English and French companies to fight for supremacy in India.

(ii) Political developments in the Carnatic and Europe provided pretexts to contest their claims which resulted in three Carnatic Wars.

(iii) The First Carnatic War started in 1740 was an extension of the Anglo-French rivalry in Europe and it ended in 1748 with the Treaty of Aix-La Chapelle.

(iv) The Second Carnatic War (1749-54), like the First Carnatic War, also remained inconclusive. But it undermined the French position in South India vis-à-vis the English.

(v) The Third Carnatic War (1758-63), known for the Battle of Wandiwash (1760-61), was an echo of the struggle in Europe. It sealed the political destiny of the French in India and made the English the master of the South.

► **Causes of French Failure**

Though the French had some exceptionally brilliant leaders, they failed against the English due to certain strategic mistakes on the part of their leaders, especially Count Lally. The other factors were ill-managed policy of imperial France, lack of commercial incentive for the French, solid support of the English government and their sound commercial base that resulted in the English victory over the French.

CHAPTER 3

India on the Eve of British Conquest

DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

A drastic decline came about in the power and prestige of the great Mughal Empire by the first half of the eighteenth century. The empire which held sway over a major part of India for more than two centuries was reduced to a near rectangular wedge of territory about 250 miles from north to south and 100 miles broad. Not only did the political boundary of the empire shrink, but there was also a collapse of the administrative structure, so assiduously built by great rulers like Akbar and Shahjahan, under the weight of its own inner contradictions. On the ruins of the empire rose several independent principalities in different parts of the country.

Aurangzeb's misguided policies had weakened the stability of the Mughal state. But the twin pillars, namely, the army and the administrative system, remained upright in 1707. Wars of succession and weak rulers plagued Delhi from 1707 to 1719. Though Muhammad Shah ruled for a long spell of 29 years, a revival of the imperial fortunes was not possible, due to his incompetence. It was during Muhammad Shah's reign that Nizam-ul-Mulk resigned as wazir and went into the Deccan to establish the independent state of Hyderabad in 1724. Bengal, Awadh and Punjab followed the same pattern and the empire disintegrated into successor states. Several local chiefs began to claim their independence and the Marathas began to make their bid to inherit the imperial mantle.

Apart from these internal weaknesses, the Mughal Empire had to face external challenge in the form of several invasions from the north-west. The Persian emperor, Nadir Shah, attacked India in 1738-39, conquered Lahore and defeated the Mughal army at Karnal on February 13, 1939. Delhi was devastated when the invader captured the Mughal emperor, Muhammad Shah, and the city was laid waste. Seventy crore rupees were gathered from the official treasury and the safes of the rich nobles. The Peacock Throne and Kohinoor diamond were the two most priced items of Nadir Shah's loot. He was so happy with the amount looted that he gave his subjects, the Persians, a tax holiday for the next three years. Nadir Shah gained the strategically important Mughal territory to the west of the River Indus including Kabul, making India vulnerable to attacks from the north-west once more.

After Nadir's death, Ahmad Shah Abdali established his rule over Afghanistan and invaded North India several times between 1748 and 1767. He continued harassing the Mughals who tried to buy peace in 1751-52 by ceding the Punjab to him. In 1757, when the British gained a foothold in Bengal by winning the Battle of Plassey, he captured Delhi and left behind an Afghan caretaker to watch over the Mughal emperor. His most striking victory over the Marathas in 1761 is well-known in history as the 'Third Battle of Panipat'.

Some historians believe that the decline of the Mughal Empire was due to a sharp downward trend in the Indian economy in the mid-eighteenth century. It is true that war and anarchy for varying lengths of time in many parts of the empire brought

about dire financial distress. The central authority lost its power and this led to the decline of Delhi, all the more due to repeated invasions. Contingents departed for the provinces, the markets lost their primacy, and artisans left to earn their livelihood elsewhere. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Delhi was well on its way to becoming the "deserted garden of Ghalib's melancholy poetry". Similar was the fate of Agra and Awadh. The situation was compounded further by the Sikh uprising which blocked the trade route to Lahore and beyond. In general, the flourishing urban centres of north-western India came to be in a state of decay by the mid-18th century. In the eastern provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the incursions of the Marathas brought about every evil attending a destructive war.

The process of disintegration of the Mughal empire began during the reign of Aurangzeb, but it picked up momentum only after his death in 1707. Even so, conditions were not so deplorable that the process could not be checked. Although Mughal authority was challenged by several chiefs and rulers, none could assert independence in the face of the Mughal might. The Sikhs, Marathas and Rajputs did not possess the capacity to overthrow the empire; they merely resisted Mughal power to gain independence in their respective territories. Thus, if the successors of Aurangzeb had been capable rulers, the empire might not have fallen. During the medieval age, an empire's fate depended on the capability, or otherwise, of the emperor. The successors of Aurangzeb, however, proved to be a group of incapable, weak and licentious monarchs who hastened the process of disintegration and finally contributed to its collapse.

There were other problems facing the later Mughals after Aurangzeb's death. Two classes shared the power of the state with the emperor during the medieval period—the zamindars and the nobles. The zamindars were hereditary owners of their lands who enjoyed certain privileges on hereditary basis, known variously as rais, rajas, thakurs, khuts and deshmukhs. They occupied an important place in the empire because they helped in the collection of revenue and in local administration, for which they maintained soldiers. Though the Mughals had tried to curb the power of the zamindars and maintain direct contact with the peasants, they had not succeeded wholly. During the reign of Aurangzeb itself, there was a marked increase in their power and influence. The biggest fallout of this was that regional loyalties came to be encouraged. Many local zamindars helped the other powerful class within the empire, the nobility, to take advantage of the weakness of the empire and carve out independent kingdoms for themselves.

The nobility consisted of people who were either assigned large jagirs and mansabs or appointed subedars of Mughal subas and given the responsibility of maintaining these. This class included many Rajput rulers, subedars and mansabdars. Mughal rule has often been defined as "the rule of the nobility", because the Mughal nobles played a central role in administering the empire. Although Akbar had provided a well-knit organisation where the nobility was concerned, the nobility was divided due to distinctions of religion, homeland and tribe, and each category formed a group of its own. Mutual rivalry, jealousy and contest for power among the various groups during the rule of the later Mughals not only reduced the prestige of the emperor, but also contributed to the decline of the empire.

Aurangzeb's reign witnessed powerful regional groups like the Jats, Sikhs and Marathas who began to fight the Mughal state in their bid to create kingdoms of their own. They did not succeed in their efforts then, but each of them made an impact on the future course of political events in their respective regions. Their continual struggle against the empire for political ascendancy weakened it considerably. Aurangzeb, and after him Bahadur Shah, by attempting to suppress the Rajputs, spurred them to wage battle after battle against the Mughals. The later Mughals did attempt a policy of reconciliation with the Rajputs, but by then it was already too late. The Rajputs no longer trusted the Mughals to forge an alliance with them for the welfare of the empire.

The Marathas too proved to be a formidable enemy. Their aim, at first limited only to regaining control over Maharashtra, broadened to include getting legal sanction for collecting sardeshmukhi and chauth from the Mughal emperor, throughout India. They penetrated territories of North India and by 1740, succeeded in spreading their influence over the provinces of Gujarat, Malwa and

Bundelkhand. The Rajput struggle against the Mughal empire and the growing ambition and power of the Marathas, thus, adversely affected the Mughal might.

Then there were several economic and administrative problems plaguing the empire. The number of amirs and their ranks or mansabs had increased so sharply that there was little land left to be distributed among them as jagirs. Aurangzeb tried to resolve the problem of acute shortage of jagirs or bejagiri by showing enhanced income from the jagirs on record. But this was a short-sighted measure which resulted in the amirs trying to recover the recorded income from their jagirs by pressurising the peasantry. The move resulted in antagonising both—the amirs and the overburdened peasantry. Added to this were the wars, the luxurious lifestyles of emperors and amirs alike, the reduction in *khalisa* (crown) land, all of which burdened the state. The net result was that the income of the state failed to meet its expenditure.

The declining economic situation had a negative impact on all classes of people whether amirs, traders, artisans, labourers or peasants. The political implications included increased group rivalries at the court, attempts at carving out independent kingdoms by the amirs, and a weakened central administration and military.

These economic and administrative problems only multiplied following the death of Aurangzeb.

In short, some of the main causes for the downfall of the Mughals were as follows:

(i) The government of the Mughals was a personal despotism and so its success depended on the character of the reigning autocrat. The later Mughals were worthless and neglected the administration of the state.

(ii) With the absence of a definite law of succession (law of primogeniture according to which the eldest son of the monarch became the natural successor), there always occurred a war of succession; this weakened the stability of the government, and fostered partisanship at the cost of patriotism.

(iii) The degeneration of the rulers led to the degeneration of the nobility, with factious quarrels and intrigues costing the empire heavily.

(iv) The deterioration of the army also proved disastrous for the empire.

(v) The empire had become too vast and unwieldy to be efficiently governed by weak rulers from a central authority, especially in the medieval conditions of transport and communication.

(vi) Aurangzeb's religious policy antagonised the Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats and Marathas who revolted.

(vii) Aurangzeb's Deccan policy was a complete failure and, to a major extent, it caused the downfall of the Mughal empire.

(viii) Invasions of Irani and Durrani kingdoms gave a death-blow to the Mughal empire.

(ix) Endless wars, stagnation in agriculture, and decline in trade and industry caused economic downfall.

(x) The advent of the European powers who took advantage of the prevailing conditions in India also hastened the process of disintegration of the Mughal empire.

Historiographical Perspective

The decline of Mughal empire and the emergence of a number of regional powers have been the subject of intense debate among historians, and scholarly opinion is broadly divided into two groups—those who view the matter as generally empire-related and those who regard the developments as region-related. The empire-related or the Mughal-centric view identifies the causes of the decline within the structure and functioning of the empire itself. The region-related view finds the causes of Mughal decline in the turmoil and instability in the different parts of the empire.

Mughal-Centric Perspective

The empire-centric view has gone through different stages. Initially, it focused on the individual rulers and their policies, the emphasis being on the deterioration of the character of the ruling elite, the emperors and their nobles. Jadunath Sarkar, for instance, has analysed the developments in this period in the context of law and order, and holds Aurangzeb totally responsible for the decline. As Aurangzeb, according to Sarkar, discriminated against his nobles on the basis of religion, there grew widespread discontent among them, especially the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Sikhs. In

his opinion, the evils of Aurangzeb's policies could have been eliminated had his successors and their nobles been men of courage and determination. As, however, they were not so endowed, the decline started by Aurangzeb's policies gathered momentum leading to the dissolution of the empire.

Views of Satish Chandra

Historian Satish Chandra has examined the structure of the empire in his attempt to find the causes of the decline of the Mughals. He concentrated his researches on the working of two key institutions of the Mughal empire—the mansabdari and the jagirdari systems. The nobles were the principal state functionaries, who were given ranks in keeping with their positions in the Mughal hierarchy. These ranks known as mansabs entitled the holder to assignments of land revenue (jagir). Among his duties, the mansabdar was required to maintain a contingent of troops who were paid from the revenue income of the jagir. These soldiers were the power source of the mansabdar, helping him to collect the revenue from the people. Thus, the availability of revenues to be assigned and the ability of the nobles to collect that revenue became the two crucial prerequisites for an effective working of the system. In the opinion of Satish Chandra, towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the mansabdari-jagirdari system went into a progressive disarray and, in the regimes of his successors, led to the collapse of the empire.

Views of Athar Ali

Focussing on the nobility and their politics in the late seventeenth century, M. Athar Ali says that the problems arising from the annexation of the Marathas and people of the Deccan into the Mughal nobility and the consequent shortage of jagirs for distribution created a sort of crisis in the working of the system. All the nobles tried to get better jagirs which were becoming rare due to the swelling ranks of the nobles. Consequently, the political structure, which was based on the jagirdari system to a large extent, was weakened.

Views of Nurul Hasan

According to Nurul Hasan (historian), the developing agrarian relations during the Mughal rule brought about an authority structure which was like a pyramid, resulting in overlapping of rights of various kinds. Consequently, the bulk of the revenue demand was passed on to the peasants. The decline in the authority of the state and the pressure on jagirs compounded the situation further, leading to an agrarian crisis.

The zamindars, by and large, were loyal to the state, but the agrarian conditions were such that conflicts between them and the state, as also amongst themselves, were inevitable and this created law and order problems, in which the authority of the state emerged second best. And, whatever equilibrium was maintained in such instances was totally disturbed after Aurangzeb's death, giving the zamindars the upper hand. They had none to oppose them and no effort was made to improve the pattern of agrarian relations. The collapse of the agrarian system became inevitable.

Views of Irfan Habib

Dr Irfan Habib (historian) has analysed extensively the mechanism of the collection of revenue the Mughals had evolved, and concluded that it was inherently flawed. The policy framed at the top set the revenue at the highest possible level so as to strengthen the military capacity of the empire. The nobles, with a view to earning more, added to it, thereby subjecting the peasantry to a crushing burden which ultimately destroyed the latter's capacity to pay the revenue. As the jagirdars were frequently transferred from one place to another, they had little interest in any long-term agricultural development, and tended to squeeze the peasant for maximum revenue in order to boost the incomes.

As the cultivators had no means of changing the situation, they ran away to escape this terrible oppression. Villages were deserted overnight with the inhabitants seeking shelter in towns and other villages. In some instances, the cultivators rebelled and refused to pay anymore, but were ultimately suppressed. Habib says that it was this condition and plight of the cultivators that considerably weakened the political structure of the empire.

Views of Pearson, et al

M.N. Pearson, J.F. Richards and Hardy also cite the Mughal involvement in the Deccan and their fight with the Marathas as the causes leading to the Mughal decline. However, they differ from Habib in their understanding of the nature of the

empire. They feel that the lives of the people were more governed by the local leadership rather than the imperial state. It was only the nobles, who were free of such 'primordial attachments', who upheld the concept of the Mughal empire. They were encouraged by the patronage of the state and this in turn, depended on military success and resulting expansion. As the military successes dwindled and the fertile areas to be given as jagirs became rare, this patronised bureaucracy (as opposed to an impersonalised bureaucracy) became more and more disaffected, which, in turn, made the political structure wobbly.

However, bejagiri or absence of jagirs was not the cause of decline, according to Richards, at least not in the Deccan. He says it was due to a wrong decision of Aurangzeb. Using archival materials from Golconda, Richards has shown that in order to finance for military campaigns and to chastise the Marathas, Aurangzeb kept most of the fertile lands as *khalisa* or crown land, thereby precipitating a shortage of jagirs for distribution among the newly inducted nobles in the Deccan.

Where the 'jagirdari crisis' is concerned, Satish Chandra also showed from recently found sources that bejagiri had not much to do with the crisis in the jagirdari system. He is of the view that the growth in the size of the ruling class or the corresponding shortage of available jagirs to be distributed were not actually the causes leading to the crisis in the jagirdari system. The jagirdari system became non-functional which led to the crisis. He says that the system was based on the tripolar relationship between the peasants, the zamindars and the mansabdar-jagirdar. The smooth working of this set-up depended on the ability of the mansabdar-jagirdar to collect the revenue from the zamindar and to keep the ryot or the peasants engaged in agricultural production. The mansabdar needed troops to exercise his authority, and for the maintenance of troops he needed money to be collected as revenue from the zamindars. Anything which disturbed this three-sided relationship also hindered the efficient functioning of the system.

Satish Chandra says that the dysfunction at the jagirdari system was seen in the 17th century itself, during the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan. When the empire had expanded beyond the fertile lands of the Ganga-Jamuna doab, the problem manifested itself as the shortfall between the *jama* (the assessed revenue) and the *hasil* (the revenue actually collected in the jagirs). A mansabdar considered himself lucky if the *hasil* was five-monthly, that is five-twelfth of the *jama*. As such, he had to trim his expenses by reducing proportionately the number of troops he was supposed to maintain. In the Deccan, the *hasil* was three-monthly, and so the jagirdar had 25 per cent of men required to exercise his authority. Such emasculated authority was, however, not quite effective, and as a result the system fell apart. It was not possible to sustain the tripolar relationship any longer under such circumstances.

Satish Chandra further argues that this crisis of the *jagirdari* system could have been averted if there had been a rapid development of the economy in the agricultural as well as non-agricultural sector. This, in turn, raises the question as to whether or not the nobles invested their surplus income in trade and commerce. Alternatively, was the income generated by trade and commerce spent on ostentatious luxury or was it invested back to generate more money? There are instances of Mughal nobles and members of the royal family investing money in commercial ventures, but the examples of a lavish lifestyle are far more common. Furthermore, archival material from the regions show that, as a class on an all-India level, merchants and traders were not very rich and did not enjoy any power, political or otherwise. In general, it can be said that in Mughal India politics and commerce were kept separated.

Stagnation in Agriculture

For similar reasons, agrarian development was also not possible. As the state policies were aimed at the preservation of the small peasant economy, the *khud-kasht* (rich peasants) were not allowed to cultivate their lands with hired help, or to extend their cultivation at the expense of the land held by the *pahis* (middle-level peasants who did not possess any land and tilled the lands of others in villages). Some of the rich peasants lent money on interest or mortgaged the lands of poor peasants, thus reducing them to the position of share croppers. Their only way to prosperity was to become intermediary zamindars or *mahajans* (money-lenders-cum-grain merchants). It is for this reason that

Politics of Otherwise Non-Political Groups: Karen Leonard's Views

The decline of the Mughal empire has also been seen in the context of the participation of groups, normally regarded as non-political, in the 18th century political process of India and its consequences. A close parallel is the role of the 10th-century Genoese and European (Dutch, German) bankers in the politics of Spain and Portugal when they financed the overseas expenditure of those states to America, India and other places. In the opinion of Karen Leonard, "indigenous banking firms were indispensable allies of the Mughal state", and the exalted nobles "were more than likely to be directly dependent upon these firms." She says that during the period 1650-1750, these indigenous banking firms shifted their gaze and began "the redirection of their economic and political support" to regional politics and rulers, including the English East India Company in Bengal. As a consequence of this change in policy of the financiers, there was bankruptcy, a series of political crises and the inevitable collapse of the Mughal empire.

Interestingly, Pearson and Philip Calkin in their researches on Mughal economy, using the same source materials as Karen Leonard, stop short of saying that the Mughals depended on the money advanced by indigenous bankers. In view of this, and considering that Leonard has not given any extra evidence, her point of view, though refreshingly original, remains just that—an interesting but unsupported point of view.

the agrarian economy developed extremely slowly and failed to avoid the ever-present and growing jagirdari crisis. Then there was the medieval social system which limited agricultural growth as also the administrative structure based on it. Other factors like the growth in size of the ruling class and the ostentatious life of the nobles further compounded the process by limiting the surplus available for expanding production.

Regional History Perspective

Awadh and Punjab: Case Studies by M. Alam and Chetan Singh

Muzaffar Alam and Chetan Singh surveyed the regions of Awadh and Punjab in their studies to arrive at the causes of the decline of the Mughal empire. Muzaffar Alam examined the comparative developments in the Mughal subas of Awadh and Punjab, while Chetan Singh made an extensive study of the regional history of 17th century Punjab. Their observations are significant because they illuminate the nature and working of the Mughal empire, the process of its gradual weakening and its eventual decline. Alam studied the regional literature to get a perspective of the Mughal suba of Awadh and observed that the Mughal empire signified a coordinating agency between conflicting communities and the various indigenous socio-political systems at different levels. He found that the empire played a negative role in such a set-up. It drew sustenance and strength because the local communities and their systems were unable to mobilise themselves beyond certain narrow bounds. This showed the inherently defective nature of political integration in Mughal India, which depended mostly on the coordination of the interests of the various social groups and their political activities which were led by local magnates.

Awadh and Punjab: Case Studies by M. Alam and Chetan Singh

These worthies or the nobles knew that they would not be able to get rich on their own. It was their appointing authority, the emperor, on whom they depended for power and pelf. Yet, they did not possess any hereditary wealth which they could increase or bequeath to their descendants. On top of that, their resources were scrutinised and regulated by the emperor, making them, in a sense, a part of the empire. But such an arrangement, where the emperor is in effect the whole universe, also created tensions, and the nobles were not free of them. For instance, the policy of jagir transfers, meant to curb the tendency of the nobles to build a personal base, had the primary objective of strengthening the imperial base. As, however, it ran against the interests of the nobles, they opposed it and resisted its implementation. In many parts of the empire, the jagirdars stayed put in the same jagirs in the seventeenth century. Thus, the local elites (zamindars), the nobles along with the *madad-i-ma'ash* holders (learned men who were granted revenue-free lands) and others who included important officials formed the structural framework of the empire. The loads and tensions of such structural members (using an engineering concept) were balanced against each other so as to form a composite whole. For instance, the emperor appointed *madad-i-ma'ash* grantees in distant areas

in the belief that they would keep in check the local influence of the zamindars. But the co-sharers of power in the regions, the nobles, the zamindars and the *madad-i-ma'ash* holders, all continually tried to increase their own influence, which meant that they poached on each other's preserves. The imperial police was to balance these social and political groups constituting the base of the empire.

Views of M. Alam

M. Alam says that the Mughal power declined when the state was unable to balance the pushes and pulls of these elements as also of locally prominent persons such as the shaikhzadar in Awadh. In the 18th century, the nobles forged political alliances with the zamindars in order to improve their fortunes. Added to it was the ever-present rivalry between the other groups for more power. Earlier such tendencies were kept in check by using military force, or *madad-i-ma'ash* grants were made in the vicinity of the areas belonging to recalcitrant zamindars—a controlling measure widely used in Awadh.

Alam's main enquiry was to find out the causes which led to the loss of imperial control over the nobles, the zamindars and the *madad-i-ma'ash* holders in the early 18th century. The main cause, in his opinion, was the impressive economic progress in the Awadh and Punjab regions during the time as opposed to the moribund conditions prevailing in Delhi and Agra. As a consequence of this prosperity, social groups and political elements in the Awadh and Punjab which hitherto had helped the emperor to maintain stability now began to take advantage of the economic upswing in their regions. A number of them got rich quick, thus having the means to start encroaching on the rights and privileges of others. A weak and financially distressed central authority had no power to intervene effectively, and the cracks in the Mughal edifice started to show up. Alam says that the Mughal decline was due to this new kind of political transformation in Awadh and Punjab with the emergence and configuration of the elements of a new subedari. These were the seeds for the emergence of independent regional units in both Awadh and Punjab. However, the result in Punjab was chaos all round, while in Awadh a stable ruling dynasty emerged.

Chetan Singh's Views

Chetan Singh's study of the history of the Mughal suba of Punjab is in the context of Mughal politics as well as the wider political changes which were sweeping through the contemporary West Asian world. Although Punjab was linked to the Mughal administrative core, this conventional mode of integration had some serious limitations. For example, there were a variety of stresses to which the local polity and society were exposed, and the administration dealt with them by transgressing the formal Mughal administrative divisions and subdivisions. This was true for the general administration as well as the revenue department. In the first, a flexibility was maintained for practical benefits like opening new offices for performing local work. In the revenue department, it was seen in the emergence of new rules and conventions which, along with the existing procedure, ensured a smooth working (and stability) of the system.

Impact of Political Upheaval

This position, however, changed towards the end of the 17th century because of the heavy silting of River Indus which seriously affected the river-borne traffic of Punjab. Its most adverse effect was the gradual diminution of the highly commercialised economy of the Punjab. As if that was not enough, the political upheaval in contemporary Turkey, the Persian invasion of Kandahar and the Mughal failure to recover Kandahar brought the overland traffic also to a virtual standstill. Then came the Yusufzai rebellion (1667) in north-west Punjab and the Afridi uprising in 1678. Singh says that the turmoil had grave political and social repercussions in Punjab, seriously disrupting trade and commerce which, in turn, damaged the region's commercialised agricultural economy. The inescapable social unrest in the wake of weakening of the socio-economic structure occurred in Punjab. As, however, the prosperity due to the flourishing economy earlier was unevenly shared, the hardships resulting from a declining trade varied in different areas of the Punjab. It so happened that the areas affected by the Sikh rebellion were also the ones which were most commercialised. Consequently, such areas were the first to be seriously disadvantaged due to economic regression. Singh argues that the social unrest which ultimately led to the separation of Punjab from the empire was the culmination of

processes that had been operating over a long time. These processes were in operation in the region long before the weakening of the Mughal empire in the 18th century.

The region-related views on the decline of the Mughal empire attempt to establish that not only did different subas of the empire go out of the control of Delhi for different reasons, but also very often these separations or dissociations were the result of economic, political and social developments and upheavels not directly connected with the Mughal state.

The above analysis suggests that we cannot find any single explanation commonly applicable to the problems of the Mughal empire in all its regions and provinces. Similarly, it is difficult to accept a view of Mughal decline which applies uniformly to all parts of the Mughal empire. The Mughal empire at best represented a consensus of both the centre and the peripheries which got disturbed in the early 18th century. Different regions followed different paths of dissociation from Delhi and pursued their own development. The 18th century regional histories thus indicate the endeavour to make use of the possibilities for growth within existing social structures. The regional-history perspective on the Mughal decline negates the application of one general theory to explain Mughal collapse all over India. The process was much more complex than what the proponents of the Mughal-centric perspective would have us believe. What followed then was a process of readjustment of all the diverse constituents of this system, the result being a dislocation of the empire and the emergence of regional powers.

EMERGENCE OF AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL STATES

Types of States

There has been a tendency in the contemporary Persian and early British historiography in undermining the significance of the emergence of independent regional powers during the first half of the 18th century thereby overprojecting the decline of the Mughal Empire and glorifying the establishment of the British rule in India. Recent research on the 18th century draws our attention to the need to understand the dynamics of the Mughal provincial polity during this period. The Mughal administration was centralised in character, and its success greatly depended on the power and ability of the emperor to contain the nobles, zamindars, jagirdars, and provincial officials. In fact, there was a balance and coordination of interests and aspirations between the emperor, who commanded a dominant position, and others. With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, this balance was destroyed, resulting in the emasculation of the authority of the Mughal emperor. Unfortunately, the central administration was crippled by financial crisis and factional rivalry among the nobles, which could not be prevented by the successors of Aurangzeb. The emperors also failed to provide the required protection to the provincial governors. As a result, the provincial governors, at the beginning of the 18th century, began to develop an independent power base. Many of them began to make local appointments with prior permission from the emperor and attempted to establish dynastic rule in the provinces. They paid theoretical allegiance to the emperor in the form of sending tributes, but in reality assumed independent power. Beginning with the Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan in 1724, the eastern Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa went out of Delhi's control in about 1740, followed by Gujarat and Sind in 1750 and Awadh in 1754. Close to Delhi, independent Pathan dynasties ruled Farrukhabad and Rohilakhand, but the back of the Rajput alliance broken by Aurangzeb was never fully restored. In the distant south, an adventurer, Haidar Ali, made the former kingdom of Mysore quite powerful. A number of small principalities ruled the country's southernmost areas. Thus three broad categories of states emerged in different parts of Mughal India:

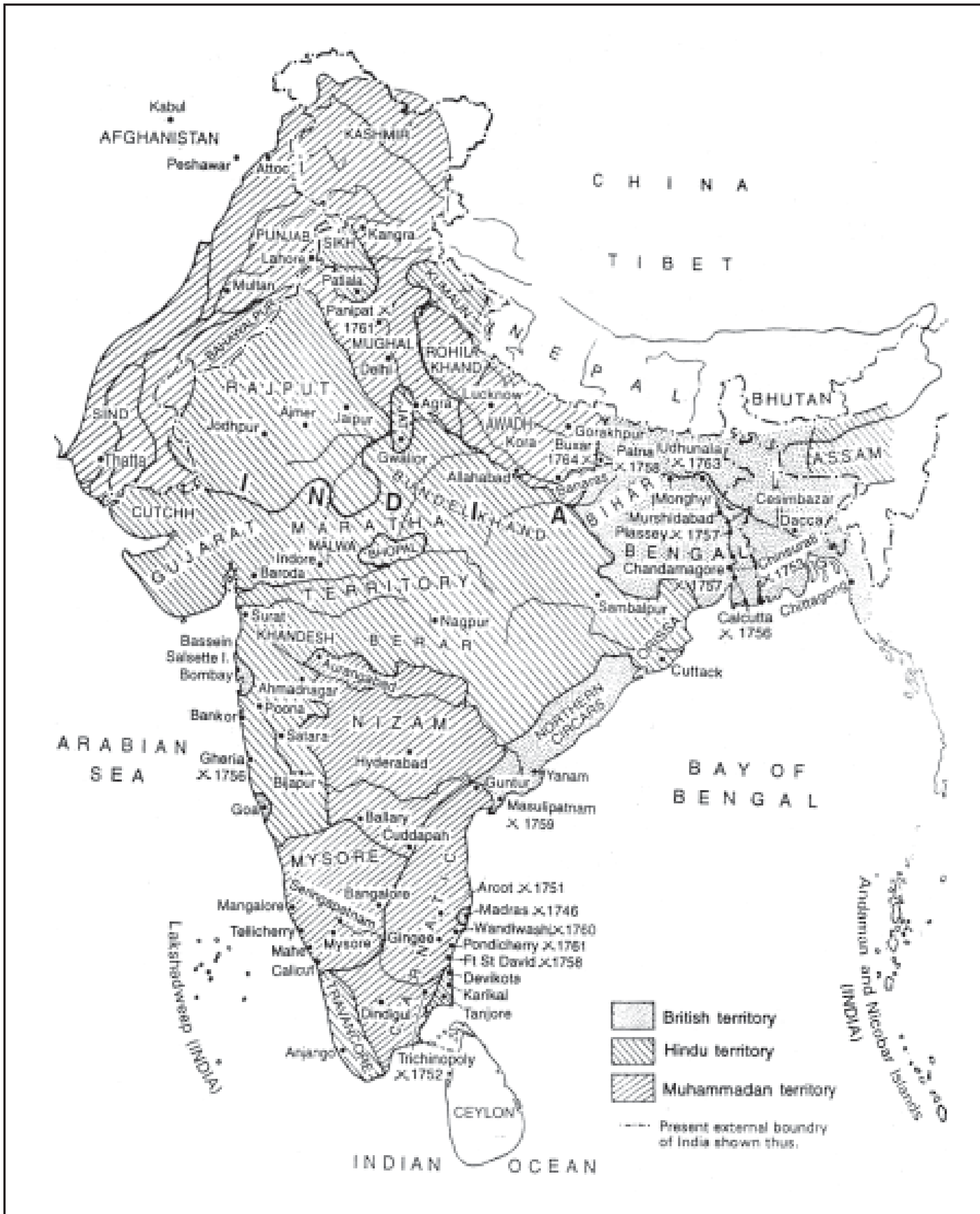
(i) successor states which broke away from the Mughal Empire (such as Awadh, Bengal, Hyderabad)

(ii) independent states which came into existence primarily due to destabilisation of the Mughal control over the provinces (namely, Mysore, Kerala, Rajput states)

(iii) new states established by the rebels against the Mughals (such as the Maratha state, Punjab, Jat state)

(i) Successor States

Hyderabad, Awadh and Bengal broke away from the Mughal empire and established independent



Decline of the Mughal Empire

states. This breakaway occurred in phases—the revolt of individuals followed by that of the social groups, communities, and finally regions. The zamindars in these provinces resisted imperial demands and the provincial governors who did not get support from Delhi tried to secure the support of the local elites. These states did not formally renounce their allegiance; they merely started exercising full autonomy. A new political order was constructed within the Mughal institutional framework.

Hyderabad

The death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 marked the close of a glorious first chapter in the history of Hyderabad. It had started with the foundation of the state in 1724 by Nizam-ul-Mulk, a prominent noble at the time the Saiyids controlled the court at Delhi. The Nizam-ul-Mulk assisted Mohammed Shah in deposing the Saiyids and in return was given the office of subedar of the Deccan.

Nizam-ul-Mulk reorganised the administration and streamlined the revenue system. After a brief tenure as wazir at Delhi from 1722 to 1724, he returned to the Deccan to set up a state which was independent in practice, though he continued to declare allegiance to the Mughal emperor. The formation of a regional elite gave stability to this independence, as Karen Leonard has shown in her study of Hyderabad's political system. Reform of the revenue system, subduing of zamindars, and tolerance towards Hindus were among his wise policies.

But his death in 1748 exposed Hyderabad to the machinations of the Marathas and, later, the foreign companies. The Marathas invaded the state at will and imposed *chauth* upon the helpless inhabitants. Nizam-ul-Mulk's son, Nasir Jang, and grandson, Muzaffar Jang, entered into a bloody war of succession. The French under Dupleix used this opportunity to play off one group against the other and supported Muzzaffar Jang, who gave them handsome monetary and territorial rewards.

Bengal

Independence in practice and allegiance in name to the power at Delhi marked the rule of the Nawabs of Bengal. Murshid Kuli Khan became Governor of Bengal in 1717 under Mughal aegis but his link with Delhi was limited to sending tribute. Shuja-ud-din became Nawab in 1727 and ruled till 1739 when Alivardi Khan assumed charge. In 1756, Siraj-ud-daula became the Nawab of Bengal on the death of his grandfather, Alivardi Khan.

The Bengal rulers did not discriminate on religious grounds in making public appointments, and Hindus reached high positions in the civil service and obtained lucrative zamindaris. The nawabs were fiercely independent and maintained strict control over the foreign companies trading in their realm. Fortifications were rightly not allowed in the French and English factories at Chandernagar and Calcutta, nor did the nawab concede the foreign powers special privileges. The sovereignty of the ruler was upheld even in the face of the threats of the British East India Company to use force to obtain its end.

However, the nawabs suffered defeat at the hands of the British because of their weak and meagre army and their underestimation of the danger posed by the company. The British victory at Plassey in 1757 inaugurated a new phase in British relations with India.

Awadh

Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk gradually secured the independence of Awadh after his appointment as governor in 1722. The main problem in Awadh was posed by the zamindars who not only refused to pay land revenue but behaved like autonomous chiefs with their forts and armies. Saadat Khan subdued them and introduced a new land settlement which provided protection to the peasants from the zamindars. The jagirdari system was reformed and jagirdaris were granted to the local gentry, who were also given positions in the administration and army. A "regional ruling group" emerged, consisting of shaikhzadas, Afghans and sections of the Hindus.

(ii) Independent States

Rajputs

The Rajput rulers did not lag behind in consolidating their position by taking advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal empire. None of the Rajput rulers was large enough to contend with the Marathas or the British for the position of paramount power. Their method was to slowly loosen their ties with Delhi and function as independent states in practice. They participated in the struggle for power at the court

of Delhi and gained lucrative and influential governorships from the Mughal emperors.

Rajput policy continued to be fractured in the post-Mughal period. Each state followed a policy of constant expansion absorbing weak neighbours whenever possible. This took place within the state too, with one faction ousting the other in a continuous game of one-upmanship at the court of the Mughals. The most well-known Rajput ruler, Jai Singh of Amber, ruled Jaipur from 1699 to 1743.

The mid-18th century witnessed the emergence of Mysore as a significant power in South India.

Mysore

Haidar Ali laid the foundations of a powerful Mysore which was consolidated by his able son, Tipu Sultan. Though Haidar Ali was only a junior officer of common parentage in the Mysore army, he gradually rose to be a brilliant commander. His most remarkable achievement was his realisation that only a modern army could be the basis of a powerful State. Consequently, he inducted French experts to set up an arsenal and train the troops along Western lines. Soon after, he was able to overthrow the real power behind the Mysore throne, the minister Nanjaraj, in 1761.

The boundaries of the Mysore state, thereby, extended to include the rich coastal areas of Canara and Malabar. An expansionist at heart, Haidar naturally clashed with other powers in the region, the Marathas, Hyderabad and the new entrants in the game, the British. In 1769, he inflicted a heavy defeat on British forces very close to Madras. With his death in 1782, his son Tipu became sultan and extended his father's policies further. [We shall deal with Tipu's relations with the English in a later chapter.]

The three states of Cochin, Travancore and Calicut together comprised the present state of Kerala. The

Kerala

territories of a large number of chiefs and rajas had been incorporated into these states by 1763. But the expansion of Mysore proved destructive for the stability of Kerala. Haidar Ali invaded Kerala in 1766 and annexed Malabar and Calicut. Travancore, the southernmost state and by far the most prominent one, was spared. Travancore had gained in importance after 1729 when its king, Martanda Varma, expanded his dominions with the help of a strong and modern army trained on Western lines and well equipped with modern weapons. The Dutch were ousted from Kerala and the feudal chiefs suppressed. Martanda Varma's vision extended beyond expansion to development of his state and provision was made for irrigation and transport and communication. His successor Rama Varma, a man of great creativity and learning, including Western knowledge, was responsible for making Trivandrum, the capital, a centre of scholarship and art.

(iii) New States

Aurangzeb's ambition to crush the Marathas completely could not be realised. The Marathas

Marathas

posed a solid challenge to the decaying Mughal Empire during the post-1707 period. Though they were one of the powers who could have filled in the power vacuum by replacing the Mughals as an all-India power, they failed to do so because of their lack of unity and their non-progressive outlook.

Shahu, the grandson of Shivaji, who remained in honourable captivity in the Mughal camp for about nineteen years, was released soon after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. An open struggle between him and Tarabai, his aunt, followed till 1714. Shahu emerged victorious, with the help of his trustworthy and capable minister, Balaji Vishwanath. In 1713, Shahu made Balaji *peshwa* or prime minister as he himself lacked administrative experience. The new Peshwa quickly consolidated Shahu's hold and his own over Maratha sardars and also a major part of Maharashtra. He took advantage of the internal weaknesses and conflicts of the Mughal court and made the Marathas powerful. His agreement with the Saiyid brothers in 1719 led to the Mughal recognition of Shahu as the legitimate ruler of the *Swarajya* (Homeland), secured the release of Shahu's family members from Mughal captivity and also secured the right to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the six Mughal provinces of the Deccan, viz., Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Golconda, Aurangabad, and Khandesh. In return Shahu agreed to place a body of 15,000 cavalry at the Mughal Emperor, Farrukhsiyar's service, to prevent rebellion and plunder in the Deccan and to pay a tribute of Rupees 10 lakh annually. However, subsequently, Balaji helped the Saiyid brothers in overthrowing Farrukhsiyar.

Balaji Vishwanath devised a system for efficient and smooth collection of revenue in the *Swarajya* territory and has been credited with 'a mastery of finance'. Though constantly engaged in war and diplomacy, he took firm measures to put an end to anarchy in the kingdom. Outside *Swarajya,* the collection of revenue, including *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*, was in charge of chieftains who had carved out areas of authority and influence in particular regions. The chieftains collected the revenue, administered the territory, maintained the local army, and contributed only a small share of their income to the royal exchequer. These Maratha sardars became practically independent, and the king's control over them was nominal. From the political point of view, this was an extremely unhealthy system, a dangerous incentive to centrifugal tendencies which weakened royal authority and adversely affected the unity of the Marathas. This saw the beginning of *jagir* system which Shivaji had earlier abolished, and it led to feudalisation, ultimately resulting in the dissolution of the Maratha empire. Already the system of *watans* and *saranjams* (jagirs) had made the Maratha sardars strong, autonomous and jealous of central power. Now they began to establish their control in the distant lands of the Mughal empire as semi-autonomous chiefs. However, during the period of Balaji Vishwanath, the office of the peshwa became very powerful and the Maratha state system attained the status of a dominant expansionist state.

Baji Rao I succeeded Balaji Vishwanath as peshwa in 1720 at the tender age of twenty after the latter's death. Baji Rao proved quite capable of expanding the Maratha power considerably. In the north, he conquered Malwa in 1728 and Gujarat in 1731. He also captured Bundelkhand and defeated the Nizam of Hyderabad in the Deccan at Palkhed and secured the rights to collect revenue from these territories. In 1733, he led a campaign against the Siddis of Janjira, and expelled them from the mainland. Continuing his victory campaigns he gained control over the territories of Salsette and Bassein from the Portuguese.

Baji Rao raided Delhi in 1737, and the Mughal emperor called for assistance from the nizam. But the Nizam was again defeated near Bhopal and was forced to concede the whole of Malwa and the territories between the Narmada and Chambal to Baji Rao. The nizam was forced to pay a huge war indemnity and grant to the Marathas besides giving them the right to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the Deccan provinces. Thus, by 1740, when Baji Rao died, the Marathas were no longer a regional power; they had attained the status of an expansionist empire.

Balaji Baji Rao (also known as Nana Saheb) became the peshwa in 1740 and ruled till 1761. He proved to be a worthy successor of his father. With the death of King Shahu in 1749, Balaji Baji Rao became the *de facto* and *de jure* ruler of the Maratha state. He shifted the government to Poona, the Peshwa's headquarters. The expansion of the Maratha power continued under the third peshwa. Under Balaji Rao, Maratha control over Central India in the territories of Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand was better integrated with the rest of the Maratha empire. The south proved relatively easier to subdue. The Nizam of Hyderabad was compelled to cede vast territories yielding an annual revenue of Rupees 62 lakh after his defeat at Udgir in 1760. Mysore and other smaller principalities in the south also paid tribute to the Marathas. In the east, repeated conquests of Bengal by the Marathas gave them Orissa in 1751. The Maratha forces under Balaji Rao overran North India and established Maratha influence at the Delhi court. Imad-ul-Mulk was made the wazir in the Mughal court with the tacit support of the Marathas who actually became the power behind the Mughal throne. Balaji Rao soon brought Punjab under his control which was then ruled by a tributary of Ahmad Shah Abdali. This resulted in a tussle between the Marathas and the Afghans that culminated in the fateful battle of Panipat in 1761.

The Maratha-Afghan conflict for the mastery of north India became multi-faceted as the major and minor north Indian powers were drawn into it. The Afghans were at an advantage as the Marathas had acquired many enemies in the process of conquering and administering this core area of the empire. The Mughal nobles, apart from Imad-ul-Mulk, had been defeated by the Marathas in the power game. The Jats and the Rajput chiefs were completely alienated by their conquests which were followed by imposition of heavy fines. The Sikhs, already frustrated in their attempt to consolidate their power because of the foreign invasions, were

obviously in no mood to help the Marathas draw Punjab too in their dominions. The Rohilakhand chief Najib-ud-daulah and the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-daulah, whose territories had been overrun by the Marathas, actually joined hands with Abdali, leaving the Marathas to face the Afghan challenge all alone.

The two armies met at the historic site of Panipat on January 14, 1761. The Maratha army was no match for the Afghans though it boasted of troops trained along Western lines. About 28,000 Marathas perished in the battlefield along with the army commanders, Vishwas Rao (the Peshwa's minor son) and Sadashiv Rao Bhau (the Peshwa's cousin). The peshwa himself did not survive long after hearing the tragic news of the defeat.

The Battle of Panipat was decisive but in a negative sense. The Panipat defeat proved disastrous for the Marathas and shattered their imperial dreams, as they lost the cream of their army as well as political prestige. The empire seemed to lie within the grasp of Ahmad Shah Abdali, but his followers at this moment mutinied for their two years' arrears of pay and compelled Abdali to retreat to Afghanistan. Thus the imperial sceptre was denied to both the Afghans and the Marathas. North India was left in a power vacuum which various adventurers vainly tried to fill during the next four decades. Thus the third Battle of Panipat "did not decide who was to rule India but rather who was not".

The young Madhav Rao who became the fourth Peshwa in 1761 was successful in restoring the Maratha fortunes within a short span of 11 years with the help of his able minister, Nana Phadnavis. In 1771, the Marathas brought back Mughal emperor Shah Alam to Delhi, who now became their pensioner. But the premature death of Madhav Rao in 1772 created confusion again when intrigues for succession started once again affecting the central authority at Poona.

The Peshwa-controlled Maratha confederacy dissolved into five virtually independent states, namely, Gaekwad at Baroda, Bhonsle at Nagpur, Holkar at Indore, Sindhia at Gwalior and the Peshwa at Poona. It was these, and not the old confederacy, with whom the British had to deal. The Peshwa's government in Poona was distracted with internal dissensions while the other four spent their time and energy alternately enlarging their borders and contending for supremacy.

The two northern chiefs, Sindhia and Holkar, were the most prominent, and of these Mahadji Sindhia showed signs of genius. But after gaining control of Delhi, defeating the Rajputs as well as his rivals, Holkar and Nana Phadnavis, and seizing power at Poona, Mahadji died in 1794, just when it seemed that he might be the destined empire-builder. Mahadji's death was an unmitigated disaster, and with the death of Nana Phadnavis in 1800 ended all possibility of the revival of Maratha power.

Jats

The agriculturist Jat settlers living around Delhi, Mathura and Agra revolted against the oppressive policies of Aurangzeb. After some initial setbacks, Churaman and Badan Singh succeeded in setting up the Jat state of Bharatpur. But it was under Suraj Mal that Jat power reached its zenith. He not only provided an efficient system of administration but also greatly extended the territory of the state. His state included territories from the Ganga in the east to the Chambal in the south and included the *subahs* of Agra, Mathura, Meerut and Aligarh. However, the Jat state suffered a decline after the death of Suraj Mal in 1763. Thereafter, the state split into small areas controlled by petty zamindars who mainly lived by plunder.

Sikhs

Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikhs into a militant sect in defence of their religion and liberties. Banda Bahadur, who assumed the leadership of the Sikhs in 1708, was defeated and killed. In the wake of the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Sikhs once again asserted their authority. At this stage they organised themselves into 12 *misls* or confederacies which exercised control over different parts of the state. The credit for establishing a strong state of Punjab goes to Ranjit Singh, who was the son of Maha Singh, the leader of the Sukarchakiya *misl*. Ranjit Singh brought under control the area extending from Sutlej to Jhelum. He conquered Lahore in 1799 and Amritsar in 1802. By the Treaty of Amritsar with the British, Ranjit Singh acknowledged the British right over the cis-Sutlej territories. Ranjit Singh provided an efficient administration. He greatly modernised his army with the help of the Europeans. But towards the close of his reign, the English forced him to

sign the Tripartite Treaty in 1838 with Shah Shuja and the English Company whereby he agreed to provide passage to the British troops through Punjab with a view to placing Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. Ranjit Singh died in 1839. His successors could not keep the state intact, and gave it up to the British.

Farukhabad and Rohilakhand

The states of Rohilakhand and the kingdom of the Bangash Pathans were a fall-out of the Afghan migration from the 17th century onwards into India. Large scale immigration of Afghans into India took place in mid-18th century because of political and economic disruption in Afghanistan. Ali Muhammad Khan took advantage of the collapse of authority in north India following Nadir Shah's invasion, to set up a petty kingdom, Rohilakhand. This was the area of the Himalayan foothills located between Kumaon in the north and the Ganga in the south. The Rohilas, as the inhabitants of Rohilakhand were known, suffered heavily at the hands of the other powers in the area, the Jats and the Awadh rulers and, later, the Marathas and the British. Mohammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan, set up an independent kingdom to the east of Delhi in the area around Farrukhabad.

The Afghani use of artillery, especially the flint gun, ended the importance of the cavalry which had been dominant since discovery of the stirrup in the early medieval ages.

Politically the role of the Afghans was negative. Not only did they accentuate the decline of the Mughals but they also helped Abdali to subdue Awadh, which could have played a major role in checking British expansion.

Nature and Limitations of Regional Polities

Autonomous political system developed in 18th century India in ways that varied from region to region. These independent political systems that emerged in the provinces continued to maintain ties with the Mughal imperial authority. Though the Mughal emperor lost his earlier control over the provincial administration, his importance as an umbrella over provincial authority still remained. The newly emerged regional powers acknowledged this importance. Even rebel chieftains of the Marathas and Sikhs sometimes recognised the Emperor or the supreme authority. Each state reorganised its administrative set-up and army as per its requirements, but the Mughal administrative system was often adapted by these states. However, it should be noted that though there was continuity of some Mughal institutions, the Mughal political system did not survive.

The polity that emerged in the early 18th century was regional in character, and worked with the collaborative support of the different local groups like the zamindars, merchants, local nobles and chieftains. With the weakening of the imperial authority and finances in the 18th century, the merchants played a crucial role in the emergence and functioning of the regional polity by providing the necessary financial support to the nobles and rulers. Similarly, the zamindars and local chieftains, in the absence of central security, emerged as protectors of the local people. The provincial rulers had to take care of these various local interests in order to maintain themselves. Of course, there were exceptions; for instance in Mysore rulers did not recognise the local chieftains. This can be regarded as one of the weaknesses of the regional polity since the provincial rulers failed to develop a system based on sound financial, administrative and military organisation. Another drawback was the constant warfare among the different neighbouring regional powers in which none could ultimately dominate over the others.

These states were strong enough to destroy Mughal power, but none was able to replace it with a stable polity at an all-India level. According to one view, this was because of some inherent weaknesses in these regional polities. Though some of them tried to modernise, notably Mysore, on the whole, they were backward in science and technology. These states could not reverse the general economic stagnation which had plagued the Mughal economy. The jagirdari crisis intensified as income from agriculture declined, and the number of contenders for a share of the surplus multiplied. Trade, internal and foregin, continued without disruption and even prospered, but the rest of the economy stagnated.

Recently, historians have questioned the above analysis of weaknesses. Satish Chandra argues that it is wrong to talk of generalised economic decline and social stagnation. The resilience of the economy

was in sharp contrast to the ease with which the polity collapsed. For example, Bengal withstood the ravages of early colonial rule very well. Bengal's economy stabilised after the 1770s and export of cotton piecegoods went up to 2.5 million in the 1790s from 400,000 in the 1750s.

The social structure did not stagnate; it changed and low castes moved upwards and "new men" pushing forward was a common feature all over India.

Muzaffar Alam presents varied picture of regional India, with some areas (Awadh) experiencing economic prosperity and other areas (Punjab) stagnation. Polities remained regional because no state system emerged indigenously with enough surplus for an all-India system comparable to the Mughal empire.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Dark Age

The 18th century India is often depicted as prey to chaos as it stood between two great empires, the Mughals and the British. Till recently, the century was described as a 'Dark Age', a notion which suited a certain way of looking at Indian history that highlighted the British achievements of re-unifying India and of inaugurating an age of enlightened administration leading to the spread of Western knowledge and culture. But this notion is no longer accepted by recent historiography.

In the world context, India was not yet one of the economically backward regions, nor were Europe and North America as rich as they became in the 19th and 20th centuries. India was open to the trade and depredations of European merchants, sometimes backed by force of arms, but none of the European trading companies was perceived as destined to rule India. The empire that the Mughals created was definitely weak but not yet dead.

Mughal decline was not the predominant feature of the century. The establishment of regional polities and the rise of the British power were equally significant developments. Continuity of traditions from Mughals to regional and British politics was remarkable. But the differences between these three polities were equally striking. The same institutions performed very different functions when integrated into a new political system.

The successor states in many cases proved to be stable polities. The Marathas who began to rise on the ruins of the Mughals as an all-Indian power failed to stand up to the rising British power due to a combination of unfortunately timed external challenges and internal weaknesses.

It is true that India in the 18th century could not make adequate progress economically, socially or culturally. The common masses suffered terribly due to increasing revenue demands of the state, oppression of the officials, the greed and rapacity of the nobles, zamindars and revenue-farmers, depredations of many adventurers and frequent wars and conflicts. The peasants remained impoverished, backward and oppressed and lived at the bare subsistence level where the rich and the powerful sections enjoyed a life of luxury and opulence. But it is worth noting that the life of the Indian masses was by and large better in the 18th century than it was after 100 years of British rule at the end of the 19th century. Indian agriculture remained stagnant mainly due to technological backwardness. On the whole, India was self-sufficient in agricultural products and handicrafts and it did not import foreign goods on a large scale. India's industrial and agricultural products had a steady market abroad, especially in Europe and Asia. Consequently, India's exports exceeded its imports, and the trade was balanced import of silver and gold.

Economic Conditions

Historians differ and disagree on the state of internal and external trade and overall economic decline as a result of the decline of the Mughal Empire. It is pointed out that while the Indian economy was quite resilient and there was certain continuity in economic life, there was no greater effervescence or buoyancy in economic activities in the 18th century than in the 17th century. On the other hand, there was a definitely declining trend. At the same time, it is also true that there was less economic distress or decline in agricultural and handicraft production in the Indian states of the 18th century than was to result from the impact of British colonialism later. The Indian villages were largely economically self-sufficient units, and internal and external trade flourished. In fact, India was one of the main centres of world trade and industry in the early years of the century.

The socio-cultural order of the 18th century India was characterised by traditional outlook and stagnation. Though there existed a certain degree of broad cultural unity, people were divided by caste, religion, region, tribe and language. The family system was primarily patriarchal and caste was the central feature of the social life of the Hindus. Apart from the four *varnas*, Hindus were divided into numerous castes (*jatis*) which permanently fixed their place in the social scale. Inter-caste marriages and inter-dining among members of different castes were forbidden. Though the choice of profession was mainly determined by caste considerations, exceptions occurred on a large scale, making caste status quite fluid in some parts of the country. Caste councils and *panchayats* enforced caste norms and regulations. Even though Islam enjoined social equality on the Muslims, they too were divided by considerations of caste, race, tribe and status. Religious considerations not only kept the *Sunni* and *Shia* nobles apart but also the Irani, Afgan, Turani and Hindustani Muslim nobles and officials apart from one another. The *sharif* Muslims consisting of nobles, scholars, priests and army affairs often looked down upon the *ajlaf* Muslims or the lower class Muslims in a manner similar to the way of the higher-caste Hindus treated the lower-caste Hindus. Religious conversions occurred and caste proved to be a major divisive force and element of disintegration in 18th century India.

Education

The education system was traditional and out of touch with the rapid developments in the West. The study of science and technology was neglected and emphasis was placed on literature, law, religion, logic and philosophy. Elementary education was quite widespread but higher education was limited to a few. The nawabs, rajas and rich zamindars patronised institutions of higher education. Higher education among the Hindus was based on Sanskrit learning, especially among the brahmins, whereas Persian education, being based on the official language of the time, was popular among both Hindus and Muslims. However, it is important to note that the average literacy in 18th century was not less than what it was under the British since the latter neglected mass education. Warren Hastings in 1813 wrote that Indians had in general "superior endowments in reading, writing and arithmetic than common people of any nation in Europe". However, education of women was neglected except for some women of the higher classes.

Position of Women

In the patriarchal family system in India (except in some parts like Kerala), women possessed little individuality of their own, though there were a few exceptions. While upper class women remained at home, lower class women worked in fields and outside their homes supplementing the family income. Certain outdated and exploitative social customs and traditions such as the *purdah, sati,* child marriage, polygamy did exist which hindered the progress of women. The plight of the Hindu widow was usually miserable. The evil of dowry was especially widespread in Bengal and Rajputana.

Cultural Situation

In the cultural sphere India showed some signs of exhaustion during the 18th century. Cultural continuity with the preceding centuries was maintained and local traditions continued to evolve. But the main weakness of Indian culture lay in the field of science and Indians remained far behind the West in science and technology. The Indian mind remained tradition-bound; a host of social evils superstitions and dogmas persisted. Most of the Indian rulers showed little interest in Western things except in techniques of military training, weapons and warfare. In the field of language and literature some positive signs were visible. For example, Urdu language and poetry flourished along with Hindi, Malayalam and Sindhi during the 18th century. Another healthy feature of the Indian society during the time was communal harmony among different religious groups. Religious affiliation was not the main point of departure in cultural and social life.

Views

- The Mughal Empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. The rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself; royalty was hopelessly depraved or imbecile; the nobles were selfish and short-sighted; corruption, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches of the public service. In the midst of this decay and confusion, our literature, art and even true religion had perished.

  —**J.N. Sarkar**, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. IV

- A common impression is, that...the decline, fall of the Mughal Empire were due to the degeneracy of its sovereigns. But...it was irretrievably ruined in the reign of Aurangzeb, a monarch of great ability, energy and determination, but lacking in political insight, and a bigoted Mussulman. He struck the first mortal blow by reversing Akbar's wise and generous policy of ignoring distinctions of race and religion, and reimposing the *jizya* or poll tax, on his Hindu subjects; whereby he estranged them, and turned the noblest and most warlike of them—the Rajputs, hitherto the staunchest supporters of the throne—into deadly and persistent enemies. And Shivaji and his followers not only vindicated their independence, but struck a second mortal blow at the integrity of the Empire. They destroyed its military reputation. They exhausted its accumulated treasure. They spread disorder and devastation over the Deccan and beyond it...They established an *imperium in imperio.* Thus the Empire, though not dissolved, was hopelessly debilitated. The effective authority of the central government was thenceforth in abeyance...Nadir Shah, after inflicting the extremity of humiliation on the Emperor and his capital, annexed the Imperial territory west of the Indus. The dissolution of the Empire was complete.

  —**Sidney Owen,** *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*

- The more I study the period, the more I am convinced that military inefficiency was the principal, if not the sole, cause of that empire's final collapse. All other defects and weaknesses were as nothing in comparison with this...Long before it disappeared, it had lost all military energy at the centre, and was ready to crumble to pieces at the first touch. The rude hand of no Persian or Afghan conqueror, no Nadir, no Ahmad Abdali, the genius of no European adventure, a Dupleix or a Clive, was needed to precipitate it into the abyss. The empire of the Mughals was already doomed before any of these had appeared on the scene; and had they never been heard of there can be little doubt that some Mahratta bandit or Sikh free-booter would in due time have seated himself on the throne of Akbar and Shahjahan.

  —**William Irvine**, *Army of the Indian Mughals*

- Various explanations are put forward for the revolts which brought about the collapse of the Mughal Empire... Here our main concern is with what our 17th and early 18th century authorities have to say. And it will be seen that they, at any rate, put the greatest store by the economic and administrative causes of the upheaval and know little of religious reaction or national consciousness... Thus was the Mughal Empire destroyed. No new order was, or could be, created by the forces ranged against it.

  —**Irfan Habib**, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*

- The roots of the disintegration of the Mughal empire may be found in the Medieval Indian economy; the stagnation of trade, industry and scientific development within the limits of that economy; the growing financial crisis which took the form of a crisis of the *jagirdari* system and affected every branch of state activity; the inability of the nobility to realise in the circumstances their ambitions in the service of the state and consequently the struggle of factions and the bid of ambitious nobles for independent dominion; the inability of the Mughal emperors to accommodate the Marathas and to adjust their claims within the framework of the Mughal empire, and the consequent breakdown of the attempt to create a composite ruling class in India; and the impact of all these developments on politics at the court and in the country, and upon the security of the north-western passes. Individual failings and faults of character also played their due role but they have necessarily to be seen against the background of these deeper, more impersonal factors.

  —**Satish Chandra**, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 1707-40

Summary

- Decline of the Mughal Empire: caused by internal weaknesses and external challenge.
  - Responsibility of Aurangzeb (Religious and Deccan policies)
  - Weak successors
  - Wars of succession
  - Lack of a definite law of succession (law of primogeniture)
  - Degeneration of the Mughal Army/Nobility
  - Court rivalries
  - The Maratha Challenge
  - Economic crisis (Jagirdari crisis)
  - Nature of the Mughal polity
  - Advent of Europeans
  - Foreign invasions
  - Absence of spirit of nationalism
  - Inherent defects of hereditary despotism and centralised government
- Historiographical Debate—Two views
  (a) Empire-Centric Perspective
  (b) Region-Centric Perspective
- Rise of Independent Regional States—3 categories
  (a) Successor states—Hyderabad, Bengal and Awadh
  (b) New states—Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, and Afghans
  (c) Independent states—Mysore, Kerala and Rajput states
- Social, economic and cultural conditions of the 18th century. The 18th century was described as a 'Dark Age'.

CHAPTER 4

Expansion of British Power

INTRODUCTION: INDIA AT THE CROSSROADS

The British Imperial Ideology

After the conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century, the British gradually sprang up as the 'new Romans', charged with civilising so-called backward races throughout the world, from Ireland to Americas and from India to Africa. The entire imperial history of Britain can be periodised into two phases, the 'first empire' stretching across the Atlantic towards America and the West Indies, and the 'second empire' beginning around 1783 (Peace of Paris) and swinging towards the East–Asia and Africa. It is argued that the late eighteenth century saw the acceptance of a territorial empire based on the conservative values of military autocracy, hierarchy and racial impudence. During the same period, British patriotism gradually developed which was closely associated with the grandeur and glories of having overseas colonies. Apart from this, the post-Enlightenment intellectuals of Britain, in particular, and of Europe, in general, started certifying themselves as modern or civilised vis-à-vis the orient peoples in order to rationalise their imperial vision in the coming 19th century. The British imperial ideology for colonies like India was the outcome of such intellectual and political crosscurrents going on in Europe. Owing to various situational and spatial forces the nature of imperial ideology changed over time but its fundamentals remained the same.

British Conquest: Accidental or Intentional?

To review the historical forces and factors which led to the success of the British in establishing their empire in India, it is necessary to analyse and understand the political and socio-economic conditions of India at the time and the process of integration of India into Britain's worldwide imperial system.

Historians have debated over the fundamental query, namely, was the British conquest of India accidental or intentional? The group saying 'yes' is headed by John Seeley who says that the British conquest of India was made blindly, unintentionally and accidentally, and in a "fit of absent-mindedness". This school of opinion argues that the British came to trade in India and had no desire to acquire territories or to squander their profits on war waged for territorial expansion. They were unwillingly drawn into the political turmoil created by the Indians themselves, and were almost forced to acquire territories. The group saying 'no' opines that the British came to India with the intention of establishing a large and powerful empire, a plan which they completed by working on it bit by bit over the years. They dismiss as propaganda the English claim of the peaceful intent and political neutrality of the English East India Company in its early days.

The Two Viewpoints

Both these schools of opinion appear to be overstating their viewpoints. Perhaps initially, the British unintentionally acquired territories, but later on the British politicians and the administrators sent by them to India did desire to acquire territories and establish an empire. The enormous profits from the trade in the East, notably India, attracted the English traders (the Company) as it did other Europeans. Judith Brown says a number

Judith Brown's Views

of factors were responsible for the British decision to extend their political influence. A desire for quick profits, personal ambitions of individuals, plain avarice and effects of political developments in Europe are some of the factors that made the British increase their political clout in India. At times, they waged wars to protect their commercial interests and, at others, they did so to protect their Indian allies from the attacks of other potential rivals. Thus B.L. Grover writes: "Lord Wellesley resorted to aggressive application of the subsidiary alliance system to extend British dominion in India as a defensive counter measure against the imperialistic designs of France and Russia. From 1798 to 1818 the British motives were consciously imperialistic. Lord Hastings further carried the policy of Wellesley and treated India as a conquered rather than an acquired country. Thereafter, the British seemed to work on a set design to conquer the whole of India, and even some neighbouring states."

It may thus be said that in the 18th century, the Western European countries embarked on a phase of territorial expansion worldwide to secure their trade and political interests and to set up colonies. The British conquest of India may be viewed as part of this worldwide political development.

When did the British Period begin?

In the mid-18th century, India was truly at the crossroads. Various historical forces were at work at this time, consequent to which the country moved towards a new direction. Some historians regard the year 1740, when the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India began in the wake of the War of Austrian succession in Europe, as the beginning of the British period. Some see the year 1757, when the British defeated the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey, as the designated date. Still others regard 1761, the year of the third battle of Panipat when the Marathas were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, as the beginning of this phase of Indian history. However, all such chronological landmarks are somewhat arbitrary because the political transformation which began around that time took about eighty years to complete. For instance, in 1740 an Indian political observer was mainly concerned with the dwindling Mughal Empire and the rising Marathas as also the Anglo-French struggles in the south. In 1761, one would think of the British (because of their victory over the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey and over the French) but would not entirely write off the Marathas and would probably also consider the prospects of Haidar Ali. This was a period of Indian history when it would be probably a mistake to interpret the past in terms of the present. It would be incorrect to conclude that nothing else could have happened or that the actual course of events or happenings were the only results from the interplay of historical forces and personalities. For instance, it was not obvious then, as it is now, that the Mughal Empire was at its end, that the Maratha confederacy would not survive, and that British supremacy could not be averted. Nonetheless, the circumstances under which the British succeeded were not clear, and the few bottlenecks which they faced were not of a serious nature. It is this paradox which makes the causes of British success in establishing an empire in India a matter of considerable interest.

No Categorical Date

Causes for British Success

Now let us discuss the common factors responsible for British success against their Indian counterparts in establishing an empire in India.

Explaining the causes of British success, B.L. Grover says that for nearly a century, while the British conquest of various parts of the country was in progress, they suffered many diplomatic and military reverses, only to emerge victorious in the end. The causes of this success summed up by him are as follows.

Superior Arms

The British were superior in arms, military tactics and strategy. The firearms used by Indian powers in the 18th century were slow firing and cumbrous and were outclassed both in speed and range by European muskets and canons which were used by the English. Again, European infantry could fire three times more quickly than the heavy Indian cavalry. True, many Indian rulers, including the Nizam, the Mysoreans and the Marathas imported European arms and employed European officers to train their troops in the use of European arms. But, unfortunately, the Indian military officers and the rank and file never rose above the level of amateurs, and, as

such, were of no match to the English officers and their trained troops.

English military discipline is considered a major cause for their success. A regular system of payment of salaries, and a strict regime of discipline were the means by which the Company ensured that the officers and the troops were loyal. On their part, most of the Indian rulers did not have enough money to pay salaries regularly. The Marathas at times diverted their military campaigns to collect revenue so as to pay their troops. Also, the Indian rulers were dependent on personal retinues or a rabble of mercenary elements who were not amenable to discipline and could turn rebellious or join the opponents when the going was not good.

Military Discipline

Another factor was the civil discipline of the Company officers and troops. They were given charge on the basis of their reliability and skill and not on hereditary or caste and clan ties. They themselves were subject to strict discipline and were aware of the objectives. In contrast, the Indian administrators and military officers were appointed on the basis of caste and personal relations, often disregarding merit and ability. As a result, their competence was doubtful and they often tended to be rebellious and disloyal in order to pursue their own interests.

Civil Discipline

Brilliant leadership gave the English another advantage. Clive, Warren Hastings, Elphinstone, Munro, Marquess, Dalhousie, etc., displayed rare quality of leadership. The English also had the advantage of a long list of secondary leaders like Sir Eyre Coote, Lord Lake and Arthur Wellesley who fought not for the leader but for the cause and the glory of their country. The Indian side too had brilliant leaders like Haidar Ali, Tipu Sultan, Chin Kulich Khan, Madhu Rao Sindhia, and Jaswant Rao Holkar, but they often lacked a team of second line trained personnel. Worst of all, the Indian leaders were as much fighting against one another as against the British. Further, they were fighting for personal or dynastic advancement. The spirit of fighting for a united cause was not their motivation.

Brilliant Leadership

The British were financially strong because the Company never forgot the trade and commerce angle. The income of the Company was adequate enough to pay its shareholders handsome dividends as also to finance the English wars in India. Furthermore, England was earning fabulous profits from its trade with the rest of the world. This vast amount of resources in money, materials and men was available to the British in times of need, thanks to their superiority in sea power.

Financial strength

Above all, an economically thriving British people believing in material advancement and proud of their national glory faced the 'weak, divided-amongst-themselves Indians' who were steeped in ignorance and religious backwardness and bereft of a sense of unified political nationalism. This lack of materialistic vision among Indians was also a reason for the success of the English Company.

Nationalist Pride

In this chapter we shall discuss the process of expansion of British paramountcy over Indian states in detail and its political and strategic significance beginning from the mid-18th century.

BENGAL: THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THE NAWABS OF BENGAL

Since the 17th century, Bengal, the richest province of the Mughal empire, with its enormous prospects of trade, became a hunting ground of the European companies who came to India. Exports from Bengal to Europe consisted of raw products, such as salt petre, rice, indigo, pepper, sugar, and silk, cotton textiles, handicrafts, etc. The English East India Company had vital commercial interests in trading in Bengal, as nearly 60 per cent of the British imports from Asia consisted of Bengal goods. During the 1630s, regular contact of the British with Bengal continued when they established factories in Balasore, Hugli, Kasimbazar, Patna and Dacca. By the 1690s, the foundation of Calcutta by the English Company completed this process of English commercial settlement in Bengal. The Company paid a sum of Rs 3,000 (£350) per annum to the Mughal emperor who allowed them to trade freely in Bengal. In contrast, the Company's exports from Bengal were worth more than £ 50,000 per annum. The provincial administration strongly resented this special privilege enjoyed by

the English Company as it meant a huge loss to their provincial exchequer. So the friction between the English commercial interests and the Bengal government became the chief cause for conflict between the two. During a short period between 1757 and 1765, the power gradually got transferred from the Nawabs of Bengal to the British with the latter defeating the former in two decisive battles.

Siraj-ud-daula and the English

After a long illness Alivardi Khan died in 1756 and was succeeded by Siraj-ud-daula, the son of the former's youngest daughter. A youth just in his twentieth year, Siraj inherited many troubles from his grandfather. He had a rival in his cousin, the Nawab of Purnea, Shaukat Jang; a hostile aunt, Ghasiti Begum, a childless widow; a rebellious commander of the army, Mir Jafar, husband of Alivardi Khan's sister; and an alarmed (Hindu) subject population. There was a dominant group in his court comprising Jagat Seth, Omichand, Raj Ballabh, Rai Durlabh and others who were opposed to him. To these internal rivals were added the threat to Siraj's position from the ever-growing commercial activity of the English Company. Impulsive by nature and lacking experience, Siraj felt insecure, and this prompted him to act in ways which proved counter productive. He defeated Shaukat Jang and killed him in a battle, divested Ghasiti Begum of her treasures and secured her, and dismissed Mir Jafar, appointing Mir Madan in his place. A Kashmiri officer Mohan Lal was appointed as the overall administrator, and he acted almost like a prime minister.

Siraj's Enemies

Siraj increasingly grew suspicious of the English Company as it fortified Calcutta without the Nawab's permission. The officials of the Company made rampant misuse of its trade privileges that adversely affected the Nawab's finances. The Company further tried to mislead him, and compounded their sin by giving asylum to a political fugitive, Krishna Das, son of Raj Ballabh who had fled with immense treasures against the Nawab's will. The Company, on its part, suspected that Siraj would drastically reduce its trade privileges in collusion with the French in Bengal. Thus, when Siraj attacked and seized the English fort at Calcutta, it brought their hostility to the surface.

Causes of Hostility

Battle of Plassey (1757)

The arrival of a strong force under the command of Robert Clive at Calcutta from Madras strengthened the English position in Bengal. Clive forged a secret alliance with the traitors of the Nawab—Mir Jafar (commander-in-chief of Siraj's army), Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth (an influential banker of Bengal) and Omichand. Under the deal, Mir Jafar was to be made the nawab who in turn would reward the Company for its services. The secret alliance of the Company with the conspirators further strengthened the English position. So the English victory in the Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757) was decided before the battle was even fought. Due to the conspiracy of the Nawab's officials, the 50,000-strong force of Siraj was defeated by a handful of Clive's forces. Siraj-ud-daula was captured and murdered by the order of Mir Jafar's son, Miran. The Battle of Plassey placed at the disposal of the English vast resources of Bengal, the most prosperous Indian province of the day. After Plassey, the English virtually monopolised the trade and commerce of Bengal.

Jadunath Sarkar's View

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "On 23rd June, 1757 the middle ages of India ended and her modern age began... In the space of less than one generation, in the twenty years from Plassey (1757-76) the land began to recover from the blight of medieval theocratic rule."

This statement appears to be a retrospective description of the aftermath of Plassey, because at that time there was no change in the commercial character of the English presence. The English resident at the Nawab's court after Plassey, Luke Scrafton, wrote: "The general idea entertained by the servants of the Company at this time was that the Battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta (by Siraj): the *subah* was considered to be as independent as ever, and the English returned to their commercial character."

It would be seen that this statement, however, does not mention the considerable restraint put on the

Nawab by Clive's pre-Plassey treaty with Mir Jafar. It should be noted that the English did not become politically supreme in Bengal after the Battle of Plassey. The Supreme Court of Calcutta some years later ruled that only the residents of Calcutta and not those of the other English resettlements and factories, were English subjects. Legally and to most outward appearances the old order continued. There had been revolutions before and the assistance of foreigners was well understood. Incidentally, the English were not the first foreigners to interfere in Bengali politics, the Portuguese had done it before them. The English continued to trade with imperial permission. The Company enjoyed more privileges than before, its prestige was very high but its exercise of power was not regarded as permanent. Actually, it was after seven years that the fact of English power as a permanent factor came to be generally recognised. Clive was regarded by his contemporaries as the English Bussy controlling the richest region of India.

Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim

Mir Jafar as Nawab

As a reward for his support to the English against Siraj-ud-daula, Mir Jafar, called "colonnel Clive's jackal" for his role in the Battle of Plassey, was placed on the seat of the Nawab of Bengal. Mir Jafar became totally dependent on the English for the maintenance of his position in Bihar and paid about Rs 17,50,000 in presents and compensation to the English.

Treaty of 1760

With the death of Miran there was a fight for the nawabship of Bengal between Mir Kasim, the son-in-law of Mir Jafar, and Miran's son. Vansittart, the new Governor of Calcutta, agreed to support Mir Kasim's claim after a treaty between Mir Kasim and the Company was signed in 1760. Important features of the treaty were as follows:

- (i) Mir Kasim agreed to cede to the Company the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong.
- (ii) The Company would get half of the share in *chunam* trade of Sylhet.
- (iii) Mir Kasim agreed to pay off the outstanding dues to the Company.
- (iv) Mir Kasim promised to pay a sum of rupees five lakh towards financing the Company's war efforts in southern India.
- (v) It was agreed that Mir Kasim's enemies were the Company's enemies, and his friends, the Company's friends.
- (vi) It was agreed that tenants of the Nawab's territory would not be allowed to settle in the lands of the Company, and vice-versa.

Under the pressure of the Company, Mir Jafar decided to resign in favour of Mir Kasim. A pension of Rs 1,500 per annum was fixed for Mir Jafar.

Mir Kasim was the ablest nawab among the successors of Alivardi Khan. After assuming power, Mir Kasim shifted the capital from Murshidabad to Munger in Bihar. The move was taken to allow a safe distance from the Company at Calcutta. His other important steps were reorganising the bureaucracy with the men of his own choice and remodelling the army to enhance its skill and efficiency.

Misuse of Dastak

Initially, Kasim's relationship with the East India Company was amiable. To the Company, he seemed a person capable of improving Bengal's economy and thereby meeting the heavy demands of the Company. The Company had thought that Mir Kasim would prove to be an ideal puppet for them. However, Mir Kasim belied the expectations of the Company. Some developments, for instance, the Ram Narayan episode and the *dastak* issue, strained the relations between the Company and Mir Kasim. Ram Narayan, the deputy-governor of Bihar, was not responding to repeated requests by the Nawab to submit the accounts of the revenues of Bihar. Mir Kasim could not tolerate this open defiance of his authority. But Ram Narayan was supported by the English officials of Patna. The misuse of the Company's *dastak* or trade permit (a permit which exempted the goods specified from payment of duties) by Company officials also resulted in tensions between the Nawab and the English. The misuse of the *dastak* meant the loss of tax revenue to the Nawab. It also made the local merchants face unequal competition with the Company merchants. By an imperial *firman,* the

English Company had obtained the right to trade in Bengal without paying transit dues or tolls. However, the servants of the Company also claimed the same privileges for their private trade. The Company's servants also sold *dastak* to Indian merchants for a commission. Besides, they used coercive methods to get goods at cheaper rates, which was against the spirit of the duty-free trade. The duty-free trade simply meant buying cheap in an otherwise competitive market. Mir Kasim decided to abolish the duties altogether, but the British clamoured against this and insisted upon having preferential treatment as against other traders.

The Nawab-Company tussle over transit duty led to the outbreak of war between the English and Mir Kasim in 1763. The English gained successive victories at Katwah, Murshidabad, Giria, Sooty and Munger. Mir Kasim fled to Awadh (also Oudh) and formed a confederacy with the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-daulah, and the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, with a view to recovering Bengal from the English.

Battle of Buxar (1764)

The combined armies of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Awadh and Shah Alam II were defeated by the English forces under Major Hector Munro at Buxar on October 22, 1764 in a closely contested battle.

Defeat of the Confederacy

The English campaign against Mir Kasim was short but decisive. The victory made the English a great power in northern India and contenders for the supremacy of the whole country. The Nawab of Bengal now became their stooge. The Nawab of Awadh became their subordinate ally, while Emperor Shah Alam II became a prisoner of Awadh.

While the English won the Battle of Plassey by treachery and diplomacy, their victory at Buxar was solely due to superior military power. The defeat of the confederacy was inherent in the defects of the Indian army and state organisation.

After the Battle of Buxar, Mir Jafar was brought back to the throne of Bengal. He agreed to hand over the districts of Midnapore, Burdwan and Chittagong to the English for the maintenance of their army. The English were also permitted duty-free trade in Bengal, except for a duty of two per cent on salt. After the death of Mir Jafar, his minor son, Najim-ud-daula, was appointed Nawab, but the real power of administration lay in the hands of the naib-subahdar, who could be appointed or dismissed by the English.

Treaty of Allahabad (1765)

Robert Clive came back as Governor of Bengal in 1765 and engaged himself in making the English authority supreme in Bengal. He concluded two treaties—one with Emperor Shah Alam II and the other with the Nawab of Awadh—at Allahabad in the same year.

Under the treaty between the English and the Nawab, the latter agreed to surrender Allahabad

Treaty with Awadh

and Kora to Shah Alam II; pay Rs 50 lakh to the Company as war indemnity; grant Balwant Singh, zamindar of Banaras, the full possession of his estate; and render gratuitous military help to the Company in time of need. In return, the Nawab was confirmed in his possessions. The Company also agreed to help him with troops for the defence of his frontier.

Under the treaty between Shah Alam II and the English, the following decisions were taken: Shah

Treaty with Shah Alam II

Alam II was to be under the Company's protection; Allahabad and Kora, ceded by the Nawab of Awadh, were assigned to the Emperor; the Emperor granted the Company the perpetual right of *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in return for an annual payment of Rs 26 lakh; the Emperor agreed to provide Rs 53 lakh to the Company for performing *nizamat* (administrative) functions in the said provinces.

Clive did not favour annexation of Awadh because it would have placed the Company under an obligation to protect an extensive land frontier from the Afghan and the Maratha invasions. The treaty made the Nawab a firm friend of the Company, and turned Awadh into a buffer state. Similarly, Clive's arrangement with Shah Alam II was inspired by practical considerations. It made the Emperor a useful 'rubber stamp' of the Company. Besides, the Emperor's *farman* legalised the political gains of the Company in Bengal.

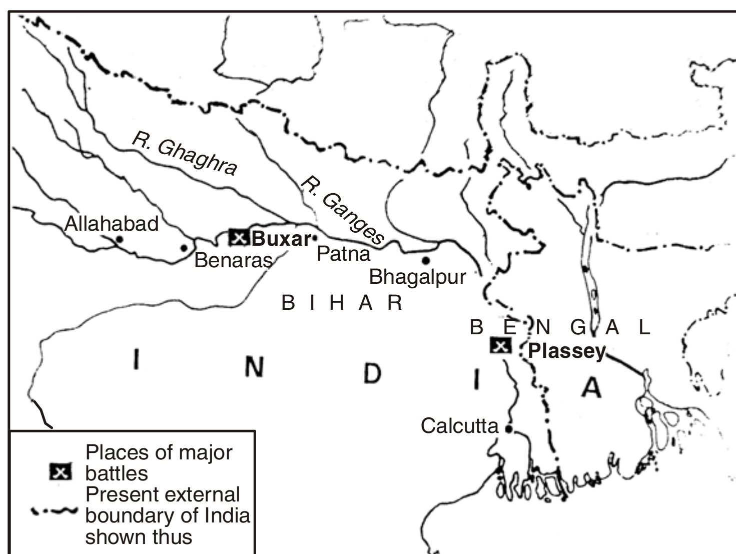
Significance of the Battles of Plassey and Buxar

Significance of Plassey

The decisive victory of the English in the battles of Plassey and Buxar established their political supremacy in Bengal. However, each of these battles had its own specific significance too.

The success of the British in the Battle of Plassey had a major impact on the history of Bengal.

- The victory of the British, whether by treachery or any means, undermined the position of the Nawab in Bengal.
- Apparently, there was not much change in the government and the Nawab still remained the supreme authority. But, in practice, the Nawab became dependent on the Company's authority, and the Company began to interfere in the appointment of the Nawab's officials.
- Internal rivalry within the Nawab's administration was exposed and the conspiracy of the Nawab's rivals with the British ultimately weakened the strength of the administration.
- Besides the financial gain, the English East India Company was also successful in establishing its monopoly over Bengal trade by marginalising the rival French and Dutch companies.



British in Bengal

Significance of Buxar

The Battle of Buxar gave the English complete political control over Bengal. Actually, the process of transition started with the Battle of Plassey and culminated in the Battle of Buxar.

The Battle of Buxar sealed the fate of Bengal Nawabs and the British emerged as the ruling power in Bengal.

The victory of the English in this battle not only proved the superiority of their forces but also strengthened their confidence. This was a victory not against Mir Kasim alone but against the Mughal emperor and the Nawab of Awadh also. The success of the English in this battle gave a clear indication that the establishment of their rule in other parts of India was not far off. In short, if the English victory at Plassey led to the establishment of territorial foundation of British rule, the victory at Buxar laid its real foundation in India.

Dual Government in Bengal (1765-72)

After the Battle of Buxar, Robert Clive introduced the dual system of government in Bengal in which

Features of the Dual Government

both the *diwani*, i.e., collection of revenues, and *nizamat*, i.e., police and judicial functions, came under the control of the Company. The Company exercised *diwani* rights as the diwan and the *nizamat* rights through its right to nominate the deputy *subahdar*. The Company acquired the *diwani* functions from the Emperor and *nizamat* functions from the *subahdar* of Bengal.

The system held a great advantage for the Company. It left the appearance of authority to the puppet Indian ruler, while keeping the sovereign power in the hands of the Company. The Nawab was responsible for maintaining peace and order, but he depended both for funds and forces upon the Company because the latter controlled the army and revenues.

For the exercise of *diwani* functions, the Company appointed two deputy diwans, Mohammad Reza Khan for

Bengal and Raja Sitab Roy for Bihar. Mohammad Reza Khan also acted as deputy nazim or deputy *subahdar*.

The dual system, i.e., the rule of the two—the Company and the Nawab—led to an administrative breakdown and proved disastrous for the people of Bengal. Neither the Company nor the Nawab cared for administration and public welfare. The dual government implied for the English "power without responsibility" whereas for the Nawab of Bengal it was "responsibility without power". It has been observed that the dual system was a complete failure from the outset. In the first place, the abuse of the private trade (misuse of *dastak* by Company officials) was much more than ever before. In the second place, the demands of the Company for the increase in revenues led to gross oppression of the peasantry. This system of governance proved to be an epitome of corruption and mismanagement. Warren Hastings did away with the dual system in 1772.

CONQUEST OF MYSORE

The State of Mysore emerged as a formidable power under the leadership of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan during the second half of the 18th century. Its alliance with the French was perceived as a veritable danger for the political and commercial interests of the English in South India. Haidar Ali and Tipu's control over the rich trade of the Malabar coast was a threat to the English trade in pepper and cardamom. Mysore was also a threat to the control of the English over Madras. According to some colonialists and administrators, basic objective of the English policy towards Mysore was to restore the Hindu Wodeyar house which was overthrown by Haidar Ali. But this argument was, however, basically designed to legitimise the English political action.

Rise of Haidar Ali

A soldier of fortune, Haidar Ali was a horseman in the Mysore army when the brothers Devraj and Nanjaraj, chiefs of the army and finance respectively, controlled the real power of this state of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar. Then began the rivalry and fights between the Marathas, the Nizam and the East India companies of the French and the English involving Mysore in adventurous politics. Repeated incursions of the Marathas and of the Nizam's troops into the territories of Mysore resulted in heavy financial demands of the aggressors from Mysore. Mysore became financially and politically weak as the two brothers, Devraj and Nanraj, failed to rise to the occasion.

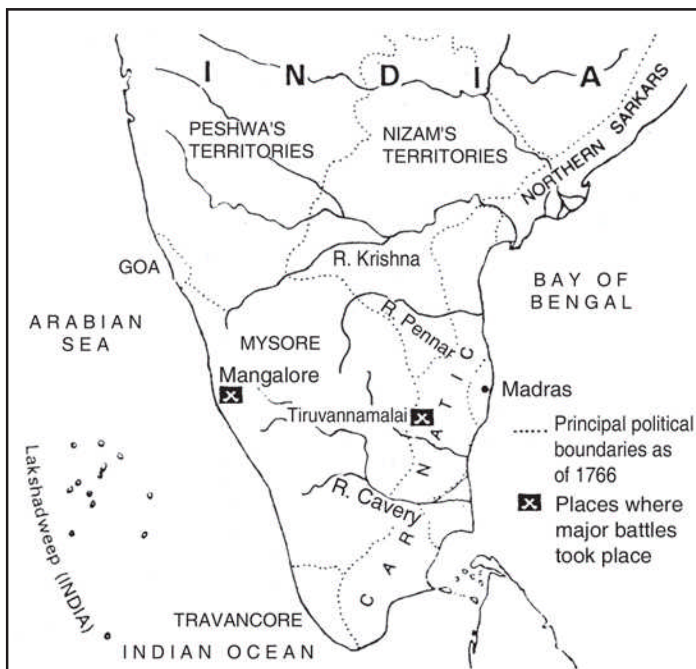
The need of the hour was a leader with high degree of military powers and first-rate diplomatic skill. Haidar Ali fulfilled that need and usurped the royal authority by becoming the *de facto* ruler of Mysore in 1761. He realised that the exceedingly mobile Marathas could be contained only by a swift cavalry, the cannons of the French-trained Nizami army could be silenced only by an effective artillery, and the superior arms from the West could only be matched by arms brought from the same place or manufactured with the same know-how.

Early Achievements

With this view in mind, Haidar Ali started preparing for the forthcoming trials of strength with his adversaries. He took the help of the French to set up an arms factory at Dindigal, and also introduced Western methods of training for his army. Lastly, he started to use his immense tact in the game of diplomacy to outmanoeuvre his opponents. With his superior military skill he captured Dod Ballapur, Sera, Bednur and Hoskote in 1761-63, and brought to submission the troublesome poligars of South India. Recovering from their defeat at Panipat, the Marathas under Madhavrao attacked Mysore, and defeated Haidar Ali in 1764, 1766, and 1771. To buy peace, Haidar Ali had to shell out large sums of money, but then came his chance to turn the tables on the Marathas. After Madhavrao's death in 1772, Haidar Ali raided the Marathas a number of times during 1774-76, recovering all the territories he had previously lost, besides capturing new areas like Bellary, Cuddapah, Kurnool, and territories in the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab. Before this, however, he had his first encounter with the English in the period 1767-69.

First Anglo-Mysore War

After their easy success in Bengal, the English naturally felt a bit sure of their military strength and started throwing their weight around. They concluded a treaty with the pliable Nizam of Hyderabad (1766), persuading him to give them the Northern Sarkars (region) in lieu of which they said



First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)

they would protect the Nizam from Haidar Ali. Haidar already had territorial disputes with the Nawab of Arcot and differences with the Marathas. Anyway, without any warning, there was an alliance of the Nizam, the Marathas, and the English against him. Without losing heart, Haidar acted with considerable tact and diplomatic skill. He paid the Marathas to turn them neutral and, promising to share conquered territories with the Nizam, converted the Nizam into his ally. He then joined the Nizam to attack the Nawab of Arcot. The battle went on for a year-and-a-half without any result.

English Defeat

Now Haidar changed his strategy and suddenly appeared before the gates of Madras. There was complete chaos and panic at Madras forcing the English to conclude a very humiliating treaty with Haidar on April 4, 1769. The treaty provided for the exchange of prisoners and mutual restitution of conquests. Haidar Ali was promised the help of the English in case he was attacked by any other power.

But this treaty between the English and Haidar Ali was nothing like a truce. Haidar Ali accused the English of breach of faith and non-observance of the treaty when in 1771 he was attacked by the Marathas, and the English failed to come to his aid. Also, he found that the French were much more helpful than the English in meeting his army's requirement of guns, saltpetre and lead. Consequently, through Mahe, a French possession on the Malabar coast, some French war material was brought to Mysore. Meanwhile, the American war of independence had broken out in which the French were on the side of the rebels. Under the circumstances, Haidar Ali's friendship with the French caused some concern to the English. They therefore tried to capture Mahe, which Haidar regarded to be under his protection. Haidar considered the English attempt to capture Mahe a direct challenge to his authority.

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84)

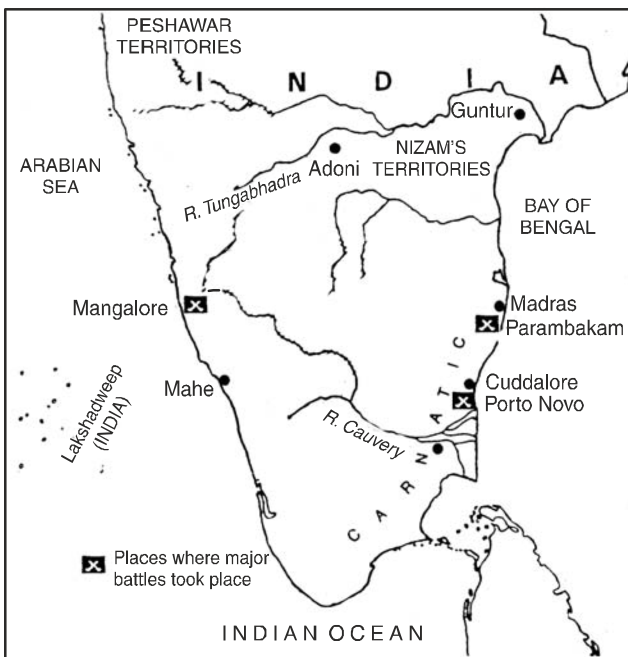
Using his tact and diplomatic skill, Haidar forged an anti-English alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam against the English. He followed it up by an attack in the Carnatic, capturing Arcot, and defeating the English army under Colonel Baillie in 1781.

Battle at Porto Novo 1781

In the meantime the English had not been sitting idle. They detached both the Marathas and the Nizam from Haidar's side, but the undeterred Haidar faced the English boldly only to suffer a defeat at Porto Novo in November 1781. He regrouped his forces and gave a befitting reply to the English by not only defeating them but also by capturing their commander, Braithwaite. Haidar Ali died on December 7, 1782 and his son Tipu Sultan carried on the war, which dragged on for one more year without any positive outcome.

Treaty of Mangalore

Fed up with an inconclusive war, both sides opted for peace, negotiating the treaty of Mangalore (March 1784) under which each party gave back the territories it had taken from the other. In this way, the second encounter between



Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84)

the English and Haidar Ali ended without a definite victory for either side.

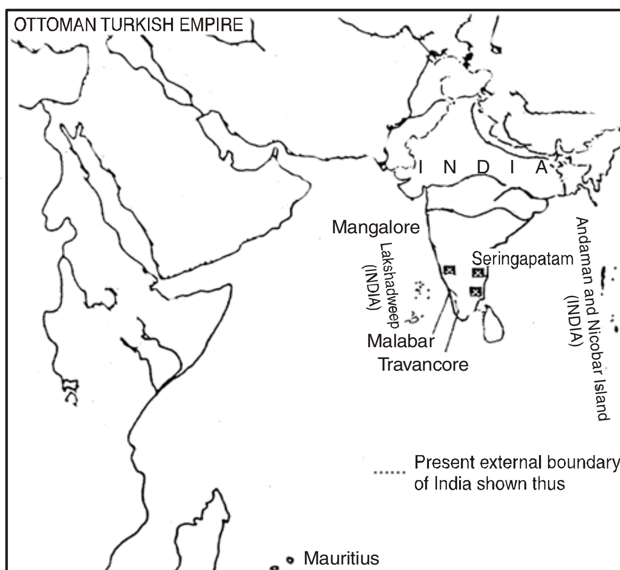
While the treaty of Mangalore was being formulated, the India Act of Pitt (1784) came into existence, recommending the East India Company not to interfere in the internal affairs of Indian states, a directive more breached by the English than observed. Tipu also realised that the time of peace resulting from the treaty was to be used for regrouping and consolidation of forces, as the English were doing. With a view to obtaining support, he sent embassies to Turkey in 1784 and 1785 and one to the French king in 1787. The English kept an eye on all the moves made by Tipu so as to threaten him with war at the first opportunity. This opportunity occurred when Tipu had to declare war against Travancore, and the English promptly took the side of Tipu's adversary.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-91)

The cause of the dispute between Tipu and the state of Travancore was the acquisition of Jalkottal and Cannanore by Travancore which they purchased from the Dutch in the Cochin state. As Cochin was a feudatory of Tipu, he considered the act of Travancore as a violation of his sovereign rights. So, in April 1790, Tipu declared war against Travancore for the restoration of his rights. This was the pretext the English were waiting for to begin their hostilities against Tipu. Joining and siding with Travancore (the English already had a treaty with the state in 1784), they also declared war against Tipu. Cornwallis himself took the leadership and as the head of a large army marched through Ambur and Vellore to Bangalore (captured in March 1791) and from there to Seringapatam. Coimbatore fell to them, but they lost it again, and at last with the support of the Marathas and the Nizam, the English attacked Seringapatam for the second time. Tipu offered serious opposition, but the odds against him were many, and he realised the hopelessness of the situation. Consequently, he had to pay heavily under the Treaty of Seringapatam. Nearly half of Mysorean territory was taken over by the victors (March 1792). Baramahal, Dindigal and Malabar went to the English, while the Marathas

Tipu's War Against Travancore

Treaty of Seringapatam



Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-91)

got the regions on the side of the Tungabhadra and the Nizam acquired the areas from the Krishna to beyond the Pennar. Besides, a war damage of three crores of rupees was also taken from Tipu. He lost heavily to the English and their allies in this trial of strength. His empire was now facing a severe crisis, and the only hope for recovery was planning and preparing for all the counter moves against the English. While Tipu's military genius could take care of the first, the second required considerable investment, for which Tipu lacked the necessary resources. Cornwallis therefore gloatingly remarked, "We have crippled our enemy effectively without making our friends too formidable."

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

The final and fourth English encounter with Mysore was staged after a gap of seven years, which the English used to good effect to recoup their losses and to strengthen and consolidate their position. Tipu's efforts to recoup were seriously affected due to a crippling lack of resources at that time. At this juncture, Lord Wellesley became the governor-general in 1798. An imperialist to the core, Wellesley was concerned about Tipu's growing friendship with the French and aimed at annihilating Tipu's independent existence or forcing him to submission through the system of Subsidiary Alliance. So the chargesheet against Tipu mentioned that he was plotting against the English with the Nizam and the Marathas and that he had sent emissaries to Arabia, Afghanistan, Kabul and Zaman Shah, as also to Isle of France (Mauritius) and Versailles, with treasonable intent. Tipu's explanation that the party of 40 who called on him contained only 10 French men naval artificers while the rest were all black and were their attendants did not satisfy Wellesley. The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War began on April 17, 1799 and ended on May 4, 1799 with the fall of Seringapatam which also ended Mysore's brief period of glory. Tipu laid down his life fighting bravely; his family members were interned at Vellore; and his treasures were confiscated by the English. The English chose a boy from the earlier Hindu royal family of Mysore as the Maharaja and also imposed on him the subsidiary alliance system.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

Mysore after Tipu

After gaining Mysore, Wellesley offered Soonda and Harponelly districts of the kingdom to the Marathas. The Marathas, however, refused to accept these. The districts of Gooty and Gurramkonda were given to the Nizam. The English took possession of Kanara, Wynad, Coimbatore, Daraporam and Seringapatam. The rest of the kingdom was handed over to the old Hindu reigning dynasty (Wodeyars) of Mysore. This new state of Mysore accepted the subsidiary alliance and became virtually a dependency of the English. Later, Lord William Bentinck brought Mysore under the direct administration of the Company. In 1881, however, Lord Ripon restored the royal family to power.

The settlement of Mysore brought not only territorial and military advantages to the Company but also secured economic and commercial gains for it. It extended the Company's dominion "from sea to sea across the base of the peninsula". When, in 1800, the Nizam of Hyderabad handed over his acquisitions from Mysore to the Company, this kingdom "became entirely encircled by the Britannica". Wellesley was elevated to the rank of Marquis for his success in Mysore.

ANGLO-MARATHA STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

As the fortunes of the Mughal empire dwindled, luck apparently favoured one of the staunchest and hardiest of the empire's adversaries, the Marathas. Not only did they control a large portion of the country, but they also received tributes from areas not under their control. By the middle of the eighteenth century, they were in Lahore dreaming of the north Indian empire and in the court of the Mughals playing the role of kingmakers. The Third Battle of Panipat (1761) in which they were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, however, changed everything. Still, they regrouped, regained their strength and within a decade came to enjoy a position of power in India.

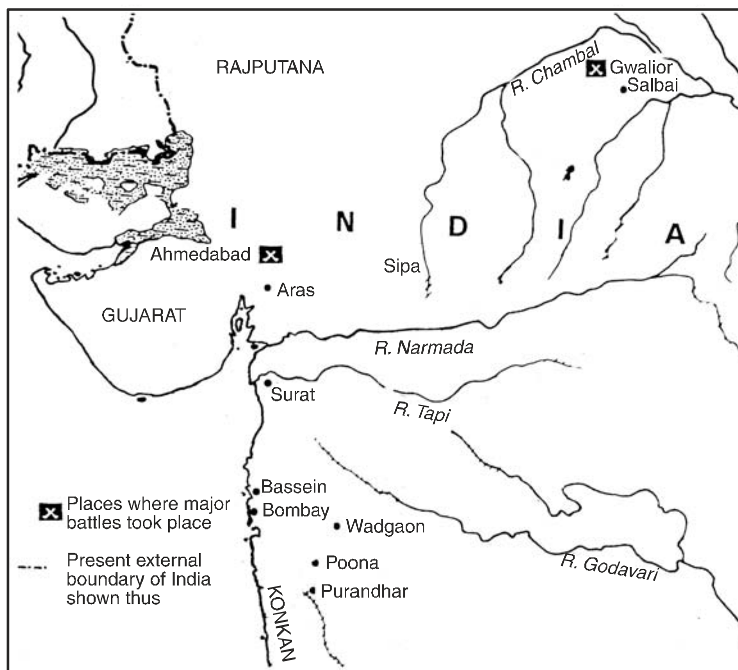
The years between the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century witnessed the Marathas and the English clashing three times for political supremacy, with the English emerging victorious in the end. The causes of these conflicts were the inordinate ambition of the English and the divided house which the Marathas represented. The English in Bombay wanted to establish a government on the lines of the arrangement made by Clive in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. So it was a longed-for opportunity for the English when dissensions over a succession divided the Marathas.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82)

After the death of Madhavrao in 1772, his brother Narayanrao Peshwa succeeded him as the fifth Peshwa. However, Raghunathrao, Narayanrao's uncle, had his nephew assassinated in a palace conspiracy and placed himself as the next Peshwa, although he was not a legal heir. The late Narayanrao's widow, Gangabai, gave birth to a son after her husband's death. The newborn infant was named 'Sawai' ("One and a Quarter") Madhavrao and was legally the next Peshwa. Twelve Maratha chiefs, led by Nana Phadnavis, directed an effort to name the infant as the new peshwa and rule under him as regents. Raghunathrao, unwilling to give up his position in power, sought help from the English at Bombay and signed the Treaty of Surat in 1775. According to the treaty, Raghunathrao ceded the territories of Salsette and Bassein to the English along with parts of revenues from Surat and Bharuch districts. In return, the English were to provide Raghunathrao with 2,500 soldiers. The British Calcutta Council, on the other side of India, condemned the Treaty of Surat (1775) and sent Colonel Upton to Pune to annul it. The colonel was also sent to make a new treaty with the regency that renounced Raghunath and promised him a pension. The Bombay government rejected this and gave refuge to Raghunath. In 1777, Nana Phadnavis violated his treaty with the Calcutta Council by granting the French a port on the West Coast. The English replied by sending a force towards Pune.

Treaty of Surat

The English and the Maratha armies met on the outskirts of Pune. The Maratha army reportedly numbered 80,000 soldiers while the English army



First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82)

consisted of 35,000 soldiers with highly superior ammunition and cannons. However, the Maratha army was commanded by a brilliant general named Mahadji Sindhia (also known as Mahadji Shinde). Mahadji lured the English army into the ghats (valleys) near Talegaon and trapped the English from all sides and attacked the English supply base at Khopali. The Marathas also utilised a scorched earth policy, burning farmland and poisoning wells.

Treaty of Wadgaon

As the English began to withdraw to Talegaon, the Marathas attacked, forcing them to retreat to the village of Wadgaon. Here, the English army was surrounded on all sides by the Marathas and cut off from food and water. The British finally surrendered by mid-January 1779 and signed the Treaty of Wadgaon that forced the Bombay government to relinquish all territories acquired by the English since 1775.

The British Governor-General in Bengal, Warren Hastings, rejected the treaty and sent a large force of soldiers across India under Colonel Goddard. Goddard captured Ahmedabad in February 1779, and Bassein in December 1780. Another Bengal detachment led by Captain Popham captured Gwalior in August 1780. Hastings sent yet another force after Mahadji Sindhia. In February 1781, led by General Camac, the English finally defeated Sindhia at Sipri.

Treaty of Salbai (1782)

After the defeat, Sindhia proposed a new treaty between the Peshwa and the English that would recognise the young Madhavrao as the Peshwa and grant Raghunathrao a pension. This treaty, known as the Treaty of Salbai, was signed in May 1782, and was ratified by Hastings in June 1782 and by Phadnavis in February 1783. The treaty also returned to Sindhia all his territories and guaranteed peace between the two sides for twenty years, thus ending the war.

The treaty essentially restored pre-war status quo, but allowed the English East India Company to focus on other princely states in India, especially Mysore.

Provisions

The treaty concluded at Salbai (May 1782) provided:

(i) Salsette should continue in the possession of the English.
(ii) the whole of the territory conquered since the treaty of Purandhar (1776) including Bassein should be restored to the Marathas;
(iii) in Gujarat, Fateh Singh Gaekwad should remain in possession of the territory which he had before the war and should serve the Peshwa as before;
(iv) the English should not offer any further support to Raghunathrao and the Peshwa should grant him a maintenance allowance;
(v) Haidar Ali should return all the territory taken from the English and the Nawab of Arcot;
(vi) the English should enjoy the privileges at trade as before;
(vii) the Peshwa should not support any other European nation;
(viii) the Peshwa and the English should undertake that their several allies should remain at peace with one another; and
(ix) Mahadji Sindhia should be the mutual guarantor for the proper observance of the terms of the treaty.

Isolation of Haidar Ali and acquisition of Salsette were the two gains the English made, but to regard the treaty as the one which allowed the English some control of the polity would not be correct. The limited success of the English in this seven-year war was entirely due to the organising capacity of Hastings who provided men, money and materials for what can be called a fruitless venture. As regards the Marathas, the statesmanship of Nana Phadnavis and Mahadji "pushed back the rising tide of the English aggression". The empire surrendered to the English after twenty years because men and women of first-rate abilities controlling the affairs died and their places were filled by short-sighted people focused on their selfish purposes. It is opined that the events of 1802-1805 did not logically follow from the first Anglo-Maratha war, nor was the rise of the English to the position of the paramount power in 1818 an inevitable result of the position gained by them under the treaty of Salbai. In fact, the long war

Significance of the Treaty

demonstrated the continuing vitality and resourcefulness of the Marathas. Their diplomats, statesmen and warriors matched evenly their adversaries, and were able to establish their superiority in many areas—a remarkable achievement considering that the mastermind in opposition to them was none other than Warren Hastings.

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1805)

The Second Anglo-Maratha war was primarily due to Lord Wellesley's measures to check the French advances in India. Coming to India as governor-general in 1798, Wellesley believed that the French menace could be overcome if the whole of India could be made militarily dependent on the English. Offering such protection, he framed the infamous Subsidiary Alliance system, but the Marathas initially refused to buy it. However, the elder statesman of Maratha politics, Nana Phadnavis, died in March 1800, and with his death the Maratha resistance to accepting Wellesley's offer was gone. Peshwa Baji Rao was quite fond of intrigues and wanted to secure his position by playing two prominent chiefs, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Holkar, against each other. Things, however, went out of control leading to a situation where Baji Rao was literally under the thumb of the Sindhia. Now the English stepped in offering to turn out Sindhia from the Deccan which Baji Rao did not accept. The English resident at Poona reported that nothing but a violent upheaval would compel the Peshwa to accept the English offer of assistance.

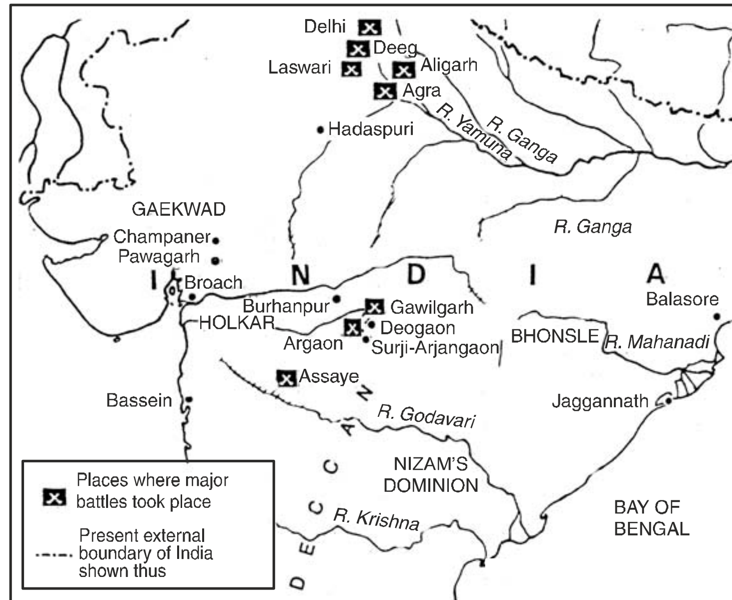
Measure to Check French Designs

The violent incident was not long in coming. On April 1, 1801 the Peshwa brutally murdered the brother of Jaswant Rao Holkar, Vithuji. A furious Jaswant arrayed his forces against the combined armies of Sindhia and Baji Rao II. The turmoil continued and on October 25, 1802 at Hadaspar near Poona, Jaswant defeated the armies of the Peshwa and Sindhia decisively and placed Vinayak Rao, son of Amrit Rao, on the Peshwa's seat. A terrified Baji Rao II fled to Bassein where on December 31, 1802, he signed a treaty with the English.

Treaty of Bassein

The terms of the treaty were as follows:

(i) The Peshwa received an infantry contingent from the Company with European artillery men and requisite stores which he was to permanently keep in his territories.
(ii) The Peshwa agreed to cede to the Company territories yielding an income of Rs 26 lakh. These were in Gujarat; in the south of the river Tapti; between the Tapti and the Narmada and near Tungabhadra.
(iii) The Peshwa agreed to surrender to the Company the city of Surat.
(iv) The Peshwa agreed not to collect *chauth* from the Nizam's territories and not to engage in armed conflict with the Gaekwads.
(v) The Peshwa agreed not to enter into negotiations with any other power without consulting the Company.
(vi) It was also agreed that the Peshwa would not



Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05)

employ European nationals belonging to a country at war with the English.

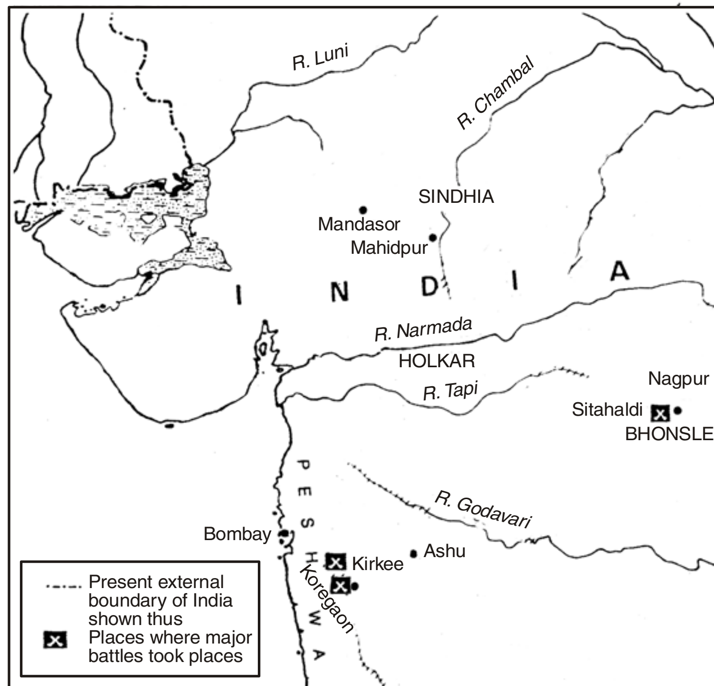
Significance of the Treaty Bassein

Stating that Wellesley had exceeded the brief and that his policy lacked political wisdom, Lord Castlereagh, president of the Board of Control of the Company, said that it would be difficult to control the Marathas through a disinterested Peshwa and that the Company would be driven to distraction while doing so. Wellesley authorised Malcolm to answer to Lord Castlereagh's observations; he said that the treaty brought national security to the people, gave the Company a legal right to promote the Peshwa's interests, and prevented the foreigners from hatching conspiracy, thus protecting the territory.

Admittedly, the treaty was signed by a Peshwa who lacked political authority, but the gains made by the English were immense. They were now in a position of supremacy at Poona. The Peshwa, the head of the Maratha confederacy, had become dependent on the English, and by implication the other Maratha chiefs were also reduced to this position. The treaty enabled the English to achieve this without a bitter and prolonged fight. The other significant achievement for the Company was that it became the arbiter in every dispute in which the Peshwa might be involved in the future. With that, one objective of Wellesley was fulfilled: that the Marathas stop bothering the Nizam who was under the Company's protection. The provision of keeping English troops permanently in Maratha territory was of great strategical benefit. The Company had already troops in Mysore, Hyderabad and Lucknow. Addition of Poona on the list meant that the Company's troops were now more evenly spread and could be rushed to any place without much delay in times of need. It is true that the Treaty of Bassein did not hand over India to the Company on a platter. However, it was a major development in that direction and the Company was now poised to add more to its areas of influence. From such a point of view, the observation that the treaty "gave the English the key to India," though exaggerated, appears understandable.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-19)

The Treaty of Bassein, described as "a treaty with a cipher (the Peshwa)", wounded the feelings of the other Maratha leaders. They saw the treaty as an absolute surrender of national independence. A repentant Baji Rao II made a last bid in 1817 to rally together the Maratha chiefs against the English in course of the Third Anglo-Maratha War. The Peshwa attacked the English Residency at Poona. Appa Sahib of Nagpur attacked the residency at Nagpur, and the Holkar made preparations for war. But by then the Marathas had lost almost all those elements which are needed for the growth of a power. The political and administrative conditions



Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-19)

of all the Maratha states were hopelessly confused and gloomy. After the death of Jaswant Rao Holkar, Tulsi Bai, the Holkar's favourite mistress, came to the helm of affairs in Poona. Though a clever and intelligent woman, she could not administer the state properly because she was influenced by some unworthy men such as Balram Seth and Amir Khan. The Bhonsle at Nagpur and the Sindhia at Gwalior had also become weak. So the English, striking back vigorously, succeeded in not allowing the Peshwa to exert his authority again on the Maratha confederacy. The battles that followed decisively undermined the power and prestige of the Marathas. The Peshwa was defeated at Khirki (November 1817), Bhonsle at Sitabaldi (November 1817), and Holkar at Mahidpur (December 1817).

Battles of Khirki, Sitabaldi, Mahidpur

The Maratha confederacy was dissolved and the peshwaship was abolished. Peshwa Baji Rao became a British retainer at Bithur near Kanpur; Pratap Singh, a lineal descendent of Shivaji, was made ruler of a small principality, Satara, formed out of the Peshwa's dominions.

Causes for the Defeat of the Marathas

Although the Marathas were superior to various other powers that rose on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, they lost to the English in their fight to establish political supremacy. Important causes for the defeat of the Marathas are discussed below.

Inept Leadership

The Maratha state was despotic in character. The personality and character of the head of the state had a great bearing on the affairs of the state. But, unfortunately, the later Maratha leaders such as Peshwa Baji Rao II, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar were worthless and selfish leaders. They were no match for the English officials such as Elphinstone, John Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley (who later defeated Napoleon).

Defective Nature of Maratha State

The cohesion of the people of the Maratha state was not organic but artificial and accidental, and hence precarious. There was no effort, right from the days of Shivaji, for a well-thought-out and organised plan for communal development, spread of education or unification of the people. The rise of the Maratha state was based on the religio-national movement. This defect of the Maratha state became glaring when they had to contend with the British who were organised on the best pattern of the state model which had evolved in the West.

Loose Political Set-up

The Maratha empire was a loose confederation under the leadership of the Chhatrapati and later the Peshwa. Powerful chiefs such as the Gaekwad, the Holkar, the Sindhia and the Bhonsle carved out semi-independent kingdoms for themselves and paid lip service to the authority of the Peshwa. Further, there existed irreconcilable hostility between different groups. The Maratha chief often took sides, favouring one group against the other. The lack of a cooperative spirit among the Maratha chiefs proved detrimental to the Maratha state.

Inferior Military System

Though full of personal prowess and valour, the Marathas were inferior to the English in organisation of the forces, in war weapons, in disciplined action and in effective leadership. The centrifugal tendencies of divided command accounted for much of the Maratha failure. Treachery in the Maratha ranks played havoc. The adoption of modern techniques of warfare by the Marathas was inadequate. The Marathas neglected the paramount importance of artillery. It is true that the Poona government set up an artillery department, but it hardly functioned effectively.

Unstable Economic Policy

The Maratha leadership failed to evolve a stable economic policy to suit the changing needs of the time. There were no industries or foreign trade openings. So the economy of the Marathas was not conducive to a stable political set-up.

The English had better diplomatic skill to win allies and isolate the enemy. The disunity among the Maratha chiefs simplified the task of the English.

Superior English Diplomacy and Espionage

Diplomatic superiority enabled the English to take a quick offensive against the targets. Unlike the Marathas' ignorance and lack of information about their enemy, the English maintained a well-knit spy system to gather knowledge of the potential capabilities and limitations of their foes, their strengths and weaknesses, and their military methods.

Progressive English Outlook

The English were rejuvenated by the forces of the Renaissance, which emancipated them from the shackles of the Church and divinism. They were devoting their energies to scientific inventions, extensive ocean voyages and acquisition of colonies. Indians, on the other hand, were still steeped in medievalism marked by old dogmas and notions. The Maratha leaders paid very little attention to mundane matters of the State. Insistence on maintenance of traditional social hierarchy based on dominance of the priestly class made the union of the whole empire impossible.

It may thus be concluded that the English attacked a 'divided house' which started crumbling at the first push.

CONQUEST OF SINDH

In the early 19th century, the English started to show an interest in Sindh where they enjoyed some trade facilities authorised by an order from the Mughal emperor in 1630. Actually, it was Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to the court of Jahangir, who in 1615 tried to obtain trading rights for the English at Sindh. However, under the influence of the Portuguese, Prince Khurram (later Emperor Shah Jahan) opposed such a move and the English had to remain content with whatever they could get in Gujarat. Subsequently, a severe famine broke out in Gujarat, and Sindh turned out to be an equally good source of indigo and coarse calicoes. The *farman* of 1630 was then obtained investing the English with such privileges in the ports of Sindh which they enjoyed elsewhere. Though Gujarat was recovering from the effects of the famine, the Portuguese concluded a treaty with the English allowing them to take their ships from Surat to the ports of Thatta and Luhribunder in Sindh. The new entrants were then allowed to extend their operations throughout the province. However, the trading operations of the English did not last long due to the disturbances in the closing years of Shah Jahan's reign and in the early years of Aurangzeb.

A *parwana* to establish a factory was granted to the English by the Kallora prince Ghulam Shah, on the strength of which a factory was built in 1758 at Thatta with a modest turnover. Three years later, on the arrival of an English resident in his court, Ghulam Shah in a burst of friendly spirit towards the English not only ratified the earlier treaty, but also excluded other Europeans from trading there. This advantage enjoyed by the English continued upto 1775 when a not-too-friendly ruler, Sarfraz Khan, made the English close their factory. This was also the time of the civil strike in the wake of which the Talpuras established themselves. Then came the political developments in Europe in the late 18th century prompting the English to think of reviving the trading operations in Sindh again.

Renewal of Relations

The common belief in the late 18th century was that Napoleon Bonaparte was conspiring with Tipu Sultan of Mysore to invade India. Professor P.N. Khera writes: "In 1799, therefore, Lord Wellesley made an effort through the Bombay government to revive commercial relations with Sindh with the ostensible object of furthering trade but in reality to counteract the then highly dangerous and spreading influence of Tipu and the French and the growing ambitions of Shah Zaman, the Kabul monarch. Negotiations were, therefore, opened with Fateh Ali Khan Talpur through a native agent deputed for the purpose. As the amir's response was encouraging, an officer of the Bombay civil service, Nathan Crow, was sent to follow up the negotiations. But the influence of Tipu Sultan and the jealousy of the local traders, aided by the anti-British party at Hyderabad (Sindh), overcame the favourable inclination of the Talpur prince and, in October 1800, Crow was peremptorily ordered to quit the

country within ten days. The reason given by the amir for this procedure was an order from Zaman Shah, which may also be true. Crow left Sindh and the Company quietly suffered the insult." (*A Comprehensive History of India*, Volume XI)

The alliance of Tilsit with Alexander I of Russia, which Napoleon concluded in June 1807, had as one of its conditions a combined invasion of India by the land route. The bogey of Russian invasion which exercised the minds of British politicians throughout the 19th century could be regarded as having its beginning from that time. This feeling has been very aptly described in an observation of Sir Mar Munn: "...from that day the bear has always cast his shadow forward on the borders of India."

Russo-Phobia

As such, it was felt necessary for the British to create a barrier between Russia and British India. To achieve this, Lord Minto sent three delegations under the leadership of various prominent persons to forge alliances. Accordingly, Metcalfe was sent to Lahore, Elphinstone to Kabul and Malcolm to Teheran. Sindh was visited by Nicholas Smith who met the Amirs to conclude a defensive arrangement. The Amirs initially gave him short shrift remembering how the English had swallowed their earlier insult, but they eventually agreed to a treaty—their first-ever treaty with the English. After professing eternal friendship between the two parties, both sides agreed to exclude the "tribe" of French from Sindh and to exchange agents to each other's court. Though the French threat had receded by then, the treaty was renewed in 1820 with the addition of an article excluding the Americans and resolving some border disputes on the side of Kachch after the final defeat of the Maratha confederacy in 1818.

Three delegations

A Treaty with Sindh

Soon after, the English became interested in using the Indus for riverside traffic and sent a delegation under Sir Alexander Burnes to explore the navigability of the river in 1831. The delegation, however, used this as a pretext to take some horses to Lahore as presents to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Baluchis saw through the pretext and commented that with the English having seen the river, Sindh was gone, because the river was the high road to conquest. Anyway, in 1832, Col. Pottinger was sent to Sindh to sign a treaty with the Amirs, while Lt. Del Host surveyed the lower reaches of the river. The contents of the treaty of 1832 were as follows:

Treaty of 1832

(i) free passage through Sindh for the English traders and travellers and the use of Indus for trading purposes; however, no warships would ply, nor any materials for war would be carried;
(ii) no English merchant would settle down in Sindh, and passports would be needed for travellers;
(iii) there would be tariff rates, to be altered by the Amirs if found high and no military dues or tolls would be demanded;
(iv) the Amirs would work with the Raja of Jodhpur to put down the robbers of Kachch; and
(v) the old treaties were confirmed and the parties would not be jealous of each other.

The tariff rates were given in a supplementary treaty in 1834. Col. Pottinger became the agent of the Company and soon the Company put up a claim to share the tolls collected at the mouth of the Indus.

The English threw a cordon round Sindh to thwart the designs of Ranjit Singh on the region. In 1831, the English (under William Bentinck) refused Ranjit Singh's proposal at the meeting at Ropar to divide Sindh. Lord Auckland looked at Sindh from the perspective of saving India from Russian invasion and wished to obtain a counteracting influence over the Afghans. Ranjit Singh was strong enough to resist coercion in this regard, but the Amirs were not. Thus the English view was that they had to consolidate their position in Sindh as a necessary first step for their plans on Afghanistan. They got an opportunity when Ranjit Singh captured a frontier town of Sindh, Rojhan, and Pottinger was sent to Hyderabad to

Thwarting Ranjit Singh's Plans on Sindh

sign a new treaty with the Amirs. The treaty offered protection to the Amirs on the condition that the Company troops would be kept in the capital at the Amir's expense or alternatively the English would be given suitable concessions in return. The Amirs initially refused but later agreed reluctantly to sign the treaty in 1838 when the possibilities of Ranjit Singh getting help from others were pointed out to them. The treaty permitted the English to intervene in the disputes between the Amirs and the Sikhs as also to establish the presence of a British resident who could go anywhere he liked escorted by English troops. Thus in one stroke of the pen Sindh was turned into a British protectorate in 1838. Commenting on the treaty, P.E. Roberts says: "Under Auckland and his cabinet of secretaries British policy in India had fallen to a lower level of unscrupulousness than ever before and the plain fact is that the treatment of Sindh from this time onward, however expedient politically, was morally indefensible."

Tripartite Treaty 1838

Now to address the Afghan problem (as the British imagined it) the British resorted to further duplicity. Firstly, they persuaded Ranjit Singh to sign a tripartite treaty in June 1838 agreeing to British mediation in his disputes with the Amirs, and then made Emperor Shah Shuja give up his sovereign rights on Sindh provided the arrears of tribute were paid. The exact amount of the tribute was to be determined by the English whose main objective of this machinery was to obtain finances for the Afghan adventure and obtain so much of the Amirs' territory as would secure a line of operation against Afghanistan through Sindh. Pottinger was sent with the draft of another treaty that intended to persuade or compel the Amirs to pay the money and also to consent to the abrogation of that article in the treaty of 1832 which prohibited the movement of English troops in Sindh by land or by river. The Amirs were aghast and produced an order from Shah Shuja exempting them from paying tributes in 1833 but were coerced to accept the terms of the treaty. In the words of B.L. Grover, "Under threat of superior force, the Amirs accepted a treaty in February 1839 by which a British subsidiary force had to be stationed at Shikarpur and Bukkar and the Amirs of Sindh were to pay Rs 3 lakh annually for the maintenance of the Company's troops". Further, he notes that the Amirs were not to have any negotiations with foreign states without the knowledge of the Company. They were to provide store-room at Karachi for the Company's military supplies, to abolish all tolls on the Indus, and to furnish an auxiliary force for the Afghan war if called upon to do so.

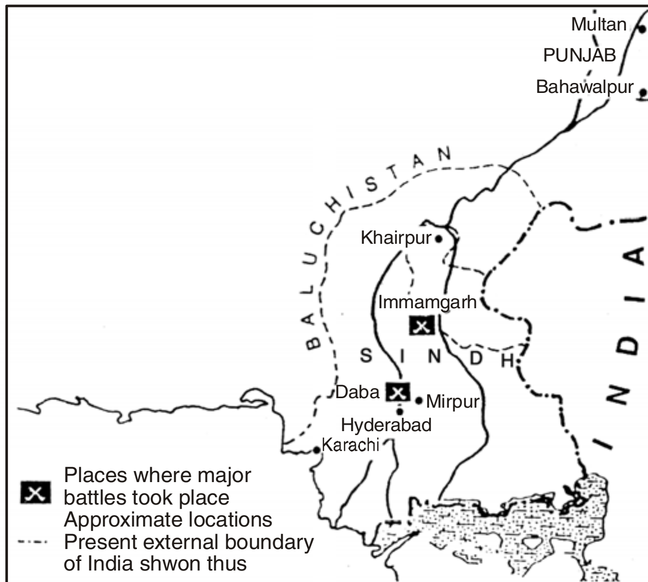
Afghan War

Then came the Afghan war, a war that the Amirs did not want, fought by troops whose presence in their territories they did not like. However, under the treaty they were asked to pay for all this, which they did. They were not rewarded or thanked for their services, but were charged with hostility and disaffection against the British government. Actually, Lord Ellenborough who succeeded Auckland was looking for some cause to annex the province. In the words of Percival Spear, "Ellenborough was eager to find a pretext for the annexation of that country, and it was not long before his search was rewarded...the desire to obtain control of that great waterway (Indus) seemed to have been the leading motive..."

So, the Amirs were charged with treasonable activities against the British, and Ellenborough, placed in a precarious position due to the Afghan war reverses, sent Outram to Sindh to negotiate a new treaty. Under this treaty, the Amirs were required to cede important provinces as the price of their past transgressions, to supply fuel to the Company's steamers plying on the Indus, and to stop minting coins. That was not all. In a succession dispute, the English intervened through Napier, and started a war when the Amirs rose in revolt.

Capitulation of Sindh

As is to be expected, the whole of Sindh capitulated within a short time, and the Amirs were made captives and banished from Sindh. Charles Napier writes "...to remove such brutal tyrants (the Amirs) was worthy of England's greatness. The conquest of Sindh is therefore no iniquity..." His deputy Outram was exasperated and wrote to him: "I am sick of your policy; I will not say yours is the best, but it is undoubtedly the shortest, that of the sword..."



Annexation of Sindh (1843)

It should also be noted that even the conqueror of Sindh, Charles Napier himself, was not very convinced of the reasons for annexation and wrote in his diary: "We have no right to seize Sindh, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be."

Like the episodes in the British conquest of India, the Afghan war is also a tangled tale of bullying tactics and deceit. However, in the instance of the First Afghan War, the English suffered terribly in the hands of the Afghans with a corresponding loss of prestige. To compensate for this, they annexed Sindh which prompted Elphinstone to comment: "Coming from Afghanistan it put one in mind of a bully who has been knocked in the street and went home to beat his wife in revenge."

Similarly, Charles Napier also believed that the annexation of Sindh was not an isolated event but the "tail of the Afghan storm". What had happened in Afghanistan, the consequence of an act of monumental stupidity, shook the legend of British invincibility. To make Afghanistan the first line of defence against a possible Russian invasion of India, they replaced Amir Dost Mohammad with their puppet Shah Shuja. Soon the Afghans rose in revolt against Shuja, but by that time the British troops protecting Shuja were gone leaving a small contingent. The English envoy Alexander Burnes was murdered in November 1841. A further humiliating treaty was concluded by Macnaughten with Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammad, on December 11, 1841 under which the rebel Afghans were to surrender arms and evacuate Afghanistan. Within 12 days, on December 23, 1841, Macnaughten was murdered. "The retreat from Kabul began in January 1842. General Elphinstone along with his entire army of 4,500 and 12,000 camp followers were murdered in January 1842. Shah Shuja himself was assassinated in April 1842. Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded Auckland in February 1842, decided upon evacuation of all British troops from Afghanistan. The grandiose plan exploded like a balloon."

Tail of the Afghan storm

Professor Grover says that Auckland was not required to pursue the plan because through diplomatic pressure the Russians were made to give up their plan for the invasion of India. But Auckland persisted in creating a barrier in Afghanistan for the defence of India; there was a debacle, and the Amirs of Sindh paid the price at the cost of their country.

Criticism of the Conquest

Historians generally condemn the acquisition of Sindh by the British in strong words. The causes for annexation were deliberately manufactured. Thornton said that "...(the Amirs) owed us nothing, and they had inflicted on us no injury..., yet they were reduced to vassalage to suit our purpose". As Ranjit Singh would not allow the passage of British arms through his territory for the Afghan war, the weak Amirs of the Sindh were the only ones who could be coerced. And the British did so, in a shamefully illegal way.

CONQUEST OF THE PUNJAB

Though Ranjit Singh's personal achievements were remarkable, he failed to establish a stable Sikh state

in the Punjab. At the time of his death (June 1839), the Sikh monarchy, apparently powerful, suffered from fatal maladies. The death of Ranjit Singh weakened the basis of Sikh autonomy, and within a decade the mighty fabric of the Sikh monarchy was absorbed by the expanding arms of the British imperialism. Ranjit Singh's only legitimate son and successor Kharak Singh, was an imbecile, and during the brief period of his reign, court factions became active. Kharak Singh's sudden death in 1839 and the accidental death of his son, Prince Nav Nihal Singh (when he was returning from his father's funeral), led to an anarchic situation in the Punjab. Plans and counter plans of various groups to capture the throne of Lahore provided an opportunity for a more decisive action by the English. The army—the pillar of the Sikh state—was far less strong than it appeared to be. Ranjit Singh's able generals—Mohkam Chand, Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Ram Dayal—were already dead. Only crafty designing men, who were either weaklings or traitors, survived to command the Sikh forces. Already discontent was growing among the troops as a result of irregularity of payment. The appointment of unworthy officers had developed the spirit of indiscipline. The Lahore Government, continuing the policy of friendship with the English Company, permitted the British troops to pass through its territory—once, when they were fleeing from Afghanistan, and again, when they were marching back to Afghanistan to avenge their defeat. These marches resulted in commotion and economic dislocation in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh's involvement in the Anglo-Afghan war brought the Punjab directly within the sphere of British political and military designs. His death, and the chaos and confusion which followed upon it, led some British officials to formulate ambitious plans. After the death of Nav Nihal Singh, Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh succeeded, and he was murdered in late 1843. Soon afterwards Dalip Singh, a minor son of Ranjit Singh, was proclaimed the Maharaja with Rani Jindan as regent and Hira Singh Dogra as wazir. Hira Singh himself fell a victim to a court intrigue and was murdered in 1844. The new wazir, Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, soon incurred the displeasure of the army and was deposed and put to death in 1845. Lal Singh, a lover of Rani Jindan, won over the army to his side and became the wazir in the same year and Teja Singh was appointed as the commander of the forces.

In 1840-41, there was talk about adding the trans-Indus region to Afghanistan (which was then under the nominal rule of Shah Shuja), and even of marching on Lahore to bring Sher Shah to the position of a protected prince. While escorting the families of Shah Shuja and Zaman Shah to Kabul, Major Broadfoot marched through the Punjab with demonstrations of force. Ellenborough consulted the Duke of Wellington about the general principles upon which a campaign against the Punjab should be conducted. These plans were temporarily upset by the British disaster in Afghanistan, but an aggressive policy gradually took shape. In 1843, Lord Hardinge became the Governor-General; he who was quite experienced in military leadership and was lucky to have a competent associate in the commander-in-chief, Sir Hugh Gough. The strength of the army on the Punjab frontier stations was raised to 40,000 men with 94 guns. There were two large boats on the Sutlej and 56 pontoons at Firozpur obviously intended for transport of British troops into Sikh territory. This alarmed the Sikhs and their suspicion was strengthened by the arrival of Major Broadfoot as British agent at Ludhiana for dealing with the affairs of the Sikhs in November 1844. He declared the Cis-Sutlej territories of Maharaja Dalip Singh to be under British protection, and he began to act as if it was British territory. He created dissensions in the Lahore Court by conspiring with Dogra chief Gulab Singh, Teja Singh, Lal Singh and the Governor of Multan. One of his subordinates described him as "the prime mover, by many considered the cause" of the first Anglo-Sikh war. It was due to his provocation that the Sikh army made the hostile move first. In a manner, it served the British purpose fully because now they got the opportunity to act as if in self-defence.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46)

Causes for the outbreak of the first Anglo-Sikh wars have been attributed to the Sikh army crossing the River Sutlej on December 11, 1845. Whilst this aggressive manoeuvre provided the British with justification to declare war, the causes were much more complex. The causes may be summarised as follows:

Causes

(i) the anarchy in the Lahore kingdom following the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh resulting in a power struggle for domination between the Court at Lahore and the ever powerful and increasingly local army;

(ii) suspicions amongst the Sikh army arising from recent British military campaigns to achieve the annexation of Gwalior and Sindh in 1841 and the campaign in Afghanistan in 1842;

(iii) the increase in the number of British troops being stationed near the border with the Lahore kingdom.

The war began in December 1845 with 20,000-30,000 troops in the British side, while the Sikhs had about 50,000 men under the overall command of Lal Singh. But Lal Singh's intention was treacherous and maintaining secret contacts with the British, he helped them in no small measure by refusing a sudden attack on Firozepur, at that time guarded by only a limited number of British troops. Instead, he attacked the main body of the British army under Lord Gough at Mudki, twenty miles from Ferozepur, and left the battlefield early leaving his soldiers leaderless. They fought gallantly but were in the end repulsed (December 18). Three days later, Gough attacked the Sikhs at Ferozeshah (alo Ferozeshahr), when they fought back driving the British into desperate straits, and Hardinge (who was present in the battlefield) thought that everything was lost. Inexplicably, however, Lal Singh left the battlefield with his guns in the night (December 21-22) and so did Teja Singh the morning next. The Sikhs, instead of decisively defeating the English, were decisively beaten by them. Hardinge was so enraged by this near debacle that he got rid of Gough (dismissed him) then and there and took charge himself.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46)

Gough, however, had a second chance because the traitors Lal Singh and Teja Singh waited quietly for a month while he got fresh supplies of guns and men. Even so, a loyal Sikh commander, Ranjodh Singh shocked the English with a successful surprise attack on January 21, 1846 at Buddowal. But the English won a brilliant victory during the next encounter at Aliwal on January 28, 1846. The final showdown was at Sobraon on February 10 where Lal Singh and Teja Singh left the battlefield as usual, and the leaderless Sikhs retreated after a heroic fight in "circumstances of discreet polity and shameless treason." That was not all. The two traitors broke the boat bridge on the Sutlej causing the death of a number of Sikh soldiers, who were crossing the river at that time, by drowning. Lahore fell to the British forces on February 20, 1846. The British captured the capital city without a fight.

Dr Anil Chandra Banerjee writes in the *New History of Modern India,* "The British owed their success primarily to the services rendered to them by the three mercenary non-Sikh leaders of the Sikh state. Lal Singh

and Teja Singh deserted their troops in the battlefield. Lal Singh regularly supplied to the British information about the disposition of the Sikh army. Gulab Singh stopped sending rations and supplies to the troops. After the battle of Aliwal he concerted plans with Hardinge for bringing about the defeat of the Sikh army. The Sikh soldiers fought with indomitable courage and determination, but these qualities alone could not bring victory against the well-fed and well-supplied British army. Their role in the war justified Ranjit Singh's policy of adopting European methods of war; at the same time their disaster testified to the weakness of his policy of employing 'strangers' in high positions in his state."

Treaty of Lahore (1846)

The main features of the treaty signed between the English and the Sikhs on March 9, 1846 after the war were as follows:

(i) All the territories of the Lahore Government lying to the south of the Sutlej were handed over to the British.
(ii) The Jalandhar Doab (between the Beas and the Sutlej) was annexed to the Company's dominions.
(iii) Kashmir (including Jammu) was given to Gulab Singh in independent sovereignty.
(iv) The Sikh army was to be reduced to 25 battalions of infantry (800 each), and 12,000 cavalry and 36 guns of the Sikhs, in addition to those already captured, were surrendered to the British.
(v) British troops were to be permitted a free passage through the Punjab whenever necessary.
(vi) The limits of the maharaja's territory were not to be altered, and no European, British or American subject was to be employed in his service without the consent of the British Government.
(vii) The British Government was not to interfere in the internal administration of Punjab.
(viii) An adequate English force would be stationed in Lahore till the end of 1846.
(ix) The transfer of Kashmir including Jammu to Gulab Singh was formalised by a separate treaty (March 16, 1846) and the price which he was required to pay to the Company was Rupees 75 lakh.

The last two clauses were added by a supplementary agreement concluded on March 11.

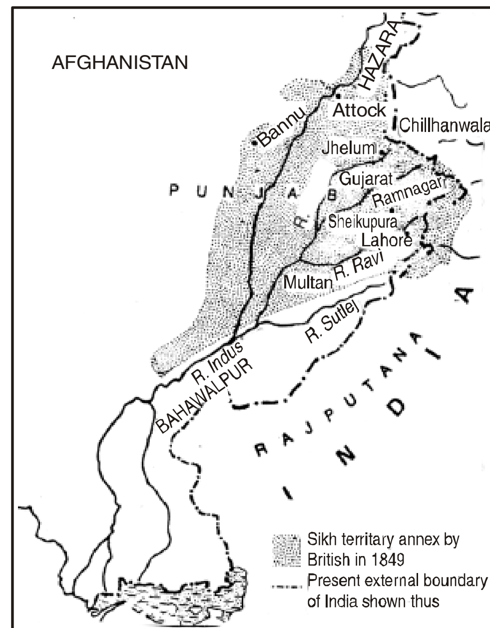
By these arrangements, the Sikh territories were divided into three parts with Maharaja Dalip Singh holding onto one, the English annexing the second and Gulab Singh getting the third as a reward for his treachery. Lahore not only got reduced in size but the Sikh state was weakened by the limit placed on the size of its army and the restrictions imposed by the acceptance of Subsidiary Alliance.

Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49)

Causes

A dispute over Multan, whose governor, Mulraj, resigned because he was asked to pay an enhanced annual revenue, provided the occasion for the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1848. A new Sikh governor was appointed, accompanied by two English officers, Van Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson. Both English officers were murdered, and within a short time, the Sikh troops and *sardars* joined in open rebellion.

The Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, agreed with Sir Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief, that the British East India Company's military forces were neither adequately equipped with



Second Anglo-Sikh War (1846)

transport and supplies, nor otherwise prepared to take the field immediately. He also foresaw the spread of the rebellion, and the necessity that must arise, not merely for the capture of Multan, but also for the entire subjugation of the Punjab. He therefore resolutely delay the strike, organised a strong army for operations in November, and himself proceeded to Punjab. Despite the brilliant successes gained by Herbert Edwardes in the Second Anglo-Sikh War with Mulraj, and Gough's indecisive victories at Ramnagar in November, at Sadulapur in December, and at the Battle of Chillhanwala on January 13, 1849, the stubborn resistance at Multan showed that the task required the utmost resources of the British. At length, on January 22, the Multan fortress was taken by General Whish, who was thus set at liberty to join Gough at Gujarat. Here a complete victory was won on February 21 at the Battle of Gujarat, the Sikh army surrendered at Rawalpindi, and their Afghan allies were chased out of India.

Battle of Gujarat

After the victory at Gujarat, Lord Dalhousie annexed Punjab for the East India Company in 1849. For his services the Earl of Dalhousie received the thanks of the British Parliament and a step up in the peerage, as Marquess.

The Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49 formed a unique military experience for the British in India, who had become accustomed to having to take into account factors such as terrain or climate rather than the military skill of their opponents. The regular troops of the army of the Sikh kingdom of Lahore, trained and armed along European lines, were to present the British with a determined and resourceful foe.

Significance of the Anglo-Sikh Wars

The Anglo-Sikh wars gave the two sides a mutual respect for each other's fighting prowess. The Sikhs were to fight loyally for the British in the Indian mutiny in 1857 and in many other campaigns and wars uptil Indian independence in 1947.

EXTENSION OF BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The process of imperial expansion and consolidation of British paramountcy was carried on by the Company during the 1757-1857 period through a two-fold method: (a) policy of annexation by conquest or war; and (b) policy of annexation by diplomacy and administrative mechanisms. We have already discussed how the Company one by one defeated and subjugated the major Indian powers like Bengal, Mysore, Marathas and the Sikhs, mainly by waging wars against them. But in the case of many other powers, the British applied diplomatic and administrative policies. In this context, we may cite examples of Warren Hastings' 'ring-fence' policy, Wellesley's system of 'subsidiary alliance' and Dalhousie's 'doctrine of lapse' to see how the British dominion expanded in India. We shall also discuss how the British came in conflict with India's neighbouring countries in order to secure the strategic interests of British imperialism.

Warren Hastings and the Policy of Ring-fence

Warren Hastings took charge as the governor-general at a critical period of British rule when the British were to encounter the powerful combination of the Marathas, Mysore and Hyderabad. He acted with firm resolve and determination not only to save and preserve the small British Indian possessions but also to give Bengal a workable system of administration. His wars against Mysore and the Marathas were fought with the objective of establishing an equality of status with the Indian rulers. He followed a policy of ring-fence which aimed at creating buffer zones to defend the Company's frontiers. Broadly speaking, it was the policy of defence of their neighbours' frontiers for safeguarding their own territories. This policy of Warren Hastings was reflected in his war against the Marathas and Mysore. The chief danger to the Company's territories was from the Afghan invaders and the Marathas. To safeguard against these dangers, the Company undertook to organise the defence of the frontiers of Awadh on the condition that the Nawab would defray the expenses of the defending army. The defence of Awadh constituted the defence of Bengal during that time. Thus the states brought under the ring-fence system were assured of military assistance against external aggression—but at their own expense. In other words, these allies were required to maintain

subsidiary forces which were to be organised, equipped and commanded by the officers of the Company who, in turn, were to be paid by the rulers of these states. Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliance was, in fact, an extension of the ring-fence system which sought to reduce the Indian states into a position of dependence on the British government.

Subsidiary Alliance

The Subsidiary Alliance system was not a discovery of Wellesley's; it was probably Dupleix who first gave on hire (so to say) European troops to Indian rulers to fight their wars. Since then, almost all the governor-generals from Clive onwards applied the system to various Indian states and brought it to near perfection. The first Indian state to fall into this protection trap was Awadh which in 1765 signed a treaty under which the Company pledged to defend the frontiers of Awadh on the condition of the Nawab defraying the expenses of such defence. As a bonus, presumably, to the Nawab, a British Resident was stationed at Lucknow to keep an eye on the goings there. It was in 1787 that the Company insisted that the subsidiary state should not have foreign relations. This was included in the treaty with the Nawab of Carnatic which Cornwallis signed in February 1787. It was but natural that the cession of territory in lieu of protection money (or subsidy) would be demanded next. This was fixed at an exorbitantly high level, which the poor rulers could not pay and they usually fell in arrears. It was Wellesley's genius to make it a general rule to negotiate for the surrender of territory in full sovereignty for the maintenance of the subsidiary force.

Not a Discovery by Wellesley

Wellesley (1798-1805) was an imperialist to the core who aimed at making the Company the supreme power in India by expanding its territories and reducing the Indian states to a position of dependence on the Company. The system of subsidiary alliance which he perfected and used to extend the British paramountcy over many Indian states acted like a "double-edged weapon". It helped the British assert its supremacy over the state which accepted the system and, at the same time, protected the state from foreign influences and aggressors, especially that of Napoleonic France.

Wellesley Perfected the Policy

There were four stages in the application of the subsidiary alliance over unsuspecting Indian states and these were carried out in an insidious manner. In the first stage, the Company offered to help a friendly Indian state with its troops to fight any war the state might be engaged in. The second stage consisted of making a common cause with the Indian state now made friendly and taking the field with its own soldiers and those of the state. Now came the third stage when the Indian ally was asked not for men but for money. The Company promised that it would recruit, train, and maintain a fixed number of soldiers under British officers, and that the contingent would be available to the ruler for his personal and family's protection as also for keeping out aggressors, all for a fixed sum of money. In the fourth or the last stage, the money or the protection fee was fixed, usually at a high level; when the state failed to pay the money in time, it was asked to cede certain parts of its territories to the Company in lieu of payment. The Company's entry into the affairs of the state had begun; now it would be for the British resident (installed in the state capital under the treaty) to initiate, sustain and hasten the process of eventual annexation.

Stages of Application

Professor B.L. Grover, illustrating a typical subsidiary treaty, points out the salient features of the policy in action:

Features of Subsidiary Alliance

(i) The Indian state was to surrender its external relations to the care of the Company and was to make no wars. It was to conduct negotiations with other states through the Company.
(ii) A bigger state was to maintain an army within its territories commanded by British officers for the preservation of public peace, and the ruler was to cede territories in full sovereignty for the upkeep of that force; a smaller state was required to pay tribute in cash to the Company.
(iii) The state was to accept a British resident at its headquarters.
(iv) The state was not to employ Europeans without consulting the Company.
(v) The Company was not to interfere in the internal affairs of the state.

(vi) The Company was to protect the Indian state against foreign enemies of every sort and kind.

Effects of the Policy

The system of subsidiary alliance proved to be a very advantageous 'Trojan-horse' for the British whereas it spelt disaster for the Indian state which fell victim to it. This policy literally made the Indian states politically impotent as they virtually became British protectorates. The rulers of these states lost the possibility of forming any confederacy or alliance against the British if situation demanded it. Secondly, the British troops were placed at strategic locations once they were stationed in the capitals of these states. The Company was relieved of a large financial burden as it could now maintain a large body of troops at the expense of the princes.

Thirdly, the system proved to be an effective weapon in keeping the French at bay, as the latter were not allowed to have any say in these states. Thus the Company could throw forward its military boundary ahead of its political frontier and keep "the evils of war… at a distance" from the sources of its wealth and power.

Fourthly, the Company began to arbitrate in inter-state disputes and the British Residents placed in the courts of the princes wielded great influence over the politics of the Indian states. The Company acquired "territories in full sovereignty" from the Indian states and expanded its imperial dominions in the country. For example, the Nizam of Hyderabad gave away all territories acquired by him from Mysore in the 1790s to the British by the treaty of 1800. Similarly, the Nawab of Awadh surrendered Rohilakhand and the Lower Doab region of his dominions to the British.

Fifthly, the Indian state concerned accepted a subordinate position and sacrificed independence by surrendering its foreign relations and accepting a kind of disarmament. The British Residents rendered the normal functioning or state administration almost impossible by frequently interfering in the state affairs.

Sixthly, the subsidiary system supported every weak and oppressive ruler, and thereby deprived the subjects of any positive remedy against misgovernance. The presence of the British troops destroyed every chance of remedy by strongly supporting the ruler against foreign or domestic rivals.

Finally, the Indian states suffered from financial bankruptcy by accepting the subsidiary alliance as the Company demanded a subsidy usually amounting to one-third of the annual revenue of the state. The British Resident and the officers of the subsidiary force received fat salaries, and huge expenditure was incurred on this equipment and other paraphernalia. All this heavily burdened the state exchequer. The ruler in turn taxed the common people who became utterly impoverished. Even when territory was demanded in commutation of subsidy, the demand of the Company was usually very high. The subsidiary alliance policy led Munro to write that "the simple and direct mode of conquest from without is more creditable both to our armies and to our national character, than that of dismemberment from within by the aid of a Subsidiary force".

States Which Accepted Subsidiary Alliance

The Indian princes who accepted the subsidiary system were: the Nizam of Hyderabad (September 1798 and 1800), the ruler of Mysore (1799), the ruler of Tanjore (October 1799), the Nawab of Awadh (November 1801), the Peshwa (December 1801), the Bhonsle Raja of Berar (December 1803), the Sindhia (February 1804), the Rajput states of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Macheri, Bundi and the ruler of Bharatpur (1818).

Critique of the Subsidiary System

It must be admitted that the British in the 18th century raised the practice of saying (and writing and passing legislations on) something and doing exactly the opposite almost to the level of a fine art. Pitt's India Act (1784) and item (v) of Model (subsidiary system) Code say 'no' to intervention in the internal affairs of the state. But the British intervened without exception in all the Indian states. Even Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Punjab, which did not join the subsidiary alliance system, had to suffer this ignominy before it was annexed. Apologists for the British would say that they (the British) had to step in because life and property of the common people was in danger and that their business interests were

at peril. In reality, however, it was their business interests solely that caused them concern, and the saying, "They came to trade but got an empire", was born. As a piece of sophistry, the argument is marvellous; but if we look into the minds of the people who were the central characters at the time, the argument gives more nobility to the Company officers than they deserve. They were generally rapacious, greedy and acquisitive in nature, people for whom the word 'Nabob' was coined—meaning, those who went to India and came back with fabulous wealth.

Looking back, it seems the Indians also deserved little better. People who incessantly quarrel among themselves and call in a foreigner, a rank outsider, to arbitrate and settle their disputes (the rulers even called the British to suppress the revolts of their subjects) should not cry and complain if the arbiter subsequently turned into the ruler.

Doctrine of Lapse

The annexations under the doctrine of lapse were the most significant in the context of paramountcy. Though this policy is attributed to Lord Dalhousie (1848-56), he was not its originator. It was a coincidence that during his governor-generalship several important cases arose in which the 'Doctrine' could be applied. Dalhousie showed too much zeal in enforcing this policy which had been theoretically enunciated on some previous occasions. His predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie in turn acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately. He probably did not examine the political expediency of rigorously applying a doctrine which ran counter to the religious sentiments of the Hindus and the traditions of India.

Features of Doctrine of Lapse

In simple terms, the doctrine stated that the adopted son could be the heir to his foster father's private property, but not the state; it was for the paramount power (the British) to decide whether to bestow the state on the adopted son or to annex it. The doctrine was stated to be based on Hindu law and Indian customs, but Hindu law seemed to be somewhat inconclusive on this point, and the instances of an Indian sovereign annexing the state of his vassal on account of 'lapse' were rather rare. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had annexed a few of his feudatory principalities on account of 'lapse'. Likewise, the Company in 1820 acquired a few petty Cis-Sutlej states on the absence of heirs. Nonetheless, there was no clear-cut instance of an adopted son being deprived of an entire state or of such a state being regarded as a 'lapse'.

However, in spite of the doctrine being defective in law and rather uncommon in usage and custom, it served the purpose of enlarging the areas of the Company's dominions besides highlighting the omnipotence of the paramount power. In 1820, Bilaspur was annexed, and in 1837, some parts of the Jid states were annexed and the rest given to Swarup Singh, a collateral heir of the late Maharaja. In 1839, the small state of Moni was declared escheat (lapse), and Kolaba was taken over as 'lapse' in 1840.

It was Dalhousie's "strong and deliberate opinion that the British government was bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may, from time to time, present themselves". By war, he annexed the Punjab and Pegu (Lower Burma). His other annexations were effected by the application of the doctrine of lapse and on the flexible ground of misgovernment. His administration practically marks the final stage of British imperial expansion in India. In the later years the province of British Baluchistan was formed as a result of the second Anglo-Afghan war, and the occupation of Upper Burma in 1885 completed the process of British conquest of Burma. But this extension of the British Indian Empire affected territories lying outside the proper geographical limits of India.

Lapsed States

Satara was a state created by the British government out of the territories of the Peshwa after the third Anglo-Maratha war (1817-18), whose ruler was a descendant of Shivaji. The treaty of 1819 provided that the Raja's "sons and heirs and successors" would "perpetually reign in sovereignty over the territory". In 1848, the childless raja died, leaving a son who had been adopted without the previous permission of the British government. Dalhousie decided that only natural heirs were entitled to succeed. The court of directors approved annexation of the state on the ground that "by the general law

Annexation of Awadh

Awadh (or Oudh, as it is often spelt) was the oldest of the surviving states brought under the Subsidiary Alliance and the cruel impact of the system resulted in its continuous maladministration under unworthy, profligate and extravagant nawabs for a long spell of 80 years.

The people groaned under the heavy taxes imposed by the Nawab as also the illegal exactions of his officials and the talukdars. The chronic bankruptcy of the treasury was partly due to the heavy charges realised by the British government for maintenance of the subsidiary troops. In addition, large contributions were realised by Lord Hastings, Lord Amherst and Lord William Bentinck for purposes entirely unconnected with the affairs of Awadh. In 1819, the worthless Nawab was given the title and status of a king.

The Nawabs were bad rulers, but they were good allies. Periodical warnings were given to them by residents and Governors-General to improve their administration: but these proved to be of no use, for the primary cause of the weakness and corruption prevailing in Awadh lay in its entanglement in the system of Subsidiary Alliance. Bentinck warned the Nawab that the management of the state would be taken over by the British government unless there was an improvement in the administration; but he declined to support the Nawab's minister in introducing reforms. In 1837, during Auckland's administration, a new Nawab signed a treaty, engaging to replace the old levies of the state by a new force commanded by British officers and maintained at his cost. The treaty also provided that if maladministration continued, the British government would be entitled to take over the management of the state. The 'Home' authorities disallowed the treaty; but this fact was never communicated to the Nawab. Lord Hardinge treated this treaty as valid in 1847 and gave the Nawab two years' time to improve his administration. No improvement was made during this period, but no action was taken against the Nawab.

Lord Dalhousie directed Sleeman, the Resident in Awadh, to make a tour throughout the state and 'ascertain the actual situation by personal inspection. The Resident submitted a report describing the anarchical condition in the state. He was succeeded as Resident in 1854 by Outram who submitted a report supporting that of his predecessor. Dalhousie hesitated to take the extreme step, i.e., annexation; he preferred permanent British administration, with the Nawab retaining his titles and rank. But the Court of Directors ordered annexation and abolition of the throne (1856). Wajid Ali Shah refused to sign a treaty giving away his rights, and was exiled to Calcutta. It was a political blunder for which the British had to pay a heavy price during the Revolt of 1857. The deposition of the Nawab and the introduction of the British system of administration affected the interests of all classes of the people of Awadh. Most of the members of the aristocracy attached to the Nawab's administration, as also the officers and sepoys in the Nawab's army, suffered serious losses as a result of the political change. Talukdars were seriously affected by the new revenue policy; their traditional rights were ignored, and direct settlement was made with the village proprietors who had so long been their tenants. Moreover, many of their forts were dismantled, and their armed retainers were disarmed and disbanded. The peasants suffered because the assessment was very high. The new system of taxation was oppressive. The new judicial system was costly and complicated. These were inevitable consequences of the replacement of a medieval system of administration by a modern system. This would have followed even if Dalhousie's advice had been accepted and a titular Nawab had been kept on the throne.

and custom of India, a dependent principality, like that of Satara, cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the paramount power".

Jhansi, originally a principality tributary to the Peshwa, was admitted by the Company to a defensive alliance in 1804. Another treaty (1817) provided that the raja and his "heirs and successors" would be hereditary rulers of the principality. The childless raja died in 1853, having adopted a son without the previous permission of the British government. Dalhousie declared that the raja was a '*subahdar*' (provincial ruler) under the Peshwa and not a ruling chief. The state was annexed.

The state of Nagpur was forfeited to the British government in 1817 as a penalty for its attack on the Company. It was granted in 1818, in a truncated form, to Raghuji Bhonsle. He died in 1853 without leaving any natural heir or adopted son. In Dalhousie's view Nagpur in its new form was a state created by the British government. As there was a political vacuum in the absence of a natural or adopted heir, he "refused to bestow the territory in free gift upon a stranger"; it was annexed.

In each of these cases, the propriety of applying the doctrine of lapse is open to question on historical and legal grounds. What really weighed with Dalhousie was political expediency; he was guided by 'imperial considerations' rather than by

Foreign Policy

The pursuance of a foreign policy, guided by interests of British imperialism, often led to India's conflicts with neighbouring countries. These conflicts arose due to various reasons: firstly, political and administrative consolidation of the country coupled with the introduction of modern means of communication impelled the Government of India to reach out for natural, geographical frontier for internal cohesion and defence which sometimes resulted in border clashes. Secondly, the British Government had as its major aims in Asia and Africa—

(i) protection of the invaluable Indian empire;

(ii) expansion of British commercial and economic interests;

(iii) keeping other European imperialist powers, whose colonial interests came in conflict with those of the British, at an arm's length in Asia and Africa.

These aims led to British expansion and territorial conquests outside India's natural frontiers, and to conflicts with other imperialist European powers such as Russia, and France.

While the interests served were British, the money spent and the blood shed was Indian. A general survey of India's relations with its neighbours now follows.

Bhutan The occupation of Assam in 1816 brought the British into close contacts with the mountain state of Bhutan. Frequent raids by Bhutanese into adjoining territories in Assam and Bengal and the bad treatment meted out to Elgin's envoy in 1863-64 and the treaty imposed on him, by which the British were forced to surrender the passes leading to Assam, led to British annexation of these passes and the stopping of allowance paid to the Bhutanese. In 1865, the Bhutanese were forced to surrender the passes in return for an annual subsidy. It was the surrendered district which became a productive area with tea gardens.

Nepal The British desire to reach out to natural geographical frontiers brought them into conflict first of all with the northern hill kingdom of Nepal. In 1814, a border clash resulted in a full-fledged war which ended with a treaty in favour of the British. As per the treaty,

- Nepal accepted a British resident
- Nepal ceded the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon, and abandoned claims to Terai
- Nepal also withdrew from Sikkim.

This agreement brought many advantages to the British—

- the British empire now reached the Himalayas;
- it got better facilities for trade with Central Asia;
- it acquired sites for hill stations, such as Shimla, Mussorie and Nainital;
- the Gorkhas joined the British Indian Army in large numbers.

Burma The expansionist urges of the British, fuelled by the lure of forest resources of Burma, market for British manufactures in Burma and the need to check French ambitions in Burma and rest of South-East Asia, resulted finally in the annexation of Burma after three wars.

The First Burma War (1824-26) was fought when the Burmese expansion westwards and occupation of Arakan, Manipur, and the threat to Assam and Brahmaputra Valley led to continuous friction along the ill-defined border between Bengal and Burma, in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. The British expeditionary forces occupied Rangoon in May 1824 and reached within 72 km of the capital at Ava. Peace was established in 1826 with the Treaty of Yandabo which provided that the Government of Burma—

- pay rupees one crore as war compensation,
- cede its coastal provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim,
- abandon claims on Assam, Cachar and Jaintia,
- recognise Manipur as an independent state,
- negotiate a commercial treaty with Britain,
- accept a British resident at Ava, while posting a Burmese envoy at Calcutta.

These terms allowed the British to acquire most of Burma's coastline and also a firm base in Burma for future expansion.

The Second Burma War (1852) was the result almost wholly of British commercial greed. The British merchants were keen to get hold of timber resources of upper Burma and also sought further inroads into the Burmese market. This time, the British occupied Pegu, the only remaining coastal province of Burma. An intense guerrilla resistance had to be overcome before complete British control of lower Burma could be established.

At the time of the Third Burma War (1885), Burma was ruled by King Thibaw. The British merchants of Rangoon and lower Burma had been complaining about the step-motherly treatment by Thibaw, who had also been negotiating commercial treaties with the rival powers of France, Germany and Italy. The French also planned to lay a rail link from Mandalay to the French territory, at a time when the British were in conflict with the French in Niger, Egypt and Madagascar. A humiliating fine had been imposed on a British timber company by Thibaw. Dufferin ordered the invasion and final annexation of upper Burma in 1885.

The British had to face a strong guerrilla uprising in the whole of Burma soon after, and a nationalist movement after the First World War. The Burmese nationalists joined hands with the Indian National Congress. To weaken this link, Burma was separated

from India in 1935. The Burmese nationalist movement further intensified under U Aung San during the Second World War, which finally led to independence for Burma on January 4, 1948.

Afghanistan The problem of imperial defence and search for a scientific frontier towards the north-west brought the English into a clash with the hardy Afghans. In the early nineteenth century, increased Russian influence in Persia replaced British influence and thwarted an English scheme for establishment of a new route by River Euphrates to India. Especially after the Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828), the English got alarmed about possible Russian plans for India. Soon, there was a search for a scientific frontier from the Indian side. Passes of the north-west seemed to hold the keys to gateway of India. The need was felt for Afghanistan to be under control of a friendly prince.

Auckland, who came to India as the governor-general in 1836, advocated a forward policy. The Amir of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammed, wanted British friendship but made it conditional on the British to help him recover Peshawar from the Sikhs—a condition which the British Government in India rejected. Dost Mohammed now turned to Russia and Persia for help. This prompted the Government to go ahead with the forward policy, and a tripartite treaty (1838) was entered into by the British, Sikhs and Shah Shuja (who had been deposed from the Afghan throne in 1809 and had been living since then as a British pensioner at Ludhiana). The treaty provided that—

- Shah Shuja be enthroned with the armed help of the Sikhs, the Company remaining in the background, 'jingling the money-bag'.
- Shah Shuja conduct foreign affairs with the advice of the Sikhs and the British.
- Shah Shuja give up his sovereign rights over Amirs of Sind in return for a large sum of money.
- Shah Shuja recognise Maharaja Ranjit Singh's (the Sikh ruler) claims over the Afghan territories on the right bank of the River Indus.

But soon, there was a drastic change in political situation of the area because of the removal of the original irritants—Persia lifted siege of Herat and Russia recalled envoy from Kabul. Nevertheless, the British decided to go ahead with their forward policy. This resulted in the First Afghan War (1839-42). The British intention was to establish a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression from the north-west.

An English army entered triumphantly into Kabul (August 1839) after a successful attack. Most of the tribes had already been won over by bribes. Dost Mohammed surrendered (1840) and Shah Shuja was made the Amir of Afghanistan. But Shah Shuja was unacceptable to the Afghans. As the British withdrew, the Afghans rose in rebellion, killing the garrison commander in Kabul. The British were compelled to sign a treaty (1841) with Afghan chiefs by which they agreed to evacuate Afghanistan and restore Dost Mohammed. The grandiose plan exploded like a balloon. Under a new expedition, the British reoccupied Kabul in September 1842, but having learned their lesson well, they arrived at a settlement with Dost Mohammed by which the British evacuated Kabul and recognised him as the independent ruler of Afghanistan.

The First Afghan War cost India one-and-a-half crore rupees and nearly 20,000 men.

John Lawrence (governor-general from 1864 to 1869) adopted a policy of masterly inactivity which was a reaction to disasters of the First Afghan War (1839-42) and an outcome of practical common sense and an intimate knowledge of the frontier problem and of Afghan passion for independence. Even when Dost Mohammed died in 1863, there was no interference in the war of succession. His policy rested on fulfilment of two conditions—

(i) that the peace at frontier was not disturbed, and
(ii) that no candidate in civil war sought foreign help.

And as Sher Ali established himself on the throne, Lawrence tried to cultivate friendship with him. With the arrival of Lytton in 1876, there was a perceptible policy change. The new foreign policy was of 'proud reserve', of having scientific frontiers and safeguarding 'spheres of influence'. According to Lytton, the relations with Afghanistan could no longer be left ambiguous. Lytton made an offer of a favourable treaty to Sher Ali, but the Amir wanted friendship with both his powerful neighbours, Russia and England, while keeping both of them at an arm's length. Later, Sher Ali refused to keep a British envoy in Kabul while having granted earlier a similar concession to the Russians. Lytton was stunned, and when the Russians withdrew their envoy from Kabul, Lytton decided to invade Afghanistan (Second Afghan War—1870-80). Sher Ali fled in face of British invasion, and the Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879) was signed with Yakub Khan, the eldest son of Sher Ali. The treaty provided that—

- Amir conduct his foreign policy with the advice of Government of India,
- a permanent British resident be stationed at Kabul,
- the government of India give Amir all support against foreign aggression, and an annual subsidy.

But soon, Yakub had to abdicate under popular pressure and the British had to recapture Kabul and Kandhar. Lytton chalked out a plan for dismemberment of Afghanistan, but could not carry it out. Ripon abandoned this plan and decided on a policy of buffer state. Abdur Rahman agreed not to maintain political

relations with any other power except the British, thus losing his hold over the foreign policy.

After the First World War and the Russian Revolution (1917), Afghans demanded full independence. Habibullah (who succeeded Abdur Rahman in 1901) was killed in 1919 and the new ruler Amamullah declared open war on the British. Peace came in 1921 when Afghanistan recovered independence in foreign affairs.

North-West Frontier The successive Indian rulers tried to reach out to this region lying between the Indus and Afghanistan in their search for scientific frontier. The conquest of Sindh (1843) and annexation of Punjab (1849) carried British boundaries beyond Indus and brought them in contact with Baluch and Pathan tribes, who were mostly independent, but the Amir of Afghanistan claimed nominal suzerainty over them.

During the 1840s, John Jacob established a system of mobile defence by patrols in Sind and also reclaimed wasteland and started cultivation. Lord Dalhousie adopted a conciliatory approach towards tribes and set up a series of fortified posts to check raids. Since 1849 the frontier policy of the British was guided by the non-interventionist school of Lord Lawrence. But, the arrival of Lytton in 1876 marked the end of masterly inactivity. The English policymakers realised the importance of having a scientific frontier, particularly after the Second Afghan War and occupation of Afghan territory. Lansdowne (viceroy during 1883-93) gave further impetus to this forward policy. During 1870s, several administrative measures were also adopted in the frontier—civil officers were encouraged to learn Pashtu or Baluchi, a local force as auxiliary to Punjab Frontier Force was established, and colonies of Afridis, Waziris, Gurchanis, Bhittanis and Bugtis were formed in the British territory.

During 1891-92 the British occupation of Hunza, Nagar in Gilagit valley, which were passes commanding communications with Chitral, alarmed Abdur Rahman (Amir of Afghanistan). A compromise was finally reached by drawing a boundary line known as Durand Line between Afghan and British territories. Amir received some districts and his subsidy was increased. But the Durand Agreement (1893) failed to keep peace and soon there were tribal uprisings. To check these, a permanent British garrison was established at Chitral and troops posted to guard Malakand Pass but tribal uprisings continued till 1898.

Curzon, the viceroy between 1899 and 1905, followed a policy of withdrawal and concentration. British troops withdrew from advanced posts which were replaced by tribal levies, trained and commanded by British officers. He also encouraged the tribals to maintain peace. He created the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) directly under the Government of India (earlier, it was under control of the lieutenant-governor of Punjab). Overall, Curzon's policies resulted in a peaceful north-west frontier. The peaceful conditions continued thereafter with occasional tribal uprisings. In January 1932, it was announced that the NWFP was to be constituted as a governor's province. Since 1947, the province belongs to Pakistan.

Tibet Tibet was ruled by a theocracy of Buddhist monks (lamas) under nominal suzerainty of China. The British efforts to establish friendly and commercial relations with Tibet had not yielded any result in the past and a deadlock had been reached by the time of Curzon's arrival in India. The Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was ineffective and Russian influence at Lhasa was increasing. There were reports of Russian arms and ammunition finding way into Tibet. Curzon felt alarmed and sent a small Gorkha contingent under Colonel Younghusband on a special mission to Tibet to oblige Tibetans to come to an agreement. The Tibetans refused to negotiate and offered non-violent resistance. Younghusband pushed his way into Lhasa (August 1904) while the Dalai Lama fled. Younghusband dictated terms to the Tibetan officials which provided that—

- Tibet would pay an indemnity of Rs 75 lakh at the rate of one lakh rupees per annum;
- as a security for payment, the Indian Government would occupy the Chumbi Valley (territory between Bhutan and Sikkim) for 75 years;
- Tibet would respect frontier of Sikkim;
- Trade marts would be opened at Yatung, Gyantse, Gartok; and
- Tibet would not grant any concession for railways, roads, telegraph, etc. to any foreign state, but give Great Britain some control over foreign affairs of Tibet.

But later, on the insistence of the Secretary of State and true to the pledge given to Russia, the treaty was revised reducing the indemnity from Rs 75 lakh to Rs 25 lakh and providing for evacuation of Chumbi valley after three years (the valley was actually evacuated in January 1908).

The Younghusband mission mainly served the purpose of gratifying the imperialist tendencies of the viceroy and no permanent result followed. Only China gained out of the whole affair because the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 provided that the two great powers would not negotiate with Tibet, except through the intermediary of the Chinese government. Still, Curzon's policy counteracted all Russian schemes in Tibet.

any abstract principle of validity or invalidity of succession by adopted heirs. Consolidation of the British territories—essential for administrative and military purposes—was his primary objective. The annexation of Jhansi would facilitate the improvement of the Company's "general internal administration" in Bundelkhand. Satara, in the hands of an independent sovereign, might form "an obstacle to safe communication and combined military movement". It was "interposed between the two principal military stations in the Presidency of Bombay". It was also "placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras". Nagpur was "placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Calcutta". Its incorporation in the Company's territories would "completely surround with British territory" the dominions of the Nizam. A subsidiary factor was Dalhousie's belief that "the prosperity and happiness of the people would be promoted by their being placed permanently under British rule".

Sambalpur, which was surrounded by British territory, was annexed, the ruler having died without any natural or adopted heir. In the case of Karauli, Dalhousie's recommendation for annexation was overruled by the court of directors.

Sambalpur, Bhagat and Udaipur

The petty principalities of Baghat and Udaipur (to be distinguished from Udaipur or Mewar in Rajasthan) were annexed by Dalhousie due to the failure of heirs. After the 'Revolt of 1857', however, princely rule was restored.

Nana Saheb, Nawab of Carnatic, Raja of Tanjore

The inadmissibility of the claim of an adopted son to inherit his adoptive father's political pension was enforced in the case of Nana Saheb, the adopted son of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II who died in 1851. The titular Nawab of the Carnatic died childless in 1853; his uncle's claim to inherit the nawabship was rejected on the ground that the treaty of 1801 had created an "exclusively personal"—not hereditary—status. The titular Maratha Raja of Tanjore died in 1855. He had no son, and his daughter's claim to succeed was rejected on the ground that Hindu law did not recognise the "succession of a female to Hindu *Raj*".

Thus Dalhousie annexed eight states into the British empire in India during his eight-year tenure (1848-56) as governor-general. His reign almost completed the process of expansion of British power in India, which began with the victory over Siraj-ud-daula at Plassey in 1757.

Views

- Our acquisition of India was made blindly. Nothing great that has been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally and so accidentally, as the conquest of India.

—John Seeley

- The deeper reasons of intention and motive for the Company's acquisition of vast areas of territory are more obscure… for the expansion occurred in such different parts of India at different times. In each particular situation the precise British interests at stake varied, and the perceived danger to them; as did the relative weight in decision-making of different British groups concerned in Indian affairs.

—Judith Brown

- There never was a battle in which the consequences were so vast, so immediate and so permanent. From the very morrow of the victory the English became virtual masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. During the century which followed, but no serious attempt was made to cast off the yoke virtually imposed by Plassey, whilst from the base it gave them, a base resting on the sea and with proper care, unassailable, they were able to extend their authority beyond the Indus—their influence amongst people of whose existence even Europe was at that time profoundly ignorant. It was Plassey which made England the greatest Muhammadan power in the world; Plassey which forced her to become one of the main factors in the settlement of the burning Eastern question; Plassey which necessitated the conquest and colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope, of the Mauritius, the protectorship over Egypt; Plassey which gave to the sons of her middle classes the first field for the development of their talent and industry the world has ever known; to her aristocracy unrivalled opportunities for the display of administrative power; to her merchants and manufacturers customers whose enormous demands almost compensate for the hostile tariffs of her rivals, and alas! even of her colonies; to

the skilled artisan remunerative employment; to her people generally a noble feeling of pride in the greatness and glory of the empire of which a little island in the Atlantic is the parent stem, Hindustan the noblest branch; it was Plassey which, in its consequences, brought consolation to the little island for the loss of America.

—**G.B. Malleson**, in *The Decisive Battles of India*

- Whether regarded as a duel between the foreigner and the native, or as an event pregnant with vast permanent consequences, Buxar takes rank amongst the most decisive battles ever fought. Not only did the victory of the English save Bengal, not only did it advance the British frontier to Allahabad, but it bound the rulers of Awadh to the conqueror by ties of admiration of gratitude, of absolute reliance and trust, ties which made them for the ninety-four years that followed the friends of his friends and the enemies of his enemies.

  —**G.B. Malleson**

- Clive was not a founder but a harbinger of the future. He was not a planner of empire but an experimenter who revealed something of the possibilities. Clive was the forerunner of the British Empire.

  —**Percival Spear**

- In the hands of Clive and Warren Hastings, the Subsidiary System was a defensive instrument to safeguard the Company's possessions; in the hands of Wellesley, it was an offensive device, with which to subject an independent state to British control.

  —**Percival Spear**

- Wellesley converted the British Empire *in* India to the British Empire *of* India. From one of the political powers in India, the Company became the supreme power in India and claimed the whole country as its sole protectorate. From Wellesley's time onwards the defence of India was the Company's responsibility.

  —**Sidney J. Owen** *(Selection from Wellesley's Despatches)*

- Tipu Sultan's failure … was a tragedy for him … and a tragedy for the sub-continent for his defeat meant the end of the first round of the struggle for freedom.

  —*History of the Freedom Movement of Pakistan*

- The decline and fall of the Maratha military power was due firstly to the revival of feudalism after the death of Sambhaji, which caused disunion and dissension from which Shivaji had tried to save his people; secondly to the rejection of Shivaji's ideal of social amity on a religious basis in favour of the principle of personal aggrandisement which led to the denationalisation of the Maratha army, and thirdly and lastly, to the failure of the Maratha leaders to keep pace with the scientific progress in other parts of the world, to learn and assimilate what others had to teach and improve upon what they had learnt. In Europe, there was steady progress from feudalism to national monarchy and from national monarchy to democracy; in Maharashtra, the process was reversed by the Peshwas, and the result was decline, decay and fall of the Maratha Empire.

  —**S.N. Sen** *(Anglo-Maratha Relations, 1785-1796)*

- The conquest of Sindh followed in the wake of the Afghan war and was morally and politically its sequel.

  —**P.E. Roberts** *(History of British India)*

- We have no right to seize Sindh, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be.

  —**Charles Napier** (Quoted in N.F.P. Napier's *The Conquest of Sindh*)

- Three commanding figures stand out in the annals of Indian history. The first of these, Warren Hastings, created the British administration of Bengal... The second the Marquis of Wellesley, conceived and created the political system by which the Native Sovereignties lying outside British India were included in one empire as India under the control of the paramount power. Lord Dalhousie brought into harmony the work of his two great predecessors. He consolidated the scattered territories under the Company's direct rule, carrying the British frontier across the Indus and the Irrawaddy and enlarged the sphere of protection over Baluchistan, and entering into an alliance with Afghanistan. He removed formidable obstacles to the moral and material development of a continent, linking together British provinces by annexation of states, sweeping away phantom royalties and connecting all portions of the empire by railways and telegraph.

  —**Lee-Warner** (*The Life of Marquis of Dalhousie)*

Summary

- **India at the crossroads:** India in the mid-18th century.
  - British conquest: accidental or intentional?
  - Factors responsible for British victory over India.
- **Bengal:** The conflict between English and the Nawab of Bengal
  - Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757): Robert Clive's victory over Siraj-ud-daula laid the territorial foundation of British rule in India.
  - Battle of Buxar (1764): Clive's victory over the combined armies of Nawab of Bengal, Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor at Buxar laid the real foundation of the English power
  - Treaty of Allahabad (1765): Granted the *Diwani* Rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English.
    (i) Treaty with Nawab of Awadh
    (ii) Treaty with Shah Alam II, Mughal Emperor
  - Dual Government—1765-72
- **British Conquest of Mysore**: Rise of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan
  - First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)
  - Second Anglo-Mysore War (1779-1784)
  - Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92)
  - Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)
- **Anglo-Maratha Struggle for Supremacy**: Three wars fought
  - First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82)
  - Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05)
  - Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-1819)
  - Causes for the defeat of the Marathas
- **Conquest of Sindh (1843)**
- **Conquest of the Punjab:** Ranjit Singh and the English (Treaty of Amritsar 1809)
  - First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46)
  - Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49)
- **British Paramountcy in action**
  - Ring-fence Policy of Warren Hastings
  - Subsidiary Alliance of Wellesley: subsidised states—Hyderabad, Mysore, Tanjore, Awadh, Bharatpur, some Maratha and Rajput states.
  - Doctrine of Lapse of Dalhousie (1848-56): lapsed states—Satara, Jaitpur, Jhansi, Nagpur, Sambalpur, Udaipur, Bhagat and Awadh.

CHAPTER 5

Early Structure of the British Raj

INTRODUCTION

For controlling and consolidating its power over its Indian possessions, the East India Company had to devise a suitable administrative mechanism. After acquiring political power over Bengal, Robert Clive established a system of government (Dual Government) in 1765 which has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The primary motive of the British during the dual government regime (1765 to 1772) was to carry on their profitable trade and collect taxes with no intention of carrying out any administrative innovation as there was little need for it. But the dual government soon became quite obnoxious as the Company officials misused their powers and their corrupt and exploitative practices utterly discredited it. In 1772, the Court of Directors undertook the administration of Bengal directly, through their own servants, thereby ending the dual government.

The authority which controlled the Company was situated far away from India in London. The British government faced many problems owing to this situation and relationship. The power and sovereignty of the Indian empire was vested in the Company which had become a great empire by combining the role of a trader and an overlord. The British government decided that the Company could no longer be allowed to remain outside the ambit of the state. This decision even had the support of Clive and Warren Hastings who held that constitutional relations of the Company with the Crown could be desirable as well.

In April 1772, a select parliamentary committee was appointed to enquire into the Company's state of affairs in India. In August the Company ran into severe financial difficulties, forcing it to beg for a loan of £ 1000,000 to the British government. In these circumstances the main problem before the British government was to define its relationship with the Company and its Indian possessions. Another problem was to determine the way the Company's authorities in Britain were to control the large number of officials and soldiers working for it in far away India. Equally important was the question of providing a single centre of control over widespread British possessions in Bengal, Bombay and Madras.

It should be pointed out here that the form of relationship of the East India Company and its possessions in India with the British government in London was of great importance as the issue was closely connected with party and parliamentary rivalries in Britain. Britain's statesmen were as politically ambitious as her merchants were commercially greedy. Since Bengal yielded enormous resources into the hands of the Company, its officials brought home fabulous wealth, which in turn, excited the jealousy of the other sections of British society such as the growing section of manufacturers and merchants, and the newly emergent group of free enterprisers. These sections strove to have a share in the profits from Indian trade and wealth. They vehemently criticised and attacked the Company's administration in Bengal and pressed for the abolition of its trade monopoly.

Apart from these sections many British political thinkers and statesmen were afraid that the Company and its powerful rich officials would bring down the moral standard of the English nation and increase corruption in British politics. Since the Company bought seats in the British Parliament for its agents it was feared that with the money from India it might assert political dominance in the home government.

The Company also faced the criticism of a new school of economists who were then advocating the doctrine of *laissez faire* or free trade. For instance, Adam Smith in his book *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* opined that exclusive companies (like the East India Company) were causing harm both to countries which establish them and the countries that they govern. However, despite the opposition from many quarters, the Company stood its ground with the help of the royal patronage it received from King George III and the political support of its friends in the British Parliament. A compromise was worked out by which the British Parliament decided to control the Company's India administration in the interest of Britain's influential elite class as a whole. The Company was allowed to continue with its monopoly of Eastern trade and the directors were given the control of Indian administration.

In 1773, the Parliament passed its first important Act (Regulating Act) to control the Company's administration. We shall discuss the Act in detail and see how it made changes in the constitution of the Company at home and subjected its Indian territories to some degree of control. We shall also discuss the Pitt's India Act passed in 1784 to rectify the anomalies created by the Act of 1773 and various charter Acts (passed in an interval of 20 years) that made substantial changes in the relationship between the Company and the home government. We shall also focus on the development of the unified administrative structure that evolved in India by 1857 and analyse how the Company's administration was considerably influenced by the changing needs of British imperialism in particular and other economic and political forces of the late 18th and 19th centuries in general.

THE REGULATING ACT (1773)

Regulating Act, 1773

The payment of high rates of dividends to the Company's shareholders caused a financial crisis in the Company's affairs. As a result, the British Parliament passed five Acts in 1767. Parliament recognised, for the first time, the Company's territorial acquisitions, hitherto based on rights conferred by Charters granted by the Crown. The British state asserted the right to control the sovereignty of these acquisitions. Provision was also made for payment of a fixed sum for two years into the British exchequer. Thus the British exchequer claimed a share of the Company's income. This was followed by an Act passed in 1769, which guaranteed to the Company its territorial revenues for five years, subject to an annual payment to the British exchequer. In 1773, with the Company's financial crisis becoming worse, an Act authorised the grant of a loan by the British Government on certain conditions. In the same year was passed the Regulating Act "for establishing certain Regulations for the better management of the affairs of the East India Company, in India as well as in Europe". The Regulating Act was moved by the Prime Minister of England, Lord North.

Provisions

The provisions of the Regulating Act were related to the two governing bodies of the Company—the General Court of Proprietors and the Court of Directors. A system of reducing the number of votes was introduced to make the General Court less chaotic and more responsible. Its main function was to elect the directors who formed the principal executive body; the directors were elected for four years, with a quarter of the number being annually replaced. A chairman and a deputy chairman were elected from among themselves every year. More important than these were the provisions of the Regulating Act to correct the 'evils having their operation in India'. These provisions belonged to two categories: executive and judicial administration in Bengal, and the creation of a central authority for the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. The Governor-General and a Council consisting of four members were given charge of the whole civil and military government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa,

as also the ordering, management and government of the territorial acquisitions and revenues in these three regions. The governor-general and the council were required to obey all orders received from the Court of Directors. The Act named Warren Hastings as the first Governor-General. He had been the Governor of Bengal since 1772. John Clavering, George Monson, Richard Barwell and Philip Francis were named the first four members of the Council. They were to hold office for five years and their successors were to be appointed by the Court of Directors. The decision of the majority was to prevail in case of any difference of opinion; the governor-general or, in his absence, the senior-most members of the Council present, were to have a casting vote in case of equality of votes. The governor-general and the Council were empowered to make rules, ordinances and regulations subject to certain conditions.

Governor-General and the Council

The relation between the governor-general and the members of his Council, as also between the Governor and Council of Madras and of Bombay on the other, was defined by the Act. The Councils of Madras and Bombay could not 'commence hostilities, or declare or make war, against any Indian princes or powers' without the previous 'consent' of the former, except in cases of 'imminent necessity' as also in cases of which 'special orders' had been received from the Court of Directors. The governor-general and the Council of Bengal were empowered to exercise the 'power of superintending and controlling the government and management' of the other two presidencies in a limited field. The first step was thus taken to establish a central authority for the Company's territories in India. The three presidencies acted separately and independently at first, subject to the control and guidance of the Court of Directors.

Supreme Court

The creation of the Supreme Court in Calcutta was the most important feature of the Regulating Act in the judicial sphere. It was to be a King's Court, not a Company's Court, and was to consist of a Chief Justice and three other Judges appointed by the Crown (the number was subsequently reduced to two). It was to have full civil, criminal, admiralty and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The Regulating Act came into operation in 1774. Partly amended in 1781, the Act was largely replaced by Pitt's India Act in 1784. In *The New History of Modern India: 1707-1947*, Anil Chandra Banerjee observes that the system established by the Act for the 'better management' of the Company's affairs in India led to three conflicts which created serious administrative and political problems. The governor-general, Warren Hastings, was the central figure in all these conflicts, and he faced internal and external crises with 'indomitable courage and unusual ingenuity'. Since the governor-general had a casting vote only in case of an equality of votes, the Act placed the governor-general on a footing of equality with the members of the Council in respect of voting. Hastings was not able to work in harmony with members of the Council as he was of an autocratic temperament and expected them to obey him. But three of them—Francis, Clavering and Monson—were opposed to him right from the start. While generally enjoying the support of Barwell, Hastings was not entitled under the Act to act against the views of the three members who generally voted against him. Of the three, Francis was Hastings' most determined opponent. "With real gifts of character and eminent talent, he (Francis) possessed a vindictiveness of temper which the Bengal climate was only too likely to encourage, and strong opinions derived from recent Indian discussions in England; he was in Macaulay's words 'a man prone to mistake malevolence for public virtue'. He went to Bengal convinced of the rottenness of the administration and hoping for the reversion of the government-generalship… It was not surprising that such a Council should be subject to dissensions." (*The Oxford History of India*)

Three Areas of Conflict

The conflict was related to issues of internal administration as also the Company's relations with the Mughal emperor and the Nawab of Awadh. The struggle continued even after the deaths of Monson in 1776 and Clavering in 1777, as their successors were not fully amenable to Hastings' control. The situation improved after Francis's resignation in 1780; yet there was the anomaly of the governor-general

Act of 1786

sometimes being compelled to take responsibility for measures which he did not approve. This anomaly was removed only in 1786 with an Act that freed the governor-general from dependence upon the members of the Council by empowering him to act in special cases in opposition to their views.

Under the Act, the governor-general and the Council on the one hand, and the Supreme Court on the other, were independent and opposed to each other, with the limits of their respective powers not being defined. The governor-general and Council thought the Supreme Court was a dreadful clog on the government. The English law that the Supreme Court enforced was unsuitable for conditions prevailing in Bengal; it obstructed the exercise of executive discretion which the Company's officials regarded as essential for the conduct of administrative business. The judges of the Court took a comprehensive view of their duties and functions, and they were supported in this by the vague provisions in the Act, as also in the 1774 Charter of the Court, relating to its jurisdiction. The Supreme Court enjoyed jurisdiction over two classes of persons: all British subjects residing in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and persons who were in the service of the Company or any British subject. This last term was open to different interpretations. Moreover, provisions in the Charter suggested that the Supreme Court would superintend the entire administration of justice in Bengal. A very wide view of the Supreme Court's jurisdiction was taken by Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. As a result, conflict was inevitable with the governor-general and Council. The governor-general and Council especially resented the Court's jurisdiction over the zamindars as the provision made the collection of revenue difficult. In the Kasijora case in 1780, the governor-general and Council resisted the service of the Supreme Court's notice on a zamindar. An Act passed in 1781 upheld the point of view of the governor-general and Council; it was provided that the zamindars would not be subject to the Court's jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

The third conflict occurred because the governor-general and Council were not given enough control over the governors and the Councils of Madras and of Bombay in respect of war and peace. During the first Anglo-Maratha War, the Bombay government violated the Act and concluded the Treaty of Surat in 1775, without consulting the governor-general and Council in Bengal. The Court of Directors upheld the treaty. In case of Madras the conflict centred round the Second Anglo-Mysore war. In both cases, the governor-general and Council had to assume heavy military, financial and political responsibilities which required them to concentrate authority in their hands, but they could not do so owing to the absence of full legal powers. The Pitt's India Act strengthened their authority substantially.

Analysing the Regulating Act, Percival Spear observes that it marked the first assertion of parliamentary control over the Company and registered the first concern of Parliament for the welfare of the people of India. But in itself it was a temporary measure full of defects which contributed to making things difficult for Warren Hastings. Besides asserting the principle of responsibility, the Act increased contact with India and knowledge of its affairs by dispatching mature judges and councillors to India. The Regulating Act was the first measure passed at a time when Indian affairs were a major topic in the British Parliament.

Significance of the Act

Although its defects soon became manifest, remedial measures were delayed due to the American War of Independence. In 1780, the Company's privileges ran out under the Act of 1744, but the government of Lord North did not bring forward any radical proposal. The Company's privileges were, instead, extended till 1791 with three years' notice from that date. Two parliamentary committees were appointed in 1781: one to examine the administration of justice and the other to consider the causes of the wars in the Carnatic. At the same time, the Lord North ministry fell in Britain, ushering in a period of political instability which only ended with Pitt's victory in the general election of 1784. India became a dominant issue in English politics for the first time. The period saw the emergence of Pitt's India Act.

PITT'S INDIA ACT (1784)

In August 1784, the Parliament passed the East India Company Act or Pitt's India Act on the motion of the Prime Minister, Younger Pitt. It was intended to serve two purposes: the better regulation and management of the Company's affairs in England and the better regulation and management of the British possessions in India. The Act provided for the appointment, by the king, of up to six Commissioners for the Affairs of India, of whom two were Cabinet ministers. Three of them were to form a Board for exercising the powers in the Commissioners. The Secretary of State (in his absence the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the absence of both of them, the senior of the other commissioners) was to preside at the Board. Generally known as the 'Board of Control', the Board superintended and controlled all the British territorial possessions in the East Indies, as also the affairs of the Company. This power did not, however, extend to the Company's commercial transactions or to its power of appointing its employees. In order to keep the Board informed of all transactions of the Company, the commissioners were to have access to all papers of the Company. The Court of Directors could not send any letter, order or instruction to its employees in India without consulting the Board in the matter.

The Court of Directors was empowered to appoint a secret committee consisting of not more than three directors, whose role would be to transmit secret orders relating to war or peace in India, to subordinates. Bengal was to have a governor-general and a council consisting of three ordinary members and one extraordinary member—the commander-in-chief of the Company's forces in India. Madras and Bombay were to have a governor and a council of three members each. The position of the supreme government in Bengal was strengthened in relation to the subordinate governments in Madras and Bombay, and the subordinate governments were to obey all orders and directions issued by the former.

Pitt's India Act introduced a system of double government, which meant government by the Board of Control and by the Court of Directors. Though modified in details, the system remained in force until 1858, and was marked by cumbrous and dilatory procedures as also elaborate checks and counter-checks. The political functions of the Court of Directors were subordinated to the powers of the Board of Control, which became the real, the sole governing power of India. Henry Dundas during the seventeen years (1784-1801) of his tenure as President of the Board determined the pattern of relationship between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors. The President took over all powers of the Board in 1787, making other members superfluous. After Dundas' retirement, the presidentship of the Board was held by many persons including Lord Castlereagh, George Canning, Lord Ellenborough (who later became Governor-General) and Charles Wood. The Charter Act of 1833 later altered the composition of the Board. The dual system, in effect, left the administration in the hands of those who were familiar with it, but provided a supervisor at home with parliamentary backing in the shape of the Board of Control, and another in India in the person of the governor-general. With the growth of British influence in India, the government's influence increased and the directors' political power declined. The days of the irresponsible exploitation of India were over and the Parliament became responsible for the government of India and the welfare of her people. These Acts formed the basis of the administrative set-up of the Company's dominions in India.

Significance and Limitations

Pitt's India Act had many significant aspects. It helped in uniting India by giving supreme power to the governor-general over the governors of the two presidencies. By reducing one member of the governor-general's executive council, his position was strengthened. The governor-general and governors were given the authority to override their councils. The President and the Board were destined to become the future Secretary of State for India and his council. The Act laid the foundation of a centralised administration—a process which reached its climax towards the close of the nineteenth century.

However, the Act also had some defects. It divided authority and responsibility. The governor-general had two masters, the Court of Directors and the

Board of Control, and out of this conflict of authority emerged the view of the primacy of the man on the spot. Cornwallis accordingly stretched his authority to the widest possible limit. Since the actual state of affairs was not known to the home government, the governor-general could act in his own discretion even on important matters.

THE CHARTER ACTS

The Charter Act of 1793

As the Company's commercial and political privileges were due to expire at the end of twenty years from 1773, the Parliament extended them for another twenty years by passing the Charter Act of 1793. President of Board of Control, Henry Dundas as well as Cornwallis favoured the renewal. However, no substantial constitutional change was considered necessary. The governor-general and governors' powers to overrule their council were emphasised and explained. This power was given specially to Cornwallis in 1786. The governor general's control over the presidencies of Madras and Bombay was strengthened and he was empowered to issue orders and directions to any government and presidency of India during his absence from Bengal without previous consultation with his Council, thereby exercising all executive power vested in the Central government.

A regular code of all regulations that could be enacted for the internal government of the British territory in Bengal was framed. The regulation applied to the rights, persons and property of the Indian people and it bound the courts to regulate their decisions by the rules contained therein. It also required that "all laws relating to the rights of the person and property should be printed with translation in Indian languages and prefixed with statements of grounds on which they are enacted," so that the people should become familiar with their rights, privileges and immunities. Hence the Charter Act of 1793 laid the foundation of government by ushering in written laws and regulations in British India in place of the personal rule of the past rulers. The courts were entrusted with the responsibility of interpreting the regulations and written laws. The concept of a civil law, enacted by a secular human agency and applied universally, was in fact, an important change.

Though the demand for ending the Company's commercial monopoly was not accepted, a provision, however, was made for reserving a small share of the Indian trade for private English merchants which for the first time breached the Company's two-hundred-year-old commercial monopoly.

The Charter Act of 1813

As the Company's charter became due for renewal in 1813, there were fresh discussions on the justification of the commercial privileges enjoyed by the Company. By that time, the Company's territories had become widespread all over India, and the continuation of the Company as a commercial and a political entity was regarded as nearly impossible. Furthermore, there was the continental system of economic blockade introduced by Napoleon which had closed the European ports to British trade. This development along with the new economic theories of *laissez faire* prompted other English people to demand a share of the trade with India. All these factors led to the demand in England for termination of the commercial monopoly of the Company. The Charter Act of 1813 conceded this demand for the end of the Company's monopoly of trade with India but allowed it to retain the monopoly of trade with China as also the monopoly of trade in tea. This decision to open the Indian trade was naturally resisted by the Company, even though it was given a dividend of 10.5 per cent out of the revenues of India. The Act permitted the Company to retain for another twenty years the possession of the territories and revenues without any prejudice to the undoubted sovereignty of the Crown in and over the same. This was the first time the constitutional position of the British territories in India was explicitly defined, requiring maintenance of separate accounts of commercial transactions and territorial revenues. The Act of 1813 not only defined the power of supervision and direction of the Board of Control, but also enhanced the scope of such functions considerably. There was an interesting clause in the Charter providing for a sum of one lakh of rupees annually to be "set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and

promotion of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India." This clause is justifiably famous for stating the responsibility of the state for the promotion of education of its subjects.

The years following the Act of 1813 saw great changes in Britain due to the Industrial Revolution. The age of the machines led to cheap and revolutionary methods of production. Mass production of goods brought about a significant increase in exports and the consequent prosperity widened people's outlook, making them more independent. Side by side, there grew a new consciousness about class, which found expression among progressive writers writing about labourers and workmen.

The Charter Act of 1833

The Whigs' assumption of power at this juncture (1830) opened the way for the adoption of liberal principles as also the acknowledgement of the Rights of Man. After a bit of tussle, the Reform Act was passed in 1832, and in this time of reform and liberal ideas, the Parliament was called upon to review the Company's charter in 1833. Quite a number of people in the Parliament recommended that the Company should cease now to operate and that the administration of India should be taken over by the Crown. Macaulay, at that time the secretary to the Board of Control, suggested that the Company rule should continue though on a different basis. Majority of the members of the Parliament accepted that suggestion, which also had the support of James Mill, the historian and pupil of Bentham, who was a high official in the India House.

The Charter Act of 1833 permitted the Company to administer India for twenty more years "in trust for His Majesty, his heirs and successors." The monopoly of the Company over the trade in China was abolished and it was required to cease its commercial operations in India as soon as possible. The interests of the Company shareholders were protected by a guaranteed dividend of 10.5 per cent every year till the entire stock was purchased at 200 per cent at some future date. European colonisation of India was facilitated by removing the restriction on European immigration to India as also the ban on European's purchase and acquisition of property.

Administration of India was centralised by making the governor-general of Bengal the governor-general of India. He alongwith his council got the authority to control, direct and superintend the civil and military affairs of the Company. Bombay, Madras, Bengal and other territories were brought under the control of the governor-general, in whose name the revenues were collected. Expenses were made under his authority. In a similar manner, the legislative process was centralised by depriving the Bombay and Madras councils of their law-making powers and leaving only the option to put forward projects of the laws which they thought expedient. To facilitate the process of law-making an additional law member was inducted into the governor-general's council to obtain professional advice. Macaulay was the first incumbent of this position, but he had attended all the Council meetings anyway. There followed the creation of a law commission for the purpose of consolidating, codifying and improving Indian laws.

Section 87 of the Act was regarded as the most important as it ended a pernicious, short-sighted policy introduced by Cornwallis. The clause stated that "no Indian or natural-born subject of the Crown resident in India should be by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disqualified for any place of office or employment under the Company". The Company's directors further clarified that the object of this provision "is not to ascertain a qualification, but to remove a disqualification.... The meaning of the enactment, we take to be, that there shall be no governing caste in British India; that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinction of race and religion shall not be there.... Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility." As seen before in Pitt's Act, the sentiment expressed in the provision was commendable, but very little was done to give effect to this pious provision. Only minor positions were available to the Indians; the higher posts in civil and military services were for the British.

Commenting on this, A.B. Keith writes in his book, *A Constitutional History of India*: "This excellent sentiment (expressed in Section 87 of the Act of 1833) was not of much practical importance since nothing was done, despite the views of Munro Malcolm, Elphinstone, Sleeman, and Bishop Heber,

to repeal the provision of the Act of 1793, which excluded any but covenanted servants from occupying places worth over 500 pounds a year."

Indians naturally very much resented this continued exclusion of them from higher positions in services and in time to come this became one of the points of the Indians against the British in their political agitation. The Act of 1833 also urged the government to take steps to abolish slavery, by Act V of 1843.

The Charter Act of 1853

In the next phase, when the time came for the renewal of the Company's charter in 1853, the demand for ending the Company's double government in England had already reached its peak. The reasons put forward for this drastic proposal were two: (a) that the court of directors had outlived its usefulness, and (b) that the continuation of the court of directors and the board of control only contributed to unnecessary delay in carrying out the work and led to undue expenditure. In fact, the presidencies in India sent an application to this effect urging the appointment of a secretary of state with a council to handle all matters relating to India. Furthermore, doubts were expressed about the adequacy of the existing legislative machinery under the Charter Act of 1833.

People also questioned the wisdom of having one person functioning as the governor-general of India as also the governor of Bengal. It was felt that so long as these two posts were combined, a partiality for Bengal could not perhaps be avoided. In addition, great political and territorial changes had taken place in the country since 1833. Sindh and Punjab were annexed in 1843 and 1849 respectively, while Dalhousie added a number of Indian states along with Pegu in Burma to the British territories in the Indian subcontinent. Over and above there was the demand for the decentralisation of power and for giving the Indians some responsibility for managing their own affairs. There was some support for this demand in England as well. For instance, in April 1852, Lord Derby said in the Parliament: "... it is your bounden duty in the interest of humanity, of benevolence and of morality and religion, that as fast as you can do it safely, wisely and prudently, the inhabitants of India should be gradually entrusted with more and more superintendence of their own internal affairs."

It was under conditions such as these that the British Parliament took up the matter of renewal of the Company's charter in 1853. As a preparatory measure, two committees had gone through the affairs of the Company the previous year and on the basis of their reports the Act of 1853 was framed. It allowed the Company to retain the Indian territories in trust for the Crown not for any specified period like the earlier Acts, but "only until Parliament should otherwise provide". It stated that the salaries of the concerned officials would be fixed by the British government but would be paid by the Company and that the number of directors be reduced from 24 to 18, of whom six would be nominees of the Crown. A committee under Macaulay dispossesed the court of directors of patronage and the posts of directors were opened to public under competitive examination. The directors were given the authority to alter the boundaries of a presidency and a law commission was appointed in England to examine the reports and drafts of the erstwhile Indian commission for taking legislative measures.

The separation of judiciary from the executive was carried a step further in India by the provision of additional members for purposes of legislation. Thus the council had a law member and its legislative process was given a broad base by including the Chief Justice and a pursue judge of the Calcutta Supreme Court and a representative each from the Bombay, Calcutta and Madras presidencies and the North West Frontier Provinces. Following the procedure of the British Parliament, questions were raised and the policies of the Council were discussed orally instead of in writing. Instead of a single member, a select committee dealt with the bills under reference, while legislative business was conducted in public instead of in secret.

As it was in earlier occasions, the Act was a compromise between two conflicting views. The faction demanding continuation of the Company's territorial authority was assuaged by the provision that the Company should continue to rule India in trust for the Crown until Parliament decided otherwise. The faction wanting Crown control instead of that of the Company was appeased by the reduction of the number of directors from 24 to 18, with six Crown nominees, as also by the loss of patronage of the directors.

However, there was a possibility that the whole structure of the Indian government would be altered due to the working of the new legislative council. It started to function as the Indian wing of the House of Commons questioning the executive and its acts and even forcing it to lay confidential papers before it. The legislative projects the Council wanted to discuss were not submitted to the secretary of state for approval. It had even refused to pass the laws required by the secretary of state and claimed its right to pass independent laws instead. Consequently, the author of the Act of 1853, Sir Charles Wood, who was the president of the Board of Control, was very disturbed by the independence displayed by the members and declared that the Council should not be regarded as the beginning of constitutional parliament in India. In reply, Dalhousie said that he had not conferred any more power to the council than that conceded by law. Anyway, the creation of the legislative council under the Act of 1853 was an important step even though the Indians had nothing to do with it. This exclusion of the people of the land from the governing process made the Act's otherwise praiseworthy effects somewhat hollow. This is echoed in the words of Sir Bartle Frere, who terms the Act as the "perilous experiment of continuing to legislate for millions of the people with few means of knowing, except by rebellion, whether the law suited them or not."

As mentioned earlier, the Charter Act of 1853 had clearly stated that the Company was to rule India in trust for the Crown till such time that the British Parliament should direct. The possibility of the Crown thus intervening at any time to take over the administration was kept open. The Great Revolt of 1857 strengthened the demand that a Company engaged in trading activities should not be entrusted with the political power needed for the administration of a country. The upheaval of 1857 made it impossible to set aside this legitimate demand any longer. Consequently, steps were taken in the days after the Great Revolt to give effect to this urgent requirement. The reorganisation which took place after that tumultuous period availed of the "opportunity for transferring control from the Company to the Crown in appearance as well as in reality." The Bill in this regard was called the Act for the Better Government of India and was based on a series of resolutions passed by the Parliament.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

The building up of an adequate administrative structure started taking shape from 1793 under Cornwallis, and continued, with interruptions, down to the 19th century. During the governor-generalship of Cornwallis (1786-93), important changes were made in all the branches of British administration. The main aim of the British administration in India was the maintenance of law and order and the perpetuation of the British rule. It suited the British requirements in India to have a uniform system of administration. And the British need for a new administration and laws varied with the changes in the British interests in India and the combination of interest groups in Britain. Here we shall discuss the new system of judiciary and administration with special reference to the three pillars of the British Raj—the civil service, army and police.

Judicial Organisation and the Rule of Law

Warren Hastings was the first governor-general who paid attention towards the organisation of a system of justice in India under the Company's rule by bringing necessary changes in the prevalent Mughal judicial system. Before that, zamindars decided civil and criminal cases by arbitration, a popular but summary and unsatisfactory method. This was so because (as Verelst commented), "Every decision is a corrupt bargain with the highest bidder…Trifling offenders are frequently loaded with heavy demands and capital offences are as often absolved by the venal judges". Englishmen and their agents often interfered in such proceedings and even acted or judges in some instances. When the Company acquired the *diwani* rights in 1765, the civil jurisdiction had come under its control and was exercised by the Deputy Diwan.

In 1772, based on the Mughal pattern, Warren Hastings established a *Diwani* and *Faujdari Adalat* in each district. The *Diwani Adalats* were presided over by the district collectors whereas Indian judges assisted by the *Muftis* and *Qazis* decided

cases in the *Faujdari Adalats*. Appeals from these *adalats* could be made to *Sadar Diwani Adalat* and the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* at Calcutta. The *Sadar Diwani Adalat* had a judge, the President of the Supreme Council and two Indian officers while the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* had a deputy nazim, a chief qazi, a chief *mufti* and three maulvis.

As mentioned, the Regulating Act permitted the setting up of a Supreme Court at Calcutta to try and decide cases involving Europeans and British subjects. It had a Chief Justice and three other judges all appointed by the Crown. The Chief Justice received a sum of 8,000 rupees and the judges 6,000 rupees as annual salary. The Supreme Court's jurisdiction extended over all persons, Indians and British, residing in Calcutta or in its subordinate factories. Complaints or suits against or between Indians outside Calcutta could also be heard in the Supreme Court with the consent of both the parties. The Court functioned on the basis of a jury system and appeal from this Court could be made to the King-in-Council. The Supreme Court held its proceedings on the basis of English laws whereas the *Sadar Diwani* and *Sadar Nizamat Adalats* operated on the basis of Indian (Hindu and Muslim) laws. This contradiction many times led to conflicts between the Supreme Court and these courts. To stop this, Warren Hastings wanted to appoint Sir Slizah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as superintendent of the two *Sadar Adalats* at Calcutta in 1780, a proposal which the Court of Directors did not approve.

Lord Cornwallis tried to remove this anomaly in the legal system and improve it on the lines of the European system of judicial organisation. His judicial reforms, better known as Cornwallis Code, divested the collector of all judicial powers thereby putting an end to his role as both the collector of revenue and the District Magistrate. A new post of District Judge was created to preside over the district civil court. For hearing the *diwani* (or civil) cases a five-tier system of Civil Courts was established. At the bottom of this hierarchy were the Munsifs' Courts presided over by the Indian officers competent to decide cases involving disputes up to 50 rupees. Above the Munsifs' courts came the courts of registrars presided over by European officers which tried cases up to 200 rupees. Appeals from both these courts were heard in the district or city courts and district judges, who used to be British, heard these appeals. Above the District Court were the four Provincial Courts of Appeal at Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad and Patna. These courts presided over by English judges had two types of jurisdictions: one was to hear appeals in cases involving disputes up to 1,000 rupees and the other was to hear appeals from the District Courts. Next in order of gradation was the *Sadar Diwani Adalat* at Calcutta presided over by the governor general and his council which heard appeals from provincial courts in cases involving over 1,000 rupees. Appeals in disputes involving more than 50,000 rupees were finally sent to the King-in-Council.

The system of criminal justice was also reorganised in a hierarchy of four Criminal Courts. At the lowest level there were the District Courts presided over by the English judges who decided petty criminal cases and exercised magisterial powers within the district to order the arrest of offenders and violators of peace. Above them were the Circuit Courts which exercised jurisdiction over the District Courts of a specific area. Next came the Provincial Circuit Courts which heard appeals in civil cases as well as functioned as Criminal Circuit Courts. The highest Court of appeal for the criminal cases was the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat*. The Governor-General had the overall power of pardon and commutation of punishment.

In the new judicial structure that evolved, the participation of Indians was confined to subordinate positions such as munsifs, amins, the qazis and the pandits who merely advised the judges on the existing Mohammedan and Hindu laws. The newly-erected judicial system was systematic and well structured but it did not satisfy the Indians mainly because the process of justice was lengthy and expensive. The new system marginalised the role of the panchayats and brought in European judges in the place of the traditional dispensers of justice like zamindars, qazis, faijdars and nazims. Moreover, Indians were not familiar with the new laws and the system encouraged false witnesses and litigations.

The judicial system prevailing since the days of Cornwallis witnessed considerable change under Lord William Bentinck. Bentinck abolished the Provincial Courts of Appeal which were inefficient and hopelessly in arrears. Their criminal jurisdiction

was transferred at first to the commissioners of revenue, and then to the judges who were invested with sessions duties. The magisterial powers of the judges were transferred to the collectors. Thus emerged the two offices of district and sessions judge and magistrate-collector. The latter was placed under the supervisory control of a newly created officer entitled Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit. Secondly, Bentinck increased the powers of the Indian office of the judicial department who tried civil cases. The principle of appointing more Indians to positions of importance in judicial as also in executive posts emerged from discussions in London relating to the Charter Act of 1833. This deviation from the Cornwallis system of exclusion of Indians was found to be the only practical method of keeping down arrears of work and avoiding a more expensive administration. Indian Deputy Collectors were appointed in 1837, and Indian Deputy Magistrates in 1843. Thirdly, Persian as the court language was displaced by the local languages in the lower courts and by English in the higher courts. This considerably affected the employment opportunities of the Muslims of the higher classes who were educated in Arabic and Persian and were averse to Western education. But the move was welcomed by the Hindus of the higher classes.

A feature of the new judicial system was the establishment of a whole network of laws through the process of enactment of laws and codification of old laws. This was well in keeping with the 19th century British passion for the codification of laws. Against the traditional system of laws, (based on customary laws that relied on traditions and social practices, religious laws based on *Shastras* and *Shariat*, and laws flowing from the will and authority of the rulers), the British created a new system of laws. They introduced regulations, codified the existing laws and systematised them. The laws were now open to judicial interpretations and subsequent amendment. Through the Charter Act of 1833, all law making authority was vested in the Governor General-in-Council. In the same year, a Law Commission headed by Macaulay was appointed to prepare a Penal Code applicable throughout the country. Based on the Commission's recommendations, the Indian Penal Code was framed, which became operational in 1860. Thus there came into being, for the first time, a set of laws which included into its fold every Indian—a commendable contribution of the Company in the field of judicial administration.

The two theoretical principles on which the entire judicial system was based were the notions of rule of law and equality before law. The rule of law for India was in fact an integral part of utilitarian thinking on law. The rule of law was posited as the possible solution to the three main problems, viz. (a) the existence of a large body of unwritten laws without any clear direction; (b) lack of definition of individual rights; and (c) tremendous discretionary power in the hands of the individuals who were likely to misuse it. It meant at least in theory that nobody was above law and administration was now to be carried out strictly according to certain laws which defined the rights, privileges and obligations of the people, and not according to the personal desires of the rulers. Even the officials and those who supervised law were, in theory, accountable to the same set of laws and could be brought before a court of law for violating any law. The law once formulated could place restrictions on the actions of the rulers.

However, the formulation of laws and their interpretation were such that they contained enough space for peoples' oppression. In fact, various bureaucratic misdeeds did not require a violation of law; they could be done well within the legal rights of the officials. Despite the theoretical principle of 'rule of law', there remained domains of actions, like by the police or the army, which remained unaffected by restrictions and which should have been enforced from the principles. A great deal of extra-legal power continued to be exercised by the civil-servants and the police. As a matter of fact, legality itself became an instrument of power and oppression under the Rule of Law.

The notion of equality before law implied that all citizens irrespective of their caste, class, creed, colour or position were placed at an equal footing in the eyes of the law. The concept of equality before law did not, of course, include Europeans into its fold for whom separate courts and laws were set up. For instance, in criminal cases the Europeans could only be tried by European judges. Though it did bring about a notion of equality among Indians, total equality before law, in reality, could never be implemented.

When put into practice, the undeniably laudable principles of the rule of law and equality before law made the Indian people pay a heavy price. Justice became quite expensive and therefore out of reach for most people. The court proceedings and litigations were carried on stamp papers which were very costly. For example, it cost 1,000 rupees to start action in a court on a property worth 50,000 rupees. Moreover, the new laws were quite complicated and most people failed to understand or interpret them. This necessitated employing lawyers which further added to the expenses. People also had to come to the district towns or the provincial centres to seek justice and to cap it all the legal process became quite lengthy and dragged on for years. To cite one example, a zamindari in Madras went into litigation in 1832 to settle some inheritance and debt suits. The judgement finally was delivered after 64 years in 1896!

Nevertheless, the judicial system established by the Company's administration in India did have the merit in setting in motion the process of the unification of India. It became possible to conceive of India, in judicial terms at least, as one unit. It is interesting to note that the British formulated and used the notion of legality as an instrument of controlling India and in turn the leaders of the national movement used the same instrument of legality to defend civil liberties and rights of the citizens in the twentieth century.

Civil Service

The term 'civil services' was used, for the first time, by the Company precisely to demarcate its civilian employees from their military and ecclesiastical counterparts. Initially commercial in nature, the civil service was later transformed into a public service. At the beginning a civil servant of the Company, appointed by the directors, began his career as an 'apprentice'. He was required to sign an indenture and a covenant embodying conditions of service and hence the term 'covenanted servant' came to be used. An apprentice became a 'writer' after seven years of service and apprentices were not sent out after 1694; henceforth the 'writers' constituted the lowest grade. The writers who maintained the accounts of the merchants were expected to gradually get promoted to three superior grades: Factor, Junior Merchant, Senior Merchant. The Charter Act of 1793 gave legal sanction to the principle of promotion by seniority. It was from senior merchants that appointments for higher services including the governor were made. This system of grading continued till 1839.

Under Warren Hastings, the first steps were taken towards the separation of the administrative and commercial branches of the Company's service. Hastings reforms in administration of revenue and justice conferred on the covenanted servants large powers, and imposed upon them heavy responsibilities. The nucleus of civil service was created by entrusting the revenue and judicial administration to English officers. Although English officials were introduced into the top levels of the administrative hierarchy, Hastings did not eliminate the India element. Under him the system of administration as well as the composition of personnel were of a 'mixed nature'. Realising the importance of the knowledge of the country languages for European officials, Hastings treated linguistic proficiency as a factor in official promotion.

With the appointment of Cornwallis as the governor-general, a 'new order of things' was introduced which had for its foundation security of property (Permanent Settlement) and the rule of law in the administration of justice. This system could not be successfully worked by Indian officials who were familiar only with the institutions of the Mughals and not with English institutions. Thus a necessary corollary to Cornwallis's new concept of government was complete Europeanisation of the civil service. The Charter Act of 1793 provided that all principal civil offices in India under the rank of member of Council should be reserved for the covenanted service. This implied the total exclusion of Indians in fact, if not in law, from all such offices, for no Indian could expect to secure nomination from a director of the Company in London for appointment to the covenanted service.

Cornwallis believed that Indians were unfit by character—too corrupt and inefficient—to hold responsible positions in the public service. In order to check corruption and make the service more attractive he increased the salaries and allowances of the officials and at the same time forbade the practice of private trade. For instance, the collector

of a district was to be paid a monthly salary of 1,500 rupees, besides one per cent commission on the revenue collected from his district. At this stage, the civil service in India was one of the highest paid services in the world. Cornwallis neither emphasised the importance of acquisition of linguistic proficiency by the covenanted servants nor made any efforts for their regular and systematic training.

The credit for introducing the first steps towards training of the Company's civil servants to improve their efficiency went to Lord Wellesley. For the purpose, he founded the Fort William College at Calcutta on November 24, 1800. In order to fulfil adequately the complex needs of the Company's expanding empire the civil service needed 'an inexhaustible supply of useful knowledge, cultivated talents, and well ordered and disciplined morals'. At Fort Williams College, provisions were made for a three-year integrated training on such subjects as history, literature, science, customary laws and languages of India. Instruction was also to be given in the principles of the Christian religion 'with a view to counteracting the erroneous principles of dangerous tendency' which had been released by the French Revolution. However, the college did not find favour of the Court of Directors and was continued only as a language training school till 1854. The Company on the other hand, established its own training college at Haileybury in England, called the East India College, in 1806 for imparting a two-year training for the young civil servants. For the next five decades or so, the Indian Civil Services remained the product of the Haileybury College.

The idea of 'competition' for recruitment (as against nomination practised earlier) was introduced for the first time by the Charter Act of 1833. But it was to be a very limited competition and could be termed as nomination-cum-competition for recruitment. The Court of Directors were to first nominate four times the number of civil servants required and one-fourth of them were to be ultimately selected to the coveted civil services through a competitive examination. The Charter Act of 1853 finally took away the Court of Directors' power of nomination and made a provision for open competition.

For regulations regarding age, qualification and subjects for the competitive examination a committee headed by Macaulay was appointed which was to submit its recommendations to the Board of Control. Subsequently the Haileybury College was abolished in 1858 and the competitive examinations became the sole responsibility of the civil service commission. This competitive examination was to be held annually in London and admission to the examination was open to all natural-born subjects of the Crown—European, Indian, or men of mixed race.

The first competitive examination was held in 1855 but the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service—Satyendra Nath Tagore, (elder brother of Rabindra Nath Tagore)—joined it in 1864. The Indian aspirants faced some serious difficulties: expenses required for the journey and residence in Britain; religious restriction on sea voyage; difficulties of residing in a foreign country; and competition with Englishmen who had 'enjoyed the advantage of the highest training and education' in the English universities. It is therefore not surprising that up to 1870 Satyendra Nath was the only Indian among 976 members of the civil service. In 1871, three Indians—Surendra Nath Banerjea (who was dismissed after a brief official career for a technical offence and who later became a nationalist leader), Romesh Chandra Dutt (economic historian, Bengali novelist and later president of the Indian National Congress), and Bihari Lal Gupta (whose official note prepared the ground for the Ilbert Bill)—succeeded.

The main job of the civil service was to translate law into action and collect revenue. The chief officer in the district was the collector who was initially responsible exclusively for the collection of revenue. He had the authority to decide all disputes related to the boundary and the rent. The collector was assisted by a tehsildar who was an Indian and after the reforms of 1831 the offices of the magistrate and the local chief of police were also transferred to him, giving him total authority in the district. Given the large size of some of the districts, a post of Deputy Collector, placed between the collector and the tehsildar in the hierarchy, was also created after 1831. This was soon converted into an uncovenanted post which meant that experienced Indians could be appointed as deputy collectors.

The Indian Civil Service often termed as the "steel frame" which reared and sustained the British empire in India developed into one of the most efficient and powerful civil services in the world. However, its lofty traditions of independence, integrity and hard work mainly served the colonial interests; became the chief opponent of all that was progressive and advanced in Indian life; and was one of the main targets of criticism of the nationalist leaders.

Army

The Army was the second important pillar of the British administration which performed a four-fold function: conquest of Indian powers, defence of the British empire from other European powers in India, suppression of ever-present danger of internal revolts and facilitation of the expansion and sustenance of the British empire in Asia and Africa. As in the case of civil administration each presidency army was at first independent. The real beginning of the Company's armies came during the Anglo-French conflicts when Stringer Lawrence embodied the Madras European Regiment which later came to be known as the First Madras Fusiliers, wherein Robert Clive had his first commission. He also raised a number of Indian companies. From that time the armies of the three presidencies developed independently. Though the Acts of 1773 and 1783 gave the governor-general in Bengal an overall control, the armies remained separate till 1857. However, with the expansion of the Bengal Presidency, its army grew and gradually over shadowed the others byreason both of its number and the greater wealth of fighting material at its disposal.

It is necessary to distinguish between the Company and the royal troops while considering the British forces in India. Royal regiments or troops, being immune to local feelings and controversies, were undoubtedly more efficient and reliable. They were first sent in particular crises to aid the Company but were later stationed in the country permanently. The royal troops evinced much jealousy since their officers enjoyed precedence over Company's officers of the same rank, and were fully conscious of their position. They were, in fact, the ultimate resource of the governor-general and it was primarily because of them that the British authority was restored during the great revolt of 1857-58.

On the other hand, the Company's armies comprised both of Europeans and Indians. To begin with, the European branch was poor both in its officers and other ranks with a few shining exceptions. It gradually improved its efficiency considerably vis-à-vis the royal regiments and there were about 16,000 Europeans in it by 1858. However, the Indian soldiers or the sepoy regiments consisted bulk of the company's army. The regular pay, the comparatively good conditions, and the prestige of the Company's name made it easy to raise troops. By 1857 there were more than 200,000 Indian soldiers in the British army. The main reason for this large share of Indians in the Company's army was the huge expenses involved in maintaining an exclusively British army.

The general success of the Company's arms and the care taken to defer to local custom retained the Indian soldiers' loyalty and fed their pride. Percival Spear says that the Company's Indian troops were undoubtedly the most efficient army in India and probably in all Asia (counting Russia as part of Europe) in the early 19th century. Only the Sikhs ran them close. However, it is also true that the Indian soldiers were a collection of mercenaries, who were loyal to their salt, and usually proud of their leaders. Fighting was a professional matter for them and they lacked supra-regimental or national pride. All hopes of high promotion was denied to them and a great cultural gulf existed between them and their leaders. Since the Indian troops could not identify themselves with the regime, they tended to express their feelings of self-respect or *izzat* by a fanatical devotion to traditional customs. Thus a certain brittle quality developed in the Indian troops. Percival Spear writes: "They (the Indian troops) were brave and steadfast in battle, loyal and well behaved in the camp, but they were liable to see in small changes and unconsidered actions insults to their customs or subtle plots against their deepest feelings. Loyalty was therefore always conditional and as the wind of innovation grew stronger from the West it became more difficult to maintain those conditions. Thus the career of victory of the company's forces were chilled by an undercurrent

of mutiny such as those of Vellore in 1806 and of Barrackpore in 1824. These were more serious than the parallel 'white mutinies' of the company's Europeans, because of the numbers involved and the intimate connection of the troops with the country. The company's Indian troops were a sharp and shining sword for the governor general, but also a two-edged one". *(Oxford History of India)*

From the early days the Company's army had European officers. By the reorganisation of 1796 the European officers equalled in numbers those of the royal regiments. Since they had Indian company commanders as well, there was in fact a pool of officers available for other duties. At a time when the civil service had still barely taken shape and the Company's territories were rapidly expanding, there was a need for men of resource and ability outside the covenanted ranks. This resulted in the practice of seconding officers for civil and diplomatic duties. For instance, Wellesley used as many officers as he could and the 'soldier-civilian' and 'soldier-political' became important elements in the Company's services. Civil work was eagerly sought after as it was well paid and at the same time offered chances of earning distinction. Those who got such assignment excited the jealousy among the civilians who regarded them as interlopers, and among their own military brethren who looked on them as deserters in the pursuit of ambition. On the credit side it can be said that they provided a valuable link between the civil and the military departments and introduced a useful element of flexibility; on the debit side was the fact that some of the best officers were thus drained away from the officer cadre. The occasional lapses of European military leadership were not wholly unconnected with this loss of good men.

The officers of the Company's army, both European and the Indian branch, were recruited from the ranks of the Company's writers (like Clive), from foreign sources, and from royal regiments. They were a motley collection, inferior to the royal officers both in morale and technique. But with the development of the army their quality greatly improved to produce brilliant leaders like Sir John Malcolm, Sir Thomas Munro, Generals Nott, Pollock, Sale, and Havelock. If they lacked, as a body, some of the patriotic ardour of the royal (or king's) troops, they yielded nothing in *esprit de corps* and professional skill. Their advantage over royal officers was the knowledge of the country, their disadvantage a certain degree of provincialism.

Police

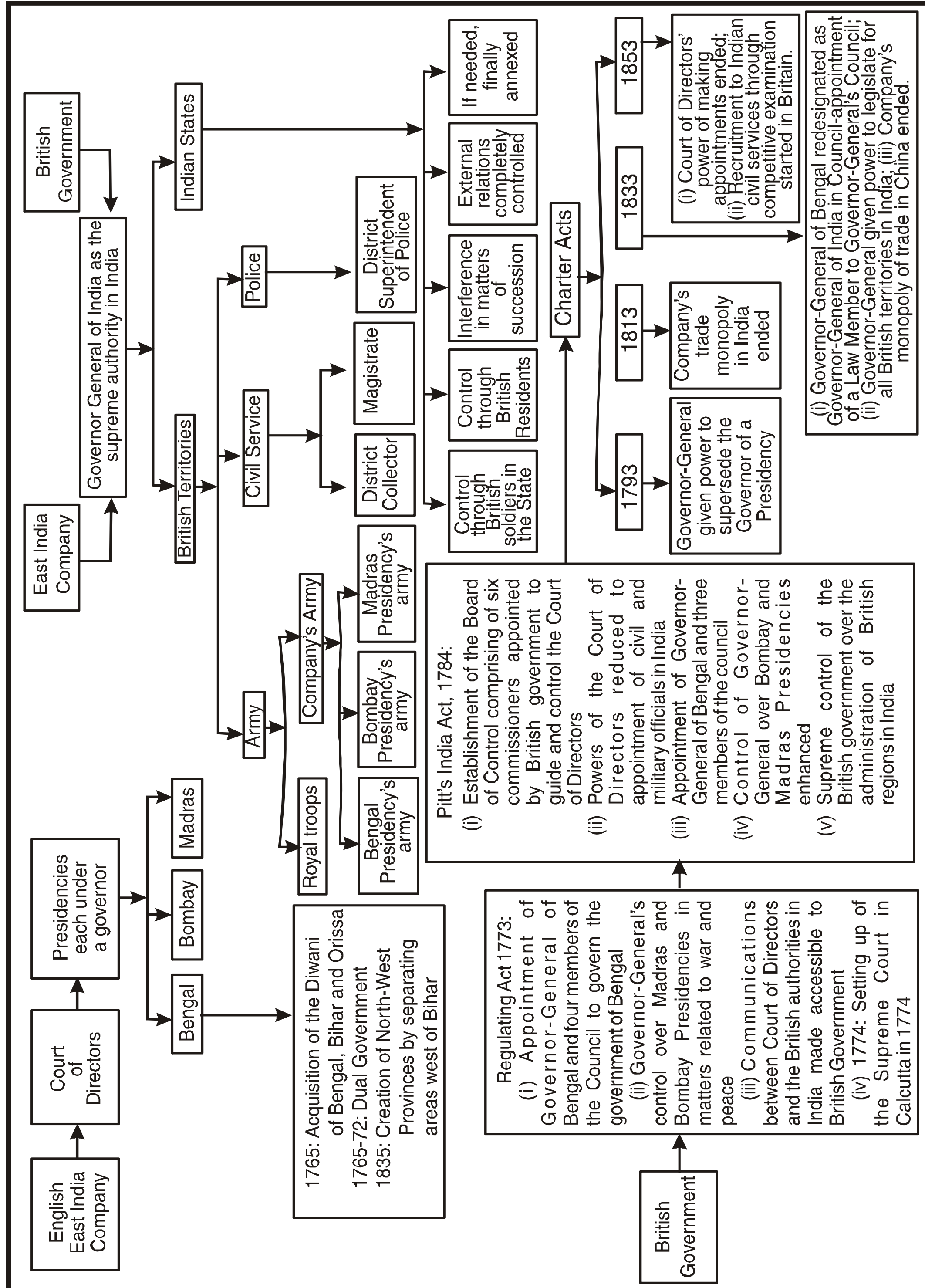
Subsidiary to the army was the police, the third pillar of the British administration. Based on their former subdivision of the imperial services into civil and military, the British subdivided the army into soldiers and the police. The credit for establishing a regular police force on modern lines goes to Cornwallis who modified the old Indian systems of *thanas*. This effort of Cornwallis was commendable since such a police system was yet to take shape in Britain.

Before Cornwallis, the function of the police was performed by the zamindars through their armed retainers. The zamindars were now stripped of their powers, their armed retainers were disbanded and in their place, a police force was established. The police force was entirely at the command of the government of the East India Company. It was grouped into circles or *thanas*, headed by a *daroga* who was an Indian. Initially the *thanas* functioned under the general supervision of the district judge. Later the post of district superintendent of police was created to head the police organisation in the district. Finally the organisation of the police force was handed over to the civil service and the collector in the district also controlled the police.

The main job of the police was to maintain internal law and order by suppressing major crimes such as dacoity and prevent the growth of conspiracy against the British Indian state. Later, in the 20th century the police was employed in a big way to suppress the growing national movement.

Though the new police increased the authority under its direct control in every part of the British possessions, it also increased its unpopularity by resorting to oppression and exactions. The police were badly paid and hence often used their extensive powers to recoup themselves both in cash and self-esteem. They were loyal and effective up to a point, but were also corrupt and heavy-handed.

Administrative Structure Developed by East India Company and British Government to Rule India between 1773 and 1857



THE VOICE OF FREE TRADE AND THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF BRITISH COLONIAL RULE

During the late 18th century and early 19th century, a growing chorus of British merchants and industrialists seriously questioned the philosophy of mercantilism and championed the doctrines of laissez faire or free trade. Free trade simply implied commerce between nations without the imposition of protective tariffs. The new economic philosophy contended that the free play of economic forces would automatically ensure the greatest prosperity for all countries. These ideas were initially promoted by physiocrats, a group of economic thinkers in 18th century France. But the most influential advocate of these new economic ideas who systematised them into a theory was Adam Smith, a Scottish professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow University. Smith's published work *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* in 1776 became the '*Bible'* of classical economic liberalism, the doctrine of free enterprise, or *Laissez-Faire,* economics.

Smith was indebted to the physiocrats for his views on personal liberty, natural law, and the role of state as mere "passive policeman". He argued that increased production depended largely on division of labour and specialisation. Because trade increased specialisation, it also increased production. The volume of trade, in turn, depended on every person being free to pursue individual self-interest. In seeking private gain each individual was also guided by an "invisible hand" (the law of supply and demand) in meeting society's needs. Smith regarded all economic controls, by the state or by guilds and trade unions, as injurious to trade. Scoffing at the mercantilist idea that the wealth of a nation depended on achieving a surplus of exports, amassing bullion (i.e., gold and silver), and crippling the economies of other countries, Smith opined that trade should work to the benefit of all nations, which would follow if the trade were free. In such a natural and free economic world, the prosperity of each nation would depend on the prosperity of all.

The British colonialism in India took shape in three phases though there was considerable overlapping of these. The first phase (1757-1813) may be described as the period of mercantile capitalism or period of trade monopoly of the East India Company. The second phase (1813-1858) was the period of free trade or industrial capitalism. This is followed by the third phase of finance capitalism or era of capital investment from about the 1860s onwards. It was during the second phase that the rising section of industrial bourgeoisie in Britain attacked the forms of exploitation of India by the East India Company. There developed an intense struggle between manufacturing and trading interests over which class of British society would control India. As we have already mentioned, a series of regulatory acts severely restricted the hold of the Company and brought the British Crown in as the controlling power in India. The Crown subsequently championed the interests of the newly emergent industrial capitalist class whose power and influence had increased vastly with the success of the Industrial Revolution. Thus, Industrial Revolution in Britain further helped to strengthen the colonial pattern.

As we have earlier discussed, the British free traders gained a foothold in the lucrative Indian trade in 1793, till which time the trade was a monopoly of the East India Company. Between 1793 and 1813 Britain's rising industrialists and manufacturing interests launched an economic offensive against the Company's commercial privileges in India based on the principles of free trade. This resulted in parliamentary debates in 1813 and subsequently the company's trade monopoly in India was abolished when their charter was renewed in the same year. Private trade admitted in this manner grew while the Company's trade declined. This continued till the time came for the renewal of the Company's charter in 1833 when it was decided to altogether abolish the Company's trade (with China and the trade in tea).

The rise of this powerful class of manufacturers in Britain had an important impact on Indian administration and policies. The needs of the manufacturing interests were quite different from those of the trading companies. The industrial capitalists needed markets for their products and sources of supply of raw materials and foodstuffs

for the rapidly growing urban population. Since the profits of this class came from manufacturing and not from trading, it encouraged, not imports of manufactures from India, but exports of its own products to India as well as imports of raw materials like raw cotton from India. In 1769, the British industrialists by law compelled the East India Company to export British manufactures amounting to over £380,000 every year, even though it suffered a loss on the transaction. Further in 1793, they forced the Company to grant them the use of 3,000 tons of its shipping every year to carry their goods. Finally, with the abolition of the Company's commercial privileges in 1813, a new phase in the economic relations of Britain with India began. India gradually got converted into an 'agricultural farm' of industrial Britain.

This phase of British colonial expansion has been described as the period of free trade imperialism as all tariff duties were removed on British goods in India. However, this did not mean that there was free trade for all. Duties continued to be imposed on Indian goods. Indian handicrafts were exposed to fierce and unequal competition when they were pitted against the machine made goods of Britain. As a result, they faced extinction.

In other words, while the doors of India was thrown open to British goods, Indian products which could still compete with their British counterparts were subjected to heavy import duties on entry into Britain. For instance, the duty on Indian textiles ranged from 30 to 70 per cent during this time. In 1824, a duty of 37½ per cent was levied on Indian muslins and a duty of 67½ per cent was levied on Indian calicos. Similarly a duty over three times the cost price of Indian sugar was imposed on its entry into Britain and in some cases import duties went up as high as 400 per cent. Within India, internal customs duties were also imposed on Indian manufactures to make them less competitive vis-à-vis the British goods. As a result of such prohibitive duties on Indian goods, Indian exports to foreign countries got drastically reduced. Summing up the unfairness of the British commercial policy during the 1757-1857 period, H.H. Wilson writes. "It was stated in evidence that the cotton and silk goods of India up to this period could be sold for a profit in the British market, at a price from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 to 80 per cent on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed preventive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her, she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty; and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms."

The problem, of course, was how to finance this entire operation from Indian revenues. For this, the British promoted the production of agricultural raw materials such as cotton, jute, silk, oilseeds, wheat, hides, skins, tea and indigo. Instead of exporting manufactures, India was now forced to export these raw materials. As a result, India was reduced to being a producer of raw materials from being one of the finest producers of crafts in the world. Indian revenues were needed for the further conquest of India and also to pay the high salaries of the officials.

The transformation of the economic, social and administrative structure was necessary for the British colony of India to be serviceable. In the economic sphere, the colonial state followed a policy of free trade or unrestricted entry of British goods. But the free trade imposed on India was one-sided. Fundamental administrative changes were initiated for the maintenance of law and order which was essential to ensure free movement of goods across the country. In the field of law, basic reforms were brought about for the introduction of capitalist notions of ownership, property and contract. This was the period when the new legal codes were drawn up and western education was introduced

primarily for the purpose of supplying clerks and junior functionaries for the vast bureaucracy that now ran the country. Means of transport and communication underwent expansion and modernisation. Railways were established under the government initiative. The political ideology of this period was one of liberal imperialism. It was believed that the economic exploitation of India could continue even after it became politically independent. Hence there was much talk of self-government during this period.

THE ENGLISH UTILITARIANS AND INDIA

In the first half of the 19th century the character of legislation for the administration of British territories was to some extent influenced by utilitarian thought and principles. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a wealthy British lawyer, devised the doctrine of utilitarianism, or philosophical radicalism, based on the two concepts of utility and happiness. Connecting these two concepts, Bentham said that all human institutions should be measured according to the amount of happiness they provide. He believed that the function of government should be to secure as great a degree of individual freedom as possible, for freedom was the essential precondition of happiness. Utilitarianism in government was thus the securing of the "greatest happiness for the greatest number". Building on his pain-and-pleasure principle Bentham pointed out that if society could produce as much happiness as possible and as little pain as possible, it would be working at maximum efficiency.

Taking the Benthamite principle further, John Stuart Mill (1806-73) proposed the theory that government should, if necessary, pass legislation to remedy injustices. Affirming that the interests of the business owners and the workers did not necessarily coincide, Mill, much more firmly than Bentham, stated that when the actions of owners harmed the people, the state should intervene for the protection of the people. The liberal theory of minimum governmental interference in the economic life of the nation was effectively challenged and altered in the direction of the humanitarian tradition instead of the profit margin.

With the coming of James Mill to the London office of the East India Company, a total vision of political reform on the philosophical premises of utilitarianism was sought to be given a concrete shape. Instead of taking the liberal detour to education for the task of 'civilising' and 'improving' India, the English utilitarians went back to the basic question of reform of law and landed property to create conditions where the market could flourish. They believed that a scientific and logical approach to these two problems of law and landed property could create reforms which would satisfy the principle of 'the greatest good of the greatest number'.

The question of law as an instrument of change was mooted under William Bentinck who believed it was possible for the judiciary or law to be the instrument of changing Indian practices like sati and female infanticide. In the realm of landed property, James Mill supported a restructuring of the land revenue policy in a manner that would be consistent with utilitarian economics. While on the one hand this implied a direct contact with the mass of cultivators as in Munro's ryotwari settlement, on the other hand this meant taxing the landlord along Ricardo's philosophy. This taxation would be in such a manner that the landlord would not enjoy undue benefit at the cost of manufacture and trade just by virtue of land ownership. This meant that the landholder would give a certain proportion of the net produce (i.e., the gross produce minus cost of cultivation) as tax to the state. Officers like Pringle sought to put this doctrine of rent into practice in Bombay. Elaborate survey methods were used to calculate the 'net produce' from land and tax rates were assessed. But in practice the revenue demand often went very high (sometimes as much as 50 to 60 per cent) leading to gradual abandonment of complex calculations based on the rent doctrine. From the 1840s purely empirical and pragmatic methods derived from the tradition of taxation in respective areas began to be adopted. However, the rent doctrine of the utilitarian philosophy was not given up in theory. Inspite of the purely pragmatic and empirical calculation of rent, the justification of rent theory for calculation was still given. The justification of the theory though did have practical reasons as over the next

decades, the idea of defining rights and obligations of the tax paying cultivators was permanently relegated to the background. But then the scientific calculations of the utilitarians were again paradoxically submitted to Munro like consideration of Indian traditions and heritage.

A streak of authoritarianism that permeated the English utilitarian thought developed into full-fledged despotism abroad. In India, depite being born in the tradition of liberalism, utilitarians never accepted a democratic government here. For instance, James Mill consistently opposed any form of representative government in India, then or in near future. Dalhousie, the consolidator of the Empire, took the paradoxes of the various kinds of perceptions of British India still forward. Dalhousie took forward James Mill's vision of belligerent advancement of Britain's mission, in his policy towards the native Indian States. In the true Benthamite tradition he created all-India departments with single heads for Post and Telegraph Services, the Public Works Department, etc. He was thus to give fruition to the idea of efficient administration within the framework of a unitary all-India empire which was in direct contrast to Munro's vision of India as a loose federation of regional entities.

Views

- "The real, the sole governing power of India is the Board of Control, and it only makes use of the Court of Directors as an instrument, or as a subordinate office, for the management of details, and the preparation of business for the cognizance of the superior power."

  —**James Mill,** Utilitarian thinker

- "The fundamental principle of the English had been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, to the interests and benefits of ourselves. The Indians have been excluded from every honour, dignity, or office, which the lowest Englishmen could be prevailed to accept."

  —**John Shore,** Governor-General

- "The system of Government in India, the foundation of authority, and the modes of supporting it and of carrying on the operations of government are entirely different from the systems and modes adopted in Europe for the same purpose…The foundation and the instrument of all power there is the sword."

  —**Duke of Wellington,** brother of Lord Wellesley

- "Every native of Hindustan is corrupt."

  —**Lord Cornwallis**

- "As for the police, so far from being a protection to the people, I cannot better illustrate the public feeling regarding it, than by the following fact, that nothing can exceed the popularity of a recent regulation by which, if a robbery has been committed, the police are prevented from making any enquiry into it, except upon the requisition of the persons robbed: that is to say, the shepherd is a more ravenous beast of prey than the wolf".

  —**William Bentincks,** Views on the Indian police force in 1832

- "No civilised government ever existed on the face of the earth which was more corrupt, more perfidious, and more rapacious than the government of East India Company from the years 1765-1784."

  —**Sir Cornwell Lewis,** A member of British Parliament

- "The government of an exclusive company of merchants is perhaps the worst of all governments for any country whatever."

  —**Adam Smith** in *Wealth of Nations*

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - A suitable administrative system was needed for the English East India company to control and consolidate its power over its Indian possessions.
  - The Court of Directors abolished the discredited Dual Government (1765-72) in 1772 and governor-generals like Warren Hastings and Cornwallis overhauled the administration of the Company and established a new system based on the British pattern.
  - The relationship of the English East India Company with the British Government was closely connected with party and parliamentary rivalries in Britain.
  - Several pressure groups (merchants, manufacturers and free traders) compelled the home government to strictly control the administration of the Company which resulted in passing of several legislations.
- **Regulating Act (1773)**
  - The Regulating Act of 1773 marked the first assertion of parliamentary control over the Company though it was a temporary measure full of defects.
  - The Supreme Court established in Calcutta in 1774 by the Act was the first step towards establishing a new structure of government.
- **The Pitt's India Act (1784)**
  - The defects of the Regulating Act and the exigencies of the British politics necessitated the passing of the Pitt's India Act in 1784 thereby giving the British government supreme control over the Company's affairs in India.
  - A Board of Control was created to guide and control the work of the Company's Court of Directors.
  - The Act introduced a system of double government (by Board of Control and the Court of Directors) which remained in force until 1858 with some modification.
- **Charter Acts**
  - The Charter Act of 1793 renewed the commercial and political privileges of the company for another 20 years and laid the foundation of a government by written laws and regulations in British India.
  - The Charter Act of 1813 ended the Company's monopoly over trade with India ending an era that begun in 1600. However, the company's monopoly of Chinese trade and its control over revenue administration and appointments continued.
  - The Charter Act of 1833 ended the Company's monopoly of the Chinese trade and declared that no Indian subject would face discrimination on the grounds of religion, creed, descent or colour (vide section 87 of the Act).
  - The Charter Act of 1853 was a holding measure which ruled that the Company was to rule India in trust for the Crown till such time the British Parliament should direct.
- **Institutional Framework of the British Administration**
  - Maintenance of law and order and the perpetuation of the British rule in India were the main objectives of the British administration.
  - Their need for a new administration and laws.
  - Varied with the changes in the British interests in India and the combination of interest groups in Britain.
  - **Judicial Organisation**
    - (i) Organisation of a system of justice in India began under Warren Hastings which was carried forward under Cornwallis.
    - (ii) The new judicial system failed to satisfy the Indians as their participation was confined to subordinate positions and the process of justice was cumbersome and expensive.
    - (iii) However, William Bentinck introduced some judicial reforms and raised the status and powers of Indians in the judicial service.
    - (iv) The British established a whole network of laws through the process of enactment and codification of old laws.

Summary

(v) The twin concepts of the 'Rule of Law' and "Equality before Law" were popularised as the whole judicial system was based on them.
(vi) The notion of legality as an instrument of controlling India used by the British later proved counter-productive.

- **Civil Service**
  (i) Initially commercial in nature, the civil service was later transformed into a public service.
  (ii) The Indian Civil Service, dubbed as the "steel frame" of the British Raj, was introduced by Cornwallis and was marked by certain degree of rigidity and exclusion of Indians throughout the Company's rule.
  (iii) Wellesley founded Fort William College at Calcutta in 1800 for training of the Company's civil servants. The Company also established a training college (East India College) at Haileybury in England in 1806.
  (iv) The idea of competition for recruitment was introduced for the first time in the Act of 1833 and the Act of 1853 finally made a provision for open competition.
  (v) The civil service's main functions were to translate laws into action and to collect revenue. It reared and sustained the British empire in India.
- **The Army**
  (i) The army served a four-fold function: the conquest of Indian powers, the defence of British empire in India from foreign rivals, defence against internal revolts and extension and defence of British possessions in Asia and Africa.
  (ii) Though the bulk of the Company's army consisted of Indian soldiers, it was officered entirely by British officials.
  (iii) Indian soldiesr proved to be a good mercenary under the Company's rule (mainly since modern nationalism did not emerge then) whereas the Company proved to be a good paymaster.
- **The Police**
  (i) The modern police system, a brainchild of Cornwallis, was created to maintain law and order, handle crime and prevent conspiracy against the British rule.
  (ii) Like the army, Indians were excluded from all higher posts.

► **Voice of Free Trade**

- During the late 18th and early 19th centuries British merchants and industrialists seriously championed the doctrine of laissez faire or free trade: an economic philosophy which contended that the free play of economic forces would automatically ensure the greatest prosperity for all countries.
- The British colonialism in India passed through three phases and it was during the second phase of industrial capitalism (1813-1858) that the newly emergent class of industrial bourgeoisie in Britain challenged the commercial monopoly of the Company. It had its impact on the Company's administration and policies in India.
- Prohibitive duties were imposed by the British government on Indian goods and measures like protective tariffs were invoked to protect the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie.
- India was transformed into a classic colony of Britain. Fundamental administrative changes were initiated to ensure free trade favouring British industrial interests.

► **English Utilitarians in India**

- The character of British legislation in India was influenced by the utilitarian thought in the first half of the 19th century.
- The doctrine of utilitarianism, as propounded by Jeremy Bentham and others, believed that all human institutions should be measured by the criterion of happiness they provide.
- Utilitarians like John Stuart Mill and James Mill influenced the policies of the Company administration considerably.

CHAPTER 6

Economic Impact of British Colonial Rule

INTRODUCTION

When the Company assumed the charge of Bengal with a namesake Nawab as a front, there began a regime of loot and plunder from 1757. Almost every member of each department started accumulating wealth by means generally corrupt. During the period 1757-1766 it was estimated that no less than 50 millions of rupees were extracted by Englishmen in the form of illegal presents and perquisites. Even after the Court of Directors of the Company imposed a prohibition in this regard in 1766, the practice continued unabated. After the grant of *diwani* rights to the Company in 1765, it was reported to the Parliament that in the following six years, nearly one-third of the net revenues of Bengal was annually remitted out of the country. Clive, during his second tenure as governor of Bengal in the years 1765-1767, introduced reforms which earned the praise of all and sundry. But a close scrutiny of his reforms would reveal that their purpose was to consider the whole of Bengal as an estate, a source of profit to the Company.

Drain of Wealth in Bengal

"The taxes from thirty millions of people were, after deduction of expenses and allowances, not to be spent in the country and for the benefit of the country, but to be sent to England as profits of the Company. An annual remittance of over a million and a half sterling was to be made from a subject country to the shareholders in England. A stream of gold was to flow perennially from the revenues of a poor nation to add to the wealth of the richest nation on the face of the earth." (Romesh Chandra Dutt on Clive in his *Economic History of India)* Now, if a stream of gold had to flow, there had to be a source of supply, which in this instance was the province of Bengal. To meet the ever-increasing demand for money, to ease the fiscal pressures generated thereby, the Company set the target of extracting the maximum possible revenue from Bengal. Of course, there was the profit from internal trade, but Clive set it aside for the Company's servants to reap even in the face of opposition from London to private trade (Romesh Chandra Dutt). So revenues or land tax was collected with a severity never seen before, forcing the cultivators to sell even the seed needed for the next harvest. The inevitable famine occurred in 1770 in which 10 million people lost their lives, but the Company's revenue collection fell only marginally.

Famine of 1770

Warren Hastings, who had become the governor of Bengal at this juncture (1772), thought that the time had come to do some experiments with the system of revenue collection. Perhaps the famine and the chaotic method of revenue collection followed then which spurred him to take this course of action.

"In 1772, Warren Hastings made a five-year settlement of land revenue by the crude method of farming out estates to the highest bidder. Acting on the presumption that the zamindars were mere tax gatherers with no proprietary rights, in the settlement of 1772 no preference was given to them and in certain cases they were actually discouraged from bidding. So, changes were made

Policy of Revenue Farming

in 1773 in the machinery of collection. The collectors who were found to be corrupt and indulged in private trade were replaced by Indian *diwans* in the districts. Six provincial councils were set up to supervise their work. The overall charge rested with the committee of revenue at Calcutta. The trend of Hastings' mind was towards centralisation and he desired ultimately to centralise all functions into the hands of the committee at Calcutta.

Effects

"The quinquennial settlement was a disaster and the peasants suffered greatly. Most of the revenue farmers were mere speculators, had no permanent interest in the land and therefore tried to extort the maximum sum from the cultivators by way of land revenue. The officers of the East India Company participated in the bidding through their servants or *banias.* Even Warren Hastings himself was not free from this greed; there is the case of a grant registered in the name of a ten-year-old son of Kuntu Baboo, an Indian servant of Warren Hastings. Further the land had been over-assessed and the state demand fixed very high. Added to it was the harshness in the method of collection. The result was that many revenue contractors fell in heavy arrears, many had to be arrested for default and the *ryot* deserted the land." (*Grover and Grover*) Incidentally, Penderel Moon in his *Warren Hastings and British India* reports that Hastings could not carry out his decision of employing only Indians in the districts and confining the Company's people only to Calcutta. It seems all the ex-members of the provincial councils demanded jobs and there were fresh recommendations from London. Consequently, Hastings was forced to re-employ the Company's ex-employees in the districts and some were placed as judges of *diwani adalats* as well.

Annual Settlement

On the expiry of the five-year settlement, Hastings went back to the system of annual settlement followed earlier on the basis of open auction to the highest bidder. The zamindars were given precedence over other bidders and some more changes were made in the machinery of collection. The provincial councils were disbanded, collectors again went back to the districts but this time they had no power to fix the revenue and the *qunungos* were re-appointed. The entire work of supervision was as before concentrated in the hands of the committee of revenue at Calcutta. Lands were thus assigned to zamindars annually in 1778, 1779 and 1780, the whole country groaned under this economic tyranny, and revenue collection went down once more. Having seen earlier the havoc the auction business had caused all around, a member of Warren Hastings's council, Philip Francis, recommended in 1776 a perpetual settlement in land revenue. This minute was published in London in 1782; the Pitt's India Act placing the administration of the Company under the control of the Crown became a law in 1784; and the Court of Directors realised the need to put the affairs of the Company in order. They were dissatisfied with the continuous increase in land tax and the move to oust the zamindars in favour of people who had no permanent interest in the welfare of the cultivators. Accordingly, Lord Cornwallis was dispatched as the governor-general with the instructions to make revenue settlements with the zamindars on a permanent basis but to begin initially with a ten-year tenure.

LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENTS

Broadly three types of land tenures were adopted. These were:

(a) Zamindari (also known as Jagirdari, *Biswadari, Malguzari* and so on) settlements were made in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Benaras division of the United Provinces and North Karnataka, covering nearly 19 per cent of the total area of British India;

(b) Ryotwari tenures were given in major parts of Bombay and Madras presidencies, in Assam and other parts covering the remaining 51 per cent.

(c) Mahalwari settlements were made in major parts of the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Punjab (with variations) to cover about 30 per cent of land.

The Permanent Settlement

Survey of Revenue Matters

Cornwallis found it impossible to conclude a ten years' settlement without some further enquiry into the question of usages, tenures and rents. Accordingly, a committee was set up consisting of Cornwallis himself and Sir John Shore and James Grant with a view to examine:

(i) who should be the other party in the settlement, the zamindar or the cultivator;

(ii) how much should the state claim as its share in the produce of the land; and
(iii) what was to be the time span of the settlement, in perpetuity or for a fixed term.

Actually, in pre-colonial India there was no concept of absolute ownership of land. People connected with the land had only certain rights. The cultivator carried out agricultural work in the land under his right of security of tenure, provided he paid a fixed share of the produce to the overlord. Moreover, in 18th century India, land had no market value in most of the places due to its poor yield as also the generally prevailing insecurity. Ignorant of the situation, the Company looked for an Indian equivalent of the English landlord on the mistaken belief that there must be definite ownership of land in a particular individual. James Grant was aware of the misconception and maintained that the state was the owner of all land in the country, the zamindar was its rent-collecting agent and hence could be removed at will. John Shore held the view that "the zamindar was owner of land subject to the payment of an annual land revenue to the state. As such the zamindar could bequeath the land to his children, sell it or mortgage it. This was the position in later Mughal times." An English landlord himself, Cornwallis supported John Shore's argument that it was the most appropriate solution. He said that the Company with its limited knowledge in the matter was not in a position to deal with the ryots directly and that in the past the business of auctioning the task of revenue collection to the highest bidder had ended in failures. So, the settlements were to be made with the zamindars.

View of John Shore and James Grant

As regards the basis of the settlement, Shore said that the Mughals generally used to assess on the higher side, collect somewhat less and write off the arrears. Grant felt that the settlement was to be equal to the last highest Mughal assessment which was in force in 1765. As the difference between the assessed amount and the amount actually collected was not known, it was decided that the settlement be made on the basis of the actual collection in 1790-91, which was about 270 lakhs of rupees. Next, Cornwallis and Shore differed in their views on the period of the settlement. As there was no proper survey and demarcation of estates and having regard to the limited means available for assessment, Shore recommended an initial period of ten-years. Cornwallis argued that a ten-year period would not be sufficient to induce a zamindar to clear away the jungles or introduce other permanent improvements. He, therefore, suggested a settlement in perpetuity with which the Court of Directors agreed.

Basis of the Settlement

Professors B.L. Grover and S. Grover write: "The zamindars were recognised as owners of the land and a ten years' settlement was made with them in 1790. In 1793, the decennial settlement was declared permanent and the zamindars and their legitimate successors were allowed to hold their estate at that very assessed rate forever. The state demand was fixed at 89 per cent of the rental, leaving 11 per cent with the zamindars as their share for their trouble and responsibility." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*)

The advantage of permanent settlement, as stated at that time, was that it would provide the government with a fixed, stable and dependable income for all time to come, regardless of the failure of rains. It would also save the state from incurring the expenses needed to make periodic assessments. Its economic benefit was that it would encourage developmental work like the reclamation of waste lands, use of manure, rotation of crops, etc., so as to utilise the full productivity of the soil. It was also expected that the zamindars would become loyal to the Company because of the protection of their interests by the administration. It was indeed so, and the zamindars remained on the side of the Company during the 1857 uprisings. On the social plane, it was believed that the zamindars would assume the leadership of the *ryots* and help in spreading education among them. It was also hoped that capable employees of the Company would now be free to take up judicial and other administrative work. Also, it would stop corrupt practices like harassment of the cultivators and wilful neglect of the land towards the end of the term in order to qualify for a low assessment.

Expected Advantages for Company

All these advantages of the permanent settlement proved to be mostly illusory, and the system soon

turned into an engine of exploitation and oppression creating "feudalism at the top and serfdom at the bottom". The state lost a great amount of money as there was no mechanism to assess the lands freshly brought under cultivation and to claim its legitimate share when the rents of the land already under cultivation had been increased manifold. The economic progress of Bengal was retarded considerably since the zamindars were interested only in extracting the maximum revenue and made no efforts to improve the condition of the lands. Always under the threat of eviction, the cultivator had neither the money nor the will to improve his lot. The zamindars usually lived in the cities, spending money on ostentatious luxuries and thereby acting as "distant suction pumps" by drawing out the rural wealth to splurge in the cities. Then, there were the intermediaries between the state and the cultivators. There were instances of sub-infeudation giving rise to as many as fifty intermediaries. Interested only in their own profits, the intermediaries sucked the ryots dry proving Carver's famous quote: "Next to war, famine and pestilence, the worse thing that can happen to a rural community is absentee-landlordism." From the political angle, the Company, no doubt, gained the allegiance of the zamindars, but in the process alienated the cultivators completely. The permanent settlement also divided the rural society into two mutually antagonistic classes—the zamindars and the tenants. By the gift of absolute ownership of land to the zamindars, the Company sacrificed the cultivators' right to property, leaving them exposed to the mercy of their landlords. To check this oppression, two tenancy laws were passed, in 1859 and again in 1885, but the zamindars managed to evade such legislation, reducing the cultivator virtually to the position of a serf.

Actual Effects

Absentee-Landlordism

Ryotwari Settlement

In the Ryotwari system prevailing in about 51 per cent of area in British India, every registered holder of land was regarded as the owner of the land and was to pay land revenue directly to the state. He possessed the right to sublet his land to a tenant, transfer it to a nominee, mortgage it to raise a loan and to dispose it by sale. So long as he continued to pay the land revenue to the state, he was not evicted from the land. In the Madras presidency, after acquiring the Baramahal district in 1792, the Company made the first land revenue settlement. Captain Reed along with Thomas Munro fixed it at 50 per cent of the estimated produce, which was very much in excess of the economic rent. This was extended to other areas, and the tax was collected with unusual severity, causing immense hardships to the people. Then Thomas Munro became the Governor of Madras (1820-27). He reduced the tax to one-third of the gross produce and extended the ryotwari system to other areas in the presidency (excepting those already under permanent settlement). Unfortunately, this one-third of gross produce was nearly equal to the economic rental, and the state wanted its money regardless of the actual yield of the holding and the prices prevailing in the market. This continued for nearly thirty years with the peasants getting deeply mired in poverty and becoming easy prey to moneylenders (*chetty)* so as to pay the land revenue. The collection procedure included torture like tying the peasant down in a bent position, making a man sit with brick bats behind his knees, tying the defaulters by their hair and so on. Questions were raised in the British Parliament in this regard. On the basis of 30 per cent of the gross produce, an extensive survey and settlement plan was decided upon in 1855, but actual work started only in 1861. Fifty per cent of the rental was finally arrived at under the Rule of 1864 which was not implemented. The continuous Madras famine of 1867-68 was a testimony to the rigid enforcement of the settlement measures.

Ryotwari Settlement

Thomas Munro

Misery of the Peasantry

The implementation of ryotwari in India can be broadly divided into three stages–early (1792-1807), middle (1820-64) and late (1864 onwards). The only description common to all was its mode of settlement with small farmers, so small indeed that their average holding was, on recent figures, only about 6½ acres. The early stage of the ryotwari was almost abandoned soon after Munro's departure for London in 1807. But around 1820, Munro returned to India as the governor of Madras and tried to complete the task he had left behind,

Stages of Ryotwari

arguing that ryotwari was the ancient Indian land-tenure system and thus best suited to Indian conditions. This reference to the past was however in the interest of the British empire.

In 1855, the Madras Torture Commission Report revealed the practices of coercion, bribery and corruption by the subordinate officials of the collectorate, indicating the need for effective reform in the ryotwari system. It was from 1855 that a scientific survey of land and a fresh assessment of revenue were undertaken, resulting in decline in the actual burden of tax. Now it was decided that the revenue rate would be half of the net value of the produce of the land and the settlement would be made for thirty years. The reformed system of settlement was introduced in 1864 which led to agricultural prosperity and extension of agriculture in coming years although interrupted by two famines in 1865-66 and 1876-78. Dharma Kumar asserts, "Recovery was faster in the presidency as a whole".

Settlements in Bombay Presidency

Ryotwari was introduced in the Bombay Presidency on the basis of a report by Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay (1819-27). It was introduced so as to prevent the landlords and village communities from making any profit out of the settlement.

Elphinstone's Report

In his report, Elphinstone underlined two important features of the erstwhile Peshwa's (Maratha) government. These were: (a) village communities as units of administration and (b) *mirasdari* tenures. Cultivators or peasant proprietors who cultivated their own lands and paid revenue at first rates to the state were known as *mirasdars*. Having regard to the past practice as also the survey carried out in 1824-28, the state demand was fixed at 55 per cent of the net produce. However, most of the surveys were faulty, and the estimates of produce erroneous, leading to over-assessment and harassment of the peasantry. It reached such proportions that the cultivators deserted their fields and large tracts of land remained fallow. At the expiry of the scheme after 30 years, resettlement work was taken up in 1866. Meanwhile, the Civil War in America (1861-65) had pushed up cotton prices, leading to an artificial boom in agriculture. The surveyors used that opportunity to raise the assessment varying from 66 to 100 per cent. Then followed the Deccan agrarian riots of 1875. The government's response was the Deccan Agriculturalist's Relief Act, which curbed the excesses of the moneylenders to some extent. But nothing was done to reduce the extortionist State demand for revenue, which was the root cause of all the trouble.

Deccan Agrarian Riots-1875

Overassessment and uncertainty were the two banes of the ryotwari settlements in Bombay. There was no appeal against the grossly unjust land tax demanded by the State. The collector informed the peasant of the amount to be paid adding that the latter had two options—to pay or to get out of his land.

Overassessment and Uncertainty

Mahalwari Settlement

The village or the *mahal* was regarded as the unit or the estate in the mahalwari system. It was held that the village community, also known as the body of co-sharers, was the owner of the village land. The responsibility for payment of revenue or land tax was vested with this body of co-sharers, though there was individual responsibility as well. In the event of any co-sharer abandoning his land, it was taken over by the village community jointly. Village commons or pastures, forest lands and such also belonged to the village community as a whole. The adoption of mahalwari system in parts of Northern India began to be considered in 1819 when Holt Mackenzie, the secretary to the board of commissioners, referred to the existence of such corporate bodies in his minutes. He followed it with the recommendation for a survey of land, the settlement of land revenue demand by village or mahal by mahal and the collection of land revenue through the village headman or *lambardar*. Legal sanction was given to his recommendations by Regulation VII of 1822 which fixed the land revenue settlements on the basis of the 80 per cent of rental value payable by the zamindars. In locations where the estate did not belong to the zamindars but was held by the village community in common tenancy, the settlement was fixed at 93 per cent of the rental.

Not only was the scheme excessive in its demand,

Tribute System

Meanings

In historical context, tribute means payment by one state or ruler to another periodically as also the obligation to make this payment. In the latter sense, it means payment at regular intervals by the vassal to the overlord as one of the conditions of acceptance of the superior monarch's suzerainty. The system had been in practice since the early times, an example of which is the tribute paid and homage rendered by the rulers of five frontier kingdoms to one of the greatest monarchs of the Gupta dynasty, Samudragupta (330-380 AD). However, there are also examples of one beleaguered power paying tribute to an equally troubled one as the price for a strategic alliance. According to the Maratha-Mughal treaty of 1777 between Shahuji, grandson of Shivaji and the later Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar, the former paid a tribute of ten lakh rupees annually to the latter for getting full possession of all territories known as *Swarajya* (homeland) and releasing Shahuji's mother and other relations from Mughal captivity. Farrukhsiyar also allowed the Marathas to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from all the Mughal *subahs* in the Deccan, for which they were to place a contingent of 15,000 troops at the disposal of the emperor.

Tribute for Strategic Alliance

Sometime before he was deposed, Farrukhsiyar granted the English a bounty in exchange for what could be loosely regarded as a tribute. Its genesis lay in the order issued by Prince Shah Shuja as subahdar of Bengal in 1656 allowing the English exemption from trade duties on payment of a small sum of three thousand annually. As the volume of English trade grew more and more, this arrangement became very unsatisfactory to the Mughal government. Murshid Kuli Khan, the first independent Nawab of Bengal, wanted the English to pay trade duties like other foreigners (viz. the French, the Dutch, etc.), in response to which the English increased their military establishments, a most convincing argument to support their privileges. In addition, they sent a deputation to Delhi in 1714 under John Surman after the accession of Farrukhsiyar to secure confirmation of their commercial privileges from the emperor himself. After the Battle of Plassey (1757), there was a plethora of treaties pledging tributes which the English had no intention of paying from their position of strength as the conqueror. In 1765, Clive obtained from the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa through a *farman* requiring the English to pay twenty-six lakhs annually to the imperial exchequer. As a protege of English (after the 1764 Battle of Buxar) Shah Alam was in no position to grant anything. The absurd pretence was carried out to satisfy the English sense of good order, and the poor emperor was never paid. Clive also persuaded Najmuddaula, the minor son of Mir Jafar, to make over all the revenues (of Bengal) to the Company in 1765 in lieu of an annual pension (tribute in another name) of fifty lakhs because he wanted to "always have it in our power to overcome the very Nawab we are bound by treaty to support." When Najmuddaula died in 1766, his brother succeeded him as the Nawab with a tribute of 38 lakhs. He too died in 1770 and the successor had to suffer a cut of 10 lakhs from his pension. The strain of maintaining such an elaborate fiction was too much for the English, and the Supreme Court in 1773 stopped the pension entirely, deciding that the Nawab was no sovereign prince. One of the judges went to the extent of describing him as a "phantom, a man of straw". However, when tributes were to be paid to the English, no mercy was shown, as would be evident in the instance of Chait Singh of Benares.

Pension as Tribute

"Chait Singh was Raja of Benares but his status was that of a *zamindar* or collector of revenue, not a ruling prince. But he was a *zamindar* with a difference in that he had a compact territory and considerable powers. Until 1775, he was a dependent of the Nawab Wazir of Awadh, but by the treaty of 1775 his allegiance was transferred to the Company. His annual tribute, or the revenue which he was expected to hand over, was 22½ lakhs of rupees. This was a substantial amount and may be compared with the 52 lakhs which constituted the Bengal provincial payment to Delhi in the early eighteenth century. On the transfer of Benares to the Company an undertaking was given that the demand would not be increased on any pretence whatsoever. In 1778, when the French War combined with the Maratha and Mysore entanglements to make the British position critical, Hastings thought himself justified in demanding (not requesting) a special sum of 5 lakhs for war expenses. The demand was repeated in 1779 and enforced by a threat of military action. In 1780, the demand was again renewed. This time, the raja sent 2 lakhs to Hastings as a bribe. Hastings took 2 lakhs which he used for the Company's forces. The raja was then required to furnish 2000 horsemen which were reduced to 1000. When the raja produced 500 with 500 match lockmen, Hastings proceeded to Benaras, determined to exact a fine of 50 lakhs. The

Chait Singh of Benaras

Hastings's Demand as Tribute

raja was put under arrest in his own palace. His own troops then rose and the small British force involved was massacred owing to the accident that they had not been provided with ammunition. From then on, Hastings behaved with almost coolness. He retired to Chunar, brought up reinforcements, recovered Benaras, and drove Chait Singh from the country. His dominions were conferred upon a nephew with a tribute increased to 40 lakhs. Making all allowance for the necessities of a perilous situation, and the irritation of a prevaricating prince who had intrigued with the governor-general's enemies in the council, it is difficult not to regard Hastings's behaviour as both high-handed and vindictive." (*The Oxford History of India*)

When its observance benefited them, the English regarded a treaty as sacrosanct. Even then, they had no qualms, in stopping the payment of tribute pledged to the Nizam of Hyderabad in exchange for the tract in the Deccan known as Northern Sarkars. Their treaties made with the Indian princes were mostly based on the ideal of imperial supremacy. The purpose of the tribute system followed by the British from the later 18th to the middle of the 19th century was to "render British government paramount in effect, if not decidedly so… to hold the other states vassals in substance, if not in name". It differed from those followed earlier in that pretence and subterfuge were used in large measures.

Purpose of Tribute System

In similar context, the systematic drain of wealth from India to England during the post-1757 period may also be interpreted as an indirect tribute. The constant flow of wealth from India to England in various forms, for which India did not get an adequate economic, commercial or material return, has been described by Indian national leaders and economists as 'drain' of wealth from India. Imperial Britain extracted this 'tribute' year after year from the hapless country.

Drain of Wealth as Tribute

but also harsh methods were used in its implementation, leading to its breakdown eventually.

Enquiring into the causes of its failure, William Bentinck's government also came to a similar conclusion. As a remedial measure, the Regulation of 1833 simplified the procedure for estimating the produce and the rent and introduced the fixation of average rents for different classes of soils. For this purpose, the use of field maps and field registers was stipulated for the first time. Merttins Bird, regarded as the Father of Land Settlements in Northern India, supervised the new scheme. It consisted of a survey of a tract of land showing field boundaries of cultivated and fallow lands. "Then the assessment of the whole tract was fixed followed by setting down the demand for each village, leaving to the *mahal* powers to make internal adjustments. The state demand was fixed at 66 per cent of the rental value and the settlement was made for 30 years…. Even the 66 per cent rental demand proved to be harsh and unworkable. Consequently, Lord Dalhousie felt the need for issuing fresh directions to settlement officers. Under the Revised Saharanpur rules of 1855 the state revenue demand was limited to 50 per cent of the rental value. Unfortunately, the settlement officers evaded the new rules in practice. They interpreted the 50 per cent rental value to mean one half of the prospective and potential rental of estates and not the "actual rentals". Thus the system fell heavily on the agricultural classes and created widespread discontent which found full vent during the revolt of 1857." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*)

Regulation of 1833

Economic Impact of the Revenue Arrangement

Eric Stokes and G.D. Bearce in their books, *The English Utilitarians and India* and *British Attitudes Towards India* respectively, have observed that contemporary ideological attitudes fashionable in England guided the British administrators in India in their policies to a noticeable degree. Much earlier, in 1892, Baden Powell in his work, *The Land Systems of India,* had said that the land revenue systems adopted by the British in India were essentially practical adaptations to local circumstances and that they had to be so if they were to work at all. Interestingly, contemporaries of Bearce and Stokes (like Morris D. Morris) also supported Baden Powell and affirmed that the zamindari system in Bengal, the ryotwari system in Madras and Bombay presidencies and the mahalwari system in the United Provinces were adaptations of the systems prevailing in those areas with minor variations.

Nature of the Revenue Settlements

Commenting on the Company's land revenue settlements, Professors B.L. Grover and S. Grover write: "The overall impact of the East India Company's revenue systems and excessive state demand coupled with the new judicial and administrative set-up turned Indian rural economy upside down with the village panchayats deprived of their two main functions—land settlements, judicial and executive functions—and the *Patel* merely acting as a government official charged with the duty of revenue collection, the old politico-economic-social framework of village communities broke down. The introduction of the concept of private property in land turned land into a market commodity. Changes came in social relationships. New social classes like the landlord, trader, the moneylender and the landed gentry shot into prominence. The class of rural proletariat, the poor peasant proprietor, the sub-tenant, and the agricultural labour multiplied in number. The climate of cooperation gradually gave place to the system of competition and individualism. The prerequisites of the capitalist development of the agriculture were created. Further new modes of production, introduction of money economy, commercialisation of agriculture, better means of transport and linkage with the world market added a new dimension to Indian agriculture and rural economy." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*)

Significance of the Revenue Settlements

COMMERCIALISATION OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in India during the pre-colonial times was more a way of life than a profession or vocation in the modern sense. A man became a peasant because his father was one with caste and social relationships as considerations. It was not a question of personal choice, of choosing a livelihood. Likewise, the choice of crops to be grown was need-based and grains and other crops were grown according to demand. Cotton, jute, oilseeds and pulses were grown no doubt, but not at the cost of rice or wheat or perhaps even jowar and bajra. Under colonial rule with significant changes in economy began the commercialisation of Indian agriculture.

Pre-colonial Conditions

As we have discussed earlier, in the 1850s the nature of Indo-British trade and commerce underwent a significant change. To solve the increasing remittance problem from India, exports of foodstuff and raw materials like cotton and jute were started. Agricultural operations, which were so far free from commercial considerations, were now influenced by such factors. Instead of being consumed in the village or being sold in the local markets, the crops were sent all over the country (thanks to the railways) and overseas (because of growing external trade). Specialised crops like cotton, jute, oilseeds, groundnut, sugarcane and tobacco were increasingly grown as they yielded more money than foodgrains. Also grown were plantation crops like coffee, rubber and tea, which were sold in a wider market. This made commercialisation or running the plantations as business ventures inevitable. The factors which came to the aid of this process were many, such as: (a) the preference for such crops in the new worldwide markets; (b) the increasing influence of a money economy; (c) the replacement of social customs and traditions by contractual obligations and competition; (d) the substantial growth of the internal and external markets; (e) the formation of a unified national market (primarily due to the railways); and (f) the considerable boost given to both the domestic market and the overseas market by the entry of British finance capital into the country.

Production for Market

Causes

Of course, normally, that was how agricultural surpluses were made, peasants accumulated wealth and the country developed and prospered. But nothing of that sort happened in India because the colonial economy was itself abnormal. The British traders profited enormously, as did their Indian agents and intermediaries. The money made by the not too insignificant number of Indians was not spent for productive purposes like development of agriculture or new manufactures. Instead, it was put to unpro-ductive use like moneylending and so on. The peasants sunk into debt because the new crops they were required to grow needed more input than the old ones, the money for which they could get only by taking loans (or advances) at high interest rates. Then there was the government revenue which they had to pay. Fixed at a very

Non-Beneficial for Peasants

high level, the payment of this government due within the stipulated period assumed such urgency at times that the peasant had to sell the standing crops in the field without harvesting. It also happened that some time later he had to buy back his own crop again in order to survive. Furthermore the fluctuating world prices of commodities did not enrich the peasant during boom time (the intermediaries greatly benefited) but hit him hard when the prices were down. For example, the American Civil War in the 1860s made cotton scarce and pushed up the prices from which the peasants did not benefit much. But the inevitable slump, when it came, did not let him off easily; famine, heavy indebtedness and the food riots in the Deccan in the 1870s were the results. Commercialisation of agriculture, which was in effect forced upon the cultivator, did not benefit him at all.

Views of Sumit Sarkar

Reviewing this process, Sumit Sarkar writes: "The inter-related processes of railway construction (only 432 miles in 1859, over 5000 miles just ten years later, nearly 25,000 miles by the end of the century), rising exports (particularly noticeably during the "cotton boom" of the 1860s when the American Civil War made Lancashire turn to Deccan raw cotton for a few years, and again in the 1880s and early 1890s) and commercialisation of agriculture have been sometimes hailed as signs of modernisation. Orthodox economics tend to associate commercialisation with the development of agricultural surpluses and rural prosperity; one might also expect tendencies towards capitalist farming through a differentiation among the peasantry which would certainly mean suffering for the poorer sections, but also growth in productivity. Yet here, as elsewhere, colonialism had a twisted logic of its own, for commercialisation emerges on analysis to have been often an artificial and forced process which led to differentiation without economic growth." (*Modern India*)

Non-Uniform Pattern of Commercialisation

There was naturally no uniformity in the pattern of commercialisation, which varied from crop to crop. For example, tea was introduced as a new crop, a new idea in agriculture in the form of plantations in areas which were sparsely populated. The British were in direct charge of such establishments where the labourers were brought from far-off places through an indentured system which was not much different from slavery. Indigo was cultivated in central Bengal by the peasants themselves, but they did so due to the force applied on them by tyrannical White planters. As planting of indigo upset the sowing pattern of other crops because of low profits from it, there was uncertainty involved, and peasants were unwilling to take it up. However, the White planters forced "advances" on the peasants compelling them to grow the crop, while the colonial rulers looked the other way, if not actually abetting the process. No such coercion was needed with regard to jute, which yielded more profit to the peasants than foodgrains. However, despite such variations, there were some noticeable common features in the process.

Features of Commercialisation

The first feature was that regardless the nature of trade, British business groups and houses were in total control of India's overseas trade by the 1850s, as also of banking and insurance. This led to the siphoning off of a major portion of the profits which was taken to England and was accounted for as "foreign leakages." The other part of the profits, not a negligible amount of money, went to the Indian intermediaries who often acted as moneylenders. They offered advances to the peasants so as to keep them under their control as also the crops they produced. As we have discussed earlier, the need for such advances was often due to the burden of the government's tax which the peasant had to pay within the stipulated time. This has been corroborated in a recent micro-study of sugarcane cultivation in Gorakhpur district where capitalist penetration helped to consolidate the already established structure of landlord and money-lender exploitation, with sugar-mills engaging local zamindars and *mahajans* as contractors to collect cane from peasants. There was also the emergence of a small number of upper class rich peasants, found in the Deccan cotton belt, the Godavari-Krishna and Kaveri deltas in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The Punjab lands were provided with large scale irrigation works at the end of the 19th century. However, the most noticeable feature was the inherent bias of the entire system against major advances in productive

technology and organisation. As stated before, the Indian peasant was made entirely dependent on a remote foreign market with which his only contact was through a number of powerful intermediaries. It was he who had to bear the burden of wildly fluctuating prices. The dramatic price variation of cotton in the 1860s could be regarded: in Bombay, one pound of raw cotton was selling at 2 annas 7 paisa in 1859, shooting up to 11 annas 5 paisa in 1864 and then crashing down to 6 annas 2 paisa in 1866. The situation in the 1860s in the Deccan was nightmarish leading to heavy indebtedness, famine and agrarian riots in the mid-1870s. Between 1870 and 1890, foodgrains and cotton were exported from North America, Argentina and Australia which brought down world prices. This adversely affected the Indian cotton and wheat exports. Its 20th century equivalent was the maintenance of the artificially high rupee-sterling ratio which was followed by the major disaster of the World Economic Depression in the early 1930s.

Burden of Price Fluctuations

While big export houses and shrewd Indian traders and moneylenders profited from both high as well as low prices, they did not attempt productive investments or innovations due to the risks involved. Anyone, be it a peasant or a trader, who had made some money would by choice invest it in trade, usury or renting-out of land to sub-tenants or share-croppers, thereby shifting like a parasite the whole burden of production risks. He would not expose himself to the risks of capitalist farming. The vast majority of poor peasants were often forced into the commercialisation process because they needed money to meet the growing burden of rent and revenue in cash. Peasants in Coimbatore seem to have told a British collector that they were growing cotton because they could not eat it, and though they would remain half-fed they would at least be in a position to pay the revenue and rent. Had they been growing grains they would eat the crop anyway and their taxes would then remain unpaid. Commercialisation of agriculture forced the peasants to grow cash crops and neglect the sowing of poor man's grains like jowar and bajra which caused acute distress in years of scarcity and disaster like the famine years. The pressure on the peasant to pay his rent and revenue in cash was no less a compelling reason than the others for the commercialisation of agriculture. One more pernicious effect of commercialisation was growing rural indebtedness because, as pointed out earlier, raising cash crops necessitated more inputs than those required to raise other crops. The money for this had to be obtained as advances or loans at high rates of interest. In this context, what Clifford Geertz called 'agricultural involution' appears an appropriate description. Commenting on the sufferings of peasants in Dutch-ruled Java, Geertz said that it is not that they have suffered (which they would have anyway under capitalist modernisation) but that they suffered for nothing.

Lack of Productive Investment and Innovation

Agricultural Involution

RISE OF LANDLESS AGRARIAN LABOURERS

In colonial India, in the permanently settled lands of the British administration, the agrarian order was a descending structure with the zamindars at the top. Though he was no less a racist than his contemporaries, Lord Cornwallis in a sudden fit of generosity invested the zamindars with absolute property rights on land, thinking that they would emulate the enlightened English landlords and bring about improvements in Indian agriculture. Nothing of that sort happened because the landlords had other ideas. Incidentally, the absolute right was not that absolute after all; the zamindars could be turned out of their estates, as quite a few of them were, if they failed to clear the government dues by sunset of a stipulated date. Meanwhile, the policies adopted by the colonial state led to the ruin of the indigenous industry when millions of artisans reverted to agriculture. The population pressure on cultivable lands increased, holdings became fragmented and agricultural productivity declined which intensified rural indebtedness. Now, rural credit, by itself an effective means of control over land, became more effective when the creditors were owners of land. Their relationship with a numerous rural group made up of dispossessed peasants, out-of-work artisans and so on who constituted agricultural labour, was affected by rural credit in which there were other determinants.

Rights of the Zamindar

Rural Credit

In the hierarchy among agrarian classes, besides the zamindar, there were sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. Sharecroppers, a government commission found out, were "regarded in their villages as having a better status than labourers." Called a *grihastha,* the sharecropper was a settled peasant in rank, while the agricultural labourer was a *mazdoor,* a mere labourer. This distinction was further reinforced by the caste position of the agricultural labourer who usually came from the lower castes. Moreover, a sharecropper usually planned the agricultural operations in the land given to him by the landowner, while the agricultural labourer only assisted the landowner in the process; the planning and such aspects were not for him to decide. It is possible that though he derived the major part of his income by hiring out his labour, he could still possess some land of his own, too small to provide for his needs entirely. That was how a local officer reported from Saran, a densely populated district of Bihar, in 1881, "...If by landless labourer is meant a labourer who actually rented not land at all... such labourers are most rare." But, as pointed out earlier, the landholding in most instances was just not adequate for the subsistence of his own family. So, "a very careful enquiry" in two villages in Patna in 1888 showed that while a family of five needed at least seven *bighas* for subsistence, 40 per cent of the families in the villages had less than four *bighas* of land. A 1938 survey of 20,000 peasant families in Bengal concluded that "more than 40 per cent of them were .... compelled to take land as *bargadars* (sharecroppers)...or to supplement their income by working as day labourers".

Agrarian Hierarchy

Not much is known about agricultural labourers prior to the advent of the British, but their preponderance in the early years of the British rule suggest that they were a part of the agricultural scene for a long time. For instance (in pre-colonial times) there were big farmers with very large holdings, variously known as *jotedars, haoladars, gatchdars* in the Vessore, Bakarganj and Purnea districts who cultivated their lands (at least partly) with hired help. They were originally engaged in reclamation of waste lands, a process which went on during pre-colonial times also. They usually had large capitals and carried out about half the agricultural operation of the country besides trade and keeping a large herd of cattle. The zamindars, naturally envious of them, however, courted them in public. Such big holders did not necessarily depend on hired labourers for cultivation, but preferred sharecropping instead. Buchanan in 1808 found in Dinajpur more sharecropping families than labourers or *kisans,* 150,000 of the former as against 80,000 of the latter. The preference for sharecropping was due to the general scarcity of labourers at the time, a consequence of the periodical outbreak of fever which "swept away an immense number of people." Another reason was the reluctance of high castes (gentry among the Muslims) to work as labourers in fields belonging to others; they preferred to work in their own lands instead.

Conditions in Pre-British Period

Anyway, the labourers during the early British rule were mostly "attached" domestic servants, bonded labour and so on, with the attachment being generally due to debt. Subsequently, there emerged the casual labourer as the most dominant form of agricultural labourer which was due to the proliferation of small holdings as opposed to the relatively large holdings existing earlier. Circumstances forced the small holders to depend on hired labour for subsistence. In Patna, Gaya and Bhagalpur, Buchanan found numerous slaves belonging to the low Riwani and Dhanuk tribes but their proportion in Bengal was quite negligible. Such bonded labourers along with the 'attached' domestic servants lived not in the master's house, but in a separate part of the village. It indicated that domestic serfdom constituted a small part of the agricultural labour force and that it had not much to do with the loss of peasants' lands which was due to indebtedness.

Casual Labourer

Domestic Serfdom

This 'attachment' naturally declined over time and where it existed it lost its old effectiveness. At the beginning of the twentieth century agricultural labourers in Gaya, particularly the landless ones, were *kamiyas* (bonded labourers). In Patna, even in the 1920s, agricultural operations were mostly carried out by *kamiyas* who were maintained and looked after by their masters. An investigation in the 1930s showed that the *kamiyas* were emerging as free labourers though the process was somewhat slow. By the mid-1940s it was found that the system

seemed to be dying out. No data is available on the ratio of attached and casual labour, but it appears that casual labour was in a majority among the agricultural workforce even in the earlier years of the 20th century. This was so because of the fragmentation of land, the holders continued to work as agricultural labourers without severing their ties with the land. Contemporary reports stated that this increasing fragmentation of land or the proliferation of small holdings was due to gradual loss of the peasants' lands and the growing population pressure which cultivation could scarcely cope with. A report from Puri stated, "...the recruitment from among the smaller peasantry", which led to the growth of agricultural labourers was "due to the decrease in the size of the holdings which makes ... men who were previously peasants supplement their reduced income by working for others, and also to the smaller tenants selling their holdings. Speaking of employment opportunities of this increasing labour force, not all of whom could be engaged in agricultural work. Prof. B. Chaudhuri says: "Attached labour tended to decline where, with the opening of new job opportunities such as those provided by the tea plantations of Assam and elsewhere, the new industries at Calcutta and around and in agricultural operations in connection with jute cultivation, particularly harvesting, the old dependence on loans in exchange of labour somewhat diminished...Even the demand for the labour of attached type declined in many regions, particularly during periods of rising food prices, where the landowners, because of the increased number of small holdings, could be sure of the necessary supply of labour." (*The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, c.1757-c.1970)

Impact of Fragmentation of Land

It is somewhat difficult to determine the numbers of sharecroppers, at least the poorer among them, and the casual labourers who constituted the agricultural labour force in India during the later part of the British rule. Prof. B. Chaudhuri says that this is due to the lack of precise data: "Assuming that a family consisted of five persons the *krishans* (casual labours) and *adhiyars* (sharecroppers) constituted 16.6 and 23 per cent respectively of the total agricultural population of Dinajpur district, and under the circumstances noted by Buchanan earlier the poorer *adhiyars* (sharecroppers) could easily sink in to the position of *krishans.* What happened ... is imperfectly known largely because of the imperfections of the census data, which constitute the main source... ."

Composition

Although the 1931 Census stated that there had been growth of 'field labourers', other evidence during the Depression years point to the opposite. "The falling income of the peasants resulting from the falling agricultural prices of the time did necessitate a search for means of supplementing the income, including agricultural labour. However, the demand for labour also sharply declined since the big holders, the usual employer of a considerable number of labourers, also suffered from the Depression, and suffered worse between 1930 and 1934 because of indifferent crops..." (B. Chaudhuri). It would appear that the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 greatly reduced the working force when a large number of casual labour was employed by the big holders. They could afford the increased expenses because of the rise in agricultural prices.

The data on agricultural wages is so imprecise and confusing that it is difficult to reach any meaningful conclusion by using them. They do not refer to regions with similarities, a grave omission considering that there was no 'labour market'. Nor do they tell us about agricultural output of the times, on which the wages paid were based. And, nor do they say anything about the wide variety of payments. Despite this, some broad inferences on the situation at different periods can be made. For instance, in the later part of the 18th and earlier part of the 19th centuries, there was scarcity of casual labour and their wages were relatively high. That was the repeated complaint of the various superintendents of public works of the time. Then, around the 1850s, one James Taylor of Dhaka said that labourers who were paid rupees eighteen, fifteen and twelve in 1803 were getting forty-eight, thirty-six and twenty-seven in 1837, meaning a probable increase in wages. However, Cockerel in Bihar reported no increase in the wages of labour "during the last ten years (1855-65)". Labourers paid in grain, (some were given sleeves of grain which they themselves thrashed) were thought to be better-off than cash wage earners, whose wages admittedly lagged behind the times. But they also ran the risk of being paid by inferior quality of grains, particularly in regions where the grain prices were

Agricultural Wages

on the rise. There were also instances of migrant tribal labourers being paid 25 per cent less than local labourers. A recent research paper has shown that wages of agricultural labourers in 1916 fell by 11 points over 1911, thus contradicting the claim of a contemporary government report that there were increases in agricultural wages. There was also a sharp fall in the real wage in the 1930s due to the Depression which greatly reduced the income from agriculture and consequently the level of employment of agricultural labour.

Despite the apparent signs of continuity the pre-British agrarian system was not quite the same as during the British rule. The nature of the changes which occurred was influenced by the policies and methods adopted by the colonial rulers, like maximising land revenue which initially caused a great dislocation in society. Then came the permanent settlement and with it a set of new zamindars of mixed origin who purchased old estates at auctions. Legal changes helped the zamindars to oppress the peasants (if they so willed). The system of rural credit affected the control over land, a striking example of which was the distress sales of peasants' lands as a form of appropriation of their loans by moneylenders. This naturally affected the economic performance of the indebted who were now turned out of their lands by creditors. While agricultural labourers in pre-colonial times were mainly domestic servants or bonded labourers "attached" due to their chronic indebtedness their numbers swelled during the British rule due to loss of land, diminution of the size of holding and the general impoverishment of peasants. Admittedly, they were free, with the freedom to suffer from hunger and want because there was not much improvement in their prospects.

IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE RURAL SOCIETY

Bengal Tenancy Act

Under the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, the ryots who had been cultivating the same land or different lands in the same village were granted the privilege of increase in rents only under certain specified conditions. Consequently, there emerged a group of peasants whose actual burden of rent went on diminishing with the rising agricultural prices. They were called occupancy and settled ryots. Side by side also emerged a mixed group, a significant control over whom and their lands was exercised by rural creditors. For them, the relations of rent often reacted with relations of credit, thus one rein forcing the other. "Rural credit provided two sources of control: the dependence of a considerable number of peasants on a regular supply of credit, eventually involving surrender by them of a large part of their produce to the creditors, and the acquisition in some instances by creditors of the lands of defaulting peasants." (Professor B. Chaudhuri, *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, c. 1757-c. 1970). Recent researches, however, have established that contrary to the general belief there was widespread rural indebtedness during pre-colonial times. The data is somewhat scanty with regard to it and does not indicate its prevalence and extent on a firm basis. Nevertheless, early British administration apparently did not find rural indebtedness to be a local or casual phenomenon. Harvest failures and other misfortunes compelled a number of peasant families with small incomes to take loans from time to time. The Maratha raids of the 1740s, generally unstable conditions and the relatively high land revenue made borrowing unavoidable.

Grain Merchants as Moneylenders

There is, however, no doubt that rural indebtedness was widespread even during the early years of colonial rule. After the famine of 1769-70 as also in 1787, the administration looked into the matter and even thought of fixing a limit on the interest charged. Anyway, in 1794 and in 1801, the grain department reported that grain merchants as rural creditors controlled about 50 per cent of the crops produced in Burdwan and Jessore. In Dinajpur their hold was so great that only the bare minimum was available for consumption in the local markets. Buchanan found in Sahabad and Gaya of peasants taking loans to pay rent, while Tytler (a judicial and revenue officer) stated in the second decade of the 19th century that nine-tenths of the peasants in central Bengal were "forced to borrow their daily food and corn to sow their lands from Mahajans". The commissioner of Patna said in 1875 that the agriculturist regards a village without its moneylender as an abnormal state of things. The Datta Commission enquiring into the causes of rising prices in 1905 and 1912 did not find any change "except in tracts where the agriculturists are peculiarly advantageously placed". The 1930 Bengal

Estimate of Debt

Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee estimated the total burden of debt at the time to be about 41 per cent of the peasant's gross produce. Another government committee found that 17 per cent of rural families were nearly destitute (as their loans exceeded their four years' income), 17 per cent had taken loans less than their four years' income and 43 per cent were in debt of less than two years' income.

Causes of Rural Decay

The causes which led to such a dismal state of the rural economy were many. A very common reason upto the 1850s and even afterwards was the peasants' undefined rent relation with the landlords who often arbitrarily increased the revenue demands on them. There were other reasons as well like the drying up of rivers in central and west Bengal, leading to a decline in agricultural productivity as also the incidence of malaria in these places. The result was largescale migration of peasant families to towns along with rich farmers and well-to-do people, from whom the farmers got loans and advances to carry on their agricultural operations. Another reason was the diminishing scope for agriculture elsewhere due to the pressure of growing population on available cultivable lands. In Bihar, this situation prevailed even in the 1880s, as it did later in the fertile eastern districts of Bengal. Actually, in Bengal, agriculture was static during the years 1901-50, and in fact in the first four decades of the twentieth century there was a negative trend in acreage, (minus)—0.66 per cent per year. Places where new cultivation was started depended on winter rains for a good harvest. Moreover, usually one crop was raised in such tracts and if that failed it meant heavy indebtedness of the farmers in the next season. That was what happened in the new agricultural settlements of Bihar in the 1880s where the failure of a single crop almost ruined the peasants. In greater Bengal double cropping was limited to only about 20 per cent of the total land in the first four decades of the 20th century. New cultivation here was carried out in marginal lands, where even single crops needed more inputs. As a consequence, there was a negative trend in output during the first four decades of the 20th century, that is —0.49 per cent per year.

Cash Crops

A notable development during colonial rule was the increasing cultivation of cash crops which contributed significantly to the growth of rural indebtedness. Where indigo and opium were concerned, the indebtedness of the peasants was due to the particular organisation of their cultivation. As indigo was an unremunerative crop, its cultivation was forced on the peasants by the White planters through various devices. Opium cultivation was controlled by the government which also fixed its selling price. Consequently, its cultivation was remunerative to farmers, especially when they could sell a part of their produce to private traders offering them a higher price than that fixed by the government. Moreover, advances for opium cultivation were given interest-free by the government. However, opium crops were prone to failure due to the vagaries of weather which was quite common in the poppy-growing regions. This drawback coupled with the rigidity with which the government recovered its opium advances (becoming more and more stringent over time) forced the opium growers to take loans, thereby landing them in debts as their most important money crop failed from time to time. It was partly for this reason that quite a few opium-growers were encouraged to grow this crop year after year. As regards jute which fetched relatively higher prices than foodgrains, the problems faced by the cultivator were different. The jute industries, as the largest consumer of the crop, could exercise control over the prices, thereby appropriating a large part of the gains which the cultivator expected. If the peasant had taken advance, then he had to surrender a part or whole of the crops to his creditor, usually a jute trader, for prices much lower than the market rates. Commenting on the situation, Professor B. Chaudhuri writes: "(The jute-growers)... suffered, probably worst, when the jute prices suddenly slumped, particularly where, not having any previous contracts with their creditors to hand over their produce to them at a fixed price, they bore the entire loss, and such fluctuations were a common phenomenon in the jute market. The volume of rural indebtedness was usually larger in the regions affected by commercial farming than in those where the economy was largely subsistence-based, also because (partly) of the greater credit-

Cultivation of Cash Crops

worthiness of the peasants there, with the increased production for the market increasing the market value of land. This was all the greater where land was transferable under the law and thus a valuable collateral on loans. With increasing land value the moneylender's concern was no longer limited to acquiring profits as a financial intermediary but was directed increasingly to the acquisition of and speculation in land." (*The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, c. 1757-c. 1970)

Impact of Price Fluctuations

Contemporary reports often highlighted the role of large, abrupt increase or fall in agricultural prices from time to time in the growth of rural indebtedness. This was not exactly unknown in precolonial times, when either a big shortfall or an abundant harvest had an impact on the local markets. The effect of such price fluctuations on the wider market system, however, was a development during the British rule. Furthermore, it was not always abundant harvests which caused the prices to fall. There are instances (in north Bengal) when for quite prolonged periods prices remained low (even though the harvests were normal) due to wider market depressions of the time.

Rising prices, though ordinarily favourable to farmers, were particularly distressing to farmers whose surpluses ran out within four-to-five months of the harvest, forcing them to borrow or purchase grains to eat in a dear market. A government enquiry showed that at the time of rising prices the marginal farmers' consumption of foodgrains dropped down to just half of what it was before. Rising prices hit the marginal farmers much more when the prices of daily necessities other than foodgrains rose relatively higher than food prices. The Datta Commission concluded that between 1895 and 1909 "the rise in the cost of living has been all along more than the rise in agricultural income" and that "agricultural indebtedness has increased in the case of cultivators with small holdings," though in some parts of northern and eastern Bengal, "where the cultivators have obtained very large profits on jute," they were "substantially better-off than before." The problem became much more acute during the War years when due to transport shortage, the distribution of commodities was affected leading to very high rise in prices suddenly. For instance, in Bihar during 1914-18 the price of salt rose by 100 per cent and that of kerosene by 50 per cent, while for clothes people were paying three times the price in 1911. The Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee (referred to earlier) observed that "the rise in prices...is more apparent than real and affected the Bengal agriculturists adversely". The committee concluded that the increase of rural indebtedness in Bengal was partly due to that movement in price.

DRAIN OF WEALTH

Drain of Wealth a Permanent Feature

In the decades following the Battle of Plassey began the phenomenon of large-scale plunder; in economic terms it could be defined as the flow of a vast amount of wealth with no equivalent returns. This 'drain of wealth' became a permanent feature of the Company's administrative policies for many years to come illustrating the character of the Company's servants as also the methods followed by them.

Describing the concept of economic drain, Professors B.L. Grover and S. Grover say, "In the mercantilist concept an economic drain takes place if gold and silver flow out of the country as a consequence of an adverse balance of trade. In the fifty years before the Battle of Plassey (1757), the East India Company had imported bullion worth 20 million pound sterling in India to balance the exports over imports from India. British mercantilists were highly critical of the trade policies of the Company.

"Even the British government adopted a series of measures to restrict or prohibit the import of Indian textiles into England. Apart from other measures (as early as) in 1720, the British government forbade the wear or use of Indian silks and calicoes in England on pain of a penalty of 5 pounds on the wearer and 20 pounds on the seller."

"After Plassey, the situation was reversed and the drain of wealth took an outward turn as England gradually acquired monopolistic control over the Indian economy. After the East India Company extended its territorial aggression in India and began to administer territories and acquired control over the surplus revenues of India, the shape of drain underwent a change. Henceforth the Company had a recurring surplus which accrued from (i)

Recurring Surplus

profits from oppressive land revenue policy, (ii) profits from its trade resulting from monopolistic control over Indian markets, and (iii) exactions made by the Company's officials. All this 'surplus' was used by the Company as an investment, i.e., for making purchases of exportable items in India and elsewhere. Against the export of goods made out of this investment India did not get anything in return. This system was brought to an end by the Charter Act of 1813 when the territorial and commercial revenues of the Company were separated."

During the post-Plassey decades, the economy of India was bled white in several forms. Whether the immense drain of wealth from Bengal was carried out in the form of direct export of bullion or not is a debatable point. Apparently, the direct export of silver was not much. But the private fortunes amassed by the Company's servants and other Europeans in India were remitted out of the country by various means. For instance, during the period 1757-66, the English and other Europeans extracted from the princes and other nobles 'presents' and such other perquisites (mostly illegal) worth no less than 50 millions of rupees. Of course, the Court of Directors prohibited it in 1766, but the practice continued nonetheless even after that. It is significant that the charges against the governor-general, Warren Hastings and his cohort (in the Calcutta council) Barwell were on those very grounds. Then, the Company's servants earned huge profits by their participation in Bengal's internal trade either directly or through their agents. As if that was not enough, the English Free Traders moved to corner the rest of the items for trading, to ensure their share of the loot.

Presents

The victory at Plassey apparently was the green signal for a large-scale invasion of Bengal's internal trade. Betelnut, salt, tobacco and other commodities, in which the English were not allowed to trade in earlier, became their monopoly items of trade almost overnight. The move was so glaring that even Mir Kasim felt constrained to protest against it, leading to his subsequent downfall. On the acquisition of *diwani* rights in 1765, the Court of Directors from distant London tried to put a curb on the private trade by the Company's servants.

Monopoly Over Bengal Economy

It was "but a feeble barrier against the united interest of every man in the settlement". As if to legitimise their private loot, the Company's servants became official looters by becoming agents of the Company's 'investments' referred to earlier. Investment meant purchase of exportable items by money set aside from the revenues earned by taxation and such. Thus, the money to be used for administration and development was spent on 'unrequited' exports, exports that led to a drain of resources and brought nothing in return. Moreover, proper market prices were not paid while acquiring all those exportable items. The producers were forced to sell at low prices under coercion that bordered at times on cruelty. For instance, silk weavers refusing to sell their products to the Company had their fingers cut off so as to stop them from spinning yarn.

A Marxian Analysis

Marxist scholar Rajani Palme Dutt has called this drain of wealth the mercantilist phase of economic exploitation of British India. Mercantilism was the dominant economic doctrine of those times, the economic counterpart of aggressive nationalism. Its main theme was control of all economic activity with a view to make the nation strong regardless of the effects upon others. With regard to external trade the method was to do business through chartered trading companies so as to obtain a favourable balance of trade (exports were to be more than the imports) and to ensure that the resulting profit flowed into the country in the form of bullions. And all these were to be done by earning huge profits. It was achieved by a three-pronged strategy:

Mercantilism

Three-Pronged Strategy

1. a monopolistic hold over all forms of trade by excluding all possible rivals;
2. buying cheap and selling at high prices, the sure-fire way of earning super profits; and
3. complete political control over the countries traded with so as to make the economic stranglehold effective.

"The English East India Company's struggle with other merchant companies in India, viz., the Dutch Company and the French Company, was aimed at

elimination of all European rivals from the Indian trade. The various wars that the East India Company fought against the Indian princes—the conquest of Bengal, Anglo-Mysore wars, Anglo-Maratha wars—and wars against other Indian powers were all directed towards control of political power over various parts of India. The political power that the Company acquired was used to control the economy of India—to control the very sources of Indian wealth and the internal and external trade of India. Not only were the Indian merchants prohibited from buying commodities directly from the producers (which were monopolised by the English) but the agents of the Company also forced their goods on the Indian merchants at a price higher than the prevailing market price". (*A New Look at Modern Indian History* by B.L. Grover and S. Grover)

Political Control for Economic Exploitation

The Company's monopoly trade based on the royal charter faced a setback in 1776 with the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. As the work supported free trade ideas and this was against the principle hitherto followed by the Company, the Parliament could not ignore the questions the book raised against England's external trade. So, renewing the Company's charter in 1793 for another twenty years, the Act permitted all British subjects to take a share of the export trade under certain conditions. The move benefitted British residents in India leading to considerable increase in private trade. The methods used by the 'Free Traders' to remit their private fortunes to England were the same as those followed by the Company's servants. One was to send out diamonds to Europe while the other was to raise bills of exchange on the East India Company or any other European company. Having become the supreme ruler of a rich and fertile kingdom, the East India Company was directly responsible for the most serious drain on Bengal's capital. Not only that, the Company used part of Bengal's revenues for purposes with which its people had no concern. It provided financial assistance to the Bombay and Madras presidencies for their administrative expenses as also for their wars like the Anglo-Maratha and Anglo-Mysore wars. Additionally, there was the Company's China trade, fully financed from Bengal but bringing nothing in return to the province.

Drain of Wealth from Bengal

Anyway, the economic drain continued unabated and unchecked throughout the duration of the British rule in India. The Marxian analysis categorised British economic exploitation of India under three phases:

Three Phases

1. Mercantilism or period of merchant capital, from 1757 to the end of the 18th century;
2. Free trade capitalism or period of industrial capital, developed during the 19th century; and
3. Period of finance capital, from end of the 19th century to 1947.

Constituents of Economic Drain

As the Indian administration was conducted by the British with the sole purpose of propagating their own cause, there were many services in England paid for by Indian revenues, some of which were as follows:

(A) Home Charges These were the expenses incurred in England by the Secretary of State on behalf of India. Before 1857, the expenses amounted to 10 to 15 per cent of the average revenues of India. After the Revolt of 1857, the expenditure rose, amounting to 24 per cent during the period 1897-1901. In 1901-02 it was 17.36 million pounds and increased sharply thereafter, consuming 40 per cent of the total revenue of the Central government in 1921-22. The home charges comprised:

(i) ***Dividends to the shareholders of the company:*** An annual dividend of 6,30,000 pounds was provided for under the Charter Act of 1833. This was continued upto 1874 when a loan of 4.5 million pounds was raised to redeem the stock at a premium of 100 per cent.

(ii) ***Interest on public debt raised abroad:*** While engaged in the economic exploitation of the country, the East India Company managed nonetheless to borrow 70 million pounds from the public (the price of its aggressive wars) to depose the Indian rulers from their principalities. By the beginning of the 20th century, this loan had gone upto 225 million pounds, part of which was used for the development of the railway network, for

irrigation systems and for other public works. It was stated that the loans were at low interest rates and that the developmental works brought prosperity to India. This was not exactly true because the systems were designed in England, thereby benefitting the English. Even the railway stores were bought in England, thus denying India its rightful economic opportunity. Furthermore, the railways helped the movement of troops as also of cargoes for exports abroad, none of which exactly benefitted the Indians. Even Marx proved to be wrong in this regard when he said that through these methods England had laid the foundations of western society in India.

(iii) ***Civil and military charges:*** These included pensions and leave expenses of the English employees, expenses of the Indian Office establishments, contributions to war office and so on.

(iv) ***Cost of departmental purchases:*** Besides the railways, stores material for departments like civil, military, navy, etc., were all purchased from England. During the period 1861-1920, such purchases varied from 10 to 12 per cent of the home charges on an average.

(B) Interest on Foreign Capital Investments "Interest and profits on private foreign capital were another important leakage from the national income stream. Finance capital entered the Indian market in the 20th century. During the inter-war period the payments on this account roughly varied between Rs 30 crore and 60 crore per annum. The foreign capitalists were least interested in the industrial development of India; rather they exploited Indian resources to serve their own interests and, in fact, thwarted indigenous capitalist enterprise by fair and foul means.

(C) Foreign Banking, Insurance and Shipping Companies India had to pay quite a large sum of money as the cost of such services. As the working of such companies was without any governmental supervision, all sorts of impediments were raised to prevent the growth of Indian enterprise in these fields besides constituting a drain on Indian resources.

Estimates of the Drain of Wealth

As regards the quantum of the drain of wealth from India, the estimates vary widely depending on the period under review and the methods of calculations employed. George Wingate in 1859 stated it to be about 72 million pounds during the period 1835-51, while William Digby in 1901 put it between 500 and 1000 million pounds during the period 1757 to 1815. An American scholar, Professor Holden Ferber in 1948 estimated the drain to be to the tune of 1.9 million pounds for the decade 1783-93, when the Company ruled over a very limited territory in India. The figures arrived at by Indian nationlists like Dadabhai Naoroji, G.V. Joshi, D.E. Wacha and Romesh Chandra Dutt also differ from one another. Dadabhai's estimate was 1500 million pounds from the beginning of British rule to 1865-66 and 359 crores of rupees for the period 1883-92. D.E. Wacha's average, given in 1901, was 30 to 40 crores of rupees per year from 1860 to 1900, and in the same year R.C. Dutt arrived at the figure of 22 million pounds per annum. Prof. C.N. Vakil's calculation for 90 years (1834 to 1924) was anywhere between 394 and 591 million pounds. A Russian economist, V.I. Pavloo stated in 1963 that in the 1930s British colonists squeezed India of 130 to 140 million pounds with which "India could annually construct three (steel) plants of the Bhilai type".

Economic Impact

With regard to the economic consequences of the drain, these could be categorised as systematic impoverishment of the country materially as well as morally. Elaborating on these aspects, Professors B.L. Grover and S. Grover quote extensively from Dadabhai Naoroji's writings and sum up as follows: "Dadabhai Naoroji described the drain of wealth as the 'evil of all evils' and the main cause of Indian poverty. He maintained that Britain was 'bleeding India white'. In a letter to Sunderland in 1905, Naoroji wrote, 'The lot of India is a very sad one. Her condition is that of master and a slave; but it is worse; it is that of a plundered nation in the hands of constant plunderers with the plunder carried away clean out of the land. In the case of plundering raids, occasionally made on India before the English came the invaders went away… The British invasion is continuous and the plunder goes right on.' Comparing the plundering raids of medieval rulers with the British method of colonial

plunder, another critic has pointed out that the old time plunder had to restrict itself to rich men's houses and godowns where the wealth was accumulated; it was not worth ransacking every little hut and little village. In contrast, the colonial plunder could reach the most lowly, the most humble and the most remote. Thus, British methods of exploitation though less painful were more thorough and resembled the blood-sucking leeches.

The drain of wealth checked and retarded capital accumulation in India, thereby creating road blocks to the industrialisation of India. Indian products and treasure drained to England without adequate return was of great help in creating conditions in that country conducive for the growth of British factory industry in the early stages of the industrial revolution. What is worse is that part of the British capital entered India as finance capital and further drained India of her wealth. Naoroji complained, 'British India's own wealth is carried out of it and then that wealth is brought back to it in the shape of loans, and for these loans she must find so much for interest, the whole thing moving in a most vicious and provoking circle.' The drain had an immense effect on income and employment potential within India." (Excerpted from *A New Look at Modern Indian History*)

Moral Drain

The moral drain or moral impoverishment, according to Dadabhai Naoroji, was due to the exclusion of Indians from positions of trust and responsibility in their own country. Unsparing in his critique of the humiliating and insulting measures adopted by the British to keep Indians out of higher positions in the government, he wrote, "All the talent and nobility of intellect and soul, which nature gives to every country, is to India a lost treasure. There is, thus, a triple dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race going on under the present system of administration."

Gestation Theory

However, the points of view of the drain theorists have recently been questioned by some scholars. For instance, Ranade's opinion that economic backwardness is due to sociological causes has been supported by some. A 'gestation' theory has been put forward by Morris D. Morris. He says that during this gestation period Britain played the role of a "night watchman providing security, national administration and a modicum of social overheads on the basis of which economic progress is expected to occur". Indian scholars are of the view that the foreign capital was either not properly utilised or under-utilised to a great extent while the colonial government pursued a policy of deliberate and guided underdevelopment.

Sullivan's Views

It is interesting that some commentators, mostly British, criticised their own government's policy in language not much different from the ones quoted earlier during the heyday of imperialism. For instance, John Sullivan, ex-member of the Government of Madras and ex-President of the Board of Revenue, complained against the annual economic drain from India before the House of Commons Select Committee (1848) thus:

"Our system acts very much like a sponge, drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges, and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames.... They (the people of India) have no voice whatever in imposing the taxes which they are called upon to pay, no voice in framing the laws which they are bound to obey, no real share in the administration of their own country; and they are denied those rights from the insolent and insulting pretext that they are wanting in mental and moral qualifications for the discharge of such duties."

Home Charges

As regards the rationale of the home charges, Major Wingate in the book, *Our Financial Relations with India*, published in London in 1859, observes "... the case is wholly different when the taxes are not spent in the country from which they are raised. In this case, they constitute no mere transfer of a portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount withdrawn from the taxed country. As regards its effects on national production, the whole amount might as well be thrown into the sea as transferred to another country."

"The Indian tribute, whether weighed in the scale of justice or viewed in the light of our true interest, will be found to be at variance with humanity, with common sense and with the received maxims of economical science. It would be true wisdom, then, to provide for such of the Home Charges of the

India Government as really form the tribute. These charges would probably be found to be the dividends on East India stock, interest on Home Debt, the salaries of officers and establishments and cost of buildings connected with the Home Department of the Indian Government, furlough and retired pay to members of the Indian Military and Civil Services when at home, charges of all descriptions paid in this country connected with British troops serving in India, and a portion of the cost of transporting British troops to and from India." In other words, if India had been relieved of Home Charges from the commencement of British rule, India would have had no public debt when she was transferred to the Crown from the Company in 1858, but a large balance in her favour.

Bagshaw's Views

Appearing before the Select Committee (1848) referred to earlier, John Bagshaw, a Member of Parliament, dwelt at length on the many disadvantages India suffered:

"*First:* Three millions sterling and upward annually taken from the revenue of India towards the payment of the Home Charges of the East India Company, without any return whatever;

Second: Fortunes accumulated in India by the Civil and Military Services, seldom if any remaining in that country annually increase the capital of Great Britain from the resources of India;

Third: The well-known fact that of the revenue raised in British India, the largest portion of it is from the land, by which its produce is necessarily burdened; this amounts to nearly thirteen-and-a half-millions sterling.

Fourth: The difficulties which importers (from India) are subject to from the way in which duties are levied at the Customs Houses of England."

Montgomery's Views

Montgomery Martin in his book *Eastern India* published in London in 1838 pointed out how the increasing volume of drain from India with the lapse of years had impoverished an industrious, peaceful and once prosperous nation. He says that a three million pound drain per year on British India "amounted in thirty years, at 12 per cent (the usual Indian rate) compound interest, to the enormous sum of (nearly) 724 million pounds for fifty years. So constant and accumulating a drain even on England would soon impoverish her; how severe then must be its effects on India, where the wages of a labourer is from two pence to three pence a day?

"For half a century, we have gone on draining from two to three and sometimes four million pounds sterling a year from India, which has been remitted to Great Britain to meet the deficiencies of commercial speculations, to pay the interest of debts, to support the home establishment and to invest on England's soil the accumulated wealth of those whose lives have been spent on in Hindustan. I do not think it possible for human ingenuity to avert entirely the evil effects of a continued drain of three or four million pounds from a distant country like India, and which is never returned to it in any shape."

Incidentally, all those pleadings to abolish/reduce/remit the home charges of 3 million pounds per year by conscientious Englishmen fell on deaf ears. The ears were perhaps vengeful as well, because from 3 million pounds in 1837 the home charges rose to 16 million in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

R.C. Dutt's Views

It has been mentioned earlier that Morris D. Morris assigned the role of a 'night watchman' to the English during the gestation period of economic progress. They provided security, administration and the modicum of social overheads on the basis of which further development was expected to occur. An Indian member of the I.C.S., Romesh Dutt, however, shows the role of the English as 'night watchman' in a dubious light in his book *Economic History of India*. According to him, the commerce of India was forced and artificial. India was forced to export foodgrain while near famine conditions prevailed in the country.

"It is instructive, if somewhat painful, to watch how this process works. The annual economic drain to Great Britain is met directly from the revenues of India. A great part of the revenues of India is derived from the soil in the shape of the Land Revenue. The Land Revenue is realised, generally, from cultivators in Southern India, and from landlords in Northern India who in their turn exact rents from their tenants. Cultivators pay their

revenue or their rents by selling a large portion of the produce of their fields, keeping an insufficient stock for their own consumption. Exporting merchants have their agents all over the country to buy what the cultivators are compelled to sell; and railways rapidly transport these purchases to seaports whence they are exported to Europe. India presents a busy scene to the winter globetrotter when these transactions take place in every large town and market; but under the cheering appearance of a brisk grain trade lies concealed the fact that the homes and villages of a cultivating nation are denuded of their food to a fatal extent, in order to meet that annual tribute which England demands from India." (Romesh C. Dutt, *Economic History of India*)

Land Revenue

The author continues poignantly: "Every nation reasonably expects that the proceeds of taxes raised in the country should be mainly spent in the country…. Taxation raised by a king, says the poet, is like the moisture of the earth sucked up by the sun to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands, not on India."

DEINDUSTRIALISATION

Before the advent of the English and other European traders down to the sixth or seventh decade of the eighteenth century, India's industries not only supplied the needs of her population but also left enough surplus for export trade with various countries of the world. Cotton and silk piecegoods, sugar, saltpetre, salt, opium, indigo, jute, metalworks (iron, brass, arms, etc.) as also herbal products (perfumes, drugs, oil and so on)—India's manufacturing industry and export basket was rich and full. The handicrafts industry in the provinces specialised in the manufacture of various articles (cotton piecegoods in Bengal, leather craft in Gujarat and so on), thereby increasing efficiency.

Pre-British Industrial Sector

Cotton and silk textiles formed the bulk of the manufactured items. Organised like most other crafts on a domestic basis, their centres of production were spread over various parts of the country. Such centres were located in Gujarat, the Coromandel coast, the Bengal-Bihar-Orissa regions, Varanasi and such other places in Uttar Pradesh, Burhanpur in Khandesh and some places in Mysore. Muslin was the special manufacture of Dhaka, its varieties ranging from the ordinary to the exquisite. Such was its excellence that it prompted an European observer to comment in 1772: "The demands for Bengal manufacture can never lessen; their quality is so peculiar to that country, that no nation on the globe can either equal or rival them." R.C. Dutt says, "Weaving was the national industry of the people and spinning was the pursuit of millions of women." Indian textiles went to England and other parts of Europe, to China, Japan, Burma, Arabia, Persia and parts of Africa.

Textiles As Major Exports

In fact, the demand for printed Indian calicoes, both in apparel and household manufacture, was so widespread in England in the early years of the 18th century that it gave rise to genuine alarms among the silk and woollen manufacturers there. Afraid of losing their hold on the markets, they persuaded the British Parliament to pass various prohibitory and sumptuary laws for the protection of the English weaving industry. The Company, therefore, was serving the interest of the British when on acquiring political power in Bengal after 1757 it decided to reduce India from a manufacturing country to one producing raw materials only for exports. This would be quite clear from the order issued by the Court of Directors of the Company in 1769: "Manufacture of raw silk should be encouraged in Bengal and that of manufactured silk fabrics should be discouraged and silk winders should be forced to work in the Company's factories and prohibited from working in their houses under severe penalties by the authority of the government."

Protection of English Weaving Industry

Elaborating on the methods employed by the Company, Professor Anil Chandra Banerjee writes: "The Company advanced money to the weavers through *gumastas* and exercised a monopolistic control over them so that they were not permitted to work for others. Thus, the weavers could not obtain a just price for their clothes. Bolts, a senior servant of the Company, wrote in 1772 that weavers who dared to sell their goods to purchasers other than the Company were frequently seized and

imprisoned, confined in irons, fined considerable sums of money, and deprived in the most ignominious manner, of what they esteem most valuable, their craft. He adds that instances have been known of their cutting off their thumbs to prevent their being forced to wind silk. The result of such methods was the wholesale abandonment of their occupation by the weavers and the decline of the weaving industry of Bengal. This was accelerated by the rise in prices of cotton in Bengal which was due to the establishment of some kind of monopoly of Bombay and Surat cotton by the Company." (*The New History of Modern India*). Incidentally, according to Bolts, the weavers cut off their fingers themselves so that the Company could not force them to wind silk. It was presumably a counter to the charge that the Company punished in this manner the weavers who dared to sell their produce to buyers other than the Company's agents. Anyway, the mandate of the Company against the manufacture of silk and cotton goods had its desired effect. The manufacture of such items declined in India, and people who had exported these goods to the markets of Europe and Asia in the past centuries began to import them from the mills of Lancashire and Manchester in increasing quantities.

Exploitation of the Weavers

It is instructed to note here that in respect of Indian manufactures, the Parliament's emphasis was on how they could be replaced by British products and how British industries could be promoted at the cost of Indian industries. Warren Hastings was asked by the Lords Committee in 1813, "From your knowledge of Indian character and habits, are you able to speak to the probability of a demand for European commodities by the population of India for their own use?" Hastings replied matter-of-factly that the poor in India had no wants and that whatever little they needed could be obtained from the soil they tread on. Nonetheless, considering that weaving was still (in the 1820s) the national industry of the people and that millions of women eked out the family income by spinning, economic inquiries were made and a report was submitted. However, nothing was done to redress the situation… "on the contrary, we have done everything possible to impoverish still further the miserable beings subject to the cruel selfishness of English commerce… Under the pretence of free trade, England has compelled the Hindus to receive the products of the steam looms of Lancashire, Yorkshire, etc. at mere nominal duties; while the hand-wrought manufactures of Bengal and Behar, beautiful in fabric and durable in wear, have had heavy and almost prohibitive duties imposed on their importation to England." (*Eastern India* by Montgomery Martin, London, 1838)

Montgomery's criticism appeared six years after a Commons' Committee in 1732 deliberated over the economic report forming the basis of his book. The evidence of one witness before the committee is of particular interest because even though the report pointed out the sufferings of Indians due to imports, the cause of English commerce was still upheld.

" 'In that part of India,' the Commons' Committee asked the witness, Holt Mackenzie, 'where the greatest number of British residents are found, has there been any increase among the natives in the indulgence of English tastes, fashions and habits?'

'Judging from Calcutta,' replied Holt Mackenzie, 'there has been, I think, a marked tendency among the natives to indulge in English luxuries; they have well-furnished houses, many wear watches, they are fond of carriages, and are understood to drink wines.'

A smile of grim satisfaction must have overspread the faces of the grave and reverend Commoners of England on obtaining this significant evidence of the spread of Western civilisation in India." (Excerpted from *Economic History of India* by R.C. Dutt)

Other Items of Manufacture

With Clive in firm control of the affairs of Bengal after 1757, the Company's servants wanted to monopolise the manufacture of salt, and Clive helped them by establishing a society for this purpose in 1765. It was a shortlived venture and was abandoned in 1768. Now the zamindars and Indian merchants were permitted to manufacture salt on payment of a 30 per cent duty to the Company. This too was abandoned in 1772 when the Company got back its monopoly of salt manufacture. Warren Hastings tried to introduce something new in 1776 by leasing

Salt

out to individuals the privilege of manufacturing and selling salt. It was not a success, so he reverted to the earlier system of manufacture under the Company's monopoly in 1780. Cornwallis brought in some new measures like extending the monopoly to Benaras as also to the "ceded and conquered provinces". Salt was not permitted to be imported into Bengal from outside, except from the Coromandel Coast and the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf regions.

Effects on the Salt Trade

All these changes brought about in quick succession had three deleterious effects:

(i) the salt trade became very unsteady;
(ii) the price of salt rose affecting the common people deeply; and
(iii) *Ajjorah Molungis,* the actual manufacturers of salt, working under a system of coercion, became impoverished and were reduced to the position of slaves.

Sugar

Sugar, the third important industry after cotton and silk, was manufactured on a large scale in Bengal. During the pre-Plassey period, the production was much in excess of internal consumption, and the surplus was exported to Europe, America, Africa and some countries in Asia. With the assumption of political control by the Company, the sugar trade suffered a decline in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. The Company's attempts to introduce West Indian methods of sugar cultivation were not successful. The Company deliberately thwarted the exports to England by imposing higher duties on Indian sugar than those levied on West Indian produce. Lastly, the disruptions caused by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars led to a fall in the quantity of Bengal sugar exported to the European continental countries.

Opium and Jute

The Company's monopoly over the opium trade brought it major revenues in India. The bulk of the opium was supplied by the Bihar opium agency; another was at Benaras. Most of the opium was exported to China and the rest to East Indies and Pegu. Hand-woven products of jute grown mostly in Bengal were an important subsidiary industry of the people. The Company exported gunny bags from Bengal, but the handicraft industry suffered when jute mills were established.

Ship-building Industry

Indians had been building boats and ocean-going ships long before the advent of the Europeans in the subcontinent. Commenting on this important industrial activity during the pre-colonial times, Professor Anil Chandra Banerjee writes, "India had a flourishing ship-building industry. Its chief centres were Surat, Bombay and Daman on the west coast and Hooghly, Dhaka and Chittagong in Bengal. Surat was famous for construction of 'incomparably the best ships for duration'; these were of all sizes and capacity of over a thousand tons. Private individuals, particularly Parsis, were the leaders of the ship-building industry. The deficiency of tonnage expected from Europe during the Revolutionary War compelled the Company to permit the 'British Free Merchants' of Calcutta to use India-built ships for export and import trade with England. Wellesley licensed some India-built ships to proceed to London in 1799-1800. Between 1781 and 1821 no less than 272 ships of a total tonnage of 1,22,693 were launched by the Hooghli dockyard. Gradually, the restrictions imposed on Indian shipping in the interest of British shipping killed this important industry of this country." (Excerpted from *The New History of Modern India*)

Industrial Revolution in Britain

Impact on Indian economy

It is paradoxical that the Industrial Revolution in England should have led to a reduction in the industrial activity of her colonial possessions in India. Yet that was precisely what had happened. The English manufacturers used the British political power in India to push their machine-made products into India, turning the country to a vast market for English goods. Its net effect was an economic onslaught which turned India into a major importer of British goods and a land of poverty instead of strengthening its huge economic potential.

In the closing decades of the 18th and the early years of the 19th century, the productive capacity of England increased immensely due to the industrial revolution. The spinning machines and weaving looms invented by Hargreaves and Arkwright and the replacement of manual power by steam-operated engines increased tremendously the production of cotton piecegoods. The traditional hand-operated methods of production in India were in no position to compete, and the Company administration used

this advantage of the English manufacturers to beat their Indian counterparts. The government in England was but a willing accomplice of the Company in this, helping it by introducing suitable laws and adopting the necessary administrative policies. Marx had stated that the country which had clothed the world in the recent past was importing cloth for its people. Perhaps he had in mind the instance of Santipur, a premier weaving centre of Bengal, where in 1793 the calicoes and muslins of India, even for Indian use, were supplanted by the products of the steam looms of Manchester. In any event, the Court of Directors of the Company made the first attempt to sell Lancashire cotton products in Bengal as early as 1786, and the sales effort continued until the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars put a damper on it. "When the Napoleonic war came to an end, the entire British tonnage, so long employed against France, came to be used for carrying goods to the eastern countries. In 1815, the Bengal government reduced the import duty on British goods by 2½ per cent, delivering thereby a severe blow at Indian industry. On the other hand, the commercial policy of the British government in England aimed at protecting, encouraging and helping the growth of English manufacturers and stimulating the foreign demand for English products. The unorganised Indian manufacturers, incapable of using improved scientific methods, discriminated against in respect of duties by the Company's government, could not face this unequal and unfair competition." (Anil Chandra Banerjee, *The New History of Modern India*)

Free Traders

The British free traders, referred to earlier, after clamouring for years got a share of the Indian trade in 1793. At that time, indigo was rapidly becoming an important item of export, and the free traders opted to become indigo-planters. The manufacture and export of indigo were certainly not begun by Europeans because as a dye, indigo had been known for long and was manufactured and exported by Indians. As the import of indigo from the Americas was interrupted due to the American war of independence, the Indian produce found a ready market in Europe and elsewhere. Indigo was cultivated and manufactured from Dhaka to Delhi. The British planters were assisted by the Company government by loans and such, due to which they acquired a near monopoly of indigo production in Bengal and Bihar. However, they began to severely oppress the cultivators leading to widespread protests in 1859. Also the demand for indigo declined with the discovery of synthetic chemical dyes.

Monopoly Over Indigo

Yet another important industry in pre-colonial times was the manufacture of saltpetre. As it was an ingredient of gun-powder "it was in great demand among the European nations during their wars in the eighteenth century. It was manufactured principally in Bihar, but there were centres for its manufacture in the Northern *Sarkars,* in Mysore, in Uttar Pradesh and in Bengal. It was from Bihar that the European companies exported saltpetre in large quantities, and the Dutch and French merchants were competitors of the English. In 1758, Clive secured from Mir Jafar monopoly in saltpetre trade in Bengal for the Company. After this the French and the Dutch could only in times of peace buy saltpetre from the English factory at Patna. The result was that the Company sold more saltpetre during peace times than during wars. In 1793, following the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in France, the export of saltpetre by foreigners and to foreign countries was prohibited. Soon afterwards the restriction was waived in favour of neutral nations like the Danes and the Americans. During the early years of the nineteenth century the Company's government lost its interest in maintaining the monopoly of saltpetre manufacture in the country." (Excerpted from *The New History of Modern India* by Professor Anil Chandra Banerjee)

Saltpetre

Having gained a foothold in the lucrative Indian trade in 1793, till then a monopoly of the East India Company, Britain's rising industrialists and trading interests launched a new economic offensive based on the principles of free trade against India. Bowing to their demands, parliamentary debates were held in 1813, but their purpose was not to foster India's indigenous industries. "The Lords and Commons inquired into the state of the industries carried on by British capital; the industries of the people of India, and the wages and profits of the artisans of India, did not interest them much. They inquired if the abolition of the Company's

trade would increase the volume of British trade with India, and would benefit the private traders and manufacturers of England; the state of the internal trade of India, carried on by the people of that country did not much attract their attention." (R.C. Dutt, *Economic History of India*)

In consequence of these deliberations, the monopoly of the Company in the Indian trade was first abolished when its charter was renewed in 1813. Private trade admitted in this manner began to grow while the Company's trade declined. This continued till the time came for the renewal of the Company's charter in 1833 when it was asked whether the Company's trade should not be abolished altogether. Public opinion in England was against the continuation of Company's trade because of the unfair advantage it had over private traders due to its territorial possessions in India. It was also argued that the duties of traders were not consistent with the duties of the rulers of an empire. Accordingly, the Company's trade with India was abolished altogether from 1833, and the Company stood forth from then on simply as the administrator of India, drawing its dividends from the revenues of India. The main purpose of those debates and enquiries was to force British products into India while Indian products were shut out from England by prohibitive tariffs.

Abolition of Company's Trade

H.H. Wilson in his continuation of Mill's *History of British India* says: "… cotton and silk goods of India upto the period (1813) could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price of 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been done, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacturers. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation… British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contented on equal terms."

Views of H.H. Wilson

Indian scholars also echo Wilson's sentiments and supplement them with other reasons. D.R. Gadgil in *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times* gives three reasons for the decline in artistic excellence and economic importance of Indian handicrafts in the 19th century:

D.R. Gadgil's Views

(i) the impoverishment of the royal houses and the consequent abolition of their courts, who patronised the arts and crafts and often employed the master craftsmen on a regular salary;
(ii) the governance by alien rulers and the many foreign influences it brought forth (of the new classes of elite it created—the European rulers and the educated professional Indians—the former necessarily preferred British goods and disdained Indian products while the latter imitated their masters and scoffed at things Indian);
(iii) the inability of traditional indigenous products to successfully compete with mass-produced machine-made products.

In the book, *Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries,* Major B.D. Basu holds the use of political power by English trade interests as responsible for the decline of Indian handicrafts. He lists the imperial methods thus: "(i) forcing British Free Trade on India, (ii) imposing heavy duties on Indian manufactures in England, (iii) exporting raw materials from India, (iv) imposing transit and custom duties, (v) granting special privileges to the British manufactures in India, (vi) compelling Indian artisans to divulge their trade secrets, (viii) holding exhibitions and (viii) introducing railways in India."

B.D. Basu's Views

Differing Periods

The scholars, however, generally agree that the decline of the handicrafts industry did not occur all over the country at the same time because the

periods differed across the country. A prime example of this was Rajasthan which was not served by the railways till 1911, when the decline began. Moreover, despite heavy odds and the absence of a level playing field the hold of the handicrafts on people could not be completely eliminated. The poor and tradition-bound rural populace continued to use cheap, coarse hand-woven cloths, pots and pans made by the village potters and metal workers and village-made wooden and iron ploughs and such other implements from the carpenter and the smith. In the early years of the 20th century, the Swadeshi movement made indigenous products quite popular on nationalist grounds thereby making inroads into the urban areas as well. Later on, the Gandhian way of life stimulated village industries and the use of *khadi* kept the tradition of Indian handicrafts alive.

Deindustrialisation

It is true that even in Britain, the Industrial Revolution led to the decline of handicrafts there. In India, however, the conditions were vastly different from those prevailing in the European countries and North America. In India,

(a) the decline of handicrafts in the 19th century went on and on and continued well into the 20th century; and
(b) there was no comparable growth of modern industry—a very significant feature of the industrial development in the West.

Moreover, the growth of modern industry in India after the First World War did not stop the pace of deindustrialisation in India in any manner. This was evident from the decrease of percentage of workers in industry and a considerable increase in the percentage of agricultural workers. It was estimated by the reputed economist Colin Clark that between 1881 and 1911 the number of people engaged in manufacture, mining and construction work was reduced by half, coming down to 17 per cent from 35 per cent. In *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru also endorsed an identical view, stating: "Foreign political domination led to a rapid destruction of the economy India had built up without anything positive or constructive taking its place… (causing)… poverty and destruction beyond measure."

Imperialist Exploitation Thesis

But this 'imperialist exploitation thesis' of Indian nationalist writers has been challenged by western scholars. Morris D. Morris argues in *Indian Economy in the 19th Century* that (a) colonial rule probably stimulated economic activity in India in a way which had never been possible before, (b) the handloom weavers were no fewer in number and no worse off economically at the end of the period than at the beginning, and (c) possibly absolute growth occurred. Comparing the census data of 1881 with those of 1931, Alice and Daniel Thorner in *Land and Labour in India* have reached the startling conclusion (vis-à-vis Colin Clark) that the "industrial distribution of the modern working force from 1881 to 1931 stood still". However, they (the Thorners) concede that perhaps there was a major shift of industrial workers to agricultural occupation during the period 1815 to 1880.

Anyway, it is in one voice that Moderate, Extremist and Gandhiite nationalist writers have said that irrigation systems, railways and ports were developed in India by the British to serve their own interests and that such "developments", instead of giving a boost to India's indigenous industries, had actually acted as dampers to their growth. It was for this reason that 'de-industrialisation' and Britain's wilful disregard of the indigenous industries of India formed a rallying cry during the freedom struggle and was used by all shades of political belief.

'Ruralisation' of Indian economy

It is useful in this connection to review the other side of deindustrialisation, the 'ruralisation' of the Indian economy and its corollary, the commercialisation of agriculture. As millions of people working as craftsmen in the indigenous industries in cities like Dhaka, Murshidabad and Surat lost their vocations, they flocked to the countryside to take up jobs in the agricultural sector. "This increasing dependence of the population on agriculture for subsistence and slant of the Indian economy on production of agricultural goods and raw materials, to the neglect of industrial development, has been described as ruralisation or peasantisation of the Indian economy. British writers of the 19th and 20th centuries took pride in describing India as traditionally an agricultural country." (Grover and Grover)

Customs Removal, Exchange and Countervailing Excise

In pursuance of their professed policy of free trade, the British rulers prevented India, in the interest of Britain, from adopting the policy of state patronage of indigenous industry (including tariff protection of Indian goods against imported goods) which helped to industrialise Canada, Australia and South Africa. Indian industries could not be offered protection because the interest of the 'Home manufacturers' had to be safeguarded.

Under the influence of the free-trade wind that blew strongly, the Government of India came under pressure to reduce its customs duties. They were first lowered to 5 per cent and in 1879, on the insistence of Lancashire, the cotton duties were abolished. This aroused strong opposition in India, both official and popular, and was thought to be a surrender of Indian to British interests. At the same time the wholly beneficial measure of abolishing the inland customs cactus line was completed. This line consisted of a cactus hedge 2,500 miles long designed to prevent the free transit of bulk articles between provinces. The line needed to be watched by twelve thousand men. The first 1,000 miles were abandoned by Northbrook and the remainder by Lytton. This was made possible by agreements with the states whereby they gave up the manufacture of salt in return for compensation. It was then possible so to equalise the salt duty that it was no longer profitable to move salt from province to province. This was followed by further remissions until a state of virtual free trade was achieved in 1882. Low export duties were levied for revenue on a few articles only while the few import duties were counterbalanced by excise duties on the same articles. Free trade lasted unimpaired until 1894 when the rupee currency crisis made the raising of further revenue imperative. This revived the controversy over the cotton duties. At first cotton was left on the free list but at the end of the year an import duty of 5 per cent was imposed on cotton piece-goods and yarn. An outcry from Lancashire led to the imposition of the 'countervailing cotton excise' of 5 per cent which was regarded by the Indian mill-owners as naked discrimination in favour of foreign goods. However, both duties were reduced to 3½ per cent in 1896. There the matter rested until the middle of the First World War when extra revenue was again required. Then the import or custom duty was raised to 7 per cent, the excise remaining at 3½. This marked the loosening of the Lancashire grip which was further relaxed by the raising of the customs duty to 11 per cent in 1921. Finally in 1925 the excise duty was first suspended and then abolished. This episode did much harm to Indo-British relations, for public opinion was firmly convinced that Indian interests had been sacrificed to those of Lancashire.

The government introduced uniform rupee coinage in 1835 in India. The silver standard was adopted and gold coins ceased to be legal tender. Under the Coinage Act of 1870 the Government was obliged to mint rupee on private account in exchange for silver bullion. The value of the rupee was now determined by the market price of silver. The currency was put on a natural basis and the exchange value of the rupee vis-à-vis the British currency generally approximated 2 shillings. In the early 1870s, a currency crisis emerged when the gold value of silver began to decline. The rupee depreciated in relation to the currencies based on gold, including the British currency. The exchange value of the rupee went down by 1893-94. India's 'loss by exchange', i.e., 'the difference between the actual number of rupees paid by the Government in any particular year, and the number of rupees which would have been required if the exchange value of the rupee had remained at the conventional of 2 shillings, rose to Rs 12.3 crores in 1894-95. A total loss of about 154 crores of rupees was incurred during the 1875-98 period. Foreign trade, especially import trade, suffered, and the mercantile community complained. The British officials in India incurred losses in remitting money to England. Moreover, the Government of India's finances were adversely affected, for it had to remit increasing amounts to England to meet the 'Home Charges'.

In 1893 an Act was passed, to tide over the crisis, by which the mints were closed to the unrestricted coinage of silver on private account. The Government fixed 1 shilling and 4 pence as the rate at which rupees or notes would be supplied to the public in exchange for gold coins and bullion. The rupee lost its 'natural' value, i.e., the value of the amount of silver contained in it, and acquired an 'artificial' or enhanced value. It was also decided that sovereigns and half-sovereigns were henceforth to be received in payment of public dues. These were preliminary steps towards the introduction of gold standard.

An Act of 1899 fixed the value of rupee at 1 shilling and 4 pence and sovereigns and half-sovereigns were made legal tender at this rate. Although the rupee remained unlimited legal tender, it became a token coin. Criticising the system, the Congress warned that it would 'add to the indebtedness of the poorer classes in India, depreciate the value of the savings in the shape of silver ornaments, and virtually add to their rents and taxes'. Though gold coins became legal tender, the public demand was for rupees. The Government had to resume silver coinage on a considerable scale. The net coinage of rupees in 1912 was 16.3 crores of rupees. The Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance (the Chamberlain Commission) reported in favour of a gold exchange standard in 1914.

The shift in economic strategy brought about by the industrial revolution in Britain required markets for its mass-produced commodities as also plentiful supply of agricultural raw materials. The Charters of 1813 and 1833, the entry of free traders, the removal of restrictions on European immigration and the acquisition of property in India were all steps towards those objectives. The drawback of the poor quality of Indian agricultural produce was sought to be removed by allowing British capital to develop agricultural plantations in India. Tea, coffee, indigo and jute cultivation were taken up with government support. In Assam, extensive tracts of land were granted as freehold property to tea planters while various Acts made breach of contract a criminal offence, allowing tea planters to arrest a run-away labourer without any warrant. It is in this context that the Thorners probably commented that labourers from industry flocked to agricultural operations between 1815 and 1880. As no census figures are available for that period, it just remains an inspired guess. But this increase in the number of agricultural workers did not mean an increase in agriculture. If anything, as pointed out by Romesh Chandra Dutt (referred to earlier), the food situation in India continued to hover between bare subsistence and famine.

Shift in Economic Strategy

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF INDIA (1858-1914)

As we have discussed earlier, it had been the settled policy of England in India, ever since her rise in political power, to convert India into a land of raw produce for the benefit of the manufacturers and operatives of England. The old industry was ruined in Bengal and the Carnatic partly by the high-handed methods of the Company after Plassey and the Anglo-French conflicts, partly by the collapse of the export trade to Europe, and partly by the lack of any protection against the machine-made goods of Lancashire. The progressive decline of the urban handicrafts and village artisan industries destroyed India's traditional union between agriculture and manufacturing industry. By the end of the 19th century, this process had practically reached its climax, but modern industry had not yet developed in India to a considerable extent.

From the 1830s onwards, a process of economic transformation began in India. The government adopted a policy of developing the country, especially in the field of trade and transport, which involved slow progress towards modernisation. In the post-1850 period, the development work undertaken by the government centred around the construction of railways, roads and bridges, ports and docks, telegraphs and irrigation works. This policy was primarily dictated by the commercial and strategic needs of the colonial state rather than by the needs of the Indian people. The determining influences were the British private merchants' interests and the needs of the stability and perpetuation of the Empire. Such a policy, instead of transforming India into a really progressive industrialised country of the European type, converted it into a raw material producing and processing as well as capital absorbing country. This process witnessed the emergence of a special type of colonial economy, whose striking feature was restricted industrialisation under the patronage of the state.

This period also witnessed inner contradictions of a matured British imperialism, the agrarian basis of Indian economy firmly set on its process of decay and ruin, emerging of an indigenous industrial capitalist class and the nationalist intelligentsia taking roots.

The financial emergency of the revolt of 1857 left the British Indian government with a pressing problem of ways and means. The need for developing India along modern lines compelled the government to take the initiative and the responsibility. The famines which visited India in regular intervals became a reproach to a government equipped with the resources of the new scientific age. The progress made in dealing with these matters in turn tended to end the old practical economic isolation of the Indian subcontinent. A peasant subsistence economy supplemented by cottage industries and a modicum of foreign trade was increasingly modified by the conditions of world trade. Food crops were replaced by cash crops; production for domestic consumption by production for the market or foreign factories; and the old decayed cottage industries by new power-driven factories. These exigencies and developments compelled government action to a steadily increasing

degree. But the *laissez-faire* principle held in India in general upto the outbreak of the First World War (1914), just as it did in Britain, though with increasing misgivings and doubts.

RAILWAYS

Among the major governmental economic initiatives taken during the 1858-1914 period, the construction of railways was the biggest and it merits a closer examination. This is because much of modern Indian development depended upon the development of railways. Lord Dalhousie's minute of 1853 proposed a system of railways for the whole country and laid down general principles of its management, finance and construction. Dalhousie's great interest in railway projects stemmed from a two-fold objective—military and economic. In his well-known memorandum approving the railway scheme he wrote: "The railways would help the government to control distant parts of India; to move around the army to quell internal disturbance and foreign attack; and to guard the frontiers of India against Russia and other powers." There was also pressure on the Indian and British government from interest groups who were economically and politically powerful, e.g., the promoters leading English capitalists interested in investing in the joint-stock railways companies in England, the manufacturers of railway engines and machinery seeking a market in India and business groups hopeful of opening up a market for English manufacturers in the interior of the country. To attain the economic objectives railways had to be laid in a certain pattern, viz., connecting the interior commercial centres with the sea ports, where imported goods came in and from where exported goods went out. These sea ports like Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Karachi were also centres of European business and seats of political power. Again, for economic reasons, it would also be convenient to have a rate of freight charges which would allow cheap transport of manufactured goods from port cities to the interior and agricultural goods from the interior to the port cities. Such a freight policy and alignment of railways later became standard practice in the railway companies.

The 200 miles of lines in use in 1857 amply proved their value; in 1859, the construction of 5,000 miles of track by eight companies was sanctioned. Dalhousie planned to have a uniform gauge which was rather oddly fixed at 5 ft. 6 inch, between the standard British gauge of 4 ft. 8½ inch and the great western broad gauge of 7 feet. Since the government at that time had no power to raise loans for productive purposes, money had to be found elsewhere. This was sought in Britain through the medium of private companies. But the companies were to be carefully controlled. In order to attract capital (hitherto distinctly shy of Indian operations) the contracts with the companies guaranteed rates of interest around 5 per cent; any profit above that figure would be shared between government and the Company. In return for this the government had the right to control expenditure and operation, and to purchase the lines at the expiry of each twenty-five-year period, while the companies carried mails free and troops at reduced rates.

Though the system had its inherent limitations and defects, it was nevertheless one of great comprehension and foresight. It set in motion on broad lines the whole mechanical transport project of India and looked forward to a national network of railways owned and operated by the government. Not all the later modifications in this plan were for the better. The plan was successful in securing capital to build the railways, though the necessity for the guarantee system in order to attract capital is still disputed. Once committed to this, however, the government could not draw back; attempts to raise money on other terms failed. But the scheme did not encourage the economy because the first profits went to the government and losses were met by them. It also proved difficult to control the working engineers. The lines in operation in 1868 cost £18,000 a mile instead of the £8,000 planned by Dalhousie. Against these defects must be set the fact that the actual construction was of high quality, challenging comparison with that of any other railway system in the world.

In the 1870s, the policy was revised. The new permission to borrow for productive work enabled the government to take up construction itself. But for economy's sake the metre gauge was adopted for most of the new lines, some of which had later to be changed to the broad gauge because they

proved to be too light for the traffic which developed. The fall in the value of the rupee further retarded construction until the Famine Report's demand for more lines in 1880 made it clear that some further revision of policy was needed. After 1880 there was a return to the guaranteed system of construction by private companies but on terms much improved as the result of experience. Thereafter, as leases fell in, the government regularly purchased the lines, operating some itself and allowing the companies to continue to operate the remainder. Thus the Great Indian Peninsula and the North Western Railways were state enterprises while the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway remained in private hands. At the same time, railways were built in the states, sometimes operated by the state itself, as in the case of Hyderabad, and sometimes by private companies or the government of India. Thus by 1900 the major part of the Indian railway system was completed, some 25,000 miles of track being open. By 1914 another 10,000 miles was added. Diversity had replaced the striking uniformity and simplicity of the original plan; three gauges (including the narrow gauge of the mountain railways and a few lines elsewhere) had grown out of one; there were three kinds of ownership and operation and various combinations between them. But the original design of overall government control of planning, ownership and operation had been maintained. The system was a national one so arranged as to become easily and by almost imperceptible stages a nationalised one. On the whole India's railway planners served her well and saved her from many of the mistakes committed and much of the expense incurred elsewhere. The fruits of this work began to be reaped in a series of annual profits on the working of government-controlled lines. In 1899-1900 a net profit of 11 lakhs of rupees was earned for the first time. From then until 1914 there was only one deficit year while the War years with their heavy demands for goods brought in large profits.

The diversity of control, however, caused serious inconvenience. The first step in remedy was the setting up of a railway board in 1905. After the First World War, as a result of the Acworth committee's report, the railway board was reorganised, the state management of lines was hastened, and a railway budget was separately prepared from 1925-26. By the end of the inter-War period three-quarters of the railways were owned by the state and nearly a half operated by it. The mileage had reached its maximum of about 43,000 miles.

The economic effects of railway construction were considerable. According to Bipan Chandra, the ruin of Indian traditional industries proceeded even more rapidly once the railways were built. The railways enabled British manufactures to reach and devastate the traditional industries in the remotest villages of the country. In the words of American writer, D.H. Buchanan, "The armour of the isolated self-sufficient village was pierced by the steel rail, and its blood ebbed away." On the other hand, others saw the railways as significant in tackling major problems. Railways, says Percival Spear, transformed the famine problem and made the Famine Code a working proposition. The north Indian famine of 1896 had been called the first 'famine of work' rather than of food. Trade was revolutionised by making possible production for a market and the opening up of the interior to large-scale operations. Plantation and factory industries were made possible because coal could be supplied for power at the points of production, and the finished goods could then be distributed. Finally, all of India was brought within the orbit of world economy and the range of world prices. For example, cotton manufacture could be carried on in the interior as well as near the coast and the development of the sugar industry was made possible. Not all the effects were good; for example, the collapse of the Indian handicrafts, the rise in the general price-levels, and the disorder of the internal economic balance of excessive exports have been charged to their account. But the handicrafts were in decay long before railways were thought of, beginning with the Bengal weavers in the late 18th century; the railways only administered the *coup de grace.* The railways did in India what they did elsewhere; they hastened the transition from handicraft to mechanical industry by transforming the transport situation. They were an essential preliminary to an industrialised India. In fact it can be said of them, and not in an

economic context only, that no railways, no modern India. Apart from heralding a new industrial age in India the railways created new facilities for communication between different parts of the country and promoted internal and external trade. The conditions of railway travel contributed to the gradual relaxation of caste prejudices and helped in developing a sense of unity among the people.

TELEGRAPH AND POSTAL SERVICES

With regard to electric telegraph, it all began with the backing of Dalhousie when O'Shaughnessy was appointed the Superintendent of Electric Telegraph Department in 1852. There were problems galore and insurmountable obstacles. But O'Shaughnessy found ways of putting up 4,000 miles of electric telegraph lines connecting Calcutta with Peshawar, Bombay, Madras and other parts of the country. Likewise, Rangoon and Mandalay in Burma were connected. During the Revolt of 1857, the telegraph system proved to be of great help to the English. It seems one revolutionary said at the time of his execution: "It is that accursed string (the telegraph lines) that strangled us."

The basis of modern postal system, the so-called penny post of England, was also introduced in India by Dalhousie. Before that, postal services were provided by the government at a loss to the exchequer. On the recommendations of an expert commission appointed by Dalhousie, a new Post Office Act was passed in 1854. The main features of the new system were:

1. Appointment of a director general to look after the work of post offices in all the presidencies;
2. Introduction of a rate of half an anna per letter, regardless of the distance over which it might be sent; and
3. Issue and release of postage stamps for the first time.

Consequent to these reforms, the postal department became a source of revenue for the government and the losses to the exchequer were recovered. The extension and improvement of the postal system also spurred administrative, educational and financial developments.

FAMINES

India suffered in one part or another from several famines and scarcity conditions during the rule of the English East India Company. For example, the dreadful famine of 1769-70 in Bengal, Madras famine of 1781-82 and the famine of 1784 in North India proved quite destructive and took a heavy toll of life. No attempt was made to formulate any general system of famine relief or prevention under the Company's government, though some provincial governments and district officers made various experiments to afford relief to famine-stricken areas such as storage of grain by the government, penalties on hoarding, bounties on imports and advancing loans for sinking of wells. The transfer of power from the Company to the Crown and the post-1850 economic developments like the construction of railways and other means of transport and communication and growth of overseas trade changed the complexion of the problem. The need for expansion and improvement of irrigation facilities, enactment of agrarian legislations, adoption of preventive measures and formulation of famine relief policy was felt by the British Indian government, as recurrence of famines, scarcities and agricultural distress especially marked the five decades following the 1857 Revolt. It must be pointed out that most of these famines were not just foodgrain scarcity-based phenomena, but were a direct result of poverty unleashed by colonial forces in India. About 2.8 crore people perished in famines between 1850 and 1900.

In the years between the Great Revolt and the First World War, no part of India was untouched by famines whose irregular incidence bore more heavily on the northern provinces. Between 1860 and 1879 some eight famines were recorded, one of which from 1876 to 1878 had the dismal distinction of taking the lives of more than five million people. The famine of 1860-61 in the North-Western Provinces almost equalled in intensity the famine of 1837 in that region affecting a population of 13 million. The Orissa famine of 1865-66 affected a vast area in the Bengal presidency. The principal cause of distress in Orissa was the deficiency of food supply. The local officials believed wrongly that large stores of food were available with the

people. The suffering of the people was aggravated by a "want of foresight, perception and precaution (on the part of the officials) regarding the impending calamity" as the Governor-General observed. The Orissa Famine Enquiry Commission (1866), with Sir George Campbell as chairman, blamed not only the local officials but also the system of administration in Bengal. The Government's relief measures were extremely belated, inadequate and ill-organised and the total mortality amounted to 1,35,000. The extension of the famine in Orissa to the Madras Presidency in 1866-67 was due to 'the rise in prices as the result of foodgrains rather than absolute failure of crops or cessation of agricultural employment'.

The famine of 1868-70 in Rajasthan, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and the Bombay Presidency was due to widespread draught. The death toll ranged between one-third and one-fourth of the total population in Rajasthan. Severity of the famine of 1873 in Bengal and Bihar was checked by import of supplies from Burma which arrested rise in prices of foodgrains as also by administration of relief on a more liberal scale than before. The famine of 1876-78 affected half of the Madras Presidency, the whole of Mysore, a large part the Hyderabad state, and the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency. It was the most grievous calamity of its kind that the country had experienced since the beginning of the 19th century. It affected an area of 2,05,600 square miles and a population of 36.4 million people. The Madras Government remitted land-revenue and made liberal money advances to the distressed population for purchase of seeds as also for construction of wells and tanks.

The period from 1880 to 1895 was free from any major agricultural calamity or severe economic distress for the masses. There was distress in different areas, in the three Presidencies, Central and North-Western provinces, but the distress was local, the rise in prices was limited, and food was freely available to the people in the market. The main problem was to provide work to the unemployed to enable them to earn wages which they could use for purchasing food.

From 1896 to 1908, however, India suffered two major famines before they again subsided. Following a limited famine in Bundelkhand in 1895-96, there was a great famine spreading to almost every part of India. It affected a population of 96,931,000 and a total area of 5,04,940 square miles. The immediate cause was the failure of autumn rains and the loss of crop amounted to about one-third of the annual production. The relief operations were conducted with a fair measure of success except in the Central Provinces where the death rate rose very high. Closely following the calamity came the famine of 1899-1900, which Curzon described as "the severest and most terrible of all", affecting an area of 189,000 square miles and 28 million people in British India. Regions like the Central Provinces, Berar, Rajasthan and Bombay Presidency were most severely affected. The authorities failed and in some cases refused to open relief works in the early stages of the famine, and when the relief works were opened such vast numbers came on them that the system almost completely broke down in many cases, causing a total relief expenditure to the tune of Rs 10 crore.

There were local famines and scarcities in the Deccan districts of Bombay Presidency (1905-06), Bundelkhand (1905-06), Bihar and East Bengal (1906), and the United Provinces (1907-08). According to official estimates, in these famines, at least 1 crore and 52 lakh people lost their lives, and the total number of famine-affected people was 39.7 crore. These vast numbers indicate periods of subsistence crisis. The immediate cause for this undoubtedly was droughts and crop failure but the roots of the crises lay in what was the 'normal' rate of agrarian production. Stagnation in agricultural technology, failure of investment to raise yield per acre, the drain of the agriculturists' resources into the hands of the revenue intermediaries and moneylenders and dealers in agricultural commodities were undoubtedly important contributing factors. The sparseness of government investments in irrigation and of other developmental investment, and the rapid rise of population from 1920s were also responsible for creating the colonial agricultural 'normalcy'. Curzon argued in 1900 that the real cause of recurring famines was failure of rains and the consequent loss of crops. By 1902 he "had become even more convinced that Indian famines were like an act of God which the hand of man could do nothing to stay or deflect". As

a matter of fact, however, the severity of famine and the intensity of distress caused by it were determined by a variety of social and economic factors such as the quantity of existing food stocks in the affected region, the facilities of transport, the extent of the rise in prices and the availability of employment. As early as 1861 Colonel Baird Smith defined Indian famines as "famines of work rather than of food". High incidence of land revenue and the poverty of the peasantry in the ryotwari areas, R.C. Dutt observed, were the causes of the famines. The distress of the common masses was increased by the government's reluctance to disorganise and paralyse private trade which indirectly encouraged profiteering in the trade of foodgrains.

The Orissa calamity proved a turning point as the Report of the Orissa Famine Enquiry Commission (1866) laid the foundations of a definite famine policy. The recommendations of the Commission in some measure anticipated those of the Royal Commission of 1880. This indicated a change of official outlook though the change was not very effective. The old doctrine that the public was responsible for the relief of the helpless was abandoned. The government was expected to borrow money in order to afford finance for building of railways and extending irrigation works. Further, the district officers were made responsible for saving all preventable deaths.

A famine commission was appointed by Lytton and presided over by Sir Richard Strachey to devise systematic procedures to follow in famine emergencies. It was to deal more fundamentally with their causes than the *ad hoc* relief measures that had hitherto tried to stem the flood of starvation. The commission recommended the preparation of a Famine Code which was promulgated in 1883 for the guidance of the provinces in the use of the resources available to them. It also urged the need for collection of statistical information relating to the condition of the peasantry. The major recommendations of the commission relief distribution during famine were as follows: (a) Employment on works should be offered before the physical efficiency of applicants had been affected by starvation; (b) Gratuitous relief in the form of money, grain or cooked food should be distributed as per local conditions; (c) Facilities should be given to private trade to supply and distribute food; (d) There should be suspension or remission of rents in appropriate cases, and loans should be given for seed grains and bullock to be purchased; (e) The cost of relief must be so localised as to bring home to its administrators a sense of personal responsibility for expenditure; (f) Financial assistance must be given from the funds of Government of India when provincial revenues could not cope with the demand for relief. Accepting the proposals of the commission, the government decided to earmark a sum of Rs 15,000,000 in the budget under the head 'Famine Relief and Insurance'.

The system and the machinery for relief were put on a regular footing with the adoption of the Famine Codes which were put to test during the famine of 1896-97. Lord Curzon appointed a Famine Commission in 1898 with Sir James Lyall as president. While adhering largely to the views of the Strachey Commission, it suggested some alterations. But before the new proposal had been fully considered by the government, the famine of 1899-1900 fell upon the country. Another commission under the presidency of Sir Anthony MacDonnell was appointed by Curzon. The commission's report emphasised the value of 'moral strategy'—early suspension of revenue and rents, early distribution of advances for purchase of seed and cattle, and the sinking of wells. It suggested enlistment of non-official assistance for famine relief on a large scale and expressed preference in particular circumstances of village works to the large public works which had hitherto been the backbone of relief schemes. These suggestions influenced the provincial famine codes.

Curzon adopted three measures which were linked with the government's policy on famine. The Irrigation Commission (1901) proposed the further development of irrigation in certain provinces. The Cooperative Societies Act (1904) was intended to supply agricultural credit and save the peasantry from the extortion of money-lenders. The Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900) severely restricted the transfer of agricultural land to non-agriculturists.

The recurrence of famines undermined the basis of paternal government. They showed that peace,

an incorrupt judiciary and an active administration would not necessarily bring security to the peasant, contentment to the townsman or prosperity to the country as a whole.

LIMITED GROWTH OF MODERN INDUSTRY

Indian nationalist leaders, during the second half of the 19th century, advocated rapid industrialisation, but they were aware of the difficulties. A major problem of Indian industrial and commercial development was the supply of capital. Until 1850, the supply of British capital was severely restricted by the risks and unknown factors associated with India. The European Agency Houses, whose working capital consisted mainly of the savings of the Company's servants, provided funds for commercial ventures and indigo plantations. The failure of the Union Bank (1848) marked the end of this period. In the early 1850s railway projects in India attracted the British investors because of a high dividend rate guaranteed by the government. Moreover, British capital began to flow for developing those industries with which European entrepreneurs were already familiar like jute and coal. The post-1850 period witnessed capital accumulation by the Indian bourgeoisie and its use for industrial development. The capital of the cotton industry was mainly Indian and that of the iron and steel industry entirely so.

Another difficulty was the country's serious backwardness in technical education. It could be removed by the establishment of technical schools, colleges and institutes, but the government took little interest in this matter. It was also recognised that the spirit of initiative and enterprise had not been sufficiently developed among the people. There was no scarcity of land or labour, but the British rulers thought—or Lord Curzon said—that the 'vast majority' of the Indian people had been "trained to agriculture, were only physically fitted for agriculture and will never practise anything but agriculture".

The expansion of the railway network helped in the establishment of new industries. The first of these was the cotton mill industry. In the early 18th century the sale of Indian piece goods was forbidden in England as a protection measure for the Lancashire handicraft industry. But re-exports to Europe continued until the American Revolution (1776) followed by revolutionary wars virtually ended them. By that time Lancashire's own handicraft industry had been replaced by the new mechanical production and its goods were imported to India by the Company. The Company started exporting raw cotton from India instead of finished products. However, it was not until 1853 that the first successful India Cotton Mill was established in Bombay, though the first cotton mills were promoted by Europeans in India as early as 1818 and 1830. The American Civil War (1861-65) caused a setback by sending up the price of raw cotton but there was a consequent slump when American cotton came back on the market. Real progress in the cotton industry began with the opening of the Empress Mill by Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata in 1887 at Nagpur. Thereafter, apart from Bombay, cotton mills grew up in Ahmedabad, Sholapur and Madras. Of the industries financed by Indian capital the cotton textile industry was the biggest. Neither foreign competition nor the cotton excise duties imposed by the colonial State in the interest of the British textile industry could check its progress. India was ranked as the fourth largest cotton producer in the world on the eve of the First World War.

The jute industry, originally a handicraft of Bengal with a small export market, was developed by European enterprise. Its value was realised as early as in 1838 when export started to Dundee in Scotland. The first jute mill came to be set up in 1855 at Rishra near Calcutta. The jute industry almost remained confined to Bengal where it enjoyed the advantage of proximity to the area of raw material supply. The requirements of packing and storing of agricultural produce provided the main demand for jute. Two other developments also opened up the possibility of large scale jute production. They were the Crimean War (1854-56) and the construction of railways. The Crimean War cut off the supply of Russian raw flax and hemp, and the Dundee market became dependent on Indian substitutes. The railway lines connecting Calcutta with Raniganj coal belt assured regular supply of coal for jute mills. As a profitable source

of income, many peasants—particularly in East Bengal—took up jute cultivation. The first jute-spinning machine was set up near Serampore in 1855 and the first powerloom in 1859. Though the clothes produced initially were inferior to those of Dundee and commanded a local market only, the real success came in the 1870s. Jute made Calcutta an industrial city just as cotton made Bombay, Madras, and Ahmedabad industrial cities. The Indian jute output exceeded that of Dundee by 1908 and by 1914, the value of jute exports reached £20.5 million.

Another important industry was that of coal with which the development of jute and other Indian industries was closely connected. In fact, 'coal as means of power' and 'railways as the means of transport' were indispensable for laying an industrial foundation in India. The first attempt to exploit coal was made by the British magistrate of Chota Nagpur who obtained the right to mine from Warren Hastings. In 1814, a fresh attempt was made at Raniganj, not far from Calcutta, with more success. William Bentinck encouraged the development of the coal industry and in 1843 several firms got united to form the Bengal Coal Company. In 1846 the coal output was 91,000 tons and it rose from 293,443 tons in 1857 to 12 million tons in 1912. The railways came to increase demand and ease the supply of coal. As railways developed, it took one-third of the total coal production. The industry received a fillip during the First World War period.

Associated with the new coalfields came the iron and steel industry on which modern industrialisation considerably depended. Various attempts made to start an iron industry in the first half of the 19th century failed for want of both fuel and experience. The indigenous iron-smelting industry fell into a moribund condition and it was only in 1875 when coal was used for smelting, that any progress was made and even then technical difficulties made it chequered and halting. The Bengal Iron and Steel Company, incorporated in England in 1889, opened its steel works in 1904; but it failed. The industry was finally established by the efforts of a Parsi entrepreneur, Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata, who had seen the possibilities of the iron industry when managing his Empress Mill at Nagpur. He began survey work in the Central Provinces and in the Mayurbhanj State in Orissa, and rich deposits of iron were discovered. Tata died in 1903 just after Curzon had widened the rules for prospecting and mining. His sons in 1907 founded the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) at a site now in Jharkhand which they named Jamshedpur. In 1905 the Government of India guaranteed to purchase from the Company 20,000 tons of steel rails annually for a period of ten years which enabled the Tata Company to launch a very successful career. Production of iron began in 1911 and of steel in 1913 and the First World War created a large demand for munitions.

Apart from these major industries, certain other industries also grew up like chemical industries among which may be mentioned the manufacture of industrial acids and soda, vegetable oils, and of disinfectants. Engineering developed mainly in connection with the railways. Miscellaneous industries included rice and flour mills, woollen and silk manufacture, cement (from 1914) and shellac, paper and matches, leather and sugar refining.

As far as the plantation industries were concerned, the industries of tea, indigo, coffee were exclusively European in ownership and did not entirely depend on modern mechanical contrivances. Coffee was a regional small industry and indigo lost its importance in the closing decades of the 19th century, especially after 1897 when the German aniline dyes began to compete against and replace Indian indigo. It was only the tea industry that made some tangible progress. The tea industry in Assam, organised by the Assam Company which was formed in 1839 in London, witnessed a period of prosperity in the 1870s. The expansion of the Indian tea industry can be judged from the fact that until 1850 Britain took the whole of her tea from China; in 1869 she obtained 10 million pounds from India as against 100 million from China; while in 1900 she took 24 million pounds from China and 137 million from India. The number of tea gardens increased from 51 in 1859 to 302 in 1902; these were controlled by British managing agency firms. The

Indian Tea Association, a representative body of European planters, formed in 1881, nominated one representative to the Bengal Legislative Council. To facilitate easy transport of tea from the Assam gardens to Chittagong port, the Assam Bengal Railway, formed in 1892, secured a financial guarantee. Meanwhile, attracted by the prosperity of the tea industry, some Bengali Hindus founded the Jalpaiguri Tea Company in 1878. There was considerable investment of Indian capital in the tea gardens in north Bengal during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Views

- "If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects and most important essentials, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people."

  —**William Bentinck's** views on the Permanent Settlement
- "In no other period of Indian history can we find so large, so well-established, and so secure a group of landholders as that which grew up and flourished between the 1790s and the 1940s."

  —**Daniel Thorner**
- "The land revenue under the preceding Indian regimes was fixed as a share of the crop, and varied according to the crop cultivated. The land revenue under the British, whether directly imposed on the ryots or assessed on the zamindars, was a true tax on land."

  —**Irfan Habib**
- "Since after acquiring dominion over India, the East India Company and private traders could appropriate Indian goods or tribute or profits without really paying for them. British did not any longer have to send bullion to India to balance her accounts. Instead bullion was now sent out from India either to China or to Britain."

  —**Amiya Bagchi**
- "Just as the land in India thirsts for water, so the industry of the country is parched up for want of capital."

  —M.G. Ranade
- "The commercial and social advantages which India would derive from their (railways) establishments are… beyond all present calculation… England is calling aloud for the cotton which India does already produce in some degree, and would produce sufficient in quality, and plentiful in quantity, if only they were provided the fitting means of conveyance for it from distant plains to several ports adopted for its shipment. Every increase of facilities for trade has been attended, or we have seen, with an increased demand for articles of European produce in the most distant markets of India… New markets are opening to us on this side of the globe under circumstances which defy the foresight of the wisest to estimate their probable value or calculate their future extent."

  —Excerpted from **Dalhousie's** *Minute of 1853* (on Railways)
- "When you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coals, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with the railways. The railway system will therefore become in India truly the forerunner of modern industry."

  —Karl Marx (in *New York Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1853)
- "The (industrial) growth from 1890 until the World War (1914) was fairly steady in all fields. Cotton spindles more than doubled, cotton powerlooms quadrupled, jute looms increased four and a half times and coal raisings, six times."

  —D.H. Buchanan
- "Modern industries could not have grown without railways and railways could not have been worked without coal."

  —Karl Marx
- "The resources of the country in raw material and labour are enormous and nothing is wanted but capital to

develop new industries. As soon as English capitalists can realise the field of profitable investment which India offers, a turning point will be reached in Indian history."

—William Lee-Warren

- "Foreign political domination led to a rapid destruction of the economy India had built up… without anything positive on constructive taking its place" causing "poverty and degradation beyond measure."

  —J.L. Nehru

- "The millions of ruined artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, potters, tanners, smelters, smiths, alike from the town and from the villages, had no alternative save to crowd into agriculture. In this way India was transformed, from being a country of combined agriculture and manufacturers, into an agricultural colony of British manufacturing capitalism."

  —R.P. Dutt

- "So long as there is no radical change in the rural economy of India through land adjustments, agricultural cooperation or scientific farming, the problem of the landless peasants will become more and more acute and there will be a tendency for this class to come in line with the industrial proletariat of the cities. That will portend social upheavals."

  —**Radhakamal Mukherjee**

- "It is not the pitiless operation of economic laws, but it is the thoughtless and pitiless action of the British policy; it is the pitiless eating of India, substance in India, and the further pitiless drain to England; in short, it is the pitiless prevention of economic laws by the sad bleeding to which India is subjected, that is destroying India."

  —Dadabhai Naoroji

- "Taxation raised by the king, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture, sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands, not on India."

  —R.C. Dutt

- "Trade cannot thrive without efficient administration, while the latter is not worth attending to the absence of profits of the former. So, always with the assent and often to the dictates of the Chamber of Commerce, the Government of India is carried on, and this is the 'White Man's Burden…' "

  —Sachidanand Sinha

- "Under the native despot the people keep and enjoy what they produce, though at times they suffer some violence. Under the British Indian despot, the man is at peace, there is no violence, his substance is drained away, unseen, peaceably and subtly—he starves in peace, and peaceably perishes in peace, with law and order."

  —Dadabhai Naoroji

- "Foreign political domination led to a rapid destruction of the economy India had built up... without anything positive or constructive taking its place causing poverty and degradation beyond measure."

  —Jawaharlal Nehru, in *Discovery of India*

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - The land revenue systems and settlements introduced by the British in India were geared to subserve the interests of a colonial economy.
- **Permanent Settlement**
  - Introduced by Cornwallis in 1793, the permanent settlement in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and parts of north Madras created a class of zamindars who became "landlords in perpetuity".
  - Despite several stated advantages the permanent settlement turned into an engine of exploitation and oppression creating "feudalism at the top and serfdom at the bottom".
- **Ryotwari Settlement**
  - Operational in about 51 per cent of area in British India the Ryotwari settlement was introduced by Thomas Munro (Governor of Madras) in the 1820s.

Summary

- Though the cultivating peasant became the owner of the land with right to sublet, transfer and mortgage it, he subsequently got deeply mired in poverty and became an easy prey to moneylenders.

Mahalwari Settlement

- Introduced in 1822 in the Gangetic valley, north-west provinces, parts of central India and Punjab the Mahalwari system was based on the assessment of produce of a mahal (estate consisting of several villages).
- Though the ownership rights were vested with the individual peasants, the responsibility of land revenue payment rested jointly with the village community. This system too proved economically disastrous.

Commercialisation of Agriculture

- Several developments from the 1850s onwards like the preference for some specialised crops in world markets, increasing influence of money economy, the replacement of social customs and traditions by contractual obligations and competitions, substantial growth of the internal and external markets, formation of a unified national market in India primarily due to railways and entry of British finance capital into India resulted in orienting agricultural produce toward a market.
- There was no uniformity in the pattern of commercialisation which varied from crop to crop.
- It mainly benefited the British business groups and to some extent Indian intermediaries. It forced the peasants to grow cash crops and neglect sowing of poor man's crops like jowar and bajra which resulted in acute distress and scarcity conditions.

Rise of Landless Agrarian Labourers

- The number of agricultural labourers (who in pre-colonial times were mainly domestic servants or bonded labourers "attached due to their chronic indebtedness") increased during the colonial rule due to loss of land, diminution of the size of land and general improvement of the peasantry.

Impoverishment of the Rural Society

- Rural indebtedness became widespread during the colonial rule and the peasants became progressively impoverished mainly because of heavy revenue demand and peasants' undefined rent relation with the landlords, decline of agricultural productivity, pressure of increasing population leading to overcrowding in agriculture and fragmentation of land.
- Increasing cultivation of cash crops, impact of price fluctuations, changes in debt-realisation powers of the moneylenders also significantly contributed to the growth of rural indebtedness.

Drain of Wealth

- Drain of wealth was a process in which a significant part of India's national wealth was exported to Britain without any economic returns.
- Constituents of economic drain were: home charges, dividends to company's shareholders, interest on public debt raised abroad, civil and military charges, cost of departmental purchases, interests on foreign capital investments and cost of services of foreign banking, insurance and shipping companies.
- Described as "evil of all evils", drain of wealth became the main cause of Indian poverty which checked and retarded capital accumulation in India.

Deindustrialisation

- Deindustrialisation refers to the phenomenon of decline of a large number of traditional industries in India under the colonial rule.
- Paradoxically rapid industrial development in Britain resulted in reduction in industrial activity in her Indian colony.
- The main factors for deindustrialisation stated by different scholars are: inability of the Indian indigenous industries to compete with machine-made products of Britain, impoverishment of royal houses who patronised traditional crafts, forcing of the British free trade on India, imposition of heavy duties on Indian manufactures in Britain, increasing preference for British goods, etc. However, scholars like Morris D. Morris challenged the imperialist exploitation thesis.

Economic Transformation of India

- The process of economic transformation in India began from the 1830s onwards and by 1914 several significant developments had occurred. The 1858-1914 period witnessed development works like the

Summary

construction of railways, roads and bridges, posts, telegraph and irrigation works. These, however, were primarily dictated by commercial and strategic needs of the colonial state rather than by the needs of the Indian people.

- This period witnessed the maturation of inner contradiction of British imperialism, from establishment of the agrarian basis of Indian economy and the emergence of an indigenous capitalist class and nationalist intelligentsia.

► **Railways**

- Dalhousie's *Minute of 1853* laid down the general principles of management, finance and construction of railways.
- Railways were constructed to bring British capital and enterprise to India, facilitate extraction of raw materials from the interior and increase the striking power of the British military forces. However, despite inherent defects, the railways heralded a new industrial age in India.
- The British also established an efficient and modern postal system and introduced the telegraph.

► **Famines**

- India suffered from several famines and scarcity conditions (especially after 1850) under colonial rule. These famines were a direct result of poverty unleashed by colonial forces in India and not just foodgrain scarcity-based phenomena.
- The report of the Orissa Famine Enquiry Commission (1866) laid the foundation of a definite famine policy.
- A famine code was promulgated in 1883 on the recommendations of the Strachey Commission appointed by Lord Lytton.
- The recommendations of two other commissions under Sir James Lyall (1898) and Sir Anthony MacDonnell (1899-1900) influenced provincial famine codes.

► **Limited Growth of Modern Industry**

- The major problems of Indian industrial and commercial development were the supply of capital, backwardness in technical education and lack of a strong spirit of initiative and enterprise among the people.
- The expansion of the railway network resulted in the establishment of new industries. The major industries in India were cotton, jute, iron and steel and some plantation industries exclusively under European ownership.

CHAPTER 7

Social and Cultural Developments

INTRODUCTION

Till 1813, the British followed a policy of non-interference in the social, religious and cultural life of India. After 1813, measures were taken to transform Indian society and its cultural environs because of the emergence of new interests and ideas in Britain in the wake of significant changes in Europe during the 18th and the 19th century. Some of these changes were the advent of Industrial Revolution, a great ferment of new ideas and the French Revolution of 1789. The Industrial Revolution which began in the post-1750 period in Britain resulted in the growth of industrial capitalism. The rising industrial interests in Britain wanted to make India a big market for their goods and therefore required partial modernisation and transformation of Indian society. The Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century Europe which created novel intellectual currents and a new spirit of rationalism and enquiry influenced the British outlook towards Indian problems. This intellectual revolution gave rise to new attitudes of mind, manners and morals. The French Revolution of 1789 with its message of liberty, equality and fraternity unleashed the forces of democracy and nationalism. The new trend was represented by Bacon, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith and Bentham in the realm of thought and by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Charles Dickens in the realm of literature.

Impact of Changes in Europe

The most significant characteristics of the new wave of thought were rationalism, humanism and the doctrine of progress. Rationalism advocated faith in reason and a scientific attitude whereas humanism advocated the love of man—a belief that every man is an end in himself and should be respected and prized as such. It emphasised that no man had a right to look upon another man as a mere agent of his happiness. This humanistic outlook gave rise to the principles of individualism, liberalism and socialism. The doctrine of progress pointed out that nothing is static and all societies must change with time. Moreover, man has the capacity to remodel nature and society on just and rational lines.

Principles of Rationalism, Humanism and Progress

These new currents of thought caused conflicts among those who determined Indian policy or ran the Indian administration and produced different schools of thought. The School of Conservatives advocated introduction of as few changes as possible. Indian civilisation, they felt, was different from the European one but not necessarily inferior to it. Many of these thinkers respected Indian philosophy and culture. If at all Western ideas and practices were to be introduced, they should be introduced gradually and cautiously. Favouring social stability above all, they opposed any programme of rapid change. Early representatives of this school were Warren Hastings and Edmund Burke and later ones included Munro, Metcalfe and Elphinstone. The conservatives remained influential throughout and it must be noted that most of the British officials in India were generally of a conservative persuasion.

Different Schools of Thought

The group of Paternalistic Imperialists became influential especially after 1800. They were sharply

critical of Indian society and culture and tried to justify economic and political enslavement of India. However, a third group, known as the Radicals, went beyond the narrow criticism and imperialistic outlook of the Conservatives and Imperialists and applied advanced humanistic and rational thought to the Indian situation. They thought that India had the capacity to improve and that they must help the country do that. They wanted to make India a part of the modern progressive world of science and humanism and therefore advocated the introduction of modern Western science, philosophy and literature in India. Some of the British officials who came to India after 1820s were Radicals. Though few, the Radicals were strongly supported by Raja Rammohan Roy and other like-minded reformers.

However, it must be noted that predominantly the ruling elements in the British Indian administration continued to be imperialistic and exploitative. They thought that the modernisation of India had to occur within broad limits imposed by the needs of an easier and more thorough exploitation of its resources. In this respect, often the Radicals also towed a conservative line. They desired most of all the safety and perpetuation of the British rule in India; every other consideration was secondary.

Colonial Modernisation

The British Indian government feared that too much modernisation might generate forces hostile to their interests. Thus it was thought to be appropriate to opt for partial modernisation—introducing it in some respects and blocking it in others, in other words, a 'colonial modernisation'.

The policy of modernising Indian society and culture to some extent was encouraged by the Christian missionaries. The missionaries regarded Christianity to be a superior religion and wanted to spread it in India through westernisation which, they believed, would destroy the natives' faith in their own religion and culture. Towards this end, the Christian missionaries supported the Radicals whose scientific approach, they believed, would undermine the native culture and beliefs. They also supported the Imperialists since law and order and the British supremacy were essential for their propaganda. They sought business and capitalist support holding out the hope to them that the Christian converts would be better customers of their goods.

Role of Missionaries

After 1858, however, the policy of hesitant modernisation was abandoned, since the Indians proved to be apt pupils and shifted rapidly towards modernisation of their society and assertion of their culture and demanded a rule in accordance with the modern principles of liberty, equality and justice. Withdrawing their support from the reformers, the British began to side with the socially orthodox and conservative elements of society. This later encouraged communalism and casteism.

In this context, we shall discuss the official British efforts at reforming Indian society, the introduction and promotion of Western education and science, the growth and development of press and vernacular literature and the activities of the Christian missionaries in India in this chapter.

OFFICIAL SOCIAL REFORM MEASURES

During their first four decades of rule in Bengal from the 1760s onwards, the British authorities were concerned about the social evils prevailing in those days, but possessed neither the intention nor the courage to initiate legislative measures against them. In their campaign against Hinduism, British Christian missionaries exposed the religious irrationalities of the Hindus, and even magnified the nature of social evils to rouse the conscience of Englishmen in India. But the East India Company government felt that any interference in the religious or cultural matters of Hindus might invite suspicion and resentment of the natives, and that would prove counter-productive.

The early decades of the 19th century, however, saw movements within Hindu society against its own customs and practices. In the light of the changing consciousness among the people, the government too changed its policies and began social legislation.

The First Measure

The first notable social measure was effected at the beginning of the 19th century. During the governor-generalship of Lord Wellesley, William Carey, the noted missionary of Serampore, drew the former's attention to the Hindu custom of throwing children into the water at the confluence of the Ganges and

the sea. The government prohibited the practice by law in August 1802.

Abolition of Sati

Of all the social legislations initiated by the government, the abolition of the custom of *sati,* assumed great significance. The term *sati* literally means a 'pure and virtuous woman'. It was applied to mean a devoted wife who contemplated perpetual and uninterrupted conjugal union with her husband, life after life, and as proof burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, if he died before her. Enlightened rulers like Akbar and the Peshwas had imposed restrictions on this heinous custom. The East India Company, while broadly adhering to its declared policy of non-interference with the social customs of its people, still had governor-generals like Cornwallis, Minto and Lord Hastings taking steps to restrict the practice of *sati* by discouraging compulsion, forbidding the administration of intoxicating drugs to the sorrow-stricken widows, banning the *sati* of pregnant women or widows below the age of 16 years and, above all, making compulsory the presence of police officials at the time when *sati* was being committed. Their job was to see that no compulsion was being used. But these restrictions achieved limited success mainly because the East India Company was proceeding very cautiously.

As early as 1789, the collector of Shahabad, M.H. Brooke, refused his assent to the burning of a widow. Writing to the governor-general, Lord Cornwallis, he stated: "The rites and superstitions of the Hindu religion should be allowed with the most qualified tolerance, but a practice at which human nature shudders I cannot permit without particular instructions. I beg, therefore, my Lord, to be informed whether my conduct in this instance meets with your approbation." The government urged him to use dissuasion instead of exercising official powers to prevent the practice. In 1805, Lord Wellesley called upon the judges of the *Nizamat Adalat* to ascertain how far the *sati* system was related to Hinduism. After consulting Hindu pandits, the judges reported that girls of the higher castes might burn themselves except under specific circumstances, and advised that, "while the custom could not be abolished generally without greatly offending religious prejudices, it might be abolished immediately in some districts, where it had almost fallen into disuse, and checked or prevented in others on lines indicated by the replies of the pandits." Wellesley did nothing, however, and neither did subsequent governor-generals. Lord Minto's government, for example, declared in 1812 that the practice of *sati* "must be allowed in those cases in which it was countenanced by religion, and prevented wherever it was not". The vagueness of the orders rendered them ineffective. In 1812, 1815 and 1817, certain orders were introduced against the indiscriminate practice of *sati.* But without the sanctity and strength of law behind them, the orders did not prove successful. Of course, officers and judges did exist, who wanted the entire and immediate abolition of the practice. But Governor-General, Lord Hastings, was of the opinion that with the growth of education, the Indians would abandon it themselves. He decided to wait, for his part. Similarly, Governor-General Amherst, fearing discontent in the Bengal army in case of official steps, decided to leave the matter to the Indians themselves.

But while the authorities hesitated, Indian reformers began to create opinion against it. Raja Rammohan Roy, who represented the view of rational Indians against the evil, launched a frontal attack on it, his conscience awakened by the burning of his brother's widow in 1812. From 1818, Rammohan boldly raised his voice against the orthodox leaders who criticised the government's circular orders. He brought to the government's notice instances where women were induced by persuasion to burn themselves, were forced upon the pyre and bound with ropes and pressed with green bamboos until consumed with flames, and of how some, after fleeing from the flames, were brought back by their relatives and burnt to death. All such instances were "murders according to every *Shastra* as well as to the common sense of all nations", wrote Rammohan. Despite risk to his life from fanatical quarters, Rammohan showed courage, published brochures and wrote articles in his journal *Sambad Kaumudi,* and made passionate appeals to the government to abolish the rite. When Lord William Bentinck came as governor-general in 1828, the ground was ready for the abolition of *sati* by legislation. Bentinck was a true representative of the era of reforms in Britain, and a bold administrator of reforms.

Proceeding prudently, Bentinck gathered opinion from army officers, judges and the executive, that the abolition of *sati* would create no discontent in the army nor any disturbance in the country. He consulted Rammohan Roy who advised the governor-general to suppress the rite quietly by increasing vigilance against it, rather than by a sudden and direct official measure which might invite popular reaction. As an Indian, Rammohan was uneasy about possible government coercion of his countrymen on a social issue. He was supported by famous Orientalist, Horace Hayman Wilson, who also advised against government legislation to end *sati*. But a determined Bentinck, on November 8, 1829, put before the Council his minute for the abolition of *sati*. With an eye to the coming Charter (1833) debates in the British Parliament and anxious to get a renewal of its charter for another twenty years by presenting a creditable image of its activities in India, the Court of Directors encouraged William Bentinck to enact legislation to suppress *sati*. On December 4, 1829, Government Regulation XVII declared the custom of *sati* "illegal and punishable by the criminal courts". The courts were empowered to pass death sentence on persons held responsible for *sati*. At first applicable to Bengal Presidency alone, the Regulation of 1829 was extended in a slightly modified form to Madras and Bombay presidencies as well in 1830.

Regulation of 1829

Orthodox Hindu leaders like Raja Radhakanta Dev, Maharaja Kalikrishna Bahadur, Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay and others submitted a petition to the governor-general against the Regulation, saying that the custom had scriptural approval. Bentinck advised them to appeal to the King-in-Council. Counteracting the move of the orthodox party, Rammohan Roy and other progressive leaders submitted a petition congratulating Bentinck on his measure. Rammohan, subsequently, prepared a counter-petition before the British Parliament in London against the conservative party. With the Privy Council rejecting the appeal against the abolition of *sati* in 1832, orthodox agitation was quashed.

Measures Against Human Sacrifice and Slavery

The East India Company also initiated legislation to suppress human sacrifice among the Khonds of the Orissa-Madras hill tracts. The practice of human sacrifice in the hill tracts of Orissa, Madras and Central Provinces was discovered by British authorities in 1836. It was in 1836 that the Hindu ruler of Ghumusar revolted against the British and, in the course of the military operation against him, British troops made their first acquaintance with the Khonds and their habit of performing annual sacrifices of human victims. The victim was usually purchased or stolen from the plain below and sold to the Khonds. Although the Madras government was very keen to take action against the practice, it was felt that any law denouncing the rite and providing for punishment would prove abortive. Partial measures, such as the rescue of *meriahs* or victims kept for sacrifice, were recommended. The Governor of Madras, Lord Elphinstone, suggested to the Central government to institute an agency to rescue the *meriahs,* which was sanctioned in 1845.

Lord Dalhousie began to take serious note of the practice from 1848. During the course of rescue operations, a young officer named Campbell rescued many *meriahs*—men, women and children. Vast areas hitherto unexplored were surveyed in the Khond region. By 1853, over 1,200 *meriahs* were rescued, of whom two hundred children were sent to missionary schools for education. Campbell worked to induce the Khonds to forego a crime sanctioned alike by antiquity and superstition. His task was made difficult because the Khonds did not think it was a crime; they were convinced that it was directly sanctioned by their deity. Moreover, they lived in strongholds which could not be easily invaded. Legislation was useless among a people who were beyond the pale of law. Threats would not work as they could not be enforced by a campaign, and bribery was fruitless as the Khonds were not materialistic. Nevertheless, Campbell persevered and managed to persuade the Khonds to substitute animals in place of humans in the sacrifices. The government kept vigilance over the entire area for some time and in 1856, Dalhousie declared that the *meriah* sacrifice was at an end.

Human Sacrifice

Slavery, recognised both by Hinduism and Islam, was prevalent in Malwa, Malabar, Dhaka, the territory of Delhi and the presidencies of Bengal and Madras. "In 1812, it was estimated that one-

sixth of the population of Sylhet in Assam consisted of slaves, mostly the descendents of insolvent debtors; in Kamrup, 12,000 slaves were released after its cession to the British. Large numbers of slaves migrated from Rajputana as fugitives from Maratha oppression. They were exported to Poona and the Deccan where they fetched high prices and brought in large profits to the Maratha Brahmanas. It was calculated that in Dacca the number of slaves accounted for one-sixth of the whole population. Sir John Malcolm noticed slavery in Malwa, where it was limited mainly to females. T.H. Baber computed the number of domestic slaves in the southern Maratha country as 15,000. In Cochin, the number of slaves was 12,000. While most parts of the Deccan had domestic, but no agricultural slavery, Dubois found both varieties in Malabar. Jacquemont found slavery in the northern India, especially in Punjab and Kashmir. In 1841, Sir Bartle Frere estimated the number of slaves in British India (as then constituted) as eight to nine million." (*The Gazetteer of India*, Volume II)

Slavery

The traffic in child slaves that Portuguese, Dutch, French, Arab and European sea-faring traders indulged in clandestinely, was attacked by Lord Cornwallis in a 1789 proclamation. The Madras government issued another proclamation on similar terms again in 1790. Through private merchants, commercial houses and hired agents who were offered rewards, the offenders were convicted, tried before the Calcutta Supreme Court, and sentenced. In 1811, the Bengal government passed Regulation X for preventing the import of slaves into the territories under the Presidency of Fort William. The Regulation was widely publicised and its contents were communicated to the local governments of Bombay, Java, the Prince of Wales Islands, Mauritius, and Ceylon and to the Resident of Fort Marlborough. Traffic in slaves was prohibited in the districts of Bareilly, Moradabad, Kanpur, Farrukhabad, Etawah, Agra, Aligarh and Saharanpur. Act V of 1843 abolished the right of slavery and ultimately paved the way for its eradication by providing that civil courts were not to take cognisance of claims to slaves. A proclamation was issued in 1855 in the state of Travancore, announcing the abolition of slavery. Slavery now began to disappear in British India, and all trade in and possession of slaves was finally prohibited by the Penal Code of 1860.

Act V of 1843

The Thugi System

To William Bentinck goes the credit of the suppression of thugs—a sect of hereditary assassins and robbers who lived by preying upon defenceless travellers. The local name for the thugs was *pansigar,* derived from the scarf and noose used by the thugs to strangle their victims. The practice of *Thugi* found a congenial atmosphere for growth during the period of the later Mughals when law and order broke down, and public roads became insecure. Unable to effectively deal with thugs, petty officials of small states in Central India made common cause with them and assured them protection in return for a share in the spoils. Thugs were particularly active in the entire area from Dudh to Hyderabad and in Rajputana and Bundelkhand. Thugs worshipped Hindu goddesses like *Kali, Durga* or *Bhawani,* to whom they offered the heads of their victims as sacrifice. They were hardened criminals who subordinated their conscience by the perverse reasoning that *thugi* was a preordained means of livelihood for them, and that their victims were ordained to die by their hands.

Thugs had a very disciplined organisation—if some were expert stranglers, others were good at disposing bodies, and still others adept spies and informers. Apprenticeship was provided for beginners, and initiation as a master thug was done amidst religious ceremonies. The thugs had a very efficient organisation and so evaded arrest: they even had their own code of words and signs. A thug gang sometimes had as many as 400 thugs.

Public opinion was strongly in support of government measures to suppress *thugi.* In 1830, Colonel William Sleeman was handed the charge of ending *thugi*; rulers of princely states were asked to cooperate in this task. Colonel Sleeman arrested about 1,500 *thugs* and sentenced them to death or imprisonment for life. *Thugi* on an organised scale ceased to exist after 1837, although individual *thugs* continued to strike terror in the hearts of travellers for some time.

Colonel William Sleeman

Attempt to End Religious and Caste Discrimination

In matters of recruitment to public services, Bentinck sought to erase humiliating distinctions between Europeans and Indians that were introduced in this arena by Cornwallis and upheld by subsequent governor-generals. Section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833 provided that no Indian subject of the East India Company in India was to be debarred from holding any office under the Company, "by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent and colour." Despite having little immediate effect, the clause laid down an important and healthy principle.

In the beginning, the British maintained neutrality in matters of caste. In the early 19th century, under the pressure of Western ideas and missionary propaganda, transgressions of caste were numerous among the students of Hindu College and Medical College, Calcutta. The contemporary missionaries and legislators even anticipated the crumbling of the institution of caste in no time. But their expectations proved wrong. The Caste Disabilities Removal Act (XXI of 1850), laying down that any law of usage which inflicted forfeiture of the rights of property or which might be held to affect any right of inheritance by reason of anyone being deprived of caste, should not be enforceable in the courts of law in British India. This was the only legislation to have had a direct bearing on the caste system. This Act protected those Hindus who converted either to Christianity or Islam from their rights being forfeited.

Caste Disability Removal Act

STATE OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND REFORMS

In the late 18th century India, there was a fairly wide network of indigenous educational institutions. These were of two types: the schools of higher learning, such as Hindu *tols* or *pathasalas;* and the Muslim *madrasahs,* and the indigenous elementary schools, both Hindu and Muslim. The Hindu schools mostly admitted boys, generally excluding the untouchable castes and girls, except in a few areas. *Maktabs*, which is what the Muslim schools were known as, were usually attached to the mosques. A few girls did attend *maktabs* along with the boys, but in richer families the practice was to educate them at home. The system was universal with almost every village having at least one school, adaptable to local environment, and it enjoyed widespread popularity owing to the fact that it was centuries-old. Sanskrit was the medium of higher education for Hindu students, and the educational systems were age-old and stereotyped. Grammar, general literature, mythology, logic and law were the main subjects, with grammar forming the main branch of study. To become thoroughly acquainted with grammar, and notably with the works of Panini, scholars had to spend ten years at study. So numerous were these *tols* that in the district of 24 Parganas of Bengal alone there were about 190 *tols.* The *madrasahs* were less numerous, and their conditions were somewhat better. They taught Persian and Arabic among other subjects, and were patronised by Muslim rulers, nobles and courtiers.

Traditional System of Education

Whether Hindu or Muslim, the character of education in these schools was medieval. Learning was confined to the scriptures, mythology and religious laws. For the vast majority of scholars, learning was embodied in dogma, with the deeper philosophies of Hinduism and Islam being accessible to only a few. Memory rather than understanding, revision of lessons rather than inquisitive penetration into the subject, was emphasised, with little attention being paid to enlightenment, curiosity, inventions and research. While the best and real aspects of ancient wisdom and sciences were neglected, the superficial aspects of scriptural faith dominated the mind of the educated. Higher education served an outmoded purpose to Indians.

Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy

Soon after the British established their political power in Bengal, a number of Western scholars, drawn by the richness of Sanskrit, began to study it. Several officials of the East India Company became interested in the subject and became famous as Orientalists. Governor-General Warren Hastings, a devoted Sanskrit scholar, reviewed Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagwad Gita* in glowing terms as a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction, almost unequalled; and a single exception among all the

Oriental Learning

True Motive of Orientalism

In recent times, the term Orientalism and the true motive of Orientalists have become highly problematic and contested, carrying several meanings which do not comfortably complement each other. In the Indian context the period of Orientalism can be said to begin from 1773 with Warren Hastings being appointed the Governor-General of Bengal by the East India Company and extend upto almost 1832, when, influenced by liberal and evangelical attitudes, the Company made English education compulsory in India. Edward Said, in his work, *Orientalism* (1978), marked a radical shift in the understanding of the term Orientalism, by combining Michel Foucault's concept of power-knowledge and Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Foucault's argument that power and knowledge implicate each other was conceptualised by Said where 'colonial power' and colonial knowledge' were concerned. This meant that Orientalism was not knowledge of the Orient produced by Englishmen sympathetic to the cultures of the East, but, in fact, it was knowledge meant to serve the power structures of colonialism. Gramsci, in his conception of hegemony, asserts that every authority attempts to replace the exercise of mere coercion with an intellectual and moral legitimacy that gives it better stability. Thus, Edward Said observed, Orientalism too, was used to establish hegemony over the Orient, whereby the Europeans appropriated for themselves the authority to make any pronouncements on the Orient.

Edward Said further said that Orientalism was a Western creation based on the epistemological and ontological distinction between the Orient and Occident. The motive of this distinction was to confine the Orient to a position of inferiority, as Europe's 'Other'. To accomplish this motive, the Orientalists portrayed the Orient in essentialised terms whose meanings were presumed without dispute. Influenced by Said's theory of Orientalism, Gyan Prakash (1950) has argued that Orientalism was from the beginning a European enterprise with Indians as objects of knowledge and seen as the emotional and spiritual as opposed to the rational and materialistic British.

Scholars like Eugene Irschick have argued that, contrary to the supposition of Edward Said that Orientalism was a knowledge thrust from above through the power of the Europeans, it was constructed through a process of dialogue in which the colonial officials, Indian commentators and native informants participated in a collaborative intellectual endeavour. One might point out though that even when Indians participated in this exercise, they seldom had control over its final result. Moreover, while emphasising the importance of the Indian agency, Irschick did not deny the most vital aspect of this cognitive enterprise, that Orientalism produced a knowledge of the past to meet the needs of the present, i.e., to serve the needs of the colonial State. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay writes: "But if the Orientalist discourse was initially premised on a respect for ancient Indian traditions, it produced a knowledge about the subject society, which ultimately prepared the ground for the rejection of Orientalism as a policy of governance. These scholars (Orientalists) not only highlighted the classical glory of India—crafted by the Aryans, the distant kin-brothers of the Europeans—but also emphasised the subsequent degeneration of the once magnificent Aryan civilisation. This legitimated authoritarian rule, as India needed to be rescued from the predicament of its own creation and elevated to a desired state of progress as achieved by Europe."

The opponents of Edward Said's school of thought say that the Orientalists made a genuine attempt to understand Indian society and learn Indian languages. According to them Orientalism can be seen as a form of *'reverse acculturation',* whereby the dominant society (i.e. the British) acculturated themselves to the colonised society (i.e. Indian society) instead of only changing the colonised society. For instance, Warren Hastings, the first governor of East India Company in Bengal, saw the Indianisation of the civil servants as a means to improve the administration of the newly-acquired territories. Thus, for Hastings the quickest way to increase the efficiency and honesty of the civil servant was to develop in them a love and affection for India; to love India one must communicate with its people and to communicate with its people it was necessary to learn its languages, its culture and history. Further, there was anxiety amongst officials of the East India Company in the late 18th century that the Indians might reject British rule as being alien and thus they ventured to study Indian culture and history to placate such sentiments. Moreover, the theory of Saidian school of thought failed to explain the European study of the Orient much before colonial rule as seen in the works of European diplomats, travellers, traders and missionaries. (The European diplomats—Sir Thomas Roe, William Hawkins, Tavernier, Bernier, Edward Terry and William Bruton—wrote about administration, jurisprudence and religious customs of India. Tavernier published his *Six Voyages* in 1676 and Bernier's *History* was published in 1670. Thomas Stephens, a missionary

who came to Goa in 1579 and became Rector of the Jesuit College in Salsette, wrote about India, although his letters which aroused great curiosity among his countrymen are related only to Goa. Ralph Fitch, a London merchant who visited India in 1583, gave a significant record about the cultural and religious practices of the Indians.) The Saidian school also fails to explain the special zeal shown by the German scholars, for instance Max Mueller, towards the Orient even though Germany had no imperial stake in India. On the basis of the ongoing research, it may be concluded that the motive of Orientalism was a combination of political compulsions of the East India Company and internal convictions of a few individual European scholars. The political compulsions were guided by imperialistic needs whereas the individual convictions were inspired by the spiritualism and ancient glory of India.

known religions of mankind of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines. The interest of the Orientalists bore fruit when the East India Company government began to officially encourage oriental learning. Warren Hastings established a *madrasah* at Calcutta in 1781 "to conciliate the Muhammedans of Calcutta" and "to qualify the sons of Muhammedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the State." In 1792, Jonathan Duncan, resident at Varanasi, founded a Sanskrit College to provide "a nursery of future doctors and expounders (of Hindu law) to assist European Judges". The Sanskrit College was moulded in the traditional pattern of Sanskrit institutions and retained the old Brahmanical character, with the government spending an annual amount of Rs 20,000 to maintain it. Its declared objectives were the preservation and cultivation of the laws, literature and religion of the Hindus. The Company declined to do anything beyond maintaining these two institutions. Meanwhile, the missionaries were evolving educational enterprise of an entirely different kind, by starting elementary schools for the poorest and low caste members of society.

The Orientalists

The Orientalists, who included William Jones, Horace Hayman Wilson and Henry Thomas Colebrooke, developed a fascination for Sanskrit, began to seriously research it, and encouraged a revival of Sanskrit learning. The Earl of Minto even issued a minute in 1811 in favour of Sanskrit education, with the Minto administration thinking of establishing Sanskrit colleges at Tirhut and Nadia. The idea did not materialise, but in 1824, a Sanskrit college was established at Calcutta. However, early attempts to educate people in oriental languages met with little success, and it was found that there were more teachers than students. Christian missionaries criticised attempts to revive an obsolete system of education and advocated the teaching of Western literature and Christian religion through the medium of English. The Serampore missionaries, in particular, were very enthusiastic to see the spread of education. Among educated Indians themselves, the tide was turning against oriental learning and in favour of Western education.

Need for Language Proficiency

The Charter Act of 1813 provided for an annual grant of one lakh of rupees for the revival and improvement of literature and for the promotion of the sciences among Indians. There was a reason why the British Parliament imposed on a reluctant East India Company the necessity of channelising a portion of the public revenue to further the cause of education. Administrative needs of the Company required Indians to be well-versed in the classical and vernacular languages. In the Judicial Department Indians knowing Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian were required to sit as assessors with English judges and expound Hindu or Muslim law from books in Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic. Knowledge of Persian and the vernacular languages was necessary in the Political Department for correspondence with rulers of Indian states. It was also necessary for clerical staff in the revenue and commercial departments who had to deal with the masses. Similarly, the higher grade staff in the Company's services were required to know both English and the vernaculars.

Official Apathy

Despite the need, the Company did not show interest in appropriating the grant of one lakh rupees, provided by the Charter Act of 1813, until 1823, and it was private initiative that brought into existence many schools and colleges. In 1823, the government appointed a General Committee of Public Instruction to ascertain the state of public education "under the Presidency of Fort William and of considering, and from time to time submitting to Government, the suggestions of such measures as may appear expedient to adopt with a view to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction among them of useful knowledge including the sciences

and arts of Europe, and to the improvement of their moral character".

The committee consisted of ten members and Horace Hayman Wilson was its general secretary.

General Committee of Public Instruction

The annual grant of one lakh rupees was placed at the committee's disposal to achieve the objectives set before it. Within the committee there were two groups, the **Orientalists** led by H.T. Prinsep who promoted the cause of Sanskrit and Persian learning, and the **Anglicists** who saw the real value of education in Western educational systems. The Orientalists were rather slow to understand that the opinion of educated Indians and of the government was changing fast in favour of Western education in place of oriental education. Inside the committee, controversy brewed on policy matters regarding the mode of education in future. At this juncture, the committee began to consider the questions of establishing a Sanskrit College at Calcutta and a new *madrasah,* which would also possess teaching facilities for the new branches of sciences, namely, European sciences. The Anglicists, though in a minority, made their resentment felt at the establishment of the oriental institutions. At that stage, Rammohan Roy, advocating the Anglicist view, came forward to oppose the move to promote oriental learning. Beginning in the twenties of the 19th century, the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy was to last for more than a decade. An interesting aspect of the controversy was that while several English scholars pleaded the cause of Persian and Sanskrit, some Indian intellectuals were strong advocates of the Western system of education.

Roy as an Advocate of Anglicist View

Rammohan Roy, in his memorial to the Governor-General Lord Amherst in 1823 protesting against the move to establish a Sanskrit College at Calcutta, wrote: "We find that the Government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindu pundits, to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India." He argued that the plan for imparting Sanskrit education would defeat the objective of improving the minds and outlook of the Company's Indian subjects, and urged the government to promote a liberal and enlightened system of instruction that included mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences.

The government decided to remain silent about the memorial, though the Governor-General sent the memorial to the Committee of Public Instruction. The committee remained committed to its previous decisions and established the proposed oriental colleges at Calcutta, Agra and Delhi. It also undertook projects to print Sanskrit and Arabic books. But the committee's policy was resented by both the Indian intellectuals and the Court of Directors in England, as they felt that oriental learning did not cater to the practical aspects of education. The Court of Directors in 1827 wrote to the Government of India that the first objective of the education system was to prepare a body of individuals for discharging public duties, i.e., people who were well-versed in the language of the rulers, namely, English. The government then pointed out to the Orientalists that the policy of the British government was "to render its own language gradually and eventually the language of public business throughout the country".

With the government having made clear its stand on the issue, the Committee modified its attitude somewhat but made no radical change to introduce Western education. But in the meantime, students graduating from the Sanskrit Colleges were posing a problem, with neither the government offering them any employment, nor the society requiring their services. Moreover, in the Oriental Colleges, greater emphasis was given to oriental learning while the English classes were neglected, with the result that the education imparted in English at these institutions proved useless. Finally, people being completely apathetic towards the Sanskrit and Arabic publications which were brought out at great expense, their sales were very poor. In contrast, the School Book Society sold thousands of English books annually.

The Anglicists

While the Anglicists became convinced that the entire educational policy was defective and required radical change, the Orientalists would not admit their mistakes. When the British Parliament in 1833 began to discuss the renewal of the Company's Charter, Rammohan Roy was in England pleading for the

codification of the Civil and Criminal Law, giving Indians positions of trust in the administrative machinery, and the acceptance of English as the court language in place of Persian. In the Charter Act of 1833, the British Parliament provided for a Law Member to be added to the Governor-General's Council. Macaulay, who came to hold this office, also worked as the president of the committee. Coming armed with the objectives of Parliament, Macaulay assumed his responsibilities in 1834. The committee by then was evenly divided into two factions—five Orientalists and five Anglicists—who opposed each other on every issue and created a deadlock every time they met. Macaulay's Minute on educational policy and Bentinck's Resolution finally put an end to the controversy thereby recognising the Anglicist point of view.

Macaulay's Minute and Bentinck's Resolution

Macaulay, who issued his famous minute on February 2, 1835, favoured the viewpoint of the Anglicists and came out strongly against the Orientalists' stand. Arguing that the grant of one lakh rupees was meant for the improvement of the mental calibre of the people, he rejected the case of vernacular languages as the vehicle for intellectual enrichment. There remained, then, either English or the classical languages of India—Sanskrit and Arabic. Himself posing the question: "Which language is the best worth knowing?", he answered: "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic." And then went on to arrogantly assert that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole literature of India and Arabia". In presenting the case for English, he wrote: 'It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East." Macaulay was contemptuous of the classical languages of India which, according to him, contained "medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history, abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter."

Aware that the vast masses of Indians could not be educated in English, Macaulay spelt out that the purpose behind the educational policy was to meet imperial needs and not popular needs. He argued for the creation of "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in colour and blood, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." Lord William Bentinck was in favour of giving high appointments to Indians in British administration. On March 7, 1835, the Bentinck government issued a resolution that, in future, the Company's government should promote European literature and sciences through the medium of the English language, and that all funds were to be spent for that purpose.

Education to Serve Imperial Needs

Bentinck's Resolution was epoch-making in the history of Indian education which, while it did not propose to abolish any institution of native learning, decided to abolish the practice of supporting the students of such institutions. Printing of oriental works at the cost of the government was stopped. The resolution and the Macaulayian system were systematic efforts on the part of the British government to educate the upper classes of India through the medium of English language. It authorised the Committee of Public Instruction to submit a plan for the accomplishment of this purpose. The committee, in turn, proceeded to implement the Resolution of 1835. Two Orientalists in the committee, H.T. Prinsep and W.H. Macnaughten, resigned as a result of the defeat of their cause.

Efforts of James Thomasan

The government made a few half-hearted attempts to develop vernacular languages. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, James Thomasan, for instance, tried to develop a comprehensive scheme of village education through the medium of vernacular languages. In the village school, useful subjects like mensuration and agricultural science were taught through the vernacular medium. A Department of Education was organised to inspect and improve indigenous schools. The motivating force behind Thomasan's plan was to train personnel for employment in the newly set up Revenue and Public Works Department of the province.

The main factor which tipped the scale in favour

of English language and Western literature was an economic one. The Empire being in a continuous process of expansion, the language of the rulers appeared valuable to intelligent Indians. The need for educating some Indians in English was necessary to govern the country effectively, felt many British administrators. Some kind of educational institutions, either private or government, could serve the purpose, and so, English schools made their first appearance in India. But far from any systematic plan to bring them into existence, everything proceeded in a rather haphazard manner. Governor-General Lord Wellesley had established in Calcutta the famous Fort William College in 1800 to train young English civilians, who came to serve in India, in the languages of the country. Reverend William Carey who joined the college as a teacher of Sanskrit, with other scholars in the college, promoted learning. Many vernacular books were printed and published by the Fort William College. These included a dictionary and grammar in Bengali and the *New Testament* translated into Hindi.

In 1816, an association was formed by several rich persons in Calcutta to promote the cause of European learning and sciences. Rammohan Roy, David Hare, an English watchmaker who became a resident of Calcutta, and Edward Hyde East, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal, became the leaders of the association. A sum of Rs 1,13,179 was collected and the Hindu College or *Vidyalaya* was opened on January 20, 1817. The main objective of the college was to educate upper class Hindus in the English and Indian languages and in the literature and science of Europe and Asia. A School Book Society formed in 1817 endeavoured to prepare and publish good textbooks. The college was successful right from the beginning and, from 1823, government grants were given to it. Other schools and colleges were established by the government and private individuals to promote new learning. Missionaries played an important role in their founding.

Introduction of Western Education

In Bengal, there was widespread interest in the English language and an eagerness for English education. Before 1835, the Committee of Public Instruction was in charge of only 14 schools and colleges, but the number of institutions increased to 48 in just two years after 1835. By opening their doors to everyone, the new institutions brought a liberalising tendency in the orthodox society. In Bombay and Madras, the progress of English education was slow but meaningful. From 1837, Persian was no longer the official language of India and in its place English became the official language, at least in the higher branches of administration. In the District Courts, by 1838, vernacular languages replaced Persian. People were encouraged to learn English in order to understand the European officers either at the lower courts or in different branches of the district administration.

Council of Education

In 1842, the government replaced the General Committee of Public Instruction with the Council of Education, which functioned in full authority till the coming of the Education Despatch of 1854. At the initiative of the council, the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, through a resolution, made knowledge of the English language and Western education mandatory for those seeking government employment. The Council of Education worked out a system of examinations with provisions for scholarships for meritorious students. The examination was tough and required "a critical acquaintance with the works of Bacon, Johnson, Milton and Shakespeare, a knowledge of ancient and modern history, and of the higher branches of mathematical science, some insight into the elements of natural history, and the principles of moral philosophy and political economy, together with considerable facility of composition, and the power of writing in fluent and idiomatic language an impromptu essay on any given subject of history, moral or political economy".

Board of Education

In Bombay, a Board of Education was instituted in 1840. In 1843, Erskine Perry, who took charge as its president, enthusiastically promoted English education. By 1850, there were ten thriving government or government-aided institutions in Bombay Presidency with nearly 2,000 students on their rolls, and a number of private schools. The Grant Medical College was founded in Bombay in 1845. In Madras Presidency, the missionaries of the Church of Scotland established an English school in 1837. Other missionary organisations established several English schools, over the next few years.

Even as the establishment of English schools and colleges signified the beginning of a comprehensive system of education, a scheme of examinations was worked out for a proper evaluation of merit. To coordinate and regulate the various kinds of knowledge imparted in the various schools and colleges, conduct examinations and confer degrees, the need was felt for a university system. Frederick John Mouat, the secretary of the Calcutta Medical College, advanced the plea for establishing a university to conduct examinations. After becoming the secretary of the Council of Education, he began to contemplate a university on the model of the University of London. However, the matter was postponed till the time of Lord Dalhousie when concrete plans were made to establish a university. The Education Despatch of 1854 ultimately recommended the establishment of universities.

Wood's Despatch 1854: Magna Carta of English Education

Charles Wood was the president of the Board of Control (1852-55) in the coalition ministry of the Earl of Aberdeen. Wood was asked to deliver a comprehensive educational policy in the shape of an education despatch. The despatch came to be regarded as the *Magna Carta* of English education in India. Envisaging a co-ordinated system of education on an all-India basis, the despatch gave priority to the subject of general education. It recognised, for the first time, the responsibility of the government to direct the education of the people and shape a uniform scheme for India.

Systematisation of Education System

Dated July 19, 1854, the Despatch came to the Government of India under the signature of the directors of the East India Company. It covered various aspects of educational policy including university education and vernacular education. The Despatch stated that the foundation on which the educational superstructure was to stand was European knowledge in arts, science, philosophy and literature, and that knowledge was to be spread as widely as possible. The rudiments of that knowledge was to be conveyed to the masses through the vernacular languages. For higher education though, English was to be the preferred medium. Both English as well as the Indian languages were adopted as the media for the spread of education, the former for those with the means and capacity to learn it and the latter for the rest of the population.

The prime objective of the government was the establishment of schools in every district for the purpose of mass education. The existing indigenous schools were to be rendered fit for giving correct elementary education. The system of grants-in-aid was introduced to encourage and foster private enterprise in the field of education. Local enterprise and private grants, coupled with government aid, were considered desirable methods for running institutions. Establishment of training schools to train teachers and greater remunerations to draw talented people to the teaching profession were considered essential.

Department of Public Instruction

The Despatch also instituted a machinery for systematic supervision for an improved system of education. It abolished the existing Boards or Councils of Education and, instead, instituted a Department of Public Instruction in each of the five provinces of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the North-Western provinces, and the Punjab. The department was to be headed by the Director of Public Instruction, who would be assisted by a number of inspectors who were to inspect schools and colleges, guide the managers and teachers of the schools, and submit inspection reports.

"The Education Despatch recommended the establishment of universities to conduct examinations in different branches of arts, sciences and literature, and to confer academic degrees. The Presidency headquarters, namely, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, were to be the seats of the proposed universities the model for which should be the University of London. On the teaching side, a number of university professors were to be appointed in various branches of learning. Regarding the university administration, there were to be the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Senate.

"Education was declared as the prime qualification for employment in government services. The Despatch directed the government to take special interest in institutions for specific professions such as medical science and engineering, to encourage education among the Muslims, and to give frank and cordial support to the education of girls.

Education imparted in government institutions was to be exclusively secular." (*A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India*, Volume III, Chopra, Puri, Das)

Before the Education Despatch recommended the establishment of universities, Dalhousie thought of a new college, to be established at Calcutta and named as the Presidency College, which would extend its sphere of activities and expand into something resembling an Indian university. But there were opponents of higher education who feared, like Sir Charles Wood himself, that if Indians "became intelligent from education, they may be dangerous".

Not surprisingly, the provisions regarding universities in Wood's Despatch were vague and contradictory. The Government of India could not frame a University Act within these provisions. A committee was appointed in 1855 to prepare a plan. The details submitted in 1856 included provision for an entrance examination which was to be equivalent to the Matriculation Examination of the London University; provisions for conferment of degrees in arts, medicine, law and civil engineering on the students of affiliated colleges on examination; and regulations for holding examinations. The plan became an Act on January 24, 1857 with the consent of the Governor-General. Acts for the Universities of Bombay and Madras, prepared on similar lines, were also passed in 1857. Thus were born the first three universities of India.

Management of the Universities

As regards the management of universities, the Acts provided for a senate for each university, consisting of the chancellor, the vice-chancellor and the Fellows, ex-officio and nominated members. The governor-general or the Presidency governor was to assume chancellorship, while the vice-chancellors were to be appointed by the governor-in-council. The management and superintendence of all university affairs were vested in the senate. According to P.N. Chopra, *et al,* the main defect of the newly established universities was that they were primarily intended to be affiliating universities, and were themselves not the teaching bodies. The government reduced the first universities to mere affiliating universities, to save money. Their chief merit lay in their role in unifying the system of higher education. Different colleges of the provinces were brought under a common system, with their academic affairs being co-ordinated and systematised. A system of common examinations decided the fate of their students, and common degrees were awarded from a common centre for the examinations held. Uniformity and regularity in academic activities became the responsibility of the university. The Calcutta University began with 14 colleges in Bengal and 4 colleges in the North-Western provinces, while the Universities of Bombay and Madras began with three colleges.

The Education Despatch of 1854 affected Indian education from the primary to the university stage. Following the Revolt of 1857, Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, blamed the educational policies as embodied in the Despatch of 1854—such as government attempts for mass education, introduction of female education, and government aid to mission schools in the shape of grants-in-aid—as indirectly responsible for the popular discontent that led to the revolt of 1857. He advocated that many features of the Despatch should be abandoned. But with power being transferred from the Company to the British Crown in 1858, the newly appointed Secretary of State for India, Lord Stanley, disagreed with the views of Ellenborough and approved the principles of the Despatch of 1854 in a new Despatch issued by him in 1859.

Operational Implications of the Despatch

The new Government of India began to conduct its educational policy on the lines of Wood's Despatch. The Departments of Public Instruction, which were created in all existing provinces, functioning as Education Departments, advised the provincial governments on all educational matters, administered the funds allocated to education, managed those institutions which were directly under the government, supervised private institutions which received government grants-in-aid, prepared reports on the progress of education and worked to improve and expand education. The system of grants-in-aid helped spread government control far and wide to various schools and colleges. When new private schools applied for grants-in-aid in most cases, the government could inspect them and impose on them the necessary conditions for improved

education, though the rules framed were not perfect, nor grants-in-aid distributed on judicious lines. Missionary schools were believed to be favoured more. The disadvantage of the educational policy after 1854 was that the government did not initiate any programme to carry education to the people at large, and education was left to private enterprise. Only a few institutions were under the direct control of the government.

Although the Education Despatch of 1854 encouraged primary education more than higher education and directed the government to promote education for the masses, the progress of primary education was very slow and its condition poor. The main reason was the decay of the numerous indigenous village schools before the issue of the Education Despatch. Downgraded and neglected, many indigenous schools voluntarily chose not to come under the new system, and began fading out, and the vacuum thus created was not filled up by the schools under the new system of grants-in-aid. The growing poverty of people, their inherent caste prejudices and other factors too contributed to the decay.

Poor Primary Education

Nevertheless, there were developments worth cheering for. The new schools used printed books and followed improved methods of teaching with new subjects. The teachers in the new schools had better educational qualifications than the teachers of indigenous schools. Their standard improved with training facilities being provided for them. Regular government inspection kept the teachers as well as the managing boards alert to their duties thus securing accountability.

The provisions of the Despatch of 1854 made a significant difference in the field of secondary education. People who craved for government jobs gravitated towards an English education, while the government too aimed at its spread for reasons of administrative necessity. The secondary schools, which served the purposes of both the people and the government, saw a rapid rise in their number. The government itself established secondary schools in various cities, towns and district headquarters, and managed them directly. From 169 government secondary schools in India in 1854, the number of such increased to 1,363 by 1882, with nearly 45,000 students on their rolls. The efforts of private individuals and missionaries also contributed to the opening of many secondary schools.

Secondary Education

While primary education was meant for removing illiteracy, and college and university education was meant for a privileged few, the real vitality of the educational system lay in the secondary education. These schools attracted intelligent pupils, were within the reach of the middle and lower middle classes, and their students entered the lowest ranks of government employment. However, there were serious drawbacks, the main being the way the mother-tongues of pupils at secondary schools were pushed into the background with English becoming the medium of instruction in all subjects. Chopra, Puri and Das point out that this was not the intention of the Education Despatch, which had aimed at imparting knowledge through both the mother-tongue and English. But the Departments of Public Instruction emphasised English education at the cost of the vernacular languages. Moreover, not only were the young pupils of secondary schools not competent in their mother-tongue, they were equally ill-equipped to understand the different subjects of study through a foreign tongue, which is what English was, after all. Primary and middle school did not prepare them to be competent enough to read everything in English at the high school.

Drawbacks of the System

Further, the theoretical character of the education they acquired left students with only two alternatives—either to enter a clerical job or to go in for still higher education. No vocational courses were offered to them, hereditary professions were ignored, not even a theoretical knowledge of agriculture was provided. The vast majority of pupils looked to government employment as the way out, with the matriculation certificate becoming a passport to smaller government jobs. But, as the number of pupils increased and as jobs became scarce, education appeared valueless. Despite their defects though, secondary schools did help spread a liberal westernised education, imparting knowledge of local subjects such as history, geography, geometry, algebra and science.

Before the Despatch of 1854, colleges for oriental learning as the Calcutta *Madrasa* and the Benaras Sanskrit College, missionary colleges and others,

such as the Calcutta Hindu College, Elphinstone Institution at Bombay, Calcutta Medical College, the Colleges of Agra and Delhi, and the Presidency College at Calcutta, served the purpose of higher education in India. The Despatch brought into existence the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857, which served as coordinating centres to bring uniformity in the system of higher education. Uniformity meant the following features: the university conducted the entrance or Matriculation examination at the end of the secondary education and declared results; only those who passed the entrance examination could seek admission to the college for higher education; the courses of studies at college were framed by the university; and the university conducted examination, and awarded degrees to students who graduated from the different colleges. Since the universities were meant to be affiliating and examining bodies, higher learning was to be imparted in colleges alone.

Educational Institutions

With the number of students passing out of secondary schools growing, the number of colleges too began to grow after 1857. In 1882, there were 27 colleges in the Bengal Presidency, Madras had 25, the North-Western Province 11, Bombay 6, Punjab 2, and Central Province 1. The total number of colleges was 72.

In 1860, the passing of the Indian Universities (Degrees) Act gave the universities power to bring in new diplomas and degrees by regulations. As affiliating and examining bodies, universities could not engage in broader avenues of intellectual exercise. University authorities played the role of mere governing bodies or managing committees, and there was no real guidance of higher education in the greater interests of the nation.

Indian Universities Act

Besides the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, a university college was established at Lahore in 1869 which was raised to the status of a university in 1882 and was called the Punjab University by a Special Act of Incorporation. Though framed in the pattern of the University Acts of 1857, the Act contained provisions for the Faculty of Oriental Learning and conferred degrees of Bachelor, Master and Doctor of Oriental Learning. It conducted examinations in Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian, and in the vernacular languages. The university was empowered to appoint professors and lecturers for its own teaching purposes. When the Indian Education Commission was appointed in 1882 to investigate the condition of Indian education, the need was acutely felt for the establishment of other universities and for the reform of the existing ones.

The Hunter Education Commission

About thirty years after the Education Despatch of 1854, the government appointed a commission under the chairmanship of W.W. Hunter to review the progress of education in India, since the Despatch in 1882. A review was felt necessary because the aim of the Despatch, that the government should provide education for those unable to acquire it on their own, was not being realised. The government neglected primary education and focused on higher education, instead. Private managements and missionaries voiced strong grievances against government attitudes, with the missionaries even forming an organisation in London in 1878 to create opinion against the educational policies of the government.

Need for Reform

To look to the actual needs of the society and to understand the demerits of the existing system, Governor-General Lord Ripon appointed the first Indian Education Commission in 1882. Sir William Wilson Hunter, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, became the chairman of the Commission which also had as members, some Indians and missionaries. The Commission was required to investigate the condition of primary education, study the system of grants-in-aid and review the activities of provincial governments in educational matters.

After an elaborate enquiry into the state of education throughout the country, the Hunter Commission submitted a voluminous report in 1883. The report traced the progress of education, examined its condition and recommended measures for improvement. The committee's recommendations covered the following features:

Recommendations

(i) Redesigning of the Academic Curriculum The subjects at the primary schools should be such as

to equip the pupils for their position in life, and not just to lead them towards higher education. For the extension of primary education, the indigenous schools should be improved and given aid. It was necessary to declare primary education as "that part of the whole system of public instruction which possesses an almost exclusive claim on local funds set apart for education, and a large claim on provincial revenues". The first part of the expenditure should meet the cost of the direction and inspection of primary schools and the cost of a sufficient number of normal schools. To make education more useful, practical subjects such as arithmetic, accounts, mensuration, elements of natural and physical science, with bearing on agriculture, health and industrial arts, were considered necessary.

(ii) ***Expansion of secondary education and avenue for higher, commercial and technical education*** While primary education was to be provided with or without local cooperation, secondary education was to be provided where local cooperation was available. The system of grants-in-aid was to be made more liberal for further extension of secondary education. The subjects in the upper classes of the high schools were to be so divided, that one group of subjects should qualify the pupils for higher general education, and the other group for commercial and technical purposes.

(iii) ***Changes in the system of granting aids and collegiate education*** The improvement of collegiate education was recommended in the manner that "the rate of aid to each college be determined by the strength of the staff, the expenditure on its maintenance, the efficiency of the institution and the wants of the locality". Bigger government or aided colleges were required to teach alternative courses as laid down by the universities for diverse studies in arts and sciences. Grants were to be provided for buildings, libraries, furniture and apparatus. "Fees at the highest rate consistent with the undiminished spread of education should be levied in every college aided by the State" and "no aided college should be required to levy fees at the same rate as that charged in an neighbouring Government college". For the promotion of higher learning, it was left to the consideration of local governments to grant scholarships to the graduates reading for the Master's Degree, if possible.

(iv) ***Physical and moral training and female education*** Attention was to be paid to physical and moral training of school children. Indian games, gymnastics, drill and exercises were prescribed for the physical well-being of the pupils. On the moral side, teachers and inspecting officers were required to exercise a right influence in building the character of the pupils. Even at the college, it was expected of the teachers to deliver to each of the college classes in every session "a series of lectures on the duties of man as a citizen." (*A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India Vol III*). The Commission also highlighted the inadequate facilities for female education outside the Presidency towns and made recommendations for its spread.

The Official Response

The recommendations did not initiate any vigorous change, nor create any strong momentum in favour of the cause of education. College education was allowed to continue as before, removed from the practical needs of society, nor were there any concrete proposals for the spread of scientific education. Nevertheless, the Government of India accepted most of the recommendations of the Hunter Commission. With the introduction of local self-government, it was decided to transfer the management of primary education to the charge of local boards and municipalities. At the same time, private enterprise was given official encouragement for the establishment of secondary schools and colleges. From 1882 to the end of the 19th century, the field of education witnessed considerable activity with a rapid rise in the number of schools and colleges.

With primary education coming under the newly-constituted local bodies, the transfer of schools to their charge was effected in a cautious manner. Power given to the local bodies varied according to local conditions, with the government maintaining its own primary schools for aboriginal and backward classes of people. Provincial governments helped local bodies in charge of primary education with finances, thus helping them to meet educational expenses. The number of schools and pupils gradually increased. However, the indigenous village schools vanished during the period, thereby drastically reducing the total number of village schools in the country. The regular primary schools could not receive adequate attention and funds as

the government failed to meet the demands of the local bodies in charge of these schools. The condition remained far from satisfactory as a result.

Secondary education though, was somewhat better placed, with the number of schools rising from 3,916 to 5,124 and number of pupils from 2,14,000 to 5,90,000 during the 1882-1902 period. The number of candidates appearing for the Matriculation Examination increased by three times, touching nearly 23,000 in 1902.

Growth of University Education and Other Developments till Independence

With the establishment of the Punjab University in 1882 and the Allahabad University in 1887, college education, too, showed progress. The demand for college education being high, the colleges established in most cases were of the traditional type. Certain colleges were founded for specific religious and political considerations. In 1875, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's efforts led to the founding of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh—which later developed into the Aligarh Muslim University which aimed at fostering loyalty of the Muslims to the British and creating solidarity among them. In 1886, the Arya Samaj established the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College at Lahore to encourage learning in the best traditions of Aryan culture, along with the Western knowledge. In 1898, Annie Besant founded the Central Hindu College at Benaras for the higher education of Hindus, and this college later developed into the Benaras Hindu University. While such colleges were few in number, the number of colleges showed a marked increase, with the number of affiliated colleges in India standing at 68 in 1882. In 1902, the number of colleges in British India was 136 and two in the Princely States.

The early years of the 20th century were marked by political unrest and controversies in educational policies, with political developments acting and reacting on educational developments. The official view was that educational expansion had not proceeded in the desired direction, that quality had suffered under private management, there was indiscipline in schools and colleges and that educational institutions had become breeding grounds for political revolutionaries. Unregulated rapid expansion under irresponsible private enterprise was blamed for this sorry state of affairs. Admitting to the lowering of standards, nationalist opinion emphasised that the government was not doing its duty to eliminate illiteracy.

Indian Universities Act, 1904

Raleigh Commission

In 1902, the Raleigh Commission was set up to go into conditions and prospects of universities in India and to suggest measures for improvement in their constitution and working. The commission precluded from reporting on primary or secondary education. Based on its recommendations, the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904 in the reign of Lord Curzon.

Under the Act, the following changes in the universities' administration were proposed:

(i) The universities were required to make provision for promotion of study and research.

(ii) The number of senators in a university shall be between 50 and 100.

(iii) A senator would normally hold office for a period of five years and not for life.

(iv) The government was to appoint most of the senators in a university.

(v) The government was vested with powers to veto the regulations passed by the senate of a university.

(vi) The Act laid down stricter conditions of affiliation to new colleges and periodical inspection of such colleges by a syndicate.

(vii) The governor-general-in-council was empowered to define territorial limits of a university and to decide the affiliations of colleges.

Reaction to the Act of 1904

The Act was condemned by the nationalists for various reasons. It increased the government control over the universities by (i) empowering the government to veto regulations passed by a university, (ii) allowing the government to appoint a majority of Fellows in a university, and (iii) empowering the governor-general-in-council to decide a university's territorial limits and even the affiliations between universities and colleges.

The nationalists saw in it an attempt to strengthen imperialism and to sabotage nationalist feelings. Gokhale called it a "retrograde measure".

Curzon justified greater control over universities in the name of quality and efficiency, but actually sought to restrict education and to discipline the educated towards loyalty to the Government.

Curzon, however, deserves credit for a noteworthy contribution—that of heralding the system of government grants for education. In 1902, five lakh rupees were sanctioned on an annual basis for five years for higher education purposes.

Government Resolution on Education Policy—1913

In 1906, the progressive state of Baroda introduced compulsory primary education throughout its territories. National leaders urged the government to do so for British India (Gokhale made a powerful advocacy for it in the Legislative Assembly).

In its 1913 Resolution on Education Policy, the Government refused to take up the responsibility of compulsory education, but accepted the policy of removal of illiteracy and urged provincial governments to take early steps to provide free elementary education to the poorer and more backward sections. Private efforts were to be encouraged for this and the quality of secondary schools was to be improved. A university, it was decided, was to be established in each province and teaching activities of universities were to be encouraged.

Saddler University Commission (1917-19)

The Saddler Commission was set up to study and report on problems of the Calcutta University but its recommendations were applicable more or less to other universities also. It reviewed the entire field from school education to university education. It held the view that, for the improvement of university education, improvement of secondary education was a necessary pre-condition. Its observations were as follows:

Observations

1. School course should cover 12 years. Students should enter university after an intermediate stage (rather than matric) for a three-year degree course in university. This was done to
   (a) prepare students for university stage;
   (b) relieve universities of a large number of below university standard students; and
   (c) provide collegiate education to those not planning to go through university stage.

   A separate board of secondary and intermediate education should be set up for administration and control of secondary and intermediate education.
2. There should be less rigidity in framing university regulations.
3. A university should function as a centralised, unitary residential-teaching autonomous body, rather than as scattered, affiliated colleges.
4. Female education, applied scientific and

Wardha Scheme of Basic Education (1937)

The Congress had organised a National Conference on Education in October 1937 in Wardha. In the light of the resolutions passed there, Zakir Hussain Committee formulated a detailed national scheme for basic education. The main principle behind this scheme was 'learning through activity'. It was based on Gandhi's ideas published in a series of articles in the weekly *Harijan*. Gandhi thought that Western education had created a gulf between the educated few and the masses and had also made the educated elite ineffective. The scheme had the following provisions:

(i) Inclusion of a basic handicraft in the syllabus.
(ii) First seven years of schooling to be an integral part of a free and compulsory nationwide education system (through mother tongue).
(iii) Teaching to be in Hindi from class II to VII and in English only after class VIII.
(iv) Ways to be devised to establish contact with the community around schools through service.
(v) A suitable technique to be devised with a view to implementing the main idea of basic education—educating the child through the medium of productive activity of a suitable handicraft.

The system, rather than being a methodology for education, was an expression of an idea for a new life and a new society. The basic premise was that only through such a scheme could India be an independent and non-violent society. This scheme was child-centred and cooperative.

There was not much development of this idea, because of the start of the Second World War and the resignation of the Congress ministries (October 1939).

technological education, teachers' training including those for professional and vocational colleges should be extended.

In the period from 1916 to 1921 seven new universities came up at Mysore, Patna, Benaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow and Osmania.

In 1920, the government recommended Saddler report to the provincial governments.

Development of Vernacular Education

During the early 19th century vernacular education was in a sorry state of affairs. It was mostly dependent on contributions from wealthy zamindars.

Chronological Development

1835, 1836, 1838: William Adam's reports on vernacular education in Bengal and Bihar pointed out defects in the system of vernacular education.

1843-53: James Jonathan's experiments in the North-West Provinces (UP), as the lieutenant-governor there, included opening of a government school as model school in each tehsildari and a normal school for teachers' training for vernacular schools.

1853: In a famous minute, Lord Dalhousie expressed strong opinion in favour of vernacular education.

1854: Wood's Despatch made these provisions for vernacular education:

1. Improvement of standards
2. Supervision by government agency
3. Normal schools to train teachers

These gave impetus to the cause of vernacular education.

1854-71: The Government paid some attention to secondary and vernacular education. The number of vernacular schools increased by more than five-fold.

1882: The Hunter Commission held that state should make special efforts for extension and improvement of vernacular education. Mass education was to be seen as instruction of masses through vernaculars.

1904: Education policy placed special emphasis on vernacular education and increased grants for it.

1929: Hartog Committee presented a gloomy picture of primary education.

1937: These schools received encouragement from Congress ministries.

Development of Technical Education

- The Engineering College at Roorkee was set up in 1847.
- The Calcutta College of Engineering came up in 1856.
- In 1858, the Overseers' School at Poona was raised to the status of Poona College of Engineering and affiliated to Bombay University.
- Guindy College of Engineering was affiliated to Madras University.
- Medical training started with the establishment of a medical college in Calcutta in 1835.

Lord Curzon did much to broaden the whole basis of professional courses—medicine, agriculture, engineering, veterinary sciences, etc. He established an Agriculture College at Pusa which acted as a parent institution of similar institutions in other provinces.

Evaluation of British Policy on Education

Even the inadequate measures the Government took for the expansion of modern education were guided by concerns other than philanthropic. The government measures for promotion of education were influenced by agitation in favour of modern education by enlightened Indians, Christian missionaries and humanitarian officials; the need to ensure a cheap supply of educated Indians to man an increasing number of subordinate posts in administration and in British business concerns—thus there was an emphasis on English medium as the language of administration and of education; the hope that educated Indians would help expand market for British manufactures in India; an expectation that Western education would reconcile Indians to British rule, particularly as it glorified British conquerors and their administration. The British thus wanted to use modern education to strengthen the foundations of their political authority in India.

Traditional system of Indian learning gradually declined for want of support, especially after 1844 when it was declared that applicants for government employment should possess knowledge of English. Mass education was neglected leading to widespread illiteracy (1911—84 per cent and in 1921—92 per cent) which created a wide linguistic and cultural gulf between the educated few and the masses. Since education was to be paid for, it became a monopoly of the upper and richer classes and city dwellers.

There was an almost total neglect of women's education because (i) the Government did not want to arouse wrath of orthodox sections; (ii) women's education had no immediate utility for the colonial rule. Scientific and technical education was by and large neglected. By 1857 there were only three medical colleges—at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and only one good engineering college at Roorkee which was open only to Europeans and Eurasians.

Under Montagu-Chelmsford reforms education was shifted to provincial ministries and the Government stopped taking direct interest in educational matters, while government grants, liberally sanctioned since 1902, were now stopped. Financial difficulties prevented any substantial expansion but still education grew, especially under philanthropic efforts.

Education Under Dyarchy

Hartog Committee (1929)

An increase in number of schools and colleges had led to deterioration of education standards. The Hartog Committee was set up to report on

Growth and Role of the Indian Middle Class

British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new urban middle class. This middle class included merchants, traders, industrialists and professional groups like lawyers, teachers, journalists and doctors. During the 19th century a new consciousness developed in the educated sections and middle classes. This middle class consciousness became the chief medium for the channelisation of popular discontent. This class was also instrumental in the development of national consciousness in India.

The urban middle class, however, had two major components: intellectuals and professionals on the one hand, and, on the other, the landed households that had been connected with the old Mughal or Maratha regimes as revenue contractors. A sizeable wealthy commercial class—the Gujaratis and the Marwaris, for instance—did not easily take to Western ways. They preserved strong links to a past whose hold they did not like to see weakened.

Indian traders, moneylenders, bankers had amassed some wealth as junior partners of English merchant capitalists in India. Their role fitted in the British scheme of colonial exploitation. The Indian moneylender provided loans to hardpressed agriculturists and thus facilitated the state collection of revenue. The Indian trader carried imported British products to the remotest corners and helped in the movement of Indian agricultural products for exports. The indigenous bankers helped both in the process of distribution and collection. But, the colonial situation retarded the development of a healthy and independent industrial bourgeoisie, and its development in India was different from its development in other independent countries like Germany and Japan.

Between the urban educated middle class and the 'underclass' which barely survived on money wages and frequent small loans, was a lower middle class that came from small towns and their rural hinterlands of the 18th century and later. Besides merchants, moneylenders and artisan-traders, there were others linked by economic activities in urban markets: labour, credit, commodities. Rich and middle-level peasants may also be included in this local category of middle class, clearly differentiated as they were from the landless agricultural workers who formed the vast underclass of wage-dependent labourers.

The urban educated middle class began to critically examine the social practices in India and made all-out-efforts for ending socially disadvantageous rituals.

Along with social consciousness, political consciousness also developed among the Indian middle class. In the beginning, i.e., the first half of the 19th century, this class was of the opinion that the means of communication, railways and other industrial enterprises were beneficial to Indians, and hence they supported the British policies. But soon they realised that the British administrative measures and economic policies were benefiting the British. After this realisation, they started protesting against the colonial rule.

Unlike the peasants, tribals and workers who took recourse to uprisings and revolts to express their resentment, the middle class adopted a different policy of protest. They worked in two ways. They started writing books and articles and publishing newspapers to critically analyse the British policies and develop consciousness among the masses. The second method adopted by the middle classes was to form organisations, associations and societies for joint programmes and activities. The main aim of these organisations was collective action against the British policies harming their interests. Their methods were mostly legal actions in courts or petitions against the East India Company.

The Indian middle classes increased their political activities when they realised that the takeover of India's administration by the British Crown in 1858 was equally exploitative.

The lower middle class also initiated reform movements in the late 19th century, often with the assistance of more westernised professionals. With the idea of removing the humiliation to which they were subjected by the high-caste Indians upon whom the government depended for their understanding of caste practices and positions, the middle-ranking castes formed associations to represent their interests to government as well as to bring about a change in social norms.

development of education. Its main recommendations were as follows:

1. Emphasis should be given to primary education but there need be no hasty expansion or compulsion in education.
2. Only deserving students should go in for high school and intermediate stage, while average students should be diverted to vocational courses after VIII standard.
3. For improvements in standards of university education, admissions should be restricted.

Sergeant Plan of Education

Sergeant was the educational advisor to the Government. The Sergeant Plan was worked out by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944. It called for the following:

Recommends

1. Pre-primary education for 3-6 years age group; free, universal and compulsory elementary education for 6-11 years age group; high school education for 11-17 age group for selected children, and a university course of 3 years after higher secondary; high schools to be of two types: (i) academic and (ii) technical and vocational.
2. Adequate technical, commercial and arts education.
3. Abolition of intermediate course.
4. Liquidation of adult illiteracy in 20 years.
5. Stress on teachers' training, physical education, education for the physically and mentally handicapped.

The objective was to create within 40 years, the same level of educational attainment as had been in England. Although a bold and comprehensive scheme, it proposed no methodology for implementation. Also, the ideal of England's achievements may not have suited Indian conditions.

THE RISE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION

The history of the Indian press begins with the coming of the Europeans. While the Portuguese were the first to bring a printing press to India, the first book published in India was by the Jesuits of Goa in 1557. In 1684, the English East India Company set up a printing press in Bombay. But no newspaper was published in the Company's territories because the servants of the Company in India wanted to withhold the news of their malpractices and abuses of 'private trading' from reaching London. Disgruntled employees of the East India Company who sought to expose these malpractices, made the first attempts to publish newspapers in India. An employee of the Company, William Bolts, on being censured by the Court of Directors for private trading, resigned from service and announced his intention of publishing a newspaper that would reveal the secrets of other employees. Official pressure put an end to Bolts' attempt. Then James Augustus Hickey in 1780 published *The Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser,* the first newspaper in India. In 1782, Hickey's press was seized for his criticism of government officials and scurrilous attacks on the governor-general and the chief justice. New publications followed, like *The Calcutta Gazette* in 1784, *The Bengal Journal* in 1785, *The Oriental Magazine of Calcutta* in 1785, *The Calcutta Chronicle* in 1786, *The Madras Courier* in 1788, and *The Bombay Herald* in 1789.

Attempts to Censor the Press

No more than a hundred or two hundred newspapers were circulated during the early period; they aimed chiefly at entertaining Europeans and Anglo-Indians, rather than shaping public opinion in India. But Company officials were nevertheless worried that these newspapers might reach London and expose their misdoings at home. In the absence of press laws, the Company's officials dealt with the press as they felt like, and the government sometimes enforced pre-censorship, even deporting the offending editor for anti-government policies.

Apprehending a French invasion of India and engaged in the struggle for supremacy in India, Lord Wellesley's government imposed almost wartime restrictions on the press, with the Censorship of Press Act of 1799. The regulations required that every newspaper was to clearly print in every issue the name of the printer, the editor and the proprietor; and the publisher was to submit all material for pre-censorship to the Secretary to the government. The Secretary had in turn been instructed not to permit publication of any information regarding military

Censorship of Press Act, 1799

movement of troops, ships, stores or species, all speculation in regard to relations between the Company or any Indian power or information likely to cause alarm or disaffection among residents in the Company's territories. Breach of these rules was punishable with immediate deportation. In 1807, the Censorship Act was extended to cover journals, books and pamphlets.

Lord Hastings' government relaxed many press restrictions. The Governor-General tried to put into practice in India some of the progressive views which were gaining ground in England, for example, pre-censorship of the press was dispensed with in 1818. But, at the same time, the government laid down a few general rules to guide newspaper editors with a view to prevent the discussion of topics likely to affect the authority of the government or harm public interest. "Editors were required not to publish news concerning (a) the doings of the Court of Directors or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India; to avoid remarks on the conduct of the Members of the Governor-General-in-Council or Judges of the Supreme Court or political transactions of local administration; (b) discussions likely to create alarm or suspicion among the native population; (c) re-publication from English or other newspapers of passages coming under any of the above heads; and (d) private scandals or personal remarks on individuals tending to excite dissensions in society." (*A New Look at Modern Indian History*).

Guidelines for Press Regulation

In 1823, the appointment of John Adams as acting governor-general gave him the opportunity to impose his reactionary views with a set of press regulations that proved more stringent than any that had been in force earlier. The new regulations required that every printer and publisher obtain a license for starting a press or using it; and that the penalty for printing and/or publishing any literature without the requisite licence was Rs 400 for each such publication or imprisonment in default thereof. Magistrates were authorised to attach unlicensed presses. Finally, the governor-general had the right to revoke a licence or call for a fresh application. Adams' regulations, directed chiefly against newspapers published in the Indian languages or edited by Indians, stopped a number of publications from being printed, like Raja Rammohan Roy's *Mirat-ul-Akbar*. Only three Bengali newspapers and one Persian newspaper continued publication in Calcutta. James Buckingham, editor of *The Calcutta Journal,* was deported to England.

Government's Attitude Towards the Press

Lord William Bentinck adopted a liberal attitude towards the press and believed the press to be a safety-valve for channelising popular discontent. While Adams' press regulations were not revoked, considerable latitude of discussion was given to the press, Indian as well as Anglo-Indian. Bentinck's minute embodying the decision to impose some restrictions on the press stated: "The Adjutant General of the Madras Army, who was at that time at Calcutta, described the angry feelings and language so loudly expressed here, and all the signs of the times, to be precisely similar to those which prevailed before the Madras Mutiny, and he anticipated a similar explosion.... The Mutiny did take place at Madras though there was not a shadow of liberty belonging to the press there.... My firm belief is that more good than harm was produced by the open and public declaration of the sentiments of the army. There was vent to public feeling and the mischief was open to public view; and the result is so far confirmatory of the opinion here that no overt act took place." He did draw a distinction between discussion of a proposal and clamour against a final decision given by the Supreme Authority, and clarified that he would not tolerate government officials making use of official information to criticise the acts of the government.

It was left to Charles Metcalfe, Bentinck's devoted lieutenant and successor, to remove the restrictions on the Indian press, after Bentinck resigned from ill-health in 1835. Metcalfe repealed the obnoxious ordinance of 1823 and earned the epithet of 'Liberator of the Indian Press.' Lord Macaulay, too, supported the cause for a free press in India. He argued that since the

Metcalfe: Liberator of the Indian Press

government possessed unquestionable powers of interference wherever the safety of the state was in danger, it was unnecessary to adopt a despotic attitude towards the press. A new Press Act required a printer and publisher to make a declaration giving a true and precise account of the premises of publication. A liberal press policy resulted in the rapid growth of newspapers throughout India till 1856.

With the outbreak of the Revolt of 1857, the government reimposed restrictions on the press. Act No. XV of 1857 reintroduced licensing restrictions in addition to the existing registration procedure laid down by the Metcalfe Act. The Act prohibited the use of printing presses without a government licence and laid down that the government reserved the discretionary right to grant licences or revoke them at any time, and to prohibit the publication or circulation of any newspaper, book or other printed matter. The Act, being an emergency measure, was in force for one year only.

Act of 1867

The Press and Registration of Books Act XXV of 1867 replaced Metcalfe's Act of 1835 pertaining to the registration of printing presses and newspapers. Of a regulating nature, the Act did not impose any restriction on printing presses or newspapers, and required every book or newspaper to have printed on it the name of the printer and publisher and the place of printing. Within one month of the publication of a book, a copy of the book had to be supplied free of charge to the local government. This Act was amended in 1890, in 1914, 1952 and 1953. The Wahabi revolt of 1869-70 alarmed the government and impelled it to arm itself with wider powers to deal effectively with seditious writings and speeches. So, in 1870, Act XXVII to amend the Indian Penal Code was passed containing a sedition section. This section was later incorporated in the Indian Penal Code as Section 124-A.

Growth of Vernacular Press

The post-1857 period was characterised by growth in racial bitterness among the rulers and the ruled. The European press, as a result, was always ranged on the side of the government in all political controversies, after 1858. The vernacular press, which had shown unprecedented growth since 1857, became very vocal in criticising governmental policies. In 1878, there were 62 vernacular papers in the Bombay Presidency, 60 in the North-West Provinces, Awadh and Central Provinces, 28 in Bengal and 19 in Madras, together catering to a readership of one lakh. Strong public opinion developed that was openly critical of the imperialist acts of Lord Lytton. The terrible famine of 1876 which cost over six million lives and the lavish expenditure on the Imperial Durbar at Delhi in January 1877 made the public opinion and press restive. On his part, Lytton considered the newly rising educated class in India "a deadly legacy from Macaulay and Metcalfe" and tried to stifle their views.

Vernacular Press Act (1878)

Gagging Act

The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was passed with a view to effectively regulate the vernacular press and empower the government with more effective means of punitive action against any kind of seditious writings. The Act empowered a district magistrate with the permission of a local government to make the printer and publisher of any vernacular newspaper sign a bond undertaking not to publish anything likely to create disaffection against the government or antipathy between persons of different races, castes and religions in British India. The magistrate could further require a publisher to deposit security and to forfeit it in case of contravention of the regulation. The magistrate was authorised to seize the press equipment if the offence recurred. The magistrate's action could not be appealed against in a court of law. A vernacular newspaper could get exemption only by submitting proofs of the paper to a government censor.

The worst feature of the Act, nicknamed the 'Gagging Act', was that it discriminated against the Vernacular press but favoured the English press. Under the Act, proceedings were instituted against newspapers like *The Som Prakash, The Bharat Mihir, The Dacca Prakash* and *The Sahachar*. So draconian were its regulations that the Act succeeded in making the vernacular press submissive. The vernacular newspapers of the period showed little originality in thinking and often ended being copies

of the English press. The Act had its critics, however. Lord Cranbrook, the new Secretary of State, objected to the pre-censorship clause of the Act on the ground that the censors would have to be Indians and that they would have to rewrite the newspapers. In September 1878, the pre-censorship clause was deleted. The Secretary of State's suggestion led to the appointment of a press commissioner entrusted with the duty of supplying authentic and accurate news to the press.

Repeal of the Act

The Vernacular Press Act was repealed in 1882 by the government of Lord Ripon. Ripon, the nominee of Gladstone's Liberal government, was of the opinion that the circumstances justifying the Act of 1878 no longer existed. The famine of 1896-97 and the bubonic plague caused discontent and violence in the Deccan. The press played its part in political controversies. Act VI of 1898 restated and amplified Section 124 of the Penal Code and a new Section 153-A was added. Section 505 of the Penal Code, too, was similarly amended to punish statements which could lead to public mischief, cause disaffection among the armed forces or induce a person to commit an offence against the state.

RISE OF MODERN VERNACULAR LITERATURE

Literature–An Agent of Socio-Political Transformation

Literature played a significant role in India's struggle for freedom. From the 19th century onwards, with the emergence of nationalist ideas and regional literature entering its modern phase, writers began to use literature to express patriotic sentiments. Most of them regarded it their duty to create a literature that would contribute to the all-round regeneration of their society and pave the way for national liberation. In fact, literature pointed to India's status of subjection and the need for freedom long before the Indian National Congress had evolved its programme of nationalist agitation. As the freedom movement grew in strength and attracted more people, literature strengthened the growing idealism of people and inspired people to make sacrifices for the cause of the country's liberation, besides exposing the weaknesses of the nationalist movement and its leaders. The literary works in India's major languages in the 19th century showed a broad identity of sentiments and ideas in relation to the freedom movement all over India. The culmination of these literary developments was the emergence of political associations and national consciousness in the second half of the century such as the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

In this section, we shall discuss some of the most prominent literary figures of India like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, Subramania Bharati and Muhammad Iqbal, and understand how their works, or literature in general, influenced the prevailing socio-political conditions in India.

Bankim Chandra (1838-94)

One language which paved the way for a literary efflorescence during the 19th century was Bengali. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was a towering personality, a powerful intellectual who made it his mission to understand the problems of his society and country. In his journal *Bangadarshan,* he drew attention of his readers to the causes that contributed to India's wretched state, and tried to inspire as many people as he could. His social novels used entertainment and education to draw in readers, but it was largely through his historical romances that Bankim broadcast the message of patriotism. His novel *Anandamath* (1882) blended history and fancy to create characters willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in their fight against injustice, oppression and subjugation. Its celebrated song, *Vande Mataram*, inspired generations of patriots and even revolutionaries. Bankim's conception of nationalism is, however, accused of having a pro-Hindu bias, a bias which is, more or less, reflected in a cross-section of nationalists. However, the bias was not part of the dominant ideology of Indian nationalism that emerged during the later 19th century, and was not consciously put forward as part of the nationalist ideology.

With Bankim's first original work in Bengali, *Durgesh Nandini* (1865), the novel came of age in India. The first full-fledged novel in any Indian language, it is set against the background of the

Mughal-Afghan war for the possession of Bengal. Many historical novels were written by others as well during this period. But writers required realism in their art to set novels successfully in the contemporary social context. Bankim showed the way with his two major social novels, *Bishabriksha* (1873) and *Krishnakanter Will* (1878). These two novels had a depth of characterisation that set the standard for Indian fiction for many years to come.

Age of Novels

Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-85)

Bharatendu Harishchandra was largely instrumental in ushering in the modern phase of Hindi literature. He produced an impressive body of literature that included poetry, drama and essays. He used conventional poetic forms, for example, *bhajans*, to describe the state of the country. The development reached its climax during the heyday of the freedom movement when popular songs were composed and sung during *prabhat pheries* and public rallies. Bharatendu's play, *Andher Nagari Chaupata Raja,* uses a popular tale to reveal the arbitrary and oppressive character of the British rule. In the play *Bharat Durdasha* (1880), his most directly political in tone, Bharatendu used humour to convey a similar message.

Govardhanram Tripathi

The most prominent literary figure of 19th century Gujarat was Govardhanram Tripathi who wrote the four parts of his famous novel, *Saraswatichandra*, over a period of 14 years from 1887 to 1901. An epic in prose, *Saraswatichandra* deals with the multi-faceted problems of India in bondage and lays down possible lines of action for patriotic Indians. While bemoaning the loss of India's independence, it welcomes at the same time the fact that of all nations, it was Britain which was ruling the country. Indians, in general, regarded this faith as an essential part of their attitude towards the colonial connection, believing that the will of God had placed India under British tutelage.

The writings of these men conformed to the general pattern of the discussion of freedom and subjection, primarily that freedom was the natural condition to which any people should aspire. The First World War (1914-1918) and the Russian Revolution (1917) changed this trend of thought. Instead of specific grievances and concessions, an integrated critique of British rule evolved over the years, and freedom from British rule began to be espoused. Yet another significant trend was the taking of a radical stance by writers in relation to the existing pattern of social organisation, a radicalism that, however, remained more or less confined to sentiments.

Impact of First World War and Russian Revolution

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): The Prophet of New India

Poet, philosopher, educationist, painter, musician, patriot, humanist, reformer and internationalist, Rabindranath Tagore was the soul of modern India. It was Tagore who naturalised the Western spirit into Indian literature and made it truly Indian in an adult sense. He did this by his creative response to the impulse of the age, and not by any conscious or forced adaptation of foreign models. The result was that the Upanishads and Kalidasa, Vaishnava lyricism, and the rustic vigour of the folk idiom, became so well blended with Western influences in his poetry that generations of critics will continue to wrangle over his specific debt to each of them. In him, modern Indian literature came of age, both in poetry and prose. All forms of literary creations, viz., novel, short story, drama, essay and literary criticism, attained maturity in his works. Though Indian literature in its latest phase has outgrown his influence, as indeed it should, Tagore was the most vital and creative force in the cultural renaissance of India and represents its finest achievement.

Soul of Modern India

Biographical Sketch Rabindranath was born on May 7, 1861 at Jorasanko, the Tagores' residence in Calcutta. He was the fourteenth child of Debendranath and Sarla Devi. The Tagores owned large estates in East Bengal and Orissa and lived in ease and comfort in their sprawling house in Jorasanko where several eminent men of letters, popular musicians, dancers and authors frequently met. The Tagores were known for their riches and their patronage of art and learning. This artistic atmosphere had tremendous influence on the artistic genius of Rabindranath. His father Debendranath, popularly known as Maharshi, was a confirmed Brahmo Samajist, and his mother died when he was fourteen, but the gap was filled by his childless

sister-in-law, Kadambari. When his elder brother, Somendra, and his sister's son, Satya, gave an impressive picture of the outside life of their school, Rabindranath joined them at Oriental Seminary only to stay for a couple of days. He was then admitted to the Normal School—a school run on British pattern. When he was twelve years old his father took him on a tour to the Himalayas that lasted for four months. On his return, he was admitted in St. Xavier's School where he got totally disillusioned with the pattern of school education as he found that life was a combination of prison and hospital. Though he gave up schooling, he never gave up reading. In 1875, his first poem was published in *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* soon after which he wrote a story in verse entitled *Banaphul* that ran into 1,600 lines and was divided into 8 cantos. He wrote a series of lyrics entitled *Bhanusinher Padavali* in the language of the medieval Vaishnav poets of Bengal.

On September 20, 1878 Rabindranath and his elder brother Satyendranath Tagore (the first Indian to become an I.C.S.) sailed for England, where Rabindranath joined a public school at Brighton. Later, he joined the London University to study English literature under the famous Henry Morley. In order to learn western music, he soon got admitted in a music school in London. He also developed interest in painting and frequented the art galleries. In 1880, he returned to India without earning an academic degree. He got married to Mrinalini Devi on December 9, 1883 and began to take interest in social affairs. In 1890, he again toured England for a couple of months and on December 22, 1901 he founded a school of his own, *Brahmacharya Ashram* at Shantiniketan, which was a place of meditation founded by his father and dedicated to public use in 1898. This school was to grow into the famous Viswa Bharati University for which Tagore lay the foundation in 1918 and which aimed at bringing about a synthesis of oriental and occidental cultures.

Vishwa Bharati University

Between 1902 and 1907, death took away five of his dearest ones—his wife in 1902, his daughter in 1903, his son Satish Chandra and his father in 1904, and his youngest son Samindra in 1907. It was during this period that he composed our national anthem which conveys the massage that India stood for unity amidst diversity. In 1912, he left again for England for medical treatment. Rabindranath met Rothenstein, the famous painter who introduced him to W.B. Yeats, the gifted poet. In 1913, Rabindranath's magnificent achievement in literature was recognised with the bestowing of the Nobel Prize for his magnum opus, *Gitanjali*. A period of travel followed, at home and abroad, when he met people of distinction, men of letters, artists, philosophers and scientists. He met writers and artists like Bergson, Sylvain Levi, Romain Rolland, Keyserling, Thomas Mann, Winternitz, Lesney, H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw.

Nobel for 'Gitanjali'

Rabindranath met Gandhi formally for the first time in 1915 at Shantiniketan, where they discussed non-cooperation. Gandhi and Tagore differed widely on the idea of non-cooperation with Tagore refusing to endorse the Mahatma's call to students to withdraw themselves from government institutions. However, Tagore increasingly came round to Gandhi's views on national and international issues. Following the shocking massacre at Jallianwala Bagh (1919), he renounced the title of knighthood that had been bestowed on him by the British Government. Towards the end of his life, Rabindranath took to painting and painted some 3000 pictures. Though a painter of unusual merit, writing remained his first love. He died on August 7, 1941.

Quest for Perfection Owing to their unorthodox views, the Tagores lived somewhat aloof from society. Commenting on this estrangement, Rabindranath wrote, "When I was born, our family had already cut loose its social moorings and floated away from the common barbaric and the common Hindu tradition of numerous rituals and ceremonies, and the worship of gods and goddesses had only left faint traces in our houses". He was influenced by three movements: (i) the religious movement introduced by Raja Rammohan Roy, (ii) the literary movement spearheaded by Bankim Chandra, and (iii) the nationalist movement that rose on the embers of the crushed Revolt of 1857. His literary genius revealed itself at an early age with the poems he composed while he was a child which made his father call him 'the bulbul of Bengal'. When he studied English literature in the University

Influences on him

of London under the famous Henry Morley, he found the answers to his intellectual quest in the poetry of the English romantics, the philosophy of enlightenment and positivism, and the new science of evolution. His genius drew sustenance from the ancient Sanskrit lore, including the Vedas, the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, drama and poetry of Kalidasa as also from the Buddhist literature. He had an unusual capacity for hard work, a dedicated will, a consuming passion for freedom along with an uncompromising devotion to truth. A self-educated and self-made person, he worked ceaselessly to make both his art and life perfect. He experimented continuously with different forms of poetry, drama, music, education and also painting to enrich his personal experience and to live in accordance with his perception of truth and reality. He continued to write over a wide vista of knowledge with a rare poetic sensibility revelling in the niceties of rhythm and music and alive to the nuances of syllabic harmonies. His ability to look at things with a poetic insight enabled him to see in a blade of grass the whole history of evolution of the world and read in it the endeavour of the earth to aspire to the sky.

'Bulbul of Bengal'

Commenting on Tagore's quest for perfection, Dr Tarachand writes, "Rabindranath lived at a time of fast developing crisis. Antagonisms between nations, inside nations, between empires and between imperial governments and their subjects, were fatefully moving towards world catastrophe. But the poet's sensitive response to the currents and eddies of the tragedy-oriented world rose above the growing turmoil. He saw a new world beyond the present travail and his intimate experience revealed to him a world of infinite joy and happiness. His heart was filled with unlimited love for man and joy in nature. This duality of experience inspired Tagore's poetry. In it was mingled the social tragedy of man with the inner rapture of the spirit. Mental conflicts troubled him throughout his life, but his intuition overcame the counsels of despair. Beyond them he found the certainty of truth, the joy of discovering unity in the universe and harmony between nature and man. Though assailed by the near meaninglessness of the world of pain, disease and death, by the senseless hate and cruelty in the relations of men, his *Jivandevata* (the inner guide) gave him the strength to cross the turbid floods and to attain the calm serenity of mind." (*History of the Freedom Movement in India*)

His Works As an artist, Tagore's poetry was known for its lyrical quality and its faith in humanity and in nature, and was loaded with depth of feeling. He wrote mostly in Bengali, but himself translated many of the poems into English. The only poem he originally wrote in English was *The Child*, a poem published by Allen and Unwin. His initial poems were marked by simplicity of thought, clarity of expression and subtlety of effect, while the later Bengali poems became increasingly terse, luminous and precise in the use of imagery. His fictional works revolutionised Bengali literature. His stories are fine pieces of workmanship, touched by a sense of sympathy, and marked by excellent characterisation, for example, the character of Rehman the fruit-seller in *Kabuliwallah*, and that of Tara in *Runaway*. Similarly, his political novels, *Gora* (1907-09) and *Ghare-Baire* (1914) vividly expressed the tensions and ambiguities of the age. His novel, *Hungry Stones*, delienates the hero's dream life with great mastery of touch and a vivid outline. Its strength lies in the writer's mastery in effecting a verisimilitude between the moods of nature outside and what goes on within the minds and hearts of his characters.

Thoughts and Ideas Tagore explains his concept of patriotism on the basis of his love for his motherland. Elaborating it, he says, when India suffers from injustice, it is right that we should fight against it and the responsibility is to right the wrong, not as Indians but as human beings. Tagore was not impressed by the idolatry of geography but was prompted by the love of mankind. "I love India", observed Tagore, "but my India is an idea and not a geographical expression." All through his writings be proclaimed his hatred of national vanity. It was only in "small minds (that) patriotism dissociated itself from the higher ideal of humanity".

On Patriotism

Tagore viewed man as a social being rather than a political being. The primacy of society and the social interpretation of history were acceptable to him. He believed that the history of India was the expression of the evergoing "process of racial and

Philosophy of History

social synthesis". His concept of politics as a "specialised and professionalised aspect of society" seems to denounce the efficacy of political agitation. Both the trends of revivalism and reformism were accommodated in his political principles and ideology. He was in favour of restoring the pristine glory of India's past, its spiritual values, its ideals of simplicity of life. He emphasised on the fact that if India had to march triumphantly on the road of progress, she had to root out the internal contradictions of her society; only then would India be fit to fight for freedom.

Critique of Nationalism

While deeply appreciating nationalism but wary, at the same time, specially of its hate-inspired manifestations, Tagore was always interested in politics. During 1905-1910, he was very active in the anti-partition (of Bengal) movement. By then Bengal's leading literary figure, Tagore was contributing to patriotism through splendid poems and short stories, as well as more directly through attacks on Congress mendicancy, by making repeated calls for *atmasakti* (self-reliance) through swadeshi enterprise and national education, and by offering suggestions for contact with the mass of India through *melas*, *jatras* and the use of the mother tongue, Bengali, in education and political work.

Tagore was convinced that man is not bound by nature or necessity, nor does pre-ordained fate hold him. "In fact, he overflows with surplus energy which he uses to acquire his knowledge in excess of his physical and biological needs and builds up magnificent systems of science and philosophy; he disposes a surplus of sympathy and fellow-feeling and produces codes of morality and principles of ethics; he commands an exuberance of imagination and feeling and by their instrumentality creates wonderful specimens of art. His unique gift of self-consciousness expresses itself in the form of religion....Man is thus not only a receiver from God, but also a giver to him." (Dr. Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*). Tagore believed that such a lesson was absolutely necessary for the people of India before they could attain freedom from their proud, foreign rulers. This was the message of all the poetry and prose which he wrote during the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century and which flooded Bengal with a new energy.

Critique of British Rule

His lectures on 'Nationalism in the West', delivered in the USA in 1916 were a severe indictment of British rule in India. There he defined nation as that aspect which a whole population assumes when organised for a mechanical purpose, the purpose of self-preservation, of retaining power but excluding humane ideals. Such an abstract being—the nation—was ruling India without humanity, its minions were doing so keeping a disdainful distance from the people, their bloodless policies damaging the very core of the lives of the Indians, threatening their whole future with a perpetual helplessness of emasculation. "In this reign of the nation, the governed are pursued by suspicion, and these are the suspicions of a tremendous mind and of organised brain and morale. Punishments are meted out which leave a trail of miseries across large bleeding tracts of the human heart. But these punishments are dealt by a mere abstract force, in which a whole population of a distant country has lost its human personality." (*Nationalism*, Rabindranath Tagore). To be fair, Tagore's charges could not be levelled against nationalism *per se,* relevant as they were to the spectre of imperialism which sprang out of the capitalistic nationalism of the 19th century.

On Mughal and British Rulers

On the Mughal period of Indian history, with its triumphs and failures, he commented: "Mughal emperors were men, they were not mere administrators. They lived and died in India, they loved and fought. The memorials of their reigns do not persist in the ruins of factories and offices, but in immortal works of art; not only in great buildings, but in pictures and music and workmanship in stone and metals, in cotton and wool fabrics." Ultimately, however, the Muslim rule failed because "it could not rouse the people into stirrings of thought or creative enterprise" and also "they were unable to make our vision reach out towards that world, the world beyond India...we still viewed narrow horizons from the pavilions of our rural shrines." About the British, he observed, "They came simply as not men but as the symbols of the new spirit of Europe... On the personal plane these newcomers

remained further away from us than the Muslims, but as emissaries of the European spirit they made a contact with us wider and deeper than all of their predecessors." Tagore attributed the success of the British to "their integrity in the pursuit of truth" and applauded them for their refusal to be "deluded by intellectual lethargy, illusive fancy, superficial resemblance, or the echoing of the age-old wisdom". Tagore was alive to both aspects of the contact of India with Britain, and hence we find in him the contradiction of robust faith in the Englishman and ignoble contempt for the imperial and unproductive rule of the British.

Social Evolution in East and West

While considering the difference between the East and the West, Tagore felt that it was to be regarded as not one of substance and quality but that of degree. The social evolution in the East is slower than that in the West. The transition from agrarian feudalism to mercantilism and then to industrial capitalism has been continuous and smooth in the West. In the East, however, there was stagnation from the 13th to the 19th century when the domination by the West started the evolutionary process. Tagore yearned for the release of the Indians from the stranglehold of the so-called civilised British race, which is why he hoped for an Indian nationalism not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive but health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian. With this in mind, he stated in his book, *Towards Universal Man:* "Hindus and Muslims constitute the two major communities of India. We must be prepared to show the patience, the sacrifice, the care and the self-restraint that are needed to unite them into a common political organisation."

On Communal Conflict

Aware of the role of history in the destiny of India, Tagore commented on the Hindu-Muslim conflict in Greater India (*Tagore Reader*): "In the history of our own middle ages, there was a religious conflict between the Hindus and the conquering Muslims. We also had at that time a succession of saints and devotees, many Muslims among that galaxy, who bridged the gulf of religious differences by personal relationships… They went where mankind finds its common and unchanging basis of unity, and they accepted as their motto that great truth which teaches us to see *all* as part of *ourselves* …the deathless message of those saints and devotees is still running in the life-blood of the Indian people. If we could draw our inspiration from that source, we would see an improvement in our politics and economics and also a strengthening in our general plan of action."

Views on National Movement and National Reconstruction

Tagore had definite views regarding the form of struggle sought to free India from the shackles of British rule. He pointed out that the nature of the pre-British Indian civilisation was society-oriented and not, like modern Europe, state-oriented. He regarded this difference as crucial. Society organised individuals in free associations for voluntary cooperation. The social and economic ties secured mutual benefits and promoted differentiation of functions. Even the rigid system of caste was originally founded on the idea of mutual aid and occupation suited to ability, but was later co-opted into the system such that the principles of heredity, race and caste hierarchy pre-dominated. Since state or polity introduces the element of obligation sanctioned by force, Tagore's liberalism required that the element of force be kept to a minimum, in order to maximise the freedom of the individual and society. In India's special circumstances induced by colonialism, where the force was wielded by an alien bureaucracy, society had to play an even more important role. Tagore advocated that more than political agitation, what was required was the building up of a self-reliant, self-regulating progressive society that would look beyond the educated middle class and include the vast majority of Indians. Tagore wanted to reduce the intervention of the government in the life of Indians, so as to eventually render it without function, and transfer all authority into the hands of people. In fact, observes Tara Chand, Gandhi's plan reflected the ideas of Tagore. However, the idea was utopian to say the least. The patient constructive work in villages that Tagore preached, in which he hoped zamindars would take the lead in a paternalistic fashion, had little appeal for militant youth provoked by British repression, nor did he have any concrete social or economic programme of mass mobilisation.

Tagore's views on education were revolutionary. He believed that education gave man the unity of truth. When life was simple, all the different

elements of man were in harmony. But with the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, school education began to emphasise the intellect and man's physical side. By doing so, it accentuated a break between the intellectual, the physical and the spiritual life. The real function of education, he further thought, is to draw out the best that is in man and to enable him to have an all-round development of personality. While the purpose of a school is to set man free through the joyousness of his natural surroundings, argued Tagore, the purpose of education is to bring about the liberation of man in his human environment, in his relation with other humans. Tagore also stressed the importance of the use of the mother tongue in school education. In his essay, *Sikshar Her Pher* (Topsy-Turvydom in Education), published in 1892, he stated that if the country was to be truly educated it must be taught through the language of the country.

On Education

Like Gandhi and Nehru, Tagore also advocated cooperation among all the people of the world, and wanted the people of India to play a useful role in tackling the world's problems. This realisation led him to found Vishwa Bharati, where people from all over the world would come to study, and associate together in the fields of knowledge, humanity and spiritual endeavours. He further argued that world peace could not be brought about by stockpiling weapons of war or by ingenious diplomacy or by establishing institutions entrusted with the task of establishing peace. To him, unity of mankind would be more easily attained through education than through anything else.

His Internationalism

Tagore could not be identified with any established and known religious system or creed because of his strong individualism. As a Brahmo, he had already abandoned Hinduism with its metaphysical doctrines of karma, its hierarchical social system based on caste and its belief in the cycle of birth and death. His interest in Brahmoism waned after his failure to reunite the Brahmo sects engaged in standardisation of truth and in abstruse metaphysical debates. He had no time for religions prescribing asceticism and denying the existence of the world, nor did he care for the others dividing the humanity into the blessed and the damned. His religion consisted of the yearning of the soul for union with the divine, of realising the God within everyone. He wrote: "The feeling I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed with my nature through living channels of communication from all sides." And sang:

His Spiritual Humanism

> There, there comes the Man eternal and the dust and the flowers of this mortal earth are ashiver all round,
> 'Fear not, Fear not', rings the call from the peaks of the rising sun the call of a new life
> And the sky is rent asunder by thousands of voices:
> Victory, victory to the awakening of Man.

Tagore argued that it was not intellect but mind "which is occasionally made intensely conscious of an all-pervading personality, answering to the personality of man". For him, personality is a "self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individually within his knowledge and feeling, wish and will and work." His identification of man's personality with that of the divine elevated the individual to the pinnacle of dignity. It was a clarion call against social bondage and political subjection. In a famous song (which had moved Gandhi), he challenges the Indians:

On Human Personality and Individualism

> If hearing thy call, none follows, then, too, march on alone,
> March on alone, march on alone, march on alone,
> If no one speaks to thee,
> O thou, O thou, helpless one;
> If every one keeps his face turned out of fear,
> Then burning in the fire of rejection,
> March on alone.

Tagore's attitude towards man, nature and society was influenced by this spirit of personal religion and individual striving. In his work, *One Hundred Songs of Kabir*, he translates that exponent of Bhakti:

> There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death;
> Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light.
> There the unstruck music is sounded:
> It is the live music of these worlds.
> There millions of sun and moon are burning;

There the drum beats and the lover swings in play.
There love songs resound, and light rains in showers.

Tagore's concern is that aspect of personality which is the feeling self, the living individual whose heart throbs with love. He arrived at it by the spiritualised interpretation of the individualism of Rousseau and the English liberal philosophers of the 19th century and was of the opinion, "Everywhere in a man's world the Supreme Person is suffering from the killing of the human reality by the imposition of the abstract….Once we accept as truth such a scientific maxim as "Survival of the Fittest" it immediately transforms the whole world of human personality into a monotonous desert of abstractions, where things become dreadfully simple because robbed of their mystery of life." His view may not be acceptable to all, but in the social milieu of India where the individual is bound hard and fast by dead social regulations it was necessary to emphasise the spontaneity and self-direction of the individual and to assert boldly the right of personality for self-expression. The perfection of personality is achieved not by meditation and withdrawal from the world of strife and struggle but by action, by unceasing efforts to remove the dams which held up in stagnant pools the fresh waters of life— the theme of his play *Muktadhara* (the release of the stream). Categorically, he states:

Salvation through renunciation, that is not mine,
I shall get the blissful taste of it in the midst of innumerable bonds.
And again:
How can I sit in my Samadhi (meditation) of salvation alone,
If the universe passes by weeping?

Premchand (1880-1936)

During the last three decades of the freedom struggle, Indian literature became increasingly concerned with the question of the objectives that freedom was expected to serve, and consequently, debated the ideological dimension of the freedom struggle. In the process, it closely followed the nature of the freedom movement and reviewed the envisaged form of free India. Writers were concerned with the right kind of programmes, ideals and leaders for the freedom movement; only then would the desired type of free India be born. The works of Premchand (1880-1936), the great Hindi-Urdu novelist and nationalist, dealt with anxieties arising out of the more disturbing aspects of the freedom struggle. A staunch Gandhian who reflected Gandhi's deep impact on the Uttar Pradesh intelligentsia, Premchand resigned his post in a Gorakhpur government school in February 1921 to work for the nationalist journal *Aj* and for the Kasi Vidyapith. He exposed the underlying selfishness of educated nationalist leaders in two of his major novels, *Rangbhumi* (1925) and *Karmabhumi* (1932). Premchand writes that these leaders delude themselves into thinking that their actions are in the interests of the country; even their compromises and secret dealings with the rulers are in the interest of the national movement.

Premchand provides the most depressing view of nationalist politics in *Godan* (1936), which is Premchand's masterpiece and one of the greatest Indian novels. Through at least three characters—Rai Saheb, Khanna and Pandit Omkarnath—Godan shows the role of money and petty material considerations in nationalist politics. Rai Saheb, a rich zamindar, is a *satyagrahi* who later goes back to the legislative council and unscrupulously uses money in the bargain. Khanna, a banker, businessman and petty industrialist, participates in Civil Disobedience only to then start making money by foul means. Omkarnath, a nationalist journalist, is basically a self-seeker for whom nationalism is a matter of self-promotion. *Godan's* world is sad and cheerless, and its basic theme is exploitation. In the novel, it is not the wickedness of individuals that leads them to oppress and exploit their poorer fellow human beings; rather exploitation is the result of certain socio-economic and political arrangements within the society. *Godan* shows that zamindars do not exist in isolation as an exploiting class, but are, in reality, part of a vast and complex network of exploitation in which businessmen, industrialists and zamindars together have a vested interest. This network is supported by the existing political order. Moreover, the antagonisms among these various moneyed interests are kept aside, and a joint united front is put up whenever their supremacy is threatened. So Rai Saheb, despite being a kind zamindar, says, "I

Godan: A Masterpiece

cannot set aside my self-interest." *Godan* thus argues that the oppressed classes will not have a better deal if those belonging to the dominant classes are individually kind, and hints at an overhaul of the socio-economic system. It brings out the duality of class and nation, and argues that freedom for the nation should not be freedom of the dominant classes to exploit the wretched of the society.

Duality of Class and Nation

Premchand's novel *Premashrama*, which he began to write in the year after the Russian Revolution, shows Balraj, an angry young villager, exhorting his fellow villagers to fight against injustice and oppression following the example of Russia. Since India was struggling against a firmly entrenched imperialist power, a united front of all the classes within the Indian society had to be forged, and this meant at least some compromise with vested interests. Moreover, it was difficult to have clear preferences—while if the influence of socialist ideas pointed to the possibility of class interests being resolved by conflict, the Gandhian influence pointed towards trusteeship and change of heart. Premchand's work, representative of his times, suggested that no clear ideological choices could be made during the freedom struggle. While writing *Godan* itself, he wrote a letter that went against the logic of the novel: He wrote: "Revolution is the failure of saner methods…It is the people's character that is the deciding factor. No social system can flourish unless we are individually lifted. What fate a revolution may lead us to is doubtful. It may lead us to worse forms of dictatorship denying all personal liberty. I do want to overhaul, but not to destroy."

Ideological Contradictions

Scholars are divided over the literary influence on Premchand. While some scholars have argued that after the initial Gandhian influence Premchand was able to finally opt for a radical progressive position, others say that he remained a Gandhian till the end. However, their explanations might well have been attempts to simplify a complex historical situation. For example, the 'Kallol' group in Bengal, a group that had among its members the famous radical nationalist poet, Qazi Nazrul Islam, was progressive and realistic. This group had consciously moved away from the life of the privileged to write about the oppressed and deprived. However, despite having raised the cry of revolt more vocally than Premchand, they could not entirely shake off the influence of their social background and so failed to present a clear-cut ideological position.

Influences on Premchand

At the other end of the literary spectrum were the novels of Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya (1876-1938), the famous Bengali novelist whose work questioned some of the cherished values of middle class society and highlighted the cheerless existence of women. An admirer of Gandhi who also had close personal relations with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Saratchandra was even a member of the Congress. At the same time, he wrote *Pather Dabi* (1926), a novel that idealised those who followed the path of revolutionary violence to liberate India. The government banned this novel. Saratchandra also wrote *Bipradas* between 1929 and 1931, a period when the Congress adopted *Purna Swaraj* as its goal and launched the Civil Disobedience Movement; in the novel a zamindar is worshipped by his *raiyat* to such an extent that the latter refuse to respond to the appeals of nationalism.

Saratchandra

The literature of the period reflected these diametrically opposite pulls which lay below the consciously stated positions. So, it happened that when the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) was formed in order to promote progressive ideas through literature, Premchand was requested to preside at its first session (1936), even though he was unwilling to support the idea of class war. As a result, one cannot assume that because Premchand presided over the first session of the PWA, he was very progressive. The literary movement too was not independent of its members. While laying down neat principles and objectives, any movement can isolate itself formally from other movements and organisations in society, but it cannot ensure that its followers actually share in their entirety its principles and objectives. This is because individuals constituting a movement remain open to other influences as well. Thus, the literature of the last 30 years of the freedom struggle mirrors an awareness of the socio-economic issues that people grappled with, even as they were fighting for independence. People came under the influence of different, even opposing, ideological

Different Ideological Currents

currents, but did not always realise the contradictory nature of these ideological positions. Premchand's work is the most telling pointer of the contradictory influences that were at work then. The novels *Karmabhumi, Ranghbhumi* and *Godan* provide the historian with insights for seeing the dialectical operation of ideology and material interests.

Another writer whose work provides insights into the complex interplay of forces that went into the making of the Indian freedom struggle is the Bengali novelist, Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay (1898-1971). His novels *Ganadevata* and *Panchagram* describe the disintegration of village society under the impact of exploitation and industrialisation, through the story of the communities of five villages. Just as *Godan* with its two villages and *Ranghbhumi* with one village depict the tragic fate of society as a whole, *Tarashankar* acquaints the reader with pre-independence India from the vantage point of the deprived and the dispossessed in five villages.

Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay

Writing feelingly about the growing burden of oppression on the poorer sections of the village, Tarashankar, at the same time, betrays in these novels an ideological flux. His unmistakable sympathy for the poor and the oppressed is accompanied by an equal sympathy for the culture that was associated with the disintegrating order. His novels revealed the coexistence of an implicit ideological radicalism with social conservatism.

Similarly, in contemporary Gujarati literature, K.M. Munshi was a leading lawyer and a literary figure who was also a member of the Congress. As a prominent Congress leader, he subscribed to a secular ideology, but virtually the whole of his work as a novelist not only invokes a glorious Hindu past but also promotes the Hindu concept of Indian nationalism.

K.M. Munshi

The revival of interest in literary matters and the emergence of literary figures were the outcomes of the Swadeshi and terrorist movements which started in two widely separated areas of the Madras presidency in the post-1905 period. It was a fallout of the tumult raging at that time in different areas of Bengal. The first was the delta region of Andhra where in towns like Kakinada, Masulipatam and Rajamundhry meetings were held from 1906 onwards to express solidarity with Bengal. People and students in such towns began taking part in what came to be known as the *Vandemataram Movement*, giving rise to a new interest in Telugu literature and history. The second was the Tuticorin port of the Tirunelveli district, regarded as the only place in Madras displaying anti-British sentiments. It found expression in the launch of a shipping company to jeopardise British commercial interests. The movement took a turn towards radicalism in 1908 when extremist leaders addressed meetings in fiery language and repressive measures against them brought protest strikes, attacks on government properties and the inevitable police firing in the wake. After the removal of the principal extremist leaders, Tirunelveli radicals "formed a small terrorist group which was responsible for the murder of district magistrate Ashe in June 1911. The small group of Tamilian revolutionaries incidentally included a major poet, Subramania Bharati, a Tirunelveli Bramhan critical of caste who contributed immensely to the emerging Tamil nationalism.

Subramania Bharati (1882-1921)

A revolutionary poet, social reformer and freedom fighter of South India, Subramania Bharati was renowned for his beautiful verses celebrating the freedom struggle and became the epitome of Tamil nationalism. His *Kuyil Pattu*, a collection of love songs, can be considered the counterpart of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. Bharati was born on December 11, 1882 in Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu. His poetic genius earned him the title of 'Bharati' at the age of eleven in a literary contest. He was educated at the Hindu College School in Tirunelveli and gained proficiency in Sanskrit and Hindi. He began teaching in Ettayapuram in 1902 to earn his living. During this period, he voraciously studied English poetical works and wrote for newspapers under the pseudonym 'Shelly Dasan'. He became assistant editor of *Swadesamitran* in 1902 and later the editor of *Chakravarthini*.

Epitome of Tamil Nationalism

It was in 1905 that Bharati flung himself into the freedom struggle heart and soul. His meetings with a number of nationalist and spiritual leaders proved a great source of inspiration. His revolutionary writings as the editor of a daily, *India* and in the English weekly, *Bala Bharati* infuriated the British

Revolutionary Writings

Indian Government. In 1908, he released his first book of poems, *Swatantra Pattu* (Songs of Freedom), which was not only a literary masterpiece but also a strong call for freedom from foreign rule.

Evading arrest, Bharati escaped to Pondicherry in 1908 which was soon to emerge as the refuge for many political leaders. His ten years spent in Pondicherry are considered the best period of his growth as a poet. Here, while continuing his strife with the British Government, Bharati had the occasion to meet V.V.S. Aiyar and Sri Aurobindo. The meeting with Aurobindo greatly heartened Bharati; he learned to view the glories of his motherland and began admiring them in his poems. He was arrested in 1918 near Cuddalore. In 1919 in Madras, he met Gandhiji to whom he dedicated a poem, "*To Mahatma Gandhi*". Bharati died on September 12, 1921, about two months after he was attacked by an elephant at the Triplicane temple in Madras.

Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938): The Pan-Islamic Poet

The most influential of the 20th century Muslim thinkers in India was Muhammad Iqbal. Born in Sialkot in 1873, Iqbal studied under an oriental scholar who taught him Persian and Arabic and introduced him to the *Quran*. He later shifted to an English school and pursued his higher studies at Lahore in the Government College affiliated to Lahore University. Iqbal was endowed with unusual intellectual gifts; and he was a poet who mastered the art of composing poetry in Urdu and Persian. Religion, philosophy and literature being his main interests, Iqbal had a brilliant academic career. Following a stint in Europe (in Cambridge and Munich), Iqbal returned home in 1908 and took up the Professorship of Philosophy in the Government College. He was allowed to set up practice in law. But he disliked government service since it placed limits upon the expression of his thought and independence. At the same time, his heart was not in the legal profession either, and he continued to cultivate poetry.

Life and Career

During his stay in Europe, the imperialism practised by the European nations filled Iqbal with revulsion and he reacted by composing poems that rejected both imperialism and nationalism: 'Every country is my country, for every country is the country of my God.' The 1905 Partition of Bengal and the subsequent agitation against it led many Muslims to turn away from the nascent Indian nationalist movement. These Muslims considered Partition as a concession to their interests and were offended by the agitation. As a result Hindu-Muslim relations became embittered, as had been Viceroy Curzon's intention. Europe had turned Iqbal into a pan-Islamist anti-nationalist, reacting sharply against humiliation and frustration; the agitation against Partition (1905) turned him into a communalist. Later developments in the world and in India strengthened his beliefs. During this period he wrote mostly in Persian and a little in Urdu, to symbolise his faith in a universal Islam. He limited his public activity to annual excursions to the meetings of the *Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam* where he read a poem composed for the occasion. In fact, poetry was his response to the tumultuous events that were taking place worldwide—wars, the toppling of empires, and the rising of the Indian masses under Gandhi's leadership. In 1927, Iqbal entered the political arena and spent the last decade of his life devoted to the realisation of his programme for the Muslim community. He died in 1938.

Response to Political Events

The two powerful influences on Iqbal's mind were the *Quran* and Western philosophy and science, especially of the later 19th and early 20th centuries when anti-intellectual philosophies such as those of Nietzsche, William James, and Henry Bergson were becoming popular. Like his contemporaries Tagore and Aurobindo Ghose, Iqbal laid stress upon the supremacy of emotion over intellect in his thought. He grappled with the same set of problems as the others, but in the frame of Islamic culture, and he emphasised on subjective experience. Iqbal's approach towards the study of the *Quran* was orthodox; he believed it to be a divinely inspired book whose words were revealed to the Prophet Mohammad by God. He believed that the Prophet underwent a religious experience similar to that of the mystic saint, only that it was more exalted. Though he built his thought structure on the basis of the *Quran*, he drew his arguments from Western philosophy. He strove to prove that the *Quran* teaches the most perfect religion, which is a sure

Ideological Influences

guide in the spiritual and temporal affairs of men; the *Quran* is the final revelation of God; the teachings of Islam, being universal, eternal and unalterable, were superior to the teachings of all other religious systems; Muhammad is the last of the Prophets; and that the light provided by the *Quran* and the Prophet must be used by humanity to achieve the ends prescribed. However, intellectuals and historians treat Iqbal's philosophical musings with caution. While his poetry is appreciated, his philosophy is regarded to be attractive but unconvincing. Cantwell Smith, a student of Islamic thought, says, "He is the Sufi who attacked Sufism, and perhaps the liberal who attacked liberalism. The historical consequence of his impact seems on the whole to have served to weaken liberalism among Indian Muslims and to help replace it with an illiberal nationalistic and apologetic dynamism."

Cantwell Smith's Views

Iqbal may be regarded as a revivalist who believed that the Islam taught by Muhammad embodied all the values of modern liberalism, and that Islam's understanding of these values was more profound than that of the West. The great advances made by the West in some spheres of culture, Iqbal believed, had been built on the foundations laid by Muslims, for instance, in physical and biological sciences. But the West's repudiation of religion, its principles of social organisation and its materialistic outlook were causing its self-destruction. Instead of looking to the West, the Muslims needed to recover the spirit of faith that had inspired them in the days of the Prophet and his immediate successors. Tarachand remarks that Iqbal's social philosophy is only apparently liberal, for he ignored and repudiated the basic principles of liberalism—freedom of the mind, independence of the individual from authoritarianism of every sort, religious, social, intellectual; critical examination of the dogmas of religion, morality and politics; society bound by human law made through democratic representative institutions. To Iqbal, Islam was a divinely revealed faith above and beyond rational discussion, and he did not believe in any form of religious criticism as a result.

The Revivalist

Iqbal entered public life in 1927, and was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly. In 1930, he gave evidence before the Simon Commission and presided over the Allahabad session of the Muslim League where he presented his scheme for an autonomous Muslim region in India's northwest as a solution for the communal problem. He attended the Second Round Table Conference, 1931-32, in London. Taking an active part in the Muslim League politics, he supported the League in preparing for elections under the Government of India Act, 1935. He managed to convert Jinnah to his point of view on the question of redistribution of Indian provinces on communal lines.

Entry into Politics

Iqbal's reputation as the guide, philosopher and friend of Indian Muslims grew after his return from Europe in 1908. The publication of his long poem *Asrar-i-Khudi* brought him recognition as the poet of Islam par excellence. It was translated by Prof R.A. Nicholson and published in English in 1920 and drew favourable notice of thinkers like McTagart and Herbert Reade. This greatly enhanced Iqbal's prestige in the eyes of his community. He was conferred knighthood in 1922 and his pre-eminence as a man of letters was established. The Muslim community was very proud that a Muslim poet had gained a position similar to that of Tagore. Iqbal, speaking with greater authority, now freely chastised the community for its apologetic, pusillanimous, defensive attitudes and lectured to them on the correct meaning of the *Quran.* His poems together with his lectures on 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' delivered in Madras and Hyderabad, helped to bring about a change to an assertive, aggressive Islam, confident of its superiority as a religion, philosophy and a social, economic and political system.

Recognition of Iqbal's Poetic Genius

Iqbal had a three-fold influence on politics. First, he gave a great impetus to emotionalism and reduced the value of reason a great deal. The result was a paralysis of clear thinking in politics and an upsurge of unreasonableness leading to violence. Second, he laid so much emphasis on the uniqueness of Islam and Islamic civilisation that he rendered almost nil any political accommodation of Muslims with other communities. Third, his exclusive reliance on religion to the neglect of all other factors—

His Limitations

ideological like patriotism and material like economy—led to a dilution of his historical analysis and sociological formulations. The religious approach prevented a proper understanding of the trends of the modern world, and obscured the vision of the future. His ideas and indoctrination played no small role in the partition of India.

A Critique of His Thoughts and Ideas *Ishq* or love is the word he used to express his exaltation of feeling and emotion, which permeates all his works, poetical and philosophical. He contrasted love with reason in numerous verses and in hundreds of ways, and, in general, downplayed reason. In his scheme of things, feeling or intuition is regarded as a superior source of knowledge. He believed that the foundation of society should be laid on pure faith that is extra-rational: "Reason is really analytic, and rationalism threatens disintegration to the life of the community which has been bound together by the force of religion…. (and)… the unity of society is based on faith, and faith is not rational but communal." Continuing, he proclaims : "If you are wise pay no attention to intellect…. (because)…Dominion, contentment, religion are all miracles of love; the wielders of crown and ring are but humble slaves of love. Love is space and the dweller in space, love is time and earth, love is faith incarnate, and faith is the opener of doors." Just as the country of England was of the English and Germany of the Germans, Iqbal regarded the society of Islam as the abode of Muslims. To him, "The Muslim society was a mental certainty and not an existence outside the mind" which he believed to be true of every society. At the same time, Iqbal was of the view that there was a radical difference between the Muslim society and other societies. "The basic principle of our society is neither community of language, nor of patriachy, nor of economic needs but we are all partners in the fraternity which was established by the Prophet, on whom be God's praise and peace, for the reason that the source of our beliefs concerning the phenomenon of creation is one, and we are all equally inheritors of the traditions which our history has bequeathed to us. Islam is indifferent to all material bonds, and its social system rests upon a specially abstract concept whose embodiment is in the collectivity of persons who are by nature capable of growth and expansion."

Love, Faith and Reason

This is an ambiguous statement, seemingly a contradiction of Iqbal's own philosophy which makes material nature an inherent part of the spirit, and considers the world of time and space as part of the creative activity of the Self. It is an attempt to separate a mental concept from an external existence in the constitution of society and seems like a surrender to Platonism which assumes, as if it is a self-evident truth, the reality of idea and the unreality of phenomena. So, in page 216 of *Zabar-i-Ajam*, Iqbal says: "To call body and soul two is theological disputation. To see body and soul as two is unlawful." Laying exclusive emphasis on man's moral and religious needs, Iqbal totally denies the body's needs—needs which can only be satisfied by a land and the bounties it promises. Without a defining territory, a society is inconceivable and is as important and as indispensable as its human base. Also, his argument that religious factors are the causes of the rise and fall of nations is faulty. In the formation of societies and states, kinship and economic needs had played a much bigger role than religion. Generally, all primitive societies were formed on a tribal basis, in which the people of the tribe, their hereditary nobility and a chosen royal family played a significant role. For example, the Teutonic, Gothic and other tribes settled in different parts of Europe gave rise, on the decline of the Roman Empire, to the medieval European kingdoms of England, France, Germany, Spain, etc. Their subsequent conversion to Christianity had little or no effect upon their political unification. Various ambitious kings like Charlemagne, the Ottos and the Fredericks used the Roman Catholic Church or the Papacy to establish empires comprising all the Christian peoples but failed, not due to shortcomings of religion but due to the emergence of powerful economic forces which shattered the feudal organisation of society. Therefore, religion is not the sole or even the main organising factor in the formation of societies and states neither is it a powerful cementing force. The political and religious history of Islam does not support such a view. Conflict and war mark the history of Islam: Shias versus Sunnis, Ghaznavids and Saljukids versus the Khilafat of Baghdad, the Mughals of India against

Philosophical Contradictions

the Uzbegs of Central Asia as also the Shia sultans of the Deccan. In recent times, despite the threat of western neo-colonialism and Israeli obtuseness, there is very little sign of Muslim or even Arab unity.

Iqbal, however, downplayed the differences among various Muslim sects, asserting that these were minor matters which the mullahs blew out of proportions. As the sects agreed on the major questions of faith, there was nothing to worry about. His opinion flew in the face of facts: whatever be the nature of differences they often led to violence and bloodshed as would be seen in the relations of the Idrises of north Africa, Mahdavis of Sudan, Sansuis of Liberia, Wahabis of Arabia, Ismailis, etc.—persecutors and blood-letters of one another. Having regard to the fact that religion is a complex matter of inner beliefs and external manifestations, of faith, dogmas, doctrines, rites and ceremonies and of discipline and organisation, Iqbal's attempts to define religion in cut and dried propositions appear simplistic. The two self-evident propositions he puts forward to identify Islam are: "God is one and the Prophet Muhammad is the last of those line of holy men who have appeared from time to time to guide mankind to the right ways of living." If these propositions are considered along with the injunctions of the *Quran* on matters of belief, worship, individual and collective conduct, they give rise to numerous interpretations according to the differences of approach of the interpreters and the trends of the age in which they live. This is how cults, sects, heterodoxy, orthodoxy, schisms and dissents evolved in Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, and Islam is no exception. All religions passed through such phases; all of them are the victims of non-conformity, dissidence and factional quarrel. "This is one of the principal reasons why such a protean phenomenon such as religion cannot serve as a stable base for the structure of a state."(Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*)

His Religious Propositions

History tells us that within the Islamic world itself attempts were constantly made to keep politics out of religion. The Umayyad Khilafat considered themselves to be racially superior to non-Arab Muslims and were known for their indifference to Islam. They were the people who separated the religious function of the Khalifa from the secular, the Imamate and the Amirate, in stark contrast and contradiction to the basic Islamic conception of the unity of the two. This gulf was widened by the Abbasids, and the appearance of the Sufis and Ulama, exclusively devoted to religious pursuits, caused a further breach in the citadel of unity of religious and worldly life.

Politics and Religions

"This separation was accentuated by the Abbasids when they departed from the pristine simplicity of Islam and adopted the pomp and show of the great Persian emperors, imitating their customs and manners, their lofty exclusiveness, and royal courtly etiquette. They borrowed the principles of government and procedures of administration from the Byzantine and Sasanid chanceries. Henceforward many of the great ideals and principles of life, which Muhammad had taught and his immediate successors enforced, were abandoned in practice. The Muslim monarchs and sultans tore the unity of the Islamic polity (*Millat*) into shreds, shrunk the concept of the *Millat* into a minimum of regulations about personal laws and religious rites. They left the administration of Shariat to Ulama and in the affairs of government they followed "la raison d'etat" rather than the canon law. The Muslim society retained the husk but let go the kernel. The ideas of equality of man, dignity of woman, emancipation of slaves, aid to the poor, the orphaned, and the widowed, charity, avoidance of imperial dominion and expansion by arms, and others were disregarded. Mighty empires were erected, wealth, power and luxury were pursued, arts encompassing painting, architecture, literature and music were fostered (not that it was a bad thing!), the aristocracy of the sword was pampered, the sycophantic theologians and literary writers were encouraged, reliance upon military force replaced moral ends and monarchy by heredity to leadership by popular consent."(Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*)

Disintegration of Islamic Poetry

The problem of religious revival was not what the Muslims were facing; they were confronted with the question of radical change, from medievalism to modernism, from static traditional ways to

Rise of Modern Literature in Indian Languages

The language of the Mughal ruling class in 18th century India was Persian which was, thus, also the official language. The learned communities of the Hindus and the Muslims expressed their scholarly thoughts in Sanskrit and Arabic respectively. During the time of Lord Wellesley in the early 19th century, the Mughal tradition was replaced by British domination, and in 1835, the British adopted an educational policy which favoured English education. These developments fostered important changes in Indian non-classical languages, and the impact was felt earlier in some languages than in others: Bengali in the early 19th century; Marathi in the mid-19th century; Urdu, Gujarati, Assamese, Hindi, Oriya, Sindhi, Telugu and Tamil in the late 19th century; and Kannada, Punjabi, Kashmiri and Dogri in the 20th century.

Changes in Indian Non-Classical Languages

An important change was the growth of vernacular languages as distinct from the classical languages. The vernacular languages acquired a standard form and a new prose literature. The standardisation of script and language was closely connected with the growth of a printed prose literature from around 1800. This gathered momentum as the spread of English education deepened the impact of the West as well as English literature on the vernacular literatures of India.

Standardisation of Vernaculars

(The year 1800 is regarded as pivotal in the development of prose writing in most Indian languages. That was the time when the Baptist Mission Press of Srirampur and the Fort William College of Calcutta started acting in conjunction to put forth a large volume of printed prose in several modern Indian languages.)

New Literatures in Vernaculars

Assamese: Though the origin of the Assamese language can be traced back to the seventh century, literature in that language appeared only in the 13th century. The translation of the *Dronaparva* of the *Mahabharata* by Rudra Kundali and of the dramatic incidents of the *Ramayana* by Madhav Kundali are some of the early works in Assamese. Hema Saraswati with his *Prahladcharita* could be called the first poet in Assamese. *Ankiya Nats*, a collection of a number of one-act plays interspersed with songs, was composed by Sankaradeva, the great saint poet. Bhattadeva is credited with translating the *Bhagavata* and the *Gita* into Assamese. Modern Assamese prose emerged from Burunjis.

Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, Lakshminath Bezbarua and Hemchandra Goswami brought a renaissance in Assamese literature in the 19th century. They founded the monthly *Janaki* and ushered in the romantic period. Lakshminath Bezbarua made a significant contribution to the development of short story and poetry in Assamese. Bezbarua, regarded as the greatest figure in modern Assamese literature, is famous for his patriotic songs such as *Amar Janam Bhumi, Mor Desh* and *Bin Baragi*. Padmanath Gohain and Rajanikanta Bardoloi were pioneers in the development of Assamese novel.

Bezbarua and Others

Bengali: Bengali emerged as a separate language probably around AD 1000. The spread of Vaishnavism in Bengal in the 14th century contributed a great deal to the development of Bengali literature. Devotional lyrics of Chandidas and Krittivasa's *Ramayana* are famous Bengali creations of early years. Krishnadas Kaviraj is famous for his *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, created in the 16th century. *Mangal Kavya*, long narrative poems extolling the triumphs of a god or a goddess over his or her rivals, became a popular literary form. Three major kinds of *Mangal Kavya* are *Mansamangal, Chandimangal* and *Dharmamangal*.

Mangal Kavya

The early Bengali prose literature of the 19th century were the products of the growing impact of institutions like the Hindu College (1831) and the Calcutta School Books Society (1817), the circulation of newspapers like the *Samachar Darpan* (1818), *Sambad Kaumudi* (1821) and *Samachar Chandrika* (1822), and serious writings of Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore and Akshay Kumar Dutt.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt was the first to break free of traditionalism and successfully experiment with naturalising European forms into Bengali poetry. He is known for his epic in blank verse, *Meghnad Badh* (1861), an unothodox interpretation of an episode from the *Ramayana*. But it was Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) who best represented the new spirit in India. His patriotic ideal, which embraced the whole of humanity and was inspired by the spirit of reason and freedom, found expression in the famous poem *Gitanjali*, which won him the Nobel Prize in 1913.

Michael Madhusudan

Calcutta was the scene of the birth of modern drama in Bengali. The first Bengali stage-play produced in Calcutta was by a Russian adventurer-cum-Indologist, Lebedev, in 1795. It was an adaptation of an English comedy, *The Disguise,* by Richard Paul Jordell. It was in Calcutta that the first public theatre

was set up in 1872. The first original play in Bengali was *Kulin Kulasarvasva*, a social satire on polygamy among the Kulin Brahmans, by Pandit Ramnarayan. However, it is Madhusudan Dutt who is credited with raising modern Indian drama to the status of literature. His first play was *Sharmistha* (1859) which was followed by his masterpiece *Krishnakumari* (1861). Dinabandhu Mitra wrote the celebrated play *Nildarpan* (1860) on the oppression of the indigo planters in Bengal. Reverend J. Long, the translator of the play, was imprisoned on the charge of sedition. *Kamaley Kamini* was another important play by Dinabandhu. Bengali drama played an important role in conveying nationalism and ideas of social change to the common man.

Bengali Drama

Many modern novels were published in Bengali. Pyarechand Mitra's *Alaler Gharer Dulal,* which is sometimes cited as the first novel in Bengali, was a satirical sketch published in 1858. In 1862, Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay published two romantic historical tales titled *Aitihasik Upanyas* (Historical Fiction).

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's first original work in Bengali, *Durgesh Nandini* (1865) was the first full-fledged novel in any Indian language. *Ananda Math* (1882), set against the background of the Sanyasi rebellion in Bengal, and *Rathasthan* (1881), with Rajput rebellion against Aurangzeb as its theme, are other notable novels by Bankim Chandra, who is considered to be the father of modern novel in India. Apart from these three famous historical novels, Bankim Chandra wrote two social novels, *Bishabriksha* (1873) and *Krishna Kanteyr Will* (1878). Rabindranath Tagore's *Chokher Bali* (1903) and *Gora* (1910) projected the tendency towards psychological realism in the beginning of the 20th century. Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay's *Pather Panchali* and *Aranyak* and Tarashankar Bandopadhyay's *Gana Devata* and *Arogyaniketan* are famous post-Tagore novels in Bengali.

Bankim Chandra's Works

Gujarati: Gujarati evolved from a dialect of the Gurjara apabhramsa and assumed a distinctive form under the influence of Jainism by the 12th century. Jain authors transformed the *Rasa*, originally a folk dance, into melodious dramatic poetry. The first distinctly Gujarati literary work was *Bharateswara Bahubali Rasa* (1185) of Salibhadra. *Phagu* is a shorter and more lyrical form of Gujarati poetry. The main theme of *Phagu* is *viraha* or separation. Gujarati literature came under tremendous impact of the Bhakti movement in the 15th century. Narsi Mehta's *Govinda Gaman* and *Sudama Charita* are famous Gujarati works influenced by the Bhakti movement. Bhalana translated Banabhatta's *Kadambari* into Gujarati.

Modern Gujarati literature came into existence in the 19th century with the rise of poets like Narmadashankar Lalshankar (1833-86) and Dalapatram. Narmadashankar is remembered today as the maker of modern Gujarati literature. His poem *Hinduani Padati* (Downfall of the Hindus, 1864) gives a stirring nationalist call to Gujarat. *Karana Ghela* (1866) by Narmadashankar was the first novel to be written in Gujarati. However, the most outstanding Gujarati novel of the period was *Saraswatichandra* (printed in four parts between 1887 and 1900) by Govardhanram Tripathi. A love story with social relevance, the work is considered as one of the classics of modern India. Ranchodbhai Udayram's *Laita-dukha-darsaka* (1804) is a notable early Gujarati play.

Narmadashankar

Hindi: The term Hindi is used loosely to denote several dialects which had evolved distinct literary forms of their own over five centuries. What is called Hindi today has vast heritage of Surdas (Brajabhasa), Tulsidas (Avadhi), Kabir (Bhojpuri) and Mirabai (Rajasthani). But its standard literary form is of recent origin, not earlier than the first decade of the 19th century. It is built on the following four language groups (classified by Grierson) of different origins. (a) Rajasthani: Mewati, Marwari, Jaipuri, Malvi, etc.; (b) Western Hindi: Bangru (Haryana), Brajbhasa (Mathura), Khari Boli (Delhi and Meerut), Bundeli (Bundelkhand), etc.; (c) Eastern Hindi: Baiswari or Awadhi, Bagheli, Chattisgarhi, etc.; and (d) Bihari: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi, etc. The early period of Hindi literature is known as *Adikala* which covers the period between the 12th century and the mid-14th century. The period was embellished by the Siddhas, the Jain poets, the *Nathapanthis* and the heroic poets. Chand Bardai's *Prithviraja Rasa* was the earliest representation of the tradition of secular writing in Hindi (of the Rajasthani dialect). The period between the mid-14th century and the mid-17th century is known as *Bhakt Kala* in Hindi literature. This period was dominated by the Bhakti poets such as Kabir, Nanak, Tulsidas, Vidyapati, etc. *Ritikavyakal* refers to the period between the mid-17th century and the mid-19th century. In the literature of this period, special predominance was given to the erotic element. Historic epics (such as Mohammad Jaisi's *Padmavat*) were also written in the *Ritikavyakal* period.

Four Groups of Language

Three Periods of Hindi Literature

The second half of the 19th century saw Hindi literature enter the modern period with the emer-

gence of Bharatendu Harishchandra, Mahavirprasad Dwivedi and Makhanlal Chaturvedi. Bharatendu is regarded as the father of modern Hindi literature. His writings reflect the urges and impulses of an age in which the old and the new were inextricably woven together. Mahavirprasad Dwivedi and Maithilisharan Gupta brought a new vigour to literary activities and rejuvenated prose writing in Hindi.

Bharatendu Harishchandra

In the early 20th century, under the influence of Tagore and the Europeans, a new romantic upsurge known as *Chhayabada* emerged in Hindi literature. Jayshankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathy 'Nirala', Sumitra Nandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma were the leading scholars of *Chhayabadi* school. Jayashankar Prasad's *Kamayani* (1936) presents the psycho-sexual journey of man through time and space. Along with *Chhayabada*, two new trends emerged—*Pragativada* (progressivism) consisting of people's poetry inspired by Marxian ideology, and *Prayagavada* (experimentalism), looking upon experiment or constant quest as the basic element of life and literature. While Yashpal and Nagarjun represented the first school, Ageya Vatsayan belonged to the second school. In the field of fiction, Sharat Chandra Chatterjee's *Grihadaha* (1920) and Premchand's *Godan* (1936) were leading creations. In the field of drama, the first original drama in the real sense was Gopal Chandra's *Nahusa Nataka*. His son Bharatendu Harishchandra effected a compromise between the technique of Sanskrit and Western drama to evolve Hindi prose drama.

Chhayabadi School

Kannada: *Voddaradhana* by a Jaina is believed to be the earliest work in Kannada. However, the earliest extant work in the language is *Kavirajamarga* by the Rashtrakuta King Amoghvarsha (9th century). Pampa, the father of Kannada poetry, was the master pioneer of *Campu* style of writing which was perfected in the 10th century, known as the golden age of Kannada language. In the 12th century, Basaveshwara introduced the *Vachana* style in Kannada writing. Kannada writing flourished greatly during the reign of the Vijayanagar kings as also under their feudatories during 14th-16th centuries.

Pampa—Father of Kannada Poetry

Modern Kannada literature began in the mid-19th century and incorporated two aspects—the absorption of western ideas and the rediscovery of the past. Lakshminaranappa (Muddana) wrote some good works in prose. B.M. Srikanthayya in his *Inglis Githagalu* gave Kannada poetry a conscious modern direction. D.R. Bendre was a very famous Kannada poet. Venkataramana Shastri's play *Iggapa Heggadeva Vivahaprahasana* deals with the social evil of the sale of girls in the marriage market.

Kashmiri: Kashmiri language separated itself from Apabhramsa parentage around the 10th century. In the beginning, Saiva Sanskrit texts had a great impact on Kashmiri literature. Lal Ded, a Saivite mystic, and Nand Rishi were great Kashmiri poets of the 14th century. Haba Khatoon was a famous poetess of the 16th century when Kashmiri literature came under the influence of Islam and Hinduism. The modern age in Kashmiri literature begins in early 20th century with Mahjur, whose work embodies many of the new strains, knowledge of Western thought and literature and developments in the literatures of other north Indian languages, while incorporating the best tradition of older secular Kashmiri poetry. Abdul Ahad Azad, Daya Ram Ganju, Zinda Kaul, Ghulam Hasan Beg 'Arif' are other well-known poets of the new age. The Kashmiri script is somewhat difficult to print and is probably the reason for there being not many works in the language.

Prominent Poets

Konkani: Much of the early Konkani literature has been lost. As a language it is close to Marathi, Hindi and Sanskrit, and Devanagari is its natural script. Tales of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* translated from Marathi by Krishnadas Sharma in the 16th century, are extant in the Roman script. A significant amount of Christian literature came to be written in Konkani in the 17th century. Names of note are Father Joachim de Miranda who wrote the longest Konkani hymn, *Rigla Jesu Mollantum,* and Dona Barreto who wrote *Papience Xerathini*. The modern period which began in the 20th century was epitomised by Shenoi Goembab. Some writers of note of the new age are B. Borkar (Paimzonam), M. Sardesai who is a poet and a novelist, Reginaldo Fernandez and V.J.P. Sakthana, both novelists.

Malayalam: Malayalam had developed as an independent language by the 10th century. In its early stage, Malayalam was greatly influenced by Tamil and Sanskrit in the 14th century resulting in the development of a special variety of literary dialect known as *Manipravalam*. Ramanuja Ehhuthachan (16th century) represented grandeur in Malayalam poetry. His *Adhyatama Ramayana* and *Bhagavatam* are classics in Malayalam literature. Ehhuthachan popularised *Kilipattu*, the song of the parrot. In the 18th century, Kunchan Nambiar popularised Malayalam among the common masses through his *Thullas*, popular narrative poems full of social criticism and satire. *Atta-katha*, the literature form of Kathakali performance, developed in the same period.

Ramanuja Ehhuthachan

In the 19th century, two factors gave a fillip to the development of Malayalam as a literary language, namely, the new system of education that had taken roots through the activities of the missionaries and the influence of Madras University established in 1857. Kerala Varma's name is famous for devising a programme for developing the language by the production of textbooks suitable for all classes. The *Venmani* school of poets broke off the shackles of Sanskrit and developed a popular diction to take literature to the masses. Besides, there were missionaries like Benjamin Bulley and Hermann Gundert who compiled dictionaries. Rajaraja Varma gave Malayalam an authoritative grammar (*Kerala Puniniyam*) and standardised Malayalam metres. With Kumaran Asan and Vallathol Narayana Menon, modernism gained momentum. Vallathol brought spirit of nationalism into Malayalam literature. Asan's writings were motivated by deep social urges. Ulloor S. Parameshwara Iyer attempted to reconcile the classical with the modern spirit. C.V. Raman Pillai's trilogy, *Martanda Varma, Dharmaraja*, and *Rama Raja Bahadur,* evoked the time of troubles in 18th century Kerala. By the 1930s, a new revolt had begun to manifest itself and was led by Changampuzha Krishna Pillai. Symbolism became prominent and G. Sankara Kurup, the first ever Jnanpith Award winner, was its outstanding exponent.

The Venmani School

Manipuri: A language of Tibeto-Burmese origin, Manipuri is a combination of seven dialects. The language is ancient, but its literature, though rich, belongs to the folk tradition up to practically the 19th century. Some of the works that are famous are the *Kumaba*, a royal chronicle; *Numit Kappa*, a prose work circa the 10th century; *Naotinkhon Phambal Kaba* of the 16th-17th centuries; and *Lelthak Lekharal* of the 17th century. Adaptations and translations of Sanskrit classics are also to be found. It was only in the early 20th century that modern Manipuri poetry began to get a form. Kamal Singh is a noted writer in Manipuri who has composed the poetic work, *Le Paren*, as well as a novel, *Madhabi*. A.D. Singh is a well-known poet who has written an outstanding epic, *Kamsa Badha*.

Kamal Singh

Marathi: Marathi literature emerged in the later half of the 13th century. For about 300 years, Marathi literature was mainly philosophical and religious in spirit. The *Natha* cult and the *Mahanubhavas* sect made a significant contribution to Marathi literature. Christian missionaries contributed to the growth of Marathi literature in the 17th century. *Kristapurana* of Father Thomas is a noteworthy example. Tukaram's *Abhangas* made a direct appeal to the people. *Povodas*, ballads of valour and warfare, and *Lavanis*, romantic and erotic poems, were two important forms of Marathi poems in this period. Modern Marathi literature developed in the 19th century. A revolution in poetry was brought about by K.K. Damle alias Keshava Suta who created new norms in the poetry of love, nature, social consciousness and neo-mysticism. By 1930, a group of poets called *Ravi Kiran Mandal* created new patterns of content and prosody. The most noteworthy among them are Madhab Trambyak Patwardhan and Yashwant Dinkar Pendharkar. The first Marathi grammar and the first Marathi dictionary appeared in 1829. Journals became popular. Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jamblekar who started the daily *Darpan* (1831) and the periodical *Digdarshana* (1841) and Bhau Mahajana who founded *Prabhakara* were pioneers of the new prose. The essays of Krishna Hari Chiplunkar and Gopal Hari Deshmukh roused people to a consciousness of their heritage. Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar founded *Kesari* which later attained all-India importance under Lokmanya Tilak. Several of the nationalist leaders did invaluable service to the language with their writings; some such leaders were Jyotiba Phule, Gopal Aggarkar, N.C. Kelkar, V.D. Savarkar and, obviously, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Forms of Poetry

Ravi Kiran Mandal

Tilak and Others

Muktamela (1861) by Lakshman Moreshwar Halbe and *Manjughosa* (1868) by Naro Sadashiv Risbud are the early Marathi novels. The first romantic historical novel *Mochanged* (1871) by Bhikaji Gunjekar is built around a hill fort in Maharashtra which Shivaji captures eventually. Gunjekar is also famous for his other two novels, *Gad Ala Pun Simha Gela* (1903) and *Suryodaya* (1905-08). Hari Narayan Apte did much in the field of the social novel. V.S. Khandekar's *Jayati* won him the Jnanpith Award in 1974. Another Marathi writer to win this award for poetical and other works is V.S. Shirwader, popularly known as *Kusumagraj*. *Ratricha Diwas* by B. S. Mardhekar is the first stream-of-consciousness novel in Marathi. S.N. Pendse is another well-known novelist whose work *Ratha Chakra* is noteworthy.

Other Literary Figures

Marathi drama had its origin in religious celebrations. The form achieved maturity in the work of Annasaheb Kirloskar. The first full-fledged play was *Prasannaraghava* (1851). Dramatists like Vijay Tendulkar and C.T. Dhanolkar have written plays of international repute. Of the numerous languages of India, perhaps Marathi,

Marathi Drama

after Bengali, is the most vigorous in its response to the new age. This has been partly because of its robust intellectual tradition, reinforced by memories of the glory of the erstwhile Maratha empire, and partly because Bombay, like Calcutta, provided a modern cosmopolitan environment.

Nepali: Nepali language has grown from the *Khas Prakrit*. Rich in folk tradition, Nepali literary forms took shape in the 18th century. Early poets of note were Subananda Das, Shakti Ballav Aryal and Udayanand Aryal. The first *Khandakavya* in the language is supposed to be Basant Sharma's *Krishna Charita*. The modern well-known poets are Motiram Bhatta, Balakrishna Sama and Lekharaj. Balakrishna Sama is also a playwright as is S. B. Aryal. Among novelists, the well-known names are Rudraraj Pandey, Shiv Kumar Rai and Pratiman Lama.

Oriya: The origin of Oriya can be traced back to the eighth or ninth century, but literary works of merit appear only in the 13th century. It was in the 14th century with Saraladasa's Oriya version of the *Mahabharata* that Oriya literature assumed a definite character. The *Pancha Sakha* or five poets of the 15th century—Balarama, Ananta, Yasowanta, Jagannatha and Achyutananda—rendered the Sanskrit classics into simple Oriya for the masses to enjoy. Under the Bhakti movement, Chaitanya's influence coloured the literature deeply. Upendra Bhanja was adept with words and his poetry had an erotic element. Vaishnavism produced great lyrical inspiration as also some outstanding poets like Baladeva Rath, Dina Krushna Das, Gopal Krishna and the blind Bhima Bhoi. In the mid-19th century, contact with the West through English education revolutionised Oriya literature. Radhanath Ray is considered the father of modern Oriya poetry; his *Chilika* shows mature poetry at its best. Madhusudan Rao, who founded the Brahmo movement in Orissa, was another great modern poet. It was only in the 19th century that prose came to be written in Oriya. Fakir Mohan Senapati was a major writer of prose besides being a poet and a novelist. The Balasore trio—Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray and Madhusudan Rao—did for Oriya poetry what Madhusudan Dutt had done for Bengali poetry. *Kanchi Kaveri* (1880), the great historical Oriya play by Ramashankar Ray, deals with a romantic episode in the life of King Purushottama Deva of Orissa. In the 20th century, Madhusudan Das became a famous name—Das did not write much but his one song composed for the Oriya movement is still sung in Orissa. The nationalist movement also produced the Satyavadi group of writers whose leader Gopabandhu Das's *Kara Kavita* is very famous.

Saraladasa's Mahabharata

Balasore Trio

Punjabi: According to scholars, Punjabi grew out of the Sauraseni Apabhramsa in the 11th century. Some scholars also see Paisachi influence in its development. The development of modern Punjabi coincided with the formation of the Gurumukhi script by the Sikh Gurus. Literary Punjabi emerged only in the 15th century. A remarkable amount of religious and mystic poetry was produced from the time of Guru Nanak to the time of Guru Gobind Singh, most of which is to be found in the *Adi Granth*. Punjabi poetry was influenced by Sufi and Qissa poetry, genres in which Bulhe Shah and Waris Shah composed beautiful verses. Waris Shah's *Heer Ranjha* (1766) is considered a classic. The earliest specimens of prose in Punjabi are the *Janam Sakhis* (biographies of the Gurus), *Paramarthas* (commentaries on scriptures) and Gurus' sayings. *Prem Sumarg*, said to have been written by Guru Gobind Singh, *Paras Bhag* by Addan Singh, *Gian Ratnavali* by Bhai Mani Singh are some important prose works. The Christian Mission at Ludhiana set up the first printing press in Punjab, and with that was born modern Punjabi literature. Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957) is considered the father of modern Punjabi literature and the best product of the Singh Sabha Movement. His *Rana Surat Singh* was the first successful attempt at blank verse in the language. His novels are historic records. Puran Singh was another notable poet. The nationalist spirit produced poets like Gurmukh Singh Musafir and Hira Singh Dard. Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam brought a progressive note into poetry. Amrita Pritam was given the Jnanpith Award. In the field of drama, I.C. Nanda did some pioneering work. Sant Singh Sekhon and Balawant Gargi have made excellent contributions to drama. Punjabi literature has been well served by journalists. Gurbaksh Singh enriched Punjabi prose through his books and his magazine, *Preet Lairi*. Nanak Singh and Jaswant Singh Kanwal were popular novelists.

Bhai Vir Singh

Amrita Pritam

Sindhi: The earliest poetry in Sindhi that can be traced back to the 14th century was in the form of the *Bayts* of Mamoi Saints. Qadi Qadan was the first notable poet. Shah Karim was a Sufi poet of repute. Sindh's greatest poet is Shah Abdul Latif (late 17th century) whose collection of poems *Rasala* shows a combination of deep thought, graphic description and beauty of language. Besides Abdul Latif, the trinity of Sindhi poets comprised the 18th century writers, Abdul Wahhab (Sachal) and Bhai Chainrai (Sami), the last being a Vedantist. The influence of

Persian poetry is apparent from early 18th century when *Ghazal, Qassida, Rubaiyat* and *Mathnawi* entered Sindhi literature. Subject matter changed from mysticism to romanticism. Khalifa Gul Mohammad 'Gul' was the first Sindhi poet to compose a *Diwan*. Kishinchand 'Bewas' composed poems on nature instead of the traditional love lyrics.

Sindhi prose got an impetus with the annexation of Sindh by the British, after which several dictionaries and grammars were published, besides books on religion, art and science. Writers who enriched Sindhi prose were Munshi Udhoram, Diwan Lilaramsingh, Dayaram Gidumal and Mirza Qalich Beg. Mirza Beg was also a well-known novelist (*Dilaram* and *Zeenat*). Other novelists of note are Lalchand Amirchand Amardinomal (*Chath ja Chand*), Abdul Razzaq (*Jahan Ara*), Bherumal (*Anand Sundrika*), Nirmaldas Fatehchand (*Dalurai ji Nagari*), Guli Kripalani (*Ithad*), Ram Panjwani (*Qaidi*) and Naraindas Bhambani (*Malhin*). As for drama, Mirza Qalich Beg made a beginning with *Laila Majnu* (1881). Khanchand Duryani wrote several original dramas. Ahmed Chagla and Lekhraj 'Aziz' are other famous Sindhi playwrights.

Prominent Literary Figures

Tamil: Tamil is the oldest of the Dravidian languages. The earliest phase of Tamil literature is termed Sangam literature, because the anthologies of odes, lyrics and idylls, which form the major part of that literature, were composed at a time when the Pandyan kings of Madurai maintained in their court a body of eminent poets who unofficially functioned as a board of literary critics and censors, and this association of scholars was called Sangam by later poets. The Sangam period produced great epics such as *Silapaddikaram* by Illango Adigal and *Manimegalai* by Sattanar. Three more epics written later in the series included *Jivakachintamani* by the Jaina Tirutthakka-devar, *Valayapati* and *Kundalakasi*. Thiruvalluvar's *Thirukkural* is sometimes called the 'Bible of the Tamil Nadu'. *Tolkappiyam*, written in the second phase of the Sangam period, is the earliest Tamil grammar. The end of the Sangam age saw the advent of devotional poetry, Saiva and Vaisnava. After the Cholas and the Pandyas, literature in Tamil showed a decline. Christian and Islamic influences on Tamil litrature are to be perceived in the 18th century. Umaruppulavar wrote *Sirappuranam*, life of Prophet Mohammad, in verse. Father Beschi introduced modern prose as a form of writing in Tamil. His *Tembavani* is an epic on the life of St. Joseph. His *Aviveka Purna Guru Kathai* may be called the forerunner of the short story in Tamil. Samuel Vedanyakam Pillai wrote the first original novel in Tamil, *Prathapa Mudaliar Charitam,* in 1879.

Sangam Literature

In the 20th century, Tamil made immense progress. Subramania Bharati's poems inspired readers to national and patriotic feelings as he wrote of personal freedom, national liberty and equality of human beings. There is a spiritual strength in his *Kuyilpattu* (a collection of love songs), and *Swatantrapattu* (a collection of songs of freedom), and the dramatic poem, *Panchali Sabadam*. He also founded the daily *India* and worked for *Swadeshamitran*. Journalism attained the heights of literature with V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. The modern short story was pioneered by V.V.S. Iyer and well-established in the writings of Pudumaippithan, R. Krishnamoorthy (Kalki) and M. Varadarajan. C. Rajagopalachari did much to reinterpret the classics in simple prose for the common people to understand.

Subramania Bharati

Telugu: Telugu is found recorded as early as the seventh century but was adopted as a literary language probably in the 11th century when Nannaya translated the *Mahabharata* into this language. However, Nannaya's work was quite original because of the freshness of his approach to the task. Bhima Kavi wrote a work on Telugu grammar besides the *Bhimesvara Purana*. Tikkanna (13th century) and Yerranna (14th century) continued the translation of the *Mahabharata* that was begun by Nannaya. In the 14th-15th centuries evolved the Telugu literary form called the *Prabandha* (a story in verse with an eight metrical system) and popularised by Srinatha. During this period the *Ramayana* was also translated into Telugu, the earliest such work being the *Ranganatha Ramayana* by Gona Buddha Reddi. Potana, Jakkana and Gaurana are well-known religious poets of the day. Vemana wrote a *Sataka* on morals.

Namayana's Mahabharata

The reign of Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar may be considered the golden age in Telugu literature. Krishnadeva Raya's *Amuktamalyada* is an outstanding poetic work. Allasani Peddana was another great poet who wrote *Manu Charita*. Nandi Thimmana's *Parijathapaharanam* is yet another famous work. Tenali Ramakrishna's popularity lay in his being a poet as well as jester in Krishnadeva Raya's court. After the fall of Vijayanagar, Telugu literature flourished in the pockets of south, such as the capitals of the various Nayaka rulers.

KDR's Reign—Golden Age of Telugu Literature

The modern period in Telugu literature begins in

the 19th century and the initiators of this period were Chinnaya Suri and Kundukuri Viresalingam. Viresalingam influenced practically all branches of Telugu literature. He wrote the first novel, the first play, the first research thesis on Telugu poets, the first autobiography and the first book on popular science in the language. He used literature to create public consciousness against social evils. Some of the famous younger contemporaries of Viresalingam were Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham, Vedam Venkata Sastri, C.P. Reddy, K.V. Lakshmana Rao and G. Apparao.

Viresalingam and Others

Urdu: The same Khari Boli that was the origin of Hindi also gave rise to Urdu in the 11th century. The Western Sauraseni Apabhramsa is the source of the grammatical structure of Urdu though the vocabulary of the language, its idioms and literary traditions owe heavily to Turkish and Persian languages. The term 'Urdu' literally means 'camp' (*ordu*) in Turki. Amir Khusrau was the first to use the language for literary purposes. However, it was in the Deccan, in the courts of the Bahmani, Bijapur and Golconda kingdoms, that it first achieved literary status. Urdu poetry has a few literary genres such as the *Masnavi*, a long amorous or mystical narrative poem; the *Qassida*, something like an ode, a panegyric; the *Ghazal*, a lyrical poem composed of self-contained couplets with a single metre and mood; the *Marsia* or elegies; the *Rekhtis;* and the *Nazm*.

Urdu Literary Genres

In the north, Urdu literature flourished when there was political decadence in early 18th century and Persian lost its ground. Some of the notable writers of the period were Mirza Jan-i-Janam Mazhar, Khwaja Mir Dard, Muhammad Rafi Sauda and Mir Hasan. Perhaps the best known name in connection with Urdu ghazal is that of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib who "sang of life in all its phases, and was perhaps the most cosmopolitan and original poet in Urdu". Altaf Hussain Hali was the pioneer of the modern movement in Urdu in the 19th century. His subjects went beyond love and mysticism to hope, justice and patriotism. Poets like Braj Narain Chakbast, Durga Sahai Suroor, Mohammad Ali Jauhar and Muhammad Iqbal used the medium of poetry to speak of social and cultural problems of the day. Urdu prose was slow to develop, and it was Syed Ahmad Khan who set the style with a plain, matter-of-fact prose. The tradition was carried on by talented writers like Krishan Chander, Sajjad Zaheer, K.A. Abbas and Ismat Chugtai. In the field of fiction are names like Ruswa (*Umra Jan Ada*) and Premchand.

Mirza Ghalib and Others

progressivism and from blind faith to reason. Iqbal was quite aware of this, but chose to believe that religion was the most potent, if not the sole, factor to bring about change in social organisations. Not only did he ignore the economic and material factors completely, but also appeared to be unaware of their powerful and pervasive influence in stimulating political and social change. It seems he did not at all consider that the basic problems of the Hindus and the Muslims were the same—hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance, problems that can be solved not by religious treatment, but only by political action. He did not think that the demand for independence and the establishment of a responsible and sovereign political system was only a means for the solution of India's basic needs. There is no place for communal differentiation in economic matters affecting national welfare. Despite his verses that hailed the workers and castigated the capitalists, the tone of Iqbal's poetry was distinctly upper class Muslim. Its refined and ornate vocabulary, gorgeous imagery, learned allusions and elevated diction all pointed to an easy and sophisticated life. His rousing compositions were for the westernised educated youth, his numerous references to war-like exploits, military triumphs, martial virtues and soaring ambition did not address the problems of the poor and the downtrodden. His switchover from Urdu to Persian, a language unfamiliar to most of the Muslims in India as the medium of expression, was an unmistakable pointer to his bourgeois preferences. His understanding of the political problem and his suggestions for its removal were more suited to the interests of the middle class. It is, however, not clear that the idea of partition of the country was in his mind when he placed his scheme before the Annual Conference of the Muslim League at Allahabad, in December 1930:

His Elitist Notions

"Perhaps we suspect each other's intentions and inwardly aim at dominating each other. Perhaps in the higher interests of mutual cooperation, we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands and conceal our egoism under the cloak of nationalism, outwardly simulating a large-hearted patriotism but

inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognise that each group has a right to free development according to its own cultural traditions." The scheme he put forward was certainly not for the partition of India into two independent sovereign states. His plan was to "create a harmonious nation" by redistributing the portions of India in which the Muslims were in a majority from the rest. He wanted the amalgamation of Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan in one autonomous region and expressed the hope that it would solve the problems of India. "It will intensify their (Muslim's) sense of responsibility and deepen their patriotic feeling. Thus possessing full opportunity of development within the body politic of India the North-West Indian Muslims prove the best defenders of India, be the invasion one of ideas or bayonets." He mentioned neither the two-nation theory nor the incompatibility of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The differences between the two were, according to him, due to misunderstanding of each other's intentions, fear of dominance and jealousy for possession and privilege. It was a complete rejection of his own pet theory: "On the renunciation of nationality, God's praiseworthy society comes into being, thou should also bear witness to the truth of the Prophet's message."

His Scheme of a Muslim Autonomous Region

Iqbal's presidential message at Lahore in March 1932 did not even refer to the demand for an autonomous region; all that he asked for was: "It is obvious that no communal settlement, provisional or permanent, can satisfy the Muslim community, which does not recognise, as its basic principle, the right of the community to enjoy majority rights in provinces where it happens to be in actual majority. The continuance of separate electorates and the status of the Frontier Province are no doubt assured, but complete provincial autonomy, transfer of power from Parliament to Indian provinces, equality of federal units, classification of subjects, not into federal, central and provincial, but into federal and provincial only, majority rights in the Punjab and Bengal, unconditioned separation of Sindh, and one-third share in the centre, constitute no less essential element of our demand." Obviously, those demands did not include partition of India into two separate states. Iqbal backed the claim for "fear and resentment" and not for religious differences. Had Iqbal been alive when the demand for Pakistan was made, perhaps he would not have agreed to it…. "till his death in 1938, Iqbal had not publicly identified himself with the demand for Pakistan. It cannot, however, be denied that through his poetry, his philosophical writings and public statements he lent strong support to the idea of Muslim separatism. The temper he fostered made compromise difficult, if not impossible."(Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*)

Communal Tinge in Iqbal Views

NEW TRENDS IN ART

It is said that when Jesuit priests from Goa visited Akbar's court, they brought with them Christian religious paintings as a gift to the emperor. Impressed with the artwork, Akbar passed on the paintings to the artists in his atelier so as to enable them to learn the techniques used in them. Legend has it that the artists began to show the perspective of distance in their paintings and miniatures from then on. For example, a flock of flying birds was shown by depicting the one near as bigger than the one following it and so on to the farthest, thus giving the work a sense of depth. Jahangir's artists also continued this trend, and so did the artists of the later schools of art such as Pahari and Rajasthani. With the rising domination of the British, the court culture of miniatures and paintings suffered a decline in the 19th century. As the princes and the rajas started losing their royal power, and were engaged in fighting meaningless wars against each other, pursuing useless goals and living in lavish extravagance, not much resources were left to continue with the traditions of artistic excellence. Consequently, patronage for the artists was reduced and the quality of their work declined as they migrated to other vocations. This happened not only in the field of painting, but also in architecture. Meanwhile, the conquering British influenced the various courts according to their own sense of aesthetics. Oils on canvases were painted with a Western perspective, supplanting the indigenous (mostly water colours) miniatures and paintings of court events and celebratory and religious themes. Thus evolved the so-called Company

Decline of Indigenous Art and Architecture

Company School

School with verisimilitude or a photographic likeness as its characteristics. There were the Daniel brothers (landscapes and ghats), Tilly Kettle (dancers and figures) and a host of European painters who produced works of good, bad and indifferent quality. The Indian master who achieved eminence in this type of painting was Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) with his works on religious themes and mannered portraits.

Towards the close of the 19th century, a college of arts was established in Calcutta and an Englishman, E.B. Havell, became its principal in 1896. Havell was an orientalist-romantic in the mould of Sir William Jones, who established the Asiatic Society in 1784. Havell was of the view that his students would be the forerunners of the artist community of India, different from the paid court artists (or artisans) of the past, well acquainted with the cultural traditions of their country. In this respect, he was quite a visionary because artistic movements in erstwhile colonies generally display three distinct trends. These are: (i) a questioning of the western influence on artistic expressions; (ii) an attempt to create a distinctly national cultural identity; and (iii) an effort to write the idiom for a national art and to find the place of the artists in their countries of origin. Then there is the purpose, the artistic response to reality. It could be an expression of societal concern, in traditional or in relatively modern ways; a statement on socially relevant issues, intensely personal or objectively detached and many other variations on a number of themes. Also, there is the political environment influencing the artists to a great extent.

E.B. Havell

Artistic Trends in Colonies

Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951), nephew of the poet Rabindranath, was a student of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta where he received a thorough knowledge of the literature in that language. Being interested in painting from an early age, he trained under Olinto Gilhardy and Charles Palmer. He also learnt the Japanese technique of painting from Yokoyama Taikan. He was also influenced by the Mughal and Rajput schools, which along with his training under artists of repute gave his paintings a delicacy of feeling, unity of concept, a highly sensitive range of colour, tone, texture and poetic depth. He was appointed vice-principal of the College of Arts in Calcutta in 1905, the year when Lord Curzon unfolded his infamous plan for the partition of Bengal. To express the anguish of the Bengalis for this crude demonstration of British arrogance, Abanindranath painted Bharat Mata in a traditional manner. She was shown as a four-armed goddess holding in her hands a cloth, a book, a sheaf of wheat, and a *japamala* (rosary), representing the cultural and economic self-sufficiency of a nation in the making. Her features were pristinely innocent, conforming to the prevailing notions of femininity of the times. The nationalists agitating against the partition adopted the painting as an icon and its prints were reverentially put up in thousands of homes.

Abanindranath—Father of Modern Indian Painting

Abanindranath was hailed as the father of modern Indian painting. His unorthodox ways of teaching in the arts college converted a talented band of young men into very fine artists. With the support of Havell and the critic Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Abanindranath and his disciples consciously drew inspiration from the frescoes of Ajanta and Ellora, the temple sculptures and the Mughal, Rajasthani and Pahari paintings and miniatures. They avoided the romanticisation of things Indian as in Company paintings and considered oils on canvases as a Western medium. They preferred water colours, tempera (an emulsion of pigment and egg), ink and wash (a famously Chinese and Japanese technique in which the colours in a painting are muted by applying a brush dipped in water). Thus emerged the Bengal school. Its exponents, besides Aban Thakur (as Abanindranath was affectionately called), were Nandalal Bose, M.A.R. Chugtai, Sarada Ukil, Kshitin Majumdar, K. Venkatappa, D.P. Rai Chaudhuri and a few more.

Bengal School

Unfortunately, as the style introduced by the Bengal School came to be identified with the national movement, it became more dogmatic. Even Rabindranath criticised its orthodoxy, and the paintings he created in the later years of his life were distinctly modernist. Kala Bhavana, the art school in Shantiniketan under Nandalal, also followed a different agenda, as would be evident from the works of two of its famous students,

Benode Behari Mukherjee and Ramkinkar Baij. The features of the Ramkinkar sculptures *Yakshi* and *Yaksha,* adorning the main entrance of the Reserve Bank of India building in Delhi, do not apparently conform to any established canon, even though the woman holds a pitcher in her hand signifying prosperity and the man a bunch of keys, may be of the treasure chest. Jamini Roy (1887-1972) was another artist who broke away from convention to strike out a form of his own. Born in Beliatore (a village in Bengal) and trained in the Art College in Calcutta (where he imbibed impressionism among other things), he went back to his roots, the folk art of Bengal, which he knew intimately from his early years. He brought an absolute simplicity in his style, much like the Kalighat pats (scrolls, plaques) and the ones made by untutored artists sold in village markets, while satisfying the basic requirements of a work of art. In the 1930s, the traditionalists faced a challenge in the robust lines and post-impressionistic colour schemes of the artist Amrita Sher-Gill, born of a Hungarian mother and a Sikh father. She did not live long and the promise shown in her works remained unfulfilled. Artists of the Calcutta Group in the 1940s projected socially relevant issues and adopted foreign artistic methods so as to 'enrich' their works and to achieve 'interdependent and international' status. When freedom was attained by the nation in 1947, artists like Sailoz Mukherjee, K.H. Ara, N.S. Bendre, Shiabax Chavda and K.K. Hebbar apparently opted for peace and tranquility after all the turmoil and sought to show in their works the simple joys of being alive.

Jamini Roy

Amrita Sher-Gill

The Progressive Artists Group in Bombay (1947-56) reacted differently; their coming together was just a matter of coincidence in 1947. The members of the group were to attain eminence in the years to come. The group consisted of F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza, M.F. Hussain and some others who were fed up with what they considered the dead hand of the past in the art scene of India. They were striving for an art form which was "entirely Indian but also modern" and succeeded in their measures by relying on Parisian abstract Expressionism and post-impressionism. Souza's portraits drawn in bold lines, female figures and paintings on Christian themes became collector's items. Raza migrated to Paris where he earned accolades and fame while Hussain, despite his modest beginning as a painter of publicity scenes on cinema-hall walls (posters), has attained a near iconic status in India. Onto the seventies, when the Naxals, the war with Pakistan and the declaration of emergency seemed to induce among the artists a sense of déjà vu, a 'been there, seen that' syndrome. A celebration of the trivial appeared to be the flavour of the times, as shown in a Bikash Bhattacharjee painting, 'Inauguration of a tubewell'! Others like Vivan Sundaram, Gieve Patel, Sudhir Patwardhan and Ganesh Pyne felt it incumbent on them to comment on the national situation and document the pain of the people. There were other centres of artistic activity, notably Baroda and the Cholamandalam Artists' Village in the South. In Baroda, experiments in abstraction, Pop Art and Neo-Dada were taken in hand, while such 'hybrid mannerisms' were vigorously opposed in Cholamandalam where attempts were made to forge a distinctly Indian art form by drawing inspiration from Jamini Roy, rural handicraft textile designs by Sultan Ali, K.C.S. Panicker, K. Ramanujam and others. There was also a revival of the Indian Tantric Art in an abstract form, which its proponents, Biren De, Ghulam Rasool, J. Swaminathan and others, believed would fill the void created due to the absence of a purely Indian idiom. To achieve this end, they endowed the art form with modernist attributes.

Progressive Artists Group

Other Art Centres

Revival of Tantric Art

All in all, there are reasons to feel optimistic about the future of art in India. As K.G. Subramanyam, a past student of Nandalal in Shantiniketan, says: "Today's artist or poet is not bound by any established social predispositions or traditional ties. His physical environment is what he is born into and grows up in, but his cultural environment is the whole world, which is brought to his doorstep through various avenues of communication—exhibitions, books, cinema, recordings, radio, or television. Each artist considers himself a kind of Robinson Crusoe in an imaginary island whose beaches are piled up with cultural bric-a-brac from all over the world, from the past and the present, amidst which he can putter about."

CINEMA—A POPULAR MEDIUM

India's introduction to the new entertainment form—the motion picture—took place roughly during the same period that the Lumiere Brothers made the first screening of a film in Paris in 1895. On July 7, 1896, the touring agents of the Lumiere Brothers' cinematographer showed six soundless short films at Watson Hotel, Esplanade Mansion, in Bombay. Following the overwhelming response the show received, motion pictures were subsequently introduced in Calcutta towards the end of 1896 and in Madras in 1897. In 1899, Prof. Anderson filmed *A Train Arriving at Churchgate Station* and *Poona Races* and included them in the Christmas edition of his show, *Andersonoscopograph*. Prof. Stevenson popularised the new medium in Calcutta around the same time with his films *A Dancing Scene from the Flower of Persia* and *A Panorama of Indian Scenes and Processions*. Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar (better known as Save Dada) was the first Indian to make a film. Bhatavdekar made two short films *The Wrestlers* and *Man and Monkey* in 1899. He did so with the help of a projection apparatus, and an imported British camera. Save Dada also picturised for posterity the coronation of Edward VII in Calcutta in 1903. F.B. Thanawala pioneered Grand Kinetoscope newsreels in 1900 and opened up the possibilities for establishing the genre as a commercial entity.

Lumiere Brothers

Save Dada

Calcutta-based Jamshedji Framjee Madan took up distribution and exhibition rights around 1905 and ushered in the motion picture industry. The credit of establishing India's first permanent cinema house—the Elphinstone Picture Palace (1907), now called Chaplin—lies with Madan, who had started showing regular shows in tents by 1902. R.G. Torney and N.G. Chitre made the first dramatic film *Pundalik* in technical collaboration with the British. *Pundalik,* the story of a Maharashtrian saint of the same name, was released on May 18, 1912, at the Coronation Theatre in Bombay. The film, paired with a foreign film, *A Dead Man's Child*, was hugely successful.

J.F. Madan

This was also the period when Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (who went on to become famous as Dadasaheb Phalke) had mortgaged his insurance policy and left for London in search of technical knowledge and material for the picture industry. He was helped in his endeavour by Cabourne, editor of a British weekly called *British Bioscope*, who helped him purchase the right equipment. Phalke was deeply influenced by *The Life of Christ,* a mythological film made in 1911, and he was determined on his part to make mythological films. Phalke's first effort, *Raja Harishchandra*, became India's first indigenous full-length feature film. Shown to a select audience on April 21, 1913, *Raja Harishchandra* was formally released on May 3, 1913 at Coronation Theatre in Bombay, where it ran for 23 days. Phalke's *Lanka Dahan* (1917) became India's first box-office hit. His contribution to Indian cinema was formally recognised with the institution of the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award in 1966.

Dadasaheb Phalke–The Pioneer of Indian Cinema

South India's first silent feature film was R. Nataraja Mudaliar's *Keechaka Vadhan* (1916). Bengal's first film, *Billwamangal* (1919), was made by Elphinstone Company and directed by Rustomji Dutiwala. Madan's 1917 film, *Satyavadi Raja Harishchandra,* was also made in Calcutta, but it was not a Bengali film. Meanwhile, other people began to make films. S.N. Patankar's *Ram Vanvas* (1918), made in four parts, was the first Indian serial. In 1920, the Bengali film weekly, *Bijoli*, was launched to record happenings in the growing film movement and was edited by eminent literary figures. Ardeshir Irani's *Nala Damyanti* (1920), made with Italian collaboration, was the first international co-production. Two other significant filmmakers were Baburao Painter and Suchet Singh. Singh was the first to use a foreigner—Dorothy Kingdom—in his film *Shakuntala* made in 1920. He also made *The Cremation of Lokmanya Tilak*, the first optical newsreel, in 1920. Painter's *Savkari Pash* made in 1925 attempted to provide realistic treatment to the story of a peasant exploited by moneylenders. But it was Himanshu Rai's *Prem Sanyas* or *Light of Asia* (1925), based on the life of Gautam Buddha, that was to receive international acclaim in 1926. Directed by German Franz Ostein, the film was an Indo-German collaboration, and ran continuously for nine months in London. The

Early Films

first woman producer and director of India, Fatima Begum, started her company and debuted with *Bulbul-e-Parastan* (1925) which released in 1926.

Early Film Movement

The early film movement which was the phase of Indian silent cinema, mostly projected India as an exotic land with scenes of ancient and medieval court life, rituals of courtly gesture and spectacular processions of elephants and camels. Films like *Raja Harischandra* combined traditional 'theatrical' framing with location shooting in natural surroundings and in the city. The thematic content changed with the introduction of sound. Universal's *Melody of Love* was the first talkie to be shown in India at the Elphinstone Picture Palace in 1929.The Madans released it in 1931, a one-reel talkie on a song. The Imperial Film Company produced *Alam Ara*, the first full-length indigenously-made talkie. Directed by Ardeshir Irani, *Alam Ara* contained seven songs and was released on March 14, 1931, at Bombay's Majestic Cinema. It was dubbed both in Hindi and Urdu. The year 1931 also saw the release of other talkies in as many as three regional languages—Bengali, Tamil and Telugu. The Bengali talkie was *Jamai Sasthi*, a hilarious comedy directed by Amar Choudhary. The Tamil *Kalidasa* was made by Ardeshir Irani's Imperial Company. The Telugu talkie, *Bhakta Prahlada*, was produced by H.M. Reddi for Bharat Movietone. The maiden Marathi *Ayodhyacha Raja* made by V. Shantaram, and Gujarati *Narsinh Mehta*, directed by Nanubhai Vakil, were both released a year later, in 1932. Mohan Sundar Dev Goswami directed the Oriya *Seeta Bibaha,* released in 1934. Other notable talkies were the Punjabi *Sheila*, Assamese *Joymati* by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala in 1935, Kannada *Bhakta Dhruva* by Jayawani Talkies and Malayalam *Balan* by S. Notani in the late 1930s. Debaki Bose introduced background music in *Chandidas* (1932), a cinematic rendering in Bengali of a major stage genre—the quasi-legendary biographical. These films were produced both in the regional languages and in Hindi, with the idea that they could be oriented to the larger Hindi-speaking market. Some of the films had 40 songs, and the song tradition in Indian films continues to this day.

Alam Ara

Regional Films

Hindi and English Films

Hindi cinema registered its first major success in the stunt film genre with the film *Toofan Mail* made in 1934. It was the biggest film next only to *Hunterwali* (1935). Imperial's *Nur Jehan*, directed by Ezra Mir, was the first to have an English version. The first Indian directorial effort entirely in English was *Karma* (1933). *Karma* was shot in England and starred the legendary husband-wife duo, Himanshu Rai and Devika Rani. *Raj Nartaki* or *Court Dancer* (1941) was the first wholly indigenous English film. It was directed by J.B.H. Wadia. The first film to win an international award was Debaki Bose's *Seeta*; it was sent to the Venice Film Festival. The Hindi *Dhoop Chhaon* (1935) and Bengali *Bhagya Chakra* (1935), launched by New Theatres and directed by Nitin Bose, introduced playback singing in Indian cinema, a feature that would forever remain popular in mainstream commercial cinema. J.B.H. Wadia's production *Naujawan,* made in 1937, was the first songless film. Bocho Gutachwager, a German photographer, produced the first animation, *Lafanga Langur,* in 1935.

Decade of Social Protest

As in the fields of arts and culture, the 1930s are recognised as the decade of social protest in the history of Indian cinema, too. Three big banners—Prabhat, Bombay Talkies and New Theatres—made important contributions to cinema through a clutch of serious but gripping and entertaining films for all classes of audience.

Several films made a strong plea against social injustice and addressed social differences of class, caste and relations between the sexes. A few of the more notable ones include V. Shantaram's *Duniya na Mane*, *Aadmi* and *Padosi*, Franz Osten's *Achhut Kanya*, Damie & Fatehlal's *Sant Tukaram* and Mehboob's *Watan*, *Ek hi Raasta* and *Aurat.* Moti Gidwani's *Kisan Kanya* (1937) was the first indigenously-made colour film, because for technical reasons *Billawamangal* and *Sairandhri* (1933) by V. Shantaram had failed to qualify as colour films. Marathi director V. Shantaram was alert to world trends in film making, and he deployed expressionist effects intelligently in such works as *Amrit Manthan* of 1934. One of the most important films of the period, *Devdas* (1935), was directed by Pramathesh Barua. Released in Bengali, Hindi and Tamil, the film created an ambivalent hero and focused on

indecision, frustration, failure and longing rather than on achievement. The Fifth Venice Film Festival (1937) saw *Sant Tukaram* of Prabhat being represented in it and the film received a special jury mention. Tamil film *Chintamani* enjoyed a continuous run of one year.

Social Films of 1940s

By the 1940s the social films came under the influence of a growing radicalisation of political forces and dealt more passionately with problems of caste. Bombay Talkies' *Kismat* (Fate, 1943) represented the sort of lavish entertainment films that became synonymous with Bombay films. The film created a record for the longest continuous run of 187 weeks at a single theatre, Calcutta's Empire Cinema (known as Roxy today). The issues of family and caste that *Kismat* dealt with became the model for popular cinema, especially after the decline of regional industries in Maharashtra and Bengal by the end of the 1940s. Tamil cinema made a departure from the norm during the same period. In the late 1940s, Tamil cinema acquired national recognition with the costume extravaganza, *Chandralekha*, directed by S.S. Vasan for Gemini Studios. The film was called a "pageant for our peasants" by its director (a large section of the audience being illiterate). It had extravagant sets and played up its regional identity or "Tamil-ness" well. Films of the 1940s such as Shantaram's *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani*, Mehboob's *Roti*, Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar*, Uday Shanker's *Kalpana*, Abbas's *Dharti Ke Lal*, Sohrab Modi's *Sikander*, *Pukar* and *Prithvi Vallabh*, J.B.H. Wadia's *Court Dancer*, S.S.Vasan's *Chandralekha*, Vijay Bhatt's *Bharat Milap* and *Ram Rajya*, Raj Kapoor's *Barsaat* and *Aag*, made remarkable strides in cinematography.

Tamil Cinema

The Year 1946

The year 1946 was significant. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas made *Dharti Ke Lal*, a realistic depiction of the plight of a peasant family caught in the man-made Bengal famine of 1943, for the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). The impact of the film can be seen in the work of such radical writers as Abbas, lyricists as Sahir Ludhianvi, and directors as Bimal Roy and Zia Sarhady. Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar*, also based on a script by Abbas, was an allegory of the widening gap between people's expectations and the determination of the rich not to acknowledge them, and the film earned acclaim at Cannes. Shantaram directed *Dr. Kotnis ki Amar Kahani*, based on *And One Did Not Come Back* by Abbas. The film was about an Indian medical team sent to China by Jawaharlal Nehru to assist the wounded of Mao Tse Tung's Eighth Army. The year 1946 also saw the start of a phenomenon unique to Bengali cinema: a group of film technicians working collectively as film director. Cameraman Bibuti Laha, sound recordist Jatin Datta, lab technician Sailen Ghoshal, scenarist Nitai Bhattacharya and producer Bimal Ghosh, together known as the *Agradoot* combine, started with films such as *Swapna Sadhna* (1947). They made a string of commercially sentimental socials in the 1950s and 1960s.

Agradoot Group

Dance maestro Uday Shankar made *Kalpana* (1948), a series of spectacular ballets, which was awarded for exceptional qualities at the Second World Festival of Films and Fine Art held in Belgium. K.A. Abbas' socially relevant films included *Munna* (1959), the second Hindi film without songs and dances. It was the story of a child being separated from his parents. The film set the pattern for a readymade formula in most subsequent Bombay mainstream films. Mehboob Khan made socially significant films such as *Aurat* (1940), remade all over again in 1957 in colour as *Mother India* which became the first Indian film to be nominated for an Oscar in the best non-English film category. Sohrab Modi's *Jhansi ki Rani* (1953) was the first technicolour film. One of the biggest blockbusters in Indian cinema, K. Asif's *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), a historical romance, was to use the technicolour to great effect. The credit of making the first Indian cinemascope film, *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959), goes to Guru Dutt. The year 1959 also saw V. Shantaram's *Do Aankhen Barah Haath* win the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and Samuel Goldwyn Awards for best foreign film.

Mother India

Pather Panchali

In the 1950s, Calcutta became the vanguard of art cinema. The film society movement emerged in the late 1940s in Calcutta, and many people who were to later make notable impact in the film industry, were involved in it. The first Bengali film to try to break away from routine formula was Nemai Ghosh's classic *Chinnamul* (1950), made with artistes from the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA).

But it was Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* or 'Song of the Road' made in 1955 which created a landmark and gave a new meaning and form to Indian cinema. It was produced with the support of the West Bengal state government and won the bronze for the best Human Document at the Ninth Cannes Film Festival and also bagged the President's Gold medal for the Best Feature Film in 1956. One of the most outstanding figures of this generation, and one who fulfilled the potential of the radical cultural initiatives of the IPTA, was the great Ritwik Ghatak. Disruption, the problems of locating oneself in a new environment, and the indignities and oppression faced by common people are the recurrent themes of Ghatak's work. Ghatak lamented the division of Bengal in 1947, exposed the darker side of the Indian lower middle-classes and the unemployed, and portrayed disharmony and discontinuity in films such as *Nagarik* (Citizen, 1952) and *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (Cloud-capped Star, 1960). He also made innovative use of symbols from Hindu mythology. In *Aajantrik* (Man and Machine, 1958) and *Subarnarekha* (1952, released 1965) he juxtaposes the displaced and transient urban figure with tribals. He placed the human figure at the edge of the frame, dwarfed by the majesty of nature.

Ritwik Ghatak's Films

THEATRE

As an art form, theatre in India can trace its traditions to the distant past. Shudraka's *Mrichchakatika* (The Little Clay Cart) still draws huge audiences when played in the West, while the theme of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shankutalam*, amnesia of a king, has given rise to many a play on the subject. The people of India continued with this glorious legacy for centuries. Theatre art found expression in *Ramlilas*, *Harikatha, Jatra, Koothu* and other myriad forms of folk theatres played out in villages, markets, palaces and temples all over the country. Some of them, for instance, Kathakali of Kerala, are quite rich in their artistic qualities. Kathakali was a performing art which remained confined to extremely narrow circles for a time without sacrificing its vitality. It is a dance drama in which the dialogues are sung by singers with accompanying musical instruments, while the actors speak through eloquent gestures and charming rhythmic physical movements, much like the Japanese *Kabuki* dancers.

Traditional Theatre

However, theatre in its modern form came to the metropolitan cities of India towards the middle of the 19th century. That was when the famous 'Parasi Theatre' started in Bombay (1852-53) and established the trend for others to follow. Very soon, theatrical performances were held in Calcutta with comedy, tragedy, satire and social issues as their themes. There is an apocryphal story about the theatrical rendering of Dinabandhu Mitra's play *Nildarpan,* depicting the oppression of peasants by English indigo planters. The story so goes that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, on seeing the play, became so incensed that he threw his chappal at the actor playing the role of the sadistic planter. The actor then held the chappal on his head and declared that he had got his lifetime achievement award. In the 1870s the first commercial theatre, The Star, was opened in Calcutta. Meanwhile, Bharatendu Harishchandra, who had revolutionised Hindi literature, also brought sweeping reforms in Hindi drama. His *Andheri Nagari Chaupat Raja* still enthralls the audience, while the plays *Bharat Durdasha, Neel Devi,* etc., gave a new dimension to Hindi theatre. Jayashankar Prasad, considered to be Bharatendu's worthy successor, continued the trend in the dramas, *Skandagupta, Chandragupta* and *Dhruvaswamini.* The dramaturgy of these two pioneers was further enriched by Dharamveer Bharati, Jagdish Chandra Mathur, Surendra Verma and Mohan Rakesh after 1947.

Modern Theatre

After the 'Parasi', it was now the turn of Bengali theatre to influence theatres in other languages. Marathi theatre had been developing on its own much before the 'Parasi' with the trailblazing Vishnu Das Bhave staging his drama, *Sitaswayamvar* in 1843. He also wrote a Hindi play, *Raja Gopichanda,* which made him quite famous. There were several professional groups such as *Kirloskar Nataka Mandal* of Anna Sahib Kirloskar. A new direction was given to the Marathi theatre as also to the theatre movement in India by Vijay Tendulkar. Although controversial in nature, his plays, *Sakharam Binder*, *Ghasiram Kotwal*, *Giddha*, etc., portray the social reality very powerfully. His tradition has been successfully carried on by Satish Alekar, Jayvant Dalvi and Govinda Deshpande.

Growth of Regional Threatre

Other Pioneers of Indian Threatre

In 1918, T.P. Kelaram staged a play and ushered in modern Kannada theatre. The mantle was picked up by K.S. Karanth, Govinda Pai and K.V. Puttappa who enriched the tradition and so did Adya Rangacharya with his memorable dramas. Following independence, Girish Karnad, Sankranti and Chandrasekhar Kambar made valuable contributions to the Indian theatre, to which directors like B.V. Karanth, Prasanna, Nagesh and Akshar added their talents.

Ramashankar Roy (1850-1910) gave the initial push to modern Oriya theatre, which then travelled long through the plays of Manoranjan Das, Jagannath Das, Basanta Mahapatra and Gopal Dey. Gujarati theatre attained eminence through translated or transcribed commercial plays, the exponents of which are Damini Mehta, Pravin Joshi, Sarita Joshi and Bharat Dave among others. Playwright Rattan Thiyam lifted Manipuri theatre to new heights by introducing traditional folk dramas and modern theatrical techniques. Other notable writers include Kanhailal and Lokendra Arambam. Beginning in the 19th century, Tamil drama had Sundaram Pillai as its earliest exponent, whose verse drama *Manonmaniam* was very popular. Sankaradasa Swamigal and Sambanda Mudaliar not only wrote plays but also acted in them. Thanjay Govind and Venkataswamy Rayar also did the same and staged performances in East Asian countries. Those who made further additions to the treasure chest of Tamil theatre are Annadurai (*Oartravu, Vellakiri*), M. Karunanidhi, M.R. Radha (*Rakhtha Kanneer*), R.S. Manohar (*Dronar, Lankeswaran*) and Cho Ramaswamy (*Tughlaq*) among others. In Bengal, the legacy of the legendary actor Shishir Bhaduri was ably carried on by Shambhu Mitra (ex-IPTA member and founder of his own group, *Bohurupee,* in 1948), Utpal Dutta (IPTA member and his Little Theatre Group) and Badal Sircar who wrote *Evam Indrajit.* There is also a flourishing Hindi theatre in which groups like *Anamika* and *Padatik* and directors Shyamlal Jalan and Pratibha Agarwal made their names. Theatre in Kerala earned national and international acclaim through the plays of Kerala People's Art Club, Kalanilayam, Deshavimini and Sangamam theatres and Viswa Kerala Kala Samiti.

WRITERS' ORGANISATIONS AND THEATRE ASSOCIATIONS

Marxist Influences

In the essay, *Nationalism: Irony and Commitment*, Terry Eagleton says: "The political left is then doubly disabled: if it seeks to evolve its own discourse of place, body, inheritance, sensuous need, it will find itself miming the cultural form of its opponents; if it does not do so it will appear bereft of a body, marooned with a purely rationalist politics that has cut loose from the intimate affective depths of the poetic." Though it was written long (about six decades) after the formation of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA) and the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association (IPTA), it holds true for the two associations whose founders, generally influenced by Marxism, "considered themselves workers in the cause of a radical independence (and) tried to work through the question of culture and community". There had been a historical tradition of leftist thought, debate and custom in pre-independent India and it would perhaps be correct to say that the dilemma stated by Eagleton was reflected in the agenda of the IPTA in the 1940s and the huge popularity it enjoyed. As regards the AIPWA, it all began in 1935 with the "World Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture", an anti-Fascist cultural front in Europe, when writer Sajjad Zaheer, who had formed a Progressive Writers Association in London with his friends, decided that their group should have a base in India.

AIPWA (1936)

The AIPWA was founded in 1936 by artistes and writers of liberal and leftist persuasions who brought out a manifesto condemning Fascism. Citing close resemblance between the fascists and the colonialists, they said, "We saw the ugly face of Fascism in our country earlier than the writers of the European country." Their aim was to create a new culture, more appropriately a new national culture. They were of the view: "It is the duty of Indian writers to give expression to the changes taking place in Indian life and to assist the spirit of progress in the country by scientific rationalism…All that drags us down to passivity, inaction, and unreason we reject as reactionary. All that arouses in us the critical spirit, which examines in the light of reason institutions and customs, which helps us to act, to organise ourselves, to

transform, we accept as progressive." (Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents*. The movement was also a response to the failure of Civil Disobedience to make a strong impression on the literary world, which was becoming disillusioned with Gandhian rigidities and was on a search for more radical ways.

There were enough indications pointing to the search for a more radical alternative. While his novel *Godan* was stark, Premchand's essay, *Mahajani Sabhyata*, written just before his death, bitterly criticised the capitalist profit motive and appreciated the Soviet experiment. In Andhra, the translation of Gorky's *Mother* in 1932 was followed by a spate of realistic novels about toilers. Poet Sri Sri, who was the first to use spoken Telegu in verse, was inspired by Bhagat Singh's martyrdom to compose the famous *Mare Prapancham* ('Another world, another world, another world is calling') which ended with an evocation of the red flag. Modkholkar and Mama Warerkar's Marathi stories about textile strikes influenced the Bombay labour movement. In Bengal, the attitude of an urban intelligentsia that had never been particularly drawn to Gandhism was best exemplified by Tagore who stayed aloof from Civil Disobedience and hostile to terrorism (as in his novel *Char Adhyay*, 1934). A literary monthly *Parichay*, founded in 1931 in Calcutta, combined indifference towards contemporary Gandhian nationalist and even peasant movements with greater interest in international developments.

Search for Radical Alternative

But there were confusions galore. For example, Premchand, not exactly a believer in class war, said in his presidential address in the first AIPWA conference in 1936 that literature's primary asset was "our inherent sense of beauty" upheld by a sense of justice, absolute and natural. So, argued Premchand, a rich man's garden might appear ugly to those who realise that it was "tainted with the blood of workers". Likewise, Bankim Chandra's *Vande Mataram* hailing the motherland was invoked in documents (as in mainstream nationalist tracts), but elsewhere he was denounced as a reactionary, who concocted imaginary solutions in the social and political past, and therefore appealed to reactionaries in literature, and to subscribers to upper-class Hindu politics. Rabindranath also did not fare any better and evoked mixed feelings. All this perhaps underlines the leftist axiom that in an anti-imperialist struggle, post-colonial nation-building was different from bourgeois nationalism. But that does not reduce the merit and contemporary character of the debates in which the AIPWA engaged itself. For example, at the Fourth AIPWA Congress, the veteran trade union leader S.A. Dange, defining Fascism as the common international enemy, envisaged, "not an imposed Akhand Hindustan but a voluntarily united Hindustan of autonomous nationalities", thereby emphasising that national culture could well be a forceful collection of several cultures and traditions welded together by democratic and well-meaning processes. In the discussion on a common language, Lalit Mohan Avasthi categorically stated that the clamour for "a 'national language' is a false and misleading slogan of blind nationalism…to consider the necessity of a national language is a bourgeois viewpoint". Mohammed Hasan pointed out with irrefutable logic the fallacy of regarding "culture to be a finished entity which took shape at a certain period of history…the theory that Indian culture and consciousness were born long before any type of 'foreign' impact, it resisted all 'foreign' influences, defended its language, culture, and national character" and cautioned that the way to unity "is not by overlooking" historical processes. (Sudhi Pradhan). Nevertheless, a certain rigidity, an unshakable adherence to dogma became apparent among the leadership after a period of time, thus alienating Sadat Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Ahmad Ali, Mulk Raj Anand and some others from the movement. There was a time when discussion papers began with the phrase, "Comrade Stalin teaches us…"

Debates within AIPWA

As an all-India movement, the AIPWA attained its greatest strength in the world of Urdu, both owing to its inter-regional, urban and elitist span, and also for having in its ranks leading literary figures like Hasrat Mohani, Josh Malihabadi, Firaq Gorakhpuri and Krishan Chander. The Association's organisers did resort to opportunism in their quest for big names. At the same time they made interesting efforts at genuine mass contact like the very successful conference of peasant poets at Faridabad near Delhi in 1938, or Kaifi Azmi's 'revolutionary *mushairas*' among Bombay workers.

The IPTA had a ten-point programme, the six important among which were: National Unity, Food Crisis and how to solve it, Grow More food, Anti-Fascism, Peoples' Unity against Police Repression and Strike. The questions that arose were—Why theatre? Why arts? How did they fit into such a dialogue? Very appropriately, the IPTA declared that art was "a means of portraying life and reality of our people, of reviving their faith in themselves and in their past and of rousing in them the will to live and the will to be free". However, the post-1942 period was a bad time for the Indian Communist Movement. Not only did they commit a mistake by eulogising the Second World War as a 'people's war' when Gandhi gave the call for Quit India movement, but also compounded it further by vilifying Subhas Bose as a 'traitor'. The first was somewhat incomprehensible to the masses, especially the peasants, but had a "real appeal among intellectuals aware of world currents, and it was in these years that Marxism acquired a significant influence over the cultural life of middle-class Calcutta. The Party Secretary, P.C. Joshi, pioneered imaginative ways of utilising folk media and cultural forms, and a significant achievement of 1944-45 was the IPTA, with a central squad raising funds for starving Bengal through countrywide tours. The IPTA and other cultural fronts were able to attract a veritable galaxy of talent—Balraj Sahani, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Kaifi Azmi, Salil Choudhuri, Shambhu Mitra, Debabrata Biswas, Suchitra Mukherjee, Sukanta Bhattacharji, to name only a few. In Bengal, Jyotirindra Maitra's *Nabajibaner Gan* and Bijon Bhattacharji's play *Nabanna* marked major cultural departures, while important literary figures like the novelist Manik Bandopadhyay or the poets Bishnu Dey, Samar Sen, and Subhas Mukherji came close to or actually joined the Communist Party." (Sumit Sarkar)

Indian Peoples' Theatre Association

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

The British brought to India contemporary science and technology—what is often termed 'modern' science and technology. However, the educational/research developments in this period were directed to meet the British Government's needs, and not primarily meant for India's socio-economic betterment. But, unwittingly perhaps, these activities promoted indigenous efforts to develop scientific thought.

The foundation of the Asiatic Society in 1784 by Sir William Jones marks the beginning of public interest in scientific research. The Society helped the founding of the Indian Museum of Calcutta in 1866. The Asiatic Society published papers in physics, chemistry, geology and medical sciences, and thus played an important role in the advancement of sciences in India.

Asiatic Society

The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, founded in 1876 by Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, provided laboratory facilities and became a prominent scientific research centre in the country. One may also recall the Bombay Natural History Society, founded in 1883, and the Indian Mathematical Society, which was started in 1907 mainly through the efforts of V. Rangaswami Iyer under the name of Analytical Club with its headquarters at Fergusson College, Poona. The Calcutta Mathematical Society was established in 1908 with Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhya as its first president, with the objects of fostering and encouraging the study of mathematics in all its branches, promoting the spirit of original research, and publishing a periodical. The efforts of Prof. P.S. MacMahon of Lucknow and Prof. Simon of Madras led to the formation of the Indian Science Congress Association in 1914. The establishment of these societies played a major role in creating a scientific consciousness, in bringing scientists together and enabling them to make the government give support to scientific research.

Indian Science Congress

The main scientific activities in the government sector were largely carried out by the medical and the engineering corps of the army and civil officers interested in science, as a spare time activity. These men, trained in European institutions and laboratories, left a record of their work and made a mark in various branches of sciences through original contributions. They brought out considerable literature on science and technology, built up a sizeable store of scientific apparatus, chemicals and research tools, and founded a few of the important scientific institutions in the country.

They created a tradition of dedicated scientific research, and the Indians who worked under them carried this forward.

Geologists had been employed since 1818 for survey work. In 1851 the Geological Survey of India was organised, under the efforts of Thomas Oldham, the then Professor of Geology in Dublin. The beginning of geological studies may be traced to the last quarter of the 18th century. A series of discoveries of Siwalik fossils, and research on these, were made by H. Falconer and P.T. Cautlay. The Trigonometrical Survey of the Peninsula of India was established in 1800 and was expanded as Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in 1818. The Topographical and Revenue Surveys grouped together under the Surveyor General of India in 1817 and a School of Surveying established in Madras, after several transformations, were consolidated with Trigonometrical Survey in 1878 as the Survey of India.

Survey of India

The Botanical Gardens was established in 1788. Dr William Roxbery was the first to start research on Indian plants in the Botanical Gardens. The Botanical Survey of India was established in 1890. Zoological research in India dates back to the appointment of Edward Blyth as the Curator of the Museum of the Asiatic Society in 1841. His successor, John Anderson, became in 1866 the first Superintendent of the Indian Museum with the zoological and anthropological collections under his direct charge. In 1916, the zoological and anthropological sections of Indian Museum were converted into the Zoological Survey of India.

Significantly enough, while those areas of science and technology which served British industrial interests were developed early, industrial research and needs of industry were not given much attention by the British, as they wished to keep India as a supplier of raw material to British industries and a market for British manufactures. The requirements of the First World War and the political pressure of the national movement, however, led to the appointment of the Holland Commission in 1918 for appraising, amongst other things, the status of the then existing industrial research facilities, and to make recommendations for their improvement. Nothing much was done till 1935 when the government established an Industrial Intelligence and Research Bureau with the object of "making a beginning and to lay the foundation on which a research organisation suitable for the needs of the country could later be constructed". An Industrial Research Council was set up to advise on measures for the coordination and development of industrial research.

Holland Commission

Once again, the Second World War forced the then government to establish units to serve the needs of a besieged Britain. The Board of Scientific and Industrial Research was established to advise the government on research for development of Indian industries, particularly those connected with the war. The Board emphasised the need and provided the basis for a central organisation to plan research, to bring about effective coordination of the research activities in the country, and to promote the application of research for national development.

Board of Scientific and Industrial Research

In 1942, an Industrial Research Fund was created by the government for the purposes of fostering industrial development in the country, and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was constituted as an autonomous body to administer the fund. The proposals for the establishment of a National Physical Laboratory and a National Chemical Laboratory were accepted, and plans for laboratories for food technology, building, road, leather, electrochemicals and others were later formulated. These plans were taken up after Independence and research institutes established in these areas, incidentally on the lines of the institutes established in the United Kingdom, under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

CSIR

It was the high incidence of diseases unknown to the West, the cost of their treatment, and their impact on army and administration that necessitated research in British-ruled India relating to diseases like cholera, plague, malaria, beri-beri, kala azar, etc. In 1892, the Bacteriological Laboratory at Agra was established with P.H. Hankin as its head. The spread of plague in Bombay in 1896 led to the deputation of W.M. Haffkine to work on this problem. In 1899, Haffkine developed a plague

vaccine and established a small laboratory, called Plague Research Laboratory, in Bombay, (renamed in 1926 as Haffkine Institute). The Pasteur Institute was established at Kasauli in 1900. Three years later, the King Institute was established at Guindy for the manufacture of calf-lymph and for general bacteriological work. In 1907, another Pasteur Institute was set up at Coonoor. In 1910, Sir Leonard Rogers proposed the establishment of the School of Tropical Medicine in Calcutta. Thus a chain of institutes with facilities for medical research was established and a cadre of scientific workers in this field created. Sir Harcourt Butler, first member of the Department of Education, Health and Lands, of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and Sir Pardy Lukis, the Director-General of Indian Medical Service, worked towards the establishment of an Indian Research Fund Association in 1911, its primary objectives being research, propagation of knowledge and experimental measures generally in connection with the causation, mode of spread and prevention of communicable diseases.

Organisations on Medical Research

Agricultural research began with the establishment of the Agricultural Research Station and Experimental Farm (later called the Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research) at Pusa in Bihar with the help of a donation made by an American philanthropist, Henry Phipps of Chicago. Subsequently, separate departments of agriculture were constituted in different provinces. Agricultural colleges were established at Ponna, Kanpur, Nagpur, Layallpur (now in Pakistan), Coimbatore and Sabour. In 1921, agriculture, which had so far been a central subject, was transferred to provinces, which were to deal with policy, administration, coordination of agricultural research and education.

Research on Agriculture

A Royal Commission on Agriculture was appointed in 1926 to examine and report on conditions of agriculture and the rural economy of India with particular reference to the measures being taken for the promotion of agricultural and veterinary research and education. Its recommendations led to the establishment of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research in 1929 with the primary object of promoting, guiding and coordinating agricultural research and education in India. The Council was also to serve as a link between agricultural institutions in India and in foreign countries. A number of central commodity committees dealing with research in particular crops, namely cotton (1921), jute (1936), sugarcane (1944), tobacco (1945), coconut (1945), and oilseeds (1947), were also set up as semi-autonomous bodies. A bacteriological laboratory was established in 1889 in Pune, subsequently transferred to Mukteshwar in 1893. The branch at Izatnagar, Bareilly, was opened in 1913 and the name changed to Imperial Veterinary Institute (now known as Indian Veterinary Research Institute).

ICAR

Not much research activity was carried on in private institutes. A few institutes were established by scientists or public men, some of the institutes being the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (1911); the Bose Institute, Calcutta (1917); the Indian Academy of Science, Bangalore (1934) of which the Raman Research Institute is a part; Sheila Dhar Institute of Soil Sciences, Allahabad (1936); the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay (1945); and Shri Ram Institute for Industrial Research, Delhi (1947). Institutes like the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore established by the Tatas played a notable role as a centre of research at a time when India possessed few research facilities. Their development was accelerated only after Independence, and they are now centres of higher studies and research in their respective fields.

Other Research Institutes

Though the policy of promotion of science and technology and their use for developing agriculture, health and industry was guided by political considerations, a number of dedicated British scientists found in India unlimited possibilities for contributing to knowledge. Their research and collection of valuable data did much for building a modern scientific base for the country.

Their deliberations, new standards of objectivity, and respect for facts as a part of discussions created a new awareness amongst the people, made them realise the importance of science and technology and possibilities of development through their use. Scientific and technological infrastructure, once created, begins to interact with situations and

opportunities, and helps in promoting a self-generating scientific and technological tradition. The political leadership of the Independence movement continuously brought pressure on the then government for greater educational facilities and creation of industries. As a result, when India became free it had, in contrast to many other colonies, a scientific and technological foundation which would support the future needs of a newly independent country, provided the political leadership was visionary enough to utilise it.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

In the beginning, the British interest in India was confined to trade; following the acquisition of Bengal, it turned to revenue and questions of power. It was the private excesses of the Company's servants and indignation against their possession of ill-gotten gains that first focused the attention on India's welfare. The principle that the welfare of the governed must be an object of government led to the introduction of the Regulating Act. The governing class in England gradually accepted the principle of the moral duty of the government to promote popular welfare. As regards the kind of welfare which was to be promoted, the first opinion was that the government's duty lay in restoring the old society and fostering its development along traditional lines. Against this conservative view were set the radical views of a forward looking school that drew its inspiration from the rationalist movement of the eighteenth century. This school found little good in Indian institutions, believed Indian thought to be puerile and its religions superstitious, Indian customs hidebound, and thought reason and European knowledge would reform Indians.

Rationalist influence made it possible to secure the admission of Christian missionaries, a Church establishment of a bishop and three archdeacons, and a resolution "that it is the duty of this country (meaning Britain) to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India and that such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction amongst them of useful knowledge of religious and moral improvement". For the evangelical Christians, Christianity was not only a herald of salvation for the individual, but of mercy for the suffering and the oppressed. With William Wilberforce at their head, they campaigned for the abolition of slavery and for prison reforms. To them, Indian religion was superstitious and rampant with idolatry and irrational ritualism; and they joined with the rationalists as westernising innovators who helped to shape British social policy in India.

Early Missions

The early missions of the eighteenth century were based in non-British stations, like the Danes in Tranquebar and William Carey and the British Baptists at Serampore. The missionaries established themselves in British territory in India only by becoming Chaplains as David Brown and Henry Martyn did in Bengal. After 1813, with the ban on entry lifted, a network of British missions was set up followed by a network of American missions. The missionaries engaged in many types of activities ranging from pure evangelism to educational and medical work and the conduct of colleges in the cities. While being unsupported by the government, they enjoyed the support of the ruling class owing to their personal and racial connections. With the Presbyterian Alexander Duff's foundation of the Scottish Churches College in Calcutta in 1830, they made a striking impact on Bengali society. From 1854, the grant-in-aid system and government policy led to a rapid growth in the number of Christian schools and colleges, like the prestigious Madras Christian College. The missionaries also engaged in philanthropic activities in the form of establishing hospitals and providing medical service, famine relief and working for rural upliftment. A large number of women workers were involved in missionary work and these women pioneered the women's movement in India.

Spread of Western Values and Ideas

The missionaries, by their manners and conduct, influenced society. Since military and technological dominance were linked in British imperialist ideology to claims of racial and religious superiority, Christianity was fused with the Raj and became an integral part of the imperial English culture by the second half of the nineteenth century. The missionaries preached their message with the help of inexpensive printed texts that could be produced with the arrival of the printing press. Along with printing, the missionaries

introduced new forms of religious organisation and action. Weekly congregational meetings held by structured societies with formal membership and sets of written rules that the Christian missionaries organised, influenced the growth of *sabhas, anjumans* and *samajes* in other religious communities. The government strengthened this type of organisation through laws granting legal recognition to associations that registered with it, which, in turn, gave them legal rights to own property and conduct business. The missionaries, who could change society only by persuasion, formed an important channel by which western values and western knowledge were disseminated in India.

The influence of the missionaries was most notable in the area of women's upliftment. By 1800, the Indian tradition of feminine culture and women's participation in public life, was no longer there in Indian society. The missionaries empathised with the sorry plight of Indian women and criticised social evils such as *sati,* infanticide, child marriage, the plight of Hindu widows, *purdah* or seclusion from public society, polygamy and *devadasi* system which degenerated into temple prostitution. While *sati* and infanticide were regarded as general moral evils and attacked by the government itself, the rest came within the scope of local custom and so escaped official action. The missionaries not only criticised these customs but also set forth a conception of womanhood that was modern and progressive. They did so partly by their *zenana* activities which brought new ideas behind the *purdah* and by their educational activities.

Efforts for Upliftment of Women

The first schools started in Calcutta in the 1820s catered to girls from poor families. The Bethune School began in 1849 for upper-class girls and was financed for the first five years by Governor-General Dalhousie. It went on to become the first government women's college. Women were trained in medical work too by missionaries and in time the medical profession became more attractive than education. The first woman doctor in India was the American Clara Swain who arrived in 1874, and the second the Englishwoman Fanny Butler who came in 1880. The Countess of Dufferin's Fund was launched in 1885, the founding of the Woman's Medical Service in 1914, and the founding of Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi in 1916. Missionaries led the way in opening of both women's colleges and hospitals. In the growing Christian community in India, women's literacy rate was higher than in any other community and Christians predominated in the professions open to women, and influenced other Indians through their example. These measures gave women hope against exploitation, ignorance, pain, diseases and seclusion. They brought with them a new conception of woman as a personality and of her place in society which appealed to the progressive section of the Indian society. In this way, a reform movement within Indian society was born. While the missionaries could not influence the vast majority of Hindus and Muslims to abandon their religion and embrace Christianity, they did help spread Christian ideas and western values which influenced the traditional society to take a fresh look at itself. The Christian crusade against Hindusim inspired enlightened Hindus to discover in the inner core of their own religion, concepts of monotheism, and all other higher principles and philosophies.

Views

- "The evolution that we seek is a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a source of human dignity."

  —M.G. Ranade

- "Enforced widowhood is a murder of a living human being. It involves the killing of human passions, feelings and emotions. You are butchering your own daughters in cold blood. Should not your blood boil with rage?"

  —Gopal Hari Deshmukh

- "I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interests… it is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort."

  —Raja Rammohan Roy

- “What shall we revive? Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our castes indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and intoxicating drink? Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognised mixed and illegitimate intercourse?… Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year’s end to year’s end, in which even human beings were not spared as propitiatory offering to God? Shall we revive the *sati*, and infanticide customs?”

  —M.G. Ranade
- “A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. …Whoever knows that language (English) has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and handed in the course of ninety generations. … In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to became the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East.”

  —Thomas Babington Macaulay
- “The British rule in India is not eternal; we shall also become wise by learning Western science and technology, and we should endeavour to excel and beat them on their own ground. It is only then that we shall begin gradually to demand power. In order to remove our discontent the British might part with some power. The more power they give, the more will it whet our appetite for it and the British may begin to oppose our demands. If they do so we may perhaps have to do what the Americans did when they drove away the English from their land.”

  —Gopal Hari Deshmukh
- “In every nation, education is intimately associated with the life of the people. For us modern education is relevant only to turning out clerks, lawyers, doctors, magistrates and policemen… This education has not reached the farmers, the oil grinder, nor the potter. No other educated society has been struck with such disaster… If ever a truly Indian University is established, it must from the very beginning implement India’s own knowledge of economics, agriculture, health, medicine and of all other everyday science from the surrounding villages. Then alone can the school or university become the centre of the community’s way of living. This school must practise agriculture, dairying and weaving using the best modern methods… I have proposed to call this school Vishwa Bharati.”

  —Rabindranath Tagore
- “What one can say with modesty is that Indian literature may look forward to a future full of possibilities. For modern Indian literature is not a mushroom growth of exotic plants in a native wilderness. It draws its sustenance from an old and rich soil to which many streams have brought their alluvial deposits. The latest stream has come from the West and its fertilizing agent has been the English language. Not that Indian literature would not have had its modern crop but for this historical accident. The spirit of the age would in any case have stirred its soil, sooner or later, and the winds were blowing fast, carrying the seeds from one part of the world to another.”

  —Krishna Kripalini
- “His (Muhammad Iqbal’s) opposition to “Westernism” instead to capitalism… left him a prey to anti-liberal reactionaries… And thus has the noblest of visionaries of tomorrow’s just and worldwide brotherhood, been turned by it into the champion of the most retrograde…sectionalists.”

  —**W.C. Smith** in his book *Modern Islam in India*, on Md. Iqbal
- “The movement in which he (Abanindra Nath Tagore) played so great a part owed its origin to a reawakening of the slumbering spirit of India. That was to be seen emerging from a period of stagnation and was a thing of organic growth drawing sustenance from the soil of India, a living art in which were enshrined the ideals and conventions of the past, a fresh flowering of the ancient tree, but a flowering in which he was necessarily influenced by the environment in which it took place. In other words, the work of the school of which Abanindranath was a leading exponent enjoyed a measure of originality which was to be expected from those who were themselves the product of a dramatic phase of Indian history.”

  —Marquis of Zetland

Summary

► Introduction

- The social and cultural policy of the British in India was influenced by significant changes in Britain and Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- The new wave of thought was characterised by the doctrines of rationalism, humanism and progress which caused conflicts among British administration and policy-makers resulting in three broad schools of thought—the Conservatives, Paternalistic Imperialists and the Radicals.
- The British believed the modernisation of India had to occur within broad parameters of the British colonialism, i.e., colonial modernisation. The policy of hesitant modernisation was abandoned after 1858.

► Official Social Reform Measures

- In the light of changing consciousness of the people, the British government in India changed its policies and initiated some social legislations.
- The reform measures were: abolition of the practices of Sati, human sacrifice (*meriah*), slavery, thugi and caste disabilities.
- Under William Bentinck, the Government Regulation XVII of December 4, 1829 declared the custom of sati "illegal and punishable by criminal courts".
- The inhuman practice of human sacrifice (*meriah*) among the Khonds of Orissa-Madras hill tracts was put to an end by 1856 during the governor-generalship of Dalhousie.
- Through the proclamations of 1789 and 1790, the Act V of 1843 and finally by the Penal Code of 1860, the practice of slavery was prohibited.
- The evil practice of *Thugee* or *Thugi* was suppressed by Col. William Sleeman in the 1830s.
- Section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833 provided that no Indian subject of the East India Company was to be debarred from holding any office under the Company in India "by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent and colour".
- The Caste Disabilities Removal Act (XXI of 1850) protected Hindus converted to Christianity or Islam from their rights being forfeited.

► State of Indigenous Education and Reforms

- A fairly wide network of indigenous educational institutions (both for Hindus and Muslims) existed in pre-colonial India where learning was confined to scriptures, mythology, grammar, literature and religious laws.
- While the best and real aspects of ancient wisdom and sciences were neglected, the superficial aspects of scriptural faith dominated the educated Indians' mind.
- The Orientalist-Anglicist controversy centred around policy matters regarding the mode of education in India.
- Macaulay's Minute and Bentinck's Resolution were major landmarks in introducing western education in India.
- Woods Despatch (1854), regarded as the *Magna Carta* of English education, organised and systematised the education system in India.
- Hunter Commission (1882) recommended for redesigning the academic curriculum, expansion of secondary education and creation of avenues for higher, commercial and technical education, etc.
- Based on the recommendations of the Raleigh Commission (1902), the Indian Universities Act, 1904 made several changes in the administration of universities, which were condemned by the nationalists.
- In 1913, the Government Resolution on Education Policy though accepted the policy of removal of illiteracy, did not take up responsibility for compulsory education.
- In 1920, the recommendations of the Saddler University Commission (1917-19) were directed at the provincial governments.
- The Hartog Committee (1929) and the Sergeant Plan (1944) also recommended several changes.

Summary

- **Rise of Press, Literature and Public Opinion**
  - Introduced by the Portuguese, the printing press emerged as an important vehicle for social change.
  - Several attempts were made to censor the Vernacular Press like the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. Charles Metcalfe is regarded as the 'liberator of the Indian Press'. The press considerably influenced public opinion in the country.
- **Rise of Vernacular Literature**
  - Replacement of the Mughal tradition by British paramountcy and introduction of English education fostered significant changes in the vernacular languages in India.
  - These vernacular languages acquired a standard form and a new prose literature in the 19th century. This had a close bearing upon the social and cultural and political history of modern India.
- **Progress of Science**
  - Though the British brought modern science and technology to India, the educational and research developments primarily served colonial needs rather than needs of India's socio-economic development.
  - Beginning with the Asiatic Society in 1784 several organisations were established gradually to cater to the needs of British industrial needs.
  - High incidence diseases, their treatment costs and their impact on army and administration necessitated medical research in colonial India.
  - Research in agriculture began with the establishment of the Agricultural Research Station and Experimental Farm (later called Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research at Pusa in Bihar).
  - Research and collection of valuable data helped in building a scientific base for the country.
- **Christian Missionary Activities**
  - Though their activities did not influence vast majority of the Indians to abandon their religions, the Christian missionaries helped in spreading western values and ideas.

CHAPTER 8

Socio-Religious Reform Movements

INTRODUCTION

Indian Renaissance and Growth of Modern India

The dawn of the 19th century witnessed the birth of a new vision–a modern vision among some enlightened sections of the Indian society. This enlightened vision was to shape the course of events for decades to come and even beyond. This process of reawakening, sometimes, but not with full justification, defined as the 'Renaissance', did not always follow the intended line and gave rise to some undesirable by-products as well, which have become as much a part of daily existence in the whole of the Indian subcontinent as have the fruits of these reform movements. For example, communalism emerged as a divisive factor in Indian politics later as some of the reformers promoted a kind of religious exclusivity by glorifying their own religion at the cost of those of others. Some even took recourse to conversion. Further, an undue glorification of India's ancient past also led to an ahistorical representation of India.

The presence of a colonial government on Indian soil played a complex, yet decisive role in this crucial phase of modern Indian history. The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. Most of the earlier intruders who came to India had settled within her frontiers, were absorbed into its culture and had become part of the land and its people. However, the British conquest was different. It came at a time when India, in contrast to an enlightened Europe of the 18th century affected in every aspect by science and scientific outlook, presented the picture of a stagnant civilisation and a static and decadent society.

The 19th century social order was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Many abominable rites had crept into the Hindu religion which had become "a compound of magic, animism and superstition". The priests exercised an overwhelming and unhealthy influence on the minds of the people due to their monopoly of scriptural knowledge and of ritual interpretation which imparted a deceptive character to all religious systems. Society was characterised by the debilitating caste system which maintained a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status. The caste regulations fostered social division, sapped individual initiative, and hampered social mobility, and the inhuman practice of untouchability stood against the very principle of human dignity. The condition of majority of women was equally pathetic and distressing. Innumerable practices characterised by constraint, credulity, status, authority, bigotry and blind fatalism were, indeed, features of a decadent Indian society.

With the conquest and consolidation of the British power in many parts of India by AD 1818, changes began to occur. The growing awareness that a vast country like India had been colonised by a handful of foreigners because of internal weaknesses of her social structure and culture made sensitive Indians respond to the new realities, though a large number of them refused to come to terms with the Western culture. While differing on the nature and extent of reforms, nearly all 19th century intellectuals

believed in an urgent need for social and religious reforms in India.

The Age of Enlightenment had created in 18th century Europe novel intellectual currents, and a new spirit of rationalism and enquiry. In contrast to a dynamic and culturally advanced Europe, India appeared to be a "stagnant civilisation and a static and decadent society". The realisation that India was lagging behind in the race of civilisation produced diverse reactions among sensitive Indians. A section of English-educated Bengali youth, known as Derozians, rejected Hindu religion and traditions completely and deliberately adopted practices that were offensive to Hindu sentiments, such as drinking wine and consuming beef. Others like Raja Rammohan Roy, though influenced by Western ideas and values, refused to break away from Hinduism. They sought to reform Hindu religion and society by accepting the best of the East and the West. Yet another section of reformers denied the superiority of Western culture, drew inspiration from India's past heritage and reinterpreted it in the light of modern rationalism. This neo-Hinduism preached the virtues of Indian spiritualism.

Different Responses

The new scientific outlook of the West, the doctrines of rationalism and humanism impressed the English-educated class in India. Stimulated by the new knowledge, its leaders sought to 'reform Hinduism from within' and purge it of superstitious beliefs and practices. The emergence of a tendency to regulate individual religious and social life in accordance with the principles of reason and to discard traditional beliefs and practices which failed to stand the test of modern knowledge, and scientific scrutiny, was discerned among such people. This approach brought a great change in the concept of 'pollution and purity' which formed an integral part of traditional Hindu socio-religious order. Educated persons questioned the logic behind the labelling of certain forbidden vegetables such as garlic, ginger, onion and beetroot as impure; their food value was cited as the reason why they should be eaten. Domestic rituals, too, underwent a change. The attainment of puberty by girls was no longer an occasion for elaborate rituals, for example; rather it began to be looked upon as a natural stage in the process of growth. The orthodox way of living was further eroded with the growing process of urbanisation and modernisation, and as new trends of eating at tables and restaurants began. The ferment of ideas gave birth to a 'spirit of renaissance' among the enlightened, educated Indians or the intelligentsia. Upon closely scrutinising India's past, Indian intellectuals found that many beliefs and practices had become obsolete and immediately needed to be discarded. They also discovered that many aspects of the country's cultural heritage were of intrinsic value to its renewed cultural awakening. The result was the birth of a host of socio-religious reform movements touching almost every aspect of Indian society.

Principles of Rationalism and Humanism

New Awakening

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the rising tide of nationalism and democracy also found expression in movements to reform and democratise the social institutions and religious outlook of the Indian people. Factors such as growth of nationalist sentiments, emergence of new economic forces, spread of education, impact of modern Western ideas and culture and increased awareness of the world strengthened the resolve to reform.

The socio-cultural regeneration of India of the 19th century was occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it.

The social base of this quest was the newly emerging middle class and traditionally-educated as well as Western-educated intellectuals, but there was a significant contrast between broadly bourgeois ideals derived from a growing awareness of contemporary developments in the West, and a predominantly non-bourgeois social base.

The 19th century intelligentsia searched for its model in the European 'middle class', which, as it learnt through Western education, had brought about the great transformation in the West from medieval to modern times through movements like the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and democratic revolution or reform. Yet its own social roots lay not in industry or trade, increasingly controlled by British managing agency firms and their Marwari subordinates, but in government service or the professions of law, education, journalism and medicine—with which was very often combined

Intelligentsia

some connection with land in the shape of the intermediate tenures.

The important intellectual criteria which gave these reform movements an ideological unity were rationalism, religious universalism and humanism. Social relevance was judged by a rationalist critique. Raja Rammohan Roy upheld the principle of causality linking the whole phenomenal universe and that of demonstrability as the sole criterion of truth. Akshay Kumar Dutt, while proclaiming that "rationalism is our only preceptor", held that all natural and social phenomena could be analysed and understood by purely mechanical processes. This perspective enabled them to adopt a rational approach to tradition and evaluate the contemporary socio-religious practices from the standpoint of social utility and to replace faith with rationality. For instance, in Brahmo Samaj, the repudiation of infallibility of the *Vedas* was the result, while the Aligarh movement emphasised reconciliation of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern age. Syed Ahmed Khan went to the extent of emphasising that religious tenets were not immutable.

New Principles

Many of the intellectuals abandoned, though in varying degrees, the principle of authority in religion and evaluated truth in any religion by the criterion of logic, reason or science. Swami Vivekananda held that the same method of investigation which applies to other sciences should form the basis on which religion is to justify itself. Although some reformers tended to appeal to faith and ancient authority to bolster their appeal, overall a rational and secular outlook was very much evident in posing an alternative to prevalent social practices. For instance, Akshay Kumar Dutt cited medical opinion against child marriage. Reference to the past was to be used only as an aid and an instrument. Neither a revival of the past nor a total break with tradition was envisaged.

Though the reformers tried to reform their religions, their religious perspective was universalistic. Raja Rammohan Roy considered different religions as national embodiments of universal theism. He was a defender of the basic and universal principles of all religions—such as the monotheism of the *Vedas* and unitarianism of Christianity—while attacking the polytheism of Hinduism and trinitarianism of Christianity. Syed Ahmed Khan said that all prophets had the same 'din' (faith) and every country and nation had different prophets. Keshub Chandra Sen held that "our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but that all established religions of the world are true".

Universalist Perspective

The universalist perspective was an attempt on the part of social reformers to contend with the influence of religious identity on social and political outlook of the people which was indeed strong. However, under the onslaught of colonial culture and ideology, instead of providing the basis for the development of secular ethos, universalism retreated into religious particularism towards the second half of the 19th century.

The social reform movements were also an embodiment of a new humanitarian morality which included the notion that humanity can progress and has progressed, and that moral values are ultimately those which favour human progress. An emphasis on the individual's right to interpret religious scriptures in the light of human reason and human welfare and a general attack on priestly domination of religious practices underlined the humanist aspect of religious reform movements.

The religious reformation was the major but not the exclusive concern of these movements. Instead of other-worldliness and salvation, attention was focussed on worldly existence. Because of the strong religious coefficient of social practices and of the fact that religion was the dominant ideology of the times, it was not possible to undertake any social action without coming to grips with it.

These movements embraced the entire cultural existence, the way of life and all signifying practices like language, religion, art and philosophy. The evolution of an alternative cultural-ideological system and the regeneration of traditional institutions emerged as twin concerns of these movements, which got expressed in a variety of forms—attempts to reconstruct traditional knowledge, cultivation of vernacular languages, creation of an alternate system of education, defence of religion, efforts to regenerate Indian art and literature, emphasis on Indian dress and food, and attempts

to revitalise the Indian systems of medicine and to probe the potentialities of pre-colonial technology.

Social Reform

The humanistic ideals of social equality and the equal worth of all individuals which inspired the newly educated middle class had a major impact on the field of social reform. This enlightened section of society was disgusted with the prevailing social ills and inhuman social practices. The social reform movements formed an integral part of the religious reforms primarily because nearly all the effort towards social ills like untouchability and gender-based inequity derived legitimacy from religion in one way or the other. In later years though, the social reform movement gradually dissociated itself from religion and adopted a secular approach. Also, earlier the reform movements had a rather narrow social base—they were limited to the upper and middle classes and upper castes who tried to adjust their modernised views with respect to the existing social conditions. But later on, the social reform movements penetrated the lower strata of society to revolutionise and reconstruct the social sphere.

Bengal Renaissance

The advent of Islam into Bengal and the establishment of Muslim rule cut ties of political influence and economic support between Hindusim and the state. Over the centuries, the socio-religious composition of Bengal also changed through conversion, with East Bengal becoming a Muslim majority region and the Hindus being concentrated mainly in the western part. Persian and Urdu became languages of administration, and Bengali, of the masses.

Oriental Studies

Englishmen replaced the Muslim ruling elite after the battles of Plassey and Buxar, and, with the establishment of the Indian Civil Service by Lord Cornwallis, took over all senior administrative positions. Ascendancy of British law and later the English language accompanied the creation of new administration. The tenure of Warren Hastings was an era of excitement and discovery for many British officials as they examined the civilisation now under their control. The Orientalists studied Indian languages, literature, religion and social structure and aimed to restore Indian civilisation to its past purity.

New Anglicised Bengali Elite

As the new rulers established an administrative structure, they felt the need for expanding the number of trained officials, both English and Indian. In 1781, Hastings founded the Calcutta *Madrasa* as a school for Muslim officials of the East India Company; the language for instruction was Persian. By the 1770s, government documents had to be reproduced in Bengali, which was achieved after Robert B. Wray succeeded in casting Bengali type in 1778. Fort William College, established to train civil servants, became known as the 'Oxford of the East'. With the expansion of British territories, the vernacular languages became increasingly important and so did English as the language of administration and education. With the shift to English education, the literate castes in Bengal too acquired knowledge of English. They were mainly Bengali Hindus of the Brahmin, *Baidya* and *Kayastha* castes. In previous generations, individuals from these groups mastered Persian to gain employment under the Mughals. Now they learnt English.

By mid-19th century, a new Anglicised Bengali elite began to create institutions to serve its own interests. In 1816, it founded the Hindu College where half the students studied western subjects and the English language even though it was not compulsory for them to do so. The Calcutta Book Society, established in 1817 to provide inexpensive textbooks for elementary schools, also encouraged the creation of new elementary schools. In 1824, the Sanskrit College was founded, which also taught English and western science. In 1829, Gour Mohan Addy opened the Oriental Seminary, a Hindu-supported school that taught English language and literature, western mathematics and science, and was open to all castes. Alexander Duff's school in Calcutta offered a free English education for anyone who wished to attend. The small group of Bengalis clustered in Calcutta who accepted English education, exhibited a variety of responses to English ideas, customs, and the implications of western civilisation. Essentially 'go-betweens' between the British and the people, they were men of business but many were also of good family and cultivated tastes. In constant contact with the ablest of Europeans in India, these men developed a cultural as well as practical and theoretical interest in western thought. Besides the desire to acquire

mastery of English for the worldly advantages it would bring, they were curious to know the secret of the men of the West, who had so swiftly and decidedly achieved dominion in India. Their response varied, however. Conservatives such as Radhakanta Deb, Rasamoy Dutta and Ranikanal Sen, all leaders in the Hindu Dharma Sabha, mastered English, but tried to limit the incorporation of foreign culture within Hindu society. Then there were cultural radicals who rejected Hindu social norms in favour of English culture and the secular rationalism imported from Europe. These young radicals were led by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, an Eurasian. Brilliant, an impressive speaker, poet and teacher, Derozio was appointed instructor of English literature at the Hindu College in 1826. Derozio's disciples called Derozians Young Bengal had begun publishing an English language weekly, the *Parthenon,* which viciously attacked Hindu religion and society. This led to an intense clash between the radicals and conservatives and in 1831, Derozio was forced to resign his post at the Hindu College. He died of cholera later that year at the young age of twenty-two.

Derozio and the Radicals

The radicals embraced everything English—language, ideas and customs such as beef-eating and hairstyles. Hindu conservatives, while desiring the practical advantages afforded by a command over English language, were willing to make those changes in customary behaviour needed to work with the rulers. They defended the status quo from the external criticisms of the Christian missionaries and the internal attacks of Hindu radicals. Those living and working within the sphere of this new power and its accompanying culture, that is, within the colonial milieu, had no choice but to examine the society around them and question certain aspects of it.

The Derozians, however, left little distinctive or permanent impression on the plane of religion and philosophy because social conditions were not yet ripe for their ideas to flourish. They did not take up the peasants' cause and there was no other such class or group at that time which could comprehend and support their advanced ideas. Bipan Chandra writes, "In fact, their (Young Bengal's) radicalism was bookish; they failed to come to grips with the Indian reality. Even so, they carried forward Rammohan's tradition of educating the people in social, economic and political questions through newspapers, pamphlets and public associations and carried on public agitation on public questions such as the revision of the East India Company's charter, the freedom of the press, better treatment for Indian labour in British colonies abroad, protection of ryots from oppressive zamindars, and employment of Indians in the higher grades of government services."

Born in 1770, Raja Rammohan Roy was exposed to diverse cultural influences. Professionally, the Roys were the Persianised members of the Hindu elite and served under Muslim rulers. Rammohan learned Bengali as his mother tongue, but also studied Persian and Sanskrit. Young Roy questioned orthodox beliefs and came into conflict with his parents as a result. He publicly criticised idolatry and polytheism; he spent nine years working for the East India Company and after retiring in 1814, devoted his energies to issues of socio-religious reforms and political and economic advancement.

Raja Rammohan Roy

Rammohan had left his home in disgust at a *sati* in the family and for seven years wandered, going as far as Tibet, seeking truth. He studied the doctrines of the Upanishads, of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, and in the course of time mastered Sanskrit, Arabic (language of Islamic learning), Hebrew (the *Old Testament*) and Greek (*New Testament*). Roy's adherence to theism and his rejection of idolatry and priest-craft, sketched the basic outlines of his reconstructed Hinduism, and he envisioned God as the 'almighty superintendent of the universe'. Reinterpreting Hindu doctrines, he found ample spiritual basis and scriptural sanction for his humanitarianism in the Upanishads. Similarly, while denying the divinity of Jesus Christ and rejecting Christianity, he accepted the humanism of Europe. Thus Rammohan Roy sought to effect a cultural synthesis between the East and West. He was recognised as the herald of the new age who, in his person, embodied the new spirit of enquiry, thirst for knowledge and humanitarianism.

Embodiment of New Spirit

Reform Movement in Western India

Though Bengal witnessed a renaissance for the first time in India, where the movement began with a religious and philosophical note, in western India, particularly Maharashtra, strictly social issues came to occupy a central place in the scheme of reform.

Early Intellectuals

The Maharashtrian intellectuals during the early period were not essentially religious thinkers but more pragmatic workers. Among the early intellectuals who initiated social reform movement, the most prominent were Bal Shastri Jambhekar (1812-46), Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar (1814-82), Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar (1816-47), Gopal Hari Deshmukh (better known as Lokahitwadi) (1823-82) and Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale (1825-73), popularly known as Vishnubawa Brahmachari.

Jambhekar spearheaded the intellectual movement in Maharashtra through his writings in the 1830s. Dadoba gave it an organisational shape by founding Paramhansa Sabha in 1840, the first reform organisation of 19th century Maharashtra. Bhaskar Pandurang was the most vociferous nationalist critic of the colonial rule in India who, for the first time, articulated the exploitative character of the British rule in 1841 through a series of eight long letters in the *Bombay Gazette* (one of the oldest newspapers in the Presidency). Gopal Hari Deshmukh's main contribution was in broadening the scope of the movement through his writings. His famous *'Shatapatren'* (Hundred Letters) written between 1848 and 1850, in a popular Marathi weekly, *Prabhakar,* dealt with all aspects of socio-cultural order of the 19th century Maharashtra. Vishnubawa Brahmachari strongly denounced caste distinctions and believed in the oneness of humanity. Although himself a Brahmin, he ate food served by anyone and employed a Muslim cook.

The reform movement in western India gained strength during the second half of the 19th century. The most notable among the host of towering

Ranade and Others

personalities who emerged on the intellectual scene, were Vishnu Parashuram Shastri Pandit (1827-76), Jyotiba Phule (1927-90), Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925), Narayan Mahadev Parmanand (1838-93), Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar (1850-82), K.T. Telang (1850-93), Ganesh Vasudev Joshi (1851-1911), Narayan Ganesh Chandravarkar (1855-1923) and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-95). Pandit was a staunch advocate of widow remarriage. He founded the *Vidhava Vivaha Uttejaka Mandal* (Society for Encouragement of Widow Marriage) in 1865 and set an example by himself marrying a widow in 1875. Jyotiba Phule, reverently called Mahatma Phule, emerged as a champion of the depressed and downtrodden classes of the society and for the first time, established a school for the untouchables in 1854. Both Pandit and Phule clamoured for liberation of Indian women.

Bhandarkar was an erudite scholar (who earned the title of *Maharishi* for himself) and he was a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity who got his widow-daughter remarried in 1891 against stiff conservative opposition. Similarly Parmanand, besides being a great social reformer, was one of the most constructive critics of the English administration, who wrote under the pen name of the 'Political Recluse'.

The most prominent among the Maharashtrian intellectuals was Mahadev Govind Ranade—a multi-dimensional man. A product of Bombay's Elphinstone College, he was a judge of the Bombay High Court during 1891-1901. He reorganised the Paramhansa Sabha into Prarthana Samaj in 1867 which preached monotheism, and denounced priestcraft and caste distinctions. Chiplunkar launched a monthly Marathi magazine, *Nibandhmala,* in 1874 devoted to the cause of social reform. K.T. Telang introduced compulsory primary education in Bombay and was the first Indian vice-chancellor. G.V. Joshi made a brilliant critique of British colonialism and emphasised the need for spreading education as the most potent engine of social progress. Chandravarkar was associated with the Prarthana Samaj whereas G.G. Agarkar, an uncompromising rationalist and iconoclast, denounced undue glorification of India's past and blind adherence to traditions.

Reform Movement in North India

The social and religious reform in North India was spearheaded by Swamy Dayanand Saraswati and Syed Ahmed Khan. Dayanand, who founded the Arya Samaj in 1875, attacked idolatry, polytheism, Brahmin-sponsored religious rites and superstitious practices. He stood for adult and inter-caste marriages and female education. However, his bent

towards the *Vedas,* which he regarded as infallible, gave his teachings an orthodox hue.

Dayanand and his followers played a progressive role in furthering the cause of social reform in North India. They worked for the improvement in the condition of women, advocated social equality and denounced untouchability and caste rigidities. Although the *Vedas* were venerated as infallible, the reforms advocated were the product of modern rational thinking. Syed Ahmed Khan, on the other hand, urged the Muslims to reject the decadent medieval thought, and to imbibe modern scientific knowledge and outlook. Condemning the custom of polygamy he advocated removal of purdah and spread of education among women. He taught tolerance and urged the people to develop rational outlook and freedom of thought.

(The activities of the Arya Samaj and the efforts of Syed Ahmed Khan are discussed in detail separately in this chapter.)

Reform Movement in South India

The most outstanding social reformer in South India was Kandukari Veeresalingam (1848-1919). Born in a poor family, he remained a school teacher throughout and tirelessly produced a huge volume of literature in Telugu on social reform—for which he is aptly called the 'father of modern Telugu prose'. He fought for issues like remarriage of widows, women rights and education, and abolition of social evils in the Andhra region.

Kandukari Veeresalingam

The Madras Presidency witnessed the emergence of a number of caste organisations and anti-Brahmanical movements towards the end of the 19th century, for example, the Congu Vellala Sangam of the Gounder Caste in Tamil Nadu, the Vokkaliga and Lingayat Associations in Mysore, the Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam (1903) of the Izhavas of Kerala (under Sri Narayana Guru), etc. Though originally concerned with internal reforms, these gradually transformed into strong political forces in the 20th century.

MAJOR SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS

The socio-religious movements active during the period of British military and political domination of the Indian subcontinent, were the response of a conquered people to the new colonial world. According to Kenneth W. Jones in *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India,* "the uneven development of a colonial milieu and the persistence of indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent produced two distinct streams of movement within the period of British rule, the one 'transitional' and the other 'acculturative'. Transitional movements had their origins in the pre-colonial world and arose from indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent, with little or no influence from the colonial milieu, either because it was not yet established or because it had failed to affect the individuals involved in a particular movement. The clearest determinant of a transitional movement was an absence of Anglicised individuals among its leaders and a lack of concern with adjusting its concepts and programmes to the colonial world.

Transitional Movements

The second of the two types of socio-religious movements, termed 'acculturative', originated within the colonial milieu and was led by individuals who were products of cultural interaction. The founder of such a movement may or may not have been drawn into the world of British culture, but his followers and those who moved into positions of leadership were largely English-educated South Asians influenced by a specific culture of England. Acculturative movements sought an accommodation to the fact of British supremacy, to the colonial milieu that such supremacy had created, and to the personal position of its members within the colonial world. The basis of such movements and many of their declared aims rested on the indigenous heritage of social and religious protest. In no way were acculturative movements totally new or without roots in the general high cultures of South Asia and the specific subcultures of a given region. Thus the difference between the transitional and acculturative movements was primarily at their point of origin." While the *Faraizi* movement of Bengali Muslims may be said to be a transitional movement, movements like the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj were acculturative in nature.

Acculturative Movements

Acculturative movements can be further divided into two broad categories: reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and the Aligarh movement; and revivalist movements like the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and

the Deoband movement. Both types of movements depended on a varying degree on an appeal to the lost purity of the religion they sought to reform, the difference between one reform movement and the other lying in the degree to which each relied on tradition or on reason and conscience. The reform movements were linked to each other by their emphasis on both religious and social reform. This link existed because almost every social custom and institution in India derived sustenance and legitimacy from religious injunctions and sanctions. This meant that social reform was futile without a reform of the existing religious notions which sustained the social customs. Indian reformers were well aware of the over pervasive hold of religion over the Indian society. Rammohan Roy, for example, believed that religious reform must precede demand for social reform or political rights.

Reformist and Revivalist Movements

Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

Founded by Rammohan Roy, the Brahmo Samaj was the earliest reform movement of the modern type which was deeply influenced by western ideas. Roy (1772-1833) believed that religion, instead of being judged solely on its own scriptural evidence, must also be measured by reason and shown to be free of contradiction and functioning to uphold a beneficial social order. It is this belief that led Roy to campaign for the abolition of *sati,* condemn polygamy and concubinage, denounce casteism and advocate the right of Hindu widows to marry.

Roy first attempted to establish an organisational base for his ideas by founding the Atmiya Sabha (Friendly Association) in 1815. At its weekly meetings, members recited Hindu scriptures, sang hymns, and discussed religious and social issues. Nine years after the Atmiya Sabha ceased meeting in 1819, Roy organised the Brahmo Samaj that met for the first time on August 20, 1828. The service consisted of selections from the Upanishads first chanted in Sanskrit and then translated into Bengali, a sermon in Bengali and the singing of theistic hymns. The Trust Deed executed in 1830 explained the objective of the Brahmo Samaj as 'the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe', a prohibition of all forms of idolatry and sacrifice, and a ban on criticism of other religious beliefs and practices. From the beginning, the appeal of the Brahmo Samaj had remained limited to intellectuals and educated Bengalis residing in towns. Orthodox Hindus led by Raja Radhakant Deb organised the Hindu Dharma Sabha founded in 1830, to counter Roy's condemnation of contemporary religion. The Dharma Sabha aimed at limiting the intrusion of English culture and not at ending it completely. Most members were connected with the British government, and they borrowed the organisational techniques of the West as well as the new technology of printing, in order to achieve their goals. Meanwhile, after the early death of Roy in 1833, the young Brahmo Samaj faded away and emerged later in different forms.

Atmiya Sabha

The Dharma Sabha

The Brahmo Samaj was revived by Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), who belonged to a wealthy Brahmin family of landowners which had worked for the Muslim rulers of Bengal and was now associated with the British. In 1839, Tagore formed the Tattvabodhini Sabha (Truth-Teaching Association) which accepted Vedanta, as had Roy, but in contrast emphasised the superiority of Hinduism. A number of his friends joined the Samaj in 1842, and a year later he began to restore the Samaj by a degree of structural organisation and ideological coherence. Within Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj was a reformist movement; outside Tagore opposed the Christian missionaries for their criticism of Hinduism and their attempts at conversion. He condemned idol worship, and discouraged pilgrimages, ceremonials and penances. Under Tagore's leadership and through the dynamism introduced by a new generation of Bengali youth, the Brahmo Samaj began to expand out of Calcutta into the cities of East Bengal.

Debendranath Tagore

Young Bengalis who were attracted to the Brahmo Samaj, brought with them a restlessness, a sharp rejection of their parental values, and a militancy. Keshav Chandra Sen (1838-84), who stood out among these young disciples, joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857 and became an active worker by 1859. Sen's energy, vigour and persuasive eloquence popularised the movement, bringing many disciples who launched a drive for social

Keshav Chandra Sen

radicalism and a growing missionary programme throughout Bengal. Branches of the Samaj were also opened in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Madras and other towns.

In 1862, Sen and his disciples celebrated an intercaste marriage in secret, and in 1864 they sponsored an intercaste marriage that was also a widow remarriage, publicly. This shocked orthodox Brahmos and horrified orthodoxy. Under Keshav Chandra Sen's influence, the Samaj began to cut itself off from Hindu moorings with religious scriptures of other sects of Christians, Muslims and Parsis being read at the Brahmo Samaj meetings. To Tagore, these developments were too radical and he dismissed Sen from the office of the *Acharya* in 1865. This division along generational and ideological lines was formalised on November 15, 1866, when Sen organised the Brahmo Samaj of India. Tagore's Samaj came to be known as the Adi (original) Brahmo Samaj. The Adi Samaj depended on Tagore's leadership and he saw it as strictly a religious organisation defined by ritual and theology. He had little interest in social reform and devoted much of his attention to the defence of Hinduism from missionary criticism. With his death in 1905, the Adi Samaj's role ended.

Split in the Samaj

Under Sen's tutelage, the Brahmo Samaj India won converts from the villages and towns of East Bengal. By 1868, sixty-five Samaj branches were operating in the east, almost all of them allied to Sen's Samaj. Many in the Samaj followed the example of Bijoy Krishna Goswami, a Brahmo who stressed the religious nature of the Samaj and provided a dramatically different model of living from Sen, who loved ostentation and ceremony. In the early 1870s, the Samaj was rocked by controversy over a legislative proposal, the Brahmo Marriage Act passed in 1872. The law legalised Brahmo marriages by declaring that Brahmos were not Hindus and so were not subject to Hindu law. It provided both a civil marriage as well as legalised inter-caste marriage. As radicals attempted to introduce further changes in the role of women, Sen turned away from his advocacy of social change and by 1875-76, he began to focus on a new type of Brahmoism that contained elements of ecstatic religious experience and shaktism or the worship of female power. This was not liked by his progressive followers. In 1878, Sen got married his thirteen-year-old daughter to a minor Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar with all the orthodox Hindu ceremonials. The marriage violated the Brahmo Marriage Act and in disgust, led many Brahmos to reject Sen's leadership. They founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on May 15, 1878.

Brahmo Marriage Act

Sen gravitated towards bhakti and a universalistic religious ideology, even founding a new organisation in 1881, the Nava Vidhan (New Dispensation). With his death in 1884, the movement died out. The Sadharan Samaj inherited the majority of branch Samajis within and beyond Bengal, and continued its programme of social action and rationalistic religion. In 1891, it opened the Das Ashram, a welfare institution for untouchables, and the Brahmo Girls School of Calcutta, also founding small hospitals, orphanages, a leper asylum. It offered legal aid to oppressed women and began a mission movement among the Khasi hill tribes. Protap Chander Majumdar carried the ideas of the Sadharan Samaj to England and America in 1874, 1884, and again in 1893 at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions.

"The Brahmo Samaj, an acculturative movement among Bengali Hindus, was led by members of the English-educated elite and supported by them. It originated within the colonial environment of Calcutta and flowed out to other cities, then towns, following a line of Bengali emigrants north-west to the Punjab. It was carried to the South and West as well by Brahmo leaders. The accultured ideology of Brahmoism with its reinterpreted Hinduism, western organisational forms of a voluntary religious association with congregational meetings, society officers, missionaries, a creed, printed literature and bank accounts, also reached to the far South and to the west coast through the travels of its leaders. There societies of the Samaj were founded or the Samaj was imitated by local members of the educated Anglicised elites. Thus the Brahmos provided a new Hinduism and a model of religious organisation to others within the colonial milieu," points out Kenneth W. Jones in *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India.*

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

The conditions of widows, especially the younger ones, were indeed deplorable at the time. To ameliorate their suffering became an integral part of the entire women emancipation movement that attracted the urgent attention of 19th century intellectuals. The idea of remarriage of widows became a logical sequel to the abolition of *sati.*

Legislation of Widow Remarriage

One of the pioneers in the task of emancipation of women was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a great Sanskrit scholar. Widow remarriage was the specific social issue he devoted his entire life to. He became the principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851, introduced the study of western thought there and opened its gates to non-Brahmin students. He wrote a Bengali Primer *Varna Parichaya* which is used in schools even today and helped evolve a distinct modern prose style in Bengali. His agitation for legalising widow remarriage fetched the support of many enlightened sections of the Indian society which finally resulted in a legislation in 1856. Under Vidyasagar's direct supervision the first legal Hindu widow remarriage among the upper castes in India was celebrated in 1856 and between 1855 and 1860 as many as 25 widow-marriages were solemnised. This was indeed a major milestone in the history of radical social reform and was a great advance from Rammohan's idea of ascetic widowhood. Vidyasagar also campaigned relentlessly against child marriage, female infanticide and polygamy through his writings and speeches. As secretary to the Bethune School, he was instrumental in leading the movement for education for women. He possessed a sterling character and shining intellect, courage and a fearless mind, love and humanism and practised what he preached.

Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Mission

The didactic nationalism of the Brahmo Samaj appealed more to the intellectual elite in Bengal, while the average Bengali found more emotional satisfaction in the cult of *bhakti* and *yoga.* The history of the Ramakrishna Mission began with Gadadhar Chatterji's birth in 1836 into a poor but orthodox Brahmin family, and his employment as a priest who conducted the worship of mother goddess *kali* at the newly-established Dakshineshwar Temple located just outside Calcutta. During his search for a direct, mystical union with God, Gadadhar was initiated into *sanyas*, and given the name Ramakrishna. By the early 1870s, Ramakrishna was beginning to attract a small group of disciples, many of whom were English-educated young men. Ramakrishna provided a refuge from the cultural and psychological strains that were generated by the educational experience. Two themes predominated his discussions—the universality of all religions, and the preservation of Hindu beliefs and rituals. While recognising the utility and value of image worship in developing spiritual fervour, Ramakrishna emphasised on the essential spirit, and not on symbols or rituals. Under **neo-Hinduism**, as the movement later came to be known as, reforms were possible and there was no need to leave the fold in order to think of reforms. If the Brahmo Samaj partially left the Hinduism-fold on the issue of idolatry, the liberalism of the neo-Hinduism, as defined by Paramahansa, showed that one could remain a perfect Hindu without worshipping idols. Ramakrishna preached for a universal synthesis of all religions, and it was his firm belief that the religions of the world were not contradictory but were various phases of one eternal religion. This spirituality and compassion for suffering humanity inspired his disciples.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

After Ramakrishna's death in 1886, it was left to Narendranath Datta (1863-1902), better known to the world as Swami Vivekananda, to interpret the teachings of Ramakrishna and render them in an easily understandable language to people. A disciple of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda became famous after a successful tour of the United States, where he attended the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, and attracted both publicity and a growing circle of disciples. In India, he founded several Vedanta societies that disseminated his ideas.

Swami Vivekananda and the Mission

On May 1, 1897, Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission, an organisation of Hindu monks. Using money collected in the West, he purchased property for a new monastery, the Belur Math, and opened a second math at Mayavati in the Himalayas. Vivekananda introduced a famine relief programme, the first concrete expression of

his concept of social service, and managed, within a few months, to transform a small group of devotees into the nucleus of a new organisation devoted to a Hindu social gospel. When Vivekananda died at the age of forty on July 4, 1902, he left behind him a new type of Hindu religious organisation, a blending of traditional monasticism and imported institutional concepts.

Neo-Hinduism

Sharing the perceptions of Rammohan Roy and other Hindu thinkers of the 19th century, Vivekananda denounced contemporary Hinduism as degenerate and felt Hindus to be filled with superstition, with the trivia of elaborate rituals, jealous of anyone who might attempt to provide leadership or direction, and "possessing the malicious nature befitting a slave". Blaming Hindu decline on ignorance and Indians' position as subjugated people, Vivekananda evoked a past age of glory, of success, when Hindus acted as teachers to a world dependent on their spirituality. He linked the concept of Vedanta, which he regarded as the one universal religion, to a dualistic division of the world between East and West. Labelling the West as materialistic he, nevertheless, drew attention to its positive achievements in the freedom and respect given to women, its work ethic, its organisational talents, and high level of material prosperity, and called to integrate these into Hindu culture. He said, "We should give our ancient spirituality and culture and get in return Western science, technology, methods of raising the standard of life, business integrity and technique of collective effort." In turn, Hindus would transfer their spirituality to the West. His conception of an ideal man was one with European body and an Indian mind.

The restored Hinduism of Vivekananda was based on selfless action by the dedicated followers of Ramakrishna, who would find their salvation through social service. Believing that it was an insult to God and humanity to teach religion to a starving man, he said, "Him I call a *Mahatma* (Great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *Duratma* (wicked soul). So long as millions live in hunger and ignorance I hold every man a traitor who while educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them." The social purpose that Vivekananda gave Hinduism not only drew into it young members of the English-educated elite, but also non-Hindus of the West under his leadership and in so doing was the first Hindu movement to explore a totally new source of support. One of his disciples, Margaret Elizabeth Noble (popularly known as Sister Nivedita) served the Mission selflessly by promoting education, social service for the poor and programmes for uplift of women. After Vivekananda's death, the social service organisation he left behind went on to become one of the leading reform movements in India. The mission runs a number of charitable dispensaries and hospitals, and offers help to people in need in times of natural calamities like famine, floods and epidemics. Despite never giving any political message, Vivekananda did succeed through his speeches and writings, in infusing into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, a new faith in Indian culture and a sense of robust confidence about India's future.

Vivekananda

Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj

Swami Dayanand

The Arya Samaj movement was a revivalist movement whose founder, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-83), rejected western ideas and sought to revive the ancient Vedic religion. Born in a Brahmin family living in the old Morvi state in Gujarat, Dayananda, or Mool Shankar as he was known then, was initiated into Vedic literature, logic, philosophy and ethics by his father, a great Vedic scholar. Dayananda's quest for the truth goaded him to *yogabhyas* (contemplation or communion) and he left home to learn yoga. For fifteen years, Dayananda wandered as an ascetic throughout India studying yoga. In 1875, he formally organised the first Arya Samaj unit at Bombay and established the headquarters of the Arya Samaj at Lahore. For the rest of his life, Dayananda extensively toured India to propagate his ideas. He preached a 'purified' Hinduism, one that rejected the popular Puranas, polytheism, idolatry, the role of Brahmin priests, pilgrimages, nearly all rituals, and the ban on widow marriage—in short, much of contemporary Hinduism. He published his views in *Satyarth Prakash* (The Light of Exposition of Truth), in which he elaborated his concepts of true Hinduism and condemned all that he considered false, i.e., orthodox Hinduism, Christianity, Islam,

Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. For him, Vedic Hinduism was the only true faith. In the Vedas lay the concept of the veritable monotheism, devotion to the one formless God. Like the Vedic religion, Vedic society too was a natural society without the social evils of subsequent ages, with society being divided into four units in accordance with the character, capability and preference of individuals for their profession. Neither the caste system nor untouchability existed in the Vedic Age, with the status of women being one of honour, privilege, and freedom.

Back to the Vedas

The Arya Samaj was required to place absolute faith in God and in the Vedas. Its duties were defined in much wider terms than as merely religious, with its members required to devote themselves to the physical, social and spiritual welfare of humanity. The movement profoundly influenced people in western and northern India, and, when Dayananda died in Ajmer on October 30, 1883, he left behind Arya Samajis scattered throughout Punjab and the North-western Provinces, as also a few in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The programme of action which the Arya Samaj upheld was at once forceful and far-reaching, with the *Samaj* establishing the *gurukulas* or educational institutions on the Vedic pattern in an attempt to reintroduce and encourage an ancient Aryan type of education. The most notable of such *gurukulas* was the one at Kangri in the vicinity of Hardwar which developed into a famous centre of Vedic studies. The media of instruction were Sanskrit and Hindi, and both the modern subjects of sciences and humanities, as well as Vedic studies, were taught in them. Character-building and a spirit of service and dedication were encouraged by the *gurukulas* and so, philanthropic activities were also part of the programme. The *Samaj* established several homes for orphans, widows, destitutes and the distressed.

Shuddhi Movement

The militant wing of the Arya Samaj condemned Brahmanic rites and rituals, idol worship and superstitious practices. Christian success in converting the lower castes led this wing to develop its own ritual of reconversion, namely, *shuddhi.* Initially employed to purify and re-admit Hindus who had converted to Islam or Christianity, *shuddhi* soon began to be performed for anyone whose ancestors had once been Hindu. *Shuddhi* was used to purify untouchables and transform them into members of the clean castes; a number of *Rantias*, a caste of Sikh untouchables, as well as Hindu *Odes* and *Meghs* were converted. It was a new method in Hinduism, a religion that was known till then as a non-proselytising religion. The Arya Samaj tried to establish that in ancient times, Hinduism embraced non-Hindu races such as Greeks, Scythians, Sakas and Hunas who lost their original identity and became Hindus. Hinduism was thus a missionary religion whose all-absorbing spirit the Aryas tried to revive by aiming to bring back to Hindu society all those people who had at one time left their original religion and had embraced either Islam or Christianity. This attempt at reconversion alarmed other religions as well as the British government, and created tension and discord. It later on, to a certain extent, contributed to the process of emergence of communalism in India.

Not only were the Muslims and Christians alienated by this militant brand of Hinduism, it has been argued by Richard Fox that the articulation of a distinctive Sikh identity through an organised Singh Sabha movement in the late nineteenth century was directly the result of the Arya Samaj campaign in Punjab, particularly its attacks on Guru Nanak. Mahatma Gandhi, after reading the comments in *Satyartha Prakash,* said, "I have read *Satyartha* Prakash, the Arya Samaj Bible. Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yarwada Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stands for truth and nothing and nothing else. But he has unconsciously misinterpreted Jainism, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism."

To the militant Aryas, education was intended to produce a new ideal Hindu woman and so they focussed on the education of women. They established the *Arya Kanya Pathshala*, a girls' school in Jullundur in the early 1890s, following this up with the establishment, on June 14, 1896, of the *Kanya Mahavidyalaya* which became a fully developed high school and, finally, a women's college. The school gradually became the core of an educational movement, as its alumnae opened their own girls' schools. The Arya militants' attempts to advocate widow marriages was also successful. Over the next

decade, widow marriage became increasingly acceptable among Punjabi Hindus. It is argued that Dayananda's philosophy represented elements of both extremism and social radicalism. While the socio-educational schemes of the *samaj* infused vigour into Hindu society, its extreme reliance on the Vedas, or the motive to ascribe all knowledge and truth to the Vedas, did not make a lasting impression on the Hindu intelligentsia.

Ranade and Prarthana Samaj

The establishment of a new society dedicated to changing the religious and social life of Maharashtra came when the Paramahansa Sabha was founded in 1849 and when Keshav Chandra Sen's visits to Bombay enthused the English-educated Marathi elites to set up the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) in 1867. The Samaj was pledged to the worship of one God and to seek the truth in all religions. Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), a prominent leader of the Samaj, wrote *A Theist's Confession of Faith* in which he attempted to create an ideological base for the Samaj by stressing on a compassionate and omnipotent God similar to the divine figure found in the writings of the Maratha bhakti saints. Members of the Samaj believed that the true love of God lay in the service of God's children and so, focussed on social reform. Besides attempting to provide education to all classes of society, they worked to end the ban on widow remarriage, to abandon caste restrictions, to abolish child marriage, and to encourage the education of women. However, unlike the Brahmos of Bengal, they were always careful not to break with Hindu society, and followed a cautious programme. Branch societies of the Prarthana Samaj were opened in Poona, Surat, Ahmadabad, Karachi and the Madras Presidency. The Samaj maintained various institutions: a free reading room, a library, night-school for workers, an orphanage in Pandharpur and, after 1906, a Depressed Classes Mission of India under the leadership of Vithal Ramji Shinde. But the strength of Brahmanical power was such that an acculturative socio-religious movement could not openly challenge it. Social protest among non-Brahmins and untouchables moved along secular lines while Hinduism, which served as a vehicle of protest against the British and their culture, also furnished symbols for political mobilisation under Bal Gangadhar Tilak's leadership.

Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded by Westerners who were inspired by Indian thought and culture. The word theosophy comes from two Greek words, *theos* and *sophia*, meaning god and wisdom. Thus the meaning of theosophy was the wisdom concerning God or its Indian equivalent, the knowledge of the Absolute. What the ancient Greeks wanted to ascertain was abundantly available in the Upanishads of the Hindus and therefore, those wanting to revive the ancient theosophy, could do so through the Hindu Upanishads. In essence, the theosophical movement aimed at the quest of Hindu spiritual wisdom through Western enlightenment. The society found acceptance and support with the intelligentsia more rather than the masses.

Theosophy

The foundation of the Theosophical Society was laid in 1875 in the United States of America by Madame H.P. Blavatsky, a Russian lady, and Colonel H.S. Olcott, a former army officer of England. The Theosophical Society of India was founded in 1886. Its branches were established at a number of places, such as Bangalore, Bombay, Kumbakonam, Surat and Ludhiana, and it was headquartered at Adyar near Madras. In India, the movement became somewhat popular with the election of Annie Besant (1847-1933) as its president after the death of Olcott in 1907. After losing all faith in Christianity, Mrs Besant divorced her husband, an Anglican clergyman, and joined the theosophical movement in 1889. One of the original objectives of the Society was to study and preach Aryan philosophy and religion. Well-acquainted with Indian thought and culture, Besant came to India to champion the cause of theosophy and gradually turned a Hindu not only in her views but also in her dress, food and social manners. The philosophies underlying theosophy were highly intricate concerning the divine, the cosmic process, the universe, the emanations, the potentialities, the soul, the evolution, the cessation and the rest. The

theosophists also believed in the theories of *karma*, rebirth, *moksha* and *nirvana*. The novelty of the movement lay in creating mental conditions for the realisation and appreciation of those ideas. Theosophy appreciated all forms of religion and all modes of worship, and believed that all the apparent distinctions were merely outward manifestations of the same divine principle. Apart from philosophical and spiritual discourses, the Society's valuable contribution to the Hindu awakening came from its literary and research activities. Besant laid the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Benaras in 1898 where both the Hindu religion and Western scientific subjects were taught. The college went on to develop into the famous Benaras Hindu University in 1916. Besant also formed the Home Rule League on the pattern of the Irish Home Rule Movements in 1916. Despite its achievements, to the average Indian the philosophy of the Theosophical Movement seemed rather vague and deficient in positive programme and as such its impact was limited to a small segment of the Westernised class.

Jyotiba Phule and Satyashodhak Samaj

A powerful movement against upper caste domination and brahminical supremacy was organised by Jyotiba Phule, a lower caste (*Mali* community) reformer in Maharashtra. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) in 1873, with the leadership of the Samaj coming from the backward classes, *Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris* and *Dhangars*. The main aims of the movement were (i) social service, and (ii) spread of education among women and lower caste people. Phule's works *Sarvajanik Satyadharma* and *Gulamgin* became sources of inspiration for the common masses. Phule used the symbol of Rajah Bali as opposed to the brahmins' symbol of Rama. Phule aimed at complete abolition of the caste system and socio-economic inequalities; he was against Sanskritic Hinduism. This movement gave a sense of identity to the depressed communities as a class against the brahmins, who were seen as the exploiters. Phule opened, with the help of his wife, a girls' school at Poona and was a pioneer of widow remarriage movement in Maharashtra.

Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Movement

This movement was an example of a regional movement born out of conflict between the depressed classes and upper non-brahmin castes. It was started by Sri Narayana Guru among the Ezhavas of Kerala, who were a caste of toddy-tappers and were considered to be untouchables. The Ezhavas were the single largest caste group in Kerala constituting 26 per cent of the total population. Sri Narayana Guru initiated a programme of action—the SNDP Yogam—in 1903. The SNDP Yogam took up several issues, such as (i) right of admission to public schools, (ii) recruitment to government services, (iii) access to roads and entry to temples, and (iv) political representation. The movement as a whole brought transformative structural changes such as upward social mobility, shift in traditional distribution of power and a federation of 'backward castes' into a large conglomeration.

SNDP Movement

Justice Party (South Indian Liberal Federation)

On November 20, 1916, T.M. Nair and P. Theagaraya established the first non-Brahminical organisation in the Madras Presidency of British India called South Indian Liberation Federation, which later came to be popularly known as the Justice Party. The Justice Party's foundation marked the culmination of several efforts to establish an organisation to represent the non-Brahmins in Madras. In 1920, the Justice Party won the first direct elections in the Madras Presidency owing to boycott of the polls by the Congress due to Non-Cooperation Movement, and formed the government. But in the 1937 election, it was defeated by the Congress party and never recovered. After that it came under the leadership of Periyar and his Self-Respect Movement. Periyar transformed the Justice Party into a social organisation, Dravidar Kazhagam and withdrew from electoral politics. The Justice Party is remembered for the introduction of caste-based reservations in the country and participation in the anti-Hindi movement of 1937-40. Present-day Dravidian parties–the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the All India Anna

Dravida Munnetra Kazham (AIDMK)–are ideological successors of the Justice Party.

Reforms Among the Muslims

The movement for reform arose relatively later among the Indian Muslims. The earliest organised Muslim response to western influences appeared in the form of the Wahabi Movement, but the Ahmadiya Movement, which began in 1889, may be said to be the real reform movement among Muslims. Founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Punjab, the aim was to liberalise the tenets of Islam in the context of enlightenment. Ghulam Ahmad became a believer in the spirit of the time and rationalism of the West. He was very hostile to the medieval concepts of religious crusades or *jihad* which destroyed the basic philosophy of true religions, namely, human brotherhood. Mirza Ghulam also condemned the worship of tombs and numerous other customs as *shirk* (polytheism) and interpreted the *Quran* to justify the gradual elimination of slavery. He taught his followers to perform the five daily prayers (*Namaz*), obey God, and to conduct themselves righteously and ethically. The ideology of the Ahmadiyas appealed at first to middle-class, literate Muslims; however, the movement being located in village Qadiyan, the Ahmadiyas began to attract more members from the less-educated, poorer rural classes. The Ahmadiya movement also broke down the exclusive tendency of Muslims to keep aloof from the English language, and opened institutions for learning at many places.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

A legacy of the Revolt of 1857 was the official impression that Muslims were the arch-conspirators in 1857-58, an impression which the Wahabi movement helped to confirm. However, a wind of change was perceptible in the 1870s, with W.W. Hunter's book *The Indian Musalman* making a vigorous plea for reconciling and rallying the Muslims round the British government through thoughtful concessions. A section of the Muslim community led by Syed Ahmed Khan was prepared to accept this line of official patronage as it felt that the Muslim community would forego its rightful share in the administrative services if it resisted modern ideas.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98) and the Aligarh Movement

Born into a prestigious family of Delhi, Syed Ahmad Khan received education in the traditional Muslim style, yet was fascinated with western science, mathematics and astronomy. In 1838, Syed Ahmad entered British service and gradually advanced up the judicial ladder until his retirement in 1877. He remained loyal to the British during the Mutiny. In 1878, he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council and earned a knighthood in 1888 for his loyalty. Syed Ahmed tried to modernise Muslim outlook, reconcile his co-religionists to modern scientific thought and to British rule, and urged them to accept services under the government. He wrote political statements to demonstrate that Islam as a religion was not responsible for the Revolt of 1857 and that there were Muslims like him who remained allied with the Raj. In his masterly work *Commentaries on the Quran,* Sir Syed criticised the narrow outlook of traditional interpreters and emphasised on the study of the *Quran.* He felt a study was necessary after a visit to England in 1869-70 left him with a depressed vision of both India and the Indian Muslim society: "The natives of India… when contrasted with the English in education, manners and uprightness, are like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man". To end this state of decadence, Sir Syed advocated the adoption by the Muslim community of certain characteristics of English society, such as its discipline, order, efficiency and high levels of education, along with science and technology. His goal led him to question the relevance of the Prophet Muhammad and his message. He approached these issues with two basic suppositions—first, he maintained that the *Quran* contained ultimate truth and existed prior to the knowledge of science; second, science or natural law was itself true, and so, there could be no contradiction between the *Quran* and natural law. His argument that if a naturalistic and rational explanation could be found that did not directly clash with the *Quran*, it was to be used, led orthodox Muslims to clash with him.

Syed Ahmed Khan

In the field of education, Sir Syed opened the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh

in 1875, where instruction was imparted both in western arts and sciences and in Islamic theology. Syed Ahmed envisioned the college as supplying educated, honest, public-spirited leaders able to work with the English government, and to protect the Muslim community. In time, this elite would lift the Muslims into a cooperative dominance, ruling India in partnership with the British. Between 1882 and 1902, Aligarh had sent upto 220 Muslim graduates, or 18.5 per cent of 1,184 in India. It also became the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community and the school became the nucleus for the formation of the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. Syed Ahmed Khan's efforts to defend and then strengthen the Muslim community marked a sharp break with previous attempts to purify Islam. Instead of focussing its attention on the *ulema* (Islamic theologians), Syed Ahmed's administrative elite would govern in cooperation with the British. Concerned with the fate of the Muslims as a religiously defined community rather than with proper religious practice, Sir Syed rejected the Indian National Congress, opposed aggressive Hinduism, and laid the foundation of a consciousness that evolved into religious nationalism. We shall analyse later how this new consciousness among the Muslims generated communal sentiments.

Reforms Among the Sikhs

Singh Sabha

Paralleling the Arya Samaj and the Ahmadiya movements in Punjab, was a socio-religious movement among the Sikh community. Influenced by the rationalist and progressive ideas of the 19th century, and shaken by incidents such as Christian conversions, a small group of prominent Sikhs formed the Singh Sabha of Amritsar, which held its first meeting on October 1, 1873. The Sabha aimed to restore Sikhism to its past purity, to publish historical religious book, magazines and journals, to propagate knowledge using Punjabi, to return Sikh apostates to their original faith, and to involve highly placed Englishmen in the educational programme of the Sikhs. The objective was two-fold: to bring to the Sikh community the benefits of western enlightenment through modern education; as also to counter the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries and Hindu revivalists.

The Singh Sabha represented the leaders of the Sikh community, and was joined by members of the landed gentry, the aristocracy, and by various types of temple employees like *pujaris*, *granthis*, and *mahants*. In 1894, the Singh Sabha organised the Khalsa Tract Society to popularise Punjabi, the Gurmukhi script, and to issue monthly tracts on the Sikh religion. A new organisation that came into being in 1879, the Lahore Singh Sabha, soon began to compete with the Amritsar Society for leadership within the Sikh community. Besides wishing to return Sikhism to its past purity by expunging all elements of non-Sikh origin, the Lahore Singh Sabha aimed to impart 'modern' knowledge using Punjabi, and published journals and newspapers to achieve these ends. It was more democratic and accepted members from all castes including untouchables. Despite differences in membership, ideology and programmes, both cooperated in establishing the Khalsa College at Amritsar in 1892, and a number of modern educational institutions throughout Punjab.

Besides the Singh Sabha movement which was acculturative in nature, transitional movements among Sikhs also sought to correct two unhealthy tendencies: first, the Sikh aristocracy was turning away from the religious austerity of the earlier days, and many aspects of religion were losing their meaning through negligence; second, Hindu influence was silently operating to revive among the Sikhs a desire for traditional festivities and ceremonies.

Dyal Das (1783-1855)

Nirankari Movement

The Nirankari Movement founded by Dyal Das, a Hindu by birth, pioneered the Sikh reform movement. A bold denouncer of idol worship, Dyal Das began to preach against the practice of Hindu ceremonies by the Sikhs. His followers, known as Nirankaris (from the worship of God as *nirankar* or formless), were found in Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. So great was Dyal Das's impact on his followers that they worshipped the book that he issued, the *Hukam Nama* or the *Book of Ordinances*, along with the *Granth Sahib*. A *dharmshala* constructed at Rawalpindi by Dyal Das became a centre of worship and was known as the

Nirankari Darbar. Drawing members mainly from the urban non-Jat section of the Sikh community, the Nirankaris grew in part through the establishment of British rule in Punjab since that freed them from the restrictions of the Sikh government. They became a permanent subsection of the Sikh religion and in doing so helped to clarify the lines dividing Sikhs from Hindus. They were separated from another transitional movement, the *Namdharis,* by their dependence on Guru Nanak and early Sikhism for their model of 'pure' religion.

Baba Ram Singh (1816-85)

Namdhari Movement

The Namdhari movement, founded by Ram Singh of village Bhaini Arayian in Ludhiana district, preached extreme puritanism. *Namdharis* wore white clothes with a white turban and carried a rosary, and discouraged the worship of gods, goddesses, idols, graves, tombs, trees and snakes, as was the consumption of beef. Ram Singh's movement was a householder's religious path that stressed hard work, cleanliness and a moral life. Women were granted a degree of equality; they were initiated through baptism, allowed to remarry when widowed and not required to give dowry. "The teaching of Ram Singh and his *guru* Balak Singh, promised a return to purified Sikhism, not of Guru Nanak, but of Guru Gobind Singh. Both leadership and membership came from the Jat peasant class of Punjab, the same segment of society that had supported Guru Gobind Singh and his version of Sikhism. They shared with the *Nirankaris* the belief that Sikhism was decadent and degenerate and they sought to return it to past purity. The *Namdhari* vision of a restructured Sikhism, however, called for a total reshaping of the Sikh community into a militant, religious-political dominion that threatened established religious authority and brought them into direct conflict with the British-Indian government. With their ecstatic devotionalism, a millennial vision for the future, a tightly organised religious community that contained elements of a parallel government, they, like the *Tariqah-I-Muhammadis,* struck against British political dominance and in return were suppressed." (*Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Kenneth W. Jones).

Reforms Among the Parsis

The Parsis, refugee Zoroastrians from Iran, who, according to tradition, reached Gujarat in AD 936, lived along the western Gujarat coast in ports and small towns. The Parsis evolved a system of socio-religious orders that was similar to the caste system of Gujarati Hindus, and were a closed community who did not convert and did not intermarry with non-Parsis. Their temples and *dakmas* (Towers of Silence), a funerary structure, were closed to non-Parsis, and access to their sacred literature was restricted to Parsi priests. Many of the Parsis also moved to Bombay and became wealthy as merchants, shipbuilders and commercial middlemen.

Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha 1851

Alarmed at Christian missionary attacks on their religion, Naoroji Furdunji and a small group of educated Parsis from Bombay founded the Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha (Parsis' Reform Society) in 1851, to achieve "the regeneration of the social condition of the Parsis and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion in its pristine purity". The Sabha issued its own journal, *Rast Goftar* (The Truth Teller), as the main voice of their movement. The leaders of the Sabha criticised elaborate ceremonies at betrothals, marriages and funerals, opposed infant marriage and the use of astrology, and also orthodox beliefs and customs through lectures, pamphlets and their journal. In the 20th century, Parsi customs and social behaviour underwent significant changes. Many wealthy Parsis in Bombay were drawn into social contact with the English—their wives began to appear at dinners, they changed their habits of dress and they adopted English customs and social etiquettes. The age of marriage increased, as did the amount of education given to their sons and daughters. Since the authority of traditional priests had not been transferred from Gujarat to Bombay, there was less resistance to change among the Parsis in Bombay than in many other Parsi communities.

The educated and urban class of Parsis in Bombay who founded the Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha, became a successful elite within that city and within British India. They allowed western scholars to study the sacred texts, rituals and customs of Parsis, and this knowledge was used to bring about

Minor Transitional Reform Movements

Through the 18th and 19th centuries in India, a number of religious sects or orders arose whose impact on society was not very deep. Within their limited spheres, however, they exercised considerable influence on their respective groups by way of religious and moral upliftment. Most of these sects originated among lower-caste Hindus, among whom a religious regeneration was necessary. Most of the sects centred around a devotional worship of God; some were reformist in outlook and discouraged idol worship and polytheism. A spirit of liberalism and tolerance pervaded most of these sects, with some of them opening their doors to all castes and creeds.

Swami Narayan Sect

The *Swami Narayan* sect that flourished in Gujarat in the early 19th century, preached devotionalism and bhakti. Its founder was Swami Sahajananda who was born in Awadh in 1871, but relocated to Gujarat. He advocated vegetarianism and condemned the use of liquor and drugs, taught that a woman should obey her husband and worship him as a deity, but also attacked the restrictions on widow remarriage, the institution of *Sati*, and the practice of female infanticide. The ideology of the movement was explained in the *Shikshapatri* (Conduct of Disciples) published by Sahajananda in 1826. Mostly, the movement acted to reinforce Hindu values and practices, and to encourage Hindu devotionalism, and appealed to Hindus, tribals and a few untouchables.

Satnami Order

In the late 18th century, Jagajibana Das of Awadh established a religious order called the *Satnami* or the believers in the True Name. Members of the sect, drawn from a wide area of northern India, were divided into two branches, the householders and the monks. The former retained their castes while the latter did not. Paralleling this movement was the growth of another order of Satnamis in the Central Provinces. Highly religious, these Satnamis wanted to worship God in the simplest possible form without the sanction of the priestly class belonging to the higher Hindu order. In the early nineteenth century, Ghasi Das became the guru of these Satnamis. A *Chamara* himself, he preached that there was only the true God manifested in His Name—*the Sat Nam,* and not the idols of the Hindus. All men were equal in the eyes of God and hence there was no distinction between men as prescribed by the castes. Ghasi Das wanted to bring about moral reforms among the lower communities by abolishing vices, such as the reckless drinking of liquor and smoking, through religious injunctions. The *Satnami* movement led to considerable religious and social awakening among the *chamaras* of Chattisgarh. For a brief period of extreme radicalism the Chhattisgarh Satnamis attempted to strike out against the caste system and society in general, but finally returned to an existence as an untouchable form of Hinduism with its own priests, its hereditary leadership and its followers almost solely from one untouchable caste.

Darwesh-Fakir, Khushi Biwas, Sahebdhani Sects

In mid-nineteenth century, Uday Chand Karmakar established a sect at Dhaka named *Darwesh-Fakir*. The members did not shave their face or cut their hair, practised various types of asceticism and showed that they hated no one. They collected alms to live, practised non-violence to the animal world and respected plant world, too. A Muslim named Khusi established a religious order called *Khusi Biswas*, in the district of Nadia in Bengal. Khusi's was a Vaishnavi sect and the members regarded their *guru* as an incarnation of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The sect's originality lay in the fact that Hindu Vaishnavas could regard a Muslim as their guru, despite a very limited membership. Members of the sect disregarded caste restrictions and they ate together. The *Sahebdhani* sect in Nadia was also founded by an ascetic of the same name. *Sahebdhani* did not believe in caste and even took Muslims as his disciples. The members of the order gave up idol worship and practised simple rituals such as placing flowers on a wooden seat, offering cooked food to the invisible God and eating the food after worship.

The Nadar Community

The Nadars, residing in the Tinnevelly district of the Madras Presidency and southern Travancore, were a caste associated with toddy, a liquor produced from the fermented sap of the Palmira tree. The production and sale of toddy were seen as polluting, and the Nadars were regarded as untouchables. They could not enter Hindu temples, use public wells, approach members of the higher castes within a specific distance, were limited to the type of dress they could wear, and forced to live outside the village. Their position as untouchables rankled, especially as some Nadars had achieved a degree of prosperity, control over land, and a resulting improvement in their social status. They were known as Nadans and functioned as landlords over others of their caste. Acquainted with Christianity first due to Jesuit missionaries, and then due to Anglican ones, many Nadars converted to Christianity. On being persecuted by Nadan landlords and members of the upper castes, they fled to live in

Christian villages of refuge that were established. By 1850, there were nearly 40,000 Christian converts in Tinnevelly district and 20,000 in southern Travancore. Despite the animosity of upper-caste Hindus and attacks on Christian converts, Christian Nadars did achieve a degree of acceptance and toleration by the 1860s. In southern Travancore, Nadars were largely toddy-tappers and tenants of the upper-caste *Nayar* and *Vellala* landlords, and held a similar position within the caste system. One restriction placed upon Nadars appeared most humiliating, especially after the Nadars had converted to Christianity. Nadar women were forbidden to cover their breasts. Several confrontations and government interference were required before the Travancore government on July 26, 1859 issued a royal proclamation allowing Nadar women to wear a jacket or cloth in the style of low-caste fisherwomen.

This movement passed beyond the stage of criticising Hinduism to the point where it rejected Hinduism entirely and sought caste uplift through conversion to Christianity—a religion that promised them equality and an end to their social disabilities. Only by rejecting Hinduism could the Nadars hope to escape the socio-religious constraints placed on them.

religious change and to instruct a new generation of Parsi priests. This movement provided a reshaped heritage that anglicised Parsis could defend against Christian missionaries and that was compatible with their changed social, cultural and economic environment. The orthodoxy at Gujarat was undermined by the loss of a monopoly of scriptural knowledge, by their low level of education, their ignorance of Zoroastrian texts, and their inability to control the elite of Bombay. By 1947, the Parsi community had largely succeeded in adjusting to the colonial milieu and emerged as the most Westernised section of Indian society.

WOMEN AS A FOCUS OF SOCIAL REFORM

Almost all the reformers shard a common realisation that the plight of Indian women was wretched and deplorable and therefore there was an urgent need for ameliorating their condition. The existing practices of child marriage, enforced widowhood, polygamy, female infanticide, sati, seclusion of women and prostitution were seen as the root cause of women's subjection and exploitation. For example, child marriage often resulted in early widowhood and promoted polygamy, which was viewed as the main source of moral and physical evil and 'a relic of barbarian and primeval necessity'. Though the legislation of 1829 solved the problem of *sati*, it became essential to rehabilitate and secure these widows in the social matrix, especially as they very often became potential victims of sexual exploitation. Hence Widow Remarriage Act (1856) became a logical sequel to the abolition of *sati*.

Causes for Women's Exploitation

The government adopted many administrative measures to improve the condition of women mainly due to the indefatigable efforts of the reformers. The reformers appealed to the doctrines of individualism and equality, and argued, to bolster their appeal, that true religion did not sanction an inferior status to women. They held the view that the practice of enforced widowhood and polygamy signified cruel crimes against humanity. It was based on human degradation and denoted barbarity and low level of social development. Some of them even held distinct views from others on the issue of emancipation of women. For instance, Raja Rammohan Roy singled out the absence of property rights for women as the root cause of their subordinate position in society, and demanded the grant of such rights to them. Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Bal Shastri Jambhekar sought a permanent solution to their problems not in monogamy and widow marriage but in equal distribution of rights to women on par with men. In fact the demand for equal rights to women was one of the most significant aspects of 19th century reformist thought.

Demand for Equal Rights

The practice of female infanticide which was common among some upper classes and Rajputs was abolished by legislation. The Bengal regulations of 1795 and 1804 declared infanticide illegal and equivalent to murder, while an Act of 1870 made it compulsory for parents to register the birth of all babies and provided for verification of female children for some years after birth, particularly in regions where the practice of infanticide was resorted to in utmost privacy. Similarly the Native Marriage Act (or Civil Marriage Act) prohibited

child marriage in 1872 and the relentless efforts of B.M. Malabari, a Parsi reformer, were rewarded by the enactment of the Age of Consent Act in 1891 forbidding the marriage of girls below 12 years of age. Later on, the Sarda Act passed in 1930 further pushed up the marriage age to 18 and 14 for boys and girls respectively.

Nearly all the intellectuals and reformers emphasised the role of education among women to be a necessary condition for their liberation. The question of women was viewed on humanistic grounds. Their emancipation was, therefore, not the emancipation of simply women but that of humanity.

Education for Women

However, their humanism was coupled with the concern for national and social progress. The reformers felt that the subordination of women signified social degeneration and national backwardness. Hence empowering women through education was viewed as essential for the progress of the society and the country as a whole.

The efforts of the Christian missionaries in spreading education for women has been already discussed. The Bethune School was the first fruit of the powerful movement for women's education that arose in the 1840s and 1850s. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was one of the pioneers of women's education and was associated with no less than 35 girls' school in Bengal. The Wood's Despatch of 1854 laid great emphasis on promotion of education for women. In Bombay the students of Elphinstone

Efforts for Women's Education

Institute became the spearhead of the movement for women education and founded the Students Literary and Scientific Society. The efforts of Professor D.K. Karve in western India and Veerasalingam Pantulu in Madras for the cause of women's education and upliftment is equally noteworthy. Karve dedicated his life to the upliftment of Hindu widows and became the secretary of the Widow Remarriage Association. He established a Home for the widows in Poona and provided them with facilities for vocational training to become self-dependent. Refusing to marry a teenager, Karve married a Brahmin widow in 1893 and crowned his work by establishing an Indian Women's University at Bombay in 1916. In the same year, Lady Hardinge Medical College was opened in Delhi. After the 1880s, the Dufferin Hospitals were established to provide health facilities, and efforts were made to make modern medicine and child delivery techniques available to Indian women.

Thus the reformers and various organisations made efforts to promote women's education, encouraged widow remarriage, tried to improve living conditions of widows and prevent child marriage, enforced monogamy and worked to enable middle class women to take up professions or public employment. The women's emancipation movement which began in the 19th century received a great stimulus from the rise of militant nationalism and later under Gandhi in the twentieth century. (This shall be discussed later in another chapter.)

Women's Organisations

Indian women became conscious of their rights and worth due to various reform movements focused on women's emancipation and upliftment that were led by socio-religious reformers in the 19th century. This resulted in the formation of various women's organisations by women themselves. These organisations acted as the platform for women's expression and assertion of views. Some of the important organisations, which played a leading role in the women's rights and reform movements, were as follows.

In 1910, Sarla Devi Chaudhurani convened the first meeting of the Bharat Stree Mahamandal in Allahabad. It is considered as the first major Indian

Bharat Stree Mahamandal

women's organisation set up by a woman, and Chaudhurani did this because she felt that the men working for women's upliftment lived 'under the shade of Manu'. The organisation opened several offices in places like Lahore, Delhi, Karachi, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Midnapur and Calcutta to improve the socio-economic and political status of women all over India. Its major objectives included promotion of education for women and abolition of the purdah system.

Bharat Mahila Parishad (Ladies Social Conference)

Bharat Mahila Parishad was founded by Ramabai Ranade (under the parent organisation National Social Conference) in 1904 in Bombay for women's education, legal rights, equality of status and general awakening.

Within the Parsi community, the Stri Zarthosti Mandal was the major organisation for women's upliftment emerging from plague-relief work done by the family of Naoroji Patuck. Deeply touched by the hardships suffered by women, Patuck set up a work class in his home. By 1903 over 50 women had enrolled and Patuck's family decided to ask other ladies to join them in forming an organisation. Later on, the organisation expanded its agenda to include medical care and education and successfully sought funding from Sir Ratan Tata, a wealthy Parsi philanthropist.

Stri Zarthosti Mandal (Parsi Women's Circle)

Pandita Ramabai Saraswati founded the Arya Mahila Samaj to serve the cause of women. She pleaded for improvement in the educational syllabus of Indian women before the English Education Commission which was referred to Queen Victoria, the Empress of British India. This resulted in a movement for medical education for women which was launched in Lady Dufferin College. A branch of *Arya Mahila Samaj* was established in Bombay by Ramabai Ranade, wife of Justice M.G. Ranade.

Arya Mahila Samaj

The National Council of Women in India was formed in 1925 as a national branch of the International Council of Women. Mehribai Tata, wife of Sir Dorab Tata, played a vital role in its formation and advancement. She was opposed to passive charity and urged the middle class women of India to get actively involved in charity work such as visiting slums. According to her, the purdah system, caste differences, and lack of education prevented women from working to solve societal problems. Other women who held significant positions on the executive committee of the council included Cornella Sorabji, India's first lady barrister, Tarabai Premchand, the wife of a wealthy banker, Shaffi Tyabji, a member of one of Mumbai's leading Muslim families, and Maharani Sucharu Devi of Mourbhanj, daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen.

National Council of Women in India

According to critics, most of the women who followed the example of Lady Tata were married to wealthy men involved in industry and banking. Just as these men supported charities and made donations that would please their rulers, likewise these newly emancipated women engaged in public activities that would be seen as 'enlightened' by British officials in India and policy-makers in England. The philanthropic style that was being followed by these women was that of upper-class English women.

Founded in 1927 by Margaret Cousins, the first meeting of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) was held at Ferguson College, Pune. The organisation was perhaps the first women's organisation with a secular approach. Other founder members were Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad, Rani Sahiba of Sangli, Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya and Lady Dorab Tata. Its objectives were to work for a society based on principles of social justice, integrity, equal rights and opportunities; and to secure for every human being, the essentials of life, not determined by accident of birth or sex but by planned social distribution. For, this purpose, the AIWC worked towards various legislative reforms like Sharda Act (1929), Hindu Women's Right to Property Act (1937), Factory Act (1947), Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act (1954), Special Marriage Act (1954), Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956), Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (1956), the Supression of Immoral Traffic in Women Act (1958), Maternity Benefits Act (1961), Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) and Equal Remuneration Act (1958, 1976).

All India Women's Conference

SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF REFORMS

The identification of the socio-cultural ills of the Indian society constituted an important starting point for the 19th century attempt at social renewal. Intellectuals in different parts of the country, in varying degrees, attacked these evils like *sati*, child marriage, polygamy, enforced widowhood, degraded position of women, idolatry, polytheism, ritualism, priesthood, caste system, untouchability and a host of other superstitions prevalent in contemporary society. The identification of the social defects was closely interwoven with an attempt to renovate the social order. By and large the reformers aimed at upliftment of the position of women, abolition of child marriage and caste distinctions, promotion of

education, widow remarriage, monogamy, monotheism, spiritual worship and the end of superstitions and social bigotry. The ultimate goal of these reform movements, as a whole, was the attainment of social happiness, popular welfare and national progress. The intellectuals were convinced that the promotion of education (general, scientific and higher) in India, especially among the women, was a necessary pre-condition for the process of social reconstruction and nation-building. Though the educational policy of the colonial state was mainly guided by the needs of British colonialism, the endeavours of Indian intellectuals and reformers on the contrary aimed at material and moral development of the country. Similarly, almost all the reformers laid stress on the promotion and growth of vernacular education which was deemed necessary to realise the goal of popular or mass education. However, the fact of increasing poverty among the masses due to the economic policies of the colonial state, eclipsed all possibility of realising the goal of mass education into a social reality. Unfortunately, the scheme of mass education received little support and initiative from the new Indian middle class.

Education as a Universal Panacea

Limited Scope for Mass Education

Another limitation seems to be that the reformers did not attack the social system as a whole; their focus centred only on the perversions and distortions that had crept into it. They did not stand for structural transformation of the social structure. In other words, they remained mere advocates of reform and not exponents of a revolution.

Another retrograde feature was the growth of religious chauvinism among members of several reform movements; an over-emphasis on the superiority of one's own religion and social set-up generated a narrow communal outlook. The British were quick to take advantage of this outlook and use it to weaken the Indian nationalist movement later.

Growth of Communal Outlook

The intellectual ferment that occurred in India in the 19th century remained confined to the urban pockets. Urban communication channels such as the press, lectures, sabhas and propaganda network remained the main vehicles of propagation of ideas and shaping of a favourable public opinion. But it must be emphasised here that despite being a localised affair, the reform movement was not regional in its inspirations and aspirations. The future vision of the intellectuals encompassed the whole country and they made conscious attempts to undermine the notions of regional distinctions and provinciality.

In terms of impact, the extent and achievements of the reform movements of the 19th century did not achieve any spectacular success. Caste rigidity remained strong and religious and social practices did not vanish. Enforced widowhood and gender discriminations remain pressing problems. Reforms, in fact, affected a small minority and the masses almost remained untouched by the ideas of the intellectuals. Despite their best attempts to reach and appeal to the masses especially through writings in the vernaculars, their appeal remained confined to the urban middle classes (particularly the educated sections) for all practical purposes. This was mainly so because of the given situation of widespread illiteracy and lack of diversified and modern means of communication network. Moreover, the task of socio-cultural reform in the contemporary public life was most difficult as it involved structural transformation of traditions which die very hard. Matters like caste and customs were so inextricably interwoven with the Indian cultural psyche that it proved quite hard to bring about reform in these areas. Above all, the growth of the awakening during the period of colonial domination posed certain inherent limitations on the success of the movement. The alien government had not been able to ensure that their attempts towards modernisation, through reforms, legislation, etc., had seeped through to the entire populace.

Limited Impact

However, the socio-religious reform movements gave the much needed confidence to the educated Indians who had been demoralised and felt uprooted from their moorings as a result of relentless propaganda of Western cultural superiority. The atmosphere of reform helped them to discard many obsolete rites and practices and adjust their religious beliefs to the new environment of rationalist and scientific thought.

Despite the limitations of the reform movements many far reaching changes did take place. It was

greatly due to the endeavours of the reformers and intellectuals that abolition of *sati* and legalisation of widow marriage became reality in the 19th century. There was much intellectual fervour, prolonged agitation and acute discussion during the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill. Through such debates, the level of popular consciousness was raised even if they failed to usher in any concrete and tangible change immediately. The most significant achievement of these reform movements was, however, their contribution towards the creation of nationalist thinking. The ideas and activities of the intellectuals were directly or indirectly concerned with the task of national reconstruction and nation-building as they were loaded with wider political and economic considerations.

Emergence of Nationalist Thought

Views

- "No other religion preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and no other religion on earth treads upon the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism."

  —Swami Vivekananda

- "The dead and the buried are dead, buried and burnt once for all and the dead past cannot, therefore, be revived except by a reformation of the old materials into new organised forms."

  —Mahadeo Govind Ranade

- "Whoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognise all his fellow countrymen as brethren."

  —Keshab Chandra Sen

- "A country where millions have nothing to eat and where few thousand holy men and brahmins suck the blood of the poor and do nothing at all for them, is not a country but a living hell. Is this religion or a dance of death?"

  —Swami Vivekananda

- "Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj form the starting point for all the various reform movements—whether in Hindu religion, society or politics—which have agitated modern India."

  —H.C.E. Zacharias

- "So long as freedom of thought is not developed, there can be no civilised life."

  —Syed Ahmed Khan

- "No reformation is possible without a renaissance."

  —G.W.F. Hegal

- "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. …Whoever knows that language (English) has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and handed in the course of ninety generations. … In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to became the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East."

  —Thomas Babington Macaulay

- "The rising middle classes were politically inclined and were not so much in search of a religion; but they wanted some cultural roots to cling on to… that would reduce the sense of frustration and humiliation that foreign conquest and rule had produced."

  —Jawaharlal Nehru

- The Neo-Hindu dogma of the equality of all religions, however much it can be supported by certain Hindu traditions, emerged originally at the beginning of the nineteenth century, probably from the ideology of the European Enlightenment. The Neo-Hindu concept of dharma was clearly prompted by the philosophy of Augustus Comte and John Stuart Mill, but was then expressed in completely Indian terms.

  —Paul Hacker

- In Vivekananda's hands, Orientalist notions of India as 'other worldly' and 'mystical' were embraced and praised as India's special gift to humankind. Thus the very discourse that succeeded in alienating, subordinating and controlling India was used by Vivekananda as a religious clarion call for the Indian people to unite under the banner of a universalistic and all-embracing Hinduism.

—Richard King

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - The new scientific outlook of the West, the doctrines of rationalism, secularism and humanism gave birth to the emergence of a 'spirit of renaissance' in India in the 19th century. While differing on the nature and extent of reforms, nearly all 19th century intellectuals believed in an urgent need for social and religious reforms in India.
  - Two distinct streams of movement viz., transitional and acculturative, emerged during the British period due to the uneven development of a colonial milieu and the persistence of indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent. The former originated in the pre-colonial world and arose from indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent whereas the latter originated within the colonial millieu and was influenced by the Western culture.
  - Acculturative movements were of two types—Reformist (Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Aligarh movement, etc.) and Revivalist (Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission and Deoband Movement).
- **Major Socio-religious Reform Movements**
  - Brahmo Samaj (1828) founded by Raja Rammohan Roy, was the earliest modern reform movement which provided a new Hinduism and a model of religious organisation to others within the colonial milieu.
  - Ramakrishna Mission (1897) founded by Swami Vivekananda became one of the leading social service organisations in India.
  - Arya Samaj (1875) founded by Swami Dayanand was a revivalist movement that sought to revive the ancient Vedic religion.
  - Prarthana Samaj (1867) founded by M.G. Ranade and other Marathi elites focussed on true love of God and social reform.
  - Theosophical Society (1875) was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in the USA, but the movement was popularised by Annie Besant in India in the 1880s whose literary and research activities greatly contributed to the Indian awakening.
  - Jyotiba Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj (1873) and Sri Narayana Guru's SNDP Movement (1903) raised voice against the caste system and various evils associated with it.
- **Social reforms Among the Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis**
  - Wahabi and Ahmadiya Movements. Aligarh Movement under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan tried to modernise the Muslim society in India.
  - Reform movements among the Sikhs and Singh Sabhas tried to restore the purity of Sikhism.
  - Reform movement among the Parsis and *Rehnumai Mazdayasan Sabha* (1851) also tried to regeneration socio-religious conditions of the Parsis.
- **Women as Focus of Social Reform**
  - Almost all the major reform movements focussed on ameliorating the deplorable condition of women by abolishing social evils and promoting women's education. The women's emancipation movement which began in the 19th century received a great stimulus under Gandhiji in the 20th century.
- **Significance and Limitations of Reform Movements**
  - Despite having several limitations, the reform movements gave the much needed confidence to the educated Indians. The ideas and activities of the reformers and intellectuals loaded with wider national political and economic consideration, directly or indirectly, were concerned with the task of social reconstruction and nation-building.

CHAPTER 9

Indian Response to British Rule

INTRODUCTION

The period 1757 to 1857 witnessed a series of popular resistance movements against the British rule and its attendant evils. The movements were often led by deposed rajas and nawabs or their descendants, uprooted and impoverished zamindars, landlords and *poligars* (landed military magnates in South India), ex-retainers and officials of the conquered Indian states and tribal leaders. The backbone of these rebellions, their mass base and striking power came from the rack-rented peasants, ruined artisans and demobolised soldiers and tribals. The establishment of British power in India was a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and consolidation and the colonialisation of the society and economy. This process generated discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage. This resistance manifested in three broad forms: civil rebellions, tribal uprisings and peasant movements. These rebellions were usually local in nature representing local grievances, although for short periods, they acquired a broad sweep involving armed bands of a few hundreds to several thousands. The culmination of these forms of popular resistance came with the great Revolt of 1857 which was the most dramatic instance of traditional India's struggle against foreign rule.

Three Broad Forms of Resistance

Causes for Resistance

A unique characteristic of the village community in India, which contained the bulk of the people, was that it was a closely-knit social and self-sufficient economic unit, which had shown extraordinary resilience through ages of invasion by successive rulers. The impact of government on the people meant essentially the impact of government on the village. The 18th century British administrator Metcalfe described village communities as little republics, having nearly everything they needed, and independent of any foreign interference. Unchangeability remained its hallmark despite ruler after ruler following each other in rapid succession at the centre, whether Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh or English. In times of trouble, villagers armed and fortified themselves; they allowed hostile armies to pass through their territory unprovoked, and if plunder and devastation were directed against themselves, they fled to friendly villages at a distance, only to return once the invading army had exhausted its capacity for pillage and massacre. The main point of contact between the village and the outside world was through the revenue collector: either a direct nominee of government or the agent of a local landlord or rent collector: Judicial officers intervened only in the case of serious crimes; in general, ordinary disputes of property and such were settled by village elders. This old village autonomy began to disappear once the effects of the British administration manifested themselves.

The overall impact of the East India Company's revenue systems and increased state demand together with the new judicial and administrative set-up turned the Indian village economy upside down. Village panchayats were deprived of their two main functions—land settlements, and judicial and executive functions. The Patel or revenue collector now acted as a government official charged with the duty of

Dislocation of the Village Economy

revenue collection, and the old politico-economic-social framework of village communities lost its significance. Land became a market commodity with the introduction of the concept of private property in land. Social relationships changed with the emergence of new social classes like the landlord, the trader, the moneylender and the landed gentry. More and more people were added to the class of rural proletariat that comprised of the poor peasant proprietor, the sub-tenant and the agricultural labour. Competition and individualism replaced the earlier climate of cooperation. This resulted in the creation of the prerequisites of the capitalist development of agriculture; a process further aided by new modes of production, introduction of money economy, commercialisation of agriculture, better means of transport and linkage with the world market.

Impact of Revenue Policy

The effects of these changes generated unease and a sense of dislocation among people and this was expressed through a number of popular uprisings and revolts against foreign rule. A number of factors led to people taking up arms against the British: the loss of independence; foreign intrusion into local autonomy; introduction of administrative innovations; excessive land revenue demands; and dislocation of economy. These factors were felt in different regions of India at different points of time in the century after 1757, and, as such, caused disturbances that were mostly local in nature. It took over a hundred years for this struggle to gain full momentum. But seldom was India free from either civil or military disturbances during the period from 1757 to 1857.

Main Causes of Resistance

Early 19th century presented favourable circumstances for the growth of the Company's rule in India. The early advance of power by a policy of war and conquest had been replaced by a process of slow penetration. In the early stages, the British were careful not to challenge the suzerainty of the Mughal emperor or to claim sovereignty over areas that they ruled. But by the time the British had established their grip over India, realisation dawned upon Indians that they had been enslaved by a foreign race. The realisation was strengthened by a few more factors: the Company began to strike coins without the emperor's name after 1835; English replaced Persian as the language of the court. Both the civil population as well as the armed forces became aware of the political subjugation of their country. The unrest that followed as a result was not due to any pre-planned organisation or a plot or conspiracy of a few individuals or groups; it flowed spontaneously from the natural reaction of the people to the open manifestation of British policies. In short, the simmering discontent of people, especially the peasants and tribals, broke out into local popular rebellions in different parts of the country at different points of time.

RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS (PEASANTS AND TRIBAL) TILL 1857

Resistance in Bengal and Eastern India

Sanyasi Rebellion

One of the earliest resistance movements against the British rule manifested itself in a peculiar rebellion of the sanyasis during the second half of the 18th century. These sanyasis and fakirs (as they were called) were religious mendicants who hailed from a peasant background, and many of them had actually been evicted from the land. They travelled from place to place in different parts of Bengal and Bihar in bands of some five thousand. The growing hardship of the peasantry, increasing revenue demand and the Bengal famine of 1770 brought a large number of dispossessed small zamindars, disbanded soldiers and rural poor into the ranks of these sanyasis and fakirs. They were alienated by the restrictions imposed by the British government on visits to holy places. Known for a tradition of fighting against oppression, the sanyasis espoused the popular cause and organised raids on the Company's factories, state treasuries, and fought heroically against the Company's armed forces. They adopted the guerilla technique of attack, looted the grain stock of the rich and government officials, and local treasuries, and sometimes distributed the looted wealth among the poor. They even established an independent government in Bogra and Mymensingh. One striking feature of these sanyasi insurrections was the equal participation of the Hindu and Muslims

in them. Till 1800, encounters between the British forces and the sanyasis-fakirs became a regular feature all over Bengal and Bihar. The most important rebel leaders were Manju Shah, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak and Debi Chaudhurani. It took prolonged military action on Warren Hastings' part to bring the sanyasi raids under control.

Rangpur Dhing

Rangpur and Dinajpur were two of the districts of Bengal which faced all kinds of illegal demands by the East India Company and its revenue contractors. Harsh attitude of the revenue contractors and their exactions became a regular feature of peasant life. One such revenue contractor was Debi Singh of Rangpur and Dinajpur who through his agents created a reign of terror in the two districts of northern Bengal. Taxes on the zamindars were increased which actually were passed on from zamindars to cultivators or ryots. Ryots were not in a position to meet the growing demands of Debi Singh and his agents. Debi Singh and his men used to beat and flog the peasants, burn their houses and destroy their crops. Even the women were not spared.

Peasants appealed to the Company officials to redress their grievances. Their appeal, however, remained unheeded. Being deprived of justice, the peasants took the law in their own hands. By beat of drum the rebel peasants gathered a large number of peasants, armed with swords, shields, bows and arrows. They elected Dirjinarain as their leader and attacked the local cutcheries and store-houses of crops of local agents, the contractors and government officials. In many cases they snatched away the prisoners from the government guards. The rebels formed a government of their own, stopped payments of revenue to the existing government and levied 'insurrection charges' to meet the expenses of the rebellion. Both Hindus and Muslims fought side by side in the insurrection. Ultimately the government's armed forces took control of the situation and suppressed the revolt.

Chuar Uprising

Chuar aboriginal tribesmen of Midnapur district were goaded by famine, enhanced land revenue demands and economic distress to take up arms against the British. A revolt was organised in 1768 by the Rajas of Dhalbhum, Kailapal, Dholka and Barabhum, and conditions in the region continued to be disturbed till 1816.

Ho and Kol Rising

The Chhotanagpur and Singhbum regions saw uprisings of the local Ho and Munda tribesmen. The tribesmen challenged the Company's forces in 1820-22 and in 1831, until 1837. The Chhotanagpur Kols resented the transfer of land from Kol headmen or Mundas to outsiders like Sikh and Muslim farmers. A thousand people were killed by Kol rebels in 1831. The rebellion, which spread to Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamu and western Manbhum, was quashed only after large-scale military operations.

Santhal Hool (Uprising)

Ill-treatment at the hands of revenue officials, oppression of the police and exactions of the landlords and the moneylenders, led the Santhals of Rajmahal hills to rise against the British. The Santhals who mainly inhabited the districts of Birbhum, Bankura, Murshidabad, Pakur Dumka, Bhagalpur and Purnea cleared forests and started cultivation. Their lands were leased out to outsiders (called *dikus* by the Santhals) which brought economic hardship and misery for them. The social and economic compulsions which drove them to insurrection were described in the *Calcutta Review* as follows: "*Zamindars*, the police, the revenue and court alas have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property, abuse and personal violence and a variety of petty tyrannies upon the timid and yielding Santhals. Usurious interest on loans of money ranging from 50 to 500 per cent; false measures at the *haut* and the market; wilful and uncharitable trespass by the rich by means of their untethered cattle, *tattoos*, ponies and even elephants, on the growing crops of the poorer race; and such like illegalities have been prevalent." Though initially they protested by looting and robbing the zamindars and money-lenders, their resistance took a more violent form later. In 1855, the Santhals rebelled under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanhu, declared the end of the Company's rule and declared themselves independent. In 1856, the situation was brought under control with the help of extensive military operations, and the Company government followed it up by creating a separate district of Santhal Parganas.

Ahom's Revolt

In Assam, the Ahom nobility felt betrayed after the Company's authorities refused to fulfil pledges of withdrawal from their territory following the

conclusion of the First Burmese War (1824-26). When the British tried to incorporate Ahom territory in their dominion, the attempt sparked off a rebellion. In 1828, Gomdhar Konwar was proclaimed the Ahom king, and a march to Rangpur was planned. The move was observed by the superior military power of the Company. A second revolt planned in 1830 led to the Company following a pacific policy. In 1833, upper Assam was handed by the Company to Mahajara Purandar Singh Narendra and a part of the kingdom was restored to the Assamese raja.

The Khasi Uprising

The hilly region between Jaintia in the east and Garo hills in the west was occupied by the English. They also planned a military road to link the Brahmaputra valley with Sylhet for which they enlisted the help of a large number of Englishmen, and Bengali and other labourers. Tirat Singh, the ruler of the Nucklow region, did not like the intrusion into his territories. He won over the support of the Garos, the Khamptis and Singhpos and rebelled against the British. The insurrection developed into a popular revolt against British rule which was suppressed in 1833.

Bhuyan and Juang Rebellion

The revolt in Keonjhar (Orissa) of the Bhuyans, who were joined by the Juangs and Kals, was to protest against the installation of a British protege on the throne after the death of their raja in 1867. The first uprising of 1867-68 was under the leadership of Ratna Nayak. The second uprising of 1891-93, under Dharni Dhar Nayak, forced the king to take protection in Cuttack.

Pagal Panthis

A semi-religious sect of the Pagal Panthis, founded by Karam Shah, lived in the northern districts of Bengal. Karam Shah's son and successor, Tipu, taking inspiration from religious and political motives, took up the cause of the tenants against the oppression of the zamindars. After capturing Sherpur, Tipu assumed royal power in 1825 and took up the cause of the tenants against zamindari oppression. The insurgents spread their activities to the Garo hills region, which remained disturbed in the 1830s and 1840s.

Resistance in Western India

The Bhil Uprising

Western India too was the hotbed of rebellions with the Bhil, Koli and Waghera risings, the Surat salt agitation and others. During the years 1817-19, the Bhils, an aboriginal tribe inhabiting the Western Ghats with their strongholds in Khandesh, revolted against the English East India Company. The revolts were rumoured to have been encouraged by Peshwa Baji Rao II and his lieutenant, Trimbakji Danglia. The Bhil revolt, driven forward by agrarian hardships and fear of the worst under the new regime, was ruthlessly crushed by British detachments. The Bhils rose again in 1825, under their leader Sewaram, as a result of British reverses in the First Burmese War.

The Koli Uprisings

The Kolis, neighbours of the Bhils, rose in arms against the imposition of British rule and demolition of their forts. The new administrative set-up of the Company caused widespread unemployment, and the Kolis rebelled thrice, in 1829, in 1839 and during 1844-48.

Kachch Rebellion

Anti-British sentiments were strong in the Kachch and Kathiawar areas, with the struggle between the Kachch ruler, Rao Bharmal, and the pro-Jhareja chiefs being at the root of the trouble. In 1819, Rao Bharmal was defeated and deposed in favour of his infant son. A Council of Regency under the superintendence of the British Resident took over the administration of Kachch district. Excessive land assessment together with administrative innovations caused deep resentment among people. The chiefs rose in revolt to demand the restoration of Bharmal, when news of the British reverses in the Burmese war reached them. Despite extensive military operations to quell the revolt, trouble erupted again in 1931. The outbreaks forced the East India Company to follow a conciliatory policy.

Waghera Rising

Exactions of the Gaekwad of Baroda, who was supported by the British government, was a sore point with the Wagheras of Okha Mandal, who took up arms in protest. During 1818-19, the Wagheras made several inroads into British territory, after which a peace treaty was concluded in November 1820.

Surat Salt Agitations

A long history of opposition to unpopular measures existed in Surat. The most unpopular was the raise in salt duty from 50 paise to one rupee in 1844, and it caused great discontent among the

people. The anti-government spirit turned into a strong anti-British spirit, and a few Europeans were attacked. Faced with a popular movement the government withdrew the additional salt levy. The government's decision to introduce Bengal Standard Weights and Measures had to be withdrawn against the people's determined bid to resort to boycott and passive resistance.

Ramosi Uprising

In the Western Ghats, the Ramosi Hill tribes were not reconciled to British rule and the British pattern of administration. Their leader, Chittur Singh, revolted and plundered the region around Satara. Eruptions broke out again during 1825-26 and the area remained disturbed till 1829.

When the British deposed and banished Raja Pratap Singh of Satara in September 1839, there was widespread resentment and a chain of disturbances occurred during 1840-41. A sizeable number of troops was captured by Narsinghrao Dattatreya Petkar, who also captured the fort of Badami, and hoisted the flag of the Raja of Satara.

Kolhapur and Savantvadi Revolts

In Kolhapur, administrative reorganisation after 1844 caused great hardships among people. The hereditary military class which garrisoned Maratha forts, known as Gadkaris, was disbanded. Fear of unemployment led the resentful Gadkaris to rise in revolt and occupy the forts of Samangarh and Bhudargarh. Similarly, the simmering discontent caused a revolt in Sawantwadi areas.

The revolt in 1844 was led by a Maratha chief, Phond Sawant of Sawantwadi with the support of other sardars. The rebels captured forts in fighting the British but were finally forced to seek refuge in Goa. The rebellion came to an end with the capture of the rebels.

Resistance in South India

Revolt of Vizianagaram

In South India, the high-handedness of the Company's officials after acquisition of the Northern Sarkars in 1765, caused the Raja of Vizianagaram to revolt. After acquiring the territories, the East India Company demanded a present of rupees three lakh from the raja and ordered him to disband his troops. When he refused, his estate was annexed. The result was a revolt in which the raja received full support of his people and his troops. Following the raja's death in a battle in 1794, the Company's authorities offered the estate to the deceased raja's son, and also reduced the demand for presents.

Poligars' Revolt

The new land revenue system caused untold misery among the Poligars of Dindigul and Malabar, who rebelled. The Poligars of the ceded districts and North Arcot rebelled against the Company, while sporadic uprisings continued up to 1856 in the Madras Presidency.

Velu Thampi's Revolt

A subsidiary alliance treaty was imposed on the ruler of Travancore in 1805 by Wellesley. The ruler, resentful of the harsh terms imposed on Travancore, did not pay the subsidy and fell in arrears. The British Resident's overbearing attitude caused resentment and Diwan Velu Thampi, with the support of the Nair battalion, raised the banner of rebellion. Peace was restored with the help of a large British battalion.

Rampa Revolt

The hill tribesmen of Rampa in Coastal Andhra revolted on March 1879 against the depredations of the government-supported mansabdar and the new restrictive forest regulations. Only after a large military operation could the rebels be crushed in 1880.

Resistance in North India

Kuka Revolt

The Kuka Movement was founded in 1840 by Bhagat Jawahar Mal (also called Sian Saheb) in western Punjab. After the British took the Punjab, the movement transformed from a religious purification campaign to a political one. Its basic tenets were abolition of caste and similar discriminations among Sikhs, discouraging the eating of meat and taking of alcohol and drugs, and encouraging women to step out of seclusion.

In 1872, one of their leaders, Ram Singh, was deported to Rangoon.

Muslim Reaction

Muslims in India reacted to British rule only when the East India Company began to substitute by legislation its own rules of evidence, definitions of offences and penalties for those of the *Sharia*, the

Islamic Holy Law. The initial reaction to attempts in this direction by the British in the last decade of the 18th century and in the first decade of the 19th comprised a verbal protest by Delhi scholar, Shah Abdal-Aziz. He declared areas of northern India under British supremacy to be *dar-ul-harb* (the abode of war).

The Wahabi Movement

It was the Wahabi Movement which caused substantial politico-religious ferment among the Muslims. To many ardent Muslims, it was *jihad* or holy war, and its objective was to convert *dar-ul-Harb* into *dar-ul-Islam* (abode of Islam). From the 1830s to the 1860s, the Wahabi movement offered the most serious and well-planned challenge to British supremacy in India. It began when Saiyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (1786-1831) called on the Muslims to stand up for Islam as a public way of life, though he did not call for open resistance to the East India Company in its territories. Born into an obscure family, Saiyid Ahmad was initiated into the *Naqshbandi*, *Qadiri* and *Chishti* orders. From 1809 to 1818, he served as a soldier in the army of the Pindari chieftain, Amir Khan, later the Nawab of Tonk. After the suppression of the Pindaris, Saiyid Ahmad returned to Delhi where he attached himself to Shah Abdal-Aziz. Between the middle of 1819 and July 1821, while staying in Rai Bareilly, his ideas were compiled in a book, the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* (The Straight Path), and he began to preach. Saiyid Ahmad condemned all innovations in Islam and advocated a return to the pure Islam and society of Arabia of the Prophet's time. He moved through Uttar Pradesh to preach his gospel and attracted a large number of followers wherever he went. The core of his disciples formed themselves into a military band of fighters. He proceeded to Mecca and Medina on a pilgrimage in 1822, and there came under the spell of the Wahabi cult, propounded by Abdul Wahhab of Arabia, which declared *jihad* or holy war against those who had displaced the Muslims from power and disgraced them as a result. Upon his return from Mecca in 1823, he spent the next two years in India teaching, organising his followers and collecting funds in the upper provinces. In 1826, he declared a *jihad* against the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh. The *mujahiddin* or band of men engaged in *jihad* were successful and Saiyid Ahmad was joined by neighbouring Pathan chiefs, including the sardars of Peshawar.

Saiyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly

Influence of Wahabi Cult

In January 1827, Saiyid Ahmad was declared imam, or religious head of Muslims. After touring the Pathan tribal areas gathering recruits, he moved his headquarters to Panjtar, establishing himself at Peshawar in 1830. Resenting control by outsiders, local Pathans rose against Saiyid Ahmad's men, murdered many and forced him to return to Panjtar. In May 1831 at Balakot on the Kaghan river, while trying to enlist the local chiefs against the Sikhs in Hazara and Kashmir, Saiyid Ahmad was killed along with nearly six hundred of his followers.

Says P. Hardy in his *Muslims of British India*, "It was the Sufi idiom of Saiyid Ahmad's early reforming activities that distinguished them from those of the Wahhabis in near-contemporary Arabia, who attacked the Sufi orders. Saiyid Ahmad of Bareilly, following the tradition of Shah Wali-Allah, wished to expurgate, not to expunge Islam in India. Arabian Wahhabism no doubt helped turn Saiyid Ahmad's thoughts towards an active military *jihad*, though precedents were not wanting in India itself for reforming brotherhoods to become military brotherhoods—as in the militant *Raushaniyya* movement on the north-west frontier in the sixteenth century, and indeed in Sikhism."

While the loss of Saiyid Ahmad was a terrible blow to the cause in India, the Wahabi influence remained in many places of India for many years. At first, the surviving *mujahiddin* found a refuge in remote Sittana where they continued to obey mandates of the *Sharia*—collecting the *ushr* or tithe for benevolent purposes and levying fines for non-attendance at prayer. An 'underground apparatus' was organised in India for transmitting men and supplies, chiefly from Bengal, to the frontier. Patna was the centre of Wahabi activities though the movement had its missions in Hyderabad, Madras, Bengal, the United Provinces and Bombay. Two deputies, Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali, two brothers stationed at Patna, sent

Patna—A Major Centre

'missionaries on mission' to tour India both to preach and to organise 'fiscal circles' under collectors that would then be forwarded to the *mujahiddin* on the frontier. The British, early apprised of Saiyid Ahmad's campaigns against the Sikhs, while correctly gauging that his followers intended the eventual overthrow of British rule, also recognised that reformist religious aims are not necessarily identical with long-term political aims. However, they also viewed the potential danger of the Wahabi base of operations from Sittana in the background of a possible war between Great Britain and Afghanistan or Russia.

In 1852, a clash occurred at Kotla between the *mujahiddin* of Sittana and British forces, after the final British annexation of Punjab, but it was a mere skirmish. But in the 1860s, the government's multi-pronged attack on the Wahabi Movement broke its back. The government organised a series of military operations on the Wahabi base of operations in Sittana that was aided and abetted by the frontier tribesmen, while in India a number of court cases for sedition were registered against Wahabis. In the 1880s and 1890s, the Wahabi movement lost its vitality finally, though some of the *mujahiddin* continued to help the frontier hill tribes in their encounters with the English. At no stage did the Wahabi movement assume the character of a nationalist movement, instead leaving behind a legacy of isolationist and separatist tendencies among Muslims.

Suppressive Measures

Faraizi Movements

The Faraizi movement, which was contemporaneous with the Wahabi movement, was more concerned with the daily struggle for existence of the Muslim cultivator—the faraizi. Hajji Shariat-Allah, its founder, was born at Shamail in the Faridpur division of Bangladesh. Following a traditional education in Arabic and Persian in Hughli district, he accompanied his teacher, Maulana Basharat Ali, on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1799, returning to Bengal only in 1818. He began to preach after a second *Haj* in 1921, wandering through the districts of Faridpur, Bakarganj, Dhaka and Mymensingh. His message, though simple, was revolutionary in the context of popular Islam in Bengal. He observed that Muslims should strictly observe the duties (*faraiz* hence *faraizi*) as laid down by the *Quran* and *Sunna* and maintain God's unity (*tauhid*) and exclusive efficacy. The new initiate had to accept his responsibility by respecting a formula of repentance or *tauba* after a spiritual guide and undertaking to live according to the tenets of the Quran and *Sunna*. The *faraizi* could not believe in anything nor participate any action smacking of unbelief (*kufr*), such as participating in Hindu ceremonies and revering local deities or *pirs*.

Hajji Shariat-Allah

Instead of preaching *jihad* against the British, Hajji Shariat-Allah concentrated on his mission of religious purification. Dadu Miyan, his son, however, turned to social and political militancy. The supporters of the Faraizi movement were drawn from the ranks of dispossessed Muslim cultivators sinking into the sea of landless labourers. Oppressed by their Hindu landlords or by the new class of European indigo planters, they found Dadu Miyan's assertion of the equality of man before God very appealing. Besides campaigning against the levy of illegal cesses by landlords, he organised violent resistance to the levy of such cesses. When a few landlords retaliated by torturing their tenants to discourage them from joining the *faraizis*, they were supported by the British administration, which had conferred such advantages upon landlords over cultivators through the Permanent Settlement.

Dadu Miyan

British courts charged Dadu Miyan with plunder in 1838, murder in 1841, and unlawful assembly in 1844, but failed to prosecute for lack of evidence or rather of witnesses. Dadu Miyan had turned a missionary brotherhood into a military brotherhood before he died. He organised a volunteer force of *faraizi* militia to fight the zamindars and established a hierarchy of district 'commissioners' called *khalifas* at village, township and district levels, responsible to him. Each *khalifa* headed an underground organisation, responsible for propaganda, the collection of funds and the settlement of disputes among members of the movement. The movement died down in late 19th century owing to a number of reasons, namely, the death of Dadu Miyan, the introduction of tenancy legislation, and the controversy aroused among Muslims by the *faraizi* refusal to say the *juma* and *id* prayers.

Titu Mir's Revolt

Similar in nature to the Faraizi movement, but far more violent, requiring British military action for its suppression, was the movement led by Titu Mir, who was born in 1782 in Chandpur in the Twenty-Four Parganas. Like Saiyid Ahmad Bareilly and Hajj Shariat-Allah, he too began by campaigning in favour of a purified Islam. Titu Mir, whose sphere of operations was mainly in West Bengal, directed his followers to grow beards and tie their *dhotis* in a distinctive fashion. When the appeal of some Hindu zamindars to the British magistracy to fine the followers on their estates for wearing beards failed, Titu Mir's followers attacked a village within the estate of one of the offending zamindars, slaughtered a cow in a public place and defiled the village temple with its blood. The result was open warfare between Titu Mir and the zamindars, which spread to the districts of West Bengal, including the Twenty-Four Parganas, Nadia and Faridpur. At first, British authorities sent police and auxiliaries, which failed to quash this hugely popular Muslim agrarian revolt. In November 1831, authorities destroyed the insurgents' stockade at Narkulbaria in Baraset district, killed Titu Mir and fifty of his followers, and arrested about three hundred and fifty. Thus Titu Mir's movement was crushed.

Titu Mir

The Mappila Uprisings

Another uprising that posed serious challenge to the colonial rule was the revolt of Mappilas (sometimes also called Moplah) who were descendants of the Arab settlers or converted Hindus. The majority of them were cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders and fishermen. The British occupation of Malabar in the last decade of the 18th century, and the consequent changes that the British introduced in land revenue administration of the area, brought unbearable hardship in the life of the Mappilas. The most important change was the transfer of *janmi* from that of traditional partnership with the Mappila to that of an independent owner of land and the right of eviction of Mappila tenants which did not exist earlier. Over-assessment, illegal taxes, eviction from land, hostile attitude of government officials were some of the other reasons that made the Mappilas rebel against the British and the landlords.

Causes of Mappila Revolt

An anti-British consciousness grew among the Mappilas under the religious leaders who played an important role in strengthening the solidarity of the Mappilas through socio-religious reforms. The growing discontent of the Mappilas broke out in open insurrection against the state and landlords. There were about twenty-two uprisings between 1836 and 1854 in Malabar. The Mappila rebels who mostly hailed from the poorer sections attacked the British officials, *janmis* and their dependants. The British forces swung into action to suppress the rebels but failed to subdue them for many years.

The uprisings and reform movements among the Muslims were unique not merely for enlisting Muslims outside the former ruling classes, but also in transforming the Indian Muslim community from an aggregate of believers into a political association with a will for joint action. While in medieval times, Muslim scholars had looked to the autocratic ruler to 'save Islam', the 19th century reformist movements were trying to achieve a more just and god-fearing society by popular cooperation. Saiyid Ahmad's message appealed to the humbler strata of Muslim society in India, the 'lower-middle' classes of pre-industrial society, petty landholders, country-town *mullas*, teachers, booksellers, small shopkeepers, minor officials and skilled artisans. Members of these classes, enfranchised after 1919 under British-sponsored constitutional legislations, responded passionately to the call of religion in politics.

Implications of the Muslim Reaction

But, as P. Hardy warns, the contemporary force of the reformist movements of the nineteenth century should not be exaggerated. It was only a tiny minority of the Muslim population which participated in some way in these movements, with the reformers themselves splintered ideologically and even encountering bitter opposition doctrinally from many *ulemas*. A long-lasting impact of the Muslim reform movements lay in the way they helped to transform Muslim attitudes towards Hindus. Essentially comprising of rejection of medieval Islam in India in favour of early Islam

Views of P. Hardy

Military Revolts Before 1857

A number of sporadic military uprisings took place before the Great Revolt of 1857 in different parts of the country. The main cause of these mutinies was the rising discontent of the sepoys against the British rule due to the following reasons: (i) discrimination in payment and promotions; (ii) mistreatment of the sepoys by the British officials; (iii) refusal of the government to pay foreign service allowance while fighting in remote regions; (iv) religious objections of the high caste Hindu sepoys to Lord Canning's General Service Enlistment Act (1856) ordering all recruits to be ready for service both within and outside India. Further, the sepoys shared all the discontent and grievances—social, religious and economic—that afflicted the civilian population.

Over the years, the upper caste sepoys had found their religious beliefs in conflict with their service conditions. For example, in 1806, the replacement of the turban by a leather cockade caused a muting at Vellore. Similarly in 1844, there was a mutinous outbreak of the Bengal army sepoys for being sent to far away Sind and again in 1824 the sepoys at Barrackpore rose in revolt when they were asked to go to Burma because crossing the sea would mean loss of caste.

The most important mutinies which broke out during the pre-1857 period are the following:

(i) The mutiny of the sepoys in Bengal in 1764.
(ii) The Vellore mutiny of 1806 when the sepoys protested against interference in their social and religious practices and raised a banner of revolt unfurling the flag of the ruler of Mysore.
(iii) The mutiny of the sepoys of the 47th Native Infantry Unit in 1824.
(iv) The revolt of the Grenadier Company in Assam in 1825.
(v) The mutiny of an Indian regiment at Sholapur in 1838.
(vi) The mutinies of the 34th Native Infantry (N.I.), the 22nd N.I., the 66th N.I. and the 37th N.I. in 1844, 1849, 1850 and 1852 respectively.

However, all these mutinies did not spread beyond their locality and were ruthlessly crushed by the British Indian government, often inflicting terrible violence, thereby executing leaders and disbanding the regiments. But the legacy of these revolts proved to be of immense significance later.

in Arabia, these movements had exponents who went out and preached against the customs which so many Muslims shared with Hindus—visiting the tombs of saints, consulting brahmins, vegetarianism and aversion to the remarriage of widows. Muslims in India were to be made aware of what they did not share with their non-Muslim neighbours, and India was made not to feel like a home, but a habitat. In this context, the religious and social activism of Dadu Miyan and Titu Mir in Bengal had a communal tinge. This was especially noticeable in Bengal under the Permanent Settlement, where the majority of zamindars were Hindu and the tenants Muslim, although Muslim landlords treated their Muslim tenants no differently.

Another blow was dealt to the composite upper-class Mughal culture by the reform movements, which was waning anyway. Religious and commercial compulsions forced the upper-class Hindus and Muslims to give up their shared interest in poetry, painting and other leisurely pursuits. Finally, British political strategy in India underwent a profound change in the face of militancy of the movements of Saiyid Ahmad Bareilly and Dadu Miyan. The British belief after 1857 that Muslims were by nature fanatical and irreconciliable was reinforced, and they reacted by offering favours to the upper-class Muslims (who were anyway alarmed by the attacks on landlords by the followers of the reformist movement and their disrespect for family and position) and thus to isolate and contain the actively disaffected. Still, it took the Revolt of 1857-58 to open up this perspective to the British, as before 1857 British policies were 'community-blind' and Muslims were regarded as "the most gentlemanly and well-mannered" of the Indians seeking employment under the Company. P. Hardy observes in *The Muslims of British India*: "Because in thinking about Muslims after 1857, the so-called Wahhabis were for the British the great unthinkable that was always thought, the British were usually ready to meet the demands of 'respectable' Muslims more than half-way. But it took the trauma of the Mutiny and Rebellion of 1857-58 to open up these political perspectives."

Change in British Attitude

Centres of Resistance (1763-1856)

1. Sanyasi,* 1763-1800: Dhaka, 1763; Rajshahi, 1763, 1764; Cooch Bihar, 1766; Patna, 1767; Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, etc., 1766-69, 1771, 1776; Purnea, 1770-71; Mymensingh, 1773
2. Midnapur, 1766-67
3. Rajas of Dhalbhum, 1766-77
4. Peasants under Shamsher Ghazi's leadership, Roshanabad (Tripura), 1767-68
5. Sandip, islands south of Noakhali, 1769-70
6. Moamarias, Jorhat and Rangpur, 1769-99
7. Ckakmas,* Chittagong, 1776-89
8. Gorakhpur, Basti and Bahraich, 1781
9. Peasants, Rangpur, 1783
10. Birbhum and Bishnupur, 1788-89
11. Chuar* Peasants, Midnapur, 1799
12. Peasants, Bakarganj District, 1792
13. Vizianagaram 1794
14. Bednur, 1799-1800
15. Kerala, Varma Raja, Kottayam, 1797, 1800-05
16. Sylhet, 1787-99: Radharam, 1787; Khasis,* 1788; Agha Muhammad Reza, 1799
17. Vazir Ali, Awadh, 1799
18. Ganjam and Gumsur, 1800, 1835-37
19. Palamau, 1800-02
20. Poligars,* Tinnevelly, Ramnathapuram, Sivaganga, Sivagiri, Madurai, North Arcot, etc., 1795-1805
21. Vellore mutiny, 1806
22. Bhiwani, 1809
23. Naiks* of Bhograi, Midnapur District, 1810-16
24. Travancore under Velu Thambi, 1808-09
25. Chiefs of Bundelkhand, 1808-12.
26. Abdul Rahman, Surat, 1810
27. Hartal and agitation in Benares, 1810-11
28. Parlakimedi, western border of Ganjam District, 1813-34

89. Cutch, 1815-32

30. Rohillas,* Bareilly, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Rampur, 1816
31. Hathras, 1817
32. Paiks,* Cuttack, Khurda, Pipli, Puri, etc., 1817-18
33. Bhils, Khandesh, Dhar, Malwa, 1817-31, 1846, 1852
34. Kols,* Singhbhum, Chota Nagpur, Sambalpur, Ranchi, Hazari Bagh, Palamau, Chaibasa, 1820-37
35. Mers,* Merwara, 1819-21
36. Platoon of the Bengal Army, Barrackpore, 1824
37. Gujars,* Kunja (near Roorki), 1824
38. Sindgi (near Bijapur), 1824
39. Bhiwani, Rewari, Hissar, Rohtak, 1824-26
40. Kalpi, 1824
41. Kittur, Belgaum District, 1824-1829
42. Kolis,* Thanna District, 1828-30, 1839, 1844-48
43. Ramosis,* Poona, 1826-29
44. Garos,* also called Pagal Panthis' revolt, Sherpur, Mymensingh District, 1825-27, 1832-34.
45. Gadadhar Singh, Assam, 1828-30
46. Kumar Rupchand, Assam, 1830
47. Khasis,* under Tirot Singh, 1829-33
48. Singhphos,* Assam-Burma border, 1830-31, 1843
49. Akas,* Assam, 1829, 1835-42
50. Wahabis,* Bihar, Bengal, N.W.F.P., Punjab, etc., 1830-61
51. Titu Mir, 24-Parganas, 1831
52. Peasants, Mysore, 1830-31
53. Vishakhapatnam, 1830-33
54. Bhumij,* Manbhum, 1832
55. Coorg, 1833-34
56. Gonds,* Sambalpur, 1833
57. Nalkda,* Rewa Kantha, 1838
58. Farazis,* Faridpur, 1838-47
59. Khamtas,* Sadiya, Assam, 1839
60. Surendra Sai, Sambalpur, 1839-62
61. Badami, 1840
62. Bundelas,* Sagar, 1842
63. Salt riots, Surat, 1844
64. Gadkari,* Kothapur, 1844
65. Savantavadi, north Konkan coast, 1844-59
66. Narshimha Reddy, Kurnool, 1846-47
67. Khonds,* Orissa, 1848
68. Nagpur, 1848
69. Garos,* Garo Hills, 1848-66
70. Abors,* north-eastern India, 1848-1900
71. Lushais,* Lushai Hills, 1849-92
72. Nagas,* Naga Hills, 1849-78
73. Umarzais,* Bannu, 1850-52
74. Survey riots, Khandesh, 1852
75. Saiyads of Hazara, 1852
76. Nadir Khan, Rawalpindi, 1853
77. Santhals,* Rajmahal, Bhagalpur, Birbhum, etc., 1855-56.

* Indicates a movement, a community, a tribe, or a group of people.

Source: *NCERT; India's Struggle for Independence (Visuals and Documents)*; 1986.

Nature and Limitations of the Popular Movements before 1857

Historians differ on the issue of interpretation of the popular (peasant/tribal) movements. Some pro-British historians often regard these uprisings as a problem of law and order. The range of problems faced by the tribals and peasants from the pre-colonial to the colonial times are often overlooked as possible causes for these uprisings.

Differing Views

The rebels are often portrayed as primitive savages resisting 'civilisation'. Another school of historians (the Nationalists) tend to appropriate the history of peasant or the tribal rebellions to the purposes of the anti-colonial struggle, ignoring certain other facets of the oppressed people's struggle. However, those more sympathetic to the cause of the tribals and peasants, tend to negate very often the logic of peasant and tribal protest in terms of the people's own experience. It is also necessary to understand the domain of peasant and tribal action in its own terms.

One important aspect of these movements was its leadership. Movements in this phase of our history

Nature of Leadership

tended to throw up leaders who rose and fell with the movement. The context in which these movements arose gave very little scope for a leadership to make an entry from outside the immediate context of the rebellion. The leadership of these movements often devolved upon men or women who were within the cultural world of the peasants and tribals they led and who were able to articulate the protest of the oppressed. The Faraizi rebellion illustrated how holy men as leaders were, on the one hand, trying to return to a past purity of their religion and, on the other hand, also addressed the peasant problems.

Some features of these protest movements demonstrate a certain level of political and social

Rebels' Socio-political Consciousness

consciousness. The rebels, for instance, often attacked *kacheris* (courts) in a definite recognition of where the political source of the peasant's oppression lay. Again, a protest movement sometimes broadened its ambit to include issues beyond the immediate grievances which started off the movement: the Mappila rebellions in the 19th century Malabar started as struggles against the landlords but ended up as a protest against the British rule itself.

It has been argued that these popular movements were highly localised and isolated. While many of these movements drew strength from ethnic and religious ties, that fact itself became a constraint. Their isolation, due to the failure to develop a higher order of integrating consciousness, limited the impact of these movements at the national

Nature and Significance

level. The isolated nature of these episodes of rebellion, besides the technical superiority of the British armed forces and the law and order machinery supporting the established social order, ensured British success. Nevertheless, as first expressions of the protest of the oppressed in the colonial period, these movements were highly significant as they were able to establish valuable traditions of local resistance to authoritarianism.

RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS AFTER 1857

Indigo Revolt

After the harrowing experience of Santhal uprisings and chastened by the Revolt of 1857, the government's response was rather restrained and was aimed to ameliorate conditions. The most prominent instance of such an uprising was the

Plight of Indigo Cultivators

Indigo Revolt of 1859-60. Most of the indigo planters were foreigners who processed the indigo in factories using inhuman methods. The peasants were forced to accept advances of money even when they did not want that, were compelled to grow indigo in their best lands where they could grow rice at a much higher profit, and were subjected to floggings, attacks on women and children and burning and demolition of houses by their hired goons (*lathiyals*). On top of it, the planters, being Europeans, were chummy with the rulers and were above the law which enabled them to cheat the cultivators of the due low price.

The relief came from unexpected quarters—the government. Hem Chandra Kar, a deputy

Bishnu and Digambar

magistrate, misinterpreted a circular and proclaimed in August 1859 that the cultivators (indigo ryots) were possessors of their lands, could produce (sow) on

them what they like and that the police should ensure that the indigo planters did not harass them. Striking back, a planter in Govindpur sent a band of 100 *lathiyals* to punish the *ryots* when under the leadership of Bishnu and Digambar Biswas, the ryots beat them up. The disturbance spread rapidly to other areas, encompassing all the indigo districts of Bengal when the planters threatened the ryots of the zamindari powers of eviction. The ryots began to use their legal rights, raising money jointly to fight court cases. The planters had to finally give in to much unified assaults and began to close their factories. By 1860, indigo plantation was virtually wiped out from Bengal.

Significance

The indigo uprising was successful in large measures due to the tremendous initiative, cooperation, organisation and discipline of the ryots when Hindu and Muslim peasants displayed complete unity and petty zamindars, moneylenders and ex-employees of the planters (in some instances) provided the leadership. The intelligentsia of Bengal also helped the ryots to carry forward their battle, the pioneer among whom was Harish Chandra Mukherjee, editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*. Deeply aware of the hardships of the ryots and aware of the historical and political significance of their struggle, he raised the issue to a high political plane. He wrote in May 1860: "Bengal might well be proud of its peasantry...Wanting power, wealth, political knowledge and even leadership, the peasantry of Bengal have brought about a revolution inferior in magnitude and importance to none that has happened in the social history of any other country." The role of the intelligentsia had an abiding impact on the emerging nationalist intellectuals, thus establishing a tradition with long term implications for the national movement.

Pabna Uprisings

Legal Resistance

During 1870-80, to prevent tenants from acquiring occupancy rights under Act X of 1859, zamindars in large parts of East Bengal resorted to increasing rent beyond legal limits and used coercive methods for the purpose. The peasants did not tolerate this and the lead was taken by forming an agrarian league in May 1873 in Yusufsahi *parganah* of Pabna district to resist the zamindars. The ryots refused to pay the rent, held large meetings and marched in procession through the villages to frighten the zamindars, and collected money to fight the zamindars in the courts. There was no violence; the struggle took the form of legal resistance. Nor was there any Hindu-Muslim dispute, although most of the peasants were Muslims and the zamindars Hindu. The government helped the zamindars whenever violence took place and official action was based on the enforcement of the Indian Penal Code.

Support of the Intellectuals

As the movement was for immediate redressal of the grievances of the peasants and the enforcement of the existing legal rights and norms, the government and the zamindar reconciled themselves to it. It was within the bounds of law, did not resist the zamindari system and raised no anti-British demands. As in the indigo uprising, a number of Indian young intellectuals supported the cause. These included Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and R.C. Dutt. Subsequently, the Indian Association under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose took up the cause of the tenants. The nationalist newspapers pegged their demands higher by asking for permanent fixation of the rent. They argued, prophetically it seems, that the system would give rise to middlemen or the *jotedars* who would be as bad as the zamindars.

Poona and Ahmadnagar Riots

Cause of Riots

Under the Ryotwari system in the districts of Poona and Ahmadnagar in Maharashtra, land revenue was directly settled with the cultivator who was also regarded as the owner of the land. The peasant found it increasingly difficult to pay land revenue which led him into the clutches of the moneylenders, usually outsiders like Gujaratis and Marwaris. At this juncture, cotton prices fell drastically because the end of the American Civil War in 1864 had virtually stopped exports of cotton there, land revenue had been raised by nearly 50 per cent and there had been a succession of bad harvests. That was when in December 1874 in Kardah village in Sirur taluq, moneylender Kalooram acting on a court order decided to pull down a peasant's house. Having failed to convince

Kalooram not to do that, the peasants began to boycott the moneylenders socially. Nobody had anything to do with them, their shops had no buyers, their fields had no cultivators, and all this was done peacefully. The movement spread to the villages of Poona, Sholapur, Satara and Ahmadnagar districts but did not have much success. Thus, on May 12, peasants in Supa of Bhimthari taluq systematically attacked the houses, shops and godowns of moneylenders, seizing and burning debt bonds and deeds, papers signed by them under pressure fraudulently. Once such papers were destroyed there was no need for violence. That was the pattern everywhere excepting Supa, where the moneylenders' houses were burnt.

Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act

The movement was short-lived (of three weeks duration) and like the Pabna Revolt, had limited objectives. There was no anti-colonial sentiment, which probably induced the colonial regime to help the peasants by passing the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879. Here also the modern nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra in the form of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha led by Justice Ranade championed the peasants' cause, leading to the rise of peasant protests in 1875.

Other Peasants Revolts

There were numerous Mappila (Moplah) outbreaks in Malabar, Phadke's Ramosi peasant force committing social banditry in Maharashtra in 1879, Baba Ram Singh's Kuka Revolt in Punjab in 1872 and high revenue assessment-induced peasant revolts in Assam during 1893-94 which were brutally suppressed. The shift in the nature of peasant movements took place after 1857 when princes, chiefs and landlords were neutralised or co-opted, and the peasants themselves took the lead to redress their grievances and to stop their economic exploitation. Colonialism was not their target nor did they want to change the system subordinating and exploiting them.

Limitations

The peasant movements were an instinctive and spontaneous reaction to the peasants' social condition and had limited territorial reach due to the absence of mutual communication or linkages. There was no continuity of struggle, nor was there any long-term organisation. The movements died when their objectives were realised and at no stage did the peasants challenge British supremacy or try to undermine it. Notions of legitimacy, of what was right and what was not, strongly influenced them which was why they did not claim land ownership or fight landlordism, nor did they object to paying legitimate interest on loans taken. They fought back against fraud and chicanery and illegal methods of depriving them of their land. Developing a strong awareness of their legal rights, they asserted them in and outside the courts, believing that the *sarkar* approved their actions or at least supported their claims and cause.

Causes of Decline in Later Years

What the peasants lacked was an adequate understanding of colonialism, of colonial economic structure and the colonial state. Nor did they possess a new ideology, a new social, economic and political programme based on an analysis of the newly constituted colonial society. They carried out their struggles within the framework of the old societal order. There was no positive conception of an alternative society, uniting people in a common struggle on an all-India plane. There was no attempt to unify and mobilise peasants and other sections of society to evolve a strategy of struggle. The colonial state, taking full advantage of all these lacunae, either pacified the rebellious peasants by granting them some concessions or suppressed them brutally by applying the full force of the state against them. That was why there was a decline in such uprisings in the later half of the 19th century compared to the earlier years of the century. It was only in the 20th century that peasant discontent merged with the general anti-imperialist discontent to give rise to a much wider political activity. Anyway, in general terms, Sumit Sarkar explains the decline in the number of such incidents towards the close of the century as "consolidation of British links with princes and zamindars in the post-Mutiny era, the development of communications and of a more efficient military and administrative structure, and perhaps also the exhaustion caused by the repeated famines of the 1870s and 1890s".

Ulugulan of Birsa Munda

The most famous rebellion of this period is the *Ulugulan* (Great Turmoil) which took place near

Ranchi in 1899-1900. Here again the Mundas witnessed usurption of their joint holding of their land (*khuntikatti*) by jagirdars from the plains coming as moneylenders and traders. There were contractors recruiting indentured labourers and missionaries promising help but doing nothing. Their attempts to fight the alien landlords and imposition of forced labour in courts being unsuccessful, the Mundas decided to have one of their own for leadership. That was Birsa Munda, son of a share-cropper who received some education from missionaries and then came under Vaishnava influence, who protested in 1893-94 occupation of village lands by the forest department.

The Legendary Birsa

Birsa claimed to have seen a vision in 1895, turned into a prophet, attracted numerous followers thus alarming the Sardars and the British who jailed him fearing a conspiracy. Two years in jail converted his religious zeal to agrarian and political channels. Holding a series of night meetings in the forests during 1898-99, he urged his followers to kill the jagirdars, *hakims* and Christians with the battle song: "*Katong Baba Katong, Katong Rari, Katong Sahib...*" (O Father Kill, Kill the Europeans, Kill the other castes...) His followers, who regarded him as God and included Christian Mundas, on Christmas eve of 1899, tried to burn down churches in six police districts of Ranchi and Singbhum. From January 1900, he targeted mainly the police, scaring them out of their wits. All that was in vain, for the rebels were defeated at Sail Rakab hill on January 9, 1900. Birsa was captured three weeks later and died in jail. Some relief was provided to the Mundas by survey and settlement (1902-10) by the Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908, restoration of *khuntikatti* rights and banning of forced labour. Birsa Munda became a legend and for contradictory reasons was regarded "as a full-fledged nationalist, a prophet of a separatist Jharkhand, or a hero of the extreme left". (Sumit Sarkar)

Phadke's Protest

Vasudeo Balvant Phadke's movement in Maharashtra (1879) was a short-lived alliance between conscious intelligentsia nationalism and plebeian militancy. Phadke was a Chitpavan Brahman with some English education who was working as a commissariat department clerk. Inspired by Ranade's lecture on drain of wealth, the harrowing experience of the Deccan famine (1876-77) and the Hindu revivalist mood then prevailing among Brahman intellectuals of Poona, he dreamt of reestablishing a 'Hindu raj'. His aim was to form a secret band, collect money by armed robberies and start an armed revolt by disrupting communications. Anticipating revolutionary terrorism in time to come, he wrote: "There is much ill-feeling among the people and now if a few make a beginning those who are hungry will join." Phadke's band of dacoits consisted of a few Brahmans and many more low caste Ramoshis and Dhangars and they were given shelter by the peasants. Following Phadke's capture and life sentence, his mantle was taken up by dacoit Daulata Ramoshi who remained active till 1883. A tribal Koli group, evicted from their land like others, also committed 28 dacoities in seven months before they were suppressed.

Phadke's Revolutionary Terrorism

THE REVOLT OF 1857

The year 1857 in the history of Modern India is a great landmark as it saw the end of an era and the beginning of another. It witnessed the culmination of a century-long tradition of fierce popular resistance to the British domination in the form of a great revolt which nearly swept away the British rule. Though it began with the revolt of the Indian soldiers of the Company's army, it soon engulfed a major portion of the country, involving millions of common masses. It was the most formidable challenge the British empire had to face in India. Had the rebels succeeded in overthrowing the alien rule, the history of India would have taken a different turn. Despite the limitations and weaknesses of the revolt, the very attempt of the sepoys to emancipate the country from British rule was a patriotic act and a progressive step. If the importance of a historical movement is not to be judged only by its immediate achievements, then the Revolt of 1857 was not a pure historical tragedy. The heroic struggle of millions of peasants, artisans and soldiers and the exemplary courage and sacrifice exhibited by the

leaders became a perennial source of inspiration for the national liberation movement which later achieved what the revolt could not.

Why the Revolt of 1857 Happened

The causes of the revolt of 1857 are so inextricably woven together that it is difficult to determine the sequence in which they arose, or to distinguish the causes from the effects, and arrive at a consensus. Hakim Assanullah, an associate of Bahadur Shah, states, "There was a fateful combination of circumstances in 1857 which did not appear in the past nor tended to recur in the future. There was a widespread discontent against the British in the country—the whole army thoroughly disaffected, a whole class of landed proprietors in a train of annihilation, an old king to revive the imperial pretensions of the dying Mughals, a dispossessed queen-mother to avenge the aggressive annexation of Awadh, a disinherited heir of the Peshwa scheming to revive the perished glory of the Marathas, and a heroic *Rani* persevering with her indomitable feminine desire to regain her own territory… That there should appear at one and the same time all these elements with the bitterest hatred for the British, or that there should be such a coincidence of similar causes tending to produce a revolt, was certainly incalculable and extraordinary." (*A Comprehensive History of India Vol. II)*

Military Background

These political factors, however, taken together, might not have produced anything more than a few sporadic uprisings, had it not been for the act of the replacement of the old musket known as Brown Bess with the new Enfield rifle for its longer range and greater accuracy. Sepoys had to load this new rifle after biting a paper off a greased cartridge, the grease being made, as it was alleged, with the fat of pig or cow. The affair of greased cartridges provoked the religious prejudices of the Hindus and Muslims alike to bring about a united resistance against the British, thus providing the immediate cause of the revolt by the sepoys.

Enfield Rifle Issue

The impact of the greased cartridges of the Enfields on the sepoy's mind, already rendered suspicious of the motives of the British by their official measures, was profound. Innovations such as the messing system in jail, the compulsory system of shaving and the Enlistment Order of 1856, making it obligatory on the part of the sepoys to go on duty wherever ordered, led the sepoys to suspect that the government intended to force them all to embrace Christianity. The acts of forcing religion on men by the Muslim conquerors and the Portuguese colonists remained in public memory, and the Hindu sepoys did not fail to remember them when British officers distributed tracts on Christianity among them.

Other factors of military administration were potent as well. Discipline in the army had suffered a serious setback since the Afghan War under Lord Auckland. Very little authority remained in the hands of the roll-calling local commanders to enforce discipline, for a series of irksome regulations had resulted in the real authority being concentrated in the hands of the headquarters. Official indiscretions tended to widen the breach between the Europeans and the sepoys of the Bengal army, despite the army being regarded as "a great brotherhood in which all the members felt and acted in union." The question of pay and prospects was a sore point with the sepoys: the highest pay of a subadar of infantry was 174 rupees a month, while corresponding pay of a British Ensign was 180 rupees. Not only could a sepoy not aspire to the rank of a marshal, he could not fulfil his aspirations as a soldier or expect any adequate reward for his valour, ability and fidelity. A stray incident of sepoy revolt at Barrakpore on November 2, 1825 was a pointer to things that were to come. It originated when the government refused to allow the sepoys two rupees each month as travelling expenses while under orders to embark for Burma. About 450 sepoys held out, despite being threatened with death if they did not go. "The Company's Indian troops were undoubtedly the most efficient army in India…. Only the Sikhs ran them close. At the same time it remained a fact that they were a collection of mercenaries. The men were loyal to their salt, and usually proud of their leaders. But fighting for them was a professional matter and they had no spark of supra-regimental or national pride… Since they could not identify themselves with the regime by helping to control it, they

Flaws in the Military Administration

tended to express their feelings of self-respect or *izzat* by a fanatical devotion to traditional customs. Hence developed a certain brittle quality in the Indian troops. They were brave and steadfast in battle, loyal and well-behaved in the camp, but they were liable to see in small changes and unconsidered actions insults to their customs or subtle plots against their deepest feelings. Loyalty was therefore always conditional and as the wind of innovation grew stronger from the West it became more and more difficult to maintain those conditions." (*The Oxford History of India*)

Composition of the Company's Army

The majority of the recruits of the Bengal Army was drawn from Awadh and the North-Western Frontier Provinces. Most of them belonged to high-caste brahman and Rajput families who did not like being treated on par with low-caste recruits. Besides, the extension of British dominion in India had adversely affected the conditions of service of sepoys. They were required to serve in areas away from their homes without payment of the extra *bhatta* (allowance). They looked with longing and nostalgia to the past when Indian rulers used to crown their meritorious deeds by bestowing *jagirs* and other prizes upon them. Following the outbreak at Barrackpore, the interval of 32 years from 1825 to 1857 saw the Bengal Army in a condition of quasi-mutiny. The annexation of Awadh in February 1856 had a negative impact on the sepoys as they stood to lose their additional *bhattas.* Awadh also had the disbanded soldiers of a king, ready to take the law in their own hands any time besides being bitterly hostile to the British government. The discontent was shared by the Awadh recruits in the army, about 40,000 sepoys seething with discontent and disaffection arising from the forcible seizure of the state in violation of long-standing alliance and justice. Their immediate reaction was manifested in a fatal attack on Boileau, the deputy-commissioner of Gonda. The situation was further exacerbated by the high-handed behaviour of Coverley Jackson, the new chief commissioner, who, instead of doing all in his power to reconcile the chiefs and the people to British rule, needlessly interfered with the tenures of their estates.

Resentment Against Annexation of Awadh

British Military Reverses

The reverses suffered by the British armies in Afghanistan, Crimea and Persia brought down the prestige of the government and generated a spirit of restiveness and a seditious belief in the minds of the sepoys that the British would be forced to quit India. In a memorandum to the authorities, Dalhousie had commented on the fact that there was no corresponding increase of the Company's military strength despite the great increase of British authority in India. He proposed the reduction of the number of Indian sepoys in each regiment to 800, and the increase in the number of European infantry from 31 to 35 battalions. No action was taken, however.

Paucity and Ill-deployment of British Troops

The paucity of British troops and their ill-deployment in the armies of the Company and the royal armies also contributed to the relative ease with which the revolt broke out. Against the 40,000 Europeans employed in the Company were 300,000 Indians, which meant a proportion of eight Indians to one European. Of these, 10,000 British troops were quartered in Punjab, there was one infantry battalion in Calcutta, and one at Danapore 400 miles away. No British troops were stationed between Calcutta and Lucknow, with the exception of a few gunners at Benares and Kanpur. The line between Calcutta and Meerut was defended only by four British infantry regiments and a few gunners. A native garrison, incharge of a large arsenal and well-supplied with all military stores, controlled Delhi. There was only one regiment of European infantry at Lucknow, and a weak regiment of Europeans at Agra which was the capital of the North-Western Provinces. Meerut, heavily garrisoned, had 1,700 Europeans. But no British troops were stationed in Rajputana and in central India, and the British garrison at Mhow comprised only one battery of artillery. "Never was a situation so exciting to the sepoys, they had provocation, temptations and opportunities without example. With arms in hand, it was too much to expect of a disaffected soldiery to submit quietly to be squeezed out of their perquisites and privileges, and to be deprived of their religion and their caste without a death-defying struggle," as S.B. Choudhury observes in

Vellore Revolt of 1806: A Precursor of 1857?

Of all the pre-1857 military rebellions, the Vellore Revolt of 1806 stands out as a significant milestone in the history of British India. Though historians in general have made a passing reference to this event in the context of resistance movement against the British rule, latest research indicates that the 'Vellore mutiny' was not merely an angry outburst by a group of disgruntled Indian sepoys against poor pay, undesirable service conditions and unwarranted regulations, but an event of wider political and revolutionary significance, or one may say, it was perhaps a prelude to the Great Revolt of 1857 which is seen by some as India's 'first war of Independence'.

Historian Dr K. Rajayyan sees the Vellore revolt as a part of the revolutionary activities of groups of people operating in different regions. The groups mobilised people to protest against the "oppressive" rule of the (East India) Company and the Crown under the Pitt's India Act (1784) in the areas that came under the Company's control following the British troops' victory over most of the native rulers in what is now Tamil Nadu between 1750 and 1800.

The system of revenue collection imposed by the Company's government in the occupied areas destabilised the rural economy and resulted in an agrarian crisis. Sections of the affected communities rallied round the discharged troops of defeated native rulers, who were regrouping in an attempt to resist foreign rule. These revolutionary groups drew support from the few native rulers who were still holding on. Interestingly, many of these revolutionaries, who had held important positions in the unsuccessful armies, found their way into the British army. The messengers of these revolutionaries fanned out to different areas to mobilise popular support and were also in touch with the sons of Tipu Sultan, housed in the Vellore fort. Thus, the revolt by soldiers of the British army had the backing of this loosely knit revolutionary network spread all over southern India.

Explaining the circumstances that led to the revolt, another historian, Dr K.A. Manikumar, says that the introduction of Permanent Settlement of land revenue held the entire village community to ransom. During this period, the agricultural prices were crashing, and the revenue system compelled the entire community to abandon their villages in search of livelihoods. People had to sell their land and move out of their villages and many of them opted for a military career under the British. Soldiers of the disbanded armies of the Polygar chieftains also joined the British army. It is evident from the records that by 1806 members of both land-owning and labour classes had joined the Company's army in a big way. This accounted for the substantial presence *of Vellalars* and *Naidus* (both land-owning classes) and *Pallas* and *Paraiahs* (mostly agricultural labourers) in the Company's army. Besides, there were also members of the militant Marava community of the southern districts and Muslims.

The trouble started when the army prescribed a new leather cockade (hat) for the sepoys, and sought to prevent the latter from wearing religious marks on their bodies and certain other regulations. The sepoys, in their turn, took it as an affront to their past glory and religious sentiments. Furthermore, both Hindus and Muslims were offended by rumours that the new hat was made of the hide of cows and pigs. This fact bears a striking similarity with the 'Enfield rifle issue" which triggered off the great revolt of 1857. The native soldiers saw in the British regulations "an effort to homogenise Indians though conversion to Christianity" which they resented.

What gave the revolt a political dimension was the hoisting of the flag of the Mysore sultanate in the palace inside the Vellore fort. The families of 12 sons and six daughters of Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore who was killed in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war in 1799, were staying in the palace and some other places around it. More than 3,000 others from Mysore, who were close to the royal family, were also staying in Vellore.

British military historian John W. Kaye in his book *History of the Sepoy War in India* says that the inmates of the palace fraternised with the sepoys and provided food "to refresh the weary bodies of the insurgents, and vast promises to stimulate and sustain the energies of their minds". In fact, he observes, one of the princes, the third son of Tipu, personally encouraged the rebel leaders. "With his (Tipu's son) lips he proclaimed the rewards to be lavished upon the restorers of the Mohammedan dynasty. And from his apartments, a confidential servant was seen to bring the tiger striped standard of Mysore, which,…was hoisted above the walls of the palace," Kaye noted.

According to one version, the revolt was originally scheduled for July 12, but it broke out two days in advance (on July 10) because a section of sepoys believed that information had leaked to officials and apprehended strong pre-emptive and punitive action. For some reason, the 1857 revolt too broke out on May 10, before its scheduled date.

Mill and Wilson observe in *The History of India,* Vol. VII, "Although the storm had burst so suddenly upon the victims of its fury, indications of its approach had not been wanting; and careful and intelligent

observation might have anticipated its violence and guarded against its consequences. It was known early in May that deep and dangerous discontent pervaded the troops in garrison, upon the subject of orders regarding their dress and accoutrements, and rigorous measures were resorted to for its suppression."

To suppress the revolt of a smaller dimension in May, officials resorted to several penal measures. Two persons who were supposedly involved in the revolt were given 900 lashes each. "Not only were there dark rumours of an approaching tumult current in the Fort and Petta, but in the latter a Mohammedan *Fakir* repeatedly proclaimed in the *Bazar* the impending destruction of the Europeans," Mill and Wilson write.

The *fakir's* utterances were ignored and three weeks before the revolt, the warning of a sepoy, Mustafa Beg, who informed Colonel Forbes, the Commander of the Corps, of a conspiracy being hatched to murder European officials, was rejected. Neither the political masters nor the military officials paid attention to the socio-economic factors that caused disaffection among the sepoys. That was why similar, though smaller, revolts followed at Wallajabad, Palayamkottai and Hyderabad. Officials responded differently in these places. While at Hyderabad order concerning the regulations was withdrawn, at Wallajabad the official ordered the entire army to march to the headquarters at Madras. When the headquarters would not receive the troops, they were stopped en route and forced to accept the new regulations. At Palayamkottai, the sepoys were aggrieved over many other issues as well. Some of them had lost their relatives in the army's reprisal and one sepoy too was shot dead. The incident left a deep imprint on the army personnel. Realising that the accumulated anger might explode any time, the commanding officer ordered the discharge of all Muslims among the soldiers. But the army headquarters acting against this 'panic response' ordered him to reinstate all of them.

The revolt at Vellore began on the morning of July 10, 1806, when the impregnable Vellore fort was rocked by gunfire as scores of sepoys garrisoned there shot at British officials who rushed out of their barracks and forced their way into a hospital and shot at a few patients. The sepoys' operation ended before dawn, killing 14 British military officials and 99 privates and wounding several others. The British forces under Colonel Gillespie (who brought in forces from Arcot, about 20 km away) responded in a swift operation and regained control of the fort killing hundreds of sepoys, though the official count was only 350. A section of sepoys and some outsiders were reported to have plundered the belongings of the British officials in the fort.

The army headquarters used different yardsticks for different places. In Vellore, most of the sepoys discharged after inquiry were taken back. The Muslims were made to bear the entire blame of the rebellion, although Hindu and Muslim sepoys were equally involved in it, the main purpose of which, in their understanding, was to put Tipu's descendants back in the saddle. The sepoys' tie-up with Tipu's sons only indicated that they wanted to replace the British with the erstwhile rulers, in this case, Muslims. But then that was part of the 'Divide and Rule' Policy the British deliberately resorted to.

In the light of these inferences, Dr Manikumar says, one could conclude that the Vellore Revolt had the elements of what historian Eric Hobsbawn calls "Proto-nationalism". Resentment against conquerors, rulers and exploiters who happened to be recognisable as foreigners by colour, costume and customs should be considered anti-imperial. According to Hobsbawn, a proto-national base is essential for state-aspiring national movements.

Proto-national identifications, ethnic, religious, linguistic or otherwise, among the mutineers are notable in the resistance of the sepoys and native officers who participated in the Vellore Revolt. Fifty years later, the colonial government confronted a revolt by sepoys at Barrackpore and Meerut (the revolt of 1857, later termed the first war of Independence) for similar reasons. So can it be said that the Vellore Revolt was a prelude to the Revolt of 1857?

'The Great Revolt' in *A Comprehensive History of India,* Vol II.

And the squeezing out of the perquisites and privileges of the sepoys had been a systematic process. The General Service Enlistment Act passed by Canning's government in 1856 decreed that all future recruits for the Bengal army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere they were told; the Act became unpopular because service in the Bengal army was usually hereditary. Sepoys declared unfit for foreign service were not allowed to retire with pension, but were to be posted for duty at cantonments. The Post Office Act of 1854 withdrew the privilege of free postage so long enjoyed by the sepoys. All of these factors made the sepoys feel more and more mutinous,

Unpopular Legislations

and they were waiting for an occasion which was provided by the 'greased cartridge' incident.

Socio-religious and Political Background

Cultural Reaction

But the simmering discontent of the Indian sepoys of the Bengal Army is, by itself, an inadequate explanation of the origin of the revolt of 1857 and its widespread nature. There is agreement among historians that the revolt was indeed a reaction to innovations in traditional Indian society, introduced by the British rule. The British system, which was identified by a policy of social reform to a degree, created an ambivalence among people towards the old orthodox order of Indian society. But the Indians were put off by the bad faith of an alien government and its rudeness and arrogance. The English were openly contemptuous of Indians, describing the Hindus as 'barbarians' with hardly any trace of culture and civilisation, while the Muslims were thought of as 'bigots, cruel and faithless'. Further, missionary activities against early marriage, the *purdah* system, the attempts at proselytisation and the gamut of social legislations for the suppression of superstitious practices provoked fear in the minds of people that the progressive measures were calculated to serve the purpose of converting Hindus and Muslims alike. It was a fear that had been growing since the introduction of The Religious Disabilities Act of 1850, which modified Hindu customs.

Hazrat Mahal's Proclamation

The numerous addresses, proclamations and manifestos issued during this period by the rebel leaders throw light on the attitudes and motives of the leaders, and the cause for which they fought. For instance, the proclamation of Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh, (which was a rejoinder to the Queen's proclamation of November 1858) articulated the fears and anger that led the sepoys and masses to rise. She declared: "In the proclamation it is written that the Christian religion is true, but no other creed will suffer oppression and that the laws will be observed towards all. What has the administration of justice to do with the truth or falsehood of a religion? … To eat pigs and drink wine, to bite greased cartridges, and to mix pig's fat with flour and sweetmeats, to destroy Hindu and Musalman temples on the pretext of making roads, to build churches, to send clergymen into the streets and alleys to preach the Christian religion, to institute English schools, and pay people a monthly stipend for learning the English sciences, while the places of worship of Hindu and Mussalman are to this day entirely neglected, with all this how can the people believe that religion will not be interfered with? The rebellion began with religion, and for it millions of men have been killed. Let not our subjects be deceived; thousands were deprived of their religion in the north-west and thousands were hanged rather than abandon their religion."

Racial Arrogance

The arrogance of British actions in India and their offensive assumption of superiority together with the insults, threats and hatred to which they subjected the people of India, rankled in the minds of people. Europeans on their hunting sprees were often guilty of indiscriminate criminal assaults on Indians. European juries, which alone could try such cases, acquitted European criminals with light or no punishment. British imperialism and the race consciousness of the British rulers of India aroused the worst form of anti-British feeling. The Azamgarh Proclamation or *Ishtihar* issued on August 25, 1857, later published in the *Delhi Gazetteer* of September 29, 1857 as a manifesto of the king of Delhi, accused the government of deliberately following this dehumanising policy.

Annexation of Native States

The East India Company's policy of effective control and gradual elimination of the Indian native states took a definite shape with the perfection of the Subsidiary Alliance system under Lord Wellesley. It culminated in Dalhousie's infamous Doctrine of Lapse, which caused suspicion and unease among all ruling princes in India. The absorption of kingdoms and vast estates into British territory was carried out with impunity. The right of succession was denied to the Hindu princes. In case of disputed inheritance, the decision of the East India Company was binding and that of the Court of Directors final. The Mughal emperor was reduced to a state of helplessness. Awadh and Punjab were both annexed in defiance of treaty rights. Nagpur and Sind provinces were added to the East India Company's possessions. Dalhousie also conquered Lower

Burma and took away the possessions of the houses of Satara, Raichur, Naldrug, Karnataka, Tanjore, Jhansi, Karauli and Sambalpur. The last of the Peshwas, Nana Sahib's claim to be recognised as such was denied, and the province of Berar snatched away from the Nizam. An enormous amount of ill-will and popular discontent was the residue of this wholesale sweeping away of native rulers and native states.

The British, through their activities, also reinforced the belief in the minds of people that they were a faithless people whose only principle seemed to be to seize everything of value. When Punjab was annexed, they auctioned the properties of the Lahore durbar. The 'lapse' of Nagpur was followed by the sale at a public auction in Calcutta of the jewels of the royal family. Camel-loads of silver and jewellery were taken to British camps after the third Anglo-Maratha War (1818). Falsehood and deceit practised in the annexation or overthrow of several states, and in the discontinuance of royal pensions and other acts of injustice, and the perjury of the English, only served to exasperate people further. Rebel leaders, Khan Bahadur Khan, Maulavi Ahmadullah and Nana Sahib, emphasised that the English should either be destroyed or driven out, a sentiment that was strengthened by the 'absentee sovereigntyship' that the British practised. Invaders in the past, had, in course of time, settled in India and become its citizens, and the revenue collected from the people were spent in India; but in the case of the British, Indians felt that they were being ruled from England and that their wealth was being drained away.

Policy of Indiscriminate Plunder

Economic Background

As we have already mentioned, the people of India were unanimous in their dislike of the land revenue policy of the East India Company. Several districts in the newly-annexed states were in permanent revolt, and military had to be sent to collect land revenue. A highly unpopular settlement was introduced in the North-Western Provinces in the period 1833 to 1842, during Lord William Bentinck's reign. In the new settlement, the proprietorship of the soil was vested in the cultivators, and the so-called proprietors were regarded only as 'agents' through whom the rents of the cultivators were paid to the government. The British justified this measure by claiming that it was only in single families and village communities that proprietary right survived in more recognisable forms than anywhere else. The real intention of the government, however, was to protect the inferior agricultural classes as a make-weight against the landed dignitaries. This settlement deprived the talukdars or owners of groups of villages of their estates. In regions where the talukdars did not exist, the zamindars or owners of villages, were allowed to continue. But the settlement of revenue was so high that the zamindars were not able to pay and were soon reduced to the position of agents. Land revenue, fixed at five-sixths of the gross rental in 1822, though reduced to two-thirds of the rental in 1833, was so excessive that the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, T.C. Robertson, observed that it was "a fearful experiment… calculated so as to flatten the whole surface of society". In 1855, the assessment was scaled down to 50 per cent and extended to all other provinces of India, but it was too late by then to undo the damage.

Unpopular Revenue Policies

The landed aristocracy of talukdars had possessed the dignity and power of feudal barons. But the government drove out the talukdars in preference to the village proprietors, who were recognised as the only legitimate inheritors of the soil. To illustrate, the Raja of Mainpuri, who was the talukdar of a large estate comprising two hundred villages, was held to be the proprietor of only fifty-one villages. In 1848, the village proprietors were left to deal with the government and not with the raja for all the remaining villages. The system broke up large estates into minute fractions, and destroyed the entire aristocracy of the country. This fragmentation of the estates led to a considerable decline in the volume of production. An English observer commented that in several properties, from two to three hundred acres each in Fatehgarh, the number of sharers had increased to half a thousand. The situation angered people like the Raja of Mainpuri, who hoped to overthrow the government and recover their estates. In

Elimination of the Landed Classes

Rohilkhand, where social conditions were the same, the British revenue system ruined the chiefs. Landed rights and interests were sold for petty debts to strangers. All this only served to unite the dispossessed landowners with the peasantry, with whom they were connected for centuries, to make common cause against the English.

In the 1850s, the government set up a tribunal to enquire into the title deeds of the estates of those who had been granted rent-free tenures. In the absence of documentary proof to certify that the vast mass of property held by the landed proprietors was their own, the proprietors were ordered to make out a legal claim to immunity under pain of forfeiture of their lands held on free tenures. From 1852 to 1857, the Inam Commission pronounced sentences of confiscation of estates on twenty-one thousand cases brought before it. In Bengal alone, £ 3,000,000 was obtained from the estates of ousted proprietors in a year, while in Bombay the income was £ 370,000. The ones to suffer most were the maulavis and ulemas who had enjoyed rent-free tenures for the maintenance of religious services. They played a very active role in the revolt.

Confiscation of Rent-free Estates

Similarly, Awadh talukdars who owned about two-thirds of Awadh were feudal barons, whom the government dispossessed by arriving at a settlement with the actual occupants of the soil, the village proprietors. In the hurry to do away with 'middlemen', whether talukdars or farmers, officers ignored the interests and rights of the great landed proprietors who were still in possession at the time of the annexation of Awadh. These independent and proud men were deeply humiliated and deprived of their estates, as in the case of Man Singh of Shahganj. This owner of 557 villages, paying £ 20,000 to the government as land revenue, was dispossessed of all but six villages. The new judicial regulations, with their increased formalities and delays and expenses, were not much help to those who wanted to turn to them to argue their case.

Resentment of Awadh Taluqdars

The economic policies, especially the Company's land revenue administration, destroyed centuries-old social institutions and brought about social disorder.

Heavy assessments and increased duties was driving the peasantry franctic as well. Taxes on opium and the duty on ferries and on other communication conveniences, together with the rise in prices of necessary commodities, aroused indignation and hatred. Due to the ryotwari settlement, peasants of Bombay Presidency and proprietors were ruined by the government demand of 55 per cent of the total produce as fixed by Pringle in 1824-28. The settlement eliminated the mirasdars of Bombay and the poligars of Madras on a large scale, thus preventing growth of a middle class. In the Central Provinces too, the government demand was fixed at a high rate, and torture, intimidation and coercion were freely resorted to so as to reach the target of collection. The situation was the same in the North-Western Provinces, which at that time extended upto Narmada, in Narsinghpur, Dumoh, Sagar, Jabalpur and Narmada territories, and in Nagpur after 1853. Every year many estates were put up for sale under the decrees of the courts as their owners could not pay revenue; this was done even for simple contract debts at times. The proprietary rights of the zamindars and peasants were purchased by baniyas who, as village money-lenders, also practised usury. They were helped in their exploitative practices by English courts which decreed even against the ordinary debt of an ignorant peasant, thereby ruining him in the interest of the money-lenders and mahajans. The protection offered to the baniyas by the English courts infuriated peasants and other lower classes of wage-earners to whom borrowing was the only resource, and explains why the latter were so vindictive towards the English during the rebellion. Various official enquiries held during this period concluded that the elimination of the landed classes, i.e., the jagirdars, inamdars, talukdars, the impoverishment of the middle classes as also the destruction of the village communities and the ruin of peasantry, were fraught with serious social repercussions.

High Rate of Taxation

Ruin of Peasantry

Indian trade and industry too suffered from the elimination of the Indian mercantile community

and the East India Company's deliberate use of political power to destroy the Indian handicrafts industry by first depriving Indian cottons from the European market, and then mass-producing cotton in English industries and flooding India with these goods. The belligerence of Indians is reflected in the Azamgarh Proclamation of August 25, 1857, which was addressed to zamindars, merchants, public servants, artisans and intellectuals: "It is well known to all that the people are groaning under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English; that the English have ruined zamindars by imposing exorbitant *jummas* and public auction of their estates for arrears of revenue; the litigations regarding zamindaris, which involve huge expenditure on stamps and other items of civil courts with all sorts of crooked dealings (as the practice of allowing a case to hang on for years), have been deliberately calculated to secure the extinction of the landed classes; that the infidel British government have monopolised the trade of all the fine and valuable merchandise, such as indigo, cloth, and other articles of shipping; that they have taxed the profits of ordinary traders with postages and tolls and other odious imposts; that they have closed against the people every avenue of respectable employment, whether civil or military; that by introducing English articles into India, the Europeans have thrown the weavers, the cotton-dressers, the carpenters, the black smiths and the shoemakers, etc., out of employment with the result that every description of native artisan has been reduced to beggary… Therefore… the present *Ishtahar* made it incumbent on all to promote common good by their individual exertion and thus to attain their respective ends which would only be possible by driving the English out of the country." (As quoted by S.B. Chaudhuri, *op cit*) The Revolt of 1857 was thus a product of the character and policies of colonial rule.

Impact on Trade and Industry

Azamgarh Proclamation

Course of the Revolt

The first warning that a storm was brewing was given at Barrackpore near Calcutta, when Native Infantry regiments destroyed the telegraphic office bungalow on January 26, 1857; before this, there had been incidents at Dum Dum, again near Calcutta. A military depot had been started at Dum Dum to train sepoys in the use of the newly-introduced Enfield rifle, equipped with greased cartridges. The disturbances occurred when a rumour that the grease used in preparing the cartridges contained the fat of pig or cow began to circulate in the Bengal regiments. The military authorities issued a denial without investigating into the matter, but subsequent enquiries proved that the fat of pig or cow really had been used. The sepoys meanwhile became convinced that the introduction of greased cartridges was a deliberate move on the part of the government to defile their religion. Authorities regarded the refusal of the sepoys to use the greased cartridges as an act of insubordination and punished them accordingly. But the flames of discontent and sedition had begun to spread already and they turned into a raging fire with the mutiny of the 34th Native Infantry Regiment at Barrackpore. Mangal Pandey, the sepoy who ran amok, attacked and fired at the Adjutant, and sepoys refused to use the greased cartridge. The regiment was disbanded and sepoys guilty of rebellion punished. Their mutinous conduct spread rapidly and disturbances connected with the greased cartridge took place in the form of incendiarism committed by members of a musketry depot on March 26, at Ambala.

Mangal Pandey Episode

The mutiny soon spread to Lucknow, the chief city of Awadh. The real outbreak is believed to be the mutiny of the regiments at Meerut. Earlier, on April 23, the Native Cavalry refused to use the greased cartridges; they were tried by a native court-martial and were sentenced each to hard labour for ten years. On May 9, the sentence was promulgated before the whole garrison: the mutineers were stripped of their uniforms, fettered and marched to jail. The next day, Sunday, May 10, the sepoys mutinied. Their first act was to release their fellow sepoys in jail, who were soon joined by soldiers of the Native Infantry. Committing an orgy of murder, loot and arson, the mutineers headed for Delhi. Reaching Delhi on May 11, the mutineers proclaimed Bahadur Shah II, the last representative of the Mughals, as the 'Emperor of Hindustan'. Europeans at Delhi were massacred by nightfall. The rebellion

Beginning of the Revolt

spread throughout the northern and central Indian regions at Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Bareilly, Benaras, parts of Bihar, Jhansi and other places. Fortunately, for the British, the Indian rulers remained loyal and rendered valuable services in suppressing the rebellion. India south of the Narmada remained almost untouched.

Three Phases of the Revolt

Percival Spear has divided the mutiny into three periods: the first covers the summer of 1857 when the problem for the British was how to prevent the mutiny from spreading and to hold on until reinforcements could arrive; the second centres round the operations for the relief of Lucknow in the later part of the year; the third phase consisted of 'mopping-up' operations which may be said to have ended with the capture of Tantia Tope in April 1859. Both sides displayed heroism, desperation and great courage, and both sides committed innumerable dark deeds. News of the fall of Delhi to mutineers reached the Commander-in-Chief General Anson at Simla on May 12. On arriving at Ambala on May 15, Anson found telegrams ordering him to retake Delhi. Before his force could reach Delhi, uprisings had begun among troops at Nasirabad in Rajasthan, Nimach in Gwalior, at Lucknow, Kanpur and Banares; the Rani of Jhansi in Bundelkhand, too, rose in revolt. The rebels shot their officers and massacred Europeans, but then they vacillated as they had no real agenda to follow and no readymade leaders to guide them. Only in Kanpur and Jhansi did Nana Sahib and the Rani Lakshmi Bai provide any immediate and aristocratic leadership. By mid-June British authority had practically ceased in a broadband of territory stretching from the borders of Rajasthan to the neighbourhood of Patna in Bihar. Only the fort of Agra, the residency of Lucknow, and entrenchments at Kanpur were held by the English.

The British had two bastions of strength—in Punjab and in Bengal. The problem was to hold these, rescue the besieged garrisons, and prevent the spread of the mutiny until reinforcements could arrive from Europe. While there was no danger in Bengal, in Punjab the situation was saved by the leadership of Sir John Lawrence and his team of enterprising officers, despite the province being faced with the triple danger of Afghan interference, a Sikh uprising and a sepoy mutiny. The Afghan chief Dost Muhammad remained loyal to his treaties, the Sikhs actively helped the British in their operations as they had unpleasant memories of Mughal rule, and the sepoy danger was met by prompt disarming and the organisation of a mobile column under John Nicholson. The British realised that the key to victory lay in recapturing Delhi from the rebels. Delhi had been the seat of power of the Mughals; the titular emperor Bahadur Shah was still considered by many to be the rightful sovereign of India, and his nominal leadership of the movement was of great psychological significance to the rebels. So, to break the back of the revolt, the British had to destroy the rebel stranglehold of Delhi.

Recovery of Delhi

A force organised by General Anson established itself on the Ridge before Delhi in late June 1857. After two months of desperate fighting, the force stormed the city in September and won it after six days of street fighting. Bahadur Shah surrendered on the promise of his life, and the mutineers, numbering about 30,000, scattered to the villages or made their way to Lucknow. Nearly a quarter of the British forces became casualties. But with the recovery of Delhi it became clear that the suppression of the mutiny was only a matter of time. The inhabitants of Delhi suffered the reprisals and punitive measures that followed the British takeover of the city. This victory would not have been achieved without a large number of rebel forces not being tied up in and around Lucknow. Several memorable fights took place: at Kanpur British officer Wheeler surrendered on June 26, after three weeks of gallant resistance; at Lucknow Sir Henry Lawrence put up a brave fight and died of his wounds, but his spirit inspired the garrison and his wise measures enabled it to resist until relief came; on June 11, the fortress of Allahabad was obtained by Neill; on July 7, General Havelock arrived with 2,000 men from Allahabad to Kanpur, where he found the European prisoners murdered by the Nana's orders. From July 7 to September 25, General Havelock fought his way into the besieged residency. No reinforcements from Britain were needed. At

Kanpur, the newly-crowned Peshwa Nana Sahib was joined by his able and experienced lieutenant, Tantia Tope. The military operations for the recapture of Kanpur are associated with the recovery of Lucknow. Kanpur was occupied on December 6 by Sir Campbell, and Tantia Tope escaped and joined the Rani of Jhansi.

Second Phase

The second phase, which involved the recovery of the Lucknow residency, saw some even more desperate fighting by the rebels who were terrified of defeat and the punishment they knew was sure to follow. Sir Colin Campbell finally relieved the residency in November and then returned to defeat the Gwalior contingent of 20,000 men under Tantia Tope. He recovered Lucknow on March 1, 1858 and pressed the remnants of the rebel forces back into the area bordering Nepal. However, guerilla resistance continued in the region till September.

Third Phase

The third phase, the phase of the central Indian campaign, showed the rebels at their best though their cause was hopeless by then. The troops at Jhansi had mutinied in the beginning of June 1857. Rani Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the late Gangadhar Rao, was proclaimed the ruler of the state. Tantia Tope joined the rani after losing Kanpur. Jhansi was recaptured by Sir Hugh Rose on April 3, 1858. Rani Lakshmibai and Tantia Tope marched towards Gwalior where they were hailed by the troops. Gwalior's ruler, the Sindhia, however, decided to remain loyal to the English, and took shelter at Agra. The newly-proclaimed Peshwa Nana Sahib also joined Rani Lakshmi Bai, and plans were chalked out for a march into the South. Despite the reckless courage of the rani and the skill of Tantia Tope, it was becoming increasingly evident that they were upholding a lost cause. Gwalior was recaptured by the English in June 1858; the Rani of Jhansi died fighting clad in soldier's uniform. Tantia Tope fled southwards; he was captured by one of Sindhia's feudatories in April 1859, and handed over to the English to be hanged. With the fall of Gwalior on June 20, the revolt was virtually over with a few skirmishes between the British and the rebels.

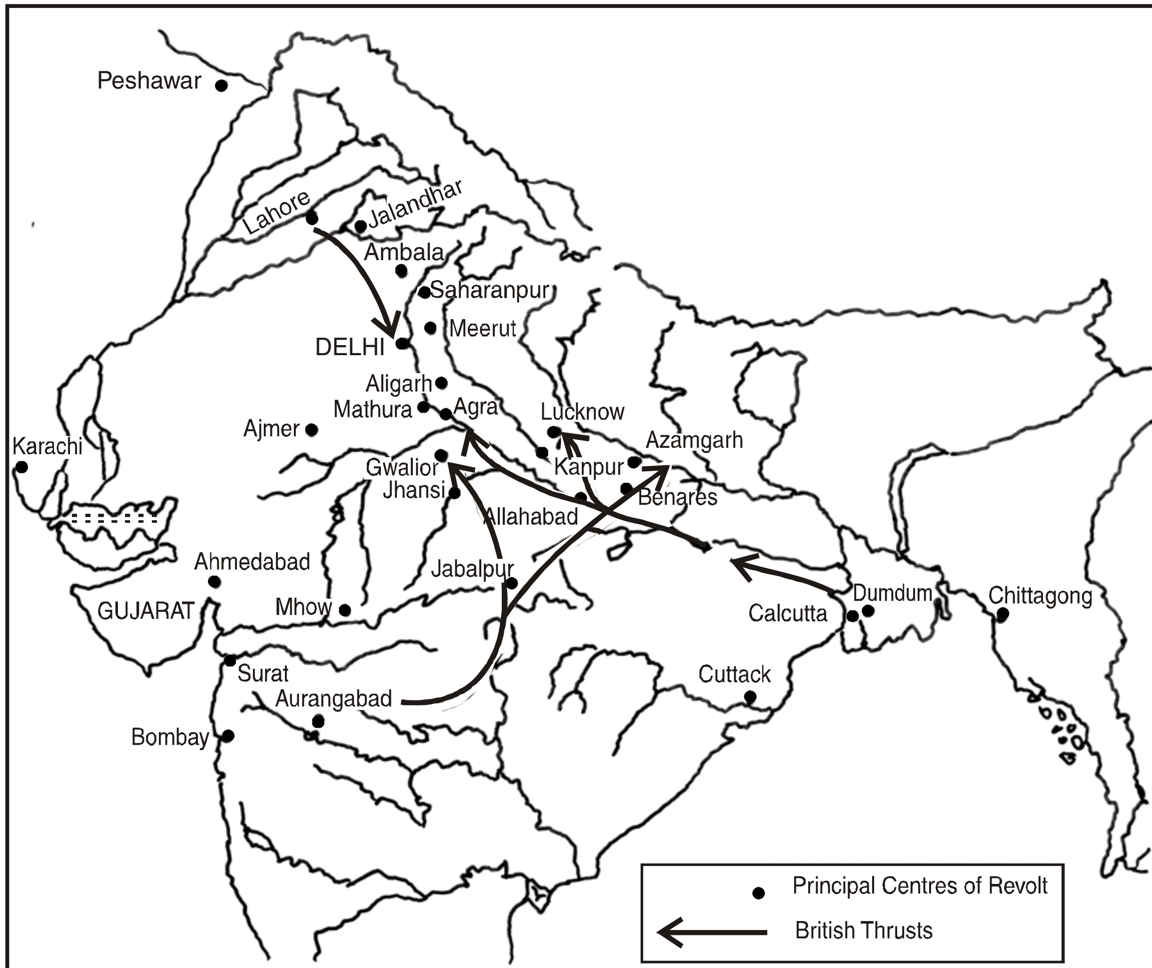
Views of S.B. Chaudhuri

In his analysis of the revolt, S.B. Chaudhuri writes that the course of the mutiny was influenced by the problem of fear. When the sepoys realised that the government would not be satisfied merely by disbanding regiments and that it was only awaiting the arrival of European soldiers to get rid of the Bengal Army, they were seized by panic. Precautionary and punitive measures taken by the British officers only served to heighten their fear and compelled them to rebel in sheer self-defence, as at Nimah and Nasirabad in central India, at Jhelum and Sialkot in Punjab, at Allahabad and Fatehpur in the North-Western Provinces, at Faizabad and Sikoora in Awadh. At Roorkee, some sepoys despite having fought loyally were shot down, and the news of the punishment inflicted upon them and others spread rapidly. The sepoys knew what they disliked, but not what they wished to set up in its stead; their passions were centred on their grievances, not on larger ideals. So they gained little from their successes and despaired over every defeat; their resistance was desperate because they had committed the unforgivable military sin. They fought to the end because they knew they would probably be killed after surrender. The people who fought on the side of the rebels, too, fought on account of specific grievances rather than with any large vision of a new India.

Suppression and Impact of the Revolt

Fate of Rebel Leaders

Tragic fate awaited the rebel leaders. Rani Lakshmi Bai and Kunwar Singh, a landlord of the Arrah region of Bihar who had assumed leadership of the sepoys of Danapore, escaped the vengeance of the British, the former dying while in combat and the latter dying of wounds. Bahadur Shah was tried by a court martial for rebellion and complicity in the murder of Europeans, found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment for life. He was exiled to Rangoon, in Burma, where he died in 1862. Nana Sahib and Begum Hazrat Mahal fled to Nepal. Tantia Tope was hanged. Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad, who preached *jihad* against the British in different places in northern India, was killed in an armed encounter with a pro-British raja near Shahjahanpur in June 1858.



Map indicating the important centres of revolt and the lines of British attack against the revolt.

Despite their individual acts of courage or valour, these leaders were not equipped by character or training to bear the burden of the rebellion. Bahadur Shah had little knowledge of the actual activities of the rebels. Nana Sahib had no political or military experience, his activities being marked by inefficiency as a commander of armed forces. Lakshmi Bai's fame centres on the strength of her personal character and her courage, and not on her ability as a military leader. Tantia Tope and Kunwar Singh were able strategists who won some military successes, but they functioned within a narrow ambit and exercised little influence on the struggle as a whole.

Impact on Soldiers and Educated Classes

Since the 1857 rebellion was, more than anything, a series of campaigns under different leaders for diverse purposes and had no unifying political ideology, it was easy for the people of India to return to being ruled by the British.

The failure of the revolt killed the idea of resistance to British rule. The sepoys went back to serving in the army of the British, and fought for their British masters in foreign countries during both the World Wars. Educated Indians of the 19th century, having no faith in armed rebellion, were confirmed in their political creed by the failure of the 'revolt'. They were influenced by

Western political ideas and by British liberalism, and thought that their birthright would be restored to them by the British as soon as they were worthy of it. For a long time after the revolt, they remained committed to the idea of partial self-government under the British flag.

The memory of the revolt, however, was revived later by a new generation with more confidence in the violent methods of European anarchist and nihilist groups. The Indian revolutionaries tried, during the First World War, to organise another military rising, with not much success. Nevertheless, the idea of armed resistance to British rule was not entirely discredited as, immediately after the revolt was crushed, sporadic uprisings did occur in various regions of India: the Indigo disturbances in Bengal from 1859 to 1861; the resistance of the Wahabis, which culminated in the state trials of Ambala in 1864, Patna in 1865, Malda and Rajmahal in 1870.

Legacy of Armed Struggle

Following the end of the revolt, two of the main centres of resistance, Delhi and Lucknow, slowly returned to normalcy, but Delhi lost its semi-independent position and was attached to Punjab. A number of princes who had supported the cause of the rebels lost their states and their lives.

Delhi's Position

In several regions after the revolt of 1857, as in Delhi after its capture, the Muslims suffered the worst. Urdu poet Ghalib, who was a resident of Delhi, wrote: "Here there is a vast ocean of blood before me, God alone knows what more I shall have to behold." Three Mughal princes were shot and later twenty-four princes were tried and executed. Several Muslim intellectuals were executed. During the weeks when the British military authorities held Delhi at their mercy, they made every expelled citizen who wished to return to the city pay a fine. Hindus had to pay 10 per cent of the value of their real property, while Muslims were made to pay as much as 25 per cent! The then Prime Minister of Great Britain, Palmerston, even wrote to Governor-General Canning to destroy every civil building connected with Muhammedan tradition "without regard to antiquarian veneration or artistic predilection". The British attitude is summed up in William Howard Russell's observation of 1858 that, "the Muhammedan element in India is that which causes us most trouble and provokes the largest share of our hostility… Our antagonism to the followers of Muhammad is far stronger than that between us and the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu. They are unquestionably more dangerous to our rule."

Repression of Muslims

But the call to wreak a special vengeance upon Muslims was not heeded by the British government, headed by Canning in India at the time. The Governor-General was determined not to turn the State into an instrument of terror that punished its Muslim citizens for their role in the revolt.

In the immediate aftermath of the revolt, both Hindus and Muslims were at the receiving end of a particularly bitter British racism. Indians in general were dubbed as unworthy of trust and subjected to insults, humiliation and contemptuous treatment. The remodelled structure of the Indian government was based on the idea of a master race. The psychological gulf between the rulers and the ruled widened, with the spirit of superiority and social pride having surpassed that of cooperation and the hope of self-government. This neo-imperialism was justified by the philosophy of the 'white man's burden' and the 'civilising' role of England on India. Fear on the side of the British that the revolt could happen again, and the memory of British vengeance on the side of the Indians, kept both sides wary of and hostile to each other.

British Racism and Neo-imperialism

There were changes in policies and power structure; there was complete transfer of power from Company to Crown, and the 'dual government' ended.

Why the Revolt Failed

The aristocratic leadership of the rebellion had a vision, but it tended to look to the past. In contrast, the British enjoyed gifted and determined leadership; they had a long record of success and the hope of reinforcements to sustain them, and most important of all, they had a huge self-confidence that sprang from the belief that they represented the forces of progress and modernity. Seen in this light, it is easy to understand how such numerically small forces, fighting on alien territory,

Lack of Progressive Vision

could defeat such desperate and numerically much larger opponents.

Men of exceptional ability fought on the British side, for instance, the Lawrence brothers, Nicolson, Outram, Havelock and others. They fought the toughest battles in the initial stages of the revolt and turned the tide in favour of the East India Company till reinforcements arrived from abroad. Their firm and prudent conduct explains why some corps remained loyal to them. That peculiarly close ties existed between the rebels and their officers is illustrated by the extraordinary example of Lieutenant-Colonel David Pott of the 47th Native Infantry, who held the spirit of mutiny in check and even persuaded his men to volunteer for services in China. Similarly, when all of Lucknow had rebelled, about 350 men of the 13th Native Infantry, held the Baillie Guard at the Lucknow Residency, despite being looked upon with suspicion by almost all the British.

Brilliant Leadership of the English

The leaders of the revolt were not lacking in bravery either, but they were deficient in experience, organising ability and concerted operations. Surprise attacks and guerilla tactics were not enough to win them their lost independence. The various commissions and boards appointed by the government failed to unearth any master plan behind the revolt or any scheme on which the movement was launched. Against the poor organisational skills of the rebels and their failure to chalk out a concerted plan of action, were ranged the superior resources of the British Empire. The British had concluded the Crimean and Chinese wars by 1856, and many of the British soldiers engaged in these wars poured into India. A large number of soldiers were recruited in India. Those fighting on the British side were equipped with the latest weapons of war. As opposed to them, the sepoys had very few guns and muskets and mostly fought with swords and spears. The electric telegraph, a new means of communication, kept the Commander-in-Chief informed about the movements of the Indian rebels and their strategy.

Lack of an Organised Strategy

The revolt was mainly feudal in character containing some nationalistic elements. While feudal lords of Awadh, Rohilkhand and some other parts of Northern India led the rebellion, other feudal princes like the Rajas of Patiala, Jhind, Gwalior and Hyderabad helped in its suppression. Sir Dinkar Rao, the minister of Gwalior, and Salar Jang, the wazir of Hyderabad, were praised for their loyalty to the British and their help in bringing the situation in their territory under control. Canning acted wisely by assuring Indian princes of his help in safeguarding their interests, and thus won over their support. In fact, the princes were rewarded after the suppression of the revolt. The districts of Berar were restored to the Nizam, and his debts remitted. Some Awadh territory was ceded to Nepal for its loyalty. The Sindhia, the Gaikwad and the Rajput princes also received rewards or concessions. As stated before, the rebels had no common ideals before them except strong anti-foreign sentiments. Bahadur Shah II may have been declared the Emperor at Delhi, but at Kanpur and Gwalior Nana Sahib was proclaimed the Peshwa. Hindu-Muslim differences, while dormant against the common enemy, were by no means dead. The peasants and the lower castes showed no active sympathy for the cause of the rebels; and sepoys in the Bombay and Madras armies, being mostly recruited from the lower castes, remained loyal.

The Feudal Element

Support of Some Indian Powers

Nature of the 1857 Revolt

The nature of the 1857 revolt has been a matter of debate among many historians. Some view it as a 'sepoy mutiny', some others as 'a national struggle' and still others a 'feudal uprising'. The factors of social and economic discontent that led the people to rise, and caused the revolt, were the same factors that produced the civil disturbances of the pre-Mutiny period, independently of the military rising. The revolt of 1857 was the product of two series of risings, military and civil. While the general condition of Indians during the British rule was not intolerable, the sense of degradation that they felt at being dominated by a foreign race far outweighed any beneficial factors brought about by British rule.

After making an exhaustive study of official and non-official records, historians, Dr R.C. Majumdar and Dr S.N. Sen, agree that the uprising of 1857 was not the result of careful planning, nor were there any masterminds behind it. During the trial

of Bahadur Shah II, despite efforts to prove that he was a party to a pre-planned conspiracy, no clinching evidence could be found to that effect. The course of the trial made it clear that the uprising was as much a surprise to the old emperor as to the British. This was so because, explain the historians, nationalism in the middle of the 19th century, was still in an embryonic form. The leaders of the revolt were no 'national' leaders. Bahadur Shah was forced by the sepoys to assume the leadership of the revolt. Nana Sahib rebelled only after his envoy in London failed to get for him the pension of Baji Rao II. In Jhansi, the Rani rebelled over the right of succession and annexation, and at no stage did indicate that her cause was the cause of the nation. The majority of the people of India, too, remained apathetic and neutral.

Neither Organised nor National

R.C. Majumdar argues that the revolt was not a 'war of independence'; the rebels followed different agendas at different places. In regions like Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, it was a mutiny of sepoys joined later by unsocial elements eager to take advantage of anarchy; in areas like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and western Bihar, the mutiny of sepoys was followed by a general revolt in which a large number of civilians, including the dispossessed rulers of Indian states, landlords, tenants and others, also took part. In provinces like Rajasthan and Maharashtra, the civil population, while sympathising with the rebels, did not indulge in overt acts of rebellion. Many sepoys who fought in the revolt were inspired by the desire of material gain, as was to be seen Delhi, Bareilly and Allahabad, where they indulged in loot and plunder and targeted both Indians and Europeans as their victims. However, Dr Majumdar claims that whatever might have been the original character of the revolt, it soon became a "symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India and a symbol of the people of India's first joint struggle for freedom". He does not quite subscribe to the idea that the 1857 Revolt was a war for independence. In his essay in the *Comprehensive History of India*, Vo. IX, he writes: "It would thus appear that the outbreak of the civil population in 1857 may be regarded as a war of independence only if we take that term to mean any sort of fight against the British. But, then, the fight of the Pindaris against the English and the fight of the Wahabis against the Sikhs in the Punjab should also be regarded as such. Those who demur to it should try to find how much the rebels in 1857 were prompted by motives of material interest and religious considerations which animated, respectively, the Pindaris and the Wahabis, and how much by the disinterested and patriotic motive of freeing the country from the yoke of foreigners. Apart from individual cases, here and there, no evidence has yet been brought to light which would support the view that the patriotic motive of freeing the country formed the chief incentive to the general outbreak of the people… It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called "First National War of Independence of 1857 is neither First, nor National, nor War of Independence."

Views of R.C. Majumdar

Contradicting this view is the opinion of Dr S.N. Sen, that the rising of 1857 was a 'war of independence'. He explains that the mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers from Meerut placed themselves under the Mughal emperor at Delhi, and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared themselves in his favour. A fight for religion became a war of independence when the rebels fought to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which they held Bahadur Shah to be the rightful representative. S.B. Choudhury's thesis that the principal cause behind the large-scale rural participation during the revolt was the loss of land rights to the urban moneylender and trader under the pressure of British land revenue system, has been refuted by Eric Stokes' study. Stokes concludes that violence and rebellion were often the fiercest and most protracted where land transfers were low and the hold of the moneylender the weakest. Pointing to the 'elitist character' of rural participation in the revolt, Stokes argues that the major agrarian violence, far from originating from peasant groups, came from traditionally superior class communities for whom British rule had meant loss of political influence and relative economic deprivation. The mass of the people appear to have played little part in the fighting or at least followed the example of its local caste leadership. In the same way, the entire rural elite was not on the side of the rebels either.

Views of S.N. Sen

Views of Eric Stokes

It was split down the middle with the result that peasant proprietors or magnates within the same district, were reacting in opposite directions. In the district of Meerut, for example, while the Jats of Hapur pargana fought on the side of the British, the Jats in Baraut and Barnawa parganas fought against the British forces and sent supplies to the rebels at Delhi.

Views of Lawrence and Seeley

An entirely contrary view of the revolt is held by British historians like Sir John Lawrence and Sir John Seeley who depict it as a mere 'sepoy mutiny' which did not command the support of the people at large. According to Seeley, it was a rebellion of the Indian sepoys against the constituted government of the day. The Indian states which joined in the revolt did so because they nursed a grievance against the annexation policy of Dalhousie. The British government as the constituted authority of the land suppressed the revolt and restored law and order. This interpretation ignores the colonial context in which the revolt occurred and of which it was a reflection. Though the revolt began as a military rising, it was not everywhere confined to the army. The army did not join the revolt either, and a considerable section fought on the side of the government. The rebels came from almost every section of the population, in fact. In the trials of 1858-59 thousands of civilians, together with the soldiers, were held guilty of rebellion and punished. Nor was the revolt a war of fanatic religionists against Christians, as some English historians allege. During the heat of the rebellion the ethical principles underlying Christianity, Hinduism and Islam had little influence on either the rebels, or the British forces fighting them. Both sides quoted their religious scriptures to cover their excesses over the other party. The Christians ultimately won but not Christianity; Hindus and Muslims were defeated but not their respective religions.

Holmes' Racist Notion

Then there is the opinion of historians like T.R. Holmes, who popularised the racist notion that the revolt of 1857 was "a conflict between civlisation and barbarism". During the rebellion both the Europeans and the Indians were guilty of excesses; if Indians murdered European women and even children in Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow, the record of the British was hardly much better. Indiscriminate shootings, hundreds of hangings without a trial, and vendetta characterised British action as well.

A Muhammedan Conspiracy?

In 1857, most British observers thought of Muslims as rebels. For them, while Hindu sepoys might have kindled the first sparks of disaffection, it was the Muslims who fanned the flames of discontent and placed themselves at the head of the movement, as they saw in these religious grievances the stepping stone to political power. In the British view, argues Dr Metcalfe, Muslim intrigue and Muslim leadership converted a sepoy mutiny into a political conspiracy, aimed at ending the British Raj. These views were formed by the evidence of Muslim responsibility for mutiny and rebellion, which was considerable.

The *sawars* or troopers of the 3rd Native Cavalry, who were among the first units to be provoked into mutiny, were Muslims. It was they who rode off from Meerut to Delhi to set up a reluctant Bahadur Shah at the head of the rebellion. At night on May 11, 1857, the day after the mutiny at Meerut, a gun salute at Delhi announced that Bahadur Shah had assumed the mantle of Akbar and other Mughals and become a real ruler of India again. Events in Awadh, the countryside in the Doab, and Rohilakhand, large-scale participation of the Muslim religious classes confirmed the 'Muslim character' of the revolt.

However, the revolt of 1857 was not "a Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances", as James Outram believed. While the original military mutinies were sparked off by Hindu sepoys, the civil risings in Bihar, Awadh and Central India were also Hindu-led. Indian Muslims themselves were as divided by personal, ethnic, class and regional affiliations as were Hindus and were subject to the same pressures. Among aristocrats, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawabs of Rampur, Karnal, Muradabad and Dhaka remained 'loyal', while the Nawabs of Farrukhabad and Danda turned rebel. Muslim officials mostly joined the rebels in the Aligarh and Rohilkhand areas; on the other hand, Muttra district and Bijnor became known for the saga of the "loyal Muhammadans" of India. The Muslims of Bengal, economically the worst-affected by British rule, did not stir. In Punjab, Muslims joined Sikhs and the Muslim tribesmen of Kohat to form part of the reinforcements for the British troops on the Ridge outside Delhi.

Sir George Campbell, writing in July and August 1857 when the conflict was at its height, observed that apart from a few small outbreaks which occurred after the British capture of Delhi in September 1857 and were provoked by British severity and persecution, the rebellion was one of previously dominant classes, both Hindu and Muslim, in the North-Western Provinces. It was not a general Muslim movement against the British.

Views of V.D. Savarkar

Savarkar attempted to look at the events of 1857 from the Indian point of view. He propagated his views through the book, *The Indian War of Independence,* published in 1909. The book itself was written in response to celebrations in Britain to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the victory of the English over the Indians during the 1857 Revolt. According to him, the revolt of 1857 had a national and unified character and it was aimed against the British authority. A leading revolutionary himself, Savarkar was enticed and inspired by the burning zeal, heroism, bravery, suffering and tragic fate of the leaders of 1857, and he made an attempt to reinterpret the events and to relate it in full. The book, *The Indian War of Independence,* was written originally in Marathi and was influenced by histories of the French Revolution and the American War of Independence. The Marathi edition of the book was banned in British India even before its publication. Some Indian students staying in India House, London translated it into English and finally the work was published in the Netherlands in 1909. The second edition was published by Lala Hardayal on behalf of the Gadar Party in America, the third edition by Sardar Bhagat Singh, while the fourth edition was published by Subhas Chandra Bose in the Far East. The ban on the book was finally lifted by the Congress government of Bombay in May 1946. R.C. Majumdar and others have negated the views of Savarkar.

The rising of the sepoys confirmed the spontaneous character of the mutiny which took the form of a formidable chain movement of sporadic revolts beginning from Meerut. While the sepoys of the various regiments were always in communication with each other by letters or by emissaries on the subject of their grievances and had established a general understanding among themselves, nothing like a previous plan or a concerted action seemed to have existed, as suggested by English historians like Cracroft Wilson. No proof exists either of the sepoys being in league with foreign powers like Russia or Persia, or with Nepal.

Diversity of Interests and Reaction

Similarly, some regiments or portions of them stood firm by the side of their rulers, while others joined only after saving their officers. S.B. Choudhury draws attention to the diversity of interests that the mutiny afforded, as also the diversity of reactions among the rebellious sepoys. Some thoroughly disaffected units cut down or shot their officers on parade or murdered their officers in their own houses without remorse, and then joined the rebellion wholeheartedly. Some mutineers, instead of murdering their officers with their own hands, handed them to others who could kill. But there were also those who protected their officers and their families, supplied them with money and parted from them with tears.

In the end, speaking in very general terms, the revolt could be said to have meant different things to different people: the sepoys fought for caste, the chiefs for their kingdoms, the landlords for their estates, the people for fear of conversion and the Muslims for restoration of their old prestige, yet all against the common enemy, the English.

REORGANISATION AFTER 1857

Political Reorganisation

Despite being completely suppressed, the revolt of 1857 had shaken British rule in India to its very foundations. The techniques of controlling India, well-established by 1857, were confirmed and uniformly acted upon, from then onwards. The reactionary and vested interests were well-protected and encouraged and made into pillars of British rule in India. Tight European control was maintained over key positions both in the civil and military administration. All this was achieved through reorganisation.

The first of these measures was the abolition of the East India Company. In 1833, the Company's commercial connection with India had ended and, from 1853, with the termination of its China trade, it had ceased to be a commercial corporation. The Home Government nominated six of its directors, and the introduction of competitive examinations had broken the directors' monopoly

End of East India Company

of appointments. The Charter Act of 1853 provided that India should remain under the government of the Company "in trust for the Crown until Parliament should otherwise direct". Parliament could terminate the Company's rule at any time as no definite period was fixed for the continuation of the Company's rule. The Company was, in fact, a corporate agency which looked after the local management of affairs in India, but had little influence on high policy. When the revolt of 1857 brought to light the undesirability of governing India through the Company, the Home Government decided to bring India under the direct control of the Crown. The Company protested against the loss of its authority in a petition to Parliament drawn up by John Stuart Mill, but to no avail.

Council of India

The British Parliament's Government of India Act, 1858 provided that "India shall be governed by and in the name of the sovereign through one of the principal Secretaries of State, assisted by a Council of 15 members". The Court of Directors and the Board of Control, which had been governing India from the time of the passing of Pitt's India Act (1784), were abolished and their powers were vested in a single body known as the Secretary of State for India in Council. With this, the system of 'double government' introduced by Pitt's India Act was abolished; however, the framework of the Government of India remained unchanged. The Secretary of State for India was the fountain of authority as well as the director of policy in India. A Council of India was set up to supply the local knowledge that the directors claimed to possess. It consisted of fifteen members, appointed for life at first, but later for periods of ten to fifteen years. The Crown appointed eight members and the directors appointed seven at first; and later the member were co-opted by the Council itself. Since the members of the Council were usually men who had retired from a lifetime of service in India, the body embodied the official experience of the past generation.

Formal Transfer of Power

The transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown was a formal than a substantial change. The sovereignty of the Crown over the territories acquired by the Company had already been established with the Charter Act of 1813. The President of the Board of Control, a minister of the Crown, had for a long time been the *de facto* authority over the Indian affairs. The petition drawn up by John Stuart Mill further pointed out that, in Indian affairs, the British Cabinet, acting through the President of the Board of Control, had possessed the decisive voice for a long time, and was "accountable for all that has been done". While this was correct, the Company had been the minor partner in the government of India since 1784. With its overthrow in 1858, the major partner—the British cabinet acting in the name of the Crown—became the sole ruler.

Queen's Proclamation

But the machinery continued to work in much the same way, and the same men continued to work it. Administrative changes at the centre were considerable however, and changes of policy still more significant. The emphasis was on how to avoid the mistakes that had led to the revolt. In its anxiety to remedy the failures of the past, the government tended to forget the needs of the present and thought more of appeasing the old classes of society than of attaching the new and rising elements to itself. For the moment, however, the new measures seemed conciliatory and wise. The new system was inaugurated with the Queen's Proclamation of November 1, 1858. The proclamation set the tone for a new era of authority and conciliation, of piety and benevolence, and mercy, justice, welfare and improvement. To placate Indian princes, it was declared that all treaties and engagements made with them by the Company would be "scrupulously maintained" and no territorial extension would be sought. To remove the fear of conversion to Christianity—an important factor in the 'revolt'—people were assured that the government would follow a principle of religious toleration. No distinction was to be made on grounds of race or creed in recruitment to the public service, it was declared—reiteration of a principle laid down by the Charter Act of 1833. While retaining his legal title, the Governor-General added the honorific of 'Viceroy' as the personal representative of the Crown. While this did not add to his power, his

prestige was increased as from now he was the personal representative of the sovereign rather than the temporary figurehead of an impersonal corporate.

Reign of Parliament

The British Parliament's supremacy over the territories of the British Crown in the subcontinent was "legally complete"; from its inception in the Regulating Act of 1773 till its abandonment in the Indian Independence Act of 1947, it was the source of the government power exercised by different authorities both in British India as also in England in matters relating to India. The powers of the Government of India and the provincial governments, the central and provincial legislatures, and the high courts in India, as well as those of the Secretary of State in Council, were derived from the enactments of Parliament. With the Charter Act of 1833 introducing the new legislative system in British India, Parliament had in practice ceased to legislate specially for India except in matters relating to changes in the system of government. From 1858 onwards, it controlled, through the Secretary of State for India, important matters relating to legislation, administration, finance and economic policy. Under the shadow of Parliament's legal authority, the Secretary of State exercised wide powers, though its formal interference was, in practice, extremely limited. The advantage of the system was that it generally kept political issues affecting India beyond the scope of party strife in Parliament.

Secretary of State and Council

The Secretary of State for India was a member of the British Cabinet and responsible to Parliament for all matters relating to India. But to prevent him from concentrating all power in his hands, the Council of India kept a check on his activities. Its special status was indicated by the provision that no grant or appropriation of any part of the revenues of India was permissible without a green signal from the Council through a majority of votes. Political exigencies and personal factors largely determined the nature of the relationship between the Secretary of State and the Council. The statutory control of the Secretary of State in Council over the Government of India was limited because the latter enjoyed large powers under statutory provisions, and the Governor-General was 'an independent sovereign' in many respects. Personal factors again decided the equation between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General. The Secretary of State controlled all projects of legislation (Imperial and Provincial), measures affecting revenue and customs, currency operations and public debt, and any proposal involving issues of policy or important administrative issues or involving large expenditure. He was allowed to place restrictions upon the powers of the Government of India on the following classes of business: the construction of public works and railways, the creation of new appointments with high salaries, the raising of the pay of government servants, and additions to military expenditure. With the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown, the 'Home' Government's interference increased. Besides the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1858, extra-legal factors also made this possible, such as the increased facilities of communication between England and India, the establishment of telegraphs and the large investments of British capital in India. The justification provided for the system was that as there was no popular control over the Government of India, it should be subject to the control of the minister who was responsible to Parliament.

Secretary of State and Governor-General

Changes in the Council

The Charter Act of 1833 provided for four 'ordinary' members and one 'extraordinary' member, the commander-in-chief of the Bengal Army, to comprise the Governor-General's Council. The Charter Act of 1853 enlarged the Council by the addition of some members who were entitled to sit in it only when it was convened to make laws and regulations. Thus the Council was divided into two wings: executive and legislative. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 raised the number of 'ordinary' members from four to five and another parliamentary Act, in 1874, raised it from five to six. It was only in 1909 that an Indian was admitted to the Council as an 'ordinary' member. Meetings of two kinds were held by the Council: ordinary meetings or meetings for transaction of executive business, and legislative meetings or meetings for

the purpose of making laws and regulations. While the Governor-General had the statutory power to override the Council and act on his own responsibility in special cases, this power was seldom ever used. Under the law the Governor-General in Council functioned as a Board, with the direct participation of the Governor-General and all Members of Council in the transaction of all kinds of business.

Organisation of Provincial Governments

Under the provincial government, British territories in India were initially grouped into three Presidencies: Fort William in Bengal (under a Governor-General and a Council), Fort St George of Madras, and Bombay (under a Governor and a Council). While the two latter Presidencies retained this form of government till 1920, Bengal however, passed through several changes. Between 1836 and 1853, two new patterns of Provincial Government were evolved: lieutenant governorship and chief commissionership. The Governor-General in Council controlled a Lieutenant-Governor's province to a much larger extent than the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay. From 1862 to 1912, Legislative Councils were given to lieutenant-governors of different provinces. The North-Western Provinces, created in 1836, was the first lieutenant-governorship; the second was Bengal, created in 1854. Others to follow suit were the chief commissionerships of Punjab, the Central Provinces and Burma; chief commissioners occupied a lower status than lieutenant-governors. The Presidency Governments of Madras and Bombay enjoyed certain privileges: for example, they could correspond directly with the Secretary of State on all matters other than financial; they could appeal to him against any order of the Government of India; each one had a separate cadre of the Indian Civil Service; each had, till 1893, a Presidency Army with a commander-in-chief; each one also had a Legislative Council under the Indian Councils Act of 1861.

Special Powers for Presidencies

Nature of Government

The system of government in India centred in the Governor-General in Council, and was unitary in nature. The provincial governments were agents of the Government of India, with no innate powers of their own. Although there was no statutory separation of powers between the Government of India and the provincial governments, the former retained important matters such as foreign affairs, defence, general taxation, currency, public debt, tariffs, posts and telegraphs, railways and accounts and auditing. Matters such as ordinary internal administration, police, civil and criminal justice, prisons, land-revenue, education, medical and sanitary arrangements, irrigation, buildings and roads, and municipal and rural boards were handled by the provincial governments. But they were subject to the overall control of the Government of India.

Executive and Legislative Councils

The Governor-General's Council was enlarged for legislative purposes by the Charter Act of 1853 through the addition of some members who would take part only in those meetings of the Council which made laws and regulations. Legislation began to be treated as a special government function requiring special machinery and special processes. The Governor-General's Council was bifurcated into two distinct bodies: an Executive Council transacting executive business, and a Legislative Council making laws and regulations. Lord Dalhousie, who treated the Legislative Council as 'an independent body', adopted a procedure which converted it into a mini-Parliament. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, later Secretary of State for India, did not like this as he was not prepared to give India "the nucleus and beginning of a constitutional Parliament". Canning did not like the idea, either. On his part, Wood was not prepared to assign to the Legislative Council more authority than it already had.

There was another reason calling for a change in the legislative system. The Charter Act of 1833 made the Governor-General-in-Council the sole law-making authority for all of India. The legislative powers previously enjoyed by the Governors in the Councils of Madras and Bombay were taken away. The Charter Act of 1853 made an addition: the heads of the governments of Madras and Bombay, and those of the provinces under lieutenant-governors, were empowered to send

one nominated member each to the Legislative Council. The governments of Madras and Bombay dissatisfied with this arrangement insisted that the matters relating to internal administration in their provinces should not be discussed and decided by a body in which officers of Bengal, or acquainted with Bengal alone, have a strong preponderance. There was an important political factor to consider, as well. Sir Sayyid Ahmad in 1858 said that the 'non-admission' of Indians into the Legislative Council formed the main originating cause of this rebellion to which all other causes were secondary. In 1853, Indian political associations had demanded participation in the Legislative Council which was proposed to be formed, and Dalhousie recommended that non-official Indian members be included. However, Sir Charles Wood did not consider it "desirable to place natives in the Council". Sir Sayyid Ahmad then remarked that the government could never know the inadvisability of any of the laws and regulations which it passed, nor could the people protest against what they might feel to be a foolish measure.

Indian Councils Act of 1861

The author of the Charter Act of 1853, Sir Charles Wood, also authored the Indian Councils Act of 1861. Under the Act, the Governor-General's Council, while making laws and regulations, was to be composed of three categories of members: (i) all 'ordinary members' of the Council as also its 'extraordinary members' (the Commander-in-Chief of Bengal and the Governor of Madras or Bombay whenever the Council assembled within the Presidencies of either of those Presidencies); (ii) the Lieutenant-Governor of the province (either Bengal or Punjab) in which the Council assembled; (iii) 'additional members' nominated by the Governor-General, of whom not less than half should be non-officials. The number of additional members was to be not less than six nor more than twelve. No statutory provision existed for the nomination of any non-official Indian as a member of the Council. Arguing that it was impossible to constitute a representative law-making body in India, Sir Charles Wood wrote that "real representatives of the various classes of the native population of that empire" could not be found. After the Act was passed, he directed the Governor-General to select the non-official "additional members" from among Europeans and "natives" from all over India. By 'natives' he meant rulers and ministers of the princely states and the big landowners.

Powers of Governor-General in Council

Extensive legislative power was conferred on the Governor-General in Council. He was empowered to make laws and regulations for all persons, whether British or native, within the territories of British India. But, he was subject to important restrictions as well. "For instance, the Governor-General in Council could not pass any law which might affect any provision of any law passed by Parliament relating to Indian affairs, or the authority of Parliament, or any part of the unwritten laws or Constitution of England, or the sovereignty or dominion of the British Crown over any part of its Indian territories." (A.C. Banerjee in *The New History of Modern India 1707-1947)* The restrictions emphasise Parliament's legislative supremacy and the Governor-General in Council's position as a subordinate legislature functioning subject to that supremacy. The Governor-General was, however, conferred one power which became a permanent feature of the Indian constitutional system. He was empowered to make and promulgate ordinances for the peace and good government of British India subject to the restrictions applicable to the law-making powers of the Governor-General in Council. Every ordinance was to have the force of law for a period of not more than six months from the promulgation of the law. The Act modified the process of centralisation of legislative power initiated by the Charter Act of 1833 and confirmed by the Charter Act of 1853. Madras and Bombay were given Legislative Councils, and provision was made to establish Legislative Councils in provinces under lieutenant-governors.

Council Act of 1892

The Acts of 1861 and 1892 created Legislative Councils to enlarge advisory committees of the Executive Councils for purposes of enacting laws. They had no control on administration, finance or foreign policy, and the size of the Legislative Councils was too small for a big and populous country like India, and consisted of a large official majority. Under the Act of 1892, for instance, the

total numbers of members in the Governor-General's Legislative Council was 25, of which there were 15 officials. A clear official majority existed in every Provincial Council. Both in the Imperial Legislative Council as also the Provincial Legislative Councils, official members enjoyed no freedom of speech or of voting. They were required to obey the instructions they received from the Governor-General. Instead of being legislators, they were instruments for carrying through the legislatures the policies laid down by the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

Prominent Non-Official Indian Members

Besides being very few in number, the non-official Indian members of the Legislative Councils had no representative character. They were not in a position to voice the grievances and demands of the masses as they belonged to the upper classes themselves. Although the composition and procedure of the Legislative Councils strictly limited their opportunities of doing useful work, some of them distinguished themselves by their parliamentary ability. They included Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the Imperial Legislative Council; Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose in the Bengal Legislative Council; C. Vijayaraghavachariar and N. Subbarau Pantalu in the Madras Legislative Council; Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir Gokuldas Parekh in the Bombay Legislative Council; and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the Legislative Council of the United Provinces.

Law Commissions

A Law Commission, composed of a few legal experts, led to the creation of the Charter Act of 1833. The Law Commission prepared drafts of laws in the form of codes which were considered and enacted by the Governor-General in Council. The Law Commission was an advisory committee which could propose laws, but the Governor-General in Council was the sole authority for making laws. The First Law Commission was constituted in 1835 in Calcutta and it prepared several drafts, including a draft Penal Code, but these were not enacted as laws. The Second Law Commission was constituted under the Charter Act of 1853, and it functioned in London from 1853 to 1856. Several drafts prepared by it formed the basis of the Indian High Courts Act of 1861 passed by Parliament, and of three important codes—the Code of Civil Procedure, 1861; The Penal Code, 1860; the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1861—passed by the Governor-General in Council. Far-reaching changes were wrought in the legal and judicial systems of India. Under the Third Law Commission, constituted in London in 1861, the law of England became the basis of legislation in India. It provided drafts for several important laws—the Evidence Act, the Transfer of Property Act, the Indian Succession Act and the Contract Act—all enacted by the Governor-General's Legislative Council. The Legislative Department of the Government of India codified some other branches of law, such as the law of marriage and divorce, the law of trustees and the law of land-acquisition. The Governor-General's Legislative Council passed their drafts. From 1865 to 1872, Sir Henry Maine and Sir James Stephen, two successive Law Members of the Government of India, enacted numerous laws. Constituted in 1870, the Fourth Law Commission functioned in Calcutta. The Legislative Council passed several Acts based on its recommendations.

Administrative Changes

Civil Service—the 'Steel Frame'

The administrative system had assumed an increasingly bureaucratic character since the days of Cornwallis. After 1858, this process was continued and consolidated. The Indian Civil Service—the cream of the bureaucracy—became the 'steel frame' of the British Indian Empire. The Secretary of State in Council was empowered by the Government of India Act of 1858, to make regulations that would admit persons to the Indian Civil Service on the basis of open competitive examination to be held by the Civil Service Commissioners in London. Before the passing of the Act of 1858, there was provision made for such examination to replace the old system of nomination of candidates by the Directors of the Company. The first examination was held in 1855. All natural-born subjects of the Crown were eligible, subject to prescribed age-limit and qualifications. The Civil Service Commissioners recommended candidates to fill up vacancies in the Indian Civil Service by the Secretary of State in Council. These candidates were recruited according to the order of their proficiency.

In 1861, Parliament passed the Indian Civil Service Act, which reserved certain categories of high executive and judicial posts for members of the Indian Civil Service. This Act excluded the Non-Regulation Provinces from its scope. An important feature of this Act was the repeal of the provision of the Charter Act of 1793 relating to the promotion of civil servants by seniority, thus depriving the future Indian members of the Indian Civil Service of the right of promotion by seniority. No Indian—not even an able officer like Romesh Chandra Dutt—attained the rank of Divisional Commissioner in the 19th century. Neither could an Indian member of the judicial branch of the Indian Civil Service aspire to the post of even a temporary Judge of a High Court in the nineteenth century. There was a continuing controversy over the age of recruitment to the Indian Civil Service for thirty years after 1858. There were two reasons: the question of duration of period of training in England; and, for the convenience of Oxford and Cambridge students who offered themselves for the competitive examination. The age limit for the examination was reduced to 19 in 1876, a move that became a serious disadvantage for the Indian civil service aspirants who found it very difficult to go to England and appear for a tough examination at an early age. It proved to be a disadvantage even among British competitors whose number decreased, and whose academic qualifications showed a marked deteriorating trend. The minimum age-limit was raised to 21 in 1892, and the maximum to 23. The first Indian to pass the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service in London was Satyendra Nath Tagore, an elder brother of Rabindra Nath Tagore and a grandson of Dwarka Nath Tagore. Parliament passed an Act in 1870, making provision for appointment of Indians under special rules to certain offices reserved for members of the Indian Civil Service.

Indian Civil Service Act 1861

Controversy Over Age Factor

The civil service played an important role throughout the entire period of British rule in India. At first appointed to deal with commercial transactions, the Company's servants became executive and judicial officers, and policy-makers towards the end of the eighteenth century. Three permanent governors-general came from their ranks; the office of provincial satraps was monopolised by them; they held the office of judges in the highest courts, and monopolised the posts of secretaries to the Imperial and Provincial Government, commissioners of divisions, district magistrates, district judges, and even inspectors-general of police. Members of the civil service had functions and powers unknown to civil servants in other countries and so attained "a certain intangible superiority of position, a cold invulnerability", which made it difficult for them to enjoy normal relations with Indians. The gulf was widened due to the bitterness caused by the Revolt. Most British civilians believed themselves to be superior even to Indians who were their colleagues in the Indian Civil Service, and their attitude was supported by the government's policy of denying Indians equality of treatment in respect of promotions.

High Profile Appointments

Though it did contribute to the well-being of the country, the Indian Civil Service did so in a limited sense. It built up an imposing administrative machinery which was marked by industry, mechanical efficiency and incorruptibility in the higher rank. It has been described as "an enlightened, hard-working, disinterested, very small official class ruling a great country". But critics point out that the system gave a very subordinate place to the interests of the people, and by putting too much power into the hands of the civil service men, impaired their sense of proportion, besides making them intolerant to criticism. Red tapism was the basic defect of the bureaucratic system that was created and nourished by civilians. As a result, bonds of sympathy and understanding were loosened, and the administrative machinery became slow and callous. There was no innovation in administrative practice; it was governed by old ideas and accumulated precedents.

Significance of the ICS

Judicial Reorganisation

As regards judicial system, during the period of the Company's rule, there were two rival sets of jurisdiction—the King's Courts or Supreme Courts functioning in the Presidency towns and the Company's Courts or *Sadar Dewani* and *Sadar Nizamat Adalats* that dealt with cases originating outside Presidency

Court System

towns. Many complications arose out of this dual system. The Indian High Courts Act passed by Parliament in 1861 affected the amalgamation of the three courts into a single court. Under the provisions of this Act, high courts were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The supreme courts and the *Sadar* courts were abolished, and their functions and powers vested in the high courts. The high courts were empowered to exercise both original and appellate jurisdictions in respect of both civil and criminal cases, and to exercise superintendence over all courts.

Each High Court was to have a chief justice and around 15 puisne judges. The Crown was to appoint them from among four categories of persons: barristers; members of the Indian Civil Service who had served as zilla judge; officers who had served as principal *Sadar Amin* or Small Causes Court judge; and pleaders of High Courts. The Calcutta Chief Justice was paid a higher salary than the Chief Justices of Madras and Bombay. Until the Government of India Act of 1935 came into being, the Calcutta High Court had relations only with the Government of India, and not with the Government of Bengal. All other High Courts had administrative relations with their respective provincial governments. Official policy was liberal as regards the matter of appointment of High Court judges. From 1862 to 1912, the Calcutta High Court had 15 permanent and two temporary Indian judges. Ramesh Chandra Mitra was the first Indian to officiate as chief justice of the Calcutta High Court and his promotion was the result of Lord Ripon's Liberal policy. Till 1952, no Indian was appointed permanent chief justice of the Calcutta High Court. High courts were established under later Acts of Parliament, at Allahabad in 1865, Patna in 1916, Lahore in 1919 and Nagpur in 1936.

Reorganisation of the Army

Under the Company's rule, each of the three Presidencies had its own army under its own commander-in-chief. This system continued even after 1858, with each of the Presidency Armies being governed by its own code of regulations. The basic defects of such decentralisation apart, the system also led to a peculiar form of local patriotism among Indians and the British, commonly known as 'the Presidency sentiment'. Incidentally, this 'Presidency sentiment' is believed to have been responsible for preventing the spread of the revolt to the South, because each army had developed its own traditions and *esprit de corps.* The existing form of organisation into three presidency armies was, therefore, retained. The Bengal Army was reorganised from the bottom; at least 1,20,000 out of 1,28,000 Indians in the Bengal Army had been involved in the Revolt of 1857. Only eleven regiments remained that had not mutinied, a few irregular corps, and the Company's European troops, numbering about 16,000. The Bengal Army had thus virtually disappeared.

Presidency Sentiment

Fate of European Troops

The first problem of reorganisation lay in deciding about the fate of the Company's European troops. With the end of the Company's rule, these troops automatically passed under the Crown, instead of being disbanded. Canning's desire to retain a local European army was overruled by the Home Government which wanted complete amalgamation. All ranks were offered service on the new terms, but the Europeans were discontented because many of them had acquired domestic ties in India which transfer to England might break. Moreover, the officers thought they would not be so well-off in the royal regiments. The government allayed these fears by granting bounties to the 10,000 men who took their discharge and offering service with Indian regiments to the other officers.

The Indian army was reorganised on new principles. Prior to the revolt of 1857, there were about 2,38,000 Indian troops to 45,000 Europeans in all the three presidencies. The proportion of Indian to European was now fixed at fifty-fifty in the Bengal Army and two to one in the other two presidencies. With the completion of the reorganisation in 1863, the Indian troops numbered 1,40,000 and the Europeans 65,000. The Indian artillery, which had played a very important role in the revolt, was disbanded. Many officials advocated a return of the 'mixed' system of regiments in use in the eighteenth century, whereby each regiment contained men of all

New Principles of Organisation

classes. But the government disregarded their opinion and adopted the class system of community regiments. A European officer led two Indian battalions so that there was no important station without its European complement of troops. Europeans continued to lead Indian regiments. A change was also made in the proportion of classes recruited. The number of Rajputs and brahmans from the United Provinces was reduced and that of Gurkhas, Sikhs and Punjabis increased. From 1893 Pathan, Sikh and Punjabi units were increased at the expense of the units from South India; from 41 battalions in 1857, only 13 battalions were recruited from the Madras Presidency by 1910. It was argued that northerners were better fitted to defend the northern passes. The effect was to make the army less representative in its composition, if not less national, and to emphasise both its professional aloofness from civilian life and the martial character of Punjab.

In 1893, the offices of commander-in-chief in Madras and Bombay were abolished; the control of the Madras and Bombay armies was withdrawn from the Presidency governments and vested in the Government of India. The army administration suffered from two principal defects. There was dual control at the top. The official head of the military department was the Military Member who was an 'ordinary member' of the Governor-General's Council. He was responsible for army finance, contracts, ordnances and stores. The commander-in-chief of the Bengal army, as an 'extraordinary member' of the Council, was responsible for the personnel of the army—for appointments, promotion, discipline, intelligence and conduct of war. This division of responsibility caused confusion and conflict, as the efficient discharge of the commander-in-chief's functions depended to a large extent on the Military Member's ideas and methods. During the governor-generalship of Lord Curzon, the internal stresses and strains of this dual system reached a crisis. The commander-in-chief of the period, Lord Kitchener, demanded larger powers and greater freedom than he was allowed under the existing system. The Secretary of State proposed a compromise on the division of powers between the Military Member (who was to be replaced by a military supply member) and the commander-in-chief. The new arrangement came into force despite Lord Curzon's dissatisfaction with it. Chaos prevailed within a few years in the military system and this was responsible for the reverses suffered by the British army in the Mesopotamia campaign during the First World War.

Defects of the Military Administration

Economic Policies and Consolidation

Financial control was the most important method adopted by the Government of India to enforce subordination on the provincial governments. Under the Charter Acts of 1833 and 1853, and the Government of India Act of 1858, the revenues of India were treated as a single fund, to be used by the Government of India to administer India. All revenues flowed initially into the coffers of the Government of India which had the legal responsibility for distributing the funds that local governments needed. The government followed an extremely rigid system in exercising this responsibility, with expenditure on the smallest item, even the employment of a menial servant, requiring its sanction. Given the over-centralised nature of the system, provincial governments were not at all motivated to increase income or practise economy.

Beginning of Modern Indian Finance

The revolt of 1857 changed all that. It cut off some sources of revenue and imposed new expenses, and added £ 42 million to the Indian debt to make a total of £ 98 million. India was making a transition from the old, self-contained rural economy of Mughal times into becoming a part of world economy. In its anxiety to prevent extravagance, the government imposed extremely stringent rules so that no financial authority remained except its own. It appointed financier James Wilson in 1859 to fill the new place on the Viceroy's Council. In a record time of nine months, Wilson remodelled the system of financial administration, outlined important economies, imposed an income tax for five years, and introduced the practice of annual budgets and statements of accounts. Following his sudden death, his successor Samuel Laing included a uniform tariff of 10 per cent, a convertible paper currency and additions to the salt duty. Taking into

Reforms of Wilson, Laing and Mayo

account India's great productive assets, Laing maintained that "the revenue of India is really buoyant and elastic to an extraordinary degree". With the help of these measures and good harvests or agricultural seasons, the annual deficit disappeared in 1864. The work of the two financiers, Wilson and Laing, marks the beginning of modern Indian finance. The rigid control over the country's finances was relaxed a little in the 1860s and moderate proposals for financial decentralisation discussed. Each provincial government was given a specific responsibility for maintaining an equilibrium between its income and expenditure. A new financial system introduced by a Resolution of the Government of India (1870) during the governor-generalship of Lord Mayo, was a step towards granting provincial governments a greater say in public expenditures.

Bengal Rent Act-1859

The government next turned its attention to land, land revenue being the most important source of public finance. The Santhal uprising before the revolt and the indigo disturbances after it showed just how discontented the cultivators in Bengal were under the Permanent Settlement. The settlement had given the value both of the unearned increment of land and of increased cultivation to the zamindars, making the cultivators tenants-at-will of the zamindars. In 1859, an attempt was made to remedy this with the Bengal Rent Act. This Act was intended to provide some relief to the *ryots* who had cultivated or held land for a period of twelve years, and limited the raising of rents. Commenting on the Act, Percival Spear writes that it was not a complete success and led to a good deal of litigation, but still succeeded in protecting cultivators from rapacious zamindars and talukdars. The government even debated extending the Permanent Settlement from Bengal and parts of Madras and the North-West Provinces to the rest of India. It was believed that, since the Rent Act protected cultivators of the great estates, in other parts of the India, too, permanency would give to peasants settled under the ryotwari and village systems, the whole value of unearned increment and of increased cultivation. It was argued that famine mortality was connected with the system of temporary settlements with its danger of over-assessment, and peasants left with too small a margin could not reserve anything for bad times. The view won impressive support and was even accepted in principle by Sir Charles Wood in 1862. But it could not be enforced and was abandoned. This was because the Bengal Rent Act was only partially successful and thus raised doubts about its success rate if replicated elsewhere.

According to Anil Chandra Bannerjee, the Act mainly safeguarded the interests of *jotedars* and rich peasants. He argues that the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, not substantially amended till 1928, was far more comprehensive. It provided for the *ryots* fixity of tenure, fair rent and right of free sale under certain restrictions, but left the problem of share-croppers (*bargadars*) untouched. The years 1866 to 1909 saw the passing of several Acts affecting landlord-tenant relations in Awadh, the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces.

Relations with the Princes

'Breakwaters of the Storm'

The British government was aware that the rigid application of the Doctrine of Lapse and the series of annexations had led to several angry princes throwing in their lot with the sepoys during the revolt. At the same time, the loyalty of the Nizam and his minister, Sir Salar Jung, Sindhia and his minister Sir Dinkar Rao, the Rajput and Sikh chiefs, had proved invaluable to the British. Loyal chiefs were rewarded by titles and gifts of money or lands. A new policy was formulated for the princes, whom Canning described as the "breakwaters of the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave". They were from now onwards to be regarded as subordinate partners rather than dependent chiefs or autonomous rulers cut off from the mainstream of Indian life. So, the Government of India Act, 1858, recognised the binding force of the Company's treaties with the 'Native States' even though its regime was terminated by then. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 declared that all treaties would be "scrupulously maintained", and the relations of native states were from now on relations with the British Crown and not with the Government of India. With the assumption of sovereignty by the Crown, all states were now to be subject to royal paramountcy as in Mughal times. From the end of the Company's regime onwards the Crown began to conduct its relations

with the native states through the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General in Council.

In 1860, Lord Canning wrote that, as a result of the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown, there was "a reality in the suzerainty of the sovereign of England which had never existed before, and which is not only felt but is eagerly acknowledged by the (Indian) Chiefs". 'British India' and the territories of the princes, though legally separate, constituted a single unit under the British Crown. This meant that the princes were converted from allies, in the days of the Company, into feudatories of the British Crown. The new link was more definite and more personal than the impersonal supremacy that the Company asserted. As integral parts of the empire, princely states were to be cherished. Their territories were guaranteed and the right of adoption conceded. Also, paramountcy carried with it the right of interference. The British resident in the princely states actively promoted good government. Princely maladministration became an imperial concern and princes were encouraged to interest themselves in affairs around them and to promote the development of their states by such measures as the building of roads and railways and the promotion of education and modern industries.

Princes as Crown's Feudatories

The step taken to integrate the princely states with British India expressed itself in a concrete form in the *sanads* of adoption given to the states by Canning. Both Hindu and Muslim princes were authorised to adopt heirs with the right of succession to their territories, a repudiation of the Doctrine of Lapse. The *sanads* laid down two conditions: loyalty to the Crown, and faithful observance of the conditions of the treaties and engagements. Princes regarded the right to perpetuate dynastic possession as a privilege. In actuality, it was a political method which transformed the states into "members of a single polity over which the Government of India presided". Introduction of a new practice emphasised the altered position of the princes: the conferment of titles. The Order of the Star of India, founded in 1861, was bestowed on many princes, with titles being granted in later times. In clear imitation of the Mughal practice, the Nizam, for example, became 'His Exalted Highness'.

Integration of Princely States under the Crown

There were three cases of restoration of territory to the native princes, after 1858. Garhwal was regranted in 1859 even though the chief had died without leaving any legitimate heir. The Gwalior fort, occupied by the British forces in 1858, was restored to Sindhia in 1886. The most important case was that of Mysore State, whose ruling dynasty had not been thrown out, despite being brought under direct British administration by Lord William Bentinck. With the death of the nominal Maharaja in 1868, his adopted son attained majority in 1881 and was installed as *de facto* ruler. Despite British administration being withdrawn, the new Maharaja was deprived of some of the rights and privileges which his predecessors had enjoyed. A new Instrument of Accession (1881) required the Maharaja to remain faithful in allegiance and subordination to the Queen, and imposed new restrictions on his powers and functions. The British government's right to interfere in the internal administration of Mysore became practically unlimited. The government would be entitled to resume the direct administration of the Maharaja's territory, in the event of the breach or non-observance of any of the conditions of restoration. While the treaties concluded in the days of the Company contained provisions against interference by the British government in the internal affairs of the states, these provisions would often be violated. After 1858 though, the right of interference began to be claimed as a matter of the suzerain's inherent privilege. Canning made it clear that the Government of India could interfere to 'set right' serious administrative abuses, or could impose the highest penalties on, and even confiscate the territory of, a state that was disloyal.

Restoration of Territories

Right to Interfere

Regarding them as potential malcontents, the traditional policy of the British government was to keep the princely states in 'subordinate isolation'. That opinion changed after 1857 and brought about a change of policy. A new spirit of cooperation and union developed in the relation between the

Imperial Service Troops

British government and the princely states. In 1885, some princes offered their troops for service against Russia, and this led to the formation of the Imperial Service Troops. Maintained and formally controlled by the princely states, these troops were trained by British officers lent by the Government of India and placed under the orders of the commander-in-chief when on active service.

Summing Up

Looking at the transfer of power and the changes this brought about as a whole, Percival Spear writes that the change involved some loss of personal feeling, of the informality and intimacy which characterised the rule of the East India Company. But the loss was compensated by a forward-looking spirit among the officers of the new government. The relics of commercialism and ledger-book attitude to which directors clung disappeared, as did the nostalgic tendency to envisage Indian government as a mere tax collector. "The government as a whole was now consciously looking forward to a modernised India, not unconsciously harking back to a Mughal tranquility, and the people became aware, as they had not been before, that their welfare was the concern of the rulers over the water. The royal courts and the royal law had once been the terror of the Bengali; the person and declarations of the new queen were to become the focus of Indian loyalty and the fountain of hope."

Canning personified this new progressive spirit. Though lacking the force of Dalhousie or Wellesley or the deeper insight of Warren Hastings, Canning was industrious, deliberate and reflective. His lack of brilliance was, however, compensated by integrity, and his slowness by tenacity of purpose. He possessed a high seriousness which gave to his government a moral quality which was all his own. In the initial stages of the revolt, Canning was not at his best because his qualities did not match the precise needs of the hour. Instead of being bold and inspiring, he was firm and tenacious. But once the initial crisis was surmounted, his stature steadily grew as the tenacious resister, the patient planner and the far-sighted conciliator increasingly came into his own. He restrained, admirably, the inflamed passions of both his countrymen and Indians. His stand against vengeance earned Canning his nickname of 'Clemency' in Calcutta among disgusted Britishers. The intended insult later became his recognised title of honour.

The crisis that the revolt brought in its wake halted the social and material improvement which was so energetically pursued by Dalhousie. But the break was short-lived. The development of education as a result of Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch of 1854 continued. The first three Indian universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were founded in 1857 itself, and the rapid expansion of private colleges as a result of the grant-in-aid system began soon after. Public works, which added to the security of the country, were the chief priority. The great expansion in railway construction in the 1860s was stimulated by the crisis. During the north Indian famine of 1861, Canning made efforts to organise relief and foreshadowed the later development of the great Famine Code. As a result, the mortality of the most affected districts fell to less than 10 per cent, instead of the third or half of the population in the great famines of the eighteenth century. Finally, the great law reform, in progress since the passing of the Charter Act of 1833, reached completion. The Penal Code was enacted in 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure in 1861. Combined with some reorganisation of the law courts and the judges, these codes even today form the basis of the Indian legal system. The new government's motto, argues Percival Spear, may be described as one of paternal efficiency. But while the government promised material progress, it would not endorse any larger aim of self-government. And this discouragement of self-government, we can add now, was what led the administration to tyranny in the years to come.

Views

- "1857 stands firmly in a historical continuum. Not of course it was the direct product of social forces blowing off the political crust but rather fortuitous conjuncture that laid these forces bane. Like 1848 in Europe—despite obvious disparities—it was on uprising sans issue that could catch a society moving into the early stages of modernisation."

  —Eric Stokes

- "First War of Independence it certainly was, as in the whole canvas of the recorded history of India it would be difficult to find a parallel to this gigantic anti-foreign combine of all classes of people and of many provinces of India. There was never a war in India lasting continuously for more than a year and simultaneously in all the regions which had for its objective the abasement and ejectment of the alien ruling power."

  —S.B. Chaudhuri

- "The Mutiny became a Revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population decided in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence."

  —S.N. Sen

- "…had a single leader of ability arisen among them (the rebels), we must have been lost beyond redemption."

  —John Lawrence

- "The revolt of 1857 was a struggle of the soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign imperialism as well as indigenous landlordism."

  —Marxist Interpretation

- "Here lay the woman who was the only man among the rebels."

  —Hugh Rose

  (a tribute to the Rani of Jhansi from the man who defeated her)

- "It was far more than a mutiny,…yet much less than a first war of independence."

  —Stanley Wolpert

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - The period from 1757 to 1857 witnessed a number of popular resistance movement against the British rule all over India, mainly due to tremendous socio-economic dislocations caused by the impact of colonial policies.
  - Popular resistance manifested in three broad forms: civil rebellions, tribal uprisings and peasant movements.
- **Resistance Movement (Peasant and Tribal) Till 1857**
  - Sanyasi Rebellion-1763-1800 (Bengal)
  - Rangpur Dhing-1873 (Bengal)
  - Chuar Uprising-1768 (Midnapur)
  - Ho Uprising-1820-37 (Chhotanagpur & Singhbhum)
  - Santhal Uprising-1855-56 (Raj Mahal Hills)
  - Ahom's Revolt-1828-33 (Assam)
  - Khasi Uprising-1830s (Garo, Jaintia Hills)
  - Pagal Panthis Revolt-1830s and 1840s (Northern Bengal)
  - Bhil Uprising-1818-31 (Khandesh in Western Ghats)
  - Koli Uprising-1829-48 (Western Ghats)

Summary

- Kachch Rebellion-1819-31 (Kachch, Kathiawar regions of Gujarat)
- Waghera Rising-1818-19 (Okha Mandal)
- Surat Salt Agitations-1844 (Surat, Gujarat)
- Ramosi Uprising-1825-41 (Western Ghats)
- Kolhapur and Savantvadi Revolt-1844-45 (Kolhapur Savantvadi)
- Poligar's Revolt-1801-56 (Dindigul, Malabar)
- Velu Thampi Revolt-1805 (Travancore)
- Rampa Revolt-1879-80 (Rampa in coastal Andhra Pradesh)

► **Muslim Reaction**
- Wahabi Movement-1830s to 1890s (Leader: Saiyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly)
- Faraizi Movements-1838-51 (Leader: Hajji Shariat Allah)
- Titu Mir's Revolt (Leader: Titu Mir)
- Mappila or Moplah Uprisings 1836-54

► **Nature and Limitations of Popular Resistance Movements Before 1857**
- Historians differ on the issue of characterisation of the movements
- Pro-British historians view these uprisings as a problem of law and order whereas nationalist historians view them as anti-colonial struggle.
- Some other historians tend to negate very often the logic of peasant and tribal protest in terms of people's own experience. However, these movements demonstrate a certain level of political and social consciousness

► **Resistance After 1857**
- Indigo Revolt (1859-60)
- Pabna Uprising (1873-85)
- Poona and Ahmadnagar Riots (1870s)
- Ulugulan of Birsa Munda (1899-1900)

► **Revolt of 1857**

It was the most formidable challenge, and culmination of a century-long tradition of fierce popular resistance against the British rule; a product of character and policies of the colonial rule.

► **Why the Revolt happened?**

Causes of the Revolt are inextricably interwoven and it is difficult to determine their sequence and distinguish the causes from the effects. Main causes were: Enfield rifle issue (immediate cause); flaws in the military administration; resentment against the annexation of Awadh (1856); impact of British military reverses in Afghanistan, Crimea and Persia; ill-deployment of British troops; the unpopular legislations; reaction to innovations in traditional Indian society; racial arrogance of the British; Annexation of native states; policy of indiscriminate plunder and dislocation; impact of land-revenue policies; elimination of landed classes; confiscation of rent-free estates; resentment of taluqdars of Awadh; and British monopoly over Indian trade and industry.

► **Why the Revolt failed?**
- Lack of a progressive vision away among the rebels
- Brilliant leadership of the English
- Lack of organised strategy of the rebels
- Feudal character of the revolt
- Support of the Indian powers

► **Nature of the Revolt: Historians differ on the issue of characterisation of the revolt.**
- R.C. Majumdar and S.N. Sen— "Not an organised 'national' revolt"
- R.C. Majumdar— "Neither first, nor National War of Independence"

Summary

- V.D. Savarkar—“War of independence”
- Eric Stokes—“Elitist in character”
- Lawrence and Seeley—“Mere sepoy mutiny”
- T.R. Holmes—“A conflict between civilisation and barbarism”
- James Outram—“A Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances”
- Mangal Pandey’s revolt preceded the actual outbreak
- Revolt began on March 10, 1857 from Meerut
- Percival Spear—Three phases of the revolt

► **Reorganisation After 1857**

- Rebel leaders met with tragic ends and Muslims were held responsible and persecuted
- Legacy of armed struggle inspired revolutionaries later
- Political reorganisation
- Transfer of power from Company to Crown
- Queen’s Proclamation—November 1, 1858.
- Reign of Parliament
- Legislative systems and administrative changes
- Relation with the Princes

CHAPTER 10

Early Indian Nationalism

FACTORS FAVOURING RISE OF NATIONALISM

The year 1885, the year of the founding of Indian National Congress, ushered in a new epoch in Indian history—the epoch of organised Indian nationalism. However, the stirrings of a national consciousness, at least among some sections of Indians, had emerged earlier, and they were a reaction to the harsh colonial policies of the British in India and the process of modernisation introduced as a component of the colonial scheme. Let us review in brief the factors that favoured the growth of Indian nationalism. The traditional view explains the rise and growth of Indian nationalism in terms of the stimulus-response debate, i.e., the stimuli of new institutions, opportunities and resources that were a creation of the British Raj induced Indians to respond, in turn, with nationalism. The political, military, economic and intellectual changes that the British effected in India primarily to strengthen their stranglehold over India and for fuller economic exploitation of India's material and human resources were also to affect Indians in other ways.

Political and Administrative Unification

The establishment of political unity in all of India from the Himalayas in the north to Cape Camorin in the south and from Assam in the east to the Khyber Pass in the west, that Britain imposed, fostered pan-Indianism. With Indian provinces under 'direct' and Indian states under 'indirect' British rule, the British created a state larger than that under either the Mauryas or the Mughals, and gave the state common institutions and laws. All of this imparted a new dimension of political unity to the hitherto cultural unity that had existed for centuries in India. This political unity stemmed from a highly centralised administrative system whose fundamental character did not change with change of top administrators like secretaries of state and viceroys. The feature was to mark the British rule as distinct from all previous empires in India.

Development of Modern Transport and Communication

Another crucial feature of the British rule and one that was to have far-reaching effects on the fostering of unity, was the planned development of a modern means of transport and communication. Necessities of administrative convenience, considerations of military defence and urge for economic penetration and commercial exploitation led the British to create a network of roads linking one province with another. The most important development in the creation of a transport system was the construction of railways that began in India in the 1850s (by 1880, some 8500 miles of rail track had been built and this extended to 25,000 miles by 1900).

About railways, Edwin Arnold prophesied in 1865, "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done—what the genius of Akbar 'the Magnificient' could not effect by government, nor the cruelty of Tipu Sultan by violence; they have made India a nation." To the growth of means of transport was added the introduction of the postal and the electric telegraph system that enabled national literature to circulate more widely to other parts of India and the speedy transmission of messages. Political organisations like the Indian National Congress, All-India Trade Union Congress and the All-India Muslim League owed their existence and functioning to the greater opportunities for interaction among the leaders, made possible through these new channels of communication.

The inauguration of the English system of education was to prove momentous in the rise and growth of nationalism. Conceived by rulers in the interests of efficient administration, the education exposed Indians to liberal European thought. Ideas expressed by Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spenser, Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the newly-educated class of Indian intelligentsia with ideals of liberty, nation and self-government. Some members of this class (who took up professions of junior administrators, lawyers, doctors and teachers in British Imperial service) visited England and had a first-hand experience of the working of political institutions there. Comparing the situation in Britain with that of India, they found the atmosphere in India slavish with a denial of basic rights to her citizens. The realisation, combined with self-interest (doors of higher services were closed to Indians), drove men like Surendranath Banerjea, Manmohan Ghose and Aurobindo to begin some form of political agitation. It was this section of English educated elites who provided leadership to the Indian political associations. English was instrumental in helping bury differences owing to regional factors by becoming the preferred mode of communication among them who aimed at organising a political movement on an all-Indian basis.

Impact of Western Education

The printing press, set up by Europeans to publish tabloid newspapers, was gradually transformed into a vehicle for printing nationalist literature by Indians. The vernacular press too came into existence, and the latter half of the 19th century saw a huge growth of Indian-owned English and vernacular newspapers. Newspapers like *Indian Mirror, Bengalee, Amrita Bazaar Patrika, Bombay Chronicle, Mahratta, Kesari, The Hindu* and *Indu Prakash* in English and different vernacular languages exposed the excesses of British administration in India and popularised ideas of representative government, liberty and democratic institutions.

Role of Press and Vernacular Literature

The new urban middle class of Indians that British administrative and economic reforms gave rise to in towns, came to the forefront during this period. Coming from varied backgrounds and regions, members of this new class forged an all-India identity after mastering English. This class established prominence because of its education, new position and close ties with the ruling class and, in due course, infused India with its own dynamism. It is this class that from the early 19th century onwards began to examine its religious beliefs, customs and social practices in the light of western scientific and cultural parameters.

Emergence of the New Middle Class

The rising Indian nationalism also drew inspiration from European nationalist movements of the age. A number of nation-states rose in South America on the ruins of Spanish and Portuguese empires. The liberation movements of Greece, Italy and Ireland stimulated Indian nationalism. Educated Indians touring Europe during this period were inspired—Surendranath Bannerjea, for instance, organised a 'Young Italy' movement and Lajpat Rai referred to the campaigns of Garibaldi in his speeches and writings. The revolutionary activities in Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Ireland, and the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905 installed in the Indians a revolutionary zeal.

Impact of Revolutionary Activities Abroad

Added to this emerging awareness of the world among the Indian middle class was a degree of self-respect and confidence brought on by a rediscovery of India's rich cultural heritage. Historical researches in ancient Indian history conducted by European scholars like Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Roth and Sassoon and excavations conducted by archaeologists like John Marshall and Alexander Cunningham, shed light on India's past glory as being no less impressive than that of ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. Scholastic appreciation and evaluation of the philosophical and literary merit of the Vedas and the Upanishads boosted the morale of educated Indians and inspired them with a new spirit of cultural nationalism.

Rediscovery of India's Past and Cultural Nationalism

The British perpetuated racial myths of White superiority by following a deliberate policy of discrimination and segregation against Indians. Europeans developed their own

Policy of Racial Discrimination

social code of ethics from this theory of superior race. Indians were hurt and insulted at this attitude and educated Indians were put on the defensive by this attitude. The movement against foreign rule was accelerated by shortsighted policies of reactionary governor-generals like Lord Lytton. The maximum age limit for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination was reduced from 21 years to 19, a move designed to make the possibility of Indians competing for it, very difficult. The grand Delhi Durbar of 1877, held at a time when India was in the grip of a severe famine, infuriated the Indians. Lytton's unpopular measures such as the Vernacular Press Act (1878) and the Arms Act (1878) provoked a storm of opposition in India, especially from the nationalist ranks.

Ilbert Bill Controversy

When the liberal Governor-General Ripon attempted to rectify matters by passing the Ilbert Bill which sought to abolish "judicial disqualification based on race distinctions" and give Indian members of the covenanted civil service the same powers and rights as those enjoyed by their European counterparts, he faced tremendous opposition from the European community. In face of stiff opposition, Ripon had to modify the bill. While the controversy made it clear to nationalists that justice and fair play could not be expected where interests of the European community were involved, at the same time, organised agitation by the Europeans to revoke the Ilbert Bill taught nationalists how to agitate for certain rights and demands.

Economic Critique of British Colonialism

The most potent factor that united educated Indians against foreign rule was perhaps brought on by an understanding of the nature of the British colonialism. The main objective of British policies was a systematic destruction of India's traditional economy. Interests of imperial Britain required that Indian economy be developed on the classical colonial model by making India a market for England's industrial products. India was to provide raw materials needed for the former's industries. Thus, economic policies of India in all fields—agriculture, industry, finance, tariffs, foreign capital investment, foreign trade, banking—were all geared for the preservation and strengthening of the colonial economy. Colonial hostility to modern capitalist enterprise, the extravagant civil and military administration, the denial of high posts to Indians, the ever-mounting 'Home Charges', the continuous drain of wealth from India all resulted in stagnation of the Indian economy and increased the misery of Indians. Recurrent famines became a regular feature of Indian economic life and devastated large sections of the Indian poor. The situation was worsened by the export of foodgrains during famines. Responding to it, Indian nationalists developed a scathing critique of Britain's anti-India economic policies. It found the most striking expression in Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Drain of Wealth' theory.

INDIAN NATIONALISM—A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

The Indian national movement has been viewed from a wide variety of historiographic perspectives. Each historiographic perspective has focused on the role that specific social group(s) have played in nationalism and based on this differentiation, approaches have varied from the imperialist to the Marxist. The participation of social groups hitherto ignored has been highlighted in recent times due to the much greater use of archival materials, private papers, as well as of local sources unearthed through field studies.

The Imperialist School

V. Chirol and Others

The imperialist approach, first put forward by Valentine Chirol, the Rowlatt (Sedition) Committee Report, Verney Lovett and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and articulated even earlier in the official pronouncements of the viceroys, Lord Dufferin, Curzon and Minto, denies the existence of colonialism as an economic, political, social and cultural structure in India. This approach does not view the national movement as being based on the denial of the primary contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and those of British colonialism. According to imperialist writers, the Indian national movement was not a people's movement but a product of the needs and interests of the elite groups who used it to serve either their own interests or the interests of their prescriptive groups, i.e., groups based on pre-existing Hindu, Muslim, Brahman, non-Brahman and other identities. These

groups, states the imperialist school, were formed either around religious or caste identities or through political connections built around patronage, but, in each case, these groups had a narrow, selfish interest in opposing British rule or each other. These groups used nationalism as a mere ideology with which to legitimise their narrow ambitions and mobilise popular support.

The Cambridge School

Anil Seal and Others

Taking the argument further, historians of the Cambridge School such as Anil Seal interpreted nationalism in terms of uneven development and competition of provincial, generally caste-based, elites—Bengali *bhadralok, Chitpawan* Brahman, the 'sub-elites' of the Hindu belt or Andhra—for British favours. According to them, as the result of a combination of administrative pressures and opportunities, as the British imposed new burdens and simultaneously sought new collaborators through constitutional reforms, local client-patron linkages were formed by local potentates. The local potentates served the interests of these clients and patrons and they, in turn, served their own interests. Gradually, bigger leaders emerged who undertook to act as brokers to link together the politics of the local potentates, and eventually, they operated on an all-India level. This approach sees Gandhi, Nehru and Patel as the chief 'political brokers'.

The Cambridge School approach, besides denying the legitimacy of nationalism as a movement of Indians for the overthrow of imperialism and for the establishment of an independent nation-state, also ignores categories of class, nation, mobilisation and ideology, generally used by historians to analyse national movements in Europe, Asia and Africa. This school further ignores the existence of colonial exploitation and underdevelopment, and also any idealism on the part of those who sacrificed their lives for the anti-imperialist cause.

The Nationalist School

R.C. Mazumdar and Others

The nationalist approach was represented in the colonial period by political activists such as Lajpat Rai, R. C. Mazumdar, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and more recently, B.R. Nanda, Bisheshwar Prasad and Amales Tripathi. According to this approach, an English-educated 'middle class', reared by English rule, engaged in socio-religious reform, and eventually turned against their masters and in the process gave birth to nationalism. Their reasons varied: frustrated selfish ambitions, ideals of patriotism and democracy or an antipathy towards foreign rule. The nationalists see the movement as a movement of the people. However, they ignore the fact that while nationalism in India represented the interests of the people of the nation as a whole, it did so from the perspective of a particular class. They disregard the constant struggle at all periods of the national movement, between different social and ideological perspectives for hegemony.

The Marxist School

R.P. Dutt and Others

The Marxist historians—R.P. Dutt, M.N. Roy, A.R. Desai, etc.—see the process of the nation-in-the-making and note the inner contradictions of the Indian society. They also see the national movement as a 'structured bourgeois movement' and ignore its all-class character. They further interpret the class character of nationalism in terms of its forms of struggle (i.e., in its non-violent character) and in the fact that it made strategic retreats and compromises.

The Subaltern School

Sumit Sarkar and Others

The Subaltern School of historians dismisses all previous historical writings, including those based on a Marxist perspective, as elite historiography and focuses on a new 'history from below'. This is effected through real grassroots studies based on village level data, with historians like David Hardiman, Majid Siddiqi, Kapil Kumar, Gyan Pandey, Stephen Henningham and Sumit Sarkar exploring the social histories of castes, sub-castes and social groups in various parts of India.

The Subaltern group believes that the basic contradiction in Indian society in the colonial epoch was between the Indian and foreign elite, and not between colonialism and the Indians. It theorises that far from being united in a common anti-imperialist struggle, Indians were divided into

two distinct movements—the real anti-imperialist stream of the Subaltern and the bogus national movement of the elite. Led by the 'official' leadership of the Indian National Congress, the elite stream marked a struggle for power among its members. The Subaltern approach glorifies all forms of popular militancy and consciousness and derides all forms of initiative and activity by the intelligentsia, organised party leaderships and other 'elites'. Consequently, it also denies the legitimacy of the mainstream national movement.

Bipan Chandra and Others

According to Bipan Chandra *et al,* India's freedom struggle was basically the result of a fundamental contradiction between the interests of Indians and that of colonialism, and India's national leaders grasped this contradiction in the beginning itself. Their developing an economic critique of colonialism in the 19th century was an attempt to lay bare its complex character through a scientific analysis of colonialism. Drawing on Indians' social experience as colonised subjects and recognising their common interests vis-a-vis colonialism, the national leaders gradually evolved a clear-cut anti-colonial ideology on which they based the national movement. Further, argue the authors, prominent Indian national leaders, recognising that India was a nation-in-the-making, also made as their objective the promotion of the growing unity of Indians through a common struggle against colonialism. The authors point out that Indian nationalism had a certain specific, though untheorised, strategy of struggle within which its various phases and forms of struggle were integrated especially after 1918. This strategy, based on Gramscian theory, relied on the waging of hegemonic struggle with the colonialists, for the minds and hearts of Indians. The sole purpose being to destroy the belief system through which the British secured the acquiescence of Indians in their rule: that British rule was for the good of Indians and that it was invincible. As a result, Indian national leaders searched for symbols to mobilise Indians. Constructive work, organised around swadeshi enterprise and Gandhian initiatives as promotion of Khadi, national education, Hindu-Muslim unity, the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, social upliftment of the so-called 'untouchables' and struggle against untouchability and doctrine of non-violence, were all geared towards achieving that end.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF EARLY NATIONALISM

Realisation of Colonial Motive

Indian nationalism arose when the contradiction between the aims and objectives of the British rule and the interests of Indians became clear and obvious. A growing number of Indians realised that the British were ruling India to promote their own interests, in particular the interests of Britain's capitalists, and that colonialism was pushing India backward in all spheres—whether economic, social, cultural or political. It was a realisation that struck different classes and groups of Indian society, though not all of them came to the realisation at the same time. From the modes of collective protest and opposition against certain invidious aspects of colonial rule rose early nationalism which involved the participation of various social groups. Bipan Chandra, in his study of the role of the various social groups, analyses the role of the peasantry, artisans, the newly-emerged groups of the working and the middle and lower-middle classes, the capitalist class and, most important to this study, the intelligentsia.

Role of the Peasants and Artisans

The peasantry, which lost a large part of its produce in the form of land revenue and other taxes to the government, was perhaps worst affected by British imperialism. Caught in the clutches of the landlord and the moneylender, the peasant found that he owned neither his land nor the crops he produced, and not even his own labour power. Peasants responded with political and economic struggles against zamindars, landlords and money-lenders but these were ruthlessly suppressed by the government's police and judicial machinery in the name of maintaining law and order. Their plight was shared by artisans who also lost their centuries-old sources of livelihood to colonialism without the development of any new, compensating avenues of employment. Consequently the two groups took a very active part in the 20th century anti-imperialist struggles.

Late 19th century witnessed a new social phenomenon—the birth of the new social class of

workers in the newly-emerged industrial pockets. Though tiny in number and forming a very small part of the population, this class, unburdened by centuries of tradition and custom, represented a new social outlook. This outlook was of an all-India character. This, and the fact that workers were concentrated in factories and cities, gave their political actions a significance that was disproportionately more than what their number suggested. According to subaltern studies of Dipesh Chakrabarti, labourers living around the Bombay cotton and Calcutta jute mills in the 1890s lived and worked in appalling conditions. The few paltry restrictions on the employment of children and women theoretically imposed by the Factory Acts of 1881 and 1891 were rarely observed, and 18-hour working-days were common. (Till 1911 no regulatory provisions concerned their hours of work. In Bombay, middle-class philanthropic efforts led N.M. Lokhande to start the weekly *Dinabandhu* in 1880, and organise labour meetings to demand shorter hours in 1884. In Calcutta, Brahmo social-reformer Sasipada Banerji started night schools, clubs and a journal named *Bharat Sramajeebi* (1874) to inculcate middle class values of thrift, sobriety and self-help among Bengali jute mill-workers of Baranagore. However, these efforts were short-lived. Members of the intelligentsia like Dwarkanath Ganguli launched a campaign in the 1880s against the slave labour conditions in Assam tea plantations. There was no attempt to organise workers though.

Rise of the Working Class

However, workers did fight back through assaults on overseers, sporadic riots and spontaneous short-lived strikes. Bombay and Madras witnessed 25 strikes between 1882 and 1890, and Calcutta jute workers too protested on a militant note in the mid-1890s. However, early labour protest the relied on community consciousness rather than a clear recognition of class. The impoverished peasant or artisan who formed the bulk of factory-hands tended to fall back upon sectional ties of region, caste, kinship or religion, with the new urban environment often strengthening old loyalties. So, says Chakrabarti's report, the first relatively stable labour organisation in the industrial area of Calcutta was the Muhammedan Association of Kankinasa, founded in 1895. The association raised funds to improve mosques and provide alms for its members.

Rise of Labour Militancy

Labour militancy was a direct outcome of the highly unsatisfactory conditions that the Indian worker lived in. Labourers had no social insurance against sickness, old age, unemployment, accident or sudden death, nor any provident fund schemes. Maternity benefit came into operation only in the 1930s. Real wages of factory workers declined between 1889-1929 despite an increase in labour productivity. Describing the lot of the Indian workers, German economic historian, Prof. Jungen Kuczynski, said in 1938: "Underfed, housed like animals, without light, air and water, the Indian industrial worker is one of the most exploited of all in the world of industrial capitalism."

It was after 1858 that the Indian capitalist class developed and, immediately afterwards, entered into competition with the British capitalists. Realising that its growth was checked by official trade, tariff, transport and financial policies of the government, this class came into conflict with imperialism on every basic economic issue. Contemporary industries of France, Germany and Japan were well-established and were being developed with active government help. At that point of time, tariff protection needed by the Indian industry to protect its products from cheaper foreign goods was denied to Indian capitalists. A bureaucracy hostile and unsympathetic to Indian industrial efforts instead introduced the policy of free trade in India.

Rise of Indian Bourgeoisie

The government's *laissez-faire* attitude was a facade behind which it actively promoted European enterprise and discriminated against Indians. The railway network and freight-rates encouraged traffic with ports and not between inland centres. The organised money-market was controlled by the Whites, the only two major Indian banks before 1914 being the Punjab National Bank and the Bank of India. Moreover, economic growth was largely geared to export needs, and the British controlled the bulk of India's external trade. It was in eastern India that the White 'collective monopoly' emerged first and it was most pronounced there. In western India by contrast, Indian merchants traded with China and other overseas countries, largely because British political control came much later there and

White Collective Monopoly

was less pervasive. Capital accumulated through overseas trade at first in Bombay and then in Ahmedabad, and found an outlet in a capitalist indigenous textile industry. This textile industry was fed raw cotton from Deccan, a process made easier by the opening of the Deccan by railways. Fearing competition, Lancashire textile mill-owners pressurised the Indian government to impose more of unfair tariff and excise policies and this, in turn, generated a sense of exploitation and led to growth of patriotic consciousness among the Indian intelligentsia.

During this period and until the 1920s, in fact, Indian business groups were loyalist, mainly for economic reasons. Bombay mills, for instance, depended to a large extent on European technical expertise and on imported machinery. Moreover, down to the 1890s, Bombay concentrated on cotton twist and yarn rather than piecegoods, and it exported the yarn to the Far East or supplied it to Indian handlooms. Any piecegood that it produced was of a 'coarse medium' quality.

Ahmedabad and Bombay

It was Ahmedabad that came into direct competition with Lancashire, and that too only from the beginning of the 20th century. There were several reasons why this was so: war in China and plague in Bombay led to a sharp fall in the export of twist and yarn to the Far East, and the focus of the textile industry, mainly in Ahmedabad, shifted from spinning to weaving. Ahmedabad mill-owners thus developed greater involvement with the national movement, especially after the entry in the national scene of Gandhi, as they stood to gain from increased indigeneous capitalist activity.

Character of the Indian Bourgeoisie

The emerging Indian capitalist class in the late 19th century, however, observes Sumit Sarkar, was not by and large, a harbinger of modernity. Of the major business communities, only the Parsis of Bombay had a Westernised orientation. Gujarati *baniyas* and Marwaris remained orthodox in social and religious matters. Joint family and close caste ties lay behind Marwari business success, the characteristic business unit remaining the family firm. Most business communities rarely supported the 19th century socio-religious reform movements—the exception being the revivalist Arya Samaj.

After 1918, the Indian capitalist class began to financially support the rapidly developing nationalist movement and specific leaders. This they did mainly because it was only after 1918 that a large-scale inflow of foreign capital investment into the Indian industry began to occur and the giant British industrial corporations started forming subsidiaries in India in order to take advantage of the tariff protection granted during the 1920s and the 1930s, the cheaper Indian labour, and the nearness of the market. The slogan, 'Indian domination of Indian markets' was raised by Indian capitalists during these years.

Rise of Middle Classes

Another social group that came into existence as a result of colonial rule and subsequently went on to form the backbone of the nationalist movement was that of the middle and lower-middle classes. In the first half of the 19th century, these groups found employment as petty government servants in the newly British-opened schools and law courts. By the end of the 19th century, however, educated Indians were faced with growing unemployment. (By the 1880s, the total number of English-educated Indians neared around 50,000). Those who found jobs discovered that most of the better-paid jobs were reserved for the English middle and upper classes.

The Role of the Intelligentsia

This 'microscopic minority' of educated Indians (literacy figures even in 1911 were only one per cent for English and six per cent for the vernaculars) was an emerging social group that, however, enjoyed an importance far in excess of its size. English education gave this group the ability to establish contacts on a country-wide scale. English-educated professionals worked fairly often outside their home regions—for instance, in the 1870s, the existence of colonies of educated Bengalis in many towns of north India enabled the Indian Association to set up a large number of branches outside Bengal. Yet another benefit of Western education was the development of an awareness of world currents and ideologies, which helped this group to formulate conscious theories of nationalism. The fallout of Western education, points out Sumit Sarkar, was to alienate its beneficiaries from their immediate environment, and bring to the fore sharp regional disparities which emerged as English

education increasingly became the path to good jobs. In 1883-84, only nine per cent of college students in Bengal came from families with annual incomes of less than Rs 200. The Public Service Commission report of 1886-87 found 18,390 'educated natives' in Madras, 16,639 in Bengal, 7,196 in Bombay—but only 3,200 in the United Provinces, 1,944 in Punjab, 608 in the Central Provinces, and 274 in Assam. Sumit Sarkar also disproves the commonly-held theory regarding the English-educated as 'elite-groups' defined basically by their upper-caste status. While it is true that the traditional 'literary' castes tended to take advantage of the new education, (almost 85 per cent of Hindu College students in Bengal came from the three upper castes of Brahman, Kayastha or Vaidya in 1883-84), not all members of the upper castes enjoyed the elite status—Bengali Brahmans were also employed as cooks or *purohits* (priests) while in Bombay in 1864 the *Chitpavan* and *Saraswat* Brahmans included 10,000 beggars and 1,880 domestic servants. Moreover, several of the English-educated were involved in social reform often aimed directly or indirectly against upper caste privileges.

Background of the Intelligentsia

A study of the socio-economic roots of the intelligentsia reveals that, as in Bengal, it continuously strove to balance the contrast between broadly bourgeois ideals derived from a growing awareness of contemporary developments in the West, and a predominantly non-bourgeois social base. The 19th century Bengali middle-class searched for its model in the European 'middle class' which had brought about the great transformation from medieval to modern times through movements like the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and democracy. But its own social roots lay not in industry or trade, unlike that of the European middle class, but in government service or the professions of law, education, journalism or medicine and some investment in land in the shape of intermediate tenures. The link with a semi-feudal land system was to inhibit radical thought and action on agrarian issues. Similarly, in Madras, Western-educated groups were connected with petty landholding. So also the intelligentsia in Poona, based as it was in a town with virtually no industrial or commercial importance. It was only in Bombay where indigenous capitalism had some importance that more stable links were forged between the new Bombay intelligentsia leadership of the 1880s and the 1890s and the mill-owners through agitation over issues like abolition of import duties on Lancashire cottons. Dinshaw Wacha, prominent Bombay nationalist and general secretary of the Congress (1896-1913), was also a member of the Bombay Millowners' Association executive committee, and managing agent of several textile mills.

Break with the Past

An important feature is that the initial response of the intelligentsia to the British rule was positive, as it was the first social group to recognise the fact that the establishment of colonial power in India marked a sharp break with the past and the beginning of a new historical era. Early 19th century reformers like Rammohan Roy observed that the causes of the defeat of a vast country such as India by a foreign trading company lay in the weakness of its internal social, economic, political and intellectual make-up and pointed to Britain's model as the basis for India's future development. Their support of colonial rule was based on the belief that the reshaping and transforming of Indian society could occur under this rule. It was only when they found that development during the first quarter of the 19th century did not bear out their expectations, that they began to question the true nature of British rule.

Attitude Towards the British Rule

The traditional elite—the zamindars, landlords and princes, the higher bureaucracy (Indians in the higher cadres of government service), and the traditional intelligentsia—had a two-sided attitude to imperialism, says Bipan Chandra. Sharing with the rulers the benefits of a high standard of living in a poor country and the feel of administrative power and high social status, members of the traditional elite remained loyal to the British rule to the end. But patriotism did inspire many of them to support the national movement, as did their self-interest.

The religious thinkers, functionaries and preachers/ teachers in the traditional education system that comprised the old intelligentsia were drawn towards political conservatism on account of their conservative socio-religious outlook. At the same

time, they had to contend with the closure of the traditional pathsalas, madrasas and the traditional centres of higher learning in the face of the spread of modern educational institutes. Many traditional intellectuals were also bitterly hostile to modern thought and socio-religious reform including the propaganda of Christian missionaries both on grounds of ideology and because they undermined their social position. In the post-1857 period, however, the British government by and large abandoned attempts at social reform and allied itself with the forces of traditionalism.

Patronage of Traditional Intelligentsia

It left the control of temples, mathas, mosques, dargahs and gurudwaras in the hands of the traditional intelligentsia while, at the same time, extending patronage through pensions, financial rewards and bestowal of titles and honours. Seeking to prevent the spread of modern ideas of nationalism, democracy and economic development, the British tried to keep alive the traditional educational system. They advised Indians to concentrate on their philosophic and religious heritage and the 'spiritual' aspects of their life, and leave the British to manage their economy, politics and administration. Nevertheless, there were those members of the traditional intelligentsia who actively favoured joining the national movement while maintaining their aversion to modern ideas.

FORMATION OF REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Growth of Modern Thought

As England started dominating over India, there grew certain forces which eventually challenged western imperialism. In fact, Lord Macaulay foresaw this in 1833 while introducing his educational policy. He saw the possibility of the Indian mind expanding under the British system and then outgrowing it, leading to "in some future age demand (for) European institutions (of governance)". Thus, with the introduction of western culture in India, there grew modern political concepts like nationalism, nationality, political rights and so on. This, in turn, gave rise to the formation of political associations, hitherto unknown in India, and different from religious and caste associations, with secular interests binding them together.

Early Political Organisations

Raja Rammohan Roy is regarded as the pioneer of the political movement in India. A widely-read man, he was inspired by western ideas and drew the attention of the English to the grievances of the Indians. He demanded liberty of the press, appointment of Indians in civil courts and other higher posts, codification of law and such other measures due apparently to which some of the beneficient provisions of the Charter Act of 1833 were introduced. It was, however, the associates of the Raja who took up the task of organising political associations. Their **Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha**" formed in 1836 reviewed the policy and administration of the government and sought redress by forwarding appeals and memorandas. It was followed by the creation of the **Zamindari Association** in July 1838 to look after the interests of the landlords and this marked the beginning of an organised political activity using methods of constitutional agitation for setting right wrongs. Then came the **British Bengal India Society** in April 1843 professing to "secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects". In 1851, these two merged to form **British India Association** and, assuming a liberal note, pleaded for a legislature of separate character, separation of the judiciary and the executive, abolition of duties, etc. The Charter Act of 1853 conceded some of its prayers and added six members to the Governor's council for legislative purpose. The Association continued well into the 20th century but was overshadowed by the more popular Indian National Congress.

Other Organisations

By 1870, higher education was well established in the presidency towns, ushering in conditions favourable for the formation of popular and broad-based associations. Sisir Ghose in 1875 established **India League** to inculcate nationalism among the people; this organisation became **Indian Association** in 1876 when Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose joined it. When Lytton introduced some unpopular measures, Surendranath went on a whirlwind tour in 1876 of the major towns of north India like Varanasi and Lahore to build up public opinion against it. New associations were formed in some of these places in collaboration with Indian Association. The next year, Surendranath embarked on a similar journey in the

presidencies of Bombay and Madras. Unlike the Bengali Hindus who apparently regarded the British as better rulers than the oppressive Muslim nawabs, the Maharashtrians thought of them as foreign tyrants who replaced the indigenous rulers. They believed that the British with their trading system looted in a few years what the Pindaris and others did in five centuries. However, there was a **Bombay Association** formed in 1852, asking for legislative councils for Indians, which worked in close association with **Poona Sarvajanik Sabha** established in 1867 by M.G. Ranade. Lytton's misdeeds and the Ilbert Bill goaded the three leaders of the three chief committees of Bombay town to establish the Bombay Presidency Association. The name of the branch of the British Indian Association of Calcutta was **Madras Native Association**. It had no hold over the public mind and ceased to exist after 1857. There was a Madras Mahajana Sabha formed in 1884 which also voiced demands like separate legislatures.

Although the demands for a common political organisation was in the air for long, it took decades to develop and materialise. The lead was taken by the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in 1877, and in 1883 plans were afoot for more political cooperation between Bombay and Calcutta, and to start a national newspaper. It is important to remember that the creation of political association in the country to spread political education and to initiate political work had to be based on new ideas, new perceptions of reality and new socio-economic and political objectives. This difficult task was made more difficult as Indians were totally unfamiliar with political work. As a result, the work of these national political associations proceeded rather slowly and it took nearly 50 years to bring common people within the fold of modern politics. Even so, a radical stream was sought to be introduced by the Anglo-Indian teacher Henry Derozio of Calcutta who was inspired by the French Revolution and the ideas of Tom Paine and Jeremy Bentham. But the time was not in the side of the political associations. All the local associations were dominated by rich people and they wanted reforms mostly to suit their interests.

Need Felt for an All-India Organisation

After the Revolt of 1857, the British rule became more reactionary, making it apparent that protests under the leadership of the rich would not succeed and resistance must flow along new channels. The exploitative character of the British rule became more and more clear to the Indian intelligentsia, who, it must be admitted, lagged behind in this regard compared to the Indian peasantry. They realised that the new politics had to be critical of the British rule and began to grope their way to a new type of nationalist political organisation. The leadership in this respect was provided by Dadabhai Naoroji, a successful businessman, who organised the **East Indian Association** in London in 1866 to show that the "poverty and economic backwardness of India were not inherent in local conditions, but were caused by colonial rule which was draining India of its wealth and capital". At this juncture, Lytton's exploitative measures like removal of import duties on British textiles quickened the pace of Indian nationalist activity. The swadeshi concept was first stated during the 1870s to protect the Indian interest. Patriots from all over India felt the need for setting up of an all-India nationalist organisation. It was given a more concrete shape in Bombay by the nationalists there who, with the help of the retired English civil servant Allan Octavian Hume, in 1885, set up the **Indian National Congress** presided over in the first instance by W.C. Banerjee. However, it was not just Congress which spread nationalist consciousness among the people. There were numerous local and regional political associations carrying on day-to-day political activities. Also, there were the nationalist newspapers in the major and important towns of the country which cared little for business success and often risking personal losses consciously worked as organs of nationalist activity.

Prominent Leaders

Besides Raja Rammohan Roy and Dadabhai Naoroji, the patriots spreading political consciousness included Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ganesh Vasudev Joshi, S.H. Chiplunkar and others who founded the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha which carried on the work in the last 30 years of the 19th century. The Madras Mahajana Sabha was founded by Ananda Charlu, Subramannia Iyer and M. Vizaraghavachari among others. In western India, Pheroze Shah Mehta, K.T. Telang, Muhammad Sayani, Umashankar Yajnik and Badruddin Tyabji were prominent among the nationalists. While in eastern India, Ananda Mohan Bose, Lal Mohan

Ghosh and Kali Charan Banerjee helped Surendranath Banerjea and W.C. Banerjee in their work.

Nationalist Press

The nationalist papers which came into being before the Indian National Congress were the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *Sanjivani* and the *Bengalee* in Bengal. *The Hindu*, the *Swadeshmi-Iran*, the *Andhra Prakasika* and the *Kerala Patrika* were brought out in the South. In Bombay, the *Mahratta*, the *Kesari*, the *Indira Prakash* and the *Sudharak* were published. While in the United Provinces, the *Advocate*, the *Hindustani* and the *Azad* tried to raise the political consciousness of the people. So did the *Koh-i-noor*, the *Akhbar-i-am* and *Tribune* in the Punjab.

Significance of the Regional Political Organisations

These regional political associations were instrumental in ushering in the first truly all-India political organisation, the Congress, in 1885. Though regional and limited, they became articulate exponents of all-India unity and prepared the people to accept the Congress as a representative national forum.

Major Issues

These associations organised various campaigns before the first all-India association, the Indian National Congress, appeared on the scene. These campaigns were:

(i) for imposition of import duty on cotton,
(ii) for Indianisation of government service (1878-79).
(iii) against Lytton's Afghan adventure (for which the Indian had to pay),
(iv) against Arms Act of 1878 which denied the Indians the right to self-defence,
(v) against Vernacular Press Act of 1878 which muzzled the publishers in Indian languages,
(vi) for right to join volunteer corps,
(vii) against plantation labour and against Inland Emigration Act,
(viii) in support of Ilbert Bill,
(ix) for all All-India fund for political agitation,
(x) agitation in Britain to vote for pro-India party, and
(xi) against reduction in the maximum age for appearing in the Indian civil service examination.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Foundation and Origin

The first organised expression of Indian nationalism on an all-India scale, the Indian National Congress, was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two politically-active Indians. Most Congress members were men from Calcutta and Bombay who had first met on common ground in the late-1860s and early 1870s while studying for the ICS or for law. They were Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Banerjea, Mammohan and Lalmohan Ghosh, Surendranath Banerjea, Anandamohan Bose, and Romesh Chandra Dutt, all of whom looked to London-based Dadabhai Naoroji for leadership. Several members of this group did not join the civil services, or were thrown out of it (Surendranath Banerjea); they instead joined forces with others like the Sadharan Brahmo group headed by Dwarkanath Ganguli in Calcutta, Ranade and G.V. Joshi in Poona, K.T. Telang in Bombay, and G.S. Iyer, Viraraghavachari and Ananda Charlu in Madras, to form 'middle class' local associations. In the early 1880s began the movement by these men to fuse the local associations–Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870), Indian Association (1876), Madras Mahajana Sabha (1884), and Bombay Presidency Association (1885), into one on an all-India scale. The Indian Association even organised two National Conferences at Calcutta, in 1883 and 1885, in this connection. But it was the attempt launched at the initiative of Allan Octavian Hume, a retired English ICS officer, that succeeded in the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC), beginning with the convening of the first session of INC at Bombay.

Early Nationalists

A.O. Hume—The Founder

Safety Valve Theory

Safety Valve Theory

A common explanation for the founding of the Congress has long been held to be 'the safety valve' theory. Despite widespread popular belief, however, this myth has little basis in historical fact, say author Bipan Chandra and others. According to the authors, the myth is that the INC was started by A.O. Hume and others under the official direction, guidance and advice of Viceroy Lord Dufferin, to

provide a safe, mild, peaceful and constitutional outlet or *safety valve* for the rising discontent among the masses, which was inevitably leading towards a revolution. That the founding of the Congress nipped the revolutionary potential is a view accepted by most writers from the liberals to the radicals, to suit their own theories of the Congress. Extremist leader Lala Lajpat Rai in his *Young India* published in 1916, for instance, used the safety-valve theory to attack the Moderates in Congress. To him, the Congress, "a product of Lord Dufferin's brain", was started more with the object of saving the British Empire from danger than of winning political liberty for India. The interests of the British Empire were primary and those of India only secondary'.

"Dufferin's Brain Child"

Left-wing view of the myth is expressed in R. Palme Dutt's authoritative work *India Today,* in which Dutt wrote that the Congress was brought into existence through direct governmental initiative and guidance and through 'a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy' so that the government could use it "as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling". Eventually though, its nationalist character was to overshadow the loyalist character. The right-wing version, articulated by M.S. Golwalkar, the RSS chief, too focussed on the 'safety-valve theory' in attacking the Congress for its secularism and, therefore, anti-nationalism.

Views of R.P. Dutt and Golwalkar

In his pamphlet *We,* Golwalkar complained that nationalists had destroyed Hindu national consciousness by claiming that Muslims too had something in common with Hindus. Consequently, "we have allowed our foes to be our friends and with our hands are undermining true nationality", claimed Golwalkar.

Historical proof of the 'safety-valve theory' was lent credence to by the seven volumes of secret reports which Hume claimed to have read at Simla in 1878. As a result, Hume was convinced of the existence of 'seething discontent' and a vast conspiracy among the lower classes to violently overthrow colonial rule. However, observes Bipan Chandra, to regard the foundation of the INC to be the result of the efforts of one individual and/or of the safety-valve, is to ignore the process of political awakening that had its beginnings in the 1860s and 1870s and picked momentum in the late 1870s and early 1880s. "The year 1885 marked a turning point in this process, for that was the year the political Indians, the modern intellectuals interested in politics, who no longer saw themselves as spokesmen of narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest vis-a-vis foreign rule, as a 'national party', saw their efforts bear fruit. The all-India nationalist body that they brought into being was to be the platform, the organiser, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics." [*India's Struggle for Independence (1857-1947)*, ed. Bipan Chandra]

Views of Bipan Chandra

The authors say the nationalist Indian demands of the period were not excessive: they wanted no reduction of import duties on textile imports, no expansion in Afghanistan or Burma, the right to bear arms, freedom of the press, reduction of military expenditure, higher expenditure on famine relief, Indianisation of the civil services, the right of Indians to join the semi-military volunteers corps, the right of Indian judges to try Europeans in criminal cases, etc. However, to have conceded them would have meant the undermining of colonial hegemony over the Indian people, and so official reaction remained hostile. Another important development, and one that hastened the formation of political associations during the period 1875-1885, was the emergence of younger, more radical rationalist intellectuals most of whom entered politics. They established new associations, having found that the older associations were too narrowly conceived in terms of programmes, political activity and social base. An indication of enhanced nationalist activity could be seen in the coming into existence during these years of nearly all the major nationalist newspapers—*The Hindu, Tribune, Bengalee, Mahratta* and *Kesari.* The formation of an all-India political organisation had, by 1885, become an objective necessity.

Early Demands of the Nationalists

That the formation of the INC was a concerted campaign could be seen, adds Bipan Chandra, in the large number of political agitations Indians had organised in the ten years preceding its formation. These included:

Issues for Political Agitation

(i) a campaign launched since 1875 around cotton import duties imposed in India which Indians were urging to stay in the interests of the Indian textile industry;
(ii) a campaign organised during 1877-88 around the demand for Indianisation of services;
(iii) a campaign organised against government efforts to control the Indian press;
(iv) a campaign organised in 1881-82 against the Plantation Labour and the Inland Emigration Act condemning plantation labourers to serfdom.
(v) an agitation against the thwarting of the Ilbert Bill which aimed to enable Indian magistrates to try Europeans;
(vi) a massive all-India effort made in 1883 to raise a National Fund which would be used to promote political agitation in India and England; and
(vii) an agitation organised in 1885 to allow Indians to join the volunteer corps hitherto restricted to Europeans.

All these point to the fact that the foundation of the Congress was the natural culmination of the political work of the previous years. By 1885, argues Bipan Chandra, a stage had been reached in India's political development when certain objectives had to be laid down, and these objectives could only be fulfilled by the coming together of political workers in a single organisation formed on an all-India basis. The founding of INC was an attempt to initiate the process of achieving these objectives. Sumit Sarkar adds that the opening of Dufferin's private papers reveal that even in ruling circles Hume's prophesy of imminent chaos (that lend credence to the safety-valve theory) was not taken seriously; and in fact the story exaggerates the personal role of Hume.

INC—A "Lightning Conductor"

Hume's role as chief organiser was a well thought-out strategy on the part of Indian nationalist leaders. Considering the size of the Indian sub-continent, there were very few political persons in India in the early 1880s and the tradition of open opposition to rulers was not yet firmly entrenched. The Indian nationalists who cooperated with Hume did not want to arouse official hostility at such an early stage of their work. The assumption being that rulers would be less suspicious and less likely to attack a potentially subversive organisation if its chief organiser was a retired British civil servant. According to Bipan Chandra, if Hume and other English liberals hoped to use the Congress as a 'safety-valve', the Congress leaders hoped to use Hume as a 'lightning conductor'.

THE MODERATE PHASE (1885-1905)

Programme and Objectives of Early Congress

Objectives of the Moderates

The first twenty years in the history of the Congress is known as the moderate phase owing to a certain broad uniformity in objectives and methods of activity. Early nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, P.M. Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Bannerji, S. Bannerji and others were, moreover, staunch believers in 'moderate' politics. These leaders believed that instead of a direct struggle for the political emancipation of India (which they felt the country was not prepared for), they had at first to focus on the arousal of national feeling, consolidation of this feeling, the bringing of a large number of Indians into nationalist politics and their training in political struggle. For this, they had to create public interest in political questions and organise public opinion, formulate popular demands on a countrywide basis, and create national unity among Indians. The early nationalists formulated economic and political demands with a view to unify Indians on the basis of a common economic and political programme.

Economic Critique of Colonialism

Early nationalists made an important contribution to nationalism by providing an economic critique of imperialism. Taking note of all the three forms of contemporary economic exploitation, namely, exploitation through trade, industry and finance, they drew attention to the fact that the essence of British economic imperialism lay in the subordination of Indian economy to the colonial economy. They organised a powerful agitation against nearly all the official economic policies based on a colonial structure that aimed to transform India into a colonial economy, i.e.,

a supplier of raw materials, a market for British manufactures, and a field of investment for British capital. They also advocated the lessening and even severance of India's economic dependence on England. The economic issues that they raised were all bound up with the general poverty of India—the 'drain of wealth' theme.

Demand for India's Economic Development

The early nationalists criticised official economic policies for bringing about the ruin of India's traditional handicraft industries and for obstructing the development of modern industry. They opposed the large-scale import of foreign capital for investment in Indian railways, plantations and industries on the ground that it would lead to the suppression of Indian capitalists and strengthen Britain's hold on India's economy and polity, and they asked for active administrative measures to keep out foreign capital. In order to remove poverty, they suggested modernisation of Indian industry and urged the government to aid Indian industry through financial subsidies, loans and guarantees. They passed resolutions calling for an enquiry into India's growing poverty and famine, demanding cuts in Home charges and military expenditure, more funds for technical education to promote Indian industry and an end to unfair tariff and excise duties. Early nationalists further popularised the idea of swadeshi as a means of promoting Indian industry. They opened swadeshi stores and in 1896 organised a powerful swadeshi campaign in Maharashtra during which students publicly burnt foreign cloth.

Pro-poor Orientation of the Congress

The early Congress was not only concerned with the interests of the English-educated professional groups, zamindars and industrialists. It agitated for the reduction of the heavy land revenue demand, and urged the government to provide cheap credit to the peasantry through state-sponsored agricultural banks and to make available large-scale irrigation facilities. It agitated for improvement in the conditions of work of plantation labourers, demanded abolition of the salt tax and other taxes that hit the poor hard, and attacked the expenditure on the civil services whose members were paid high salaries that were disproportionate to the level of economic development of India. An agitation organised against the abandonment of tariff duties on imports from 1875 to 1880 and against the imposition of cotton excise duties from 1894 to 1896, played an important role in arousing countrywide national feelings.

Demand for Greater Indian Representation

The principal political demand was reform of supreme and local legislative councils to give Indians greater powers (of budget discussion and interpellation, to give one example) and to make them representative by including some members elected by local bodies, chambers of commerce, universities, etc., in the councils. Earlier, the government had, through the Indian Councils Act of 1861, made provision for the nomination of a few non-officials (zamindars and big merchants) to the councils, but these non-officials had toed the official line. In face of nationalist demand, the government amended the old provision and passed the new Indian Councils Act of 1892. The Act increased the number of non-official members, a few of whom were to be elected in an indirect manner. While members were given the right to speak on the budget, they were not given the right to vote upon it. Indians, who saw in the Act a mockery of their demands, agitated for a non-official elected majority in the councils and for non-official Indian control over the public purse. They also raised the slogan 'no taxation without representation', and tried to broaden the base of their democratic demand.

Policy of Gradual Reform

While the early nationalists in the beginning believed that India should eventually move towards democratic self-government, instead of an immediate fulfillment of the goal, they suggested a step-by-step approach towards freedom. Even as late as 1905, Gokhale's presidential address stressed that the educated were the "natural leaders of the people", and explained that political rights were being demanded only for that portion of the population as had been qualified by education to discharge properly the responsibilities of such association. The early nationalists also hoped that freedom would gradually broaden from precedent to precedent on the British pattern, till India attained, as Naoroji said in 1906, "Self-Government or Swaraj like that of United Kingdom or the colonies".

Early nationalists clamoured for administrative reforms in an administration ridden with corruption, inefficiency and oppression. Indianisation of the higher grades of the administrative services, was the most important administrative reform. The demand for simultaneous ICS examinations in England and India, for instance, was not only raised just to satisfy the tiny elite who could hope to get into the ICS, but also meant as a blow against racism; it would further reduce the drain of wealth in so far as much of the fat salaries and pensions enjoyed by White officials were being remitted to England. It was aimed to make administration more responsive to Indian needs.

Demand for Responsive Administration

Other administrative demands included the separation of the judiciary from the executive so that the people might get some protection from the arbitrary acts of the police and bureaucracy; the demand of the principle of equality before the law which did not distinguish between Indians and Europeans; the demand for a repeal of the Arms Act; demand for greater facilities for technical and higher education and the extension of medical and health facilities; and the demand for active administrative measures to develop industry and agriculture. Early nationalists also opposed the aggressive foreign policy against India's neighbours, for example, the policy of the annexation of Burma. The nationalists also took up the cause of Indian workers who had migrated to British colonies such as South Africa, Malaya, Mauritius, Fiji, the West Indies, and British Guiana, and who were being subjected to racial discrimination. While championing the cause of the plantation workers forced to live in conditions of near-slavery on low wages by the foreign planters, early nationalists did not lend support to the ruthlessly-exploited factory and mine workers. They supported Indian capitalists instead.

Other Demands

Opposition to Foreign Policy

Early nationalists and politically-conscious Indians also put up a strong defence of civil rights, namely, the freedoms of speech, the press, thought and association. They opposed the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which sought to gag Indian language newspapers, till it was repealed in 1880. Similarly, official attempts during the 1890s to curb criticism against the government in the newspapers under the garb of protecting official secrets, were opposed too.

Methodology or Forms of Struggle

The basic difference of the early nationalists with the later nationalists did not lie in a different definition of the nationalist political goal, rather it lay in the methods of struggle to achieve the goals and the nature of the social groups on whom the struggle would be based. The moderates believed in methods of constitutional agitation—they held meetings where speeches of a very high calibre were made (nearly always in English) and passed resolutions setting forth popular demands. They used the press to carry on a daily critique of the government. They also sent numerous carefully-drafted memorials and petitions to high government officials and the British Parliament. The idea was to build up through these petitions, speeches and articles, a foolproof logical case aimed at convincing liberal-minded public opinion in Britain that Britain's rule over India was 'un-British' in nature. However, politics remained for most moderates a part-time affair—the Congress was less a political party, says Sumit Sarkar, than an annual three-day show of a tiny coterie of elites. The Moderate leaders were also anglicised in their personal life and highly successful men in their professions. Their attitudes towards Englishmen were somewhat ambivalent as a result, with criticism of specific policies balanced by general admiration of the British and a belief that British rule was eventually for the good. Success in profession left them with little time for political activity. The highly elitist lifestyles of many Congressmen (P.M. Mehta travelled in a special railway saloon, Ranade visited Simla in 1886 with 25 servants) led them to fear the 'lower orders' and depend on the British for law and order. Moreover, the early Congress depended on the support of propertied groups—groups who would not support radical programmes or unrestrained mass agitation.

Constitutional Agitation

Faith in the British Sense of Justice and Fairplay

Ambivalent Attitudes and Elitist Character

Assessment of the Moderates

Based on the activities and organisation of the Congress, Sumit Sarkar divides the Moderate era

into three broad phases. The first phase—beginning with the formation of the Congress in 1885 to 1892—was a time of Congress domination by Hume as general secretary and full-time activist. Hume's presence gave to Congress a certain dynamism—attendance figures rose rapidly for the first five sessions, from 72 in 1885 to nearly 2000 in 1889. Sessions were also more broad-based during this period than during later sessions—funds for the Madras Session (Rs 5,500 and Rs 8,000) of 1887 were raised through mass collections, a determined effort to woo Muslim support was made in 1887-88 utilising the personal contacts of Badruddin Tyabji, and another attempt made to rally peasant support in 1887 through two popular pamphlets translated into twelve languages. The second phase was marked by a gradual abandoning of the bid for mass contact. Feeling that they would lose if they supported the Hindu-dominated Congress demands for elected councils and service recruitment through examinations, the Muslim elite led by Saiyyid Ahmed opposed the Congress and its demands. The Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893 strengthened Muslim alienation, and the percentage of Muslim delegates in Congress, which had averaged 13.5 per cent of the total between 1885 and 1892, fell to only 7.1 per cent between 1893 and 1905. Hume's peasant strategy was abandoned too in face of intense official suspicion and hostility. Hume had left for England in 1892 after being privately rebuffed by frightened Congress leaders. The third phase, falling in the late 1890s, was marked by Congress failures in India and a shift in emphasis almost entirely to campaigning in England through the British Committee of the Congress headed by Wedderburn, Hume and Naoroji with their journal *India*. Two developments marked an end to the last phase—the Curzon's provocative policies and the rise of a new leader in Gokhale.

Three Phases

Any assessment of Moderate Congress activity brings to light the narrow social base of the early Congress. Its area of influence was mainly limited to urban educated Indians, and its leadership confined to professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, journalists, teachers and a few landowners. Critics point out that these men saw few of the reforms for which they agitated, being introduced. The government instead of becoming more liberal became more reactionary and repressive. And the national movement failed to acquire any roots among common people. The critics ridiculed moderate politics as 'halting and half-hearted' and its methods as mendicancy through prayers and petitions. Barring a few exceptions, most early nationalists had made no personal sacrifice and undergone little personal discomfort, they add. Moreover, Moderate Congress leaders' inability to visualise India's economic development except along capitalist lines inevitably limited the extent of their appeal among the masses and the capacity to move them to political action.

Narrow Social Base

Political Mendicancy

Lacking political faith in the masses, early Congress leaders tended to underestimate their potential for political struggle. Gokhale, for instance, pointed to "endless divisions and sub-divisions in the country, the bulk of the population ignorant and clinging with a tenacity to the old modes of thought and sentiment, (and) averse to all changes and do not understand change."

No Faith in the Power of Masses

However, Moderate politics should not be labelled a failure, cautions Bipan Chandra. Despite a meagre record of practical achievements, political assumptions that became outdated by the beginning of the 20th century owing to the changing character of British rule, and their failure to carry out an all-India constitutional agitation or attract younger Indians to their mode of politics, the early nationalists made political achievements that have historical significance. Besides the early nationalists represented the most progressive force of the times, making possible a decisive shift in Indian politics.

As mentioned earlier, despite a narrow social base the programmes and policies of the early Congress nationalists championed the cause of large sections of Indians. Bipan Chandra also points out the inability of the early nationalists to organise a nationwide agitation partly due to the extreme paucity of funds. The propertied classes and industrialists provided little financial support, and most political leaders had to maintain themselves on their own earnings—Surendranath Banerjea and G. Gokhale lived on the earnings of a teacher while Tilak ran a private coaching class for law students.

Early Congress leaders succeeded in creating a wide political awakening and a feeling in the middle and lower-middle class Indians and the intelligentsia that they belonged to one common nation. They popularised among Indians the ideas of democracy and civil liberty, helping Indians acquire a practical knowledge of democracy at a time when the rulers told them that they were fit for only 'oriental' despotism. A large number of nationalist political workers were trained in the art of modern politics. The leaders helped people become familiar with the concepts and ideas of modern politics.

Consolidation of Indian Nationalism

The greatest contribution of moderate Congress workers was probably the pioneering work they did in exposing the true character of British imperialism in India. They linked nearly every important economic question with the politically-subordinate status of India, and successfully brought to light the most important political and economic aspect of the Indian reality—that a foreign power ruled India in order to economically exploit it. Any regime is politically secure only so long as the people have a basic faith in its benevolent character. The economic critique that Moderates provided both undermined the moral foundation of colonial rule and popular confidence in its benevolent character.

Exposition of Nature of British Imperialism

Inspite of their many failures, the early nationalists laid strong foundations for the national movement to grow upon. Instead of basing their nationalism or appeals on shallow sentiments and emotions, or abstract rights of freedom and liberty, or obscurantist appeals to the pact, they rooted it in a hard-headed and penetrating analysis of the complex mechanism of modern imperialism.

Ideological Foundation of INM

That Moderate Congress made a significant impact on the nationalist consciousness could best be gauged by the increasing official hostility towards it. In the beginning of its existence, British authorities had not adopted an openly hostile attitude towards Congress and Viceroy Dufferin had tried to divert the movement by suggesting to Hume that Congress should focus on social rather than political affairs. When that did not work, authorities had hoped that Congress would keep itself busy with academic discussions. But when it became apparent that Congress and other nationalist associations would not confine themselves to such a limited role, official attitude towards it changed to open hostility. Officials branded nationalists as 'disloyal babus' and Congress as a 'factory of sedition'. Curzon declared in 1900 that "the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise". To counter nationalism, British authorities pushed further the policy of 'divide and rule' and encouraged pro-British officials like Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiva Prasad to start an anti-Congress movement. They encouraged communal rivalry among educated Hindus and Muslims on the question of government jobs. The 'divide and rule' policy was further extended to turn the traditional feudal classes against the new intelligentsia, province against province, caste against caste. A split in nationalist ranks was sought to be created by adopting a more friendly approach towards the more conservative or moderate sections.

Factory of Sedition

Believing that the spread of education had been a major cause of the growth of nationalism, plans were set afoot to impose greater government control over it. The Education Act of 1903 sought to put controls on education, teachers were monitored through the system of government inspection of schools and colleges, private colleges run by religious trusts began to be promoted in place of modern, secular education. By the end of the 19th century, British imperialism was willing to join hands with the socially and intellectually reactionary forces in order to remain in power.

Controls on Education

EXTREMIST PHASE (1905-1919)

Causes of Rise of Extremism

The last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a younger group within the Indian National Congress that was sharply critical of the ideology and methods of the old leadership. In face of growing British unpopularity under the impact of famine and plagues, Viceroy Curzon's package of aggressive measures, and a rapidly expanding base

for political activity (circulation of vernacular newspapers went up from 299,000 in 1885 to 817,000 in 1905), conditions were becoming ripe for the rise of a new form of radical nationalism.

Several explanations have been put forward for the rise of extremism. Cambridge School historians in recent years see Extremist dissent as basically a set of factional quarrels between 'ins' and 'outs' for the control of the Congress. In Bengal, Surendranath and his newspaper, the *Bengalee,* had a running quarrel with Motilal Ghosh and his newspaper, *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*. In Punjab, factionalism led to three groups within the Lahore Brahmo Samaj, a major split within the Arya Samajists, and a conflict between Lala Harkishan Lal and Lala Lajpat Rai. In Madras too, factionalism led to the formation of the in-group the Myalapore clique, the Madras city-based Egmore rivals, and *mofussil* 'outs' like T. Prakasam and Krishna Rao in coastal Andhra and Chidambaram Pillai in Tuticorin. In Poona, Tilak quarrelled in the late 1880s with Agarkar and Gokhale over the control of the Deccan Education Society. However, argues Sumit Sarkar, factionalism alone does not explain why dissidents should have been so eager to capture the Congress—not yet a real political party with power, but rather an annual platform with very inadequate funds—unless it was because they had certain alternative strategies and ideals to put forward.

Systematic Critique of Moderate Politics

In the 1890s itself, a fairly systematic critique of Moderate politics was emerging, most notably in Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra, the three principal bases of Extremism. Dissatisfied with the negligible achievements of Moderate Congress and critical of the methods of constitutional agitation—petition, prayer and protest—a younger group of leaders challenged the Moderates' 'mendicant' technique of appealing to British public opinion, and criticised it for being a movement of an English-educated elite alienated from common people. Self-reliance and constructive work replaced prayers and petitions as the new slogans: *Swadeshi* enterprises were started, national education was organised and the need for concrete work in villages was emphasised. Extremist leaders made use of self-help and programmes vernaculars, utilised traditional, popular customs and institutions like the village fair or *mela* and evoked Hindu revivalist moods in order to bridge the gulf between the educated and the masses.

The New Leadership

Extremism had the impact it did owing to the appearance on the national scene of a series of men schooled in the new traditions of thought. Aurobindo Ghosh in a series of articles entitled *New Lamps for Old* written in 1893-94, rejected the English model of slow constitutional progress in favour of the republican ideals of the French. Himself the product of a highly anglicised upbringing, Ghosh rejected it for a type of revivalist Hinduism through which he hoped to link 'the bourgeois, or the middle class' which the Congress represented and the 'proletariat'. He elaborated a programme of mass passive resistance during the anti-partition (against partition of Bengal in 1905) upsurge. Aswini Kumar Dutt was another Extremist, a Barisal school teacher, who through a lifetime of patient social work in his district built up a unique kind of mass following and made his region the strongest base of the *Swadeshi* movement in 1905. Rabindranath Tagore, then Bengal's leading literary figure, also contributed to patriotism through his poems and stories, attacks on Congress mendicancy, repeated calls for *atmasakti* (self-reliance) through *swadeshi* enterprise and national education, and suggestions for mass contact through *melas, jatras* and the use of Bengali. Early 20th century saw Vivekananda's message being given political overtones by his disciple, Irish Sister Nivedita (Margaret Elizabeth Noble), with her experience of Irish and other European revolutionary movements. Educated Bengalis were also turning to *swadeshi* industrial enterprise: Bengal Chemicals was started by scientist Profulla Chandra Roy in 1893, and indigenous forms of education were experimented by Satish Mukherjee through his Dausi Society and Tagore through his ashrama at Shantiniketan.

Lala Lajpat Rai

In Punjab, Arya Samajists started *swadeshi* enterprises from the 1890s, and Harkishan Lal started the Punjab National Bank. Lala Lajpat Rai advocated technical education and industrial self-help in two articles published in the *Kayastha Samachar* in 1901.

In Maharashtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak pioneered several extremist methods—he used religious orthodoxy as a method of mass contact, developed

a patriotic-cum-historical cult as a central symbol of nationalism using Shivaji as a rallying point, and experimented with a no-revenue campaign of sorts in 1896-97 around the countervailing cotton excise. Tilak made use of his flair for journalism to mould public opinion in favour of the nationalist cause. His Marathi newspaper *Kesari* became an eloquent champion of nationalism.

B.G. Tilak

The new leadership, in its exhorting of Hindu culture, was also reacting to the stranglehold of excessive westernisation in Indian life, thought and politics. The new leaders felt that Christianity and utilitarianism (that had inspired earlier socio-religious movements like Brahmo Samaj), and a materialistic, individualist Western civilisation, were eroding the values of Hindu culture. Drawing inspiration from India's spiritual heritage and ancient heroes, men like Bankim, Vivekananda and Swami Dayanand hoped to revive the glory of the India that was.

A Cultural Defence

Events outside India exerted a powerful infleunce on the rise of extremism. The emergence of Japan as a powerful modern nation after 1868 proved that a backward Asian country could, through its own efforts, become an industrial nation and a strong military power. Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 and Ethiopia's victory over Italy in 1896 proved false all claims of White superiority over brown and black people. The fight of people in Ireland, Russia, Egypt, Turkey and China for freedom inspired Indians to fight as a united nation against the injustices of a colonial government.

Influence of International Events

The economic miseries of the last years of the 19th century spurred the growth of extremism in Indian national activity. Recurring famines and plague took a heavy toll of Indian life. The bubonic plague that broke out in Maharashtra during this period could not be properly contained by a government relief machinery that was inadequate, slow-moving and badly-organised. Riots broke out in the Deccan in reaction to the government's attempts to stifle public opinion and suppress lawlessness. Referring to the Durbar of 1903, Lal Mohan Ghose said: "Nothing could be more heartless than the spectacle of a great Government imposing the heaviest taxation upon the poorest population in the world, and then lavishly spending the money so obtained over fireworks and pompous pageants..."

Economic Distress

Lord Curzon's viceroyalty contributed more to the extremist cause than any other development because, as Bipin Chandra Pal's *New India* said: "Lord Ripon's ideal was to secure, by slow degrees, autonomy for the Indian people. Lord Curzon's is to secure it for the Indian government. Curzon remained consistently hostile towards educated Indian aspirations as represented by the Congress, and had decided from the beginning to treat the Congress as an 'unclean thing....never taking notice of it', as 'in so far as it is innocent, it is superfluous, and in so far as it is hostile to Government or seditious, it is a natural danger'." Curzon confidentially reported to the Secretary of State in November 1900: "My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise." He, in fact, attempted to tighten restrictions on the national intelligentsia through three successive measures: changes in the Calcutta Corporation in 1899 which reduced the number of elected Indian members, and was a move designed to favour the interests of the Calcutta European business community; the Universities Act of 1904 which, trumpeted by Curzon as a move 'to raise the standard of education all round', actually cut down the number of elected Senate members, transferred the power of ultimate decision in matters of college affiliation and school recognition to government officials and tried to fix minimum college fees; and the Partition of Bengal. The Universities Act claimed to effect improvements in education; however, the total expenditure on education was only Rs 20.46 million in 1903-04 and Rs 24.49 million in 1905-06. This was not too great an increase and was only a paltry 2.5 per cent of the budget. The new official controls that the Act imposed together with the recommendations of a Police Commission (1902-03), which improved the number, training and salaries of the police force at an additional expenditure of Rs 15 million annually, aimed to strengthen British defences against the rising tide of nationalism.

Lord Curzon's Unpopular Measures (1898-1905)

Partition of Bengal and its Aftermath

The partition of Bengal brought out pent-up nationalist anger at the government attitude. Historians are divided over the causes leading to partition. At first (as imperialist historians point out), the size of Bengal Presidency was a cause of worry owing to administrative purposes, and there were attempts made to develop Assam into a more viable province to create a maritime outlet for its White-dominated industries in tea, oil and coal. On July 19, 1905, partition was announced with the new province of East Bengal and Assam eventually including Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi divisions, Hill Tippera and Malda and Assam. Nationalist historians point out that partition was a move to encourage Hindu-Muslim tensions and point as evidence to Curzon's much-quoted speech at Dacca in February 1904 offering East Bengal Muslims the prospect of "unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman viceroys and kings". Home Secretary H.H. Risley added in 1904: "Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is perfectly true and is one of the merits of the scheme…" The really important political motive being the division among mainly Hindu politicians of West and East Bengal. Alternative plans of detaching linguistically-distinct Bihar and Orissa "would tend to consolidate the Bengali element by detaching it from outside factors, and would produce the very effect that we desire to avoid. The best guarantee of the political advantage of our proposal is its dislike by the Congress Party", argued Curzon, who dismissed the alternative plan on that ground.

Divide and Rule Policy

At first, objections to partition were voiced by elitist-interest groups: babus worried about their clerical jobs; zamindars with estates in both Bengals who disliked having to appoint two sets of agents and pleaders, merchant families of Calcutta who feared the possible rise of Chittagong; Calcutta lawyers who feared that a new province with a new High Court in it, would cut into their practice; the East Bengal political elite was worried at the prospect of losing its seats in legislative councils, and Calcutta politicians were worried at the curtailing of their influence. But official hope that protests would die down quickly was belied when, after July 1905, the movement broke away from traditional moorings, developed a variety of new and militant techniques, attracted larger numbers than before, and broadened into a struggle for Swaraj. The sense of unity among the Bengalis rooted in a history marked by long periods of regional independence and fostered largely, at least among the literate, by the cultural developments of the 19th century, and which led to an educated Bengali lead in professions, government services, and politics over much of India due to the advantage of earlier English education was strong. It further fostered a new self-confidence which came to be stimulated by the growing Hindu revivalist mood best typified by Vivekananda. International developments such as Japan's victory over Russia (1904-05) helped to consolidate the new mood. Curzon's provocative actions were regarded a national insult, in this atmosphere. Besides Calcutta, Bakarganj, Madaripur, Vikrampur and Kishoreganj in East Bengal developed as swadeshi strongholds, and these were areas of Hindu *Bhadralok* concentration, a large number of intermediate tenures, considerable spread of English education in turn leading to an overcrowding of professions and spread of nationalist ideology, and rising prices. However, the intelligentsia failed to draw the peasantry to its cause owing to its inability to link up the nationalist slogan with the peasant's immediate economic grievances.

Anti-Partition Movement

Bengali Solidarity

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movements

After July 1905, Moderate methods of press campaigns, meetings and petitions (in Dhaka and Mymensingh districts) and big conferences (at Calcutta Town Hall) were replaced with methods that included boycott of British goods (first suggested by Krishna Kumar Mitra's weekly *Sanjivani* on July 13, 1905), exchanging of *rakhis* on Partition Day (October 16) as a symbol of brotherhood, and the hearth kept unlit as a sign of mourning. When the British targetted student picketers through measures like the Carlyle Circular (published on October 22) threatening withdrawal of grants and scholarships from nationalist institutions, official educational institutions were boycotted and national schools organised. Besides the Moderate tradition and the

Movement in Bengal

new trend of ‘constructive swadeshi’ (setting up *swadeshi* industries, national schools and village improvement and organisation), Sumit Sarkar identifies emergence of a creed of newer, more political extremism that appealed to youth Journals like Bipin Chandra Pal’s *New India*, Aurobindo, Ghosh’s *Bande Mataram* and others calling for swaraj.

Promotion of Swadeshi and Boycott

Aurobindo for instance, visualised a programme of ‘organised and relentless boycott’ of British goods, officialised education, justice, and executive administration (backed by the positive development of *swadeshi* industries, national schools, and arbitration courts), and called for a ‘social boycott’ of loyalists, and recourse to armed struggle if British repression reached unbearable limits. Sumit Sarkar adds that Bengal Extremism wasted energy in purely verbal violence and in-fighting over the Congress organisation, though it also contributed to building up a chain of district organisations or samitis and in providing leadership to labour unrest. Upto 1908, samitis were engaged in physical and moral training of members, social work during famines, epidemics or religious festivals, preaching the swadeshi message through organising crafts, schools, arbitration courts and village societies, and implementing passive resistance techniques.

Labour Unrest

Samitis were found in Calcutta, with the police reporting IG, and in East Bengal provinces of Bakargunj, Faridpur, Dhaka and Mymensingh (where five principal samitis of Swadesh Bandhav, Brati, Dacca Anushilan, Suhrid and Sadhana). Faced with repression during 1908-09, the open *samiti* either disappeared (*Swadesh Bandhav)* or became a terroristic secret society (Dacca Anushilan). As regards labour unrest, strikes in White-controlled enterprises in Bengal, sparked off by rising prices and racial insults, obtained nationalist support in the form of newspaper sympathy, occasional financial help and even aid in setting up trade unions. Pioneer labour leaders such as barristers Aswinicoomar Bannerji, Prabhat Kusum Roychaudhuri, Athanasius Apurbakumar Ghosh and proprietor Premtosh Bose, helped organise or settle strikes and walk outs. The first real labour union, the printers union, was set up on October 21, 1905. Boycott achieved some success in the initial phase in Calcutta—the Collector of Customs in September 1906 noted a 22 per cent fall in the quantity of imported cotton piecegoods, 44 per cent in cotton and yarn, 11 per cent in salt, 55 per cent in cigarettes and 68 per cent in boots and shoes as compared to August 1905.

National Education

However, the boycott of goods did not last and Marwari traders went back to doing business. Bombay mill-owners on their part hiked up prices. Certain traditional artisan crafts were promoted: handloom and silk-weaving and handicrafts glorified as the Indian way to avoid evils of large-scale industry. While national education efforts failed to attract the bulk of the student community owing to negligible job prospects, they led to the setting up of a Bengal Technical Institute, and a number of schools in West Bengal, Bihar and East Bengal. The schools did not survive the end of the anti-partition movement, however, and a few of them became virtually recruiting centres for revolutionaries, such as the Sonarang National School near Dhaka.

Spread of Extremism

United Provinces

In the United Provinces, extremism made notable impact only in Benaras (Varanasi) with its Marathi and Bengali communities, and led to the emergence of a revolutionary group under the leadership of Sachindranath Sanyal. Benaras, owing to its geographical position, came to occupy an important place in revolutionary plans as the meeting place of Bengal and Punjab groups. The Benaras Congress session protested against the partition and government repression, and endorsed *swadeshi* and boycott for Bengal.

Punjab

In Punjab, swadeshi efforts in the fields of banking, insurance and education dated back to the 1890s, to well-established traditional business communities belonging to the Khatri, Aggarwal or Arora castes, and to Arya Samajists and a Brahmo-leaning group headed by Lala Harkrishan Lal’s efforts. Down to late 1906, however, the Punjabi variety of extremism concentrated on constructive work rather than boycott. The situation changed after 1907, when the editor of *Punjabee* was put on trial for reporting racist outrages, and proposals were made to tighten up the Land Alienation Act. Punjab was notable also for witnessing signs of discontent and militancy among Sikh, Muslim and Hindu peasantry in certain areas, particularly in the relatively prosperous Chenab Canal colony centred around Lyallpur. A protest movement had emerged in the region against the government’s dictatorial rule over it,

and by early 1907 the Chenab Canal Colony were provided a broader political leadership by Lajpat Rai of the Arya group, and Ajit Singh (uncle of Bhagat Singh), who organised the Extremist *Anjuman-i-Mohibban-i-Watan* in Lahore with its journal *Bharat Mata*. This group urged non-payment of revenue and water rates. After the government struck in May 1907 with a ban on political meetings and the deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, Punjab Extremism died down. Some concessions were offered—Viceregal veto of the Chenab Colonies Bill, reductions in water rates, and the release of the deportees in September 1907—but the Arya Samajists turned towards communal politics, and Ajit Singh's group towards revolutionary terrorism.

South India

In Madras, the Andhra delta region and Tirunelveli districts were Extremist hot-beds. Andhra delta towns like Rajamundhry, Kakinada and Masulipatam held meetings from 1906 onwards, and a *Vandematram* movement was organised after Bipin Chandra Pal toured the region in April 1907. The *swadeshi* atmosphere inspired a flowering of Telugu literature, language and history, and also influenced demands for a separate linguistic state for the Telugu-speaking people. Extremist leaders like Subramaniya Iyer and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai emerged from Tirunelveli district and in October 1906 a Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was started in Tuticorin to run steamers upto Colombo. The government's bitter hostility towards this *swadeshi* venture sharpened anti-British feelings, and the message of *swaraj* began to be preached, boycott extended, and workers urged to strike. Workers went on strike at the foreign-owned Coral Cotton Mills, and a 50 per cent rise in wages was obtained in the first week of March. However, after authorities removed local leaders Subramania Siva and Chidambaram Pillai from the scene, Tirunelveli radicals either became inactive or formed a small terrorist group which organised the murder of district magistrate Ashe in 1911. Subramaniya Bharati, a Tirunelveli Brahman sharply critical of caste, poet and Tamil nationalist, was part of this clique.

In Maharashtra under Tilak's leadership (he was recognised as the most outstanding Extremist leader), the *swadeshi* mood boosted radical journalism, with the *Kesari* reaching a circulation of 20,000 by 1907. The creed of *swaraj* and extended boycott or passive resistance was energetically preached. Besides religio-political festivals pioneered by Tilak in the 1890s (Ganapati festival and Shivaji festival), bonfires of foreign cloth were organised (Poona, October 1905), and a *Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha* was set up in Bombay city. The mostly Parsi or Gujarati Parsi industrialists, however, were lukewarm supporters of *swadeshi* at best and in September 1906, the Extremists' bid through Dinshaw Wacha to persuade mill-owners to sell *dhotis* at more moderate prices, failed. Production of indigenous cloth helped Bombay and Ahmedabad to make profits and in staving off a major slump in 1906-07 when Japanese competition affected the Chinese yarn market. The Tata Iron and Steel Project was floated in 1907 (the projected share capital of Rs 2.5 crore was subscribed in three weeks, mainly from Bombay). In Maharashtra and Bombay city in late 1907 and early 1908, Tilak encouraged the mass picketing of liquor shops, and efforts to develop contacts with the mostly Marathi working-class of Bombay. A tradition of militancy also marked the Bombay working: class they had been involved in communal strife (1893); in spontaneous powerful strikes in 1892-93 and 1901 against wage cuts; and against 15-16 hour working days in 1905. Jobbers or the main agents in hiring workers, who belonged to the same caste and region as the men they engaged and Brahmin clerks in mills, played a crucial role in the Bombay labour organisation.

Tilak's Leadership

Mass Protest Over Tilak's Trial

A landmark in extremist action was the massive outburst of proletarian anger in Bombay when Tilak was put on trial in July 1908 (for certain articles on terrorism in *Kesari*), and given six years' transportation. Sporadic strikes, stone-throwing and clashes with the police took place and a massive walk-out staged which at its height affected 76 out of 85 textile mills, as well as the railway workshop of Parel. Police and army firing killed 16 and wounded 43. But in Maharashtra too, mass contact and participation proved short-lived, and after the waning of Extremism what survived was terrorism. The Nasik-based *Abhinava Bharat* that emerged in 1907 from out of the *Mitra Mela* founded in 1899 by the Savarkar brothers, survived. From 1905 to 1907, the struggle between various trends within the national movement culminated

in the Surat split of December 1907. In a bid to adjust themselves to the new atmosphere, some of the Moderate leaders began to hold industrial conferences, from December 1905 onwards, along with the Congress sessions, to promote a kind of non-militant *swadeshi*. Gokhale in June 1905 launched his *Servants of India Society*, that combined strictly Moderate goals with an insistence on self-sacrifice, moral purity, and full-time national work on a salary of Rs 65 per month. The society managed to recruit over 20 members by 1909. At Benaras in December 1905, Gokhale's presidential address and a separate resolution condemned partition and repression in Bengal, but at the same time a resolution 'most humbly and respectfully' welcomed the coming visit of the Prince of Wales. By the end of 1906, Extremism forged a certain degree of intra-provincial contacts. The Calcutta session with its resolutions on boycott, *swadeshi,* national education and self-government, marked the height of Extremist influence. Naoroji redefined the goal of the Congress as 'self-government or *swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies.' Malaviya and Gokhale repudiated Bipin Chandra Pal's effort to extend the resolution on boycott to cover other provinces and the boycott of honorary offices and of foreign goods as well.

Surat Split 1907

The Surat Session of 1907 saw the moderate Rashbehari Ghosh elected as president. Confrontation between the Moderates and the Extremists led to uproarious scenes on the opening day, and Tilak's abortive move for an adjournment on December 27 was followed by Marathi "chappal-throwing" and the dissolution of the session. In the months following Surat, the Extremists tried for their reunion with the Congress. But the Bombay Moderate group in its Allahabad Convention of 1908 made the split definitive by drawing up a constitution which fixed the Congress methods as 'strictly constitutional' and restricted delegate election to 'recognised bodies of over three years standing', the last an attempt made to exclude Extremists from future sessions. The Moderate leadership hardened its attitude in expectation of reforms, as the liberals were in power in England.

Evaluation of Extremist Politics

Extremism was not a consistent political philosophy, with advocates ranging from active revolutionaries at one end to those who opposed violence of any sort on the other. Further leaders such as Aurobindo, Tilak and Lajpat Rai differed in their emphasis on political ideals and the practical course of action. If Tilak's conception of swaraj meant self-government, to Aurobindo swaraj meant complete independence from foreign rule. Nevertheless, certain ideas that gained currency with the rise of Extremism became part of the Indian nationalist lexicon. Chief among these were the ideas of swadeshi and boycott, which were not new ideas and, in fact, had been adopted by the Americans, the Irish and the Chinese. As a purely economic measure to develop Indian industry, swadeshi had been preached by Gopalrao Deshmukh, M.G. Ranade, the Tagore family, among others. Similarly, boycott was recommended by Bholanath Chandra in the 1870s to bring economic pressure on the British public. To the Extremists, boycott was an economic pressure on Manchester, a weapon of political agitation against imperialism and a training in self-sufficiency for the attainment of swaraj. According to Bipan Chandra, A. Tripathi and Barun De, the anti-partition agitation gave cohesion and vigour to scattered and timid forces. Many Congressmen and educated Indians lost belief in the justice of the British people and the efficacy of moderate methods of constitutional agitation. Swadeshi brought into politics new classes of people (women and students, for example) without distinction of caste or creed. The movement gave a stimulus to cottage industries and large-scale enterprises, such as swadeshi textile-mills, watch and soap factories, potteries and tanneries. In the realm of culture, a wealth of patriotic songs and other considerable cultural achievements such as a new interest in regional and local history and folk traditions, the scientific work of J.C. Bose and P.C. Ray, and the Calcutta school of painting founded by Abanindranath Tagore, were important swadeshi contributions.

Swadeshi and Boycott as Integral Part of INM

Emergence of Revolutionary Terrorism

Sumit Sarkar identifies revolutionary terrorism as the most substantial legacy of the swadeshi movement in Bengal, casting a space on the minds of radical educated youth for sometime. The 'revolutionary' movement took the forms of assassination of oppressive officials or traitors, *swadeshi* dacoities to raise funds, or at best

military conspiracies with expectations of help from Britain's foes. However, the movement never rose to the level of urban mass uprisings or guerilla bases in the countryside. Prominent secret societies included the *Anusilan Samitis* of Calcutta and Dhaka, the *Jugantar* of Calcutta and *Mitramela* started by the Savarkar brothers in Maharashtra. The terrorists did manage to frighten the British on occasion, set examples of death-defying heroism in the cause of complete independence and sought worldwide contacts in quest for shelter and arms. Yet they never seriously threatened British administration, and the intense religiosity of most early secret societies kept Muslims aloof or hostile. Acts of terrorism included the assassination of two unpopular British officials by two brothers Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar of Poona in 1897; the Kennedy murders (1908) by K. Shudiram Basu and Prafulla Chaki—the target, a White magistrate named Kingsford, escaping without harm; ML Dhingra's killing of Curzon Wyllie, an official of the Indian office in London; and the killing of Ashe, who had ordered a firing at Tinnevelly, by Vanchi Aiyar of the Bharatha Mata Association. But these remained individual elite acts. As Sumit Sarkar observes, in a 1918 official list of 186 killed or convicted revolutionaries, the bulk were drawn from the upper castes of Brahman, *Kayastha,* and *Vaidya*.

The Extremists, moreover, failed to appreciate the full significance of India being a country of many religions, castes and regions. While their militant anti-imperialism helped in national consolidation, the upper caste and Hindu tinge they imparted to it weakened the process of national unification. The period in fact witnessed the disturbing growth of Muslim separatism. Despite eloquent pleas for communal unity, some Hindu-Muslim fraternisation and the presence of an active group of Swadeshi Muslim agitators like Ghaznavi, Rasul, Din Mahomed, Abdul Gafur and Liakat Husain, British propaganda that the new province would mean more jobs for Muslims did achieve some success in swaying upper and middle class Muslims against swadeshi. A rash of communal politics broke out in East Bengal: in Iswarganj in Mymensingh district in May 1906, Comilla (March 1907), Jamalpur, Dewanganj and Bakshiganj in April-May 1907. The targets were Hindu zamindars and mahajans, and at places even Hindu cultivators. Rabindranath Tagore, in a series of articles in 1907-08, wrote that the British alone were not responsible for the riots, and the real problem was that "a great ocean separates us educated few from millions in the country". The riots had the effect of convincing nationalists that the rioters were hired agents of the British, and so Extremist propaganda assumed an aggressive Hindu tinge.

Limitations and Weaknesses

Differences Between Moderates and Extremists

Moderates	*Extremists*
1. Social base—zamindars and upper middle classes in towns.	1. Social base—educated middle and lower middle classes in towns.
2. Ideological inspiration—western liberal thought and European history.	2. Ideological inspiration—Indian history, cultural heritage and Hindu traditional symbols.
3. Believed in England's providential mission in India.	3. Rejected 'providential mission theory' as an illusion.
4. Believed political connections with Britain to be in India's social, political and cultural interests.	4. Believed that political connections with Britain would perpetuate British exploitation of India.
5. Professed loyalty to the British Crown.	5. Believed that the British Crown was unworthy of claiming Indian loyalty.
6. Believed that the movement should be limited to middle class intelligentsia; masses not yet ready for participation in political work.	6. Had immense faith in the capacity of masses to participate and to make sacrifices.
7. Demanded constitutional reforms and share for Indians in services.	7. Demanded swaraj as the panacea for Indian ills.
8. Insisted on the use of constitutional methods only.	8. Did not hesitate to use extra-constitutional methods like boycott and passive resistance to achieve their objectives.
9. They were patriots and did not play the role of a comprador class (the intermediaries between a foreign agency and native merchants or officials).	9. They were patriots who made sacrifices for the sake of the country.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS (1905-1919)

The period from 1905 till the emergence of Gandhiji as the undisputed leader of the Congress witnessed certain significant developments like the emergence of revolution terrorism, passing of the Government of India Acts of 1909 and 1919, Lucknow Pact (1916), and the Home Rule Movement. We shall discuss the emergence of revolutionary terrorism in a later chapter and confine our discussion to other developments here. The Indian Council Act of 1909 and the Montford Act of 1919 were major constitutional developments which shaped the contours of political India whereas the reunion between the Moderates and the Extremists at the Lucknow session in 1916 and the demand for Home Rule during the War-period sustained the political energies of the Indians effectively to prepare them for greater mass struggles later.

Indian Council Act of 1909

Morley-Minto Reforms

The activities of revolutionaries forced the government to think of ways of conciliating Indian public opinion. The new Liberal British government appointed Curzon's successor Lord Minto (appointed by the outgoing Tory administration) and famous Liberal political thinker and Secretary of State, John Morley, for undertaking this task. Both were to contribute, along with many other officials, to the formulation of a set of policies for tackling political unrest which became the standard for the remaining years of British rule in India. The three major components of the policies were—outright repression, concessions to 'rally the moderates', and the divide and rule policy, best typified by the device of separate electorates.

Background

The British adopted repressive measures after 1906 with considerable hesitation and uncertainty at first. This was because their target was educated Indians for whom (unlike tribal or peasant rebels, workers on strike, or indentured labourers) civil liberties and the rule of law (even as an ideological instrument, says Sumit Sarkar) were important. These measures were first tried out by the lieutenant governor of the new province of East Bengal and Assam, Bampfyld Fuller, who employed Gorkha regiments to control Barisal, banned the *Bande Mataram* slogan, and tried to disaffiliate schools for participation in politics. But Fuller's methods were recognised as harsh by the British administration and his resignation in August 1906 over a clash on the disaffiliation issue was readily accepted. With the increase in revolutionary activities in Punjab and Bengal in 1907-08, however, the British too made attempts at more systematic repression. The instruments used with which to take the repressive methods forward included banning of seditious meetings in specific areas, newspaper acts enabling seizure of presses, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of December 1908 permitting a ban on the principal *samitis* in Bengal, and deportations (Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh in May 1907, nine leaders of Bengal in December 1908). The tough stance was continued under Lord Hardinge's Home member, Reginald Gaddock, after 1910, and culminated in the wartime Defence of India Act of 1915.

Measures to Placate the Moderates

Following a series of fruitful meetings with the Moderate Gokhale, Morley and Minto tried to balance maintenance of the unpopular partition with some political concessions. These were the end of 'castison bureaucracy' at some point or the other, entry of Indians into the Legislative, and (perhaps) the Executive Councils, allocation of more time for budget debates and permitting of amendments though officials would remain a majority. However, there was no question of introducing English political institutions into India, nor of initiating a Parliamentary commission of enquiry. There were differences between Morley and Minto on the kind of 'moderates' who could be rallied, with Morley preferring Congress Moderates like Gokhale, and Minto focussing on loyalists outside the Congress, like a Council of Princes or upper-class Muslims. In order to win over the princes, Minto and his political secretary Harcourt Butler inaugurated a significant departure in British policy towards the princely states and emphasised the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the princely states. The idea was to convince princes to mount a joint action against sedition as a further proof of their "devotion and loyalty to the crown". According to Sumit Sarkar, this signalled an end to the policy of Curzonian interference for the sake of efficiency and an

extension of the post-Mutiny policy of alliance with feudal chiefs in face of nationalist danger.

In order to gain a better understanding of Lord Minto's 'Divide and Rule' strategy, let us study the evolution of the concept of separate electorates. On October 1, 1906, an Aligarh-based Muslim elite group had met Lord Minto at Simla to plead for separate electorates and representation in excess of numerical strength in view of 'the value of the contribution' of Muslims "to the defence of the Empire". A step in the direction towards separatism was taken with the formation of the Muslim League at Dhaka in 1906 owing to efforts of Salimulla. Separatist tendencies had existed much earlier though—Sayyid Ahmed and his followers had been pleading for special Muslim representation by nomination from the 1880s. British responsibility was considerable too, with Fuller playing off the two sections of the population against each other in the new province. The British and elite Muslims were also alarmed at the sympathy that young educated Muslims were developing for the Congress (the Aligarh students union, for instance, had passed a resolution advocating Hindu-Muslim political cooperation in May 1906), and it was this objective similarity of interests that bound officialdom with Muslim and Hindu upper-class communalists. So it was that an infant and weak organisation like the Muslim League (with a membership of only 400 in December 1907, an annual subscription of Rs 25, and a minimum eligibility qualification of Rs 500 annual income), pursuing 'mendicant' techniques identical with those of early Congress, became a formidable political force within three years of its foundation. So it was also that a deputation under Ameer Ali in early 1909 rejected Secretary of State Morley's move to replace separate electorates by a mixed electoral college. At the same time, says Sumit Sarkar, the Muslim League had its limitations. It could not, despite loud protests, convince the government to revoke the decision to undo the partition of Bengal in 1911.

Policy of Divide and Rule

Provisions

An Indian was to be appointed a member of the Governor General's Executive Council and of each of the Provincial Executive Councils. The strength of the Imperial and the Provincial Legislative Councils was raised, while the character of the councils remained unchanged. An official majority was retained at the Centre, where out of a maximum of 60, only 27 members were to be elected through a narrow electorate. Non-official members were in a majority in the Provincial Legislatures, and nominated members usually voted with the officials against the elected. Three main types of electorates existed for the Central Legislature: general, consisting of non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils; class, such as Muslims and landholders; and special, like the Universities and Chambers of Commerce. Most of the non-official members in the Provincial Councils were to be elected by groups of local bodies, landholders, traders and universities. While Muslims, landlords and European capitalists got reserved seats, women had no vote. Any person could be excluded by the Governors and Governor-General as politically undesirable.

The legislature had limited powers, with the right of asking a supplementary question reserved only for the member who had asked a question initially. The Army and the Native States were among the important areas of public interest that were excluded from debate and resolution. While discussion and voting on separate heads of the budget were allowed, no resolution or voting was permitted on the whole budget. Details of seat allocation and electoral qualifications were left to be made by regulations in India, to be settled in accordance with the specific recommendations of the Local Governments—thus leaving a good deal of scope for bureaucratic whittling down of reforms. No less than eight out of 27 elected seats in the Imperial Council were reserved for the Muslim separate electorates (they captured three of the general seats, too, in the 1910 elections).

Analysing the Act, Sumit Sarkar observes that it proved to be the most short-lived of all of Britain's 'constitutional' experiments in India and was totally revised within nine years by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918. It failed to placate the Moderates and kept politically-active Hindus and Muslims apart. At the Madras session of the Congress in 1908, the Moderates had welcomed the proposed reforms as 'large and liberal'. But provisions of the Act made them realise that the reforms had never been meant to introduce a parliamentary form of government. The provisions such as the arbitrary powers of disqualification, the

narrow franchise, the official majority at the Centre and the hoax of non-official majorities in the Provinces, the restriction on debate and the limited power of influencing the budget, amply proved this.

In a micro-study of Allahabad, Cambridge School historian Bayly has revealed that developments like moderate unease at violations of civil liberties in the suppression of radicals and further extension of separate electorates into local bodies made several Moderate leaders think in terms of somewhat greater militancy by about 1915-1916. Moreover, the Congress disapproved of separate electorates. According to Jawaharlal Nehru, as a result of the introduction of separate electorates for Muslims, a "political barrier was created round them, isolating them from the rest of India and reversing the unifying and amalgamating process which had been going on for centuries. The barrier was a small one at first, for the electorates were very limited, but with every extension of franchise it grew and affected the whole structure of political and social life."

Demand for Communal Electorates

The separate electorate for Muslims provision in the Act was also a signal for other communities to intensify their agitation for separate representation—Sikhs received special representation in 1919; Harijans, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians also got special representation by the Act of 1935. (B.L. Grover, S.L. Grover) Sumit Sarkar points out that electoral rules were made markedly invidious: the income qualification for Muslim voters was considerably lower than for Hindus, for instance. Also, while officials and Muslim leaders always spoke in terms of entire communities, in practice only particular elite groups among Muslims were being preferred throughout by government policy. As a result, when separate electorates were extended to the United Provinces local bodies in 1916, government servants, pensioners and landlords outnumbered professionals, traders, or *ulama* in the 'Muslim franchise'.

Home Rule Movement and the Lucknow Pact (1916)

The First World War (1914-1918) brought about profound political and socio-economic changes in India, and gave a new lease of life to the nationalist movement which had been lying dormant since the days of swadeshi. The opportunity to make use of Britain's difficulty was seized in different ways and with varying success by the *Ghadar* revolutionaries based in North America and by Lokmanya Tilak, Annie Besant and their Home Rule Leagues in India. The aim of the *Ghadar* revolutionaries was a violent overthrow of British rule and it was the dramatic response to the First World War of Indians living abroad. The Home Rule League Movement, a nationwide agitation for securing Home Rule or swaraj, was less charged, but a more effective and constructive Indian response during those War years.

Impact of the First World War

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released on June 16, 1914 from prison in Mandalay in Burma after serving a six-year sentence, and he returned to India a changed man. Of his fellow Extremists, Aurobindo Ghosh had taken *sanyas* in Pondicherry, and Lala Lajpat Rai was abroad, visiting the United States of America. Combined effects of the split at Surat in 1907, the heavy government repression of the activists of the swadeshi and the negligible gains from the constitutional reforms of 1909, all contributed to the present crisis in Moderate ranks. Tilak got down to the task of seeking readmission for himself and other Extremists into the Indian National Congress. He felt that Congress sanction was a necessary pre-condition for the success of any political action, symbolising as the Congress did the Indian national movement. To make up with his old Congress enemies, he publicly declared: "I may state once for all that we are trying in India, as the Irish Home-rulers have been doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government; and I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which had been committed in the different parts of India are not only repugnant to me, but have, in my opinion, only unfortunately retarded to a great extent, the pace of our political progress." He also assured the government of his loyalty to the Crown. Tilak's efforts bore fruit as several Moderates joined hands with him, mainly to revive an almost moribund Congress. The reunification process was also helped by the sudden rise to political

Role of Tilak

prominence of Theosophist leader Annie Besant, who had only recently joined Congress.

Role of Annie Besant

Annie Besant, who was 66 in 1914, had begun her political career in England as a proponent of free thought, radicalism, fabianism and theosophy, and had come to India in 1893 to work for the Theosophical Society. Since 1907, she had been spreading the message of Theosophy from her headquarters in Adyar, Madras, and had gained a large number of followers among the educated members of many communities. Though not a consistent anti-imperialist, Besant had come to believe that a substantial measure of self-government was necessary for Indo-British friendship, and that the only way of achieving this goal was through effective and nationwide agitation and organisation modelled on the British Radical and Irish Home Rule Movement. Hence she thought it necessary to get both the official sanction of the Congress and active cooperation of the Extremists, and devoted her energies in persuading the Moderate leaders to open the doors of the Congress to Extremists. While the annual Congress session in December 1914 refused to let Extremists in (Pherozeshah Mehta and his Bombay Moderate group won over Gokhale and the Bengal Moderates to his side), the session in December 1915 re-admitted the Tilak group.

Prior to their readmission, Annie Besant had, in early 1915, launched a campaign through her two papers, *New India* and *Commonweal,* and organised public meetings and conferences to demand that India be granted self-government on the line of the White colonies after World War I. Tilak had, meanwhile, along with many of his followers, set up local associations in many Mahrashtrian towns in August and September 1915 that concentrated more on emphasising the need for unity in the Congress than on the stepping up of political activity. Securing the support of the 'Young Party'-controlled Muslim League was another achievement to the credit of Tilak and Besant. Following the December session, the Congress and the Muslim League met simultaneously at Bombay to set up committees to draft a platform of minimum constitutional demands through mutual consultation. Around 19 non-official members of the Imperial Council petitioned the viceroy in October 1916, calling for representative government and dominion status for India. In December 1916, at Lucknow, a common demand was again raised for elected majorities in Councils, while Hindu-Muslim political differences were sought to be resolved through the famous Lucknow Pact by which the Congress accepted separate electorates. The Congress and the League struck a bargain over distribution of seats—the Muslim leaders accepted under-representation in Muslim-majority areas (only 40 per cent of seats in Bengal, for instance), in return for over-representation in provinces like Bombay or United Provinces (where 30 per cent of seats was assigned to them). The pact favoured the interests of the UP-based 'Young Party' led by Wazir Hassan and Mahmudabad. Tilak and Annie Besant had overriden the wishes of important leaders, including Madan Mohan Malaviya, in order to bring about an agreement between the Congress and the League. Tilak's support of the Pact was a signal for most Congress members to accept it, as he was considered the most orthodox of Hindus.

Lucknow Pact 1916

The Congress, at this point of time, was a deliberative body not geared to any sustained agitation, and the president A.C. Majumdar ruled out Tilak's proposal at Lucknow to set up a compact Working Committee as a first step towards converting it into a real party. At the Lucknow Session, Tilak's League established a tradition that was to become an essential part of the later annual sessions of the Congress—a special train, known variously as the 'Congress Special' and the 'Home Rule Special', was organised to carry delegates from western India to Lucknow. The two Home Rule Leagues of Tilak and Annie Besant had to organise agitational work on their own. Tilak set up the Home Rule League at the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Belgaum in 1916. Though remaining confined to Maharashtra and Karnataka, Tilak's League claimed a membership of 14,000 in April 1917 and 32,000 by early 1918. Besant's League, having more of an all-India character but relying heavily at first on its founder's old Theosophical contacts, was set up in September 1916. While the organisation that Tilak and Kelkar ran from Poona was a fairly centralised

Activities of Home Rule Leagues

one, the Adyar (Madras) headquarters of Besant's League only loosely supervised its 200-odd local branches (132 of them in Madras Presidency). The Besant Home Rule League had 27,000 members in mid-1917. The two Leagues demarcated their areas of activity in order to avoid any friction. The activities of the Home Rule Leagues consisted in organising discussion groups and reading-rooms in cities, mass sale of pamphlets, and lecture tours—similar in form from older moderate politics, but far more intense and widespread. While Tilak's League in its first year sold 47,000 copies of six Marathi and two English pamphlets, Besant's organisation was printing 300,000 copies of 26 English tracts by September 1916.

Tilak's Efforts

Tilak promoted the Home Rule campaign with a tour of Maharashtra; he also linked up the question of *swaraj* with the demand for the formation of linguistic states and education in the vernacular. His opinion was to form separate states each for Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese provinces. He also revealed an understanding of the causes of social inequality by arguing that Brahmans were ahead of non-Brahmans in jobs because they were more educated and so, the real difference was between the educated and the non-educated. He further demanded Home Rule on a secular basis, claiming that 'alienness' was not a question of religion, but of interests. Tilak tried to relate the concept of Home Rule to specific and concrete popular grievances like the salt tax and revenue pressures. Besides Marathi, Tilak's League brought out pamphlets in Gujarati and Kannada. It was organised into six branches, one each in central Maharashtra, Bombay City, Karnataka, and the Central Provinces, and two in Berar. Tilak was served notice by the government asking him to show cause why he should not be bound over for good behaviour for a year and demanding a security of Rs 60,000, on July 23, 1916, his 60th birthday. Defended by a team of lawyers led by Mohammad Ali, Tilak lost the case in the Magistrate's Court but was exonerated by the High Court in November. The victory was hailed all over India, with Gandhi's *Young India* summing it as a victory won for the cause of Home Rule. Tilak's group intensified its propaganda and drew in large numbers.

More loosely organised as it was, Besant's League established 200 branches, some covering a town and others, groups of villages. Annie Besant and her lieutenants—Arundale, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar and B.P. Wadia—carried on most of the work from Adyar. Though membership of Besant's League increased at a rate slower than Tilak's, it drew some influential people like Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad and B. Chakravarti and J. Banerjee in Calcutta. The League agitated for Home Rule by seeking to promote political education and discussion. It conveyed instructions through individual members and through Arundale's' column on Home Rule in *Young India.* Most of the branches were very active in holding public meetings and lectures and always responded when a nationwide call was given for protest on any specific issue. Moderates dissatisfied with the affairs of the Congress joined the Home Rule agitation. Members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society undertook lecture tours and published pamphlets (they were not permitted to become members). Many other Moderate nationalists joined the Home Rule Leaguers in the United Provinces in touring the surrounding towns and villages in preparation for the Lucknow session. They organised meetings in the local bar libraries that were attended by students, professionals, businessmen and agriculturists, meetings that they addressed in Hindi.

Besant's Efforts

Protest Against Besant's Arrest

When the government of Madras placed Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia and George Arundale under arrest in June 1917, a nationwide protest was launched. Sir S. Subramania Aiyar renounced his knighthood, while moderates like Malaviya, S. Bannerji and M.A. Jinnah now enlisted as members of the Home Rule Leagues as a show of solidarity. At a meeting of the AICC on July 28, 1917, Tilak advocated the use of the weapon of passive resistance or civil disobedience if the government refused to release Besant. At Gandhi's instance, Shanker Lal Banker and Jamnadas Dwarkadas collected signatures of 1,000 men willing to defy the internment orders and march to Besant's place of detention, and signatures of a million peasants and workers on a petition for Home Rule. They made regular visits to Gujarat towns and villages and helped found branches of the League. The British government then decided to effect a change in policy and adopt a conciliatory posture. The new

secretary of state, Montagu, in the House of Commons on August 20, 1917 declared: "The policy of His Majesty's Government… is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India…" Montagu's Declaration was in marked contrast to that of Lord Morley who, while introducing the Constitutional Reformism 1909, had stated categorically that these reforms were in no way intended to lead to self-government. However, while the statement observed that the demand for Home Rule or self-government could no longer be regarded as seditious (as a gesture of conciliation Annie Besant was released in September 1917), the accompanying clause in the statement clarified that the nature and timing of the advance towards responsible government would be decided by the government alone.

Decline of the HRM

In course of the year 1918, the movement, instead of going forward after its great advance in 1917, petered out. The Moderates who had joined the movement after Besant's arrest, pacified by the promise of reforms and by Besant's release and put off by the talk of civil disobedience, did not attend the Congress from September 1918 onwards. The publication of the scheme of government reforms in July 1918 further divided the nationalist ranks: while some felt they did nothing much many felt that, though inadequate, they should be given a trial. Moreover, Montagu's Declaration converted Besant almost overnight into a near-loyalist and she vacillated on this question as well as on the question of passive resistance. Tilak on his part went to England to pursue the libel case that he had filed against Valentine Chirol, the author of *Indian Unrest,* and was away for many months. The movement was left leaderless.

Legacy of HRM

To Bipan Chandra, the legacy of Home Rule Movement (HRM) lay in the creation of a generation of ardent nationalists who formed the backbone of the national movement in the coming years when, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, it entered its truly mass phase. It popularised the idea of Home Rule or self-government, and generated a widespread pro-nationalist atmosphere in the country. Sumit Sarkar further draws attention to the fact that the real importance of the agitation, and particularly of Besant's League, lay in the fact that it included new groups and areas like Tamil Brahmans of Madras city and *mofussil* towns, urban professional groups in the United Provinces (*Kayasthas*, Kashmiri Brahmans, Muslims), the Hindu Amil minority in Sind, and younger Gujarati industrialists, traders and lawyers in Bombay city and Gujarat. With the exception of the cities of Bombay and Madras, these were areas without strongly established political traditions, whether Extremist or Moderate (while Maharashtra had been active in the Home Rule agitation, two Extremist bastions—Punjab and Bengal—had been the main targets of British repression during the war years and so, were relatively quiet). The movement created young people who became future leaders of Indian politics from the 1920s onwards—Satyamurti in Madras, Jitendra Lal Banerjee in Calcutta, Jawaharlal Nehru and Khaliquzzaman in Allahabad and Lucknow, and wealthy men like Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Umar Sobhani, Shankerlal Banker, and Indulal Yagnik in Bombay and Gujarat.

The Government of India Act, 1919

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms

Dramatic changes in Indian life accompanied the War and the immediate post-War years. The three crucial landmarks in this context are regarded to be constitutional reforms (Secretary of State Montagu's declaration of August 20, 1917, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 and the Government of India Act of 1919), the emergence of Gandhi as leader of the mass, and important shifts in Indian economy. Constitutional reforms were deemed necessary to stave off the growing dissatisfaction among Indians. The Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 had angered Congress members with their inherent tendency to buttress British authority by rallying Moderates and Muslims to the side of the authority. The Indian National Congress expressed disappointment at the unfairly preponderant share of representation given to Muslims, disparities between Muslims and non-Muslims in the matter of electorates, franchise and qualifications of candidates, and arbitrary restrictions seeking to disqualify candidates seeking elections to the councils.

Meanwhile Muslim discontent against British rule rose, mainly in reaction to the treatment meted out to the Ottoman Empire of Turkey. The landing of the Greeks and Italians in Turkey with Allied support seemed to herald the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate, and because the Caliph was regarded as the religious head by many Muslims, the act angered them. Believing that any weakening of the Caliph's position would adversely affect the position of Muslims in other countries which were under imperialist domination, Indian Muslims organised the Khilafat Movement. The Home Rule agitation and the Khilafat movement, both of which were anti-imperialist outbreaks against British rule, had the effect of bringing Hindus and Muslims closer, as the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and Muslim League had demonstrated. International developments too had some role in the emergence of new forces. Revolution broke out in Czarist (also spelt Tsarist) Russia in November 1917, and the Bolsheviks established the world's first socialist state. Soviet Russia's unilateral renouncing of imperialist rights in Asia made a favourable impression on colonial peoples. The proclamation of the Irish Republic by the Sinn Fein party of guerillas which fought against British domination, was another event that inspired nationalism in India. The official policy of introducing constitutional reforms was thus an answer to the challenges that new forces of nationalism presented.

Khilafat Issue

It was during this period, on August 20, 1917, that Montagu, the new Secretary of State, made his statement about the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as the goal of the British government in India. Montagu discussed his scheme of reforms with the viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in November 1917 in India. A committee was appointed consisting of Sir William Duke, Earl of Donoughmore, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Charles Robert which, together with the Viceroy, helped Montagu to prepare the draft of a reform scheme which was published in July 1918. This is called the Montagu-Chelmsford or Montford Report on the basis of which the Government of India Act was drafted. The Act laid down in its preamble the principles on the basis of which the reforms were to be progressively introduced. British India was to remain an integral part of the British Empire; responsible government in British India was the objective of the declared policy of parliament, and the responsible government would only be introduced through progressive realisation; in order to achieve responsible government, it was necessary to increasingly associate Indians in every branch of administration and gradually allow self-governing institutions to develop; and with the development of self-governing institutions in the provinces, provinces were to be given the highest measure of independence in provincial matters. The Preamble gave Montagu's Declaration a definite legal shape.

Montford Report

Provisions

The Secretary of State for India who used to be paid out of Indian revenue was now paid by the British Exchequer, and some of his functions were taken away from him and given to the Government of India-appointee. While the control of the Secretary of State was reduced in provinces in so far as Transferred Subjects were concerned, his control over the Centre remained as complete as before. At the centre, the Act set up a bicameral system (Council of State and Legislative Assembly, with elected majorities but no control over ministers and a Viceregal veto plus 'certificate' procedure of pushing through rejected bills) and enlarged electorates to 5.5 million in provinces and 1.5 million for the Imperial Legislature. The basic innovation was 'dyarchy', a system of transferring certain functions of provincial governments (education, health, agriculture, and local bodies) to ministers responsible to legislative assemblies while keeping other subjects 'reserved'. Officials remained in control of more vital departments like law and order or finance, and provincial governors too had veto and certificate powers. Revenue resources were divided between the Centre and the provinces, with land revenue going to provinces and income tax remaining with the Centre. Communal representation and reservations were retained and considerably extended, the British conceding the demands of the Justice Party for reservations for non-Brahmans in Madras, for instance, and extending separate electorates to the Punjab Sikhs.

Introduction of Dyarchy

Extension of Communal Electorates

The Governor was to preside over both the wings of the Executive but not always together. While the ministers were responsible to the Legislative Councils for their subjects, the Governor was free to accept or reject their advice. A second Indian was included in the Governor-General's Executive Council which, in turn, remained responsible to Parliament as before.

Liberal-imperialist historians have claimed that the 'Montford' reforms were positive proof of basic British good intentions and that they signalled a clear break with the old line of British Indian perspective towards 'representative' government—with elected legislators, even elected majorities, but who had no control at all over the executive. According to Sumit Sarkar, however, the reform process was not all that far-reaching or novel. Devolution for financial motives, shifting local expenditure on locally raised and managed revenues went back to Mayo and Ripon, and in 1907, to a Decentralisation Commission that had been appointed to look into the matter. Hardinge (who was the viceroy between 1910 and 1916), in a dispatch of August 25, 1911, had argued for some kind of provincial autonomy and self-government to accompany the next round of political concessions. But the idea of Indian self-government had been dismissed by the then Secretary of State, Crewe. Now war pressures and weaknesses of the government forced it to adopt a more conciliatory stand, as has been mentioned earlier.

So, a number of concessions to Indian public opinion were made—war finance demanded a hike in cotton import duties, and these were raised from 3.5 to 7.5 per cent in March 1917 without a corresponding increase in the countervailing excise on Indian textiles; a ban on the much-criticised export of coolies through the indentured labour system was accepted in 1917. Chamberlain's replacement by Montagu in July 1917 only hastened an already well-advanced process, a process given a further impetus by official fears of the possible impact on India of the overthrow of Czarist autocracy in Russia in March 1917.

At the level of specific reforms, the Government of India's Despatch of November 24, 1916 had visualised elected majorities in the provinces without any kind of executive responsibility. It was felt, however, that such an extension of the Morley-Minto line of development would create a powerful permanent opposition in councils, without adding to the number of Indian collaborators. An influential group around the London journal *Round Table,* comprising Lionel Curtis, Philip Kerr, William Duke, felt that it would be disastrous to give elected non-officials more power without some amount of executive responsibility, and so the idea of dyarchy was born. The Cambridge school of historians, in fact, relate the reforms to the twin imperial requirements of financial devolution and need for a wider circle of Indian collaborators (Dyarchy, for instance, transferred only departments with less political weight and little funds to ministers responsible to provincial legislatures, the idea being to draw Indian politicians into a patronage rat-race and thus discredit them, as the British were not keen to spend the large amounts of funds that improvements in education, health, agriculture and local bodies actually required.)

Significance

The Cambridge School of historians seeks to establish a direct relationship between the reforms and the emergence of mass politics. Since the Act of 1919 broadened electorates, politicians were forced to cultivate a more democratic style. But, observes Sumit Sarkar, the interpretation is incomplete: it may well explain certain types of politics and politicians, but hardly the fact of the tremendous post-War mass awakening. The Justice Party in Madras or non-Brahman and 'depressed classes' movements in Maharashtra were stimulated by the possibility of special reservations, as was the starting of the United Provinces Kisan Sabha with Allahabad Home Rule League funds in February 1918, with a fairly obvious electoral purpose, by Malaviya's protege Indira Narain Dwivedy. At the same time, the United Provinces presented examples of the emergence of an autonomous, grassroots Kisan Sabha in Pratapgarh and Rae Bareli under Baba Ramachandra in 1920, a development which hinted at the huge reserves of energy that would be unleashed during the anti-imperialist upsurge of 1919-22 under Gandhi.

Views

- "Associations, like cricket, were British innovation and like, cricket, became an Indian craze."
  —Anil Seal
- "The Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."
  —Lord Curzon
- "You don't realise our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to the Government. In reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years, without expecting any other results, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land."
  —M.G. Ranade to Gokhale
- "Reforms may not save the Raj, but if they don't, nothing else will."
  —Lord Morley
- "Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways… One of our main objects is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule."
  —**Risley** (Home Secretary to the Government of India, 1904)
- "After nearly ten years of painful separation and wanderings through the wilderness of misunderstanding and mazes of unpleasant controversies… both wings of Indian Nationalist Party have come to realise the fact that united they stand, but divided they fall."
  —**A.C. Mazumdar** (President of Lucknow Session of INC in 1916)
- "Indian nationalism was the child of the British Raj, and British authorities blessed its cradle."
  —R. Coupland
- "The period from 1858 to 1905 was the seed-time of Indian nationalism; and the early nationalists sowed the seeds well and deep. Instead of basing their nationalism on appeals to shallow sentiments and passing emotions, or abstract rights of freedom and liberty, or an obscurantist appeal to the past, they rooted it in a hard-headed and penetrating analysis of the complex mechanism of modern imperialism and the chief contradictions between the interests of the Indian people and British rule. The result was that they evolved a common political and economic programme which united rather than divided the different sections of the people… In spite of their many failures the early natioanalists laid strong foundations for the national movement to grow upon and they deserve a high place among the maker of modern India."
  —Bipan Chandra
- "Let us not forget that we are at a stage of the country's progress when our achievements are bound to be small, and our disappointments frequent and trying. That is the place which it has pleased providence to assign to us in this struggle and our responsibility is ended when we have done the work which belongs to that place. It will, no doubt, be given to our countrymen of future generations to serve India by their successes; we, of the present generation, must be content to serve her mainly by our failures. For, hard though it be, out of these failures, the strength will come which in the end will accomplish great tasks."
  —Gopal Krishna Gokhale
- "Swaraj or self-government is essential for the exercise of swadharma. Without Swaraj there could be no social reform, no industrial progress, no useful education, no fulfilment of the national life. That is what we seek, that is why God has sent us into the world to fulfil him."
  —Lokmanya Tilak
- "Swaraj as the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of the Satyuga or national greatness, the resumption by her of her great role of the teacher and guide, self-liberation of the people for final fulfilment of the vedantic ideal in politics, this is the true Swaraj for India."
  —Aurobindo Ghosh
- "The Government of India Act, 1919 forged fresh fetters for the people."
  —S.C. Bose
- "The dyarchy of the double executive was open to almost every theoretical objection that the armoury of political philosophy can supply."
  —P.E. Roberts
- "The Montford Reforms… were only a method of furthering draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude."
  —M.K. Gandhi

Summary

- **Introduction**
  The foundation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 was the first organised expression of Indian nationalism. Modern Indian nationalism arose to meet the challenge of foreign domination.

- **Factors responsible for the rise and growth of nationalism**
  (i) Political and administrative unification of India due to introduction of a uniform administrative system.
  (ii) Development of modern means of transport and communication.
  (iii) Impact of modern western education.
  (iv) Role of press and vernacular literature.
  (v) Emergence and role of the middle class.
  (vi) Impact of international events.
  (vii) Rediscovery of India's past and cultural nationalism.
  (viii) Reaction against British policy of racial discrimination.
  (ix) Lytton's repressive measures and Ilbert Bill controversy.
  (x) Economic critique of British colonialsim.

- **Historiographical profile of Indian nationalism** Broadly, six approaches or schools of thought on the Indian National Movement (INM)
  (a) **Imperialist School:** Denial of existence of colonialism as a socio-economic and political structure in India.
  (b) **The Cambridge School:** Views Gandhi, Nehru and Patel as chief 'political brokers'.
  (c) **The Nationalist School:** Views INM as a movement of the people, but undermines the secondary contradictions within the Indian society.
  (d) **The Marxist School:** Perceives INM as a 'structured bourgeois movement' and ignores its all-class character.
  (e) **Sub-altern School:** Denounces all previous historical writings as elitist historiography and glorifies all forms of 'popular' militancy.
  (f) **Bipan Chandra and Others:** INM was basically a product of fundamental contradiction between the interest of British colonialism and that of the Indians. Indian nationalism had a certain specific strategy of struggle within which its various forms and phases were integrated.

- **Social background of early nationalism**
  (i) Role of the peasants and artisans in anti-imperialist struggles.
  (ii) Rise of labour militancy.
  (iii) Resistance of the Indian bourgeois against White collective monopoly.
  (iv) Major role played by the middle class section of people, especially the educated middle class or the intelligentsia.

- **Formation of regional political organisations**
  Though regional and limited, these organisations served as articulate exponents of all-India unity and prepared the people to accept INC as a representative national forum.

- **Foundation of the Indian National Congress**
  (i) The Congress was founded by A.O. Hume in 1885 at Bombay. The first session was presided over by W.C. Bannerji and attended by 72 delegates from all over India.
  (ii) Myth of the safety valve and exaggeration of personal role of Hume in founding the Congress.

- **Moderate Phase (1855-1905)**
  (i) Laid the ideological foundation of the Indian national movement.
  (ii) Objectives, main demands, social base, leadership, methods of struggle of the moderates reveal that their main contribution was exposing the true character of British imperialism in India.

Summary

► **Extremist Phase (1905-1919)**

(i) A new phase of radical nationanalism began roughly during the beginning of the 20th century and more intensely after 1905.

(ii) Causes of rise of extremism—failure of moderate politics, emergence of new leadership, influence of international events, economic distress, growing realisation of the evil character of British rule, and Curzon's unpopular measures especially the partition of Bengal (July 1905).

(iii) Emergence of an anti-partition movement (1905-11) which spread beyond Bengal, and promoted swadeshi, boycott and national education. The prominent leaders were Aurobindo Ghosh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal who were popularly known as 'Lal-Bal-Pal'.

(iv) Though there were several limitations, the extremist era prepared a base for the rise of revolutionary terrorism.

► **Other Developments (1905-1919)**

- **Indian Council Act of 1909** Also known as Morley-Minto Reforms aimed at placating the Moderates, the Act sowed the seeds of 'divide and rule' policy by introducing separate electorates for the Muslims.
- **Provisions of Act of 1909:**
  (a) Introduction of an element of direct elections to Legislative Councils
  (b) Introduction of separate electorate for the Muslims (Communal Electorates)
  (c) Enlargement of the Provincial Legislative Councils and removal of official majority in them.
  (d) Retention of official majority in Imperial Legislative Council.
  (e) Increase in the deliberative functions of the Councils at both levels.
  (f) Majority of the non-officials at both levels were still indirectly elected.
- **Home Rule Movement and Lucknow Pact (1916)** Under the leadership of Annie Besant and B.G. Tilak, the Home Rule Movement was the most significant political development during the War-years. The HRM created a generation of ardent nationalists who formed the backbone of the national movement in later years. The Congress and the Muslim League came together at the Lucknow session in 1916 resolving their differences.
- **Government of India Act (1919)** Also known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, Provisions of Act of 1919 were:
  (a) Introduction of Dyarchy in the provinces and division of provincial subjects into 'Reserved' and 'Transferred' subjects.
  (b) Relaxation of central control over the provinces through 'Devolution Rules' which categorised the subjects of administration into two groups, viz., central and provincial. This devolution of powers to the provinces should not be mistaken for a federal distribution on powers for the provinces, i.e., as constitutional division.
  (c) Central legislature became bicameral consisting of Councils of States and Legislative Assembly and became more representative by removing the official majority and increasing non-official directly elected majority.
  (d) The salaries of the Secretary of State for India and his assistants to be paid out of the British revenues, not out of Indian revenues.
  (e) Appointment of a High Commissioner of India at London responsible to Indian Government and paid by it to look after the commercial interests of the Indian government and education of Indian students in England.

CHAPTER 11

Nationalism Under Gandhi's Leadership

GANDHI'S NATIONALISM, POPULAR APPEAL AND METHODS OF MASS MOBILISATION

The entry of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi into the mainstream freedom struggle of India proved to be a turning point. Hereafter the national movement acquired certain distinct ideological and methodological orientation under his leadership. In a short span of time he became not only the undisputed leader of the Congress but also a universal leader with strong mass appeal. His life, his thought and his manner of functioning considerably influenced almost all aspects of Indian society and its people. His credential as a leader rested on his unique capacity to arouse and unite all sections of the Indian people.

While the Moderate nationalists in the late 19th century successfully evolved a complex understanding of colonial economy and the Extremists in the early 20th century, gave birth to politics of struggle against colonialism, it was in the Gandhian phase that a better understanding and practice of the dialectic between the masses and the leaders or between spontaneity and organisation were evolved. It was Gandhi who reached out to the masses, mobilised them, and based the national movement on the basic formulation that the masses are the subjects and not objects of politics. The bedrock of his politics was immense faith in the capacity of the masses to fight with fearlessness, a self-sacrificing spirit, courage and moral strength. He clearly realised that a mass movement had to be based on the active participation of the people; it could not be sustained only by the highly motivated cadre of the movement. It was only with "the might of the dumb millions" that the British rulers could be challenged. Gandhi believed that leaders could not create movements on their own; movements were created by the people. The people moved towards a movement on their own; leaders could lead it only when they correctly gauged the people's mood. He repeatedly asserted that no leadership could manipulate the people any way it wanted and that people and their politics had an autonomy of their own to which leaders had to relate in a positive manner. At the same time, however, Gandhi always maintained that leadership was essential to any mass movement and that no mass movement could be waged without a strong leadership which commanded the essential loyalty and obedience of the rank and file. On the one hand, he emphasised the role of free expression and democratic functioning within the Congress Party; on the other hand, he stressed the role of discipline. A mass movement, he said, was like waging a war—a satyagrahi must act like a soldier of the non-violent army. Ordinary people could become a political and historical force only through discipline. The people must exercise the democratic right of choosing and changing their leaders. But they must not expect a leader to accept their uninformed dictation. A leader must lead; he must not agree to be pushed from behind by the crowd. People should expect the leader to sometimes take unpopular decisions.

Gandhi's understanding of the relation between leaders and followers and spontaneity and organisation can also be seen in the style and

conduct of the mass movements that he organised. He carefully prepared each movement politically and ideologically and was meticulous in gauging the extent of the people's readiness for struggle. The tempo of the movement was developed in close correspondence with the rising tempo of the people's feelings, and the higher-level leaders, the lower-level leaders and activists (cadre) were gradually unified into a homogenous and well-disciplined mass. Every effort was made to politically isolate the colonial rulers not only from the supporters of the Congress but also from non-Congress groups and persons. The nature of demands put forward was basically geared to the widest possible mobilisation of the people.

Another important aspect of Gandhian politics was the effort to win over or neutralise sections of British society. Instead of projecting the British people as enemies, Gandhi made a sharp distinction between the colonial rulers and the British people. In this case a disjunction was sought to be created between the British people and their political rulers who were maintaining or supporting colonialism in India.

Gandhi's conception of the relation between the leaders and the led produced two important consequences, says Bipan Chandra. It led to very healthy and democratic relations between the different levels of leaders themselves without relying on bureaucratic hierarchy and subordination. They were based on equality, comradeship, mutual regard, division of functions and authority which was not hierarchical, and full freedom to express differing or opposite views. The view, put forward by some neocolonial historians, that these relations were of the patron-client variety is not sustained by detailed historical research.

Methods of Mass Mobilisation

The Gandhian form of struggle proved quite effective and successful as a method of mass mobilisation. It evolved in South Africa in the context of racialism and was nurtured in India in the context of an alien rule. It involved a careful training of disciplined cadres (as in the Phoenix Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm), non-violent satyagraha involving peaceful violation of specific laws (compulsory registration, entry permits, trade licences, etc.), mass courting of arrests, and occasional hartals and spectacular marches. It included a combination of apparently quixotic methods, observes Sumit Sarkar, with meticulous attention to organisational and financial details; a readiness for negotiations and compromise even at the cost of abrupt unilateral withdrawals; and the cultivation of Gandhian 'fads' (vegetariansism, nature therapy, experiments in sexual self-restraint). The idea was to draw in the masses while, at the same time, keeping mass activity strictly pegged down to certain forms predetermined by the leader, and to the methods of non-violence. Besides the advocation of the policy of the satyagraha, Gandhi also spoke about the importance of strengthening the Indian society. He explained his programme for doing so by pointing to the five fingers of his hand, as a way of exhorting the people to practise five virtues—spinning, removal of untouchability, sobriety (non-consumption of alcohol or opium), Hindu-Muslim amity and equality for women. His efforts were responsible for making the Congress movement a mass movement and, at the same time, strengthening the organisation and making its constitution more democratic. As a part of his political strategy, Gandhi, many a times, restrained mass movements, yet he retained his popularity among the masses.

Popular Perceptions of Gandhi

The enormous influence that Gandhi came to wield upon the hearts and minds of Indians, particularly rural Indians, cannot be explained purely by what he as a personality thought, stood for, or actually did, says Sumit Sarkar. Here, the role of rumour in a predominantly illiterate society going through a period of acute strain and tensions must be taken into account. "From out of their misery and hope, varied sections of the Indian people seem to have fashioned their own images of Gandhi, particularly in the earlier days when he was still to most people a distant, vaguely-glimpsed or heard-of tale of a holy man with miracle-working powers. Thus, peasants could imagine that Gandhi would end zamindari exploitation, agricultural labourers of UP believed that he would 'provide holdings for them' (Viceroy Reading to the Secretary of State, October 13, 1921, *Reading Collection*), and Assam tea coolies left the plantations *en masse* in May 1921 saying that they were obeying Gandhi's orders. A CID report on the kisan movement in Allahabad district in January 1921 makes the same point in vivid detail: 'The currency which Mr Gandhi's name has acquired even in the remotest

villages is astonishing. No one seems to know quite who or what he is, but it is an accepted fact that what he says is so, and what he orders must be done. He is a Mahatma, or sadhu, a Pundit, a Brahman who lives at Allahabad, even at Deota…the real power of his name is perhaps to be traced back to the idea that it was he who got *bedakhli* (illegal eviction) stopped in Pratapgarh…That a Gandhi-type leadership with strong religious overtones was something like a historical necessity in this period is indicated, as we shall see, by the emergence of a number of somewhat similar regional or local leaders in the early 1920s: Swami Viswananda and Swami Darshanananda among Bengal and Bihar miners, Swami Vidyananda in north Bihar, Baba Ramachandra in Pratapgarh, Swami Kumarananda in Rajasthan, Ananda Swami in Maharashtra, Alluri Sitaram Raju among the 'Rampa' tribals of Andhra." (*Modern India,* 1885-1947, Sumit Sarkar). But they were at the same time attributing their own achievements to Gandhi—the restricting of *bedakhli* in Pratapgarh, for instance, had little to do with Gandhi's efforts and it owed more to the peasant struggle under local leaders like Baba Ramachandra. The peasants needed to be represented by a saviour from above, and the Mahatma filled the need. The subsequent growth of Gandhian Congress in terms of organisation and discipline reined in the millenarian impulses of the rural people in a big way. However, a kind of inverse relationship between organisational power and the strength of elemental, often violent and radical, popular outbursts would establish itself as a recurring pattern in Gandhian movements.

Views of Bipan Chandra

Bipan Chandra, while analysing the long-term strategy of the national movement and the role of Gandhi's political style of mass mobilisation in it, says that though elements of the nationalist strategy were more or less evolved during the moderate and the extremist phase of the freedom struggle, the national movement was structured and came to fruition only under Gandhi's political practice during the 1920-47 period. Many social scientists and historians have tended to concentrate on Gandhi's philosophy of life which in fact had only a limited impact on the people. It was as a political leader and through his political strategy and forms of struggle that Gandhi moved millions into political action.

Hegemonic Struggle

The Gandhian strategy was based on a thorough understanding of the nature and character of British rule as well as the nature and limits of popular resistance. Gandhi launched a 'hegemonic struggle' to win the minds and hearts of the common masses and instill in them a nationalist and patriotic consciousness through different channels during the different stages of the national movement. He realised that the effectiveness and validity of his method of struggle was based on the participation of the masses who were to be politicised and activised. The political passivity of the masses especially in the villages had been consciously inculcated and nurtured by the colonial authorities to establish stability of the colonial rule. So Gandhi, through his mass movements (in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s), brought the masses from remote corners of the country into the vortex of nationalist politics. As Gandhi repeatedly declared, people "can have swaraj for the asking when they have attained the power to take it". He directly or indirectly tried to undermine the twin notions of 'benevolence' and 'invincibility' of the British rule. The process of undermining the notion of British 'benevolence' and creating an intellectual framework for it was initiated and performed brilliantly by Moderate leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, Justice Ranade and others. This framework was carried to the lower middle classes by the Extremists and to the masses by Gandhi.

Notions of Benevolence and Invincibility

The notion of invincibility was challenged by the sturdily independent newspapers of the late 19th century, leaders like Gokhale and Pheroze Shah Mehta in the legislative councils, the bold propaganda of Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh and other Extremist leaders, and the death-defying deeds of the revolutionary terrorists. But it was the law-breaking mass movements of the post-1918 period under the leadership of Gandhi which basically performed the task among the masses. These movements aimed at destroying the notion that British rule could not be challenged and inculcated the notion that no people could be ruled without their consent. Gandhi was immensely successful in arousing in the people the qualities

of fearlessness and courage, and the capacity to fight and make sacrifices.

Another aspect of the Gandhian strategy was the long-drawn-out character of the hegemonic struggle in which a phase of vigorous extra legal mass movement and open confrontation with the colonial authority was followed by a phase during which direct confrontation was withdrawn, and political concession, if any, was wrested from the colonial regime, says Bipan Chandra. During the latter phase, the more 'passive phase', intense political and ideological work was carried on among the masses within the existing legal and constitutional framework, and forces were gathered for another mass movement at a higher level. All the three Gandhian mass movements (the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement) exhibited this pattern. The culmination of this strategy came with a call for 'Quit India' and the achievement of independence. Both the phases of the Gandhian movement were utilised, each in its own way, to undermine colonial hegemony, to recruit and train nationalist workers, and to build up the people's capacity to struggle. The strategic perspective that there should be two types of phases of the national movement was also based on the perception that though a mass movement needed a 'standing army' or 'steel frame' of whole-time political workers, it could not be based only on them. Its real striking power could come only from the masses. The Gandhian leadership and methodology produced thousands of these whole-time workers who devoted their entire lives to the freedom struggle.

Long-drawn Pattern

Still another dimension of the Gandhian method of mass mobilisation was the Constructive Programme. It was organised primarily around the promotion of khadi, spinning and village industries, national education, Hindu-Muslim unity, the struggle against untouchability and the social upliftment of Harijans, and the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. The programme played a crucial role during the 'passive' or non-mass movement phase in filling the political space left vacant by withdrawal of civil disobedience. It solved the basic problem that a mass movement faces—the sustenance of a sense of activism during the non-mass movement phase of the struggle. The constructive programme involved millions of people as it was within their reach unlike the parliamentary efforts and intellectual work carried on which could be done only by a few. The hard core of constructive workers provided a large cadre for the civil disobedience movement and these workers were Gandhi's 'steel frame' or 'standing army'.

Constructive Programme

Gandhi adopted *ahimsa* or non-violence as a matter of principle rather than a matter of policy. As policy and as a form of political action and behaviour, it was an essential component of the overall strategy of the Congress under Gandhi's leadership. Its adoption as a form of struggle enabled and facilitated the participation of the mass of people who could not have participated in a similar manner in a violent struggle. This was particularly true of women's participation. Women would have found it difficult to join an armed struggle in large numbers. But when it came to undergoing suffering, facing lathi-charges and picketting for hours, women were probably stronger than men.

Once the basic character and objectives of the Gandhian methodology are grasped, once it is realised that both phases of the national movement were geared to the twin tasks of winning the hearts and minds of the Indian people and making them active participants in the movement and makers of their own history, the successes and failures of the different phases of the movement have to be evaluated in a new manner. The criterion of success or failure has to be the extent to which the colonial hegemony over the Indian people was undermined and the people were politicised and prepared for struggle. Judged in this light, it should be clarified that these objectives were progressively achieved through successive waves of mass movements alternating with phases of truce. Even when mass movements were suppressed (1932, 1942), were withdrawn (1922), were ignored and suppressed (1940-41), or ended in compromise (1930-31) and were apparently defeated in terms of their stated objective of winning freedom, these movements were a great success in terms of hegemony, and marked leaps in mass political consciousness. (Bipan Chandra, et al, *India's Struggle for Independence*)

Women's Participation

In this chapter we shall discuss Gandhi's early career in South Africa and his ideas in the first section and then deal with his leadership in the

three mass movements during the post-1920 period in the second section.

Gandhi's Early Life

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar, a small coastal town in Kathiawar, Gujarat. He was the fourth and last child of his father's fourth and last marriage. His father, Karamchand Gandhi (called Kaba), was a hereditary *diwan* or prime minister for twenty-eight years in the states of Rajkot, Porbandar and Wankaner. He was a man who had who earned a name for his uprightness. His mother, Putlibai, was an orthodox, good-natured lady. The Gandhi family belonged to the vaishya or merchant caste and was closely connected with the sect of the Jains, with whom *ahimsa* or non-violence is a cardinal principle. At the age of seven, he was sent to school and at twelve, he married Kasturba, who was affectionately nicknamed 'Ba'. He went to England for his studies in 1881, offered the London Matriculation, and qualified for the Bar in 1891. Gandhi then returned to India, and set up practice at the Bombay High Court. Failing to make a success as a lawyer, he shifted to Rajkot where petition-writing brought him a monthly income of about Rs 300. In 1893, Gandhi sailed to Durban in South Africa in connection with a legal case of Dada Abdulla and Co., an Indian firm that traded in that country.

South African Experiences

A series of experiences in South Africa were to influence Gandhi profoundly and mould his life. Gandhi was also unique in that he was the first Indian barrister, the first highly-educated Indian, to have gone to South Africa. Indian immigration into South Africa had begun in 1890 when the White settlers recruited indentured Indian labour from south India to work on the sugar plantations, and Indian Muslim merchants followed. The third group of Indians comprised ex-indentured labourers, who had settled down in South Africa after the expiry of their contract, and their children, many of whom were born in South Africa itself. These Indians were not educated, and certainly not English-educated, with even the wealthy merchants often knowing just enough English to carry on their trade. They silently accepted the racial discrimination to which they were subjected as part of their daily existence.

Racial Humiliation

Gandhi, the son of a *diwan* of an Indian state whose family was widely respected in Kathiawar, was not used to swallowing racial insults. He had never, whether in India or England, come in contact with the overt racism that confronted him within days of his arrival in South Africa. Journeying from Durban to Pretoria, he faced his first racial humiliation when he was bundled out of a first-class compartment by a White man and left to spend the night in the waiting room. He was also made to travel in the driver's box in a coach for which he had bought a first-class ticket. When he ignored the coach leader's order to vacate even that seat and sit on the footboard, he was beaten up. He could not get a room to stay in any of the hotels in Johannesburg. After quoting from railway regulations, he finally succeeded in securing a first-class ticket from Johannesburg to Pretoria. He was almost pushed out again from this railway compartment but was saved from further humiliation when a European passenger intervened. On arriving in Pretoria to work on the civil suit that had brought him to South Africa, he immediately convened a meeting of Indians and offered to teach English to anybody who wanted to learn, suggesting that they organise themselves and protest against oppression. He voiced his protest through letters to the press, like the *Natal Advertiser*. After having settled the law suit for which he had come, Gandhi prepared to leave for India, but then came the issue of the Bill to disenfranchise Indians which was in the process of being passed by the Natal legislature. Indians in South Africa persuaded Gandhi to stay for a month more and help them organise their protest as they did not know enough English to draft their own petitions. Gadhi agreed, and stayed on as the first westernised Indian in South Africa—for 20 long years. In the process, he demonstrated to the Indians there that the real reason behind Indians being discriminated lay in the assumption of racial superiority by the White rulers.

Gandhi's Political Activism in South Africa (1893-1914)

Indian Natal Organisation

Gandhi's first endeavour was to infuse a strong sense of solidarity into the heterogenous Indian community in Natal. He formed an association for the purpose in 1893. It was known as the 'Indian Natal Organisation'. With this began the 'moderate phase' of the struggle of the South African Indians, says Bipan Chandra in *India's Struggle for Independence.*

Gandhi sent petitions and memorials to the South African legislatures, the Colonial Secretary in London, and the British Parliament. He attempted to unite the different sections of Indians and give their demands wide publicity, so that the British sense of justice and fair play was aroused and the Imperial government intervened on the behalf of Indians, who were British subjects after all. His first act of struggle was the agitation organised against a proposed Bill of the Natal Government to disfranchise Indians. About 400 Indians living in Natal submitted a petition against the Bill, which, however, was still passed by the Natal legislature. Gandhi sent a long petition signed by 10,000 Indians to the Colonial Secretary in England with the appeal that the Queen should not approve the Bill. In view of strong opposition the Colonial office in London vetoed the Bill on the ground that it discriminated against the inhabitants of another part of the British Empire. Far from being disheartened, however, the Europeans of Natal obtained their object by passing the Bill in an amended form. According to the new Bill, "No native of countries (not of European origin) which had not hitherto possessed elective institutions founded on parliamentary franchise were to be placed on voters' list unless they obtained exception from the Governor-General." The amended Bill was finally approved.

Gandhi faced much hostility and even the wrath of the Europeans for his efforts. In 1896, a mob of 4,000 Europeans assembled at the Natal port to oppose Gandhi's return from India. He was later attacked by some Europeans, but was saved by the wife of a senior police official. Gandhi carried on his campaign and, on his next visit to India, attended the Congress session at Calcutta where he successfully piloted a resolution on the condition of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi returned to South Africa in 1902 and stayed there continuously for 12 years fighting against racial discrimination.

Indian Opinion

He started a paper called *Indian Opinion* in 1903 which became a mouthpiece of his struggle. In 1904, Gandhi and a select band of associates shifted to a place called Phoenix near Durban and lived a communal life with simplicity. The inhabitants at Phoenix later became the main participants in Gandhi's satyagraha.

The second phase of the struggle in South Africa began in 1906 and was characterised by the use of the method of passive resistance or civil disobedience, which Gandhi named satyagraha. It was first used when the Transvaal government enacted legislation making it compulsory for Indians to take out certificates of registration which held their fingerprints. Whoever failed to register before a certain date was to be considered guilty of an offence for which he could be punished or deported. An Indian could be asked to produce his registration certificate at any time, and the police could enter an Indian's house to check his papers. At a huge public meeting held on September 11, 1906, in the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg, Indians resolved that they would refuse to submit to this law. In face of an adamant government, Gandhi formed the Passive Resistance Association to conduct his campaign. The last date for registration being over, proceedings were started against Gandhi and 26 others. The passive resisters pleaded guilty, were ordered to leave the country, and sent to jail when they refused to do so. Others followed; their numbers swelled to 155, and the fear of being put in jail disappeared.

Passive Resistance Association

General Smuts called Gandhi for talks, promising to withdraw the legislation if Indians voluntarily agreed to register themselves, and, in turn, Gandhi accepted the proposition and was the first to register. But Smuts then ordered that voluntary registrations be ratified under the law, and the Indians retaliated by publicly burning their registration certificates.

Meanwhile the Transvaal government enacted an immigration law which aimed at excluding new immigrants from India, and Gandhi extended his campaign to oppose this law as well. In August 1908, a number of prominent Indians from Natal crossed the frontier into Transvaal to defy the new immigration laws. They were arrested. Other Indians from Transvaal opposed the laws by hawking without a licence, even as traders who had licences refused to produce them. All of them were jailed. Gandhi himself landed in jail in October 1908 and had to endure a harsh prison term, along with other Indians. Imprisonment, however, failed to crush the spirit of the resisters, and the poorer among them were deported. The economic interests of merchants were threatened too. At this stage, the movement reached an impasse with the majority of satyagrahis showing signs of fatigue. A small

Tolstoy Farm

band of satyagrahis, however, continued to court imprisonment. The funds for supporting the families of the satyagrahis and for running *Indian Opinion* were running out, Gandhi's own legal practice having virtually ceased since 1906. Gandhi set up 'Tolstoy Farm' during this period to house the families of the satyagrahis and give them a means to sustain themselves, and the funds were provided by his German architect friend, Kallenbach. 'Tolstoy Farm' was to become the precursor of the later Gandhian ashrams that played a very important role in the Indian national movement. Some funds were provided by rich Indians like Sir Ratan Tata who sent Rs 25,000 for the purpose, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and by the Congress and the Muslim League.

Struggle Against Poll Tax

In 1911, to honour the coronation of King George V, an agreement was reached between the government and the Indians in South Africa. But it was only a short-lived agreement: it lasted only till the end of 1912. Meanwhile, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who was on a visit to South Africa, was treated as a government guest and given a promise that all discriminatory laws against Indians would be removed. When the government went back on the promise, satyagraha was resumed in 1913. This time the movement was widened to include resistance to the poll tax of three pounds that was imposed on all ex-indentured Indians. The tax weighed heavily on poor labourers whose wages hardly averaged ten shillings a month, and so the movement against it drew the indentured and ex-indentured labourers into the struggle. Passions raged when a judgement of the Supreme Court invalidated all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites and not registered by the Registrar of Marriages. It implied that Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages were illegal and children born through these marriages were illegitimate. Indians felt the judgement insulted the honour of Indian women, and many of them were drawn into the movement as a result. Gandhi launched the campaign with a march from Phoenix Settlement in Natal to Transvaal which involved a group of 16 satyagrahis, including Kasturba, his wife. They were immediately arrested. A group of women then marched from Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal and crossed the border into Natal without a permit, and reached New Castle, a mining town. Speaking to the mostly Tamil Indian mine workers in the town, they persuaded them to go on strike.

On reaching New Castle, Gandhi took charge of the agitation. The employers in turn cut off water and electricity to the workers' quarters, and forced them to leave their homes. An army of 2,000 men, women and children marched over the border and they, along with Gandhi himself, maintained a high morale even in face of impending imprisonment. In jail, the satyagrahis were starved and whipped, and forced to work in the mines by mounted military police. Gandhi had to dig stones and sweep the compound, was kept in a dark cell, and was taken to court handcuffed and manacled. In retaliation, workers on the plantations and mines went on a lightning strike. Gokhale toured India to arouse Indian public opinion against the cruelty towards Indians in South Africa, and even India's Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, condemning the repression as uncivilised, called for an impartial enquiry into the charges of atrocities. Most people were shocked by the use of brutal force on unarmed and peaceful satyagrahis. A series of negotiations involving Gandhi, Lord Hardinge, C.F. Andrews and General Smuts led to an agreement by which the government of South Africa conceded the major Indian demands relating to the poll tax, the registration certificates and marriages solemnised according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the issue of Indian immigration more sympathetically.

Gandhi was no firebrand revolutionary professing hatred of British rule and, till 1906, had a deep faith in the British sense of justice and fair play. He even helped the British government during the Boer War (1899) against South Africa by organising an Indian Ambulance Corps. But Gandhi became disenchanted with the British when he found that they were deaf to his pleas for bettering the plight of Indians and they were not in favour of redressing the grievances of Indians. It was then that he turned to satyagraha. Nevertheless, his loyalty to the empire did not end, and he believed that one day Britain might enact the principles in South Africa which it subscribed to in theory.

The South African experience was the turning point in Gandhi's life as it was here that the blueprint for the Gandhian method of struggle

evolved. The 'experiment' was now to be tried on a much wider scale on the Indian subconti-nent.

Significance of the South African Experience

It prepared Gandhi for the leadership of the Indian national struggle and built up his faith in the capacity of the Indian masses to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them, as Bipan Chandra observes. The Indians that he led in South Africa belonged to diverse social groups—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis; they were drawn from regions like Tamil Nadu and Gujarat and belonged to varied social strata that included both rich merchants and indentured labourers. Women participated in the struggle along with men. It was in South Africa that Gandhi learnt that leadership involves facing the ire not only of the enemy but also of one's followers. A white mob chased him down a street in Durban in 1896 once and surrounded the house where he was staying, asking for his blood; he had to flee in disguise. In another incident, Gandhi was attacked by an Indian, a Pathan, who was angry with him because of an agreement he had reached with the government. These were learning experiences for Gandhi, who, in South Africa, evolved his style of politics and leadership, and tried out new techniques of struggle until he had perfected the Gandhian method. Sumit Sarkar points out that his experience in South Africa made Gandhi into potentially a much more of an all-India figure from the beginning of his work in India than any other politician, all the others like Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal having a regional base. Gandhi also recognised the possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity in South Africa, where Muslim merchants had been very active. Moreover, South Africa made him something of an international celebrity, while the connections which many South African Indians still had with their original home helped to spread Gandhi's name throughout India.

Gandhi's Arrival in India

Gandhi returned to India in January 1915 after having achieved a number of successes in South Africa. Smuts' Indian Relief Act of June 1914 abolished the three-pound poll tax on all ex-indentured Indians and recognised Indian marriages. Discrimination against Indians was, however, still rampant and the broader question of white racist exploitation of Indians and Africans alike had hardly been touched upon as yet. In India, Gandhi received a warm welcome not only from educated Indians, but also from the masses (on a visit to the Kumbh Mela at Hardwar, he found that people flocked to him for his 'darshan'). Gokhale said of Gandhi at this time: "He has in him the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and martyrs." On the advice of Gokhale, his political guru, and in keeping with his own style of never intervening in a situation without first studying it with great care, Gandhi decided that he would not take a public stand on any political issue for the first year. He spent the year travelling around India and in organising his ashram in Ahmedabad where he and his band of followers would lead a community life. He maintained his distance from political affairs like the Home Rule movement launched in 1916. He was trying to formulate a new mode of struggle during this period, having lost his faith in the 'Moderate' methods of prayers and petitions, though he did not agree with the Home Rulers that the best time to agitate for Home Rule was when the British were in difficulty at the time of the First World War. He felt that the only viable method of political struggle was satyagraha. He also made it clear that he could only join an organisation or movement that adopted non-violent satyagraha as its method of struggle.

Rise of Gandhi in Indian Politics

Gandhi did not remain politically idle immediately after his return from South Africa. During the course of 1917 and early 1918, he was involved in

Local Movements 1917-1918

three significant struggles—in Champaran in Bihar, and in Ahmedabad and in Kheda in Gujarat. His involvement in these struggles led Gandhi to acquire the reputation of a man who would take up local wrongs (of Champaran indigo cultivators, Ahmedabad textile workers and Kheda peasants) and usually manage to do something concrete about them—a political style in sharp contrast to the established Congress (and Home Rule League) pattern of starting with somewhat abstract all-India issues or programmes and proceeding from top downwards. According to Judith Brown, the main importance of these early movements that involved Gandhi lay in the recruitment of 'sub-contractors' who would serve

as his lifelong lieutenants—Rajendra Prasad, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, and J.B. Kirpalani in Champaran, and Vallabhbhai Patel, Mahadev Desai, Indulal Yajnik and Shankarlal Banker in Ahmedabad and Kheda. But this is too simplistic an explanation, and the victories in all these cases ultimately paved the way for Gandhi's emergence as an all-India leader.

Champaran (1917)

Champaran in the Tirhut division of north Bihar had a long history of anti-planter discontent and agitation. In early 19th century, European planters had involved the cultivators in agreements that forced them to cultivate indigo on 3/20th of their holdings (known as the *tinkathia* system). The late 19th century saw German synthetic dyes forcing indigo out of the market, and the European planters of Champaran, keen to release the cultivators from the obligation of cultivating indigo, secured enhancements in rent and other illegal dues as a price for the release. Some slight modifications were made in the *tinkathia* system in 1908, but they failed to bring about any material change in the degrading condition of the tenants. Exactions of the planters continued till Raj Kumar Shukla, a peasant of the region, persuaded Gandhi to come to Champaran to investigate the problem. Gandhi arrived in Bihar and started making investigations in person. On reaching Motihari, the headquarters of Champaran district, he was served with an order to quit Champaran as he was regarded "a danger to public peace". In an unusual move, Gandhi decided to disobey the order "out of a sense of public responsibility". To offer passive resistance or civil disobedience to an unjust order was indeed novel. The Government of India, not willing to make an issue of it and not yet used to treating Gandhi as a rebel, ordered the Bihar government to retreat and allow Gandhi to proceed with his enquiry.

Tinkathia System

While investigating the peasants' grievances, Gandhi and his colleagues, who now included Brij Kishore, Rajendra Prasad and other members of the Bihar intelligentsia, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh and J.B. Kirpalani, toured the villages from dawn to dusk, recording the statements of peasants and interrogating them to make sure that they gave correct information. Peasants were mobilised in large numbers and the crucial mediating role in peasant mobilisation (according to a study by Jacques Pouchepadass) was played not so much by Gandhian converts from the small-town intelligentsia mentioned above, but by a somewhat lower stratum of rich and middle peasants like Rajkumar Shukla, local mahajans and traders who resented planter competition in moneylending and trade, and a few village *mukhtars* (attorneys) and school teachers (Pir Muhammad, Harbans Sahai). The government appointed a commission of inquiry, the Champaran Agrarian Committee, to go into the whole issue, and nominated Gandhi as one of its members. Armed with evidence collected from 8,000 peasants, Gandhi convinced the commission to abolish *tinkathia* and compensate the peasants for the illegal enhancement of their dues. As a compromise with the planters, he agreed that they refund only 25 per cent of the money they had taken illegally from the peasants. The psychological impact of Champaran was greater than any concrete activities carried out. A raiyat (or ryot), comparing Gandhi with Ramachandra, declared before the enquiry committee that tenants would "not fear the *Rakhshasa*-planters now that Gandhi was there".

Champaran Agrarian Committee

Kheda (1918)

The Gandhian intervention proved much more of a permanent success at Kheda district of Gujarat. Most of Kheda was a fertile tract and the crop of foodgrains, tobacco and cotton produced here had a sizeable market in Ahmedabad. There were many rich peasant proprietors called *patidars* drawn from the *Kanbi* caste, and a large number of small peasants and landless labourers. Many *patidars* had gone to South Africa as traders, and had had a primary education at least. A late 19th century 'golden age' in Kheda was succeeded by repeated famine and plague after 1899, making revenue payments (rarely ever reduced) very difficult. The 'lesser *patidars*' who lived in villages and occupied a lower position in the marriage network within the caste, were the worst affected, for the superior *patidars* could accumulate extra wealth through dowries or could be employed in the civil service of the nearby Baroda state. The lesser *patidars* were the ones to provide the most important support to Gandhian nationalism.

The Patidars Class

In 1917, excessive rain damaged the kharif crop in Kheda. This, and an increase in the price of kerosene, iron, cloth and salt, led to an increase in the cost of living for the peasantry. Meanwhile the low-caste *baraiyas* whom the Kheda *patidars* employed as farm labourers had successfully got a wage rise. Peasants demanded the remission of land revenue; the revenue code, in fact, provided for total remission if the crops were less than 25 per cent of the normal production. The government did not agree with the findings of two Bombay barristers, V.J. Patel and G.K. Parekh, that a major portion of the crop was damaged. After an enquiry into the state of crop in Kheda the Collector decided that there was no justification for the remission of land revenue. The official contention was that the agitation, far from being a spontaneous expression of peasant discontent, was started by 'outsiders' or members of the Home Rule League and the Gujarat Sabha of which Gandhi was the president at that time. But the initiative for no-revenue really came not from Gandhi or Ahmedabad politicians, but from local village leaders like Mohanlal Pandya of Kapadvanj taluka in Kheda in November 1917. Gandhi maintained that the officials had over-valued the crops and the cultivators were entitled to a suspension of revenue as a legal right and not as a concession by grace. After a good deal of hesitation he decided to launch a satyagraha movement on March 22, 1918, at a meeting at Nadiad, where he urged the peasants not to pay their land revenue. Sumit Sarkar says that the delay proved unwise, as by then the poorer peasants had already been coerced to pay up revenue, and a good rabi crop had weakened the case for remissions. Kheda, the first real Gandhian peasant satyagraha in India, proved a patchy affair of sorts, affecting only 70 villages out of 559, and having to be called off in June after only a token concession. This was so because the peasants of Kheda, already weakened by plague, high prices and drought, were beginning to show signs of weakness when Gandhi came to know that the government had issued secret instructions directing that revenue should be recovered only from peasants who could pay. A public declaration of this decision was not made as it would have meant a blow to government prestige since this was exactly what Gandhi had been demanding. The movement was then withdrawn.

Causes

First Gandhian Peasant Satyagraha

Kheda became notable for becoming a solid Gandhian base in Gujarat owing to sustained village work, particularly in the Anand and Borsad talukas of the rich tobacco and dairy-farming Charotar tract of Kheda, and Bardoli taluka of Surat. The influence of Gandhi was strong among the *patidars* owing both to their shared traditional Vaishnava-*bhakti* base, and the fact that as property-owners the *patidars* did not want a violent revolution. That the *patidars* had a mind of their own, and were not simply responding to strings pulled by Gandhi's 'sub-contractors', was proved by the extremely poor response that Gandhi and his followers obtained in Kheda for their war recruitment campaign in early 1918. But Kheda certainly helped Gandhi in broadening his social base in Gujarat.

Kheda—A Strong Gandhian Base

Ahmedabad Mills Strike (1918)

While the Champaran and Kheda movements were directed against White planters and revenue authorities, Gandhi's intervention in Ahmedabad in February-March 1918 was in the context of a purely internal conflict between Gujarati mill-owners and their workers. The textile magnate Ambalal Sarabhai had been an early contributor to the Sabarmati ashram finances and his sister Anasuya Behn had become a Gandhian, visiting Kheda during the satyagraha and starting night schools among mill-workers. The dispute lay in the mill-owners' attempt to end a 'plague bonus' once the epidemic had passed (a virulent plague that killed 22,996 people had struck Ahmedabad in 1917-18) and the workers' insistence that it should stay, since the enhancement (the bonus included) hardly compensated for the rise in the cost of living during the First World War. Gandhi persuaded the mill-owners and the workers to agree to arbitration by a tribunal, but the mill-owners took advantage of a stray strike and withdrew from the agreement. They offered a 20 per cent bonus and threatened to dismiss those workers who would not accept it.

Causes of Strike

The strike began, and Gandhi addressed the workers every day on the banks of the Sabarmati river. In his daily news bulletin, he insisted that there would

be no violence against employers or blacklegs. Anasuya Behn supported Gandhi in the struggle in which her brother was one of the main adversaries. After a few days, the workers began to exhibit signs of weariness. The attendance at the daily meetings flagged. In this situation, Gandhi decided to go on a fast to rally the workers and strengthen their resolve to continue—the first time that he made use of the weapon of the hunger strike (from March 15). The fast had the effect of pressurising the mill-owners into agreeing to submit the whole issue to a tribunal. (Judith Brown, quoting the District Magistrate's report, says that Gandhi had been assailed by the workers for being a friend of the mill-owners, riding in their motorcars and eating sumptuously with them. The fast was Gandhi's alleged response to the workers' taunts!) Nevertheless, the hunger-strike had the effect of winning for the workers a settlement (on March 18), according to which the workers would receive a 35 per cent wage increase on their first day, in keeping with their pledge. On the second day, they would get a 20 per cent increase offered by the millowners. From the third day until the date of an award by an arbitrator, they would split the difference and receive 27½ per cent increase. Finally the arbitrator's award favoured a 35 per cent rise for the workers. Meanwhile, the Gandhian hold on the Ahmedabad workers was consolidated through the Textile Labour Association of 1920, grounded on the philosophy of peaceful arbitration of disputes, interdependence of capital and labour, and the concept of owners being 'trustees' for the workers. Such methods became a success also owing to Gandhi's excellent personal contacts with Ahmedabad mill-owners and workers alike. However, this Gandhian model, which rejected not only politicisation along 'class-war' lines but also militant economic struggles, never spread beyond Ahmedabad. The message of class peace and mutual adjustment had much greater success among the peasantry than with the proletariat, for in the countryside exploitation could often be 'paternalistic' and issues like land revenue or salt tax provided unifying grievances.

First Hunger Strike

Textile Labour Association

Significance of the Local Movements

The Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda movements, in short, served as a demonstration of the Gandhian style and method of politics. They helped Gandhi find his feet among Indians and study their problems at close hand. These movements gave him a surer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the masses, as well as the viability of his method of struggle. Gandhi also earned the respect and commitment of an entire generation of political workers, especially the younger workers, who were impressed by his willingness to take up the cause of ordinary Indians. Finally, the success of the movements gave Gandhi the confidence to launch an all-India satyagraha for the first time against the enactment of the provocative Rowlatt Act in February 1919.

GANDHI AND HIS IDEAS

Gandhi's philosophy of life evolved out of many influences. In his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, he mentions that the outlook of his parents and the socio-religious milieu of his native place had a profound influence on him. The values of Vaishnavism and the tradition of Jainism, and Hindu texts like the *Bhagavad Gita* shaped his early thought and influenced him. The Gospels (especially the *Sermon on the Mount*) and the writings of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin were other important influences. Primarily a man of action, Gandhi's own experiences in life too helped in the evolving and shaping of his ideology.

Influences on Gandhi

There are some concepts central to Gandhian thought. All his actions are to be seen as attempts to apply these concepts in real life. "As the microcosm, so the macrocosm"—is an idea that informs all his thought and action. Principles have to be practised by oneself before one can motivate others to follow them. And, for Gandhi, the principles to be followed were *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (non-possession), *asteya* (non-stealing) and *brahmacharya* (self-control)—the cardinal observances of the satyagrahi in the quest of self-realisation.

Fundamental Principles

In evaluating the nature of Gandhian thought, Brij Kishore Goyal in *Thoughts of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore,* observes that the very nature of Gandhian thought is spiritualistic. Behind all his utterances, writings, meditations and actions in life, ran his

absolute conviction of the power of truth, love and non-violence. Gandhi believed that the spiritual side is the permanent side of human nature, for humans are constantly struggling and endeavouring to regain that peace, to find that 'kingdom of heaven' which is an essential part of their being. By following the path of truth, love and non-violence, one will get the real freedom that is one's due. Further, for Gandhi, Truth, Love and God are convertible terms: a true devotee of Truth, Gandhi maintained that God is Truth and Truth is God and also that God is Love (of humanity) and Love is God. He was concerned for all of humanity, in fact, for creation, for what seems to be existing and what our senses perceive are the manifestations of God. His love of Truth was derived from Hinduism while his innate belief in non-violence could be traced to Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity. Making *satya* and *ahimsa* the basis of the new social order that he envisaged, Mahatma Gandhi advocated that freedom for India was to be won through non-violence against, and non-cooperation with, the evil-doer. Non-violence, maintained Gandhi, is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. He held that an essential prerequisite of the policy of satyagraha (literally persistence in Truth) is fearlessness. Gandhi's success in his various campaigns in South Africa and India may be attributed to his weapon of satyagraha which sought to convert the adversary to his side. Even Gandhi's ideas on such materialistic affairs of life as the economic organisation of society, decentralisation, trusteeship, national language, machines and industry, and science and technology draw sustenance from his deeply religious or spiritual conviction. "The mundane affairs of life should be so governed, the material side of human life should be so led, the bodily requirements should be so met that man is enabled to secure the development of his spiritual side and thus achieve the spiritual freedom which alone is his goal."

Nature of Thought

The Gandhian method was empirical. According to U.S. Mohan Rao, "While Gandhiji was idealistic in his approach, he was eminently pragmatic in the translation of his ideals into practice, that while his belief in fundamental principles like truth and non-violence was unshakable, his application of these principles was governed by a continuous process of experimentation and developed by practice; and that his methods of conflict-resolution had no finality about them and could be improved by further experimentation." The methodology Gandhi adopted to develop his thought and ideas proves false the charge that Gandhi lived only in the world of ideas, and that what he uttered and wrote has no relevance whatsoever to the problems of life. As a matter of fact, Gandhi preached only what he practised, developing his philosophy on the basis of his experiences in life. His own life was nothing but a documentary of experimentation, and that is the reason behind his naming his autobiography, *My Experiments With Truth*. Just as Montesquieu had studied a number of constitutions and constitutional practices before he developed his theory of liberty, Gandhi too experimented with the principles and methods he stood for before recommending them for use: for instance, he tested the efficacy of the method of satyagraha in South Africa before he made use of it in his fight for the freedom of India.

Gandhian Methodology

Historicity is another trait of the Gandhian method. Unlike Marx's materialistic interpretation of history, Gandhi's interpretation of history is spiritualistic. From a study of historical events in various epochs of the history of mankind, Marx concluded that the class war between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' has always been the law of society. Through the dialectic method, Marx proved that the conflict of classes at a certain stage of history gave birth to a new social order which again led to the same conflicts. At present society is divided between the capitalits and labour, and the ongoing class war between them will lead to the victory of the labour class who will establish a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This dictatorship will work towards establishing a classless society. Gandhi, on the other hand, laid stress on love and man's pursuit of the ultimate goal as the determining factors of history. Something unintelligible, something indescribable, something intangible but which the man's inner eye perceives, goads him into action. Gandhi believed that perception and attainment of that goal is not possible except through truth, love and non-violence, and he called

Historicity

upon individuals and nations to fight the negative factors with positive ones. Gandhi, essentially a man of reason, nevertheless believed in certain experiences which were more intuitional than rational. He believed in the power of the spirit which does exist and influences human behaviour, and it was this faith which enabled Gandhi to befriend even the fiercest of men and attempt to convert even hardened criminals into law-abiding citizens.

On Religion

Gandhi's concept of God rested on his absolute faith in the Supreme Being. Gandhi believed that not a blade of grass moved but by God's will, and he regarded himself simply as an instrument of God. God, for Gandhi, is not an external reality but an abiding presence in the human heart. God is an all-pervasive reality in which everything, good and bad, lives, moves and has its being. God is immanent in man and also in the world which is His manifestation. It is God who sustains life. A man without faith in God is like a drop thrown out of the ocean and bound to perish. "That which impels man to do the right is God. The sum total of all that lives is God." Gandhi says, the reality of God is not based on the evidence of senses, nor can it be demonstrated by reason like a theorem in geometry, but it in fact transcends reason. Gandhi felt that three things were required for communion with God: fullest trust in God, perfect purity and extreme humility. Gandhi wrote: "The purer I try to become, the nearer I feel to be to God. How much more should I be when my faith is not a mere apology, as it is today, but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white and bright as the snow on their peaks?" He defined extreme humility as reducing the self to zero, that is, annihilation of self, which can materialise with one's identification with one's fellow creatures. Hence, a life of service must be one of humility. "True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity."

Concept of God

Gandhi also believed that God is Love and Truth. At a later stage in the development of his thought he converted the proposition 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'. He explained that to say God is Truth is fraught with certain dangers. Millions have committed nameless atrocities in the name of God; to Gandhi, such religion had no meaning. The Sanskrit word for truth is a word which literally means that which exists, *Sat*. Gandhi thus came to the conclusion that the definition—Truth is God—gave him the greatest satisfaction. "And when you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is, non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love." Gandhi referred to God as *Sat-Chit-Anand*. Where there is *Sat* or Truth, there is also knowledge or *chit* which is true. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (*anand*). *Anand,* even as truth, is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. "Hence we know God as *Sat-Chit-Anand*, one who combines in himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss."

God as Love and Truth

Several consequences followed Gandhi's intense and living faith in God. First, it led him to regard the universe with all its sentient and insentient creation as the manifestation of God, and hence to view all life as one. The observance of *ahimsa* or non-violence towards all living beings is a natural corollary to this conception; resorting to violence causes offence against the unity of life, and hence militates against truth. Second, if Truth is God, it follows that one who devotes himself to the pursuit of truth, that is, the satyagrahi, can be sure of receiving the backing of cosmic forces in all his activities. Third, if whole life is one, one cannot serve the poor and oppressed without entering politics. Gandhi's conception of God as Truth led him to revolutionise politics by insisting that the principles of conquering hatred by love and untruth by truth was as much applicable in the sphere of national and international politics as in that of private life—a belief that may be regarded as Gandhi's most important and revolutionary contribution to political thinking and action.

Politics—A Means of Service

Gandhi's attitude towards religion is a very important aspect of the Gandhian ideology. Religion for Gandhi was not a doctrinal formulation of any religious system but a basic truth underlying all formal religions. "By religion," he said, "I do not

mean formal religion or customary religion, but that religion which underlines all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker." To Gandhi, religion does not mean sectarianism or the acceptance of a dogma or creed preached by a prophet, or contained in a scripture like the *Vedas*, the *Bible* or the *Quran*, or the performance of any ritual or external observance like going to a temple, church or mosque or counting the beads of a rosary; rather it means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe. The essence of religion is to be found in the disinterested search after Truth which purifies the heart and transforms conduct. Gandhi summed up the characteristics of a truly religious man as follows:

Characteristics of a Religious Person

(i) Belief in the existence of God, the Supreme Power, in whom the universe lives, moves and has its being.
(ii) Truth and Righteousness. Morality is the soul of religion. As soon as we lose our moral basis, we cease to be religious. "Man for instance cannot be untruthful, cruel and incontinent and claim to have God on his side."
(iii) Fearlessness. An unshakable faith in God drives away every kind of fear.
(iv) Service of fellow creatures and extreme humility. "Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us… And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives."

Gandhi, in his belief that the soul of all religions is one, pleaded for tolerance for all religions, and reverence and respect for others' faiths as for our own. "If only we could all read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were helpful to one another." This belief in the oneness of all religions led Gandhi to disapprove of all attempts at conversion. He wrote in *Harijan* (January 30, 1937): "Why should a Christian want to convert a Hindu to Christianity and vice versa. Why should he be not satisfied if the Hindu is a good or godly man? If the morals of a man are a matter of no concern, the form of worship in a particular manner in a church or a mosque or a temple is an empty formula, it may even be a hindrance to individual or social growth."

Oneness of Religions

But it was his conviction that religion could not be relegated to the realm of private opinion but must influence and permeate all activities of men, and that religion provided the fundamental basis for political action in India, that led to Gandhi's greatest contribution—the spiritualisation of politics. To Gandhi, true religion consists in the service of fellowmen, in uplifting the poor, the helpless, the oppressed and the downtrodden, and since this cannot be accomplished without overhauling the political structure of life, taking part in politics becomes inevitable. He criticised all talks of double standard of morality implied in phrases like 'politics is politics' and 'business is business'. He believed that "Activities that draw no sustenance from the spiritual nature of man, but derive all their energy and motive power from the non-spiritual side of man's composition, are bound, after running their allotted course, to end in disaster and ruin." This might explain why Gandhi took the Khilafat issue of the Muslims with a view to bringing them in the movement against the British government. At the same time, Gandhi's use of the religious idiom through concepts like 'Ram Raj' to mobilise people in the national movement, has come under fire from historians for alienating non-Hindu sections of Indians, most notably the Muslims.

Over-Pervasive Hold of Religion

Spiritual Basis of Politics

On Satyagraha and Passive Resistance

The chief aspect of Gandhian ideology was satyagraha, i.e., 'true force.' Evolved by Gandhi in South Africa, satyagraha, after being developed fully, became a dominant element in India's struggle for freedom from 1919 onwards. For Gandhi, the purpose of satyagraha was to convert the enemy to one's own point of view by self-suffering and not by violence. This true force or love force or soul force can be explained as "non-violent resistance to political authority, non-cooperation with evil, and fasting", though "they do not exhaust its full import". The Christian tenet of overcoming evil with good comes closer to its real significance. According to P. Sitaramayya, satyagraha "involves

self-chosen suffering and humiliation for the resistors. If it is effective, it is so by working on the conscience of those against whom it is being used, sapping their confidence in the exclusive rightness of their cause…and weakening their resolution by insinuating a sense of guilt for the suffering they have part in causing." As a result, the satyagrahi would not seek to vindicate the truth by violent means, rather he would wean the opponent from error by patience and sympathy. Equating patience with self-suffering, the doctrine sought to vindicate the truth not by inflicting suffering on the opponent but on one's own self. Bearing no ill-will or hatred against the evil-doer, the satyagrahi tries to overcome hatred and anger by love, evil by good, untruth by truth, *himsa* by *ahimsa*. Adds Dr Stanley Jones, the satyagrahi matches his capacity to suffer against the capacity of his opponents to inflict suffering; he does not hate the latter but refuses to obey him and to help him in perpetuating injustice. Possessing faith in the existence of the soul behind the physical exterior and striking directly at it, the satyagrahi thus values soul force as the most important component in his arsenal.

Soul Force

Gandhi made a further distinction between satyagraha and passive resistance: "The latter (passive resistance) has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end; whereas the former (satyagraha) has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest, and excludes the use of violence in any shape." Naturally then, the superiority of satyagraha over violent means lies in the fact that it leaves no bitterness or destruction as its aftermath. On the other hand, it leaves a trail of goodwill between the one who wields the weapon of satyagraha and the one against whom it is wielded. The principle of returning good for evil, overcoming hatred by love, which constitutes the essence of satyagraha, is not new. It has been practised by thinkers and preachers from Socrates to Prahlad to Mirabai and the Buddha and Christ. It is to be also found in the writings of modern thinkers who influenced Gandhi, like Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau. Brij Kishore Goyal observes that Gandhi's contribution lies in the fact that from being used by individuals and groups in private life, he extended the sphere of satyagraha's application to public affairs. His originality lay in using it on a much larger scale for the solution of social, economic and political problems.

Passive Resistance vs Satyagraha

Universal Application of Satyagraha

Taking the non-violence principle further, Gandhi proved that non-violence is the law of the human species as violence is the law of the brute. The history of mankind is witness to the fact that man has been steadily progressing towards ahimsa. "Had it been otherwise the human species should have been extinct by now even as many of the lower species have disappeared." At the same time Gandhi took pains to clarify that his was the non-violence of the brave, a philosophy that in its turn created delicate problems of interpretation. (As a politician, he campaigned for military recruitment in 1918 in the hope of winning post-War political concessions and also repeatedly insisted that even violence was preferable to cowardly surrender to injustice. So, violence offered in self-defence, or the defence of the defenceless, even if not lawful, is an act of bravery.) Non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. "But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature," he added. Gandhi put forward the reasons why non-violence was always to be preferred over violence. First, the non-violent struggle is always conducted gracefully and with a minimum of bitterness: "it does not leave a trail of bitterness behind it and does not lead to brutalisation of humanity as a violent war does". The non-violent warrior is always prepared for negotiation, conciliation and compromise. Second, non-violence renders ineffective and useless the weapons of violent warfare which the adversary possesses and makes his position difficult. Third, the use of the moral weapon of non-violence ennobles not only him who wields it but also him against whom it is directed. Fourth, in a non-violent struggle the final victory of the satyagrahi is certain because the satyagrahi fights on the side of God.

Philosophy of Non-violence

In practice, satyagraha assumed various forms such as fasting, non-violent picketing, different types of non-cooperation and ultimately in politics, civil disobedience in willing anticipation of the legal

penalty. His critics point out that through the technique of satyagraha, Gandhi succeeded in controlling the mass movements from above. The dominant section in the peasantry and business groups, for instance, found the Gandhian non-violent model convenient because they feared they would have much to lose had political struggle turned into uninhibited and violent social revolution. Nonetheless, it was the use of satyagraha by Gandhi and the Congress in the national movement that brought different sections of Indians together like never before, to fight against British rule.

Forms of Satyagraha

Ideal State, Society and Sarvodaya

Philosophers, right from ancient times to the present day, have outlined an ideal society which can give the largest measure of happiness to the individual and ensure a peaceful, healthy and happy life to the community to which the individual belongs. Plato described such an ideal state in his *Republic*; Thomas More did the same in *Utopia*; and Francis Bacon exulted about the ideal commonwealth in *New Atlantis*. Mahatma Gandhi too conceived of a new social order which possessed features of an ideal society. His unshakable faith in truth, love and non-violence made Gandhi repose his faith in a social order where untruth and violence are absent. Unlike philosophers such as Plato, Gandhi did not systematically develop his ideas about the new social order which he idealised as 'Ram Raj'. The chief features of 'Ram Raj' can be gleaned from his various utterances, beliefs and writings.

Ram Raj

Gandhi envisioned 'Ram Raj' as an ideal society by rejecting the highly centralised and coersive state model. In other words, Ram Raj would imply a system of "cooperative commonwealth and statelessness". He rejected the state because it is rooted in violence insofar as it is a highly centralised system and centralisation cannot be sustained and defended without some measure of force and violence. The greater the centralisation, the greater the degree of force needed for maintaining it. Gandhi further looked on the coercive authority of the state as destructive of individual freedom and personality. He said, "I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence." Gandhi's repudiation of the state was on moral or ethical grounds, not on the communist ground that the state has an alliance with capitalism. Anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin rejected the state on the grounds that in a society based on voluntary cooperation the state would not be needed at all as its functions would be carried out by individuals organised in voluntary associations. To Gandhi however, the prime function of the state was the regulation of social behaviour. In an ideal society based on perfect non-violence, there would be no need of an external authority to regulate the behaviour of individuals. Individuals would be motivated by the spirit of self-discipline and self-control, and would conduct their life in a manner that does not act against the interest of any member of society. In such a society of self-regulated individuals, national life would become self-regulated and perfect.

Repudiation of State

Need for a Self-regulated Social Order

Outlining the features of the ideal stateless society, Gandhi said it would consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary cooperation would be the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. Every village would be a republic or panchayat having full powers and capable of managing all its affairs. Life in such a non-violent society would not be a pyramidal structure as in the modern state in which a narrow top rested on a broad bottom; it will be an oceanic circle whose centre would be the individual. Since individual freedom was more important than anything else, the new stateless society based on perfect non-violence may be said to represent perfect democracy. The villages would be free and autonomous and would be organised into a loose sort of federation whose basis will be moral, not force. Gandhi's position that true freedom, which meant self-discipline and self-control or inner swaraj, could be realised only in a condition of 'enlightened anarchy' is close to that of Marx. He is different from Marx insofar as he emphasises the moral and spiritual basis of society, whereas Marx focuses on the materialistic aspect. At the same time, Gandhi was aware that the ideal stateless society was not viable in practice

Principles of Social Organisation

owing to the many weaknesses of humans; so the next best alternative had to suffice, that is, not a wholly non-violent society but a predominantly non-violent one. He agreed with Thoreau's saying that that government is the best which governs the least.

The Gandhian state exists to aid the individual in his all-round development. To Gandhi, like Kant and Green, the individual is the end, the state is the means. "If the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom," he argued. While stressing individual freedom Gandhi also observed that man is a social being and that he has been able to rise to his present state of development only by having learnt to adjust himself to the requirements of social progress. He has to enjoy his freedom within the limits allowed by the similar requirements of all the members of society, and must thus exercise restraint on his freedom in order to allow others also to enjoy their freedom. "Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member." By reconciling the claims of individual freedom to the requirements of social obligation, Gandhi was in effect trying to revive the ancient Hindu ideal of Dharma as the basis of social cohesion. He also believed that the conflict between individual freedom and social obligation arose in present-day society because of an undue emphasis on individual rights. Gandhi gave more importance to duties than to rights, claiming that rights are opportunities for self-realisation through service of others and doing one's duty by them. In so doing, he differed in approach from individualist thinkers like G.D.H. Cole and Harold Laski who defined rights as opportunities for the fullest development of the individual, and who claimed that it was through the enjoyment of certain rights that the individual realised his inherent potential. Gandhi's emphasis on duties was owing to his concern for the inner development of man which is possible only through the discharging of social obligation. Gandhi's views of rights and duties may in fact be said to be intimately connected with his views on swaraj. The swaraj of a people means the sum total of the swaraj (self rule) of individuals. And such swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens.

Harmony between Individual Freedom and Social Obligation

Primacy of Duty Over Rights

In short, Gandhi was a philosophical anarchist who, ideally speaking, repudiated the state as such, whatever its form. He believed the "the greatest good of all" could be realised only in the classless, stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on non-violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralisation. The ideal society, which Gandhi named as Sarvodaya Society, was the stateless democracy, the state of enlightened anarchy where social life would become so perfect as to be self-regulated. According to Gandhi, Sarvodaya implies welfare of all secured by the conscious effort of everyone in the community. It is a new social order, planned by goodwill and cooperation. A believer of Sarvodaya and a votary of ahimsa cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula, "the greatest good of the greatest number", because under the formula, the interests of a substantial minority could be sacrificed for the good of the majority. But a believer of Sarvodaya will strive for the greatest good for all and die in the attempt to realise the ideal. Being a practical idealist, Gandhi also realised that a Sarvodaya Society could not come into existence immediately; it was therefore necessary to continue with the existing state but modifying it with the nobler and virtuous ideals of Sarvodaya till the people were ready and worthy to be free of the state and government.

Ideal Sarvodaya Society

Another feature of Gandhi's new social order or the predominantly non-violent society is decentralisation. Since centralisation is incompatible with individual freedom, the creation of a non-violent society must presuppose the end of centralisation, for centralisation cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Centralisation makes life highly complex, is restrictive of individual initiative, diminishes opportunities for self-government, and at the same time leads to depersonalisation. To Gandhi, political

Decentralised Socio-political Order

decentralisation means that village communities be given the largest measure of autonomy in managing their own affairs. The village panchayat should be entrusted with the task of village development; the control of the national or federal government should be reduced to the minimum. Every individual should have a sense of participation in the governance of the affairs of the society. Gandhi agreed with C.E.M. Joad that if man's faith in social action is to be revived, "the state must be cut up and its functions distributed. The machinery of government must be reduced in scale; it must be made manageable by being made local, so that, in seeing the concrete results of their political labours before them, men can be brought to realise that where self government is a fact, society is malleable to their wills because society is themselves."

Economic Decentralisation

Economic decentralisation means the replacement of centralised large-scale industries by cottage industries. This is a great necessity in a non-violent society, for a great deal of violence of the present day is due to the existence of a highly centralised industrialised system. And the modern centralised industrialisation leads to the division of society into 'haves' and 'have-nots' and also makes men insensitive to the sorrows and sufferings of others. Gandhi believed that most of the evils of modern civilisation like colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and widespread international tension are due to the mad rush for accumulation of more and more wealth. Man's moral and spiritual development and his pursuit of the higher values of life are possible only in a system of cottage industries in which the workers own the means of production and manufactured goods. He felt that the substitution of large-scale industries by cottage industries was the best method of ending man's exploitation by man and introducing the principles of truth and non-violence in the economic sphere.

Principles of Varna-Vyavastha

Another feature of Gandhi's non-violent society is the principle of *varna-vyavastha*. Gandhi interprets this principle to mean that every member of society should follow his hereditary and traditional calling or profession "insofar as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics and this only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood." Observance of *varna-vyavastha* would lead to a nobler kind of specialisation. By adopting the hereditary calling, a man will be in a position to improve his technical skill in his profession and thereby increase his income. Second, it would avoid all unworthy competition; everyone will be guaranteed the fruit of his labour. Third, it will remove the distinction of high and low as the principle of *varna-vyavastha* implies equality of professions. Fourth, in a decentralised society, the local needs of people will be met from local sources making the village self-sufficient in all respects.

Non-possession

As stated, the implication of the principle of *varna-vyavastha* is equality of all callings and professions. The hereditary profession which every member is supposed to adopt must be regarded as a means of doing one's duty to society and earning one's livelihood, and not as a way of amassing wealth. In order that this principle may be successfully observed in a society, the earnings of different professions must be made more or less equal. According to Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the following points may be constituted as the essence of *varna-vyavastha*: equal wages for all work; the absence of all competition; and a system of education which takes the fullest advantage of the hereditary capacities of people. Gandhi, like the Buddha, attached the miseries of life to the multiplication of wants, and preached the reducing of wants by every member of society. Non-possession or *aparigrah* is an ancient principle recommended by scriptures for leading a happy and contented life and attaining liberation. Gandhi's originality lies in the fact that he gave it an extended meaning and application.

Theory of Trusteeship

As far as the form of ownership of property is concerned, Gandhi put forward his famous theory of trusteeship—an economic extension of his philosophical concept of man as a trustee of all he had, including his powers, capacities, energy and time. The theory was intended to avoid the evils and combine the advantages of both capitalism and communism, and to socialise property without nationalising it.

His Economic Ideas

"Earn your crores by all means," Gandhi would say to the capitalists, "but understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society." In this thought lies

Gandhi's philosophy of trusteeship. Gandhi preached that if a person has talent and capacity, let him earn as much wealth as he can by honest means, but since in this earning goes the contribution of the society as well, the wealth he earns must be used for the welfare of society. The wealth must be held in trust by the capitalist for the welfare of the society. He wanted the rich to consider themselves not as owners of the wealth they possessed but as its trustees. The principle of trusteeship is thus Gandhi's formula for solving the problem created by inequalities in the distribution of wealth. In this principle, he ingeniously reconciled the institution of private property with the objective of welfare of all.

Elements of Trusteeship

Professor Dantwala and other socialists, after having a long discussion with Gandhi on the nature and implications of his theory of trusteeship, summed up his views in a draft, to which Gandhi made a few changes designed to strengthen its egalitarian thrust. The final version of the draft read as follows:

(i) Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

(ii) It does not recognise any right of private ownership of property except insofar as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

(iii) It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.

(iv) Under state-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard to the interests of society.

(v) Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

(vi) Under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

This draft was a fairly accurate statement of Gandhi's mature economic views. Since the early 1930s he had begun to turn radical, partly in response to the political pressures of the discontented groups and partly because he was beginning to see more clearly than before the economic implications of his moral and political thought.

Dignity of Human Labour

In the concept of his new non-violent social order, Gandhi also introduced the principle of bread labour, the idea for which came to him from Tolstoy's writings on *Bread Labour* and Ruskin's *Unto This Last.* The idea was that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands. Gandhi further believed that intellectual work is never a substitute for bodily labour. More than nine-tenths of humanity live by tilling the land. "How much more happier, healthier and more peaceful would the world become if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food," was Gandhi's opinion. To those who were unable to take up agricultural work, which was the Gandhian ideal, he advised the taking up of weaving, carpentry or smithery, disposing of one's own waste, etc.

On Socialism

Gandhian socialism derived from his principle of trusteeship: "A socialist society is a cooperative commonwealth in which private property in the means of production may remain, but the motive of social service will replace the motive of private profit, and all individuals shall constitute a noble brotherhood." While he believed that all people are created equal and free, they are not born equal in intellect. To him the doctrine of equality would be vindicated if those who had superior intellect use it would for service rather than for self-advancement at the expense of others. Similarly, economic equality to Gandhi means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. Gandhian economic equality does not imply equality of incomes of all people which is an impossibility because of the different levels of mental and physical ability of humans. Rather, it emphasises equal distribution which implies that each man

shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural wants and no more.

Gandhian views on socialism differed from the Marxian concept of socialism. Gandhi advocated 'village socialism' rather than the state ownership of the means of production as conceived in contemporary Europe. According to Gandhi, socialism and communism of the West are based on a belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. He did not subscribe to that view and did not approve the idea of class-war. Class-war was not inevitable, Gandhi argued, if the doctrine of trusteeship was accepted and implemented.

If Gandhi was a socialist at all, his socialism was entirely his own. For him, socialism did not represent a necessary and logical stage in social evolution, growing out of production relations of capitalism. It was not out of any theoretical study or critical intellectual analysis of social development of history that Gandhi arrived at this form of socialism. He developed his concept when he was confronted with the growing challenge and influence of scientific socialism during the 1930s. He said, "I call myself a socialist, love the very word but I will not preach the same socialism as most socialists do." During his detention in Aga Khan Palace, Gandhi read for the first time, at the age of 74, Karl Marx's first volume of *Das Capital*. He did not bother whether Marxism was right or wrong. Moral indignation against acquisitiveness was the principle of socialism for him. He said, "All I know is that the poor are being ousted, something has got to be done for them. To me this is axiomatic." Changing the social structure through violence had no attraction for Gandhi because he believed that it would not benefit the dumb millions of India. Socialism for Gandhi was neither a gospel for the expropriation of the rich nor a programme for the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It was based essentially on ideas of non-possession, trusteeship, non-violence, human equality and service of the poor. His faith was in individual and cooperative efforts, and not in the state with unlimited power, for bringing about a radical social and economic transformation. He was neither a doctrinaire socialist nor a dogmatist and tried to adopt himself to changed situations. While attacking the inequitable and unjustifiable basis of capitalism and vested interests, Gandhi pleaded for the adoption of trusteeship.

Critique of Scientific Socialism

Concept of Democracy

Gandhi also held certain convictions about democracy. He defines democracy as "the art and science of mobilising the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all". In other words, far from being a theoretical concept of politics, democracy, for him, stands for certain values which ought to inform the physical, the economic, the social, the political, the cultural and the spiritual life of society. Democracy does not end with electing representatives and sending them to govern the country with responsibility to account for their acts of omission and commission; rather it becomes a way of life that is to be lived. Second, democracy involves all the people in the country. To Gandhi, democracy is an impossible concept until the power is shared by all, even the poorest and humblest individual in society. Third, Gandhi's definition of democracy emphasises the common good of all, and not of the majority as implied in the notion, the greatest good of the greatest number. To Gandhi, certain conditions are necessary for the success of democracy:

Democracy as a Way of Life

(i) The success of democracy rests on discipline. "If the masses want to enjoy independence, they have first to learn the secret of observing voluntary discipline. Otherwise discipline would have to be imposed upon them by the powers that be. That would not be independence but its negation. Voluntary discipline is the first requisite of corporate freedom."

(ii) Willing obedience to laws, human or divine, is the second most important condition for the success of democracy. Though a votary of individual freedom, Gandhi stressed that man is essentially a social being who had to abide by the laws of society.

(iii) A democrat must be utterly selfless. "If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost convictions and are not intended merely as a convenient party cry."

(iv) Tolerance is another essential requisite of democracy. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause, says Gandhi. Echoing the views of western democratic thinkers like John Stuart Mill, Gandhi said: "Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shun the door of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or, having listened, make fun of them." Tolerance of others' opinion and the right of dissent are linked to the right of speech and expression in Gandhi's view.

(v) Truth and non-violence are central to democracy. "True democracy or the swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa."*

(vi) Gandhi also recognises the citizen's right of resistance. Citizens should support the government so long as the actions of the government are bearable; if the government's actions hurt them and their nation, they must withdraw the support. But Gandhi recognised non-cooperation and civil disobedience as forms of resistance, and not the violent overthrow of the government. He urged fearlessness on the part of the people as a prerequisite in winning battles.

(vii) Citizens of a democracy must also cultivate an alert public opinion. Sitting easy after having won independence would not benefit India's nascent democracy.

Concept of Swaraj

'Swaraj', according to Gandhi, is the government by many since swaraj meant self-government—where people must learn to govern themselves. He believed in the concept of popular sovereignty. The political manifestation is but a concrete expression of the individual's soul force. As people get the government they deserve, self-government can come only through self-effort. He believed that people are the roots, the state is the fruit. "If the roots are sweet, the fruits are bound to be sweet." He says, "Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's 'Swaraj'." It is here that Gandhi emerges as a proletarian democrat who thought of abridging the gulf between the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong. Basic amenities of life should be similarly and identically available to everyone in the society. Self-government was attainable through a continuous endeavour to be independent. It is dependent entirely upon our internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds.

Popular Sovereignty

Gandhi's social ideals were put forward in his book *Hind Swaraj,* published in 1909. Gandhi made the basic point in this pamphlet that the real enemy was not British political domination, but the whole of modern industrial civilisation. Extending the 19th century critique of industrialisation developed by English writers like Carlyle and Ruskin, Gandhi argued that mere political swaraj would mean "English rule without the Englishmen", while "it would be a folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller". Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country—railways have spread plague and produced famines by encouraging the export of foodgrains; lawyers have stimulated disputes in their greed for briefs and helped to maintain British rule by manning the law courts; and western medicine is expensive and ruinous of natural health measures. He added: "India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past 50 years or so. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper class have to learn to live consciously and religiously and deliberately the simple life of a peasant."

His Social Ideals

Sumit Sarkar points out that the Gandhian social utopia as outlined in *Hind Swaraj* is unrealistic and obscurantist if considered as a final remedy for the ills of India and the world. These views even then had little appeal for sophisticated urban groups which by the 1930s and 1940s would turn increasingly to either capitalist or socialist solutions based on industrialisation. It represented a response to the deeply alienating effects of 'modernisation', particularly under colonial conditions. Gandhian anti-industrialisation stance attracted the artisan ruined by factory industry, the peasant who could afford neither the law court nor the city hospital,

Sumit Sarkar's Views

and the rural or small-town intelligentsia for whom education had brought few material benefits. After his return to India, Gandhi concretised his message through programmes of *khadi*, village reconstruction and Harijan welfare. While none of these programmes changed social or economic relations, when tried out with sincerity and patience by devoted Gandhian constructive workers, they attempted to improve the lot of the rural people to some extent. The Gandhian advocacy of swadeshi, in particular, the replacement of foreign machine-made goods with Indian handmade cloth, helped peasants who could spin at home to supplement their income. It thus prevented, in a limited way, the drain of money to England in payment for imported cloth. Sarkar adds that Gandhi's peasant appeal was helped also by his political style: travelling third-class, speaking in simple Hindustani, wearing only a loin-cloth from 1921 onwards, and using the imagery of Tulsidas' *Ramayana* so deep-rooted in the popular religion of the north Indian Hindu rural masses.

On Education

By education Gandhi meant an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—in the body, mind and spirit. He argued that literacy is only a means of education and is neither its beginning nor its end. He emphasised that children from the very beginning should be taught to make useful handicrafts and the state should take over the products made by the students, thus making every school self-supporting. Every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically but scientifically so that the child knows the why and the wherefore of every process. Gandhi believed that an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his/her intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the development of personality would prove to be lopsided. By spiritual training, Gandhi meant teaching the heart to feel.

State Funding for Education

Gandhi was not opposed to education even of the highest type attainable in the world, and suggested the state pay for it wherever it has definite use for it. He was opposed to all higher education being paid for from the general revenue. It was his firm conviction that the vast amount of the so-called education in arts given in our colleges is a sheer waste and has led to unemployment among the educated classes. The medium of foreign language through which higher education has been imparted has caused incalculable intellectual and moral injury to the nation.

Reforms

According to Gandhi, it would be good economy to set apart a class of students whose business would be to learn the best of what is to be learnt in the different languages of the world and give the translation in the vernaculars. Universities must be made self-supporting. The state should simply educate those whose services it would need; for all other branches of learning it should encourage private effort. The medium of instruction should be altered at once and at any cost, and the provincial languages be given their rightful place. Gandhi said he would prefer temporary chaos in higher education to the criminal waste that was accumulating daily. He said that he was not an enemy of higher education as such but to the kind of education given in the country by the British. Under his scheme there would be more and better libraries, laboratories and research institutes. Under it the nation should have an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will serve society and answer the varied and growing requirements of a people who are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and wants. And all those experts will speak not a foreign tongue, but the language of the people. The knowledge gained by them will be the common property of the people. There will be truly original work, instead of mere imitation, and the cost will be evenly and justly distributed.

Music as an Integral Part of Education

Gandhi heartily endorsed Pandit Khare's proposition that music should form part of the syllabus at the primary education level. Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand in order to draw the best out of the boys and girls and create in them a real interest in their work. According to Gandhi, music means rhythm and order whose effect is electrical and soothing. "If I had any influence with volunteer boy scouts and seva samiti organsiations," Gandhi said, "I would make compulsory a proper singing in company of national songs. And to that end I should have great musicians attending every congress or conference and teaching mass music."

Gandhi was a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. He held that we shall realise this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilising it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. Gandhi valued education in the different sciences. He wanted to develop in the child his hands, his brain and his soul, because "the hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored." Gandhi remarked that a wise parent allows the child to make mistakes. It is good for children once in a while to burn their fingers. He was also strongly in favour of introducing sex education as part of the curriculum. But the sex education that he stood for had for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sexual passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between a man and brute, to make them realise that it is man's privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of both head and heart, that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, and to renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instinct is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate. In man, reason quickens and guides the feeling; in brute, the soul lies ever dormant. The aim of education, for Gandhi, was to awaken the heart. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

Learning by Doing

In 1937, Gandhi published a series of articles in *The Harijan* and proposed a scheme of education called Basic Education, better known as the Wardha Scheme. The main principle of this scheme was 'learning through activity'. The Zakir Hussain Committee worked out the details of the scheme, prepared detailed syllabi for a number of crafts and made suggestions concerning training of teachers, supervision, examination and administration. The scheme centred round 'manual productive work' which might cover the remuneration of the teachers. It envisaged a seven years' course through the mother tongue of the pupils. However, the scheme had to be postponed due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and subsequent resignation of the Congress ministries. Gandhi also wrote a tract on education titled *A Beautiful Tree* symbolising the indigenous system of education in India. The colonial system of education, according to Gandhi, considerably altered the indigenous education system and blocked many creative channels of expression thereby destroying the rising 'cultural common sense' in India.

Wardha Scheme

On Status of Women

Gandhi decried any kind of discrimination against women as an anachronism. Rejecting the saying attributed to Manu that "for woman there can be no freedom", Gandhi propagated the notion of perfect equality between man and woman. He maintained that the women of India had the necessary strength, ability, character and determination to stand on their own and work shoulder to shoulder with men in every walk of life. Time and again, he called upon women to join the Indian National Congress and take part in the freedom struggle. Gandhi's appeal for support in various movements greatly influenced prominent women like Kasturba Gandhi, Kamala Nehru, Mrs C.R. Das, Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur and many others who threw their lot with him and made tremendous sacrifices in the cause of the nationalist struggle.

Equality of Women

Social evils such as child marriage, dowry, the purdah system and enforced widowhood met with severe criticism from Gandhi. He advocated that in the social, economic and political spheres, women should be given full protection. He also demanded equal remuneration for women for equal work. Gandhi did not like women being called the 'weaker sex'. He declared, "To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, a woman is less brute than a man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior." Extremely critical of the *devadasi* system (a system of temple prostitution), Gandhi advised the *devadasis* to take up an honourable living by spinning khadi. In various constructive programmes which Gandhi launched for the upliftment of the masses and in all social and educational institutions he founded during his long political career, Gandhi always afforded a place of equality and better status for women.

On Untouchability

Gandhi outrightly denounced the practice of untouchability as a "crime against humanity". He believed that untouchability is not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague that has injured Hinduism through the ages. He was against this inhuman practice in his abiding concern for reconstituting the Hindu social order. "None can be born untouchable, as all are sparks of one and same divine fire," he argued. The abolition of untouchability is the abolition of the fifth caste. Gandhi, therefore, named the untouchables as *Harijans*, the children of God. According to him, only when caste-Hindus develop the true inner conviction of the wrong of such practices and get rid of untouchability, will they find favour with God. For the removal of untouchability, Gandhi recommended the vow which follows from the principle of spiritual unity of all life. He wanted everyone to break down the barriers between man and man and between various beings. To him, the removal of untouchability was a bigger problem than that of attaining Indian independence.

A Social Plague

Gandhi held that if untouchability lived, Hinduism and, with it, India would die. In this age of reason, the ideal of freedom and the principle of social equality demanded the removal of untouchability. Gandhi said that untouchability was a phenomenon which was peculiar to Hinduism only and it was not warranted either by reason or in the *Shastras*. It should be repugnant to our sense of humanity to consider a single human being as 'untouchable' by the reason of birth, Gandhi argued. His anti-untouchability movement was a gesture of unity with the depressed classes by the Satyagrahi, which ultimately resulted in Article 17 of the Indian Constitution calling for the abolition of untouchability and Article 46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy calling for promotion of educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the community and protecting them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

GANDHI AS MASS LEADER

Rowlatt Satyagraha (1919)

As mentioned earlier, it was the enactment of the Rowlatt Act in February 1919 that made Gandhi call for an all-India satyagraha campaign for the first time. Besides protesting against the internment of Annie Besant, and demanding the release of the Ali brothers (Mahomed and Shaukat Ali), who were actively associated with the Khilafat issue, Gandhi stayed aloof from reform proposals during the years 1917-1918. But the British decision to pass the 'Rowlatt Act' made him change his mind.

In 1917 a committee of inquiry was appointed to investigate 'revolutionary crime' in India under an English judge, Mr Justice Sydney Rowlatt. The committee produced evidence of detailed subversive activity and made proposals for strengthening the law. After a review of the situation, the Rowlatt Committee proposed a series of changes in the machinery of law to enable the British government to effectively deal with revolutionary activities. Publication of the committee report almost coincided with that of the Montagu-Chelmsford report, and both were in fact read together. The 'Rowlatt' Act was rushed through the Imperial Legislative Council between February 6 and March 18, 1919, against the unanimous opposition of all non-official Indian members. The Act was an attempt to make war-time restrictions on civil rights permanent through a system of special courts and detention without trial for a maximum of two years (even for actions like mere possession of tracts declared to be seditious). There was no provision of appeal against the decision of the courts which could meet in camera and take into consideration evidence not admissible under the Indian Evidence Act. The bill further proposed to authorise the government to search a place and arrest a person without a warrant. The bills were regarded by nationalist leaders as an effort to conciliate a section of official and non-official white opinion which had resented Montagu's Reform proposals. They were accompanied by Viceregal assurances that the civil service and British commercial interests would not suffer from the coming reforms.

Rowlatt Committee

The whole of political India treated the Act as a grave insult, especially as it came at the end of the First World War when substantial constitutional concessions were expected. It was left to Gandhi, however, to suggest a practicable form of an all-India mass protest, which would go beyond petitioning but would not be violent or unrestrained.

Gandhi said that the proposed powers were out of all proportion to the danger, particularly when the viceroy possessed emergency powers of legislation by ordinance. He further stated that they were instruments of distrust and repression, nullifying the proposed reforms, and opposed not just the content of the bills, but also the manner in which they were foisted in the country without regard to public opinion. He formed a Satyagraha Sabha on February 24, 1919 in Bombay to protest against the Rowlatt Bills. Its members signed a pledge proclaiming their determination "to refuse civilly to obey these laws (i.e., the Rowlatt Bills) and such other laws as a committee hitherto appointed may think fit and we (members) further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property". While launching the satyagraha agitation against the Rowlatt Bills, Gandhi said: "It is my firm belief that we shall obtain salvation only through suffering and not by reforms dropping on us from the English—they use brute force, we soul force."

Satyagraha Sabha

Gandhi's move of starting the satyagraha was opposed by a group of liberals that included Sir D.E. Wacha, Surendranath Banerjee, T.B. Sapru and Srinivas Sastri, who argued that the satyagraha would hamper the reforms. Some of them also felt that the ordinary citizens would not be able to disobey the Act in a civil manner. Annie Besant condemned the satyagraha on the grounds that there was nothing in the Act to resist civilly, and that to break laws at the dictate of others was dangerous. Gandhi, meanwhile, in organising his satyagraha, tried to utilise three types of political networks—the Home Rule Leagues, certain Pan-Islamist groups, and the Satyagraha Sabha. Despite Besant's opposition, younger, radical members of the two Home Rule Leagues were in need of a leader. In fact most of the men and finances of the Satyagraha Sabha were supplied by Home Rule League enthusiasts in Bombay city like Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Shankerlal Banker, Umar Sobhani and B.G. Horniman. Tilak's younger followers supported Gandhi, though N.C. Kelkar and G.S. Khaparde, Tilak's principal followers, remained aloof. Gandhi also got the support of leaders like Abdul Bari of the Firangi Mahal *ulama* group at Lucknow—the religious preceptor of the Ali brothers who were still interned.

Three Types of Political Networks

With the defeat of Ottoman Turkey in the First World War and the spread of rumours regarding very harsh peace terms being prepared by the victorious Allies, the Indian Muslims began to be concerned about the future of the Sultan-Khalifa. The Delhi session of the Muslim League of December 1918 was marked by an important change in leadership. The more moderate section of the 'Young Party', that included Wazir Hasan and Mahmudabad and who wanted to accept the Montford reforms, were ousted by an alliance of more radical politicians like Ansari and a large group of *ulama* brought by Abdul Bari. Ansari had hailed Gandhi at this session as 'the intrepid leader of India…who has…endeared himself as much to the Musalmans as to the Hindus'. Bari favoured satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act after a meeting with Gandhi in mid-March 1919. The role of the Satyagraha Sabha was confined to publishing propaganda literature and collecting signatures to a satyagraha pledge, while Gandhi himself embarked on a whirlwind tour of the cities of Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow, and others in south India between March and early April. The Congress played a very limited role then. It lacked the machinery for real agitational politics in most parts of India; in regions where the Congress did have a tradition of such politics, as with the old Extremist networks in Bengal and Maharashtra, resistance to Gandhi was, in fact, to be the strongest.

Khilafat Issue

Gandhi's plan of inaugurating his satyagraha was at first limited to getting volunteers to court arrest by public sale of prohibited works. He extended his satyagraha on March 23, 1919 by calling upon all Indians to observe an all-India hartal on March 30th. The date was later postponed to April 6th. However, observes Sumit Sarkar, despite the idea of the hartal being novel and radical, it was fixed for a Sunday, and Gandhi's declaration that only employees who were required to work even on Sunday may suspend work but that too after obtaining previous leave from their employers, suggest that there were obstacles right from the beginning. Gandhi also rejected the Arya Samajist leader Swami Shraddhanand's suggestion

Limitation of the Satyagraha

for a no-revenue call, and urged the old Moderate leader Dinshaw Wacha to accept the programme with the argument that satyagraha was the only method to stop terrorism. Notwithstanding an extremely limited and patchy organisational preparation, however, the upsurge which arose in April 1919 was the biggest and most violent anti-British upsurge which India had seen since 1857.

While the success of the hartal varied considerably between regions and between towns and the countryside, the Hunter Committee and the Congress Punjab Inquiry Committee Reports (1920) presented a picture of an elemental upheaval, sparked-off by a combination of post-War economic grievances, vague but potent rumours about Gandhi, and brutal provocation and repression particularly in Punjab. The movement had an urban slant, with the lower middle class groups and artisans playing a more important role than industrial workers. Most Indian towns saw hartals on March 30th and April 6th; the places most affected by the ensuing disturbances were Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, and a number of smaller towns in Punjab, Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Nadiad in Gujarat, and Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta to a lesser extent.

Punjab Disturbances

Punjab, under Lieutenant-Governor O'Dwyer's administration, witnessed a good deal of atrocities including ruthless recruitment and war exactions, severe repression following the Ghadr outbreaks of 1915, and tactless speeches abusing educated groups. In a micro-study of Lahore, Ravinder Kumar also pinpoints specific factors for the unpopularity of the Punjab administration: a foodgrains price-rise of 100 per cent between 1917 and 1919 and only a 20-25 per cent corresponding increase in the wages of the artisans; O'Dwyer's deliberate role in 1913 in the collapse of the top *swadeshi* entrepreneur Harkrishan Lal of Peoples Bank of Punjab, a move that negatively affected the ambitions of the mostly-Hindu trading community of Lahore; the spread of anti-British political ideas by Arya Samajist barristers with business connections like Mukund Lal Puri and Gokul Chand Narang and by the old Extremist Ram Bhuj Dutt and the *Sanatan Dharma Sabha* patron Ram Saran Das; and a Muslim awakening, inspired by the journalist Zafar Ali Khan and the nationalist poetry of Iqbal. O'Dwyer and other British officials were most frightened by the remarkable Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity of early 1919 in Punjab, a province otherwise noted for communal divisions. The hartals of March 30 and April, 6, 1919 at Amritsar were peaceful but they were massive affairs, and a Ram Navami procession held on April 9 saw a large Muslim participation and evidence of Hindu-Muslim unity, people of the different creeds drinking out of the same cups publicly. The local Congress leaders of Amritsar, Kitchlew and Satyapal, were deported on the evening of April 9, and orders were issued restraining Gandhi from entering Delhi and Punjab. A peaceful demonstration near Hall Bridge in Amritsar was fired at on April 10; and banks, post offices, the railway station and the town hall were attacked. In retaliation, Europeans including women were attacked. The army was called in and the city handed over to General Dyer, who issued an order prohibiting public meetings and assemblies. On April 13, *Baisakhi* day, a large crowd of people, many of whom were visitors from neighbouring villages who had come to town to attend the Baisakhi celebrations, collected in an enclosed ground, the Jallianwala Bagh, to attend a public meeting. They did not know of the ban on meetings. General Dyer, angry that his orders were disobeyed, ordered his troops to fire upon the unarmed crowd. He did not issue any warning to the crowd nor was he deterred by the fact that the ground was hemmed in from all sides by high walls which left little chance for escape. At the end of the shooting, which continued for 10 minutes, official estimates listed 379 dead; unofficial estimates put the toll at a number much higher. Dyer shockingly confessed before the Hunter Committee that his ammunition ran out, and that the narrow lanes had prevented his bringing in an armoured car! During the following weeks, Dyer and O' Dwyer intensified the repression through indiscriminate arrests, torture, special tribunals, public flogging, recruiting lawyers to work on menial jobs as special constables, insisting on the 'salaaming' to all sahibs by Indians, and making Indians crawl down Kucha Kauchianwalla lane where a White woman had been insulted.

Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy

Lahore saw a spate of peaceful hartals and demonstrations, marked once again by remarkable communal unity on April 6 and 9. There were violent clashes with the police on April 10, 1919

as rumours about Gandhi's externment and the Amritsar events reached the city. Muslim artisans and workers were particularly militant, and leaders like Rambhuj Dutt tried their best to control the crowds. On April 11, strikes at the Mughalpura railway workshop that employed 12,000 people and at factories forced the British to withdraw from the city into the cantonment area. A People's Committee was formed at an enormous rally at the Badshahi Mosque, and it took over control of the city from April 11 to 14. Comprising middle class politicians who were accustomed to power politics and did not know what to do with the power so suddenly thrust into their hands by the people, the committee only organised kitchens to provide food during the hartal, and even made an unsuccessful attempt to call off the hartal itself at a Town Hall meeting on April 13. There were very few and very short-lived signs of a more militant leadership. One of these was a 40-member 'Danda Fauj' under Chaman Din that paraded the streets with *lathis* and toy guns, and put up inflammatory posters: "O Hindu, Muhammadan and Sikh brethren, enlist at once in the Danda army and fight with bravery against the English monkeys…Leave off dealings with the Englishmen, close offices and workshops. Fight on. This is the command of Mahatma Gandhi.' Returning with force on April 14, the British deported the People's Committee leaders, and clamped martial law, thus smashing the popular movement. The Rowlatt disturbances affected five districts in Punjab— Gujranwala, Gujarat, Lyallpur, Amritsar and Lahore. The pattern everywhere was the same—sporadic attacks on government buildings, communications (54 cases of disruption of telegraph lines between April 10 and 22), and occasionally on Whites, followed by far more violent, brutal and ruthless repression. Gujranwala and surrounding villages were bombed aerially; there were 258 sentences of flogging by martial law tribunals and 'fancy punishments' like rubbing noses on the ground and making the entire population stand under the whole day under the scorching sun (at Kasur on May 1 where an eleven-year-old boy was charged with waging war against the King). In Punjab only 4 Whites were reported killed, while the number of Indians wounded were 3,600 and those that died numbered at least 1,200.

People's Committee

Delhi, which had been politically active since 1912, had become a centre of pan-Islamic activity owing to a Home Rule League branch that was operating since February 1917 under Ansari. Besides this, the Hindu lower middle class was under the sway of Shraddhanand. Five radical vernacular newspapers had been started between November 1918 and February 1919. Their editors, Indra of *Vijaya,* Asif Hussain Haswi of *Congress and Inquilab,* and Qazi Abbas Hussain of *Qaum,* went on to play a prominent and radical part in April 1919, even more so than established leaders like Ansari or Hakim Ajmal Khan. Economic factors were important, too, notes D.W. Ferrell in a study. Some 7,000 people died due to the influenza epidemic, the price of salt was up to four times the 1914 price, kerosene became unobtainable, war taxation hit the predominantly Hindu trading community hard, and the decline in handicrafts hit the largely Muslim artisan community. Between 1911 and 1921, for instance, the number employed by the lace and embroidery trade went down from 18,000 to 4000.

Delhi

The Rowlatt movement in Delhi went through three phases. The first phase was the hartal of March 30, marked by two cases of police firing—near the railway station and in Chandni Chowk. This was followed by a relative lull. At a memorable rally held on April 4 at the Jama Masjid, Muslims and Hindus alike kissed the feet of Swami Shraddhanand. The second phase saw news of the externment of Gandhi setting off a continuous hartal from April 10 to 18, accompanied by a strike of bank clerks and an attempted rail strike on April 13. But the lower-class militant strain frightened the established leaders and even the more radical journalists, and the informal alliance between the middle classes and the lower classes soon began to dissolve. The third phase saw another round of firing at Chandni Chowk on April 17 after which the city quickly returned to normal.

Ahmedabad saw a massive and violent upsurge on April 11, following the news of the action taken against Gandhi (the externment of Gandhi during the second phase of the Rowlatt movement in Delhi). Rioters consisting mainly of textile workers burnt down 51 government buildings. Official estimates speak of 28 killed and 123 injured in the action taken subsequently under martial law. On April 12,

Ahmedabad

crowds of mill-hands rioted in the nearby town of Viramgam. A spontaneous two-day hartal in Bombay city on April 10-11 was peaceful, and it was led by Gujarati merchants and professional groups who were far more prominent than industrial workers. Gandhi's presence was a restraining factor here. At Nadiad in Kheda district, mass violence was averted by the effort of one of Gandhi's followers who came from Ahmedabad on April 11 and exhorted the people to remain quiet. The Bombay Government's reactions were much more restrained than the Punjab Government's, as the latter was a frontier province supplying the major part of soldiers for the Indian army.

Calcutta

Calcutta witnessed hartals on April 6 and 11, a joint Hindu-Muslim rally at Nakhoda mosque on April 11 and clashes with the police and the army in the cosmopolitan Harrison Road-Chitpur-Burra Bazar area the next day, when machine guns were used by the British to kill nine people. The Hindus, Marwaris and Muslims participated in these demonstrations. The student community, in sharp contrast to the Swadeshi days, stayed away. In Madras, city protest remained non-violent, but included a number of big labour meetings. These were addressed by T.V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, a Congress member and a chief organiser of the pioneer Madras Labour Union of 1918, and Subramaniya Siva, the Extremist veteran of the Tuticorin strike of 1908.

Other parts of India remained unaffected—in the Central Provinces for instance, the only places affected by hartals, complete or partial, were Chhindwana, Akola and Amravati.

Significance

Gandhi's Rowlatt satyagraha provided a rallying point to the people belonging to different sections and communities. This aspect of the movement is quite evident from the massive participation of the people in Punjab, which Gandhi had not even visited before the movement. However, the movement was more intense in cities than in rural areas. The anti-Rowlatt movement was poorly organised. The Satyagraha Sabha mainly focused on publishing propaganda literature and collecting signatures on the satyagraha pledge. The Congress as an organisation was hardly in the picture. Popular participation in most of the areas was due to people's own economic and social grievances against the British government. Gandhi decided to call off the satyagraha on April 18 because of widespread violence, particularly in his home state in Ahmedabad city. He confessed in public that he committed a 'Himalayan blunder' by asking people who were insufficiently prepared for the discipline of satyagraha to offer civil disobedience. However, the most significant result of this agitation was the emergence of Gandhi as an all-India leader. His position became almost supreme in the national movement and he began to exercise decisive influence on the deliberations of the Congress.

Most Indian politicians were frightened by the unprecedented scale of British repression. Public protest meetings could not be organised in the Calcutta of those days. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood on May 30, 1919 in protest and to voice the anger and agony of a nation. A non-official enquiry committee was the official Congress reaction to the repression at Punjab.

At the 1919 Amritsar session of the Congress, Gandhi gave his full support to a resolution thanking Montagu for the Montford Reforms and promising cooperation in working the new Councils. A compromise clause describing the Act as disappointing was added at the insistence of CR Das, Tilak, Rambhuj Dutt Chaudhuri and Hasrat Mohani, despite Gandhi's opposition. Gandhi's decision was a sharp reversal of the position adopted by Congress the previous year, in 1918; the Congress had been critical of the Montford Reforms. Similarly, by September 1920, Gandhi had reversed his position of support of the Reforms and was pressing hard for Council boycott and Non-Cooperation.

Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)

The year 1919 was a year of deep discontent for Indians. The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and martial law in Punjab had belied all the generous war-time promises of the British. The system of dyarchy announced by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms towards the end of 1919 satisfied few people. Indian Muslims were further angered when they discovered that their loyalty had been purchased during the First World War by British assurances of generous treatment of Turkey after the war—a promise that the British went back on. The Muslims regarded the Caliph

of Turkey as their spiritual head and were naturally upset when they found that he could no longer retain control over the holy places it was his duty as Caliph to protect. Those who were willing to treat the happenings at Jallianwala Bagh and other places in Punjab as aberrations that would soon be 'corrected', were disillusioned with the results of the Hunter Committee appointed by the government to enquire into the Punjab disturbances. They found that the House of Lords had voted in favour of General Dyer's action, and that the British public had demonstrated its support by helping the *Morning Post* collect 26,000 pounds for General Dyer.

Central Khilafat Committee

The Khilafat movement rapidly gained strength in 1919-1920. Its three central demands, presented by Mohammad Ali to diplomats in Paris in March 1920, were that the Turkish sultan-*khalifa* must retain control over the Muslim sacred places; he must be left with territory that would be sufficient for him to be able to retain Islam; and that the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under Muslim sovereignty. The movement soon acquired both moderate and radical strands. The moderate strand focused on the Central Khilafat Committee, organised by prosperous Bombay merchants like Chotani; the radical strand consisted of lower middle class journalists and *ulama* with considerable influence over small towns and villages, particularly in the United Provinces, Bengal, Sind and Malabar. The Bombay leaders wanted to confine the agitation to sober meetings, memorials and deputations to London and Paris. The radicals, led by the Ali brothers after their release from internment in early 1920, urged countrywide hartals (as on October 17, 1919 and March 19, 1920). This group made the call for non-cooperation at the All-India Khilafat Conference in Delhi on November 22-23, 1919. Hasrat Mohani called for the boycott of British goods. The Khilafat leadership spelt out that in case the peace terms after the war were unfavourable to Muslims, they would stop cooperating with the government. In April 1920, Shaukat Ali warned the British that if the government failed to pacify Indian Muslims, a joint Hindu-Muslim movement of non-cooperation would be started by Khilafat members "under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, a man who commands the respect of both Hindus and Muslims".

Gandhi—A Vital Link

Gandhi had played a vital mediating role between the moderate and radical Khilafat wings. He was also the indispensable link with Hindu politicians—and Khilafat leaders were extremely eager for Hindu-Muslim unity, without which any Non-cooperation movement involving boycott of services by the Councils was evidently impossible. The Khilafat leaders even called for a 1919 Muslim League Resolution calling for the giving-up of the *Bakr-Id* slaughter of cows, remarks Sumit Sarkar, though Hindu leaders then or later on never offered the quid pro quo of abandoning music before mosques. Till May 1920, Gandhi sided with the Bombay group on the whole. He had opposed Hasrat Mohani's call for boycott of British goods at the Khilafat Conference of November 1919 since the bulk of Bombay Muslim merchants were importers and retailers of such goods. The harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres with Turkey were published on May 14, 1920, followed on May 28 by the Hunter Committee Majority Report.

Four-Stage NCM Programme

In response, the Allahabad meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee (June 1-3, 1920), which was attended by a number of nationalist Hindu leaders, favoured a radical course of action, now backed by Gandhi. A programme of four-stage Non-Cooperation was announced (boycott of titles, civil services, police and army, and finally payment of taxes), and Gandhi began pressing the Congress to adopt a similar plan of campaign around the three issues of the 'Punjab wrong', the 'Khilafat wrong' and 'Swaraj'. Full support initially came only from Gujarat and Bihar. Old Congress members like Motilal Nehru were at first hesitant about the crucial issue of boycott of council elections (scheduled for November 1920), and the followers of C.R. Das and Tilak bitterly opposed it. Tilak, sceptical of satyagraha as an instrument of politics, also opposed an alliance with Muslim leaders over a religious issue. Much depended on the attitude that Tilak took. Tilak, however, passed away on August 1, 1920, the same day that Non-Cooperation was formally launched. The day of mourning and of the launch of the movement merged as people all over India observed hartal and took out processions.

The programme of non-cooperation and boycott

was then placed before the Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs). After a prolonged debate, the PCC of the United Provinces approved the principle of non-cooperation, and gradual boycott of government schools and colleges, government offices, and British goods. But there were reservations about the boycott of legislative councils.

Attitude of the PCCs

The Bombay PCC approved of non-cooperation as the legitimate method of agitation, but objected to the boycott of councils. It recommended only the boycott of British goods at the first stage. The Bengal PCC agreed to accept the principle of non-cooperation but again disagreed with the idea of boycott of councils. The Madras PCC approved the policies of non-cooperation but rejected Gandhi's programme.

If the attitude of these 'traditional' bases of Indian politics to Gandhi's programme was somewhat cool, it was the 'non-traditional' bases such as Gujarat and Bihar that supported the Gandhian programme wholeheartedly. Between September and December 1920, however, the established leaders made a dramatic conversion to Gandhi's programme, and, observes a Gordon and Brown study, political calculation of election prospects lay behind their decision to do so. The study adds that Lajpat Rai supported election boycott on June 25, as the Punjab election rules announced in mid-June offered little chance for the victory of the urban Hindu-based Congress of Punjab. The opposition to council boycott was strongest in the provinces of Bengal and Maharashtra, old Extremist strongholds holding bright electoral chances. Similarly, Motilal Nehru, realising that the UP Congress was organisationally unprepared for elections, offered decisive support to the Calcutta Special Congress (September 4-9, 1920). The session approved a programme by 144 to 132 votes at the Subjects' Committee and a much wider margin (1,855 to 873) at the open session. The programme involved surrender of titles, the 'triple boycott' (of schools, courts and councils), boycott of foreign goods, and encourgement of national schools, arbitration courts, and *khadi*. There was no mention, however, of resignations from services, police, or the army, or of no-tax.

Regional Response

The Nagpur Congress of December 1920 saw C.R. Das make a dramatic switch-over to the Gandhian programme. He spent Rs 36,000 on financing a big opposition delegation from Bengal, but eventually moved the central resolution accepting "the entire or any part of the non-violent non-cooperation scheme, with the renunciation of voluntary association with the Government at one end, and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, (to be) put in force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress or the AICC". Resignation from the councils, renunciation of all legal practice, nationalisation of education, economic boycott, organisation of workers for national service, raising of a national flag and Hindu-Muslim unity were suggested as steps in the programme. Gandhi's promise of "Swaraj within one year" first made in a *Young India* article on September 22, 1920 may have implied a tacit understanding that the whole issue could be reopened if *Swaraj* did not come through Non-Cooperation within a year. For the time being, at least, the entire Congress was willing to do Gandhi's bidding. The Congress creed was modified to read "the attainment of Swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means", although, the concept of Swaraj itself was left deliberately vague. Gandhi initiated crucial changes in the Congress organisation in an effort to make it into a real mass political party for the first time. These changes were: a regular four-anna membership; a hierarchy of village-taluka-district or town committees; reorganisation of PCCs on a linguistic basis, and the number of delegates to be fixed in proportion to population; and a small 15-member Working Committee as the first real executive head.

Changes in Congress Organisation

The programme of the Non-Cooperation thus evolved two main aspects, constructive and destructive. Under the first category came the nationalisation of education, the promotion of indigenous goods, the popularisation of *charkha* and *khadi,* and the enrolment of a volunteer corps. In the second category were included the boycott of law courts, educational institutions, elections to the legislature, official functions, and British goods as well as the surrender of honours and titles conferred by the British. The campaign began with enthusiasm from early 1921 onwards. Until February 1922 when the movement was withdrawn, Non-

Programmes under NCM

Cooperation went on to become the first of the successful all-India Gandhian mass movements. Sumit Sarkar provides an analysis of Non-Cooperation at three levels: the phases of the all-India movement as sought to be determined by the Gandhian Congress leadership, the role of distinct social groups and classes, and the regional and local variations.

The official movement, specifically responding to successive calls from the Working Committee or AICC, had four phases. From January to March 1921, the central emphasis was on students leaving government-controlled schools and colleges and lawyers giving up practice. The *charkha* programme in the beginning had a strong intelligentsia orientation, and students and urban people were urged to take up spinning on a voluntary basis. Spinning was both a symbol of identity with the rural masses, as well as a quick road to swadeshi. The intelligentsia movement made a spectacular beginning: massive student strikes were held at Calcutta and Lahore, and top lawyers like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru gave up their practice, but soon there were signs of decline. In April 1921, the Vijayawada session found the country "not yet sufficiently disciplined, organised and ripe" for civil disobedience, and decided to concentrate on raising rupees one crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, enrolling one crore Congress members, and installing 20 lakh charkhas by the June 30. But radicalising pressures from below led the Bombay AICC meeting of July 28-30 to adopt a somewhat more militant stance. It boycotted foreign cloth (including public bonfires), and boycotted the coming visit of the Prince of Wales in November, but postponed full-scale civil disobedience through non-payment of taxes. Gandhi called for flooding the prisons with volunteers, and volunteer bands began to be organised. The new mass orientation was quickly grasped by Viceroy Reading, and he remarked (referring to the strategy of large-scale enrolment of volunteers, militant picketing, and courting of arrest by thousands): "…the change from Gandhi's appeal to intellectuals to his appeal to ignorant masses…has altered (the) situation, but it has the advantage of bringing intellectuals and persons of property more closely to us". An extremely successful countrywide hartal greeted the Prince of Wales on November 17. Violent clashes in Bombay led Gandhi to postpone once again the plans for civil disobedience in the selected single *taluka* of Bardoli, in the third phase. The developments in the fourth phase, between November 1921 and February 1922, nearly succeeded in demolishing government authority. Khilafat leaders like Hasrat Mohani, angered by the jailing of the Ali brothers in November (for speeches at the Karachi Khilafat Conference in July calling on Muslims to resign from the army), were demanding complete independence and giving up of non-violence. The new government policy of large-scale arrests and ban on meetings and volunteer groups threatened the Liberals, while much of India seemed poised on the brink of variegated, disorganised, but formidable revolt. The government's response is seen in Reading's secret telegram to Montagu in December 1921, suggesting not only the release of prisoners, but a Round Table Conference and an early revision of the just-implemented reform scheme. Gandhi, in turn, decided to go on a no-revenue campaign at Bardoli, on the issue of infringed liberties of speech, press and association, and it was to begin from the second week of February 1922. The entire movement was called off on February 11 at Gandhi's insistence owing to the incident at Chauri-Chaura.

Four Phases

Popular Response and Impact

How did different social groups respond to the movement? The initial appeal for self-sacrifice by the upper classes was not successful, with only 24 titles surrendered out of 5186, and the number of lawyers giving up practice standing at 180 in March 1921. Polling was low in many places in the November 1920 elections, falling to only eight per cent in Bombay city and five per cent in Lahore. Candidates, however, offered themselves in all but six out of 637 seats, and council functioning could not be disrupted. By far, the educational boycott was more effective, particularly in Bengal, where about 20 headmasters or teachers were resigning per month till April 1921. Further, 11,157 out of 103,107 students quit government or aided institutions in response to the movement. All-India figures collected in Bamford's confidential *History of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements (1925)* reveal the impact to have been considerable in colleges but non-existent at the primary level. A considerable number of

National Educational Institutions

national schools and colleges were also founded like the Jamia Millia Islamia in Aligarh (later shifted to Delhi), the Kasi Vidyapith at Benaras and the Gujarat Vidyapith. Some 442 institutions were started in Bihar and Orissa, 190 in Bengal, 189 in Bombay, and 137 in UP. Many of these wound up when swaraj failed to materialise and the pull of conventional degrees and jobs reasserted itself, but a few institutions survived to serve as valuable seminaries of nationalism.

Economic Boycott

The economic boycott was successful, with the value of imports of foreign cloth falling from Rs 102 crore in 1920-21 to Rs 57 crore in 1921-22, and imports of British cotton piecegoods at 1,292 million yards and 955 million yards in 1920-21 and 1921-22 respectively. While picketing remained important, a new feature was the collective pledges by merchants not to indent foreign cloth for specific periods. There were interesting forms of business pressure, as when a Delhi trader's threat not to honour hundis of Rohtak led Rohtak into joining a hartal in February 1920. For importers of Lancashire cloth, nationalism in 1921 coincided with short-term business interests, when the rupee-sterling exchange ratio declined from 2s to 1s 4d by late 1921, and Indian merchants were asked to pay much more for British goods than they were paying previously.

Response of the Business Class

Business support improved the Congress funds situation to a large extent. The AICC had only Rs 43,000 in its coffers in 1920, but it was able to collect over Rs 130 lakh between 1921 and 1923. At least 37 and half a lakh rupees out of the Tilak Swaraj Fund of a crore came from the city of Bombay alone. Alarmed at business backing of Non-Cooperation, the British decided to set up a Fiscal Commission with Indian representatives to go into the question of tariff protection for Indian industries. A large section of big business, however, still remained hostile to Non-Cooperation. Purshottam Thakurdas, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Cowasji Jehangir, Pheroze Sethna, and Setalvad were the industrialists who set up an anti-Non-Cooperation Association in 1920. While the textile industry was helped by the nationalist-Swadeshi upsurge (in October 1921 the average of cotton mill share prices, taking 1913 as 100, stood at 275, as against a general share price average of 248), fear of labour unrest (at its peak in 1920-21) was probably crucial in keeping industrialist attitudes ambivalent. Throughout 1921, labour militancy was at a high. (*Capital*, the organ of British business in Calcutta, declared on July 13, 1922, that nationalist politics had "promoted the influence of millowners and enhanced the sale of their goods. The only fly in the ointment is the liability of labour to run amock.") There were 396 strikes involving 600,351 workers and a loss of 6,994,426 workdays. Mid-1920s saw a post-war boom that was succeeded by a recession particularly in the Calcutta jute industry, with the mill-owners trying to cut back production with a four-day week. The workers, in turn, retaliated with 137 strikes in Bengal jute mills in 1921, involving 186,479 labourers. Workers participated in large numbers in the Jharia session of the AITUC in December 1921. Regional Congress leaders were active in some strikes, mainly in Bengal and Madras. Gandhi was clear about his stand, though: "We seek not to destroy capital or capitalists, but to regulate the relations between capital and labour. We want to harness capital to our side. It would be a folly to encourage sympathetic strikes."

High Labour Militancy

The peasant benefited through his participation in the Gandhian programme of village reconstruction through self-help. An economic revival was sought through the spinning wheel and hand-woven cloth (charkha and khadi), panchayats or arbitration courts, national schools, and campaigns for Hindu-Muslim unity and against the evils of liquor and untouchability. Panchayats proved popular in Bihar and Orissa, while in Bengal, 866 arbitration courts in all were set up between February 1921 and April 1922. The anti-liquor campaign became popular for the lower castes who found in it an opportunity for 'Sanskritising' social upliftment. Excise revenues fell in 1921-22 by Rs 33 lakh in Punjab, and caused a Rs 65 lakh deficit in the Madras budget. Handloom production rose sharply from 931 million yards in 1920 to 1084 million yards in 1923. Other benefits included the Hindu-Muslim unity becoming a powerful fact due to the Khilafat movement, and Gandhi's bringing of the issue of untouchability to the forefront of nationalist politics.

Non-Cooperation was shaped in most places according to local conditions; however, the local grievances of the people found expression through

this movement, and often the movement took on dimensions not originally conceived by the leadership. Let us analyse the trends in the various provinces.

Regional Trends

Punjab

In Punjab, Non-Cooperation began with a fairly successful Lahore student walk-out inspired by Lajpat Rai in January 1921. But the movement in the cities was relatively weak as compared to April 1919. A powerful Akali upsurge took place in the Sikh-dominated central Punjab countryside. The Akalis were fighting to wrest control over the Sikh shrines (Gurudwaras) from corrupt mahants, who had established a mutually profitable alliance with British officials. (Arur Singh, the government-appointed manager of the Amritsar Golden Temple, had even gone to the extent of inviting General Dyer to become a honorary Sikh.) On February 20, 1921, a hundred Akalis were massacred by the mahant, and the Sikhs suspected that the Lahore Divisional Commissioner had a role to play in it, too. In November 1921, the British refused to hand over the keys of the Golden Temple to the Sikhs, and many Akalis courted mass-arrest as a result. The British retreated, as the incident coincided with the peak of Non-Cooperation, and the keys were handed over and the prisoners released by mid-January 1922. The majority of the 15,506 Akali volunteers listed, according to a government report of January 1922, were drawn from the Jat Sikh peasantry, particularly of the Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Shaikhupura and Lyallpur districts. A dissident 'Babbar Akali' group emerged from the official Akali movement in March 1921 in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur under Kishan Singh and Mota Singh, calling for no-revenue movements and eventually adopting terroristic methods against loyalists and some moneylenders. The Akali struggle continued until the Sikh Gurudwaras and Shrines Act of November 1925 established control of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) over the Gurudwaras. After 1922, however, the link with the broader national movement was lost in Punjab, as was the remarkable communal unity established in 1921.

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan's deeply-feudal princely states, powerful peasant movements grew and contributed directly to an urban nationalism, first observed in 1920 in the British enclave of Ajmer with the Rajasthan Seva Sangh. The Bijolia movement in Mewar won a partial victory in 1922. There was an agitation against cesses and begar on the Khalisa lands of the Udaipur Maharana, and it began with a peasant rally in May 1921 at the traditional annual *Matri Kundiya* fair. A Bhil tribal movement under Motilal Tejawat grew militant in 1921-22. In December 1921, Meos from Alwar attacked a police station in the neighbouring Gurgaon district and it needed the joint operation of the British Indian police and Alwar State troops to control the violence.

Bombay

In Bombay Presidency, the Muslim traders and peasants of Sind were greatly enthused by the Khilafat call. There were two important Hindu leaders, Jairamdas Daulatram, a close associate of Gandhi, and Swami Govindanand, jailed for five years on a sedition charge in May 1921. The Swami later became a radical critic of Congress orthodoxy. In Bombay city, though, enthusiastic support came from Gujarati businessmen, professional and clerical groups. The Maharashtrians, still in mourning over Tilak, tended to be somewhat suspicious of Gandhi, and industrial labour and lower-class Muslims rioted. The hartal on November 17, 1921 turned into large-scale riots, and Maharashtrian mill-workers and Muslims reacted to the jailing of the Ali brothers by attacking Whites, Christians, Anglicised Parsis and, at times, anyone wearing European clothes. More than 20 were killed in the riots. The riots ended in November 1923 when Gandhi decided to go on a fast. A radical student group emerged in 1921 under S.A. Dange, R.S. Nimbkar, V.D. Sathaye and R.V. Nadkarni, which criticised Gandhian methods and gravitated towards Marxism through literature supplied by R.B. Lotwalla, a millionaire with socialist leanings. On the whole, Non-Cooperation remained weak in Maharashtra, where the established Tilakite political leadership was unenthusiastic about Gandhi, and where non-Brahmins, till the 1930s, stayed away from the Congress which they considered to be dominated by Chitpavans. The peasants of Mulshi Peta, near Poona, adopted satyagraha methods to defend their land, which Tata, with government support, was trying to acquire for a hydro-electric project. The Poona Congress took up their cause in April 1921, and the struggle continued for years.

Gujarat

In Gujarat, the Gandhian movement was naturally the strongest. In a 'tour of inspection' of the Bardoli taluka in 1921 with the Mahatma, Krishnadas vividly describes a peasant awakening, at once massive and tightly-controlled and disciplined. The Patidar peasant-proprietor interests fitted in with the discipline of non-violence, for a more uninhibited movement could have raised problems of control over lower caste or tribal agricultural labourers and village servants. The important Gandhian bases were Anand and Barsad in Kheda, and Bardoli, which was the first civil disobedience centre.

South India

In South India, the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat upsurge was remarkable. Of its four linguistic regions, only Karnataka remained unaffected. In Madras Presidency, there was an initial appeal made to the upper and middle class professional groups. Only six out of 682 title-holders surrendered their honours, 36 Tamil and 103 Andhra lawyers gave up their practice, and only 92 national schools were established with some 5,000 students. A labour upsurge culminated in a four-month-long strike at the White-owned Buckingham and Carnatic textile mills from July to October 1921 with the support of Non-Cooperation leaders like Thiru Vi Ka. At the same time, the nationalist leadership's attempt to link the labour movement with the Gandhian strategy by distributing charkhas in place of strike funds, led the elderly Madras lawyer and volunteer organiser, Singaravelu Chettiar, to eventually become the first Communist in South India. He condemned the brakes Gandhi was imposing on kisan movements in an open letter dated May 5, 1921, and urged the use of non-violent Non-Cooperation against 'capitalistic autocracy'. Picketing of liquor shops was one of the most successful forms of Non-Cooperation in coastal Andhra and interior Tamil Nadu. In the Andhra delta region, Non-Cooperation attained its greatest strength. It had leaders like Konda Venkatapayya, A. Kaleswara Rao, T. Prakasam and Pattabhi Sitaramayya, considerable merchant support, and peasant participation. Among the highlights of the Andhra upsurge was the resistance of the small town of Chirala-Parala in Guntur district to the government move to make it a municipality, and thereby hiking local taxes from Rs 4,000 to Rs 30,000. Led by Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya, the town's 15,000 inhabitants refused to pay taxes and collectively migrated to a new settlement named Ramanagar for 11 months. It led to a powerful movement for the non-payment of land revenue between December 1921 and February 1922. The movement attained its greatest strength in the Pedanandipad sub-division of Bapatla taluka near Guntur town and in Raghudevapuram near Rajahmundri, and it brought down revenue collection from Rs 14.73 lakh to only Rs 4 lakh for January 1922, before it was called off. Andhra was also the scene of the 'forest satyagraha' in Rajyachoti taluka of Cuddapah and Palnad taluka of Guntur. Huge crowds of villagers had greeted Gandhi in Cuddapah in September 1921 so that he could get their taxes reduced and the Forest Regulations abolished. While Congress leaders like Venkatappayya tried to confine the agitation to the social boycott of forest officials, peasants began sending cattle into forests without paying grazing fees, some forest villages in Palnad proclaimed swaraj and attacked police parties, and forest administration in both Palnad and Rayachoti collapsed. This militancy, in turn, was to spur other acts of rebellion: a jail break by ordinary convicts at Trichinopoly in May 1921 was based on the belief that Gandhi's Swaraj was about to replace British rule.

But it was the Moplahs of Malabar who rose in the most violent of the 1921 upsurges. The previous Moplah outbursts had a 'ritualistic' character with only a handful of actual participants. But the rumours of the imminent collapse of British authority now converted the endemic protest into a massive popular rebellion. A tenant-rights agitation, developing in Malabar from 1916, was taken up by the Khilafat movement after the Manjeri conference of April 1920. Peasants were encouraged to air their grievances at Khilafat meetings, and the local leader, Ali Musaliar, promised them a sort of socialist utopia. When established Congress and Khilafat leaders like K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala menon, Yakub Hasan and P. Moideen Koya were arrested in February 1921, local radical leaders like Musaliar took over. On August 20, 1921, a police raid on Tiruraangadi mosque in search of arms sparked off a major rebellion, and police stations, public offices, communications, and houses of oppressive landlords were attacked. The British lost control completely over the Ernad and Walluvanad talukas of South Malabar for several months.

'Khilafat Republics' were set up at a number of places under 'Presidents' Kunhammad Haji, Kalathingal Mammad, Ali Musaliar, Sithi Koya Thangal and Imbichi Koya Thangal. Declaring the Moplah resistance as "framed upon guerilla warfare", a British GOC asked for artillery reinforcements on September 26th. The Hindu opinion generally condemned the Moplahs as communal fanatics. According to an Arya Samaj source, about 600 Hindus were killed and some 2500 forcibly converted. Sumit Sarkar says that these figures are low because the 'fanatics' controlled for months an area inhabited by four lakh Hindus including many oppressive landlords and moneylenders, and numerous collaborators with the British—a Moplah band marched 23 miles across a Hindu area merely to burn the records of an oppresive Hindu landlord without injuring anyone on the way or even the family of the *jenmi.* The Moplah rebellion became a massive and armed anti-imperialist revolt. The British retaliated with brutal repression in which 2,337 rebels died, 1,652 were wounded, and 45,404 were taken as prisoners. At Podanur on November 20, the bodies of 66 asphyxiated Moplah prisoners were found in a railway wagon into which they had been shut in.

Assam

In Assam, the tea gardens of the Surma valley saw the most important development of Non-Cooperation. At Chargola in May 1921, coolies demanded a big wage increase with shouts of *Gandhi Maharaj Ki Jai*, followed by a massive exodus of 8,000 workers (52 per cent of the labour force). The bulk of the plantation labour in Chargola valley came from the eastern UP districts of Basti and Gorakhpur where Non-Cooperation had become very powerful. In October and in December, sporadic strikes and disturbances were reported from the tea gardens in Darrang and Sibsagar districts, and officials repeatedly complained that Non-Cooperators were active among the tea garden labour. Most Assam Congress leaders were not enthusiastic about strikes in plantations, since some of them like N.C. Bardaloi were planters themselves. There were signs of a no-revenue movement among peasants as well.

Bengal

In Bengal, the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat alliance made 1921-22 the point of the greatest strength and unity in the national movement history. Most Bengal political leaders accepted Gandhi very late—only with C.R. Das's conversion to Gandhi's ideas at Nagpur—after which even the terrorists agreed to give Gandhian methods a year's trial. The Gandhian ways did not have much appeal for the sophisticated Calcutta intellectuals. Rabindranath started a 'Call of Truth' movement, which hailed Gandhi's achievement in arousing millions of Indians, but sharply criticised elements of narrowness, obscurantism and unthinking conformity in the *charkha* cult. Bengal was notable mainly for the unique communal unity established among the Hindus and Muslims, for which the effective political leadership was provided by C.R. Das and his three young lieutenants (Birendranath Sasmal in Midnapur, J.M. Sengupta in Chittagong, and Subhas Bose in Calcutta), and the elemental awakening of urban and rural masses. A student upsurge in early 1921 was followed by the Gurkha assault on coolies fleeing from Assam tea-gardens on May 20-21 at the East Bengal port of Chandpur. The incident led to widespread hartals and strikes under the leadership of J.M. Sengupta. It paralysed railway and steamer services in East Bengal. From July to October, a period of relative lull, nationalists concentrated on building up volunteer groups, organising arbitration courts, and holding innumerable meetings. The third wave began with the coming of the Prince of Wales in November and it continued till February 1922 and even beyond. The November 17 hartal was a massive success in Calcutta, with control of streets passing into the hands of volunteers, and a number of police personnel resigning. Repression was countered by mass courting of arrest (over 3,000 had gone to jail in Calcutta by the end of 1921). The volunteers who went to jail included both upper class women like C.R. Das's wife, Basanti Debi, and mainly Muslim mill-workers. In the countryside, a campaign against the White-owned Midnapur Zamindari Company on the Rajshahi-Nadia-Pabna-Murshidabad border led to a peasant fight against indigo cultivation led by the Calcutta student, Someshwarprasad Chaudhuri.

The best organised village movement was the anti-Union Board agitation in the Contai and Tamluk sub-division of Midnapore led by Birendranath Sasmal. The agitation was introduced against a very effective no-tax movement among the mostly

Mahishya tenantry of Midnapur in 1921 which forced the government to withdraw the new regulation from the district. But while this was an example of relatively better-off peasants led by local lawyer-politicians, more militant rebellions simmered too. On March 24, 1921, 669 convicts broke out from Rajshahi jail, declaring that Gandhi Raj had arrived. An official report speaks of "a great wave of lawlessness' in early 1922, and even in well-organised Kidnaper, district leaders" pleas for payment of *chaukidari* taxes after the Union Board was withdrawn (in December 1921) often went unheeded. There was withholding of rent, and Santals in the Jhargam sub-division looted *hats* and zamindar-owned forests. Districts of Rangpur, Chittagong and Tippera all noted disturbances; these outlying districts, seldom visited by top leaders, saw unrestrained mass action.

Bihar

Bihar was praised by the Mahatma as "a Province in which the most solid work is being done in connection with Non-Cooperation. Its leaders understand the true spirit of non-violence…" Forty-one high schools and 600 primary and middle national schools with a total of 21,500 pupils had been established by June 1922, and 48 depots had been set up in 11 districts to distribute cotton and charkha. Some 300,000 charkhas, 89,000 handlooms, and a khadi production of 95,000 yards per month were reported from Bihar in August 1922, though Congress leaders admitted that khadi was not popular because of its high price and it was being worn by only 1 per cent of the population. The boycott of liquor was popular. Some contacts were established with Chota Nagpur tribals (Jharkhand), particularly with the Tana Bhagat sect. Sporadic incidents of violence included 35 cases of *hat*-looting (and even the enforcing of just prices at some places after the loot) in Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Monghyr and Purnea in January 1921, the attack on Giridih just after the arrest of a Khilafat volunteer, leading to firing on April 25, 1921; an epidemic of illicit distillation in some tribal areas, and widespread tension in Champaran and Muzaffarpur districts over appropriation of traditional village pastures by zamindars and indigo planters. The Bhumihar villagers of Sonparsa in Bhagalpur attacked the Gurkhas employed by a European landlord in January 1921; a dispute regarding grazing rights led to the burning of the Chauterwa indigo factory near Motihari in Champaran in November 1921; and Sitamarhi sub-division in Muzaffarpur earned a reputation as a storm-centre.

United Provinces

The United Provinces became one of the strongest bases of the Congress during Non-Cooperation with 328,966 members in July 1921 (a figure exceeded only by Bihar which claimed 350,000), and UP came to have from this time, a leading position in national politics which it has retained till date. Leading nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottamdas Tandon, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Govind Ballabh Pant, and Lal Bahadur Shastri belonged to this province and began their political careers in earnest in 1920-21. About 137 national educational institutions had been set up by July 1921, of which the Kashi Vidyapith was the most prominent. Organised non-cooperation in UP was mainly an affair of cities and small towns. The UP Congress leadership was somewhat more responsive to peasant outbursts than that of Bihar, perhaps because the Avadh talukdar was very loyalist. The peasant upsurge in south and south-east Avadh associated with Baba Ramachandra led to widespread agrarian riots in Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh, Fyzabad and Sultanpur between January and March 1921. The targets included the houses and crops of talukdars, as well as the bazars and merchant property. On January 6, the Fursatganj bazar in Rae Bareli, for instance, was attacked by a crowd of 10,000 who complained of expensive grain and cloth and demanded that shopkeepers sell cloth at 4 annas per yard and flour at 8 seers per rupee. There were several violent clashes with the police and instances of peoples' courts dispensing peasant justice. Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru condemned this plebian outburst. Nehru in his *Autobiography* recalls a meeting in Fyzabad where he persuaded those who had indulged in violence to put up their hands, knowing that the police were present and the men would be jailed. The Khilafatist and Congress leaders persuaded Baba Ramachandra to keep away from the affected area, and on his arrest on February 10, Congress leaders did not attempt to get him released. Ramachandra later accused the Congress of betrayal.

The kisan movement in 1921 did not come into its own though, with specific peasant demands relegated to the background, while an alarmed UP government persuaded talukdars to agree to a few

concessions by the Oudh Rent Act of 1921 (like life-tenancies in place of seven-year leases). In late 1921 and early 1922 in North-West Avadh (Hardoi, Bahraich, Bara Banki and Sitapur districts), things threatened to get out of hand when the 'Eka' movement started by some local Congressmen was taken over by the much more radical Madari Pasi. The basic demand was for the conversion of produce rents (batai) into cash (which would have favoured the peasants as the prices were rising), and an elaborate ritual of mantras and vows seemed to have been devised. The police crushed the movement and arrested Madari Pasi only in June 1922. There were signs of disaffection among the hill tribes too. In 1921, they burned down thousands of acres of reserved forests in the Kumaon district.

Suspension of the Movement

Suspension of the NCM

Non-Cooperation was called off by Gandhi with the Chauri-Chaura incident. The incident took place in a Gorakhpur village, where a well-organised volunteer body had started picketing the local bazar in a campaign directed both against liquor sales and high food prices. Gandhi later admitted there had been ample provocation—the police had beaten up volunteer leader Bhagwan Ahir, and then opened fire on the crowd which had come to protest before the police station. In retaliation, the entire procession attacked the police and when the latter hid inside the police station, set fire to the building. The sessions court at first sentenced 172 of the 225 Chauri-Chaura accused to death (eventually 19 were hanged, and the rest transported), reflecting British alarm at the incident. Sumit Sarkar notes that the only recorded nationalist protests against the barbarous attempt to take 172 lives in return for the 22 policemen killed, were those made by MN Roy's émigré Communist journal, *Vanguard*, and by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. And that even today while a police memorial remains at Chauri-Chaura, there is nothing in honour of the peasant martyrs.

Nehru recalled that Gandhi's abrupt and unilateral decision to suspend the entire movement after Chauri-Chaura was deeply resented by both the prominent Congress leaders and the younger people. Gandhi in turn used two arguments (*Young India*, February 16, 1922): a reiteration of faith in non-violence ("would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent") and an appeal to the fear of the unruly element should the Indian Government abdicate in favour of the victors of Bardoli. R.P. Dutt, in the standard Left critique, pointed out that the Working Committee's Bardoli Resolution of February 12 confirming the withdrawal emphasised in two of its seven clauses that "the withholding of rent payment to the zamindars is contrary to the Congress resolutions", and assured the zamindars "that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights…" Yet rent was not directly involved in Chauri-Chaura. Sarkar adds that Gandhi had, at the outset, warned that he would lead only a specific type of controlled mass movement, and was not interested at all in class struggle or social revolution. The fact that the entire movement collapsed when Gandhi called it off also reveals its own basic weakness—while there was an objectively revolutionary situation in the India of 1919-22, there was nothing at all in the way of an alternative revolutionary leadership. While the masses interpreted the vague vision of Gandhi Raj in their own diverse, sometimes near-revolutionary, ways, they still looked up to Gandhi alone for guidance. A badly-frightened British, who had not dared to touch Gandhi so long even while arresting practically every other Congress leader, picked up courage on March 10, 1922 to arrest him and award a six-year jail sentence to him. Gandhi made a magnificent court speech: "I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen." But no one protested when Gandhi went to jail.

Resentment Against Suspension

The authors of *India's Struggle for Independence* (B. Chandra, *et al*), remarking on Gandhi's decision, say that in his assessment the chances of his being allowed to conduct a mass civil disobedience campaign in Bardoli had receded further after Chauri-Chaura. The government would have had excuse to remove him and other activists from the scene and use force to cow down people, and mass civil disobedience would have been defeated even before it had been given a fair trial. By taking the onus of withdrawal on himself and on the Working

Committee, Gandhi was protecting the people from demoralisation and the movement from repression. While the withdrawal itself led to considerable demoralisation, especially of the active political workers, the brutal crushing of the movement might have led to even more demoralisation, argue the authors. The authors add that the fear of the growth of radical forces was not the real motive for withdrawal. The crowd at Chauri-Chaura had not demonstrated any intention of attacking landlords or overturning the structure of property relations; they were only angered by the overbearing behaviour of the policemen and vented their wrath by attacking them. The Bardoli resolution announcing the withdrawal contained clauses which asked peasants to pay up taxes and tenants to pay up rents, and assured the zamindars that the Congress had no intention of depriving them of their rights. In doing so, the resolution was merely reiterating the Congress position on this issue.

Bardoli Resolution

Moreover, Non-Cooperation had begun to show signs of ebbing in many parts of India. Students had started drifting back to schools and colleges, lawyers and litigants to law courts; the commercial classes showed signs of weariness and worry at the accumulating stocks of foreign cloth; and attendance at meetings in both rural and urban areas had dwindled. The mass enthusiasm that had been evident in the country in the first part of 1921 had receded, though individual satyagraha in pockets where intensive political work had been done, as Bardoli in Gujarat or Guntur in Andhra, continued. The capacity of masses to withstand repression, endure suffering and make sacrifices is not unlimited, and breathing space is required in any mass movement to consolidate, recuperate and gather strength for the next round of struggle. Therefore, a withdrawal or a shift to a phase of non-confrontation is an inherent part of a strategy of political action that is based on the masses.

Decline of the NCM

Many historians and scholars across the world have questioned the nature of the Congress-Khilafat alliance and its implications on the course of the Indian national movement. The alliance, termed by some as a marriage of convenience, is regarded as a political agitation based on a pan-Islamic platform and being largely indifferent to the cause of Indian independence. Dr Koenraad Elst writes: "The Khilafat movement was a tragicomical mistake, aiming at the restoration of the Ottoman Caliphate against which the Arabs had risen in revolt and which the Turks were dissolving, a process completed with the final abolition of the institution of the Caliphate in 1924. It was a purely retrograde and reactionary movement, and more importantly for Indian nationalism, it was an intrinsically anti-nationalist movement pitting specifically Islamic interests against secular and non-Muslim interests. Gandhi made the mistake of hubris by thinking he could reconcile Khilafatism and Indian nationalism, and he also offended his Muslim allies (who didn't share his commitment to non-violence) by calling off the agitation when it turned violent. The result was even more violence, with massive Hindu-Muslim riots replacing the limited instances of anti-British attacks, just as many level-headed freedom fighters had predicted. Gandhiji failed to take the Khilafat movement seriously whether at the level of principle or of practical politics, and substituted his own imagined and idealised reading of the Khilafat doctrine for reality."

Critics of Non-Cooperation-Khilafat Alliance

The Khilafat Movement introduced the religious idiom in the politics of Indian Muslims. Prior to this movement, Muslim nationalism in India was secular rather than a religious movement. By virtue of the Lucknow Pact, the Muslim leaders had already moved decisively towards a common platform with the broader Indian national movement. The Khilafat Movement decisively killed the politics of the Lucknow Pact. The Khilafat Movement in Indian Muslim politics has had a considerable retrogressive ideological influence on modern Indian Muslims and it still reverberates in the thinking and politics in the present-day Indian subcontinent. Its lasting legacy can be traced in the legitimised place that it gave to the Muslim clergy in the modern political arena, who emerged with a political organisation in the form of the *Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Hind*. After the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Syed Ataullah Shah with the support of Chaudhary Afzal Haq created the Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam; Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali joined the Muslim League and played a major

role in the growth of the League's popular appeal and the subsequent Pakistan movement.

NATIONAL POLITICS FROM 1922 TO 1930

The years from 1922 to 1927 were dominated by a sense of anti-climax, all the more acute because Gandhi's promise in 1920 of swaraj within a year had aroused such soaring expectations. The Chauri-Chaura incident of February 1922 compelled Gandhi to summarily withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement which demoralised many Congress leaders, leading to a steep decline in the national movement. In March 1923, the Congress membership (for the 16 out of 20 provinces which had sent reports to the AICC) stood at 106,040, less than a third of what UP alone had claimed two years before. A rift in the Congress regarding No Changers and (Swarajists) Pro-Changers threatened to break up the national movement. Council and municipal politicking gave way to the Swarajist programme of wrecking dyarchy from inside. The Gandhian group following the 'no change' policy kept themselves aloof, doing scattered constructive work in villages and satyagrahas on local issues. (See next chapter for details.) In fact, the newly-discovered techniques of non-violent satyagraha and mobilisation of public opinion were used by the nationalists to impact on socio-religious issues which affected the internal structure of Indian society. This was in part the result of the fact that as the national movement advanced, the social base of colonialism was narrowed, and the colonial authorities began to seek the support of the socially, culturally and economically reactionary sections of the society.

No-changers vs Pro-changers

A satyagraha movement was started in Nagpur in mid-1923 against a local order banning the use of the Congress flag in some areas of the city, but it proved to be a rather tame affair. Gujarat under Vallabhbhai Patel, however, revealed its organisational strength by sending large numbers of volunteers. Another satyagraha came from the Akali movement that had developed as a purely religious issue but ended up as a powerful episode of India's freedom struggle. The *Guru-ke-Bagh* satyagraha (August 1922-April 1923) originated from a trivial dispute over the cutting of a tree on land disputed between the ousted mahant of the shrine and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) management, but it aroused countrywide sympathy due to the police beating up thousands of peaceful Akali volunteers. In September 1923, British pressure led to the abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, a major patron of the Akali movement, and this led to a satyagraha at Jaito which Jawaharlal Nehru briefly joined. The astute new Governor of Punjab, Malcolm Hailey, was however able to defuse the whole Akali issue through the Sikh Gurudwaras and Shrines Act of 1925, accepting SGPC control over Sikh religious centres. In Bengal, in 1924, a somewhat similar, though more localised, issue briefly emerged, with the *Tarakeswar* satyagraha against a corrupt mohant, started by Swami Viswananda and taken up by C.R. Das.

Guru-ke-Bagh Satyagraha

The two really significant satyagrahas were those at Borsad in Kheda district (in present Gujarat) in 1923-24 and Vaikom in Travancore state in 1924-25. The Borsad movement was directed against a poll tax imposed in September 1923 on every adult in Borsad to pay for the police who were required to suppress a wave of dacoities. The movement then took the form of total non-payment of the new levy by all the 104 affected villages in December, and the tax had to be cancelled on January 7, 1924. The victory revived the Gandhian Congress prestige, somewhat lowered by the abrupt retreat of February 1922. In 1923, the Congress decided to take active steps towards ending untouchability. The basic strategy it adopted was to educate and mobilise opinion among caste Hindus on the question, and this came to be symbolised by the Vaikom satyagraha in Kerala. The Vaikom satyagraha was the first 'temple-entry' movement—more precisely an attempt along strict Gandhian lines to assert the right of low-caste *Ezhavas* and untouchables to use roads near a Travancore temple. The movement was led by the Ezhava Congress leader T.K. Madhavan, together with Nair Congressmen like K. Kelappan and K.P. Kesavan Menon. Multi-caste support for the satyagraha was indicated also by the participation of the Nair caste association leader, Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, but the important Christian community was unncessarily alienated by a

Borsad and Vaikom Satyagraha

statement by Gandhi asking them to keep away from a Hindu affair. Gandhi visited Vaikom in March 1925, but the satyagraha petered out after 20 months when the government constructed diversionary roads for use by untouchables.

Construction Work

During these years, the Gandhian 'No-Changers' did impressive relief work (often far outdoing government efforts) in emergencies like floods (as in Bengal in 1922 and Gujarat in 1927), established national schools, promoted khadi and other cottage crafts, carried out anti-liquor propaganda, and performed social work among low castes and untouchables. If looked at as a solution to the social and economic problems of rural India, the programme was clearly a failure, however. National schools, as the experience of numerous efforts since 1905 clearly revealed, flourished in times of high political activity and languished in normal times. Even Gandhi admitted to Motilal Nehru in 1927 that khadi was so much more expensive than either imported cloth or Indian mill-cloth. The programme of Harijan welfare extended after 1932 for political reasons, but it did not tackle at all the basic economic issue of landless and often semi-servile agricultural labour which constituted the bulk of the 'untouchables'. But the programme was considerably hindered in the 1920s by Gandhi's refusal to condemn the caste system in principle. His defence of *varnashrama* ideals led militant anti-Brahmins in Tamil Nadu like E.V.R. Naicker to express their disappointment. The main weakness of the temple entry movement and the Gandhian or nationalist approach in fighting caste oppression was that even while arousing the people against untouchability they failed to draw up a strategy for ending the caste system itself. But this aspect found expression later in the Constitution of independent India which called for abolishing caste inequality, outlawing untouchability and guaranteeing social equality to all citizens irrespective of their caste.

Significance of Constructive Work

On the other hand, the research of Hitesh Sanyal on Bengal, Gyan Pandey on UP, and David Hardiman on Kheda, reveals the considerable political importance of Gandhian constructive work in building up rural support for the Congress and in establishing Congress hegemony over low castes and untouchables. National schools, Khaddar Bhandars, and social service organisations like Lajpat Rai's *Lok Sevak Mandal*, active in Punjab and UP, trained and provided financial support to considerable numbers of full-time Congress cadres. If national education served mainly urban lower middle class and rich peasant groups, khadi did provide marginal relief for the rural poor, apart from having the clear political advantage of "forcing elite politicians to dress as peasants" (Hardiman). Even in a non-Gandhian province like Bengal, much useful work was done by institutions like Satis Dasgupta's *Khadi Pratisthan* of Sodepur and Suresh Banerji's *Khadi Asrama* of Comilla. Hitesh Sanyal has emphasised the sustained activities from 1922 onwards of men like Prafulla Sen in the very backward and poverty-stricken Arambagh region of Hooghly district. Constructive work also attained full success in Gujarat, particularly in Kheda and Bardoli with their chain of asramas and dedicated gram sevaks. Constructive work here helped to extend Gandhian influence considerably beyond its initial, 'lesser Patidar' base. The Gandhians combined work among the Bardoli Kaliparaj and Kheda Baraiyas with a process of taming unruly elements. Ravisankar Maharaj wandered as a sadhu and social reformer in Baraiya villages, and this contributed to reducing the number of dacoities in Borsad taluka from 20 in 1921 to one each year during 1927-29. The centres of constructive work everywhere provided the initial bases for Civil Disobedience activities in 1930. The deep roots struck by nationalism among the peasants of Kheda were vividly revealed when 14 Borsad villages pressed on their own initiative for a no-revenue movement during the Dandi March.

Communal Disturbances

But other developments of the period gave reason for alarm. There were strong tendencies of a return to moderate politicking methods, and the Hindu-Muslim unity of 1919-1922 gave way to a wave of communal rioting. In September1924, Kohat in the North West Frontier Province, witnessed a violent anti-Hindu riot. Between April and July 1926, 139 people were killed in Calcutta due to riots. Communal disturbances occurred in Patna, Delhi, Rawalpindi, Dhaka and UP. The Hindu Sabha and Swarajists often had common members in some places, while communal organisations proliferated.

The Hindu-Muslim friendship of 1919-22 was not regained, but the two communities came together to stage hartals and demonstrations jointly in the course of the boycott of the Simon Commission.

Simon Commission (1927-28)

In fact, it was the announcement of the creation of an all-white Simon Commission on November 8, 1927, to recommend whether India was ready for further constitutional progress, that changed the situation. The Commission was an answer to Indian nationalist clamour declaring the constitutional reforms of 1919 as inadequate. Faced with the prospect of electoral defeat at the hands of the Labour Party, the Conservative Government of Britain appointed the Indian Statutory Commission or the Simon Commission under the chairmanship of John Simon. That no Indian should be thought fit to serve on a body that claimed the right to decide the political future of India was seen by Indians as an insult. The call for a boycott of the Commission was endorsed by the Liberal Federation led by Teg Bahadur Sapru, by the Indian Industrial and Commercial Congress, and by the Hindu Mahasabha; even the Muslim League split on the issue and Mohammad Ali Jinnah carried the majority with him in favour of boycott. The Indian National Congress turned the boycott into a popular movement. Gandhi made clear in *Young India* of January 12, 1928: "It is said that the Independence Resolution is a fitting answer…The act of appointment (of the Simon Commission) needs for an answer, not speeches, however heroic they may be, not declarations, however brave they may be, but corresponding action…"

Boycott of the Commission

As soon as Simon and his friends landed at Bombay on February 3, 1928, all major cities and towns observed a complete hartal, and people came out in the streets to participate in mass rallies, processions and black-flag demonstrations. Everywhere that Simon went—Calcutta, Lahore, Lucknow, Vijayawada, Poona—he was greeted by a sea of black flags carried by thousands of people. In Lucknow, Khaliquzzaman executed the brilliant idea of floating kites and balloons imprinted with the popular slogan 'Go Back Simon.' The police retaliated with lathi-charge. In Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai was hit on the chest by lathis on October 30 and he succumbed to the injuries on November 17, 1928. It was his death that Bhagat Singh and his comrades sought to avenge when they killed the white police official, Saunders, in December 1928. Another leader who remained crippled for life due to injuries inflicted on him during the anti-Simon demonstration was Govind Ballabh Pant.

Repression of Anti-Simon Demonstrations

The anti-Simon boycotts heralded the growth, from 1928 onwards, of anti-imperialist movements. Middle-class students and youth dominated such urban demonstrations. The years 1928 and 1929 were full of student and youth conferences and associations, raising demands for complete independence and social and economic change. The rise in the number of students (from 5.04 per cent of the total population in 1922 to 6.91 per cent in 1927, according to the Simon Report) was greater than the corresponding increase in employment opportunities. Bombay and Calcutta witnessed militant Communist-led workers movement, which alarmed Indian businessmen and British officials and capitalists alike. Bhagat Singh's *Hindustan Socialist Republican Association* introduced a new secular and socialistic tone, leading to a revival of revolutionary groups in Bengal and Northern India. Also, Vallabhbhai Patel's Bardoli Satyagraha in Gujarat in 1928 against the enhancement of land revenue spawned peasant movements in various regions. This was also the time when Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru of the emerging Congress Left raised slogans of Purna Swaraj rather than only of Dominion Status. A diffident Gandhi agreed to this change in the Congress demand at the Lahore Session in December 1929, heralding the next major round of countrywide struggle in1930-34. (In private though, Gandhi had warned Jawaharlal he was going too fast. In a pattern which would be repeated in future, Jawaharlal drew back from any open breach.) But the change in attitude took some time in coming.

Bardoli Satyagraha

Gandhi had strongly disapproved Jawaharlal's passing of an Independence Resolution in his absence at the Madras Congress in 1927 and, in 1928, pushed through a compromise formula while

at Calcutta. This formula accepted the Nehru Report objective of dominion status, provided the British granted it by the end of 1929, failing which the Congress would be free to go in for Civil Disobedience for Purna Swaraj. Bose's amendment calling for immediate reiteration of the complete independence objective was backed by Jawaharlal, Satyamurti of Tamil Nadu, many Bengal delegates, and the Bombay Communists, but the amendment was defeated by 1350 votes against 973. Gandhi emphasised constructive work in villages, prohibition, and boycott of British goods, plus redress, along Bardoli lines, of 'specific grievances' during 1929. He encouraged public bonfires of foreign cloth, and toured India collecting funds for khadi, but repeatedly rejected pressures for any all-out struggle. Sumit Sarkar traces the restraint during 1928-29 to the fact that the regions and social groups most prominent in these years, like the urban educated youth of Bengal, Punjab and Bombay and the industrial workers of Bombay and Calcutta, were those over whom Gandhi had least influence or control.

Nehru Report 1928

The 'Irwin offer' of October 31, 1929 complicated matters somewhat. In the offer, the Viceroy declared dominion status to be the 'natural issue' of India's constitutional progress and promised a Round Table Conference after the publishing of the Simon Report. The Viceroy Irwin had been privately urging the need for such a gambit from December 1928 in the context of the strength of the Simon boycott. The new Labour Government of June 1929 endorsed Gandhi's move, but most Tories and Liberals did not like it and made this clear. Thus the credibility of the move was reduced. On November 2, Gandhi, Motilal and Malviya joined the Liberals in accepting the offer, subject to four conditions: the Round Table Conference should discuss the details of Dominion Status which the British should accept immediately; the Congress must have majority representation in the Conference; and there should be an amnesty and a policy of general conciliation. Bose refused to sign this 'Delhi Statement'. Nehru signed it but then developed doubts and wanted to resign. Negotiations broke down when Gandhi met Irwin on December 23, and the Viceroy flatly rejected the Congress conditions.

Irwin's Offer

Lahore Session (1929)

In the first of his presidential addresses made at the Lahore Congress in December 1929, Nehru sketched out a new internationalist and socially-radical perspective for the freedom movement. He attacked Gandhi's pet 'trusteeship' solution for zamindar-peasant and capital-labour conflicts, arguing that the English considered themselves the trustees for India and had still harmed the country. Yet the proceeding details show Gandhi firmly in command. He rejected Bose's alternative proposal for immediate 'non-payment of taxes', 'general strikes wherever and whenever possible', and rejected a 'parallel Government'. Gandhi's resolution (passed by the fairly narrow majority of 942 to 794 votes) condemned the bomb attack on Irwin's train. Gandhi pushed through the main resolution by arguing that the delegates would have to either accept or reject it 'in toto'. Above all, though Nehru and Bose had visualised a Civil Disobedience which would culminate in general strikes, the details of the action programme were left to be worked out entirely by the AICC and in effect by Gandhi.

The Cambridge school historians credit Simon with reviving a 'moribund nationalism', while Irwin raised Gandhi's stature by talking with him on a level of equality. But this is not true; the crafty Britsh often changed their policies in response to nationalist pressures and not the other way round. Simon apparently had no intention of accepting even the Montagu-Chelmsford framework in respect of the demands of the Indians. It was the mass upsurge of 1930 which made the British promise some sort of responsible government at the centre. It forced Irwin to negotiate with Gandhi in February-March 1931.

But that was not all. Political and economic tensions between the British domination and a variety of Indian interests were steadily increasing during 1928-29. The first of these was the impact of the World Economic Depression which set in from late 1929. British tariff policy did not exactly make the business groups happy. Textile imports from Lancashire were again increasing; the British jute interests and the Birlas were at loggerheads in Calcutta; while in Bombay coastal shipping was a source of friction. Large

World Economic Depression 1929-33

scale retrenchment of the workers spawned agitations with unprecedented virulence and organisation.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-34)

Eleven-Point Programme

The launch of a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes was the tactic the Congress authorised at the Lahore session in 1929 along with a request to all members of legislatures to resign their seats. Although Gandhi was empowered to launch the agitation at a time and place of his choice, he was desperately in search of an effective formula. He submitted a minimum demand of 11 points like reduction of rupee-sterling ratio, halving of agricultural tax, abolition of salt law and so on. The demands were ignored. Jawaharlal regarded them as a climbdown from *Purna Swaraj,* and Gandhi was still in two minds. It was in February 1929 that Gandhi began to talk about salt: "There is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the State can reach even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless. The tax constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise." He informed the Viceroy Irwin that on the 11th of March he would proceed with the co-workers of his ashram to disregard the provisions of the salt law. It was a brilliantly conceived plan though few realised its significance when it was announced. With seventy-eight members of the Sabarmati Ashram, among whom were men belonging to almost every region and religion of India, Gandhi was to march from Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 240 miles. Upon reaching the Dandi coast, he would break the salt laws by collecting salt from the beach. It was a deceptively innocuous and devastatingly effective move. People began to converge at Sabarmati Ashram in thousands before it began even to witness the dramatic events that would unfold. "And Gandhi painstakingly explained his plans, gave directions for future actions, impressed on the people the necessity for non-violence and prepared them for the Government's response: 'Wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt laws should be started.... Liquor and foreign cloth shops should be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts .... I prescribe only one condition, viz., let our pledge for truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of *swaraj* be faithfully kept.'" (Bipan Chandra)

Salt Issue

Dandi March

"You planned a fine strategy round the issue of salt," Irwin told Gandhi later. A concrete and universal grievance of the rural poor, the salt laws had no socially divisive implications. A daily necessity of the people, salt carried with it the far-reaching emotional content of trust, hospitality and mutual obligations. The breaking of the salt law by Gandhi meant a rejection of the government's claim on the allegiance of the people. Furthermore, in coastal areas, illegal manufacture of salt could provide the people with a small income which was not unimportant. Above everything, the Dandi March and the widespread violation of the salt laws over large areas of the country subsequently demonstrated the tremendous power of a non-violent mass struggle. While Gandhi was marching to Dandi, his comrades took up the far more difficult task of organisation, fund collection and touring towns and villages to spread the nationalistic message among the people. The Satyagrahis held salt marches in Assam, Bengal, Madras, Sindh, Orissa and many other places. Many policemen and lower-level government officials resigned due to social boycott. The government let loose a reign of brutality, methodically bashing unresisting men to a bloody pulp, as the American journalist Webb Miller observed. Such repression and its heroic defiance evoked admiration and sympathy which quickly turned into active participation, releasing the movement from its initially narrow confines. But then the movement turned violent, weakening the Gandhian restraint because his followers were already behind the bars. The Chittagong armoury was captured by the Bengal revolutionaries on April 18, 1930 after which they fought a pitched battle on Jalalabad hill on April 22. Civil Disobedience in Bengal was accompanied by revolutionary terrorism, with 56 incidents in 1930 (as compared to 47 in 1919-29). The arrest of Khan

A Pinch of Salt that Rocked the Empire!

Revival of Revolutionary Terrorism

Raid at Dharasana: The Perfect Satyagraha

After Gandhi's arrest, his successor, Abbas Tyabji, ex-Justice of Baroda, was getting ready at Karadi for the march to the Salt Works at Dharasana. On May 12, 1930, the volunteers fell into line ready for the march, but Tyabji was arrested.

Sarojini Naidu succeeded Abbas Tyabji. On May 21 over 2,000 volunteers led by her and Imam Saheb raided Dharasana salt depot, about 150 miles north of Bombay. Mrs. Naidu led the volunteers in prayer and addressed them briefly: "Gandhiji's body is in jail but his soul is with you. India's prestige is now in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist, you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows." With Manilal, Gandhi's son in the forefront, the throng moved forward towards the salt pans, which were now surrounded with barbed-wire stockade and ditches filled with water, guarded by four hundred Surat police with half a dozen British officials in command.

One hundred yards from the stockade the satyagrahis drew up and a picked column advanced, wading the ditches and approaching the barbed wire. "Suddenly," observed Mr. Miller, an American journalist, "at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers, and rained blows on their heads with steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ninepins. From where I stood, I heard sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls… Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking ranks, silently and doggedly, marched on until struck down."

When the first column was gone, another marched forward. "Although every one knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, and perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up… The police… beat down the second column. There was no fight, no struggle; the marchers simply walked forward until struck down. There were no outcries, only groans after they fell. There were not enough stretcher-bearers to carry off the wounded…".

"Bodies toppled over in threes and fours, bleeding from great gashes on their scalps. Group after group walked forward, sat down, and submitted being beaten into insensibility without raising an arm to fend off the blows. Finally the policemen became enraged by the non-resistance, sharing, I suppose, the helpless rage I had felt at the demonstrators for not fighting back. They commenced savagely kicking the seated men in the abdomen and testicles. The injured men writhed and squealed in agony, which seemed to inflame the fury of the police, and the crowd again almost broke away from their leaders. The police then began dragging the sitting men by the arms or feet, sometimes for a hundred yards, and throwing them into the ditches… Hour after hour stretcher-bearers carried back a stream of inert, bleeding bodies."

Mrs Naidu and Manilal Gandhi were arrested. Miller went to the temporary hospital where he counted 320 injured, many still insensible with fractured skulls, and others writhing in agony. Scores of the injured had received no treatment and two men had died. The Government made every effort to prevent Mr Miller from communicating his reports to his newspapers…. His story of the beating caused a sensation when it appeared in the 1,350 newspapers served by the United Press throughout the world.

Source: *National Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi*

Abdul Ghaffar Khan on April 23, 1930 gave rise to a massive upsurge when Hindu soldiers refused to open fire on a Muslim crowd in a fine instance of patriotic self-sacrifice, non-violence and communal amity. A textile workers' strike in Sholapur led to attacks on liquor shops, police outposts and government buildings, giving rise to something like a parallel government for a few days in early May. However, illegal salt manufacture became difficult due to the onset of monsoon, and the Congress took to other forms of mass struggle like non-payment of land revenue, refusal to pay *choukidari* tax and satyagraha in forest areas. The government retaliated with force, but the peasants held firm and resorted to violent confrontations with the police in many places.

Trends in Regional Popular Response

In the urban areas, the support for Gandhian nationalism around 1930 was less than what it had been during the Non-Cooperation Movement and only a few lawyers gave up their practice and few students left official institutions to join national schools. Revolutionary terrorism attracted the educated youth more in Bengal, and for a brief

period Bhagat Singh became more popular than Gandhi in the north Indian towns. Muslim participation was low, and there was communal discontent in Dhaka town and Kishoreganj village in May and July 1930. There were frequent hartals in towns, but to the relief of British officials the Congress did not include industrial or communication strikes in its programme. That lacunae was largely made up by the massive peasant mobilisation and considerable support from the business groups, at least during the initial stages. As the movement implied violations of law, the number of jail-goers was more than three times the 1921-22 figure. There was solidarity with the nationalist movement by the Calcutta Marwaris headed by G.D.Birla at this stage, and merchants in many towns gave up imports of foreign goods for some months. Due to picketing and the overall impact of the Depression worldwide, there was a spectacular collapse of British cloth imports—from 1,248 million yards in 1929-30 to only 523 million yards in 1930-31. Widespread participation of women in the Civil Disobedience Movement was a welcome feature: women from socially conservative professional, business or peasant families picketed shops, faced lathis and went to jail. Yet, it did not entail any drastic change in the traditional image of women. It was male action mostly, 'feminised' somewhat through the acceptance of suffering. However, women's participation in revolutionary terrorism came under sharp attack. Even Rabindranath Tagore with his impeccable progressive outlook wrote a novel *Char Adhyay* criticising such unfeminine behaviour.

Women Participation in CDM

Regional studies of Civil Disobedience have revealed that Gujarat and the Gujarati business-cum-professional community of Bombay city became the classic heartland of Gandhian controlled mass mobilisation through satyagraha. The interests of substantial landholding peasants like the Patidars of Bardoli and Kheda fitted in well with Gandhian stategies and controls, because rent was not much of an issue. In the areas where the Congress was weaker or where internal zamindar-peasant divide was quite pronounced, rural movements tended to be much more uninhibited. This was seen in Central Provinces, Maharashtra or Karnataka, where non-cooperation had little impact and Gandhian ideas came to be associated with a near millenarian flavour and novelty, mostly absent in the well-established strongholds like Gujarat, coastal Andhra or Bihar. This inverse relationship between organisation and militancy had been brought out in district-level comparisons in UP. A strong organisation and a few big zamindars in parts of Agra district followed the Bardoli pattern, while in taluqdar-dominated Rae Baraeli, peasants exerted pressure. In Bengal, the Congress was weak and faction-ridden, there was a communal divide in the eastern districts and the presence of a left alternative made matters complicated.

Regional Studies

Truce Offers, and Renewal and Petering Out of the Movement

Civil Disobedience passed on to a second more contradictory phase in the last few months of 1930. The effect of the Depression increased the pressures for no rent, which the UP Congress reluctantly sanctioned. Though incidents of peasant and tribal militancy increased, official reports indicated a marked decline of enthusiasm and support among urban traders, many of whom started selling foreign goods on the sly. Industrialists grumbled about the limits of patience while Homi Modi complained of the frequent hartals dislocating trade and industry. The ruthless seizure of property by the government reduced the nationalistic ardour of the rich peasants. Gandhi had to retreat probably due to all this as also owing to the fact that almost all leading Congress leaders were in jail. He had a talk with Irwin, ending in the Delhi Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 5 which proposed another round table conference to discuss the agreements reached in the first; the immediate withdrawal of Civil Disobedience; the discontinuation of boycott of British goods; the withdrawal of ordinances promulgated, release of prisoners and remission of penalties; and, with the exception of people living by the seashore, no breach of the salt law. There was a feeling of unhappiness all over, more so when Gandhi's request was ignored and Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed on March 23. Nehru wrote Civil Disobedience had died, "not with a bang but a whimper". People felt let down, more so the peasants who had sacrificed land. The second round table conference (September-December 1931) was a fiasco, with

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

Round Table Conferences

Gandhi squabbling endlessly with Ambedkar and Muslim leaders who had asked for separate electorates, which the British watched with unconcealed glee. The session was a pointless exercise primarily because Gandhi had given up, during the Delhi negotiations, the demand for majority representation for his party which had led to the rejection of Irwin's offer in December 1929.

Significance of the Civil Disobedience Movement

Yet, it would be wrong to regard the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the period of truce as entirely negative. Gandhi talked to Irwin as an equal and was shown the courtesy equals deserve, discomfiting the die-hard British officials. The Congressmen released from jail went back as heroes, the organisation expanded and the general mood was upbeat. That was when the empire hit back with sweeping ordinances (Emergency Powers, Unlawful Association, Unlawful Instigation, and Molestation and Boycotting), banning all Congress meetings, abrogating all civic freedom without formally declaring military rule and arresting Gandhi and Sardar Patel along with scores of Congressmen on January 4, 1932. There was repression on an unprecedented scale, and Wellingdon described Bombay and Calcutta as two black spots. The first because the small Gujarati traders did not forsake the Congress, and the second because Calcutta became a nightmare due to terrorism. An important feature of the second civil disobedience were upsurges in the princely states of Kashmir and Alwar. By late 1932, though, Civil Disobedience was being defeated. The decline in peasant participation evident, for instance, in Gujarat, Andhra or UP, was a submission to a superior force rather than any loss of faith in Congress, says Sumit Sarkar. The halo of sacrifice and martyrdom won by the Congress during 1930-34 helped decisively to win elections from 1934 onwards. Hardiman points out that "voting was not the same as agitating…The days of the classic Gandhian satyagrahas had passed." Propertied peasants would go on voting Congress, but would no longer sacrifice their land, and in some areas like Gujarat, they would also become more prosperous after the Depression was succeeded by a war boom. Rural capitalism developed only in few places before 1947, and peasant radicalism was particularly evident in the zamindari areas. However, peasant radicalism would, from the mid-1930s, seek forms of expression outside the Congress proper, through Left-leaning kisan sabhas as well as through communal organisations.

Meanwhile, big business moves towards collaboration with the British were bitterly denounced by G.D. Birla. Nonetheless, from 1932 onwards he was quitely pressing Gandhi for a compromise. Thinking of an honourable retreat, Gandhi suspended the movement temporarily in May 1933, and formally stopped it in April 1934. He devoted himself entirely to Harijan work as an answer to the British policy of divide and rule which found expression in the communal award declared early in 1932. As it happens so often, the government's sense of triumph proved to be illusory because the Congress swept the polls in most of the provinces in 1937.

NATIONAL POLITICS FROM 1930 TO THE 1940s

Second World War and the Congress

With the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany on September 1, 1939, the Second World War was declared. Britain and France, Poland's allies abandoning their policy of appeasement towards Hitler, declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. The Government of India immediately declared India to be at war with Germany without consulting the Congress or the elected members of the central legislature. Indian opinion on the subject was divided. Most of the Congress leaders adopted the line that despite sympathy with the victims of fascist forces, an enslaved nation could hardly be expected to go to the aid of anti-fascist forces. They believed that since Britain was in trouble, India should seize the opportunity to gain freedom by opposing British efforts to mobilise India's resources for the war, and by launching a strong movement against the British. Gandhi took an emotional view of the situation: taking a sympathetic view of the Allies, he made a sharp distinction between the democratic states of Western Europe and the totalitarian Nazi state headed by Hitler. He urged for full and unquestioning cooperation with Britain. The official Congress stand was adopted at a meeting of the Congress

Working Committee held in Wardha from September 10 to 14, in which Subhas Bose, Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan were also invited.

The Congress' offer of full cooperation in the War was subject to the condition that the British would in return establish some sort of a responsible government at the centre immediately. The Congress further demanded a constituent assembly to frame the Constitution of free India. Despite his support of the Congress Working Committee Resolution of conditional support, Gandhi stated later, "I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally." At the same time he realised that his silence might turn out to be a "distinct disservice to both India and England," and he added: "If the British are fighting for the freedom of all, then their representatives have to state in the clearest possible terms that the freedom of India is necessarily included in the War aim. The content of such freedom can only be decided by Indians and them alone." The British government's reaction was negative. Viceroy Linlithgow, in his well-considered statement of October 17, 1939, harped on the differences among Indians, tried to use the Muslim League and the princes against the Congress, and refused to define Britain's war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression. As an immediate measure, he offered to set up a consultative committee whose advice might be sought by the government when it felt it necessary to do so. For the future, it made a vague promise of dominion status. The Defence of India Rules were promulgated in order to check defiance of British authority and exploit India's resources for the war effort.

Government's Proposal

The Indians and the national government reacted in two ways to the government's proposal. The angriest reaction came from Gandhi who had been advocating more or less unconditional support to Britain. Pointing out that the British government was continuing to pursue 'the old policy of divide and rule,' he said: "The Indian declaration (of the Viceroy) shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it…The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone." The Working Committee, meeting on October 23, rejected the Viceregal statement as a reiteration of the old imperialist policy, decided not to support World War II, and asked Congress ministries to resign in protest. However, it stopped short of calling for an immediate and massive anti-imperialist struggle.

Indian Response

There were two opinions in the Congress about the launch of civil disobedience or mass satyagraha. Gandhi and the dominant leadership advanced three broad reasons for not initiating an immediate movement. First, they felt that since the cause of the Allies—Britain and France—was just, they should not be embarrassed. Second, the lack of Hindu-Muslim unity was a big barrier to a struggle, and in the existing atmosphere any civil disobedience movement could degenerate into communal rioting or even civil war. Third, they felt that there did not exist in India an atmosphere for an immediate struggle: neither were the masses ready nor was the Congress organisationally in a position to launch a struggle. It was, therefore, necessary to carry on intense political work among the people and prepare them for struggle; to tone up the Congress organisation and purge it of weaknesses; and to negotiate with the authorities till all the possibilities of a negotiated settlement were exhausted and the government clearly seen to be wrong. This view was summed up in the resolution placed by the Working Committee before the Ramgarh Session of the Congress in March 1940. The resolution asserted that "nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people", and declared that the Congress would resort to civil disobedience, "as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough for the purpose…"

Two Congress Opinions

The second opinion came from a coalition of various left-wing groups—Subhas Bose and his Forward Bloc, the Congress Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the M.N. Roy group or Royists—who were in favour of an all-out struggle as the World War being fought was an imperialist war. They felt that hurdles like the communal problem and the weaknesses in the Congress organisation would be swept away once the mass movement was launched. The rift came out in the open at the Ramgarh Congress of March 1940 under the presidentship of Maulana Azad, where

people were asked to prepare themselves for participating in a satyagraha to be launched under Gandhi's leadership. Not happy with the resolution, the left-wing groups and Forward Bloc held an anti-compromise conference at Ramgarh, and Bose urged people to resist compromise with imperialism and be ready for action.

Individual Satyagraha

Convinced that the British would not modify their policy in India, Gandhi decided to start an individual satyagraha for himself and a few select individuals in every locality. The satyagrahi would demand the freedom of speech to preach against participation in the war. He or she would publicly declare that it was wrong to help the British war-effort with men or money, and the only worthy effort was to resist all war with non-violent resistance. The satyagrahi would inform the district magistrate beforehand of the time and place where he or she was going to make the anti-war speech. The carefully-chosen satyagrahis—Vinoba Bhave was to be the first satyagrahi on October 17, 1940 and Jawaharlal Nehru the second—were surrounded by huge crowds when they appeared on the platform and the authorities could often arrest them only after they had made their speeches. If the government did not arrest a satyagrahi, he or she would not only repeat the performance but move into the villages and start a trek towards Delhi (*the Delhi Chalo* or 'onwards to Delhi' movement). The individual satyagraha had a dual purpose—while giving expression to the strong political feelings of the Indian, it gave the British Government further opportunity to peacefully accept Indian demands. More importantly, Gandhi was beginning to prepare the people for the coming struggle. By May 15, 1941, over 25,000 satyagrahis had been convicted for offering individual civil disobedience.

August Offer

In August, the Viceroy Linlithgow proposed the expansion of the Governor-General's Council with Indian representation in it, and the establishment of a War Advisory Council. In this offer he promised the Muslim League and other minorities that the British government would never agree to a constitution or government in India which did not enjoy their support. In turn, the Congress rejected this offer because there was no suggestion for a national government and because it encouraged the anti-Congress forces like the Muslim League.The government, meanwhile, systematically put under preventive arrest many Congress workers—particularly the ones with left leanings—and placed the local leaders under observation.

According to Sumit Sarkar, the relative weakness of the national movement between 1939 and 1941 probably also had certain economic roots. Certain gains accrued to the population. The rise in agricultural prices was not sharp, and came as a relief for peasantry after a long decade of depression. As during the First World War, Indian industrial development received a major stimulus from War demand with cutting-off of imports and forced reliance on indigenous products. The British, however, did a lot to discourage Indian efforts (by Walchand Hirachand and Diwan Mirza Ismail of Mysore) to start production of automobiles, ships and aircraft. Employment in factories went up by 31 per cent between 1939 and 1942, whereas it had increased only from 1,361,000 to 1,751,000 between 1922 and 1939. Labour unrest could have seriously threatened the war effort, but it was kept in check in the big cities by substantial dearness allowances and supply of essential goods at subsidised rates. For Indian businessmen and traders, the war meant an opportunity for very quick profits, particularly so long as it remained distant and did not involve the threat of destruction of property through aerial bombardment or evacuation.

Economic Developments During War

Two world developments in the second half of 1941 transformed the Indian situation: Hitler's invasion of Russia, and the dramatic Japanese drive through South-East Asia from December 1941. In four months, the Japanese swept the British out of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and threatened to bring its empire in India to a sudden end. The German invasion of Russia confronted the Indian Communists with the choice of supporting the British, whose policies in India remained as repressive and reactionary, or opting out of the war effort, of which Britain was a part, of the world's only socialist State. The Communist Party of India (CPI) in January 1942, along with the rest of the international Communist movement, called for full support to the anti-fascist 'people's war' even while

People's War

reiterating the standard Congress demands for an independence pledge and immediate national government. Internationalists like Nehru spoke of a compromise enabling Indian support to the war during the Cripps Mission negotiations, and the need to organise guerrilla resistance to Japanese invaders. These leaders initially had great reservations about Quit India. However, most Congress right-wingers, the Gandhians, Socialists, and followers of Bose, felt that Britain was going to be defeated and urged for freedom.

THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT (1942)

'Quit India' or '*Bharat Choro*' was the simple yet powerful slogan that launched the Quit India movement which also became famous by the name of the 'August Revolution'. In this struggle, Indians demonstrated an unparalleled heroism and militancy, and, in turn, had to suffer the most brutal repression ever used against the national movement. The circumstances in which resistance was offered were also the most adverse faced by the national movement ever. Using the War effort as justification, the government had armed itself with draconian measures and suppressed even basic civil liberties. Virtually any political activity, however peaceful and 'legal', was at this time an illegal and revolutionary activity. In response, the people, after the arrest of the Congress leadership, decided their own course of action and challenged the British in a way reminiscent of 1857. New leadership emerged at local levels and their role was at variance with the Gandhian form of struggle. Non-violence was no more the guiding principle, and the intensity of the attacks made it clear that the British would not be able to rule India for long.

August Revolution

Causes of the Quit India Movement

The failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942 made it clear that Britain was unwilling to offer an honourable settlement and a real constitutional advance during the Second World War, and that Britain was determined to continue India's unwilling partnership in the war effort. The Cripps Mission was an attempt by the beleaguered Conservative government of Churchill to seek the active cooperation of Indians in the war. Stafford Cripps was a Cabinet minister and a left-wing Labourite who had earlier actively supported the labour movement. Even though Cripps announced that the aim of the British policy in India was "the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India", the draft declaration he brought with him was disappointing. The terms of the Cripps proposals were: Dominion status would be granted to India immediately after the war with the right to secede; immediately after the cessation of hostilities, a constitution-making body would be set up, and would consist of members from British India as well as Native states; the constitution so framed would, after the war, be accepted by the British government on the condition that any Indian province could, if so desired, remain outside the Indian Union and negotiate directly with Britain; and the actual control of defence and military operations would be retained by the British Government.

Cripps Mission 1942

Almost all the Indian parties rejected the Declaration. The Congress, on its part, objected to the provision for Dominion Status rather than full independence, the representation of the princely states in the constituent assembly not by the people of the states but by the nominees of the rulers, and above all the provision for the partition of India. The British Government also refused to accept the demand for the immediate transfer of effective power to Indians and for a real share in the responsibility for the defence of India. An important reason for the failure of the negotiations was the incapacity of Cripps to bargain and negotiate as he had been told not to go beyond the Draft Declaration. Moreover, Churchill, Secretary of State Amery, Viceroy Linlithgow and Commander-in-chief Wavell did not want Cripps to succeed and constantly opposed and sabotaged his efforts to accommodate Indian opinion. The failure of the Cripps Mission, the responsibility for which rested squarely with the British, made Indians feel that the situation in India had become intolerable, leaving no meeting ground between the Congress and the British Government, and that a final assault was needed.

Failure of the Mission

The British obduracy contributed in a big way to making the struggle both inevitable and necessary. Right from the outbreak of the war, the bureaucracy

had been planning a wholesale crackdown on the Congress on the pattern of 1932. However, while disobedience on the 1932 scale could be crushed with relative ease, there developed from August 9 onwards "by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security". (Linlithgow in a telegram to Churchill) The rout of the British in South-East Asia following the victory of Japan not only shattered White prestige but it also revealed British racism. The Europeans in Malaya, Singapore and Burma commandered all forms of transport in their flight and left the Indian immigrants there to make their way by trekking through forests and mountains. This led to an anti-White backlash. Sarkar points out that east UP and west and north Bihar—the region where the 'August Rebellion' attained its maximum popular intensity—was also traditionally the region from where the Indian migrant labour travelled most to South-East Asia and other parts of the world (Azamgarh district received Rs 30 lakh annually from foreign moneyorders). There were instances of racial ill-treatment and of rape by European, Australian and American soldiers; prices shot up (a 60-point rise in foodgrains in eastern UP between April and August 1942); and there were shortages particularly in rice and salt. The British, at home, were running an efficient War economy based on egalitarian rationing, but they made little effort to check India's flourishing black market and profiteering in food. The Bengal famine of 1943 was a direct result of this policy. The synchronisation of rising prices and shortages with the coming of a large number of Allied troops led to fears that the food reserves of the country were being depleted to feed the army. Bureaucratic mismanagement of the war climaxed in the Bengal order to seize all country boats and destroy them. House-to-house communication required boats in many parts of Bengal during the monsoon: "To deprive people in East Bengal of boats is like cutting-off vital limbs," wrote Gandhi in *Harijan*, May 3, 1942.

Bengal Famine 1943

There were sections of Indians who had benefited from the war in its first phase, particularly industrialists, traders and businessmen. The gains continued throughout the war—most of the contractors and blackmarketeers being Indian—but for a period in 1942 other considerations also mattered. The Governor of the Central Provinces wrote to Linlithgow on May 25, 1942 that Indian business had been very pro-war two years earlier but "the losses incurred in Malaya and Burma have stricken the *Banias* and *Marwaris* to the soul…a war which yields no profits, in the circumstances of the Excess Profits Tax, and which is accompanied by the sacrifices experienced at Singapore and Rangoon, is not at all to their tastes…It is fairly clear that the capitalist elements in the Congress Working Committee will go to almost any length to safeguard themselves and their property from the ill-effects of a possible Japanese invasion." As a result, sections of the Indian business, for a brief while, may have tended to support a movement (even if violent) which might quickly push out the British, and this might explain why industrialists in Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad were philosophical about strikes that crippled both industrial centres during August-September 1942.

In May 1942 Gandhi told a gathering of Congressmen at Bombay that he had made up his mind to ask the British to quit India in an orderly fashion and if they failed to agree, he would launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. On July 14, the Congress Working Committee adopted the Quit India Resolution which was to be ratified at the Bombay All India Congress Committee meeting in August. The AICC then passed the Quit India Resolution on August 8, 1942. The Congress appeal to Indians was: "they must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued." Gandhi declared in his passionate 'Do or die' speech the same day: "…if a general strike becomes a dire necessary, I shall not flinch." Gandhi's hard line was backed by right-wingers like Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Socialists including Achyut Patwardhan and Narendra Dev, while Nehru along with arch-moderates, Rajagopalachari and Bhulabhai Desai, urged restraint. Rajaji had been urging, from early

Quit India Resolution

1942 onwards, the need for some understanding with the Muslim League through recognition of the right of Muslim majority provinces to secede through plebiscite after independence had been obtained. The Communists took up a similar stand at the Bombay AICC pleading for a joint front with the League on the basis of the right of secession to any "more or less homogeneous section" of the population. Eventually, Nehru put aside his doubts and moved the Quit India Resolution, which only the Communist members of the AICC opposed.

Course of the Quit India Movement

The Congress gave the call for ousting the British but it did not give any concrete line of action to be adopted by the people. On the morning of August 9, 1942, the government arrested all prominent Congress leaders including Gandhi. As in earlier movements, the removal of established leaders left the younger and more militant cadres to take control of the movement. K.G. Mashruwala, who had taken over as editor of *Harijan,* published his personal opinion as to the shape the protest should take: "In my opinion looting or burning of offices, bank, granaries etc., is not permissible. Dislocation of traffic communications is permissible in a non-violent manner-without endangering life. The organisation of strikes is best…Cutting wires, removing rails, destroying small bridges, cannot be objected to in a struggle like this provided ample precautions are taken to safeguard life."

Phases of QIM

Sumit Sarkar identifies three broad phases in the Quit India Movement. The first, massive and violent but quickly suppressed, was mainly urban and included hartals, strikes and clashes with the police and army in most cities. Bombay was the main storm-centre from August 9-14; Calcutta witnessed hartals from August 10-17; there were violent clashes with heavy casualties in Delhi; and in Patna control over the city was lost for two days on August 11. The violence in Delhi was largely due to millhands on strike and the Viceroy reported strikes in Lucknow, Cawnpore, Bombay, Nagpur and Ahmedabad.

The Tata Steel Plant was totally closed down for 13 days from August 20 in a strike in which the sole labour slogan was that "they will not resume work until a national movement has been formed". At Ahmedabad, the textile strike lasted for three-and-a-half months and a nationalist chronicler later described the city as the 'Stalingrad of India.' The urban middle class spearheaded by students was prominent in the first phase.

The second phase saw the focus shifting to the countryside, with militant students fanning out from centres such as Benaras, Patna and Cuttack. They destroyed communications on a massive scale and led a peasant rebellion against White authority, strongly reminiscent of 1857 in some ways. Northern and western Bihar and eastern UP, Midnapur in Bengal, and pockets in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa were the major centres of this phase which saw the installation of a number of local 'National Governments' which were usually shortlived.

A round of brutal repression (where no less than 57 army battalions were being used, informed the Indian government to the Secretary of State on September 12th) caused the movement to enter its longest but least formidable phase. This was characterised by terroristic activity by educated youth directed against communications and police and army installations, occasionally rising to the level of guerilla war such as the one led by Jayaprakash Narain along the north Bihar-Nepal border. Part-time peasant squads engaged in farming by day and sabotage activities by night, and set up secret parallel 'national governments'. Such activities, while making an impact, were of little threat either to British rule or to the war plans of the Allies.

According to official statistics, the end of 1943 saw 91,836 people being arrested, with the highest figures coming from Bombay Presidency (24,416), UP (16,796) and Bihar (16,202). Some 208 police outposts, 332 railway stations and 945 post offices had been severely damaged, and there had been 664 bomb explosions. Bihar headed the list of police stations stormed by mass action (72 out of 208), but recorded only eight bomb incidents as compared to 447 in Bombay. It indicated greater popular participation in Bihar and more organised terrorist activity in Bombay. About 1060 were killed during police or army firing, while 63 policemen died fighting the upsurge and 216 defected, no less than 205 of them in Bihar. As

regards official atrocities, a Congress source listed 74 cases of rape in Tamluk sub-division. Free use was made of public flogging. Again the comparison with 1857 was obvious, with the British now commanding all the resources of modern science, while the people were almost entirely unarmed. Linlithgow, by August 15 itself, had ordered the use of 'machine-gunning from air' against crowds disrupting communications around Patna, and aeroplanes were also used in Bhagalpur and Monghyr in Bihar, Nadia and Tamluk in Bengal, and Talcher in Orissa.

Social Base

Several social groups participated in Quit India. Labour participation was considerable in Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad, as also in smaller centres like Ahmadnagar and Poona, where there had been little Communist activity and where Gandhian influence had contributed to cordial relations between labour and capital. Middle-class students were very much in the forefront in 1942, whether in urban clashes as organisers of sabotage or as inspirers of peasant rebellion. What made the August movement so formidable was the massive upsurge of peasantry in certain areas, most notably of peasant smallholders. Upper and middle class predominated in the figures of those arrested—17 per cent Brahmin, 27.5 per cent Rajput and Bhumihar—as against 7.4 per cent untouchable and 4.2 per cent tribal in a sample of 1214, while in another sample of 242 there were 36.5 per cent kisans, 0.8 per cent zamindars and 3.5 per cent agricultural labourers. An interesting feature of the movement was that while 1942 clearly surpassed all previous Congress-led movements in its level of anti-British militancy, the very extent of anti-foreign sentiments, as in 1857, possibly reduced internal class tensions and social radicalism, and explains why private property was not attacked.

Main Centres and Regional Variations

Regional studies of 1942 are all but non-existent. Punjab and even the Congress province of NWFP were quiet, as politics in Punjab were set in the communal mould, Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, while war-time army employment and rising grain-prices kept quiet a relatively prosperous peasantry. The movement was relatively weak in Madras Presidency, except for scattered pockets like Guntur and West Godavari in coastal Andhra and Coimbatore and Ramnad in Tamil Nadu. Communist hostility helped keep the agitation at a low key in Kerala.

Storm-centres

The four main storm-centres were Bihar-east UP, Midnapur, Orissa and Maharashtra-Karnataka. Both the intensity and the extent were the greatest in undivided Bihar—the province which in the 1930s had become the principal base of the Kisan Sabha and where most of the Kisan Sabha cadres had swung to the side of the socialists despite the new pro-war stance of the Communists and of Sahajanand. Patna was cut off from all districts except Gaya save by air, and nearly 80 per cent of police stations were captured or had to be temporarily evacuated in the ten districts of north and central Bihar. There was considerable tribal participation too, for a Congress source estimated the number to be killed to be the highest in Hazaribagh district (533 out of 1,761, followed by Saran—517 and Bhagalpur—447). From Bhojpuri-speaking west Bihar, the tide of rebellion swept into the economically and culturally similar Benaras division of UP. All ten police stations were captured in Ballia, and brief national governments set up here and in neighbouring Ghazipur. Niblett has described the siege of Madhuban police station in Azamgarh on August 15-17, particularly the march of crowds of 5000 with lathis, spears, plough-shares, hammers, saws and spade. The rural population helped the garrison through two zamindars. It took several weeks and a really massive use of army and police to restore order and normal communications in the 16 seriously-affected districts of eastern UP and Bihar. Sporadic guerrilla activities continued till 1944, with a number of local parallel governments loosely connected with the Nepal frontier-based provisional government of Jaiprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia.

Bihar

The rebel 'national government' of Tamluk sub-division of Midnapur has been chronicled by local Congress leaders like Satis Samanta, the first *Sarbadhinayak* of the Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar. Tamluk and the neighbouring sub-division of Contai were old Gandhian bases, with a tradition of sustained constructive work and so were better prepared to set up the 1942 rebel government. Special

circumstances like the need to resist the British 'denial' or scorched earth policy of destroying boats and bicycles and the need to provide relief after a cyclone (October 16, 1942), followed by famine in 1943, forced a radical economic policy. The Congress, from mid-1942, had campaigned on the slogans of resistance to the denial policy and stopping grain exports from the region. The first clash in Tamluk sub-division occurred on September 8 when villagers on their own blocked export of rice by a millowner at Danipur, and then sought the help of nationalist volunteers. On September 29, a well-planned simultaneous attack was launched on communications and police stations in Tamluk, Mahishadal, Sutahata and Nandigram. Two weeks later, a cyclone destroyed 50 per cent of the crops and nearly 70,000 heads of cattle and killed about 4000 in Tamluk sub-division. In the absence of adequate official relief, Congress volunteers had to switch over to large-scale self-help measures. This became a major function of the underground Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar set up in December 1942 with subordinate branches later on in Sutahata, Nandigram and Mahishadal. Lasting till September 1944, the Jatiya Sarkar controlled an armed Vidyut Vahini, ran a hierarchy of arbitration courts which claimed to have settled 1681 cases, provided grants to schools, organised relief worth Rs 79,000, and tried to distribute the surplus paddy of the well-to-do among the many needy villagers.

Midnapur

In Balasore district of Orissa bordering Midnapur, the Congress organised plunder of salt depots and disruption of communications and asked village swaraj panchayats to hold on to foodstocks. Around thirty-five people were killed in a mass attack on Eram-Basudevpur police station on September 28, and a national government functioned for some time in the Gurpal region. The official enquiry report on the Eram-Basudevpur firing alleged that the rumour had spread about a swaraj which would be attained within a week, during which no taxes would be paid and the paddy of the rich would be available to the poor. Cuttack was a storm-centre of terrorist activity organised by a local *Rakta Vahini.* Koraput with its large tribal population saw no-rent movements against the Jeypore zamindari, invasion of reserved forests, and attacks on thanas. An illiterate villager Lakshman Naik provided leadership, but he was hanged on 16 November for allegedly murdering a forest guard. In Talcher state, guerrilla activities continued till May 1943 under a peasant-labour (*chasi-mulia*) raj. The fighters even staged an attack on September 7, 1942 which could be repressed only with the help of aeroplanes.

Orissa

In Bombay Presidency, following the suppression of the initial urban upsurge, the movement took on two distinct forms: peasant guerrilla war in a few pockets and a more widespread terroristic activity and sabotage which was carried on mainly by educated cadres. The latter enjoyed popular support. The main centres of peasant rebellion were east Khandesh and Satara in Maharashtra and Jambusar taluk in Broach district of Gujarat. In Satara criminal elements of the district took advantage of the rebellion headed by Nana Patil, and numerous 'dacoities' with a local 'bandit' named Megzi helped the Jambusar movement to set up a kind of liberated area for three months. Gail Omvedt's study of the Satara Prati Sarkar, based on interviews of participants, brings out a few interesting features. The Satara movement was closely related to the peasant-based non-Brahman bahujan samaj tradition which had been very strong in this region. The parallel government developed rather late, from mid-1943, and maintained some kind of existence till late 1945-46. Its activities included the running of people's courts (*nyayadan mandals*) and constructive work along Gandhian lines apart from carrying on a guerrilla war. As elsewhere in 1942, nationalist militancy took away the edge of social radicalism: for though in a few cases mortgaged land was returned to poor peasants and rape and exploitation of women by prosperous villagers was severely punished, property relations were not touched. The Prati Sarkar took effective measures against local dacoits, possibly reflecting the needs of a propertied peasantry. Elsewhere in Bombay Presidency, the Socialists organised effective terroristic underground activity controlled from Bombay city by leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali.

Bombay

In Karnataka, telegraph lines were attacked, and 26 railway stations and 32 post offices raided. But there was no 'no-tax' campaign, and no-revenue did not figure even in Kheda and Bardoli, where rich patidars indulged

Karnataka

in some terroristic activity. The lesser patidars had seen some improvement in their economic situation—remittances from emigrants in South Africa, increase in tobacco cultivation, the war boom in agricultural prices and no-revenue enhancement after 1928—and so stayed away from agitating. In fact, regions marked by some amount of agricultural progress and the emergence of a prosperous peasantry in Punjab, western UP, Gujarat, the Thanjavur delta in Tamil Nadu tended to keep peasants away from the 1942 rebellion. The main centres of peasant rebellion were in eastern India, where per-capita agricultural production stagnated, or even declined.

Aftermath of QIM

The end of 1942 saw the British emerging victorious in their immediate confrontation with Indian nationalism. The rest of the two-and-a-half years of the war passed without any serious political challenge from within India. The British realised that they could not risk such a confrontation. In a letter to Churchill dated October 24, 1944, Wavell pointed out that it would be impossible to hold India by force after the Second World War, given the likely state of world opinion and British popular or army attitudes. He pointed to the desirability of starting negotiations before the end of the war brought a release of prisoners and unrest due to demobilisation and unemployment, creating "a fertile field for agitation, unless we have previously diverted their (Congress) energies into some more profitable channel, i.e. into dealing with the administrative problems of India and into trying to solve the constitutional problem". Imprisonment and consequent isolation, in fact, helped the Congress workers to avoid taking a public stand on the pro- or anti-Japanese war issue—a ticklish issue at a time when Subhas Bose's Indian National Army appeared on the borders of Assam (1944) but also when the Allies were clearly winning the Second World War. According to D.D. Kosambi, in 1946, "the glamour of jail and concentration camp served to wipe out the so-so record of the Congress ministries in office, thereby restoring the full popularity of the organisation among the masses". Right-wing Congress leaders, who throughout the late 1930s had urged more and more cooperation with the British and pursued mainly conservative policies as ministers, could now bask in the halo of patriotic self-sacrifice as much as the socialists who did most of the actual fighting in 1942. The Communist critics of both were looked on as 'collaborators and traitors' in the eyes of many Indian nationalists.

Decline of QIM

The 1942 rebellion and its aftermath also strengthened forces preferring a compromise on the nationalist side by giving a new prestige to the Congress Right. The Left alternative was weakened in two ways through a struggle which, however heroic and natural, was also probably doomed to fail, given the British control of massive military resources in 1942. Brutal repression played its part in exhausting many peasant bases, built up through years of Gandhian constructive work or radical Kisan Sabha activity. Bihar, eastern UP, and rural Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa played little part in the anti-imperialist upsurge of 1945-46, while most rural Gandhians of Midnapur and Hooghly found themselves largely pushed aside in the Bengal Congress politics of the post-war and post-independence years.

Nature and Significance

Popular and Spontaneous

Analysing the nature of the rebellion, Bipan Chandra observes that the element of spontaneity in the 1942 movement was certainly larger than in the earlier movements, though even in 1919-22, as well as in 1930-31 and 1932, the Congress leadership had allowed scope for popular initiative and spontaneity. In fact, the pattern of the Gandhian mass movements was that the leadership chalked out a broad programme of action and left its implementation at the local level to the intitiative of the grassroots level political activists and the masses. The Congress had been also ideologically, politically and organisationally preparing for the struggle for a long time. From 1937 onwards, the organisation had been revamped to undo the damage suffered during the repression of 1932-34. In political and ideological terms as well, the ministries had added considerably to Congress support and prestige. In East UP and Bihar, the areas of the most intense activity in 1942, considerable mobilisation and organisational work had been carried out from 1937 onwards. In Gujarat, Sardar Patel had toured Bardoli and other areas since June 1942 warning people of an

impending struggle. Congress Socialists in Poona had been holding training camps for volunteers since June 1942. Gandhi himself, through the Individual Civil Disobedience campaign in 1940-41 and more directly since early 1942, had prepared the people for the Quit India agitation which he said would be "short and swift".

The 1942 Quit India Movement was the most significant among Gandhian mass movements which had far-reaching consequences. It projected the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement and made it clear to the British government that there could be no retreat and future negotiations could only be on the manner of the transfer of power from the Crown to the Indian hands. The movement rapidly engulfed the entire nation and the storm centres like UP, Bihar, Midnapore, Maharashtra and Karnataka witnessed massive participation of students, workers and peasants, though Muslim mass participation remained minimal and many sections of the upper classes and the bureaucracy remained loyal to the British. However, government officials, especially those at the lower levels of the police and the administration, were generous in their assistance to the movement. In fact, the erosion of loyalty to the British Government of its own officers was one of the most significant aspects of the Quit India Movement. Jail officials often openly expressed their sympathy and tended to be much kinder to prisoners than in earlier years. There was a total absence of any communal clashes, which implied that though the movement may not have aroused much support from among the majority of the Muslim masses, it did not arouse their hostility either. Another powerful attraction of the Quit India Movement was that hundreds of communists at the local and village levels participated in the movement despite the official position taken by the Communist Party which felt the irresistible pull of the movement and for some time joined it along with the rest of the Indian people. The common masses displayed unparalleled heroism and militancy. The brutal repression they faced and the adverse circumstances under which they offered resistance only strengthened their resolve to fight till independence was won.

An Estimate of Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who was adored as a Mahatma and affectionately called 'Bapu' by the people of India was a many-faceted personality. Very often he has been grossly misunderstood and misinterpreted by many. One reason lies in the tendency to treat him as an unchanging person. Both his admirers and critics have often quoted him without consideration of time, place and context. Despite these adorations and criticisms, Gandhi was a profound political leader and thinker who 'constantly experimented with truth' and therefore changed and developed his understanding of society and social change. He was a person who maintained the highest standards of morality in politics; a great political strategist who evolved and practised politics of the capture of State power through a prolonged mass movement; an orthodox religious believer who stood for the social liberation of women, the ending of caste oppression and discrimination, and, in general, application of reason to all aspects of social life; a person who had the vision of a world where all conflicts would be resolved through use of non-violent means. Despite being called a 'philosophical anarchist' for his defiance of constituted authority, and his methods of struggle dubbed as 'a form of blackmail', Gandhi remained committed to truth and kept the purity of means in the achievement of his objectives.

Gandhi—this was the man—slight, bespectacled, and deprecating in manner, apparently the reverse of a man of action, who stirred the Indian masses to the depths, who swept the rugged veteran Tilak into oblivion, and who controlled the national movement for almost three decades, says Percival Spear. He raised a family and used them as specimens for his dietic experiments, he assumed the leadership of the Indian community and used it as a laboratory for experiments in non-violence. The poverty of the masses, whether the kisans in the indigo estates of Bihar or in his own Gujarat, burnt into his soul. A mass leader, he believed, must identify himself with those he aspired to lead, and he must not only lead but raise them. The motives of both compassion and policy led him in 1921 to discard his dapper European clothes, not for the swami's saffron robe, but for the peasant's

homespun cotton dhoti and shawl. It was this gesture and deep humanity which finally won the hearts of the people and marked him in their eyes as a great soul.

Gandhi's mystique consisted of a union of original ideas (or an original pattern of known ideas) with a remarkable flair for tactics and an uncanny insight into the mass or peasant mind. Being deeply entrenched in Hindu religious traditions and being sensitive to the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoureau, his philosophy was a viable equation between the traditional and the modern. He took certain ideas, expanded them, and gradually wove them into a system which was ethical and spiritual as well as practical and political. He came to believe that his ideas formed a universal ethic, as applicable to Hitler and Stalin as to Hindus. He believed in the rights of man which led him at once into collision with Hindu caste distinctions and their attitude towards the 'untouchables'. He welcomed these 'untouchables' into his ashram, put humanity before caste rule and found various ways of emphasising the equality of the 'untouchables' with others.

At the heart of his ideas lay the doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence, along with which went severe self-discipline that included vows and fasts of purification and penance. At the centre of non-violence lay the concept of *satya* or truth. *Ahimsa* was only one expression or outworking as it were of *satya* which was the pervasive spirit in man's life and the object of all his endeavours. Gandhi's *ahimsa* can perhaps be compared with the Platonic idea of justice as the art of right living.

Gandhi united various elements of Hinduism and other creeds in a highly original way. He reflected his ideas in a constant stream of articles, speeches and declarations, and above all by his own example. Gandhi, in the peasant's loin-cloth and shawl, sitting at the spinning wheel, writing notes on his weekly day of silence, sitting lost in contemplation or lying exhausted during a fast were all ways of getting his image across to a largely illiterate population. They were not Brahmanic, priestly ways, but ways which made an immediate appeal to the ordinary men, bringing out another facet of Gandhi's genius—his power as a popular psychologist. He could not only dramatise himself; he could dramatise on an issue with an unerring instinct. When others called meetings of protest against the Rowlatt Bills, Gandhi called a *hartal* or religious strike. When he moved against the British government, it was as if he was not acting against tyranny but against a 'satanic' institution, with which no conscientious person could cooperate. When others walked out of the Assembly as a gesture of defiance, Gandhi walked sixty miles to the sea at Dandi to make illicit salt. In all that he did, he not only brought the issue in question vividly before the minds of his countrymen, but contrived to make them morally superior to their physically stronger opponents. The load of supposed western superiority, moral as well as material, which had weighed so heavily on mid- and late-Victorian India was finally lifted and thrown back on the westerners themselves.

Describing Gandhi's unique capacity for mobilizing almost all sections of the Indian society Percival Spear writes: "As a politician Gandhi's great work was to unite the masses with the classes in the national movement. He could persuade the masses to follow the classes because the masses believed him to be a Mahatma or a great soul; he could persuade the classes to accept his Hindu and, as many of them thought, his primitivist habits because these won them the masses. The industrialist put up with his hand spinning, the politician with his loin-cloth, the epicure with his diet-sheet, because they knew that these things won them the support they needed. They also knew that, when it came to dealing with the British, Gandhi could surpass them all in arguments, in tactics, and, above all, in making the British feel uncomfortable in their cherished field of moral rectitude. If Gokhale and Tilak and Bannerjea gave nationalism to the classes, Gandhi gave the Indians a nation." (*History of India*, Vol. II)

Views

- "Great as Gandhi is as a politician, as an organiser, as a leader of men, as a moral reformer, he is greater than all these as a man, because none of these aspects and activities limits his humanity. They are rather inspired and sustained by it. Though an incorrigible idealist and given to referring all conduct to certain pet formulae of his own, he is essentially a lover of men and not of mere ideas."

—Rabindra Nath Tagore

- "The generation into which I happen to have been born has not only been Hitler's generation in the West and Stalin in Russia it has also been Gandhi's in India; and it can already be forecast with some confidence that Gandhi's effect on human history is going to be greater and more lasting than Stalin's or Hitler's."

—Arnold Toynbee

- "The Mahatma is more right when he is wrong than we are when we are right… Many of us are correct in our little correctness and are small in the process. But the Mahatma was incorrect in many things and yet correct in the sum total and big in the very inconsistencies. In the end he seldom or never came out at the wrong place."

—Acharya Kriplani

- "The essence of his (Gandhiji's) teaching was fearlessness… not merely body courage but the absence of fear from the mind… But the dominant impulse in India under British rule was that of fear, pervasive, oppressing, strangling fear; fear of the army, the police, the widespread secret service; fear of the official class; fear of laws meant to supress and of prison; fear of landlord's agents; fear of the money-lender; fear of unemployment and starvation, which were always on the threshold. It was against this all pervading fear that Gandhiji's quiet and determined voice was raised: Be not afraid."

—Jawaharlal Nehru *(The Discovery of India)*

- "The question of majority and minority community is a creation of the British Government and would disappear with their withdrawal."

—M.K. Gandhi

- "Gandhi was the best policeman the British had in India."

—Ellen Wilkinson

- "Dandi march is the kindergarten stage of revolution… based on the notion that king Emperor can be unseated by boiling sea-water in a kettle."

—Brailsford, *an English journalist*

Summary

- **Gandhi's Nationalism Popular Appeal and Methods of Mass Mobilisation**
  (i) The national movement acquired a certain distinct ideological and methodological orientation with the entry of Gandhi into Indian politics.
  (ii) Though Gandhian methodology evolved in South Africa, it was nurtured in India. It involved careful training of disciplined cadres, non-violent satyagraha involving peaceful violation of specific laws, mass courting of arrests, occasional hartals and spectacular marches.
- **Gandhi's Early Career**
  Born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar in Kathiawar (Gujarat). Went to England for studies in 1881, offered the London Matriculation, qualified for the Bar in 1891. In 1893 sailed to Durban in South Africa and stayed there till 1915. A series of experiences in South Africa influenced his life profoundly. Evolved his techniques of struggle (Satyagraha) in South Africa.
- **Rise of Gandhi in Indian Politics**
  From South Africa in 1915. Gandhi's successful leadership of the local movements at Champaran (1917), Kheda (1918), and Ahmedabad (1918) made him immensely popular.

Summary

- **Gandhian and His Ideas**
  Concepts central to Gandhian thought are *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (non-possession), *asteya* (non-stealing) and *brahmacharya* (self-control). His views on religion, truth and god, satyagraha, and passive resistance, ideal state or Sarvodaya (*Ram Raj*), theory of trusteeship, democracy, education, status of women and untouchability influenced the political leadership and also the masses in India.

- **Gandhi as a Mass Leader**
  Gandhi emerged as a mass leader in Indian politics in 1920, and remained the undisputed leader of the Congress till late 1940s. During this period (1920-1942) he launched three major mass movements.

- **Rowlatt Satyagraha (1919)**
  First all-India satyagraha under Gandhi, which provided a rallying point to the people cutting across different sections and communities. It made Gandhi the supreme leader of the nationalist struggle.

- **Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)**
  (i) Launched under Gandhi's leadership with demands like favourable treaty for Turkey, redressal of Punjab wrongs and establishment of swaraj.
  (ii) Methods of struggle included boycott of government-run schools, colleges, law-courts, municipality and government service, foreign cloth, liquor, setting up of national schools, colleges, panchayats and using khadi.
  (iii) Chauri Chaura violence in February 1922 resulted in the suspension of the movement by Gandhi.

- **National Politics From 1922 to 1930**
  No-changers vs Pro-changers: Pro-changers or Swarajists advocated for council entry whereas No-changers advocated for constructive work during this transitional period.

- **Simon Commission (1928)**
  Visited to review the working of the Montford Reforms (1919) and suggest further constitutional advance; the all-White Commission under John Simon was boycotted by Indians across the country.

- **Lahore Session (1929)**
  INC adopted complete independence resolution as its goal officially and decided to launch a civil disobedience movement.

- **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34)**
  (i) Popularly known as the "Salt Satyagraha". Gandhi put forward an Eleven-Point Programme which was ignored by the British Government.
  (ii) A dramatic march to Dandi on the Gujarat coast from Sabarmati Ashram under Gandhi resulted in spread of the salt satyagraha to different parts of the country. The movement saw mass participation of women, students, merchants and petty traders, tribals, workers and peasants.
  (iii) Delhi Pact between Gandhi and Irwin led to temporary suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement and Gandhi went to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London (1931).

- **Quit India Movement (1942)**
  (i) Popularly known as the 'August Revolution', it was a widely popular and spontaneous anti-imperialist outburst.
  (ii) Causes: failure of the Cripps Mission (1942), popular resentment against Wartime handships, and a feeling of imminent British collapse due to some early reverses in the Second World War.
  (iii) Quit India resolution passed on August 8, 1942.
  (iv) Main centres of the Quit India Movement: Bihar, Midnapur, Orissa, Bombay and Karnataka.

CHAPTER 12

Other Strands of the National Movement

INTRODUCTION

There can be no doubt that with the foundation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885, the Indian nationalist struggle took on an organised form and despite weaknesses, vacillations and at times even blunders on the part of the leadership, it was the INC that ultimately steered the country to freedom. But it cannot be said that struggles for freedom were carried on by the Congress alone. There were other movements, ideologies and leaders as well who contributed to the freedom struggle. More often than not, the others functioned within the Congress as an integral part of the united national struggle, while maintaining their independent, separate identity. These forces served to widen and deepen India's struggle for national liberation by rousing and awakening a broader section of the oppressed people. They put their deep imprint on the aims and content of the nation's liberation struggle, often in the teeth of stiff opposition from the leadership of the Indian National Congress. Among these others which fought alongside the Congress were the revolutionaries (both in India and abroad), who aimed at liberating India from the colonial yoke through an armed rebellion; the Swarajists who during the post-1922 period tried to enter councils and paralyse the colonial administration from within; the Leftist groups (the Socialists and the Communists) who organised the peasants and working classes to end exploitation of the poor and remove injustices and inequalities in the Indian society; and the Indian National Army which was led by Subhas Chandra Bose to free India with the help of fascist forces during the Second World War. These strands tended to reorient the freedom struggle in their distinct ideological and operational dimensions thereby expanding the social base of the Indian nationalist movement and making it one of the largest wars of independence in the world history.

Apart from these supplementary and distinct struggles for freedom, we shall also discuss the role of women in India's nationalist struggle in this chapter.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS SINCE 1905

The emergence of revolutionary terrorism as a political weapon added a new dimension to the Indian national movement in the early years of the 20th century. A generation of highly motivated nationalist youth, whose creative energies failed to find adequate room for expression within the existing political trends, resorted to revolutionary violence as a form of protest against the ruthless suppressive measures adopted by the British government to crush the anti-partition (of Bengal) movement in 1905. These angry young men were convinced of the futility of the methodology of the Moderates and were equally impatient with the inability of the Extremists to either extract immediate concessions from the government or to achieve a full-scale mobilisation of the masses. So they turned to a path of violent action (on the lines of the Irish revolutionaries and Russian Nihilists against their autocratic governments) with a three-fold objective:

(i) to strike terror in the officialdom, (ii) to remove fear and inertia of the people, and (iii) to arouse their nationalist consciousness. However, one has to distinguish between the two phases of revolutionary terrorism that arose in India. The first phase emerged in the early years of the 20th century, especially during the post-1905 Bengal agitation. This phase witnessed acts of individual heroism which found expression in the assassination of unpopular oppressive British officials. The second phase emerged during the post-1922 period and it was brought about mainly by the disillusionment among the young enthusiastic non-cooperators in the Congress and the old revolutionaries, due to the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhi soon after the Chauri-Chaura violence. This phase widely differed from the earlier one as the revolutionary movement in this phase underwent certain changes, viz., it moved away from individual heroic action to a mass-based movement and from religious nationalism of the earlier revolutionaries to secular patriotism. The revolutionaries during this phase were mainly active in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (the Central Provinces) and Bengal. Both strands of the revolutionary movement were tremendously influenced by the new social ideological forces such as the growth of socialist ideas and groups all over India, the rise of a militant trade union movement and the successful socialist revolution of 1917 in Russia with the consequent rise of the Soviet Republic. Although the movement of revolutionary terrorism proved unsuccessful in its stated objective of leading a long-term mass-based armed struggle, it made a major contribution to the ongoing national struggle against colonialism. The exemplary courage, supreme sacrifices and patriotism exhibited by these revolutionaries inspired the Indian youth and restored their pride and self-confidence.

Objectives of the Revolutionary Movements

Two Phases

The year 1905 was a turning point in the history of the national movement. In the month of December that year, the Congress held its session in Benaras when polarisation of political opinion was beginning to take place among Indian leaders. The champions of a more militant course of action were men of strong will. Exasperated by the humiliations and insults heaped on them by the Lt. Governor of East Bengal, Bampfylde Fuller, and his minions, they felt that a strong retaliation was necessary regardless of the consequences. They were of the view that the boycott of British cloth resorted to as a protest against the partition of Bengal should be extended in the sense that the boycott should cover everything British. They also wanted to extend the anti-partition of Bengal movement beyond the Bengal Presidency. They wanted to convert the defiance of particular orders to general passive disobedience including non-payment of taxes, and they declared *Swaraj* as their goal. Such tendency towards extremism was not liked by the older leaders, who were afraid that it would lead to crushing repression and thus put an end to all genuine political movements. They believed that because of the backwardness and ignorance of the people as also India's inability to defend itself from foreign invasion, British guidance was needed. They thought that the weaknesses of the country would be removed with British help and wanted continuance of British rule till such time that the country was fully capable of self-governance. Trying to restrain what in their opinion was dangerous exuberance, they believed that they could appeal to the democratic conscience of the English people. In this, they were following Cotton, who in his address in Bombay had advised the Congress to activise propaganda in England. Both the sides were present in the Benaras session, in which Gokhale upheld the decision of Bengal taking recourse to boycott but cautioned that such action should not be a normal feature of the relations with England. He supported Swadeshi enthusiastically and, as a goal, suggested a form of government which existed in the self-governing colonies of the British empire. Lala Lajpat Rai advised the method of passive resistance which he regarded as legitimate, constitutional and perfectly justifiable.

Benaras Session 1905

Divergence of Opinions

Soon after, John Morley became the Secretary of State and Lord Minto II replaced Curzon as Governor-General. Morley's prescription for governing India was "unfaltering repression on the one hand, and vigour and good faith in reform on the other". Minto agreed with it and Bampfylde Fuller was the one to administer the medicine. Morley, however, recognised that the partition of

Bengal had gone "wholly and decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned," and differed from the theory that the agitation was the work of a handful of wire-pullers and agitators. Even then, he considered the partition of Bengal as a settled fact and felt that there was no way of going back on it. Minto also had his opinion regarding the Indian situation. Establishing contacts with the moderate Congress leaders, he concluded that it would be dangerous to import English political institutions into India. At the same time, he agreed that the loyal educated Indian class was entitled to a greater share in the country's governance, but refused to undo the wrong Curzon had done. Thus, the year 1906 began with the wicked policy of terrorising the political movement and its workers and fomenting discord between the Hindus and Muslims. Terming the boycott movement as seditious, anti-British and anti-Muslim, the police was ordered to suppress it. Prohibitory orders were issued disallowing meetings of protest and propaganda; shouting of *Vande Mataram* was considered an offence; and students were asked not to attend meetings and join processions. The flashpoint was reached with the forcible dispersal of the Barisal Conference in April 1906. Barisal was the home town of Aswini Kumar Dutta who had made it headquarters of the Boycott and Swadeshi movements in that area. On knowing that it was going to be the venue of a meeting to be attended by leaders from both the Bengals, the panicky government issued orders prohibiting shouting of *Vande Mataram* and posted police along the route of the processions to disperse the participants. The delegates were assaulted, the veteran leader Surendranath Banerjea was arrested and fined. These measures evoked strong protests throughout the country and numerous meetings were held to denounce the government's policy. The media also strongly denounced such efforts and ventilated popular anger and frustration. Even moderate papers like *Hitavadi* and *Indian Mirror* felt constrained to warn the government that arms would be used against arms and that the White man's blood would be shed to compensate for the blood drawn from inoffensive boys. The more strident papers like the *Sandhya* and *Yugantar* recommended that force should be stopped by force. In fact, the atrocities in Barisal aided in the polarisation of political opinion among the Congress leaders and the militant ones among them like Bipin Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Aswini Dutt shot into prominence. As the coercive and repressive policies of the government and the violence with which these were implemented disillusioned the people, they became more and more conscious of the sprit of self-respect and resistance. Bipin Pal touched a responsive chord when he wrote: "The old faith of the people in the British Government as the saviour of the country is almost dead. And in proportion as they have been losing faith in the foreign agencies at work among them, in that proportion they have been acquiring a new and intrepid faith in themselves." To the more ardent and reckless among the militant leaders, even a person like Bipin Pal appeared to be over-cautious. Fired by the extraordinary fervour of the partition agitation and bitter resentment against the government measures of repression, these leaders entertained the idea of a violent retaliation. Tilak encouraged the idea when, immediately after the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, he declared that his party did not believe in the benevolence of the government and wanted full control over the administrative machinery to be obtained through boycott. "I want to have the key of my own house. Self-government is our goal." Aurobindo Ghosh put it more forcefully in the Bengal Provincial Conference at Medinipur early in 1907 where he rebuffed the Moderates. In April that year, he wrote in an article on Passive Resistance in the journal, *Bande Mataram*: "From any idea of open struggle with the bureaucracy they shrank with terror and a sense of paralysis. Dominated by the idea of the overwhelming might of Britain and the abject weakness of India, their want of courage and faith in the nation, their rooted distrust of the national character, disbelief in Indian patriotism and blindness to the possibility of true political strength and virtue in the people precluded them from discovering the rough and narrow way to salvation." All these exhortations helped the Bengal militants to acquire a dominating influence over the Swadeshi movement, and new forms of mobilisation and techniques of struggle began to emerge. The 'extended boycott' was a concept in which lay the core of large-scale peaceful resistance to be followed

Repressive Measures

Extremist Leaders

Surat Split in 1907

by Gandhi much later. The Moderates did not like it at all and tried to patch up the differences by requesting the (then) grand old man of Indian politics, Dadabhai Naoroji, to preside over the next Congress session. The effort was not successful, and eventually there was a split in the Congress in December 1907 at the Surat session.

Formation of Secret Societies

It has been generally observed that the struggle against foreign domination in any country generally pushes a section of the youth to the path of violence. It also happened in India, which was completely disarmed by the government and where the revolutionaries could not procure arms in the open. As a result, the revolutionaries formed secret societies to carry out their plans and propaganda. Organisations engaged in social work and 'national volunteer' movement, known as *samitis* in Bengal, were formed mostly during the Swadeshi era. Initially, their activities were quite open, like physical and moral training of members, social work during festivals or famines, spreading the message of Swadeshi and implementing the techniques of passive resistance. During the anti-partition movement, the government let loose vigilant police supervision. Nonetheless, the revolutionaries suffered for their devotion to the national cause: they were fined, expelled, even beaten and flogged. It had no effect on their morale, and with more punishments they became more rebellious. As there were restrictions on their public activities, they had to go underground to achieve their objectives. Although the police reported 19 revolutionaries organisations in Calcutta in 1907, the main strength of the movement was in and around Dhaka, East Bengal. From here originated the five principal samitis which were banned in January 1909: *Swadesh Bandhab, Brati, Dhaka Anushilan, Suhrid* and *Sadhana*. Among these, the *Dhaka Anushilan* maintained a close connection with the *Anushilan* of Calcutta.

Bengal

Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta

The Calcutta *Anushilan* was founded by Barindrakumar Ghosh, brother of Aurobindo. Barindrakumar, Bhupen Dutta and others were the main constituent of the terrorist movement which took root in Bengal. On the surface the Calcutta *Anushilan* was a club for promoting social welfare and physical fitness while its hidden agenda was to paralyse the British administration through dacoity and assassinations. The Dhaka chapter was organised by Pulin Behari Das, whom the British intelligence reported as an ascetic disciplinarian and a visionary enthusiast who was cunning and deceitful. In 1907, the Dhaka *Anushilan* had 116 branches with over 8,000 volunteer members. They were required to take two vows: unquestioned obedience to the leader, and the breaking off of all family ties. Its aims and objectives of the *Anushilan* at Dhaka were the same as that of the Calcutta group, and the means employed to effect a revolution and overthrow the British were economic boycott, social persecution, etc. The revolutionary activity consisted of training in arms and bomb-making besides dacoity and assassinations. Actually, assassination as a form of protest was carried out by the Chapekar brothers at Puna in 1898 when they shot Rand and Ayerst of the Puna Plague Committee. Tilak acknowledged his admiration for acts of such supreme sacrifice for patriotic causes, justifying Shivaji's assassination of the Bijapur general, Afzal Khan, in an article in his paper, *Kesari.* The government accused Tilak of encouraging sedition and jailed him for two years. The first revolutionary group in Bengal was formed in Medinipur by Jnanendranath Basu in 1902, followed by the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti* established by Aurobindo's brother Barindrakumar and others. Aurobindo's involvement in such activities cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty, though by conviction he was not a believer in non-violence. Visiting Bengal even before the partition to assess the situation and to formulate a course of action, he had sent Jatindranath Banerjee of the Baroda State Army in 1902 to tour the province. An inner circle of the Calcutta *Anushilan* started the weekly *Yugantar* in April 1906 with behind the scene advice of Aurobindo. The members planned one or two abortive actions like the attempt on the life of the very unpopular Lt. Governor of East Bengal, Bampfylde Fuller. Aurobindo subsequently admitted that immediately on his arrival in Calcutta, he started organising revolutionary activities as a preparation for open revolt, "in case passive resistance proved insufficient for the purpose".

Hemchandra Kanungo

Probably the most outstanding figure of this first revolutionary generation was Hemchandra Kanungo. Kanungo went to Europe for military and political training and got in touch with a Russian emigre in Paris. After he returned to India, a combined

institution for bomb-making and religious teaching was set up at a garden house in the Maniktala suburb of Calcutta. Unfortunately, the leadership was not quite vigilant, and within hours of a bomb attack in Muzaffarpur on April 30, 1908, the whole

Aurobindo Ghose

group including Aurobindo was arrested. Aurobindo was tried in the famous Alipore Bomb Case. He spent nearly a year in jail in solitary confinement, and on release left for Pondicherry to take up religion. "The circumstances of his flight and subsequent life have given rise to speculation of not altogether complimentary nature. The prophet of the *Karmayoga* of the *Bhagavad Gita* had become an adept in *Yoga* without the *Karma*." (Tarachand). The Muzaffarpur bomb attack illustrated the growth of revolutionary terrorism, a result of the brutal repression of the Swadeshi movement by the government. The bomb was thrown by Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose on a carriage in which they thought Kingsford, a particularly sadistic district judge, was travelling. The blast killed two British ladies instead while Kingsford escaped unhurt. Prafulla Chaki shot himself to avoid arrest and trial. Khudiram was caught, tried and hanged. Using the incident as an opportunity, the government involved Aurobindo and others of the *Yugantar* group in a conspiracy case in which Aurobindo himself was acquitted, but his brother Barindrakumar and many others were sentenced to deportation and harsh prison terms. There were secret societies outside Bengal as well, some of which were in league with the Bengal organisations.

In Maharashtra, V.D. Savarkar, influenced by the writings of Tilak and the European revolutionary movement, became an ardent advocate of armed revolution. He established secret societies: first, the *Mitra Mela* and then, *Abhinava Bharat*. He went to

V.D. Savarkar

England in 1906 and in weekly meetings in the India House preached his fiery anti-imperialist doctrine. He won many adherents, some of whom learned bomb-making and shooting. Although a close watch was kept on his activities, he succeeded in sending to India twenty Browning pistols and causing the death of a magistrate in Nasik. The societies' activities were unearthed in the ensuing enquiry. Savarkar was tried along with the members and was deported to the Andamans for 11 years. The movements created a new situation for the government, striking a blow to its prestige. Repressive measures were started in 1906, at first hesitantly and then in full force after the spate of bomb attacks in 1908. In fact, repression had begun from the time of Curzon. The Morley-Minto duo brought about a modification in the policy. Both of them realised that repression alone could not prove successful in quelling the Indian unrest. The policy of carrot and stick was needed for the purpose, which would be a combination of oppression-conciliation-suppression. The Congress

Policy of Carrot and Stick

split in the Surat session of 1907 into Moderates and Extremists made the circumstances very favourable for the application of the policy. "The Extremists, as we shall refer to the militant nationalists from now on, were to be repressed, though mildly in the first stage, the purpose being to frighten the Moderates. The Moderates were then to be placated through some concessions and promises and hints were to be given that further concessions would be forthcoming if they disassociated themselves from the Extremists. Once the Moderates fell into the trap, the Extremists could be suppressed through the use of the full might of the State. The Moderates in turn could then be ignored. Unfortunately for the national movement, neither the Moderates nor the Extremists were able to understand the official strategy and consequently suffered a number of reverses." (Bipan Chandra).

Meanwhile, the daring exploits of the revolutionaries set the alarm bells ringing in the government. There was no indication that revolutionary activity had ceased or was reduced. There were eight dacoities in Bengal in 1908; in 1909-10 there were seventeen. Special police forces had to be stationed in Dhaka, Jashore and Khulna. Many arrests were made and legal proceedings started, including one against Pulin Behari Das. In East Khandesh and Gwalior, conspiraces were unearthed. Murders continued unabated. The collector of Nasik was shot to death. On November 29, 1909, two bombs were thrown at the carriage of the Viceroy in Ahmedabad which failed to explode. The Deputy Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Police was shot in the Calcutta High Court on January 26, 1910. As a consequence of the repressive policy, the topmost Extremist leaders were out of the fight. Bipin Pal and Lajpat Rai went out of the country into self-imposed exile, while Tilak was jailed in Mandalay. The heavy

hand of the government as also the close watch of the CID was felt by the other Extremist leaders, and they were forced to go underground. With a view to enmesh and strangle all unpalatable opinion and opposition, the government also thought of gagging the press and armed itself with several Acts and Ordinances such as (i) *The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1907*—to control meetings in connection with agitation in Bengal and Punjab; (ii) *The Explosive Substances Act, 1908*—to suppress anarchist activities and control the use of explosives for such purposes; (iii) *The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908*—to bring about drastic changes in the criminal law and procedure such as prohibition on appeals; (iv) *The Newspapers (Incitement & Offences) Act, 1908*—to stop seditious writings in newspapers, pamphlets and books, or suggestions and excitement against British rule; and (v) *The Press Act, 1910*—the Act of 1908 in this regard having proved ineffective, a Bill was brought before the legislature in order to exercise control over the presses and means of publication as well as to secure the suppression of newspapers considered undesirable or seditious. Nevertheless, revolutionary terrorism was the most substantive legacy of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal and it cast a spell on the minds of radical educated youth for a generation or more.

Supressive Legislations

In Assam, Bihar and Orissa, extremism failed to make any impact, though sympathy was often expressed for 'non-political' Swadeshi enterprise. Nor was extremism present in the United Provinces where the Congress' political activity was somewhat dormant.

Punjab turned towards extremism between the years 1904 and 1907, the reason for its inclusion in the purview of the Act of 1907. Extremism in Punjab was the result of a factional quarrel as also a series of British provocations. There was a difference of opinion between Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Har Kishan over the management of the Punjab National Bank, and in retaliation Lajpat Rai started the paper *Punjabee* in 1904 with the slogan 'self-help at any cost' as a challenge to his rival's *Tribune.* Up to 1906, extremism in Punjab was rather mild in comparison with that prevailing in Bengal. In 1907, *Punjabee* was prosecuted for racist outrages at a time when violent abuse of Indians in the pages of the *Civil and Military Gazette* passed unnoticed by officials. When the editor of *Punjabee* was tried in a court for the offence, there were protests and demonstrations along with stray attacks on the Whites in Lahore. The British got a fright on knowing that discontent was brewing among peasants and soldiers due to the introduction of the Chenab Colonies Bill in October 1906 with a view to tighten up the administration there, and the raising of water rates by 25 to 50 per cent. All these irritants together with the ravages of the plague epidemic and the general price rise led to several strikes by revenue clerks and railway workers. The government hit back with the Act of 1907 and intelligently followed it with some concessions. The Viceroy vetoed the Chenab Bill, water rates were reduced and those arrested were set free. As a consequence, Punjab extremism died down quickly.

Extremism in Punjab

Two widely separated areas in the Madras Presidency, the Andhra delta region and Tirunelveli district in down south, came under extremist influence. In Andhra delta towns like Kakinada, Masulipatam and Rajamundhry, meetings were held from 1906 onwards to express solidarity with Bengal. The people of these towns began what came to be known as the *Vande Mataram* movement, which was intensified further when Bipin Pal visited these places in April 1907. Students in Rajamundhry wearing nationalist badges and attending Pal's meeting were punished, and this led to a student strike. The Kakinada European Club was attacked when one of its members boxed the ear of a student for shouting *Vande Mataram.* The Swadeshi feeling also generated a new interest in Telugu language, literature and history. The government, however, was much more concerned over the developments in the Tuticorin port of Tirunelveli district. The port earned the distinction of being the only district in Madras to be mentioned in an official report as displaying significant anti-British sentiments. A Tuticorin *vakil*, Chidambaram Pillai became a major extremist leader. In October 1906, Chidambaram Pillai was instrumental in promoting the Swadeshi Steamship Company which was started with six lakh rupees raised from local business groups to ply steamers from Tuticorin to Colombo.

Madras Presidency

Vande Mataram Movement

The British India Steam Navigation Company was bitterly hostile to this Swadeshi venture, and this sharpened anti-British feelings in Tuticorin. With the arrival of a plebian agitator named Subramania Siva, a sharp turn towards radicalism became apparent in the area from January 1908. Together with Chidambaram Pillai, Siva began addressing almost daily meetings on the Tuticorin beach, preaching the message of Swaraj and extended boycott. He sometimes urged more violent methods. "Allegedly as a direct result of such speeches, the workers went on strike at the foreign-owned Coral Cotton Mills, and a 50 per cent rise in wages was obtained in the first week of March. The British effort in mid-March to stop meetings and prosecute Siva and Pillai led to closing of shops, protest strikes by municipal and private sweepers and carriage drivers in Tuticorin, attacks on municipal offices, law courts, and police stations in Tirunelveli, and firing in both towns on March 11-13, 1908. The Calcutta *Bande Mataram* on March 13th hailed the Tuticorin events as forging a 'bond …. between the educated class and the masses, which is the first great step towards *swaraj*…every victory for Indian labour is a victory for the Indian nation…'. As in Bengal, however, this 'first great step' remained beyond the reach of Extremism, and after the removal of Siva and Pillai, Tirunelveli radicals became inactive or formed a small terrorist group which was responsible for the murder of district magistrate Ashe. The small group of Tamilian revolutionaries incidentally included Subramaniya Bharati, a major poet and Tirunelveli Brahman critical of caste who contributed heavily to emerging Tamil nationalism." (Sumit Sarkar)

Swadeshi Steamship Company

There is no record of extremism in Maharashtra, Tilak's home state, at least in the English press in the years 1905-08. Radical journalism touched a peak in 1907 with Tilak's *Kesari,* advocating the creed of Swaraj and extended boycott or passive resistance reaching a circulation of 20,000. The boycott movement brought super profits to cotton mills in Bombay, to the tune of Rs 3.25 crore against a wage bill of 1.68 crore. Tilak's request for cheaper dhotis was met by the blunt reply that they could not be supplied except at market rates. Mass picketing of liquor shops and efforts to make contacts with the predominantly Marathi working class of Bombay were the two high points of Tilak's activities in 1907-08. This became evident in the explosion of proletarian anger in Bombay when Tilak was put on trial in July 1908 for certain articles on Bengal terrorism in *Kesari* and was transported for a period of six years. After Tilak's imprisonment, there was one major *mofussil* riot in Pandharpur and it was on July 29, one day after the industrial strike in Bombay in which 16 were killed and 43 wounded by army and police firing. Extremism in Maharashtra then took the path of individual acts of terror in which the *Abhinava Bharat* group was the most important. There was also a *Nava Bharat* group in Gwalior whose experience under Scindia's autocracy revealed that the Native States in India were not nationalist.

Maharashtra

"The terrorist movement in India concerned itself with secret conspiracy and individual action. The direct political result of the movement cannot be considered striking. The method of assassinating individuals through secret conspiracy is by its nature futile and its aim of paralysing government impractical. Yet the psychological effects of the drama of high adventure and bold defiance cannot be ignored. Each act of murder, dacoity or train derailment sent a thrill of excitement through the hearts of the people. Many approved the deed and sympathised with and admired the doer. Those who felt repelled by the violence, marvelled at the fearless and reckless challenge to authority, whose might was never questioned before. The spread of such a spirit boded no good to the government which was founded on prestige and fear."(Tarachand) The government was naturally shaken by these incidents and made special arrangements to watch for signs of disloyal and seditious activity and to take steps to nip such efforts in the bud. As a consequence, there were deliberations on the causes and remedies with respect to each incident. The Home Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Reginald Craddock, wrote in April 1913 a note elaborating on why revolutionary terrorism began in Bengal and became widespread there. Craddock said that terrorists were mostly from the upper strata of the Bengali society, the *Bhadralok.* They were not of the urban class, and were spread over the whole of rural Bengal. Poised between the zamindar and the ryots, they were an educated group. Functioning as middlemen, they were a product of the peculiar system of permanent land

Impact

Social Base of Bengal Extremism

settlement in Bengal. They collected rents from the peasants and passed them on to the landlords through other middlemen. Their families provided the people for the professions—the lawyers, teachers, clerks, journalists and so on. Economically not too sound, some of them could just make both ends meet. Craddock analysed that the two causes of their discontent and disloyalty were the inadequacy of administration and economic distress. Considering that there were no village officers concerned with land administration and that the only governmental agency available was the police, the village administration in Bengal was the weakest among all the provinces in India. The consequent economic distress of the people was increased by the tyranny of the police, the lawyer, the zamindar, the moneylender and others to such an extent that the beneficient effects of the government were not felt. It was therefore concluded that a deep-seated conspiracy existed, the object of which was to paralyse the government. It was decided to crush all anti-governmental activities by making the law harsher, by amending the Criminal Procedure Code and by carrying out security and surveillance proceedings on a large scale.

But revolutionary terrorism in Bengal had shown no signs of abatement; even the royal proclamation of December 1911 abrogating the partition of Bengal had no perceptible effect. The Dhaka *Anushilan,* having branches throughout and even outside the province, concentrated on Swadeshi dacoities to collect money and on assassination of traitors and officials. The *Yugantar* party under Jatindranath Mukherji tried to build up international contacts with a view to start a military conspiracy at an appropriate time. Rashbehari Bose along with Sachin Sanyal established a secret organisation with branches in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. They made a spectacular bomb attack on Hardinge as he was making his official entry into Delhi (which had been made the capital of India) riding an elephant on December 23, 1912. Hardinge was seriously injured and an attendant was killed. But the draconian laws to suppress revolutionary terrorism passed during Minto's regime were strengthened in the time of Hardinge. The revolutionaries therefore increasingly felt the need for safe havens where they could get arms and bring out revolutionary literature immune from press laws. Such quests took them abroad, usually to cities in Europe.

Revolutionary Centres Abroad

In 1905, Shyamaji Krishnavarma had started a centre for Indian students (India House) in London, which was sort of taken over by Savarkar in 1907 for his revolutionary group. A member of this circle, Madanlal Dhingra, shot a bureaucrat of the India Office, Curzon-Wylie, in July 1909 and was hanged. After Savarkar was extradited for his involvement in the Nasik conspiracy case, London was considered no longer safe by the Indian militants. New bases like Paris and Berlin emerged. Madam Cama, a Parsi lady, brought out *Bande Mataram* from Paris, while Virendranath Chattopadhyay, who along with some others established the Indian Independence League in 1915, chose Berlin as his headquarters from 1909 onwards.

The outbreak of the First World War appeared to be a golden opportunity for the revolutionaries. There was an occasion when the number of British troops in India went down to only 15,000, bringing near the possibility of monetary and military help from German and Turkish enemies of Britain as far as the revolutionaries were concerned. At that point of time, the overthrow of British rule by armed revolution did not seem impossible. As Turkey was the seat of the Khalifa who claimed religio-political leadership of all Muslims, Britain's war with that country brought Hindu and Muslim leaders close, and important Muslim revolutionaries like Barkatullah and the Deoband mullahs, Mahmud Hassan and Obeidulla Sindhi, emerged.

Bagha Jatin

The Bengal revolutionaries raided the Calcutta arms dealer, Rodda & Co., and got away with 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition in August 1914 with the help of a sympathetic employee. Political murders and robberies reached a new high—19 in 1914-15 and 32 in 1915-16. Jatin Mukherji alias Bagha Jatin became the leader of most of the Bengal groups, and planned the disruption of railway communications. Other actions on their agenda were the seizure of Fort William in Calcutta for which contacts were established with the 16th Rajput Rifles stationed there, and getting German arms. Most of the grandiose plans failed due to poor coordination. Bagha Jatin died heroically on the Balasore beach in Orissa fighting the police. He was tracked down there with the help of local

villagers, a tragic illustration of the essential social isolation of the Bengal revolutionaries.

The actions of Bagha Jatin were a part of the extensive conspiracy planned by Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal with the help of *Ghadar* returnees in Punjab. The Ghadarites started coming back in thousands to free India from the British rule when the situation became worse due to the *Komagatamaru* incident on September 29, 1914. Komagatamaru was a Japanese ship chartered by Gurdit Singh, a contractor living in Singapore for the purpose of carrying to Vancouver about 376 Indians living in various places in South-east Asia by taking advantage of some relaxation in the Canadian Immigration Laws. Before they could land, the Canadian press started a campaign against 'oriental invasion' while its counterparts in Punjab warned of serious consequences if the Indians were refused entry. The Canadian authorities then plugged the legal loopholes and did not allow the Indians to come ashore. As the First World War broke out during the ship's return journey, the government made it a condition that the passengers could only disembark at Calcutta and nowhere else. On reaching Budge Budge near Calcutta the harassed passengers clashed with the police—18 were killed, over 200 arrested and some managed to escape. Of the total of about 8,000 Punjabis who had returned to India after 1914 from various places in the West, 2,500 were interned and 400 jailed. The plan for a coordinated revolt based on mutinies by Ferozepur, Lahore and Rawalpindi garrisons failed at the last moment due to treachery. Rashbehari Bose got away to Japan, and Sachin Sanyal was deported for life because he tried to subvert the garrisons at Benaras and Danapur. Some isolated mutinies occurred, one at Singapore on February 15, 1915. The Punjabi Muslim 5th Light Infantry and the 36th Sikh Battalion stationed there under Jamadar Chisti Khan, Jamadar Abdul Ghani and Subedar Daud Khan revolted. After the mutiny was quelled, 37 were executed and 41 transported for life. Political robberies in Punjab meanwhile acquired a rather new social content. In at least three out of the five main cases in January-February 1915, dacoits raided the village moneylenders, and burnt debt bonds before fleeing with the money.

Komagatamaru Episode

Virendranath Chattopadhyay set up the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin in 1915 as a centre to send help from abroad to Indian revolutionaries. The Committee received help from the German foreign office under the so-called *Zimmerman Plan.* Har Dayal, Bhupen Dutta and others assisted Chattopadhyay. There was an Indo-German-Turkish mission set up specifically to raise anti-British feelings among the tribes near the Indo-Iranian border. A 'Provisional Government of Free India' was established in Kabul in December 1915 by Mahendra Pratap, Barkatullah and Obeidulla Sindhi with some support from the Afghan crown prince Amanullah. A third centre was in the United States where the *Ghadar* leader Ramchandra and the head of the agents of the Berlin Committee, Chandra Chakrabarti, received a lot of German funds. But the leaders quarrelled among themselves. When the US entered the War and the 'Hindu Conspiracy Case' was started, all such activities came to an end. The German embassies in the Far East also sent funds, and Rashbehari Bose and Abani Mukherji tried many times to send arms from Japan after 1915. With disheartening regularity all such efforts to send arms failed, and anyway the time for an armed revolution had already come to an end by early 1915. Between the years 1908-1918, a total of 186 revolutionaries were killed or convicted. "Revolutionary terrorism gradually petered out. Lacking a mass base, despite remarkable heroism, the individual revolutionaries, organised in small secret groups, could not withstand suppression by the still strong colonial state. But despite their small numbers and eventual failure, they made a valuable contribution to the growth of nationalism in India. As a historian has put it, 'they gave us back the pride of our manhood'." (Bipan Chandra)

Zimmerman Plan

Significance

With the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the national movement that had been quiescent since the suppression of the Swadeshi movement started again because Britain's difficulty was India's 'opportunity'. This opportunity was seized by the *Ghadar* revolutionaries based in North America who wanted to violently overthrow the British rule in India. Since 1904, Punjabi immigrants had been flocking to the west coast of North America in increasing numbers. Land-hungry peasants, people who had emigrated earlier to places in South-East Asia and ex-soldiers all had gone there in search of some means for survival. Driven out of their

homes and tempted by the prospect of a bright future, they sold their homes or pawned their belongings and made their journey to the promised land. They were totally disappointed by the treatment they received on reaching Canada and the USA. Many were denied entry, especially those who had come straight from their villages and had no idea of the customs and mores of the people there. Those who were given permission to stay faced racial indignities as also the hostility of the native workers and their unions who were afraid of the competition. "Meanwhile, the Secretary of State for India had his own reasons for urging restrictions on immigration. For one, he believed that the terms of close familiarity of Indians with Whites which would inevitably take place in America was not good for British prestige; it was by prestige alone that India was being held and not by force. Further, he was worried that the immigrants would get contaminated by socialist ideas, and the racial discrimination to which they are bound to be subjected would become the source of nationalist agitation in India." (Bipan Chandra)

As early as 1907, a political exile in the west coast of North America, Ramnath Puri, brought out *Circular-e-Azadi* supporting the Swadeshi movement. Tarak Nath Das started publishing *Free Hindustan* in Vancouver adpoting a strident nationalist tone. A *Swadesh Sevak Home* on the lines of India House in London was set up in Vancouver by G.D.Kumar who also began to publish a paper *Swadesh Sevak* in Gurumukhi advocating social reform and asking the Indian soldiers to rise in revolt against the British. Turned out of Vancouver in 1910, Das and Kumar established the United India House in Seattle in the USA, where they lectured a group of 25 Indian labourers every Saturday. They developed close links with the radical nationalist students and the Khalsa Diwan Society and sent a delegation to meet officials in London and India. They had no success in London, but had a meeting with the Viceroy in Delhi, and were given a tumultuous welcome in Lahore, Ludhiana, Ambala, Ferozepur, Lyallpur, Amritsar, Sialkot and Simla. A consequence of this sustained agitation both in Canada and the US was that the Indians there became aware of nationalist issues and developed feelings of solidarity among themselves. When they found that iniquitous laws like the Alien Law in the US preventing acquisition of property were applied to them and that the Indian government was unwilling to intercede on their behalf, they became angry, impatient and rebellious.

United India House

Lala Har Dayal and the Ghadar Party

Early in 1913, Bhagawan Singh, a Sikh priest who had been to Hong Kong and the Malay States, came to Vancouver and openly started telling the people to violently overthrow British rule in India and to adopt *Vande Mataram* as a revolutionary salute. He was turned out of Canada after three months when the centre of activity shifted to the US with its relatively free political atmosphere. In the US, the main activist was Har Dayal, the somewhat mercurial intellectual from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. A political exile, he arrived in the US in April 1911, taught briefly at Stanford, and served as secretary of the San Francisco branch of the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. Initially not much interested in matters Indian, he plunged into action after hearing about the bomb attack in Delhi on the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in Delhi in December 1912 and issued a *Yugantar* circular praising the venture. The Hindi Association was established in Portland in May 1913 and in its first meeting Har Dayal said: "Do not fight the Americans, but use the freedom that is available in the US to fight the British; you will never be treated as equals by the Americans until you are free in your own land; the root cause of Indian degradation and poverty is British rule and it must be overthrown, not by petitions but by armed revolt; carry this message to the masses and to the soldiers in the Indian Army; go to India in large numbers and enlist their support." Har Dayal's ideas were immediately accepted, and it was decided to set up a headquarters in San Francisco with the name *Yugantar Ashram* and to publish a weekly paper *Ghadar* for free distribution. Immediately, an extensive propaganda campaign was started; the militants began visiting mills and farms where most of the Punjabi immigrants worked; and the *Yugantar Ashram* became their refuge and home. The first issue of *Ghadar* in Urdu came out on November 1, 1913 and the Gurumukhi edition on December 9th. *Ghadar* means 'Revolt' and any doubt regarding the aims of the paper was dispelled

by the caption *Angrezi Raj ka Dushman* on the masthead. A feature titled *Angrezi Raj Ka Kacha Chittha* on the first page of each issue listed fourteen points exposing the harmful effects of the British rule: "the drain of wealth, the low per capita income of the Indians, the high land tax, the contrast between the low expenditure on health and the high expenditure on the military, the recurrence of famine and plague that killed millions of Indians, the discriminatory lenient treatment given to Englishmen who were guilty of killing Indians or dishonouring Indian women, the use of Indian tax payers' money for wars in Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, Persia and China, the efforts to foment discord between Hindus and Muslims, the destruction of Indian arts and industries, the policy of promoting discord in the Indian States to extend British influence, the policy of helping Christian missionaries with money raised from Hindus and Muslims" and so on. The simple and powerful message of the *Chittha* was made more absorbing by serialising the works of Tilak, Aurobindo and Savarkar, and highlighting the daring deeds of the *Anushilan Samiti*, the Yugantar group and the Russian secret societies. However, the most powerful messages were probably conveyed by the poems published in the pages of the journal, later published as a collection titled *Gadar di Goonj* and distributed free. A secular tone and revolutionary zeal made these poems remarkable. The collection was circulated widely among Indians all over the globe (America, Philippines, Trinidad, China, and, of course, India) and it evoked an unprecedented response; the poems were recited at gatherings of Punjabi immigrants and became very popular. Within a short time, the publication helped to change the self-image of the Punjabi immigrant from that of a loyal soldier of the British to that of a rebel whose only aim was to forcibly remove the British from India.

Gadar di Goonj

The message found its target and ardent young revolutionaries wanted to engage themselves in 'action', surprising Har Dayal himself by the intensity of the response. However, three events in 1914 changed the direction of the Ghadar movement and brought it to its ineffectual end. These were: the arrest and escape of Har Dayal; the *Komagatamaru* incident and the outbreak of the First World War. Har Dayal was taken into custody on March 25, 1914, ostensibly for his anarchist activities, but everyone knew that the British were behind the move. The *Komagatamaru* incident was the precursor of the mass arrest of the Ghadar militants in time to come. The outbreak of the First World War was the event which made the Ghadar revolution imminent because this was the opportunity the militants were waiting for. Although they were not fully prepared, they did not want the moment to go by. It was decided in a meeting of the activists that their major weakness, the lack of arms, could be overcome by going to India and enlisting the support of the Indian soldiers to their side. Public meetings were called and addressed by Barkatullah, Ramchandra and Bhagawan Singh, urging Indians to return to India to stage an armed revolt. Prominent leaders set out for Japan, China, Hong Kong, the Malay States and other countries to persuade the Indians living there to return home and join the militants. Activists like Kartar Singh Sarabha who was hanged by the British subsequently and Raghubar Gupta could not wait any more and left for India to join the fight against the British. But their plans were not unknown to the British who enacted the Ingress into India Ordinance for the people to return. The emigrants were subjected to scrutiny on arrival. The 'safe' ones were allowed to go home, the 'dangerous' ones were jailed and the 'less dangerous' ones were told not to leave their villages. Naturally, some of the danger men managed to escape and went to Punjab to foment rebellion. There were also some who went straight to Punjab via Colombo and South India avoiding detection. About 8,000 emigrants came back, and by February 1915, roughly 1500 of them were subjected to precautionary measures, 704 restricted to their villages and 189 interned. But the Ghadarites found the Punjabis different from what they were told to expect. The Punjabis were in no mood to join the romantic adventure of the Ghadar militants. The rebels tried their best: they went round the villages talking to people in melas and festivals, but to no avail. The Ghadar militants were branded as 'fallen' Sikhs by the Chief Khalsa Diwan who having proclaimed his loyalty to the Crown helped the authorities to track them down. In desperation, they turned to the army and tried somewhat naively to incite mutiny among their ranks. Their attempts failed due to the lack of an organised leadership and a central command. Next, they got

in touch with the Bengal revolutionaries and through them persuaded Rashbehari Bose to become their leader.

Bose arrived in Punjab in mid-January 1915, set up a sort of organisation, and sent out men to contact army units in Bannu in the North West Frontier and Faizabad and Lucknow in the Uttar Pradesh. Bose's emissaries returned with optimistic reports, and February 19 was set as the date for the mutiny. Unknown to them, however, the government had succeeded in infiltrating the organisation from the very highest level down and in taking effective pre-emptive measures. Consequently, most of the top leaders were arrested, though Bose managed to escape. The Ghadar movement was crushed totally, but that did not stop the government from taking what was probably the most repressive action against the national movement experienced till that time. In conspiracy trials held in Punjab and Mandalay, forty-five revolutionaries were sentenced to death and over 200 to long periods of imprisonment, decimating an entire generation of nationalist political leaders in Punjab. It would, however, not be correct to conclude that the Ghadar movement was a failure. If "success or failure are to be measured in terms of the deepening of nationalist consciousness, the evolution and testing of new strategies and methods of struggle, the creation of tradition of resistance, of secularism, of democracy, and of egalitarianism, then, the Ghadarites certainly contributed their share to the struggle for India's freedom". (Bipan Chandra) The Ghadar movement succeeded greatly in spreading the nationalist ideology. Through its pages it brought the entire nationalist critique of colonialism to the mass of Indian immigrants in a simple and powerful form, many of the immigrants being poor workers and peasants. Although a majority of the activists were Sikhs, *The Ghadar* and *Ghadar di Goonj* as also other publications were strongly secular in tone. *Bande Mataram* was their rallying cry and not the Sikh religious greeting, *Sat Sri Akal.* Tilak and Aurobindo were their heroes and as Sohan Singh Bhakna had said, 'We were not Sikhs or Punjabis. Our religion was patriotism."

Decline of the Ghadar Movement

An important feature of the Ghadar movement was its democratic and egalitarian content which perhaps transformed many of its activists into peasant leaders and Communists in the 1920s and the 1930s. But the Ghadar movement also had some drawbacks, the most prominent of which was their underestimation of the power of the British colonial regime. They appeared to neglect the preparations that were needed to take on such a gigantic challenge. They forgot that it was quite easy to motivate a few thousands of immigrants suffering racial humiliations daily with nationalist ideology as compared to the stupendous efforts needed to mobilise the lakhs of peasants and soldiers in India. They were extremely short-sighted in imagining that all that the masses of India wanted was a call to revolt, which, once given, would bring the British rule to an end. Their inability to evolve an effective and sustained leadership to guide the movement through all vicissitudes was another cause of their near total extinction, as would be evident from Har Dayal's sudden disappearence. What was not so apparent was the tremendous waste of human resources, of a band of heroic men. Unlike the *Bhadralok* terrorists of Bengal, who became household names at least in their own province, the *Ghadar* militants largely remained unremembered and unsung.

Limitations

Lack of Effective Leadership

Severe suppression of revolutionary terrorists during the First World War left most of their leaders either in jail or absconding. With a view to create a harmonious atmosphere for the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the government decided to release most of them in jail under a general amnesty in early 1920. The Non-Cooperation Movement was soon started thereafter by Congress when Gandhi asked C.R. Das and other leaders to request the revolutionaries to cooperate with the movement. The revolutionaries then joined the mass movement or suspended their activities to give the movement a chance. As, however, the movement was suspended abruptly, the high hopes raised earlier were dashed. A large number of young people started asking questions about the strategy of the Congress leadership and the emphasis on non-violence, and began to look for alternatives. They did not find the parliamentary politics of the Swarajists attractive, nor did they consider the patient and prosaic constructive work of the no-changers sufficiently appealing. They began to

Severe Repression

think that only violent methods would bring freedom in India. It is interesting to note that nearly all the major new leaders of revolutionary terrorist politics, such as Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen, Chandrasekhar Azad and Sukhdev, were enthusiastic participants in the Non-Cooperation Movement earlier. The outcome of such thinking was the emergence of two strands of revolutionary terrorism, one in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and the other in Bengal. Several new social forces, such as the upsurge of working class trade unionism, the consolidation of the Russian Soviet state and the emergence of Communist parties with their emphasis on Marxism, Socialism and the proletariat, exerted their influence on these two strands.

Hindustan Republican Association

Casting away the mood of despondency and frustration, the revolutionaries in northern India were the first to reorganise under the leadership of older leaders like Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chatterji and Sachin Sanyal whose *Bandi Jiban* served as a textbook for the revolutionary movement. Meeting in Kanpur in October 1924, they founded the Hindustan Republican Association (or Army) to organise armed revolution so as to overthrow the British and establish a republic with adult franchise as its basic principle. To start the armed struggle, propaganda on a large scale had to be organised, men had to be recruited and trained, and arms had to be procured, all of which required funds. So, on August 9, 1925, a train was held up in Kakori near Lucknow, and the railway cash was looted. The government retaliated swiftly and harshly, arresting a large number of people who were subsequently tried in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. The result was that Ashfaqulla Khan, Ramprasad Bismil, Roshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri were hanged, four of those involved were deported to the Andamans for life and 17 persons were given long terms of imprisonment. Chandrasekhar Azad was able to get away. The incident was a major setback but it motivated Bejoy Sinha, Shiv Varma, and Jaidev Kapur in Uttar Pradesh, and Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Bhagawati Vohra in Punjab to reorganise the HRA under the leadership of Chandrasekhar Azad. Subsequently, a new collective leadership was created and the HRA was renamed as Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army) with socialism as its goal. The HSRA initially decided to move away from assassination and individual heroic action, but Lajpat Rai's death resulting from a police lathi-charge while he was leading a demonstration against Simon Commission at Lahore in October 1928 took them once again on the path of violence. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru killed Saunders, the official involved in the police action, stating: "We regret to have had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of the inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed." Deciding next to let the people know about the Association's changed objectives and about the need for a revolution by the masses, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw a dud bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929 to protest against the anti-people Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills. Their objective was not to kill, but as the pamphlets thrown into the floor of the Assembly declared, "to make the deaf hear". Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were tried in the Assembly Bomb Case, and later in a series of conspiracy cases along with Sukhdev, Rajguru and other revolutionaries. Their defiant and fearless attitude in the court room, where they raised slogans like *Inquilab Zindabad* and sang the songs *Sarforoshi ke tamanna* and *Mera rang de basanti chola* moved the hearts of the people and made them household names all over the land. People wept and refused to eat food, attend schools, or carry on with their daily work when they heard of the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on March 23, 1931. Other revolutionaries facing trial went on a hunger strike protesting against the inhuman conditions in the jails, demanding that they be treated as political prisoners and not as common criminals. On the 64th day of the epic fast, Jatin Das died, a number of his comrades were deported to the Andamans and others were sentenced to long years of imprisonment.

Kakori Conspiracy Case

Assembly Bomb Case

Surya Sen and the Chittagong Armoury Case

The revolutionaries in Bengal also got together and resumed their underground work and, simultaneously, many of them continued to be associated with the Congress. This gave them access to the vast Congress masses while the Congress benefited

from their network in small towns and villages. They helped C.R. Das in his Swarajist work and when he died, the *Yugantar* group joined the first faction of the Congress headed by Subhas Bose and the *Anushilan* group joined the second faction headed by J.M. Sengupta. The newly-formed groups planned several actions, of which the botched attempt on the life of Charles Tegart, the hated police commissioner of Calcutta, by Gopinath Saha in January 1924 created a major setback. By mistake another Englishman named Day was killed; the government arrested Subhas Bose and many other Congressmen and hanged Saha despite massive protests. On top of this, there were the incessant quarrels between various groups, chiefly between the *Yugantar* and the *Anushilan*. As a result, new groups were formed, among which the 'revolt group' of Chittagong led by Surya Sen was the most active and famous.

Masterda

"Surya Sen had actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement and had become a teacher in a national school in Chittagong, which led to his being popularly known as Masterda. Arrested and imprisoned for two years, from 1926 to 1928, for revolutionary activity, he continued to work in the Congress. He and his group were closely associated with Congress work in Chittagong. In 1929, Surya Sen was the Secretary and five of his associates were members of the Chittagong District Congress Committee." (Bipan Chandra)

A brilliant and inspiring organiser, a soft-spoken and transparently sincere person, Masterda possessed immense personal courage and was deeply humane in his approach. He often used to say, "Humanism is a special virtue of a revolutionary." Gathering around himself a large band of revolutionary young men, of whom Ganesh Ghosh, Ananta Sinha, and Loknath Bal were prominent, Surya Sen planned an uprising, on however small a scale, to demonstrate that it was possible to challenge the armed might of the British in India. "Their action plan was to include occupation of the two main armouries in Chittagong and the seizing of their arms with which a large band of revolutionaries could be formed into an armed detachment; the destruction of the telephone and telegraph systems of the city; and the dislocation of the railway communication system between Chittagong and the rest of Bengal. The action was carefully planned and was put into execution at 10 o'clock on the night of 18 April 1930. A group of six revolutionaries led by Ganesh Ghosh captured the Police Armoury, shouting slogans such as *Inquilab Zindabad, Down with Imperialism* and *Gandhiji's Raj has been established.* Another group of ten, led by Loknath Bal, took over the Auxiliary Force Armoury along with its Lewis guns and 303 army rifles. Unfortunately, they could not locate the ammunition. This proved to be a disastrous setback to the revolutionaries' plans. The revolutionaries also succeeded in dislocating telephone and telegraph communications and disrupting movement by train. In all, sixty-five were involved in the raid which was undertaken in the name of the Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch. All the revolutionary groups gathered outside the Police Armoury where Surya Sen, dressed in immaculate white Khadi dhoti and a long coat and stiffly ironed Gandhi cap, took a military salute, hoisted the National Flag among shouts of *Vande Mataram* and *Inquilab Zindabad*, and proclaimed a Provisional Revolutionary Government." (Bipan Chandra)

Chittagong Armoury Case

The revolutionaries did not want to fight the expected army attack in the town and marched to the nearby Jalalabad hills looking for a safe place. There they were surrounded by several thousand troops on the afternoon of April 22. Fighting heroically, the revolutionaries killed over eighty British troops and lost twelve of their comrades when Surya Sen decided to disperse into the neighbouring villages and to carry on the struggle from there by attacking government property and personnel. They were able to survive for three years with help from the villagers who were subjected to severe repression by the authorities. On February 16, 1933, Surya Sen was finally arrested; he was tried and hanged on January 12, 1934. A number of his colleagues were also captured and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The Chittagong Armoury Raid was a major event in the annals of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal and had an immense impact on the people. According to a government report, it "fired the imagination of the revolutionary-minded youth" and "recruits poured into the

Revolutionary Activities

various terrorist groups in a steady stream". There was a spurt in revolutionary activity in 1930, which spilled over to 1931 and 1932. Medinipur district alone witnessed the assassination of three British magistrates. There were attempts on the lives of two Governors, and two Inspectors-General of Police were killed. In those three years, around 22 officials and about 20 non-officials were assassinated. The initial government reaction was that of panic, and there was brutal suppression. The police went on a rampage accosting all nationalists while the government armed itself with twenty repressive Acts. A reign of terror prevailed in Chittagong with police burning several villages and imposing punitive taxes on many others. Jawaharlal Nehru was sent to jail for two years on a charge of sedition because he had condemned police repression and praised the heroism of revolutionary youth in a speech in Calcutta even though he had criticised the policy of terrorism as futile and out of date. A unique aspect of the Chittagong rebels was that theirs was a group action aimed at the framework of the colonial state in place of individual heroism or the assassination of an official. Their objective was to set an example before the youth and to demoralise the bureaucracy. The idea was, as Surya Sen told Ananda Gupta, "A dedicated band of youth must show the path of organised armed struggle in place of individual terrorism. Most of us will have to die in the process but our sacrifice for such a noble cause will not go in vain." Unlike their predecessors, they did not place any emphasis on Hindu religiosity, nor did they take religious oaths and vows. There were a number of Muslims in the Chittagong I.R.A. cadre and leadership such as Sattar, Mir Ahmad, Fakir Ahmad Khan and Titu Mian who got unstinted help from the Muslim villagers around Chittagong.

Bhagat Singh and His Revolutionary Ideology

It was, however, Bhagat Singh and his colleagues who made a breakthrough in terms of revolutionary ideology, in the goals of revolution and in the forms of the revolutionary struggle. The rethinking had started earlier, and the HSRA manifesto of 1925 declared that it stood for "abolition of all systems which make the exploitation of man by man possible". Its mouthpiece, *The Revolutionary,* suggested nationalisation of the railways and other means of transport and large-scale industries such as steel and ship-building. The revolutionaries wanted "to start peasant and labour organisations" and to usher in "an organised and armed revolution".

Ideology of HSRA

Bhagat Singh was born in 1907 and was a nephew of the famous revolutionary, Ajit Singh. One of the most well-read political leaders of the time, Bhagat Singh had studied books on socialism, and on revolutionary movements of Russia, Ireland and Italy. Founding several study circles at Lahore, he, along with Sukhdev and others, carried on intensive political discussions. Due to his initiative, wide reading and deep thinking pervaded the ranks of the HSRA leadership, turning Bhagawati Vohra, Shiv Varma, Sukhdev, Bejoy Sinha and Yashpal into intellectuals of a high order. Even Chandrasekhar Azad, who was not proficient in English, would not accept any idea until it was fully explained to him. It was on Azad's instance that Bhagawati Vohra wrote the famous treatise, *The Philosophy of the Bomb*. Before his arrest in 1929, Bhagat Singh had come to the conclusion that popular broad-based mass movements could alone lead to a successful revolution. In order to carry out open political work among the youth, peasants and workers, he founded the *Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha* in 1926 and delivered political lectures there with magic lantern slides. He and his comrades believed that "revolution meant the development and organisation of a mass movement of the exploited and suppressed sections of the society by the revolutionary intelligentsia" and that "the real revolutionary armies are in the villages and factories". On February 2, 1931, Bhagat Singh explained to young political workers: "Apparently, I have acted like a terrorist. But I am not a terrorist….Let me announce with all the strength at my command, that I am not a terrorist and I never was, except perhaps in the beginning of my revolutionary career. And I am convinced that we cannot gain anything through those methods."

Naujawan Bharat Sabha

The question therefore was—why did Bhagat Singh and his comrades still take recourse to individual heroic action? "One reason was the very rapidity

of the changes in their thinking….Second, they were faced with a classic dilemma. From where would come the cadres, the hundreds of full-time young political workers, who would fan out among the masses? How were they to be recruited? Patient intellectual political work appeared to be too slow and too akin to the Congress style of politics which the young revolutionaries wanted to transcend. The answer appeared to be to appeal to the youth through 'propaganda by deed', to recruit the initial cadres of a mass revolutionary party through heroic dramatic action and the consequent militant propaganda before the courts. In the last stage, during 1930 and 1931, they were mainly fighting to keep the glory of the sacrifice of their comrades under sentence shining as before. As Bhagat Singh put it, he had to ask the youth to abandon revolutionary terrorism without tarnishing the sense of heroic sacrifice by appearing to have reconsidered his politics under the penalty of death. Life was bound to teach, sooner or later, correct politics; the sense of sacrifice once lost would not be easy to regain." (Bipan Chandra)

Revolution Redefined

Bhagat Singh and his comrades also took upon themselves the responsibility to broaden the scope of revolution. They did not equate revolution with mere militancy, nor did they limit it to individual heroic action. Though revolution aimed at national liberation by overthrowing imperialism, it had to go beyond that to stop exploitation of man by man. In their seminal work, *The Philosophy of the Bomb*, they defined revolution as "independence, social political and economic" which would bring in "a new order of society where political and economic exploitation would be an impossibility". During his trial Bhagat Singh said in the court, "Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and the pistol. By 'Revolution' we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change." Then, again: "The peasants have to liberate themselves not only from foreign yoke but also from the yoke of the landlords and the capitalists." In his last message, he said as long as a handful of exploiters go on exploiting the labour of common people for their own ends, the struggle in India would continue. "It matters little whether these exploiters are purely British capitalists, or British and Indian in alliance, or even purely Indians."

His Secular Credentials

A staunch secularist, he equated communalism with colonialism. He used to say, religion was one's private concern and communalism was an enemy to be fought. He defined communal killings as savagery, adding that the communal killers did not kill a person because he was guilty of any particular act but simply because that person happened to be a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. He did not even spare Lajpat Rai, whom he revered as a leader, when the latter during the last years of his life turned towards communal politics. He brought out a pamphlet containing Browning's famous poem, *The Lost Leader,* in full and without any comment added a photograph of Lajpat Rai thereon. In the article *'Why I am an Atheist',* written a few weeks before his death, he declared, "Any man who stands for progress has to criticise, disbelieve and challenge every item of old faith. Item by item he has to reason out every nook and corner of the old faith." He was "trying to stand like a man with an erect head to the last; even on the gallows".

Limitations and Significance

The government pursued a ruthless policy of suppression and gradually eliminated the ranks of the terrorists. Chandrasekhar Azad's death in a police encounter in Allahabad in February 1931 brought the curtains down on the terrorist movement in northern India. Three years later, with the hanging of Surya Sen, the same thing happened in Bengal. "The politics of revolutionary terrorism had severe limitations, above all theirs was not a politics of a mass movement; they failed to politically activate the masses or move them into political actions; they could not even establish contact with the masses. All the same, they made an abiding contribution to the national freedom movement. Their deep patriotism, courage and determination, and sense of sacrifice stirred the Indian people. They helped spread nationalist consciousness in the land; and in northern India the spread in socialist consciousness owed a lot to them." (Bipan Chandra)

Influence of 'World Forces' on Indian Nationalism

Harald Fischer-Tine, a professor of History at Jacobs University, Bremen, Germany, points out that the external influences and global contexts are often played down or even completely edited out from the histories of what is sometimes mentioned as 'the nation's arduous way to self-realisation'. There are, however, some exceptions to this trend, even among nationalists themselves. According to Bipan Chandra, even the revolutionary terrorists of the Indian national movement were inspired by European revolutionary movements, for example, those of Ireland, Russia, and Italy, rather than by the Kali or Bhawani cults. But there was also a certain Hindu tinge in the political work and ideas of the militant nationalists. This Hindu tinge proved to be particularly harmful as clever British and pro-British propagandists took advantage of the Hindu colouring to poison the minds of the Muslims.

Lala Lajpat Rai, in his book, *Young India,* acknowledged the formative impact of global factors on Indian nationalist politics in general and revolutionary terrorism in particular. *Young India,* published in 1917, contains a short chapter on 'world forces' that influenced the Indian national movement. Rai takes an overtly internationalist stance when he states, "There can be no doubt that Indian Nationalism is receiving a good deal of support from the world forces outside India.... Indian Patriots travelling abroad.... seek and get opportunities of meeting and conversing with the Nationalists of other countries. Some of them are in close touch with Egyptian or Irish nationalists, others with Persian and so on. Indian Nationalism is thus entering on [sic!] an international phase which is bound to strengthen it and bring it to the arena of the world forces."

The 1970s and early 1980s produced a couple of interesting survey works on 'Indian revolutionaries abroad,' mostly written by scholars with a Marxist ideology. On the basis of analysis of these works, it can be said that the international outlook of the radical brand of Indian nationalism was a result of the existence of a large number of Indian students studying abroad. Although the community of Indian students studying abroad was certainly smaller in size than the South Asian labour diaspora and the merchant communities living overseas, they turned out to be far more important in weaving an intercontinental web of anti-imperial activism. Britain was the most important destination for the Indian students, followed by other central European universities, American colleges and universities, and the Japanese universities in Tokyo.

Den of the British Lion—London

It is a paradox that the earliest and arguably the most important centre of revolutionary terrorism outside India, was located right in the heart of the British empire. India House, founded in London in 1905 by Shyamji Krishna Varma attracted many youths, for instance, V.D. Savarkar. In addition, London was a focal point from which to develop alliances with other anti-colonial movements. In 1906 a reception hosted by the Pan-Islamic Society at a restaurant in London in honour of the Egyptian nationalist Mustapha Kamil Pasha was attended by Krishna Varma who declared his solidarity with the people of Egypt. In January 1909, two members of the India House left London for Morocco to join the Rif-Rebellion led by Abd al-Karim. It is said that the actual motive to join the rebellion was to get acquainted with the practice of guerrilla warfare.

The Indian Sociologist, a monthly journal published from London by Shyamji, was distributed globally. The articles published in the journal carried almost exclusively straightforward political messages and hardly ever contained sociological reflections of scholarly interest, though Herbert Spencer, the father of sociology in Britain and the godfather of Krishna Varma's anti-imperialist ideology, got several references in the articles. The Indian nationalist activities in the heart of the empire came to a standstill by the end of 1911 owing to the tightening of security surveillance by the British authorities in the wake of the assassination of a British official by an Indian student resident at India House in 1909.

Henry Mayers Hyndman, a proponent of the radical left in England, criticised imperialism for

its exploitative character in a more fundamental and outspoken manner than proponents of other socialist groups like the Fabian Society or the Labour Party. Hyndman founded the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) in 1881 and became the editor of a weekly paper, *Justice,* in 1891. The SDF and the pages of *Justice* were used by Hyndman to make relentless attacks on British imperialism. In 1905 he delivered the inaugural speech at the opening of the India House in London and addressed the Indian audience saying that "loyalty to Britain would mean treachery to India". For many years, he invited Indian revolutionaries regularly to meetings of the SDF and introduced them to the platforms of international socialist conferences. He even granted permission to reprint selected articles he had written on Indian affairs for *Justice* in *The Indian Sociologist*.

English Radical Socialism and Its Agenda Against Imperialism

Jawaharlal Nehru in his book, *Glimpses of World History,* has noted many events in Ireland's liberation struggle which later inspired the Indian revolutionaries. He wrote: "During Easter week in 1916 there was a rising in Dublin, and an Irish Republic was proclaimed. After a few days of fighting this was crushed by the British, and some of the bravest and finest young men of Ireland were shot down afterwards under martial law for their part in the brief rebellion. This rising–it is known as the 'Easter Rising'–was hardly a serious attempt to challenge the British. It was more of a brave gesture to demonstrate to the world that Ireland still dreamt of a republic and refused to submit willingly to British domination. The gallant young men behind the rising deliberately sacrificed themselves in order to make this gesture to the world, well knowing that they would fail in the present, but hoping that their sacrifice would bear fruit later and bring freedom nearer."

Influence of the Irish National Movement

After the end of the First World War, a mere handful of young Irish men and women, with the sympathy of their people behind them, fought against the organised British empire. This movement known as Sinn Fein was a kind of non-cooperation with an element of violence. In the rural areas a guerrilla warfare was carried on against the police. The hunger strikes by the Sinn Fein prisoners in jails were strikingly similar to those of Indian revolutionaries. The most notable hunger strike was that of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork. When put in jail he declared that he would come out, free or dead, and gave up taking food. Terrence died after a marathon fast of seventy-five days. Similarly, when Bhagat Singh and his companions went on a hunger strike, Jatin Das died after a 64-day epic fast. Even Subhas Chandra Bose was conscious of Irish parallels and claimed that in his native Bengal there was hardly an educated family where books about the Irish heroes were not read.

Another strand of the Indo-Irish alliance was seen in New York. It was perhaps the most spectacular proof of both the possibilities for propaganda work in India and Ireland and the potential of a united Indo-Irish front of international cooperation between the Irish nationalist weekly the *Gaelic American* and *The Indian Sociologist*. From 1906 onwards, many articles from *The Indian Sociologist* were reprinted in the Irish radicals' mouth-piece and vice versa.

Nihilism constitutes radical skepticism and is a pessimistic belief that all values are baseless. The rise of Russian nihilists can be traced to the decade of the 1860s when Russia was defeated in the Crimean War. In 1861, the tsar abolished serfdom but that did not bring relief to the peasants owing to inadequate land being given to the freed serfs. In the early 1870s, the socialistically inclined students decided to carry their propaganda to the peasantry, and many descended upon villages. But unfortunately, due to trust deficit, many of these students were arrested by the peasants themselves and handed over to the tsar's police! This utter lack of success with the peasantry was a great shock to the student intellectuals and, in annoyance and despair, they took to what is called 'nihilism' and 'terrorism'. They started throwing bombs and tried to kill those in authority by other

Impact of Russian Nihilism on Indian Revolutionaries

means as well. These bomb-throwers called themselves 'Liberals with a bomb', and their terrorist organisation was named 'Will of the People'. This cult of bomb and individual heroic action became the inspiring forces for those who wanted change from oppressive rule of any kind. It has been argued that Indian revolutionary terrorism might have derived its ideology from the Russian nihilists.

The Japanese triumph against Russia in 1905 broke the myth of the white man's superiority and inspired the colonial Asian countries. For many educated Indians, Japan suddenly replaced the Western world as a reference point for successful modernisation. Almost immediately after the Japanese victory, the then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon warned that Indian students in Japan were likely to be influenced with sentiments tending towards discontent and even disloyalty. Eventually, in 1907, an India House was founded in Tokyo on the initiative of a few students and a visiting revolutionary from Bengal. The patriotic movement in Japan gained a new momentum with the arrival of Maulavi Barakatullah and Freeman in 1909 on the order of Krishna Varma. Barakatullah joined the School of Foreign Languages at Tokyo University as a professor of Urdu and dedicated himself immediately to revolutionary propaganda work by distributing *The Indian Sociologist* and other revolutionary writings from Europe. It is worth noting that Barakatullah always tended to advocate close cooperation between Muslims and Hindus in the struggle for India's independence. This ecumenical stance is even more extraordinary given the growth of Hindu-Muslim tensions and 'communalist' politics in India at the time.

Japan: Symbol of Asian modernity

The most important ideological resource drawn upon by the Indian expatriate community in Japan was **pan–Asianism.** In Japan this notion of pan-Asianism had found some resonance by the 1880s. In India this idea was later picked up by various religious reformers of whom Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore are the most outstanding examples. The manifesto of this idea was written by the Japanese art historian Okakura Kakuzo who was of the opinion that all Asia was one and "Asiatic races formed a single mighty web". Kakuzo, who had visited India and met both Tagore and Vivekananda in 1901-02, called for the cultural and political renaissance of the Asian nations.

CONSTITUTIONAL POLITICS: SWARAJISTS, LIBERALS, RESPONSIVE COOPERATION

A picture of despondency, disintegration and disorganisation represented the contours of the political situation in the years 1922-27. Gandhi's abrupt suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement in February 1922, and his arrest a month later led to the demoralisation of nationalists of all ranks. A section of the people started questioning the wisdom of the entire Gandhian strategy. Yet others began to look for ways out of the stalemate. At this point of time, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru proposed a new line of political activity to keep up the spirit of resistance to foreign rule. They suggested that the boycott of the legislative councils be ended; instead they should enter them and expose them as "sham parliaments" and "obstruct every work of the council". In the Gaya session of the Congress in December 1922, Das and Motilal put forward this proposal of "either ending or mending the councils" which was not accepted by the Gandhians like Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel. Consequently, Das and Motilal resigned from their posts in the Congress and founded the Congress-Khilafat Swaraj Party, later known as the Swaraj Party on January 1, 1923. The supporters of the council-entry line were known as pro-changers while their opponents as no-changers. The Swaraj Party adopted the Congress programme in its entirety with the proviso that it would contest the forthcoming elections and reiterate in the councils the national demand for self-government. If that was rejected, its elected members would paralyse the administration by adopting a "policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction".

Swaraj Party, 1923

"Both Das (born in 1870) and Motilal (born in 1861) were successful lawyers who had once been Moderates but had accepted the policy of boycott and non-cooperation in 1920. They had given up their legal practice, joined the movement as wholetime workers and donated to the nation their magnificent houses in Calcutta and Allahabad respectively. They were great admirers of Gandhi but were also his political equals. Both were brilliant and effective parliamentarians. One deeply religious and the other a virtual agnostic, they complemented each other and formed a legendary political combination. Das was imaginative and emotional and a great orator with the capacity to influence and conciliate friends and foes. Motilal was firm, coolly analytical, a great organiser and disciplinarian. They had absolute trust and confidence in each other that each could use the other's name for any statement without prior consultation." (Bipan Chandra)

C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru

The no-changers whose effective head was Gandhi soon engaged in a fierce controversy with the pro-changers, although their points of view were similar in many respects. They differed in their answers to the basic question all mass movements face: how to keep the movement alive in its non-active phases? The Swarajists felt that they should join the councils because even without Congressmen the councils would work thus leading to a weakening of the Congress in the political field. The pro-changers would "transform the legislatures into arenas of political struggle and their intention was not to use them, as the Liberals desired, as organs for the gradual transformation of the colonial state, but to use them as the ground on which the struggle for the overthrow of the colonial state was to be carried out". The no-changers were of the view that participation in the councils would lead to the neglect of constructive work among the masses, loss of intent and political corruption. Legislators joining them with the intention of "wrecking them from within" would be gradually sucked into the imperial constitutional framework and would work with the government on piecemeal legislation and petty reforms. On the other hand, constructive work among the masses would prepare them for the next active phase of the movement. As the controversy between the two groups intensified, the leaders were asked to cool down because the 1907 split was still fresh in the people's mind. The Hindu-Muslim riots in 1923 further complicated the political atmosphere. The special session of the Congress in Delhi in September 1923 under the presidentship of Maulana Azad, allowed the Congressmen to contest the forthcoming elections. The Swarajists made impressive gains in the elections, sweeping the polls in some provinces. Gandhi was released from jail in February 1924, and he revived the controversy in June in the Congress meeting at Ahmedabad by declaring his support for the original boycott programme, adding that those who did not agree with him should function as a separate organisation. Another resolution recommended that every officeholder of the Congress should spin two thousand yards of yarn every month and authorised action against the defaulters. The Swarajists were taken aback because their success in the election was very much due to the prestige and resources of the Congress. Gandhi's views on *khaddar* and hand-spinning were not quite endorsed by the Swarajists. C.R. Das admitted that *charkha* and *khadi* had a role to play in improving the economic life of the people, but he did not accept the commercial utility of *khadi*. Nor did he consider it as a commodity of worldwide marketable importance. Even then, the Swarajists exhorted people to wear *khadi* and made it mandatory for their legislators to attend council meetings dressed in pure *khadi*. However, they strongly opposed the proposal to make *charkha* spinning the basis for the membership of the Congress. "It is stated," said Das, "that *Khaddar* alone will bring us Swaraj. I ask my countrymen in what way is it possible for *Khaddar* to lead us to Swaraj?" On being asked to explain the attitude of the Swarajists towards the Spinning Resolution, Das stated: "The Swarajists have no objection to spin and they have over and over again declared their faith in the constructive

No-changers vs Pro-changers

Delhi Session, 1923

Spinning Resolution

programme." But they strongly resented anything being forced upon them, and they thought that it was an attempt to exclude them unconstitutionally from the Congress executive. Faced with such stiff opposition, the resolution was diluted by omitting the penalty of loss of office originally attached to it, as a compromise. It was a setback to Gandhi, and he publicly confessed that he was feeling defeated and humiliated.

The government, while releasing Gandhi from jail, hoped that now he would exclude the Swarajists from the Congress, but Gandhi, changing his stance, tried to move towards an accommodation with the Swarajists. His "starting point was the fact that even when opposing the Swarajist leaders he had full faith in their bonafides. He described them as 'the most valued and respected leaders' and as persons who 'have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the motherland.' Moreover, he and Das and Motilal Nehru throughout maintained warm personal relations based on mutual respect and regard." (Bipan Chandra) The courageous and uncompromising manner in which the Swarajists conducted themselves in the councils convinced Gandhi that their politics could be wrong, but certainly they were not turning into stooges of the government. Nonetheless, Gandhi felt that participation in the councils had already occurred and any reversal of that decision would be misunderstood by the government as a sign of split in the Congress ranks and by the people "as a rout and weakness".

Gandhi and the Swarajists

When the government launched a full attack on civil liberties and Swarajists in Bengal in the name of fighting terrorism, it brought Gandhi and the Swarajists closer. On the strength of an ordinance, the government conducted raids on Congress offices in October 1924 arresting Subhas Bose along with some Swarajists, terrorists and other Congressmen. To demonstrate his solidarity with the Swarajists, Gandhi decided to surrender before them and wrote in *Young India*: "I would have been false to the country if I had not stood by the Swaraj Party in the hour of its need …I must stand by it even though I do not believe in the efficacy of council-entry or some of the methods of council-Warfare." And added: "Though an uncompromising no-changer, I must not only tolerate their attitude and work with them, but I must even strengthen them wherever I can." At the Belgaum Congress in December 1924, Gandhi ended the differences between the no-changers and the pro-changers by allowing the Swarajists to work on behalf of the Congress. The Swarajists were also given a majority of seats in the Congress Working Committee. For the elections to be held in November 1923, the Swarajist manifesto adopted a strong anti-imperialist line, promising that the Swaraj Party would wreck the sham reforms from within the councils. "The guiding motive of the British in governing India is to secure the selfish interests of their own country and the so-called reforms are a mere blind to further the said interests under the pretence of granting responsible government to India, the real object being to continue the exploitation of the unlimited resources of the country by keeping Indians permanently in a subservient position to Britain." The Swaraj Party decided to force recognition of the rights demanded by it by refusing supplies and by throwing out budget proposals and measures increasing the powers of the bureaucracy in the councils. The intention of the Swarajists was to introduce bills and move resolutions necessary for the healthy growth of national life. They wanted to help the constructive programme of the Congress, to prevent the drain of wealth from the country and to promote national economic interests. Also on their agenda was the projection of the rights of agricultural and industrial workers and to bring in harmonious relationships between landlords and tenants, and capitalists and labourers. It would be seen that the Swarajist manifesto was of an omnibus character, trying to please all sections of people with an eye on the elections. The Swarajists distinguished themselves with their attempts to destroy the make-believe reforms of the British from within, because it was more difficult to deal with sabotage than with an open rebellion. As C.R. Das stated in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1925: "We want to destroy

Programmes of the Swarajists

and get rid of a system which does no good and can do no good. We want to destroy it, because we want to construct a system which can be worked with success and will enable us to do good to the masses."

Of the three elections held under the Act of 1919, the Congress boycotted the first in 1920 due to the Non-Cooperation Movement, thus leaving the field open to the Liberals and others. The 1923 election was fought by the Swarajists on the subject of council-entry. With only a few weeks to prepare for the elections, the Swarajists managed to do quite well among the 6.2 million voters. They secured 42 out of 101 elected seats in the Central Legislative Assembly, a clear majority in the Central Provinces, the largest number of votes in Bengal and comfortable positions in Bombay and Uttar Pradesh. In Madras and Punjab, they were not so well-placed because of strong casteist and communal currents. They forged a common political front in the Central Assembly with independents led by M.A. Jinnah, the Liberals, and individuals like Madan Mohan Malaviya. Forming similar coalitions in the provinces, they began to inflict defeat after defeat on the government.

Election of 1923

"The legislatures, reformed in 1919, had a 'semblance' of power without any real authority. Though they had a majority of elected members, the executive at the centre or in the provinces was outside their control, being responsible only to the British government at home. Moreover, the Viceroy or the Governor could certify any legislation, including a budgetary grant, if it was rejected in the legislature. The Swarajists forced the government to certify legislation repeatedly at the centre as well as in many of the provinces, thus exposing the true character of the reformed councils. In March 1925, they succeeded in electing Vithalbhai Patel, a leading Swarajist, as the President of the Central Legislative Assembly." (Bipan Chandra) They intervened on every issue in the centre and often outvoted the government. They also took up the issue of constitutional advance leading to self-government; of civil liberties, release of political prisoners, and repeal of repressive laws; and of the development of indigenous industries. They voiced the national demand for the framing of a new constitution in the very first session of the legislative assembly, which was passed twice by majority votes. They repeatedly humiliated the government by voting out its demands for budgetary grants under different heads. Vithalbhai Patel took the opportunity of one such occasion to tell the government: "We want you to carry on the administration of this country by veto and by certification. We want you to treat the Government of India Act as a scrap of paper which I am sure it has proved to be."

Activities of the Swarajists

The government was outvoted several times on the issue of the repeal of repressive laws and regulations and the release of prisoners. Its harsh criticism of the revolutionary terrorists was countered by C.S. Ranga Iyer who said that the government officials were themselves "criminals of the worst sort, assassins of the deepest dye, men who are murdering the liberties of a liberty-loving race". During this time, in 1923-24, the Congress also captured a large number of municipalities and other local bodies. C.R. Das became the Mayor of Calcutta with Subhas Bose as the chief executive officer. Vithalbhai Patel was elected the President of Bombay Corporation, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru became chiefs of the municipalities of Patna, Ahmedabad and Allahabad, respectively. Although they had limited powers, they and other leaders in such local bodies brought forth many improvements in the quality of life of the people by working in the fields of education, sanitation, health, anti-untouchability and khadi promotion. Then came a set of reverses. C.R. Das died in June 1925; widespread communal riots broke out with active encouragement from the colonial authorities; and the preoccupation with parliamentary politics started telling on the internal cohesion of the Swaraj Party.

After outvoting the government a number of times and forcing it to certify its legislation, there remained nothing much for the Swarajists to do to carry forward the politics of confrontation while being a part of the councils. The next step involved

working outside the councils—starting a mass-based movement. The coalition partners of the Swarajists were not with them at all times and did not believe in the tactic of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction". The government also dangled before them the fishes and loaves of the office, the lure of which some of them found difficult to resist. Such efforts to separate the Liberals and other coalition partners from the Swarajists started to bear fruit. The Swarajists in Bengal did not support the tenants' causes, thereby losing the support of their Muslim constituency. So, there was a group within the party, known as the Responsivists, who like the Liberals wanted to work the reforms and to hold office wherever possible. In the Central Provinces, due to their majority, the Swarajists had earlier nearly paralysed the government, but now some of the Swarajists joined the government, their ranks swelled by M.R. Jayakar, N.C. Kelkar and other leaders. Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya too left the coalition on Responsivist as well as communal grounds. To prevent this slide towards dissolution, the main leadership of the Swaraj Party reaffirmed its faith in mass civil disobedience and decided to withdraw from the legislatures in March 1926. Gandhi, resuming his critique of council-entry, wrote to Srinivas Iyengar in April: "The more I study the councils' work, the effect of the entry into the councils upon public life, its repercussions upon the Hindu-Muslim question, the more convinced I become not only of the futility but also of the inadvisability of council-entry." But the Swarajists not only achieved whatever they possibly could by their politics of obstruction, but also motivated the people by overthrowing the dyarchy in Bengal and the Central Provinces envisaged in the reforms. They also earned the grudging admission of the Indian Statutory Commission which observed: "The only really well-organised and disciplined party with a definite programme (though, it is true a negative one) is that of the Swarajists. Only in Bengal and the Central Provinces did they, even temporarily, achieve their initial objective of making dyarchy unworkable and in the provinces they have tended everywhere, in varying degrees, to be transformed into an opposition of a more constitutional kind and have not infrequently played a useful part as keen and vigilant critics." Their greatest achievement was that they filled the political void at a time when the nationalist movement was regaining its strength. They stood firm in their resolve even though some in their ranks fell by the wayside. Above everything, they demonstrated that it was possible to use the legislatures in a creative manner without getting co-opted by the colonial regime and showed the people of India that they were governed by lawless laws.

Responsivists

A demoralised and much weaker Swarajist Party went to the November 1926 polls facing the government and loyalist elements and its own dissenters along with the resurgent Hindu and Muslim communalists. It encountered virulent and scurrilous propaganda by the Hindus that accused Motilal of sacrificing Hindu interests, of favouring cow-slaughter, and of eating beef while the Muslims branded the Swarajists as anti-Muslim. Consequently, they received a severe drubbing, winning only 40 seats at the centre, half the seats in Madras and a thin presence elsewhere, especially in Uttar Pradesh, the Central Provinces and Punjab. As the Hindu and Muslim communalists increased their representations, the Swarajists were unable to form a national coalition like they did in 1923. Once more they passed a series of adjournments, the most famous of which was the defeat of the Public Safety Bill in 1928. As socialist and communist ideas and influence spread, the government panicked, believing that the Communist International was sending foreign agitators to India to foment trouble. There was a proposal to deport undesirable and subversive foreigners, and the Bill was drafted for this purpose. All nationalists, from the moderates to the militants, raised their voices in protest against the Bill. Lajpat Rai said: "Capitalism is only another name for Imperialism…We are in no danger from Bolshevism or Communism. The greatest danger we are in, is from the capitalists and exploiters." Narrating his experiences in the Soviet Union and condemning the anti-Soviet propaganda, Motilal described the Bill as a "direct attack on Indian nationalism, on

Public Safety Bill, 1928

the Indian National Congress and as the Slavery of India Bill No.1." The two spokesmen of the business community, G.D. Birla and Purushottamdas Thakurdas, also firmly opposed the Bill. Defeated in its attempt to pass the Bill, the government went berserk and arrested thirty-one leading communists, trade-unionists and other left-wing leaders in March 1929 and put them on trial at Meerut. Strong protests surfaced again, with Gandhi observing that "the motive behind these prosecutions is not to kill Communism, it is to strike terror…. Evidently, it (the government) believes in a periodical exhibition of its capacity to supersede all laws and to show to a trembling India the red claws which usually remain under cover". In accordance with the resolution taken in the Lahore Congress (1929), the Swarajists finally quit the legislatures in 1930.

Meanwhile, the no-changers went on with their undemonstrative constructive work involving the promotion of khadi and spinning, national education, Hindu-Muslim unity along with the struggle against untouchability in which the Swarajists also took part. Unfortunately, the rise of the Swarajists coincided with the worst period of Hindu-Muslim tensions. Although they valued freedom, national unity and secularism, the Swarajists could do nothing to stop the downward slide except making pious speeches on the desirability of Hindu-Muslim unity like other groups did. As regards Swadeshi, the Gandhian definition of it was comprehensive including not only *charkha* and spinning but also all other forms of indigenous industries. Though the Swarajists upheld Swadeshi, their attachment to *charkha* and *khadi* was not as deep and as strong as that of Gandhi and his staunch followers. It forced Gandhi to bemoan that *khaddar* appeared to be a ceremonial dress among the Swarajists as they did not hesitate to use *videshi* cloth in their households. Like other Congressmen, the Swarajists also regarded untouchability as a scourge and worked for its removal by taking many initiatives. For example, in Vaikom, South India, reformers started a satyagraha to secure the right of passage for the untouchables on a public road leading to a Hindu temple. The initiative received full support from Gandhi, and the Swarajists passed a resolution in favour of the Satyagrahis of Vaikom. In the Belgaum Congress, a resolution was passed calling upon the Travancore Government to agree to the Satyagrahis' demand and to provide speedy relief. The Travancore Government did so by removing the barricades and pickets preventing entry to the temple, although there was a difference of opinion among the public on the matter. In the Tarakeshwar temple incident, the Swarajists were involved more directly. The *mahant* or the headman of the temple was an autocrat, protesting against whose high-handedness two reformers, Swami Satchidananda and Swami Viswananda, raised a band of volunteers and demanded that the temple be declared a public property. C.R. Das criticised the government's inaction and asked the government to arrest the *mahant*. The Tarakeshwar matter took a grave turn when the temple personnel clashed with the volunteers and the police had to resort to firing on one occasion. Finally, C.R. Das compelled the *mahant* to agree to the terms drafted by him. It was a demonstration of the sincerity of the Swarajists who wanted to stop discrimination in the matter of religious worship in temples. They upheld the dignity of the depressed classes in the Central Assembly and in the provincial councils. To break down caste prejudices, they organised inter-caste feasts. The Swarajists were conscious of the evils of drinking or consumption of intoxicants. The government was, however, unwilling to impose prohibition because it would cause a substantial loss of revenue. As drinking and drug addiction were detrimental to national health and moral welfare of the people, the Swarajists worked for its abolition.

Decline

The enthusiasm with which the Swarajists started their movement in 1923 began to wane in the years that followed, eventually leading to a decline. A substantial section of them realised that destructive opposition was taking them nowhere and so the spirit of responsive cooperation started to gain ground. In fact, it was C.R. Das who inclined towards cooperation while presiding over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur in May 1925. He told the British that "cooperation with the government was possible if some real responsibility was transferred to the people" and called for a "general amnesty to all political prisoners" so as "to show a practical demonstration of change of heart". He followed it

with an assurance to the government that the Swarajists would do everything to discourage "revolutionary propaganda".

The Faridpur declaration gave some encouragement to the government to make overtures to the Swarajists. A month after C.R. Das's death, in July 1925, Lord Birkenhead, in a speech, lauded the Swarajists "as the most organised political party in India". Some members of the Swaraj Party who had no faith in the policy of non-cooperation were not exactly averse to enjoying parliamentary privileges. Some of the Swarajist leaders accepted offices and sat an various committees. Even Motilal Nehru who had earlier declined to join the Muddiman Committee (constituted to examine the working of the Reforms of 1919), now accepted a seat in the Skeen Committee. Vithalbhai Patel became the president of the assembly and A.R. Iyengar sat on the Public Accounts Committee. Sir Basil Blackett praised the contribution of Motilal Nehru in the passage of the Steel Protection Cooperation Bill in the assembly. A.R. Iyengar was also eulogised by Blackett for his valuable contribution to the Public Accounts Committee. All this was reflected in the astonishing public demand of the Responsive Swarajists for a recasting of the party's programme. Motilal responded to it with the threat that "the diseased limb of the Swaraj Party must be amputated". His reply offended the Responsivists further, leading to an open rebellion against the central leadership. Then, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lajpat Rai formed a party of Congress Independents gathering Hindus under their banner stating that the interests of Hindus were being neglected. Nationalists of all hues convened a meeting in Calcutta in December 1925 to forge a common line of action, as there were no fundamental differences between the Swarajists, Liberals, Independents and others. Another meeting was held in April 1926 and it was presided over by Tej Bahadur Sapru, but nothing could be achieved in these two meetings. Motilal called another meeting in Sabarmati, accepting the principles of responsivism and laying down certain conditions for office acceptance. The no-changers did not like it when the Responsivists walked out of the meeting. It was evident that by following parliamentary practice the Swaraj Party had demolished itself instead of the Act of 1919.

Congress Independents

In 1927, the Simon Commission evoked universal boycott while Lord Birkenhead, the secretary of state, challenged the Indians to make a constitution acceptable to all sections of the society. Motilal responded to the challenge by drafting one which came to be known as the Nehru Report and which brought the Swarajists and no-changers together. The Nehru Report envisaged a "constitution where India with dominion status would have a federal government elected through universal suffrage whose residuary powers would rest with the centre and where separate electorates would be abolished". On the last named issue, the report foundered because the vociferous sections of the Muslims, led by Jinnah, rejected the notion of one-man, one-vote arguing that this would mean the swamping of the Muslim community. Not only did they demand that one-third of the seats in the legislature be reserved for Muslims, but also that residuary powers remain with the provinces, a recipe for weak national bonds. The Calcutta Congress of 1928 asked the British to accept the Nehru Report by December 31, 1929, failing which the Congress would declare complete independence as its goal. In this changed political situation, council-entry lost its relevance and the Swaraj Party merged with the Congress to start the second phase of mass movement for the country's complete independence.

Nehru Report 1928

THE LEFT (SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS)

The terms *Left* and *Right* in politics had been derived from the seating arrangements of the legislators in the National Assembly of France during the Revolution of 1789 to distinguish between the Pro-Revolutionaries (the Left) and the Anti-Revolutionaries (the Right). The Conservatives supporting the emperor and his absolutism perched themselves on the right side of the speaker; the Radicals wanting drastic changes in the system of government occupied the left side; whereas the Liberals desiring limited changes filled the centre. The terms acquired a wider connotation during the post-Industrial Revolution period, with the emergence of socialist and communist thought.

Factors Responsible for the Growth of Leftist Ideology in India

The Leftist ideology in India emerged out of certain politico-economic conditions prevailing towards the end of the First World War, conditions which were inextricably linked with the mainstream nationalist movement. The Left movements in India developed into mainly two streams: (a) the Communist Movement that operated as a branch of the International Communist Movement whose functioning was mainly regulated by the Comintern, and (b) the Congress Socialist Party which represented the left-wing of the Congress and drew its strength from the philosophy of Democratic Socialism. Both these movements drew their support from the anti-imperialist sentiments prevalent in India. The conditions which provided the ground for the rise of these leftist movements, according to Prof. B.L. Grover, are as follows:

Two Broad Streams

(i) The First World War brought in its train crippling financial burdens, rising prices of basic commodities, famine conditions and manipulative profiteering—all exposing the evils of imperialist-capitalist domination.

Impact of First World War

(ii) The romantic appeal of the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx coupled with the reflected glory of the new regime in the Soviet Union fired the imagination of the Indian intellectuals, political leaders, revolutionary terrorists and even the workers and made them conscious of a new ideology loaded with a socio-economic content.

Marxism

(iii) Gandhi's slogan of Swaraj and Swadeshi and his attempt to carry the message to every nook and corner of India gave a new orientation to the political movement that drew even the workers and peasants into the vortex of the freedom struggle. This new development provided a fertile ground for the beginning of an organised and ideologically inspired socialist movement.

Politicisation of Workers and Peasants

(iv) A volatile section of the new generation of educated middle-class with the spectre of unemployment staring them in the face had lost faith in the 19th century liberalism and all that it stood for and was attracted towards individualistic terrorism or the new revolutionary socialist ideology.

Rising Unemployment

(v) Lastly, a section of the Radicals felt disappointed with the weak and watery reformism of Gandhi, labelled him as the leader of the forces of reaction and saw his cult of non-violence as an obstructive element in the development of a real revolutionary mass struggle against British imperialism and its indigenous allies. These Radicals also questioned the exclusive emphasis on swaraj without a socio-economic dimension.

Critique of Gandhian Methods

The aims of socialism are to end exploitation of the poor (who are in a majority almost everywhere) by the rich (who are in a minority) and to remove the resulting injustices and inequalities. The doctrines of socialism were formulated in the second half of the 19th century in the West where it acquired a considerable following in the beginning of the 20th century. India under the British rule was ruthlessly exploited, leaving its people impoverished and degraded. Naturally, Indian intellectuals and patriots, especially those who had lived in the West, were drawn towards socialist ideologies. As, however, most of them lived outside the country, they did not exercise any influence over the policies, activities and programmes of the main nationalist party, the Indian National Congress. It was only around the late 1920s that socialist ideas started gaining ground in India. Nonetheless, Congress leaders were aware of the socialistic ideas from the beginning, for example, Dadabhai Naoroji had close contacts with British socialists and attended the International Socialist Conference at Amsterdam in August 1904 and was given a rousing welcome. The Congress, working for national awakening and for national unity, wanted all sections of the people to come under its influence. Perhaps that was why it did not entertain socialistic principles encouraging resistance of the exploited against the exploiters in its early years. As it depended on the money-power and the support of the rich and the well-to-do, the Congress was understandably not in a position to antagonise them. Moreover, the early nationalists

Growth of Socialist Ideas

were engaged in constitutional politics and the agitations the British allowed them to launch. They did not think in terms of mass action with the exception of the Swadeshi movement. It was not as if they were blind to the sufferings of the oppressed and the poor. They were aware of the hardships and believed that once prosperity returned all the economic ills would go away. This line of thinking, though questionable, prevailed in the Congress for a long time, even up to the mid-1930s.

Among the Congressmen who thought about the future of India was the young Jawaharlal Nehru. He had gained some first-hand knowledge about agrarian problems while working among the peasants of Pratapgarh and Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh in 1920-21. Though loyal to Gandhi, he was critical of the decision to withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement. In 1926, he had to go to Switzerland for medical treatment of his ailing wife. He attended the International Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism, held in Brussels. There he came in contact with the best exponents of European radical tradition as also a large number of delegates from China, Mexico and other countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. This exposure helped him to understand how capitalism developed and the role played by imperialism in the process. Thus when he returned to India in December 1927, he for all intents and purposes turned a socialist. In 1928 the all-White Simon Commission visited India to make recommendations about India's political future. The Commission was boycotted for the crude racial arrogance it displayed. Then followed the Nehru Report in which Motilal Nehru opted for Dominion Status for India. Jawaharlal organised resistance against the acceptance of the Nehru Report in which he received considerable help from Subhas Bose. Though differing in temperament from Jawaharlal, Subhas Bose had much in common with him. Both came from well-to-do families, received education abroad, were intellectuals by their own rights and were committed to the cause of Indian nationalism. Bose's political mentor was not Gandhi, but C.R. Das. Unlike Nehru, he had no experience of working among the toiling masses, and was aware of their aspirations only from a distance. As a result, inspite of his leftist leanings and radical stances, he was not as sure of his socialism as Jawaharlal was.

Jawaharlal Nehru— A Socialist

Nehru and Subhas Bose

"In 1928, Jawaharlal joined hands with Subhas to organise the *Independence for India League* to fight for complete independence and 'a socialist revision of the economic structure of society'. At the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, Nehru proclaimed: 'I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have a greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy.' India, he said, would have to adopt a full 'socialist programme' if she was 'to end her poverty and inequality'. It was also not possible for the Congress to hold the balance between capital and labour and landlord and tenant, for the existing balance was 'terribly weighted' in favour of the capitalists and landlords.

Independence League

"Nehru's commitment to socialism found a clearer and sharper expression during 1933-36. Answering the question in *Whither India* in October 1933, he wrote: 'Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class.' And in December 1933 he wrote: 'The true civic ideal is the socialist ideal, the communist ideal.' He put his commitment to socialism in clear, unequivocal and passionate words in his presidential address to the Lucknow Congress in April 1936: 'I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense…I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation, and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure…That means the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service.' During these years, Nehru also emphasised the role of class analysis and class struggle."(Bipan Chandra)

Disenchanted with Gandhian strategy and attracted by socialist ideology, a group of young Congressmen planned for the formation of a socialist party while in jail during 1930-31 and 1932-34. Aware of Marxist principles and attracted by socialist ideas and the Soviet Union, they, however, could not agree with the prevalent political line of the Communist Party of India. Thus the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was born in Bombay in October 1934 under the leadership of J.P. Narayan, Minoo Masani and Acharya Narendra Dev. The four basic propositions they agreed on from the beginning were: that India had been fighting for her freedom primarily and nationalism was a necessary stage towards socialism; that they must work within the Congress since that was the primary body leading the national struggle; that the national struggle must acquire a socialist direction; and that workers and peasants were to be made participants in that struggle, forming its social base.

Formation of CSP (1934)

"The CSP from the beginning assigned itself the task of both transforming the Congress and of strengthening it. The task of transforming the Congress was understood in two senses. One was the ideological sense. Congressmen were to be gradually persuaded to adopt a socialist vision of independent India and a more radical pro-labour and pro-peasant stand on current economic issues. This ideological and programmatic transformation was, however, to be seen not as an event but as a process. As Jayaprakash Narayan repeatedly told his followers in 1934: 'We are placing before the Congress a programme and we want the Congress to accept it. If the Congress does not accept it, we do not say we are going out of the Congress. If today we fail, tomorrow we will try and if tomorrow we fail, we will try again.'" (Bipan Chandra)

The CSP thought that the existing leadership of the Congress was incapable of taking the struggle of the masses to a higher level and it was for them to form the nucleus of such a leadership. This was also reiterated in their Meerut thesis of 1935 that the task was to influence the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress so as to counter the hold on them by the present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism. "This perspective was, however, soon found to be unrealistic and was abandoned in favour of a 'composite' leadership in which socialists would be taken into the leadership at all levels. The notion of alternate Left leadership of the Congress and the national movement came up for realisation twice—at Tripuri in 1939 and at Ramgarh in 1940. But when it came to splitting the Congress on a Left-Right basis and giving the Congress an executive left-wing leadership, the CSP (as also the CPI) shied away. Its leadership (as also the CPI's) realised that such an effort would not weaken the national movement but isolate the Left from the mainstream, that the Indian people could be mobilised into a movement only under Gandhi's leadership and that, in fact, there was at the time, no alternative to Gandhi's leadership. However, unlike Jawaharlal Nehru, the leadership of the CSP, as also of the other Left groups and parties, was not able to fully theorise or internalise this understanding and so it went back again and again to the notion of alternative leadership." (Bipan Chandra)

Meerut Thesis

Another socialist party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, was formed by the old revolutionary terrorists in 1940 who aimed at a violent overthrow of the British and the establishment of Socialism in India. Ideologically, it was closer to CSP and supported Subhas Bose in his spat with Gandhi. It opposed help to the allied War effort, even after Russia's entry into the Second World War. The RSP denounced the transfer of power and partition of India as "a backdoor deal between the treacherous bourgeois leadership of the Congress and Imperialism."

Revolutionary Socialist Party

After his differences with Gandhi in 1939, Subhas Bose with his followers formed the Forward Bloc. The Forward Bloc followed the creed, policy and programme of the Congress, but was not obliged to act as per the instructions of the Congress High Command. Its aim was to consolidate together all anti-imperialist groups.

Forward Bloc 1939

The success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the ensuing formation of the Communist International inspired some revolutionaries and intellectuals working inside and outside India to form a Communist Party in India. However, it was

in Tashkent under the auspices of the Communist International that the Communist Party of India was formed by M.N. Roy in 1920. Narendranath Bhattacharjee, a.k.a., M.N. Roy, had his education in the National University established by Aurobindo. As a revolutionary terrorist, he devoted himself to bringing about an armed revolt in India through imported German arms, attempts which failed with disappointing regularity. He then travelled to South East Asia, China, Japan and countries nearby, finally landing in San Francisco, USA where he changed his name to Manabendra Nath Roy. As he was a Marxist, he had to leave the United States when that country joined the First World War. He took refuge in Mexico. There he became friendly with Michael Borodin, a Russian communist, with whom he founded the Communist Party of Mexico. Receiving a call from Lenin, the Russian communist leader, he went to Moscow and attended the Second Congress of the Communist International. Deliberating over the strategy to be adopted in countries under colonial rule, Lenin said that in such countries communists should lend active support to the revolutionary movements carried on by the bourgeois nationalists against the foreign imperialistic governments and that Gandhi was a progressive nationalist. Roy was of the opinion that the bourgeois nationalists were reactionaries and that communists should carry on their struggles against the imperialists independently by forming parties of workers and peasants. Due to the force of his argument, the view of Lenin was changed in the resolution in the following manner: While extending support to revolutionary national bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism, the communists would carry on their struggle independently by means of an alliance between workers and peasants.

Formation of Communist Party of India

M.N. Roy

Lenin's View

"Guided by the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, the Communists broke their connection with the National Congress and declared it to be a class party of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the Congress and the bourgeoisie it supposedly represented were declared to have become supporters of imperialism. The Congress plans to organise a mass movement around the slogan of Purna Swaraj were seen as sham efforts to gain influence over the masses by bourgeois leaders who were working for a compromise with British imperialism. Congress left leaders, such as Nehru and Bose, were described as 'agents of the bourgeoisie within the national movement' who were out to 'bamboozle the mass of workers' and keep the masses under bourgeois influence. The Communists were now out to 'expose' all talk of non-violent struggle and advance the slogan of armed struggle against imperialism. In 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was described as a proof of the Congress betrayal of nationalism." (Bipan Chandra)

Communist Critique of the Congress

The Communist Party of India (CPI) formed four workers and peasants parties in Bengal, Bombay, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, after the arrival of an emissary from the Communist Party of Great Britain, Philip Spratt, in December 1926. The All India Workers and Peasants Party was formed in December 1928, after which the CPI organised a number of strikes in Bombay. During this period, the CPI was involved in conspiracy trials thrice—in Peshawar (1922-23), Kanpur (1924) and Meerut (1929-33). Of these, the Meerut trial continued for three-and-a-half years, ending with the conviction of 27 persons who were leading nationalists or trade unionists. As they had taken an anti-British stand, they earned the sympathy of the nationalists, with the Congress Working Committee arranging for their legal defence and engaging eminent nationalists like J.L. Nehru, K.N. Katju and F.H. Ansari to argue their case. They were seen in the jail by Gandhi in 1929, and the sympathy generated led to the successful opposition in the Central Assembly of the Public Safety Bill (1928). In July 1934, the CPI was declared an illegal organisation. From this period onwards, the CPI went on making mistakes in their reading of the political situation. They even denounced the left wing of the Congress and charged Gandhi as a petite-bourgeois-nationalist leader who was betraying the revolutionary struggle of the masses. It was a wrong tactical approach which kept the CPI away from the political mainstream. This was reversed in 1935 when R.P. Dutt and Ben Bradley called the Indian National Congress as the joint front of the Indian people in the nationalist struggle and asked the CPI to make full use of the Congress

All India Workers and Peasants Party

organisation as also of the Congress Socialist Party. When the Second World War broke out, the CPI scored over the Congress by stating that it had nothing to do with a war started by the imperialists while the latter displayed a pro-British attitude. When Russia joined the war, the CPI called it a "people's war". The British rewarded the CPI by removing the ban on it. Meanwhile, the Congress also expressed its opposition to the War and started the Quit India Movement. The CPI's studied aloofness during that period severely eroded its credibility. Consequently, by 1947, the CPI was in total disarray.

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

Subhas Chandra Bose was the unanimous choice for the presidentship of the Congress in 1938, and he decided to stand again for presidentship in 1939 as a spokesperson of militant politics and radical groups. He said that he was representing new ideas, ideologies, problems and programmes which had come to the fore with the progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. The Working Committee said that such matters were decided by the Committee itself, that the presidentship was a symbolic post representing the unity and solidarity of the nation, and put up Pattabhi Sitaramayia as a candidate for the post with Gandhi's approval. Bose was elected; Gandhi called Sitaramayia's defeat "more mine than his." The crisis deepened due to Subhas Bose's accusation that the Gandhian circles were looking forward to an understanding with the British Government. All the Committee members with the exception of Jawaharlal Nehru resigned. Nehru did not want to confront Bose publicly, but he was not in agreement with Bose either. "However, more importantly, basic differences of policy and tactics were involved in the Bose-Gandhian debate. They were based on differing perceptions of the political reality, and differing assessments of the strength and weakness of the Congress and the preparedness of the masses for struggle. Differing styles regarding how to build up mass movement were also involved."(Bipan Chandra) These differences ultimately led to Bose's resignation and the formation of a new party, Forward Bloc. The failure of the Cripps' Mission to offer an honourable settlement and British determination to continue India's unwilling partnership in the War effort, led to the launching of the Quit India Movement in 1942.

Bose-Gandhi Stand Off

Indian National Army (1942)

Among the revolutionaries working abroad for the country's cause was Rashbehari Bose who had been living in Japan since 1915 after fleeing from India. With the onset of the War, he mobilised the Indians abroad for an armed struggle against the British. The Indian soldiers fighting on behalf of the British were taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese after their invasion of South-East Asia. A Japanese officer, Major Fujiwara, convinced Captain Mohan Singh (one of the prisoners of war) to fight for India's freedom in collaboration with the Japanese. There was a conference of Indians in Tokyo in March 1942 when the Indian Independence League was set up. Then followed a conference in Bangkok in June 1942 when Rashbehari Bose was elected President of the League and a decision was taken to raise the Indian National Army. Captain Mohan Singh was made the Commander of the INA which then had about 40,000 Indian soldiers. It was decided in the Bangkok conference to invite Subhas Bose to lead the movement. Under house arrest in Calcutta, Bose had escaped to Berlin in 1941. He was brought to Singapore by German and Japanese submarines in June 1943. He went to Tokyo, met the Japanese Prime Minister, Tojo who assured him that Japan had no intention of occupying India. Returning to Singapore, Bose set up the Provisional Government of Free India on October 21, 1943. The Provisional Government was given recognition by the Axis powers and their allies. Subsequently, the Provisional Government declared war on the United States and they took charge of the administration of Andaman and the Nicobar Islands from the Japanese in November 1943. Subhas Bose set up two headquarters, one in Rangoon and the other in Singapore, and started reorganising the INA. Recruitments were made from the civilian population, funds were raised from the public and a women's regiment was formed and named after the Rani of Jhansi. "On 6 July 1944, Subhas Bose,

Rashbehari Bose and India Independence League

Provisional Government

Subhash Chandra Bose's Life at a Glance

- Born on January 23, 1897 in Cuttack of Bengal Presidency.
- In 1919 graduated from Calcutta University and then went to England.
- In 1920 passed the Indian Civil Services examination, securing fourth position.
- In 1921, resigned from the ICS, joined the Indian National Congress under the influence of Chitraranjan Das, his political guru, and M.K. Gandhi.
- In December 1921, went to jail for the first time; imprisoned for 6 months.
- In 1923, became the mayor of Calcutta.
- On October 25, 1924, imprisoned again, deported to Mandley (Burma); released on May 16, 1927.
- In 1927, founded the Independence League.
- In 1928, opposed the Dominion Status as proposed in the Nehru Report.
- In 1938, became the President of the Indian National Congress at Haripura (Gujarat) session.
- In 1939, again became the President of the INC by defeating Gandhi's candidate Pattabhi Sitaramayya.
- In April 1939, resigned from the presidentship of the INC. In the same year, formed 'Forward Bloc'.
- In 1940, placed under house arrest by the British.
- On January 26, 1941, reached Peshawar under the pseudo-name Ziauddin, helped by Bhagat Ram. Through Kabul, reached to Germany and met Hitler under the pseudo name, Orlando Mazzotta. With the help of Hitler, 'Freedom Army' (Mukti Sena) formed which consisted of all the prisoners of war of Indian origin captured by Germany and Italy. Dresdon, Germany made the office of the Freedom Army. Called 'Netaji' by the people of Germany. Gave the famous slogan, "Jai Hind" from the Free India Centre, Germany.
- On March 28, 1942 meeting called by Rash Bihari Bose of all Indians, residing in the regions extending from Malaya to Burma, at Tokyo and announced the formation of Azad Hind Fauz and the Indian Independence League. From Tokyo messages sent to Subhas to come to the Far East.
- On June 13, 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose (under pseudo name Abid Hussain) reached Tokyo; met the Japanese prime minister, Tojo.
- On July 7, 1943, command of the INA given to Subhas by Rash Bihari Bose.
- On October 21, 1943, formed the provisional government for free India at Singapore with H.C. Chatterjee (Finance portfolio), M.A. Aiyar (Broadcasting), Lakshmi Swaminathan (Women Department) etc.—with headquarters at Rangoon; supported by Germany as well as Japan. The famous slogan—"Give me blood, I will give you freedom" given in Malaysia.
- On November 6, 1943, Andaman and Nicobar islands given by Japanese army to the INA; islands renamed as Shahid Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively.
- On July 6, 1944, Subhas' addressing of Mahatma Gandhi as 'Father of Nation'—from the Azad Hind Radio (the first person to call Gandhi, 'Father of Nation'.
- On August 15, 1945 surrender of Japan in the Second World War; with this the INA also surrendered.
- On August 18, 1945, reportedly, Subhash Bose died mysteriously in an air-crash at Taipei (Taiwan).

in a broadcast on Azad Hind Radio addressed to Gandhi, said: 'India's last war of independence has begun.... Father of Our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessing and good wishes.'" (Bipan Chandra)

Three fighting brigades named after Gandhi, Azad and Nehru were formed by the INA within a few months with generous assistance from overseas Indians. 'Jai Hind' and 'Delhi Chalo' were the slogans of the INA Subhas's declaration "*Tum Mujhe Khoon Do, Main Tumhe Azadi Doonga*" (Give me blood, I will give you freedom) became very popular. Fighting along with the Japanese Army, the INA raised the national flag on Indian soil after crossing the Indian frontier on March 18, 1944. As, however, the Japanese failed to maintain the supplies and heavy monsoon rains began, the INA could not capture Imphal. Meanwhile, the British had time to regroup their forces so as to stage counter-attacks. By this time, the course of the War had changed with the Germans facing collapse and Japanese encountering setbacks after setbacks. Consequently, the INA could no longer stand on its own. It began to retreat and surrendered to the British in South-East Asia in mid-1945. When the INA forces were brought to India and threatened with serious punishments, a powerful movement was to emerge in their defence.

Although the INA failed to liberate the country from the British, it made an enormous impact on

the freedom struggle. The British found out that the Indians in the armed forces were not mercenaries and their loyalty could not be taken for granted. The INA was not at all affected by religious divisions—there were Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in its ranks. Subhas Bose, who disappeared after the collapse of his forces, was neither a supporter of the Nazi Germany nor of the expansionist Japan. His sole concern was the liberation of India, for which he took help from the Axis powers. In fact, he had problems with the Germans regarding the use of Indian Legion against the USSR.

Significance of INA

PRINCELY STATES' PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

The national movement made its most significant advance in the princely states between 1937 and 1939. The princely states had been developed as the bulwarks of autocracy and rampant feudal exploitation which British Federation plans had increasingly exposed as key supports for imperialism in the efforts to keep India divided and subjugated. The rulers of the princely states had unrestrained power over the state revenues for personal use. They imposed a land tax that was usually heavier than that in British India, and paid less attention to the rule of law and civil liberites. Some of the more enlightened rulers and their ministers did make attempts, from time to time, to introduce reforms in the administration and the system of taxation and even granted powers to the people to participate in government, but the vast majority of states were bastions of economic, political and educational backwardness. The advance of the national movement in British India had an inevitable impact on the princely states. As in many other phases of the national movement, the real initiative came from below rather then from top leaders or organisations. In the early decades of the 20th century, runaway terrorists from British India seeking shelter in the princely states became agents of politicisation. A much more powerful influence was exercised by the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements launched in 1920; numerous local organisations of the States' people came into existence under its impact.

Bulwarks of Autocracy and Feudalism

The organisation formed to address people's issues in the princely states, the *praja mandals* or States' People's Conferences, were organised in Mysore, Hyderabad, Baroda, the Kathiawad states, the Deccan states, Jamnagar, Indore and Nawanagar. In December 1927, the All-India States' People's Conference (AISPC) was convened and attended by 700 political workers from the states. The men chiefly responsible for this initiative were Balwantrai Mehta, Maniklal Kothari and G R Abhayankar. The policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian states had first been enunciated in 1920 at Nagpur when a resolution calling upon the princes to grant full responsible government in their states had been passed. However, at this point the AISPC was a moderate and elitist body, confined to drawing up petitions and issuing pamphlets, while the Congress stuck to a strict policy of non-interference till the early 1930s. Gandhi reiterated in 1934 the helplessness of the Congress, and expressed the hope that princes could be persuaded to behave as good 'trustees' of their subjects. The year 1936 marked the beginning of a change with certain developments. First, the Government of India Act of 1935 projected a scheme of federation in which the Indian states were to be brought into a direct constitutional relationship with British India and representatives were to be sent from the States to the Federal Legislature who would number one-third of the total membership of the Federal Legislature and act as a solid conservative block to thwart nationalist pressures. These representatives were to be the nominees of the princes and not democratically elected people's representatives. The Congress and the AISPC, rejecting the imperialist manoeuvre, demanded that the states be represented only by elected representatives of the people. This fact gave a sense of urgency to the demand for responsible democratic government in the states. The second development was the assumption of office by Congress ministries in most of British India's provinces in 1937. The fact that the Congress was in power created a new sense of confidence and expectation in the people of the Indian states and acted as a spur to greater political activity; the princes, in turn, realised that the Congress was a party in power with a capacity to influence developments in Indian states.

All India States' People's Conference (1927)

In his address to the fifth session of the AISPC, Gandhi urged the need for mass contact in place of mere petitions, and the session for the first time drew up a programme of agrarian demands: a one-third cut in land revenue, scaling down of debts, and an enquiry into peasant grievances in the context of the 'tragedies of Kashmir, Alwar, Sikar (Jaipur) and Loharu'. However, specific peasant or tribal issues were still very seldom raised. Under its secretary, Balwant Rai Mehta, the AISPC became more active and addressed issues of civil rights and responsible government. But it made no demand for the wholesale integration of states, merely suggesting (as at its Ludhiana session in 1939, where Nehru presided) that very small non-viable states could be merged into neighbouring provinces. At first, the Congress right-wing tried to stick to the old policy of non-intervention. Gandhi himself showed rigidity on this point, openly expressing his displeasure over an AICC resolution in October 1937 which had appealed 'to the people of Indian states and British India to give all support and encouragement' to the popular struggle in Mysore. At the Haripura session (February 1938) a compromise resolution declared the Purna Swaraj ideal to cover the states as much as British India, but insisted that 'for the present' the Congress could give only its 'moral support and sympathy' to states' people's movements, which should not be conducted in the name of the Congress. A few months later, Gandhi indicated that he would be satisfied if the princes granted a measure of civil liberties and independent courts, and reduced their privy purses.

Rajkot

It was only in early 1939, after the 1937 formation of popular ministries by Congress had set-off a wave of popular unrest in princely India, that Gandhi decided to try out his specific techniques of controlled mass struggle for the first time in a native state. He allowed business magnate Jamnalal Bajaj to lead a satyagraha in Jaipur, and, together with Vallabhbhai Patel, began a personal intervention in the movement in Rajkot which had been started by the local *Praja Parishad* under U.N. Dhebar. Virawala, the very unpopular Dewan of Rajkot, had imposed numerous monopolies disliked by local traders and stopped summoning an advisory elected council set up earlier, while nearly half the revenues of the state were swallowed up by the privy purse of the ruler. Rajkot, a tiny state surrounded by the firm Gandhian base of Gujarat, had almost half its population living in the capital and so possessed little danger of seeing agrarian radicalism take over the agenda of non-violent satyagraha. Kasturba Gandhi and Manibehn Patel courted arrest in February 1939, and Gandhi himself went to Rajkot and started a fast on March 3. This was on the eve of the Tripuri Congress, where his leadership was being seriously challenged by the re-election of Bose. However, the Rajkot intervention proved to be one of Gandhi's failures. The British Political Department instigated Virawala to withdraw the concessions he had offered at one stage, and to encourage Muslim and untouchable demands for more seats in the proposed Reform Committee. In May 1939, Gandhi withdrew from the Rajkot affair by declaring that his own fast had been of a coercive nature and not sufficiently non-violent as a result.

Other significant movements to develop in many other parts of princely India were the ones in Mysore, the Orissan states, Hyderabad, Travancore, parts of Rajputana, and the Punjab states of Patiala, Kalsia, Kapurthala and Sirmoor.

Mysore

Gandhian controls remained fairly firm in Mysore. K.T. Bhashyam's State Congress, initially based on Brahmin urban professional groups, extended its support through merger in 1937 with the Peoples Federation of Non-Brahmin Rural Landholders led by K.C. Reddy and H.C. Dasappa. An agitation that began from October 1937 for the legalisation of the Congress and responsible government culminated on April 11, 1938 in violence at Viduraswatha village in Kolar district. Thirty people were killed in firing on a crowd of 10,000. In May, Patel concluded a truce with Dewan Mirza Ismail which legalised the Congress, but the failure to implement promises of significant constitutional reform led to another round of civil disobedience from September 1939. Effective Congress leadership of controlled mass movements built up strength for the party in the Karnataka region.

Orissa

In the interior state of Orissa, issues like forced labour, taxes on forest produce, extortion of 'gifts' on festive occasions and tenancy rights inevitably were as important as demands for political reform. The CSP leader Nabakrushna Chaudhuri led a satyagraha in

Dhenkanal in December 1938. Powerful movements developed in Nilgiri, Talcher and Ranpur, and tribals fought back with bows and arrows. Thousands emigrated from Talcher to camp at Angul and Kosala in Congress-ruled Orissa, and on January 5, 1939 the British Political Agent in Ranpur, Major Barzelgette, was stoned to death after he had fired on a crowd in front of the royal palace. Gandhi attempted to get the Orissan movements called off in return for some token political reforms in Dhenkanal and Talcher, and the issue became a bone of contention between the Orissa Gandhians and the Socialists and Communists who were leading the Kisan Sabha in Orissa.

Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the biggest princely state of all, had a small Muslim elite holding 90 per cent of government jobs. Urdu was the sole official language and medium of instruction in a state which was 50 per cent Telugu, 25 per cent Marathi, and 11 per cent Kannada-speaking. No elementary civil and political rights existed, and extremely crude forms of feudal exploitation, like *vetti* or forced labour and compulsory payments in kind, prevailed in the Telengana region. Popular awakening first took the form of middle-class language-based cultural associations—the Andhra Mahasabha in Telengana and the Maharashtra Parishad in Marathwada—petitioning for mild political reforms. The Congress policy of non-intervention allowed Hindu communal parties like the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha to campaign against the tyranny of the Nizam and the *Ittahad-ul-Mussalmaan* even while the Mahasabha was denouncing Congress interference under the slogan of responsible government in states under Hindu princes (Nagpur session, December 1938). The Arya Samaj leader Pandit Narendraji started a Hindu satyagarha in Hyderabad city and the Marathwada region in October 1938, with the demand for more jobs for Hindus. At about the same time, Swami Ramananda Tirtha and Govinddass Shroff from Marathwada, Ravi Narayan Reddi from Telengana and a few Muslims like Sirajul Hasan Tirmizi from Hyderabad city, founded the State Congress. It began a parallel and more effective satyagraha from October 24, 1938, demanding its own legalisation and responsible government. A powerful *Vande Mataram* movement had meanwhile developed among Osmania students, who left the University when the Nizam banned the singing of the patriotic hymn. Gandhi, however, called off the Congress movement in December 1938, ostensibly on the ground that it could get mixed up with the Hindu communalist agitation (Ramananda Tirtha later confessed that they 'could not understand the propriety of this decision'.) An alternative power base was created with the establishment of a Nizam State Committee of the CPI in 1939, guided initially by the already-strong movement in coastal Andhra. Using the broad front of the Andhra Mahasabha, the Communists penetrated into the Telengana countryside and built up a base that would sustain India's greatest peasant guerrilla war from 1946 to 1951.

Kerala

In Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, the Left played an important role in building up the national movement. In his autobiography, A.K. Gopalan describes how in the mid- and late-1930s he, along with activists like Krishna Pillai and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, founded the Congress Socialist Party, converted the Congress for the first time into a real mass organisation, and embraced communism. In August 1938, the Travancore State Congress started a powerful agitation against the autocracy of Dewan C.P. Ramaswami Iyer. Despite brutal repression including 12 cases of firing in two months, students joined the satyagraha in large numbers and *jathas* marched into Travancore from many parts of Kerala, in the process contributing to the developing sense of regional-linguistic unity. Alleppey coir workers led by Krishna Pillai went on strike in October 1938, demanding wage-increase and union recognition, and release of political prisoners and responsible government based on universal franchise. The Dewan was forced to call off repressive measures against the Congress satyagraha in order to isolate the militant Alleppey workers. Gandhi's role was limited here: he and the Congress High Command only advised the withdrawal of the satyagraha once a few token concessions had been obtained.

The authors of *India's Struggle for Independence* observe that the protection provided by the British enabled the rulers of the princely states to withstand popular pressure to a considerable degree, as in Rajkot. As a result, there was a much greater tendency in these states for the movements to

resort to violent methods of agitation—Hyderabad, Travancore, Patiala and Orissa are examples. This was the reason why Communists and other Left groups, who had less hesitation than the Congress in resorting to violent forms of struggle, were placed in a more favourable situation in these states and were able to grow as a political force in these areas.

WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Women's participation in the national movement began on a large scale during the Civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930s. At Dharasana on the Bombay Coast, in May 1930, a foreign journalist Webb Miller witnessed the beating up of women and little children of 10 and 12 by the police. This was also pointed out by Thakurdass, the renowned industrialist. It was a significant feature of the movement that no less than 2,050 participants were below 17, while 359 were women, as recorded on November 15, 1930. The number of women detainees rose to over 2,000 by 1932. Actually, Civil Disobedience can be regarded as a major step forward in women's participation in politics, "a point admitted by a Uttar Pradesh police official in a note full of male chauvinist overtones: 'The Indian woman is struggling for domestic and national liberty at the same time and like a woman she is utterly unreasonable in her demands and in her methods, but like a woman she has enormous influence over the stronger sex…many loyal officials including police officers have…suffered more from taunts and abuse from their female relatives than from any other source.' This is the note of Uttar Pradesh Police Inspector-General Dodd, September 1930 excerpted from Home Political 249/1930." (Sumit Sarkar)

Women Participation in CDM

Nonetheless, there were still a handful of post-graduate women students who went to their classes escorted by teachers. There were a large number of women from far more socially conservative professional, business or peasant families who picketed shops, faced lathis and went to jail. It must be admitted, however, that this sudden, active role of women in politics did not produce any significant change in their conditions or in their positions in their respective families. In fact, Gandhian non-violence did not want any drastic violation of the traditional image of women. The male participants in the movement, through their emphasis on self-sacrificing acceptance of suffering, were considered to have 'feminised' participation in politics, which was a male sphere of action. The movement acquired a kind of religious ambience due to Gandhi's saintly image, and perhaps this rendered participation in the movement as similar to a religious mission, particularly for women. Due to this, certain transgressions were allowed or even glorified in such a context, just as Meera, centuries back, had come to be venerated as a saint, even though her actions were not liked by the orthodox Hindus.

Politicisation of Women

In revolutionary terrorist activities, women's active participation, including in assassinations as happened several times in Bengal, came under sharp attack. It was perhaps expected because even Rabindranath Tagore, a person who was much in advance in upholding women's role, wrote a novel, *Char Adhyay* condemning such 'unfeminine' behaviour. Surya Sen's revolutionary group, which carried out a raid on the Chittagong armoury in April 1930, had many women in their ranks who not only provided shelter and worked as messengers and carrier of arms, but also fought alongside their male counterparts with a gun in hand. That was how Pritilata Waddekar died while raiding the Railway Institute at Pahartali, Chittagong. Kalpana Dutta (later Joshi) was arrested along with Surya Sen and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Following the Chittagong Armoury Raid, there was a spurt in terrorist activities which included the assassination of Stevens, the District Magistrate of Comilla, by two schoolgirls, Shanti Ghosh and Suniti Chaudhuri, in December 1931. Sometime later in February 1932, Bina Das attempted to kill the Governor while receiving her degree at the Convocation. Then there was Rezia Khatun associated with the revolutionary groups, *Yugantar* and *Anushilan Samiti*. People looked up to these brave young women with admiration and respect, and the people included sections of the bureaucracy, army and police. "Kalpana Joshi (then Dutta) narrated an

Women Revolutionaries

interesting incident in this respect. When a group including Kalpana Dutta surrendered in May 1933 after a bitter fight, a subedar of the Jat Regiment slapped her. Immediately, she was surrounded by other soldiers who warned the subedar: "She is not to be touched. If you raise your hand once again, we will not obey you." A Parsi lady, Madam Bhikaji Cama, helped the Indian revolutionary terrorist movement from abroad by opening a centre for this purpose in Paris along with Shyamaji Krishnavarma and S. S. Rana in Paris. She had good contacts with leading French socialists like Jean Longuet. She brought out the journal *Bande Mataram* and even designed the first national flag.

Annie Besant was not born in India. She came to the country in 1893 to work for the Theosophical Society and devoted herself to education and Hindu revival by lecturing and founding schools and by translating Hindu texts into English. According to Rajagopalachari, "She helped Young India to feel sure of the greatness of Indian culture and religion." From 1914, she started working in the political field because "increasing repression, narrowing of liberty, the ill-treatment of students and the danger of revolution forced her into the field of politics." Before this, she had lectured in England on various subjects like 'England's need is India's opportunity', 'The price of India's Loyalty is India's Freedom' and 'Strike the Metal while the Iron is Hot'. After joining politics, she advocated self-governance and said that she would lead a campaign for the attainment of Swaraj. She observed, "The fate of the British Empire hangs on the fate of India, and therefore it is, but wisdom and prudence to keep India contented by granting Home Rule to her." Finding that the Congress was almost lifeless, she came to the conclusion that unless the Extremists returned to its fold, it would not be possible to infuse fresh enthusiasm in it. With this in mind, she began negotiations with Tilak in December 1914 and found that Tilak was more than eager to come back. But in place of the Moderates' method of association with the government and mild censure of its acts, he wanted to "substitute the method of opposition to government, pure and simple, within constitutional limits—in other words, a policy of Irish Obstruction".

Annie Besant's Political Activism

"In early 1915, Annie Besant launched a campaign through her two papers *New India* and *Commonweal*, and organised public meetings and conferences to demand that India be granted self-government on the lines of the White Colonies after the War. From April 1915, her tone became more peremptory and her stance more aggressive." (Bipan Chandra) Tilak also began his political activity, but since he had not yet been admitted into the Congress, he did so on a low key. His efforts and those of Annie Besant met with success when the Congress decided to re-admit the Extremists. But she could not succeed in persuading the Congress and the Muslim League to support her proposal for the formation of Home Rule Leagues. So, she asked the Congress to start an educational propaganda, failing which she said that she would form her own Home Rule League in September 1916. Tilak, however, having gained the right of entry into the Congress, went ahead and formed Home Rule League. So did Mrs Besant from September 1916 and worked in tandem with Tilak. She explained that their two organisations did not merge because some of her followers were not fond of Tilak just as some of his followers were not fond of her. She carried out her work through a loosely structured organisation where instructions were issued to the branches through a column in *New India*. The government helped them to become more popular by slapping a fine on Tilak in 1916 (later withdrawn) on his birthday and arresting Mrs Besant and her associates, Arundale and Wadia, in June 1917. It led to massive protests everywhere, and a rueful Montague (the new Secretary of State) wrote in his diary: "…Shiva…cut his wife in fifty-two pieces only to discover that he had fifty-two wives. This is what really happens to the Government of India when it interns Mrs. Besant." Alarmed by the protests, the government made conciliatory noises and released her in September 1917. Her popularity reached a peak, and Tilak had no difficulty in proposing her name for the presidentship of the Congress. She was elected president at the Congress session in December 1917. Before that, she had presided over the joint conference of the committees

Home Rule League (1916)

As Congress President (1917)

of Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at Calcutta and used her influence to bring about agreement between the two bodies on the question of communal representaion. The decision reached at that meeting paved the way for the Pact which was signed in Lucknow and formed the basis for the resolution on self-government passed at the Congress session in 1916. Incidentally, this resolution was a factor that influenced Montague and helped him to develop the reforms he formulated subsequently.

Montague got the permission of the Cabinet to go ahead with his report which was brought out on July 8, 1918. The Indian reaction was hostile and Mrs Besant declared, "The scheme is unworthy of England to offer and unworthy of India to accept."

Legacy of Home Rule Movement

The promises of reforms somewhat dissipated the energies which had concentrated in the agitation for Home Rule. "The tremendous achievement of the Home Rule Movement and its legacy was that it created a generation of ardent nationalists who formed the backbone of the national movement in the coming years when, under the leadership of the Mahatma, it entered its truly mass phase. The Home Rule League also created organisational links between town and country which were to prove invaluable in later years. And further, by popularising the idea of Home Rule or self-government, it generated a widespread pro-nationalist atmosphere in the country." (Bipan Chandra) In all that Mrs Besant's contribution was no less than that of Tilak.

During the Quit India Movement of 1942, women's participation was not as large as it was during Civil Disobedience, but the lack of numbers was made up by the valuable contributions they made. For instance, a lot of underground work was carried out then under the leadership of women leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali and Sucheta Kripalani. "Dissemination of news was a part of the activity, and considerable success was achieved on this score, the most dramatic being the Congress Radio operated clandestinely from different locations in Bombay City, whose broadcast could be heard as far as Madras." Usha Mehta was its announcer, and she continued till November 1942 when the radio transmitter was found out by the police and was confiscated. In Singapore, Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army raised a women's detachment and named it as the Rani Jhansi Brigade.

Views

- "The ultimate object of the revolutionaries is not terrorism but revolution and the purpose of the revolution is to install a national government."

  —**Subhas Chandra Bose**

- "The thirty crores of people inhabiting India must raise their sixty crores of hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force."

  —***Yugantar*** (April 1906)

- "The murder of a leader respected by millions of people at the unworthy hands of an ordinary police official like J.P. Saunders was an insult to the nation. It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it. Today the World has seen that the Indian people are ever watchful of the interests of their country and no cost is too great for them to defend its honour… We regret to have had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed. In him, an agent of British rule has been done away with. Shedding of human blood grieves us but blood shed at the altar of revolution is unavoidable. Our objective is to work for a revolution which would end exploitation of man by man."

  —**Bhagat Singh**

- "I do not think that Jawaharlal's own views are yet sufficiently crystallised to make any fundamental departure from Congress policy likely. He is a firm believer in socialism but his ideas on how best the socialist principles can be applied to Indian conditions are still in the melting pot. His communist views need not therefore frighten anyone."

  —**M.K. Gandhi** *(on apprehending "red terror" in Nehru's actions)*

- "Jawaharlal Nehru played a decisive role in the history of the twentieth century as a leader of the Indian people, as representative of the new mood of Asia, and as a spokesman of the international conscience."
  —S. Gopal
- "The Soviet Republic enjoys tremendous popularity among all the Eastern Peoples… for the reason that in us they see an unswerving fighter against imperialism."
  —V.I. Lenin
- "Do you not see that this communal policy which the Muslim League here has fathered is a policy more injurious to the Muslims of India than anything that a majority could do would be? It is a doomed policy both from the point of view of the community and the larger world."
  —J.L. Nehru

Summary

- **Introduction**

  Many other streams of struggle supplemented the mainstream nationalist movement which was led primarily by Congress leadership. The major ones were—revolutionary movements for armed rebellion by younger elements, constitutional politics of the Swarajists, Communist and Socialist movements, Subhas Bose's Indian National Army, etc.

- **Revolutionary Movement**

  (i) Emerged in two phases: (a) in the early years of the 20th century, especially during the post-1905 period; (b) in the post-1922 period after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

  (ii) Revolutionary terrorism emerged as a by-product of the process of the growth of militant nationalism in India. As a political weapon, revolutionary terrorism found expression in the assassination of unpopular British officials, looting of government treasury and ammunitions, propaganda for an armed revolt against the alien rule through revolutionary literature, formation of secret societies, etc. It was based on individual heroic actions on lines of Irish revolutionaries and Russian Nihilists and could not acquire the status of a mass-based countrywide struggle. Particularly active in Bengal, Punjab and parts of South India.

  (iii) The Ghadar movement organised by Lala Har Dayal and his companions operated abroad. It aimed at bringing about a simultaneous revolt in all British colonies in the world, especially during the First World War period.

  (iv) The second phase of revolutionary terrorism emerged in the 1920s, wherein Bhagat Singh and his colleagues made a breakthrough in terms of revolutionary ideology, in the form of revolutionary struggle. However, the movement was crushed by ruthless official repression by the early 1930s.

- **Constitutional Politics: Swarajists, Liberals, Responsive Cooperation**

  Swarajists (Pro-changers) advocated council-entry with an aim to end or mend the councils whereas the No-changers advocated constructive work during the transitional (1922-27) period.

- **The Left (Socialists and Communists)**

  (i) The Leftist ideology emerged from the politico-economic conditions that prevailed towards the end of the First World War. Developed in two broad streams: (a) the Communist movement as a branch of the International Communist Movement; (b) Congress Socialist Party that represented the left-wing of the Congress which drew its strength from democratic socialism. These Left movements drew support from the anti-imperialist sentiments prevalent in contemporary India.

  (ii) Factors responsible for Left movements are—financial burdens of the First World War, appeal of Marxism and successful establishment of the Soviet state in Russia, rise of peasant and working classes, drift of the new generation educated middle-classes towards revolutionary socialist ideology, loss of faith in Gandhi's reformism.

  (iii) Formation of the Communist Part of India (CPI) in 1920 by M.N. Roy.

Summary

- **Subhas Bose and the Indian National Army**
  Bose reorganised the Indian National Army (INA) in 1942, raised by Rashbehari Bose and Mohan Singh. The INA fought the British from outside with Japanese help but failed to liberate the country. The INA's struggle left a legacy of boundless courage, sacrifice and patriotism and made an enormous impact on the freedom struggle.

- **Princely State's People's Movement**
  (i) Formation of All India States' People's Conference (1927).
  (ii) The national movement made its most significant advance in the princely states during 1937-1939 period.

- **Women in the National Movement**
  (i) Women's participation in the nationalist struggle on a large scale began during the Civil Dioobedience Movement in the 1930s.
  (ii) Gandhi was primarily responsible for drawing Indian women into the vortex of nationalist politics.
  (iii) Many women revolutionaries participated in revolutionary terrorist movements, both inside and outside India.
  (iv) Annie Besant's political activism was noteworthy, as she not only clamoured for socio-religious reforms through the Theosophical Society but also sustained the political energies of the Indians during the War period through the Home Rule Movement.

CHAPTER 13

Economic Developments Between 1914 and 1945

INTRODUCTION

The First World War brought to the fore important changes in the economic fabric of India—the drain of wealth, decline of handicrafts, revenue pressures and obstacles to indigenous capitalist growth—and exposed the numerous contradictions between Indian and British interests. The War affected Indian life through massive recruitments, heavy taxes, war loans, a very sharp rise in prices and created conditions that facilitated the entry of the two social groups which were to play an important role in the national movement under Gandhi—the peasantry and the business group. Yet another group to emerge as an important social force during the period under review was the industrial working class. This class was to contribute to nationalism in significant ways through the trade union movement.

Impact of World War I

The 'drain of wealth' during the War years took the form of a massive plunder of Indian human and material resources. The Indian army was expanded to 1.2 million. Thousands of Indians died in campaigns which were often grossly mismanaged, for instance, in some of the offensives on the Western front, or in Mesopotamia. Recruitment was voluntary only in theory. In Punjab, under Lieutenant-Governor Michael O' Dwyer, a Congress enquiry after the 1919 disturbances found *lambardars* or village chiefs trying to coerce people into joining the army. At least 355,000 people were recruited from Punjab. Large quantities of grain and fodder were exported from India to serve army needs. Remarking on the quantities of fodder being exported, Bombay Governor Lloyd, in a conversation with Montagu, let it slip that this was being done "while the Deccan starves".

Plunder of Material and Human Resources

The defence expenditure registered an increase of 300 per cent, which meant war loans, increase in taxes and significant changes in the entire financial structure. Land revenue remained a burden and provoked Gandhi's second campaign in India, the Kheda Satyagraha of 1918. But the land tax was by now being governed by regulations permitting enhancements in temporarily settled areas only at thirty-year intervals, and the peasantry, which constituted the bulk of recruits for British war efforts, could not be alienated further. Trade and industry were taxed instead. Between 1913-14 and 1920-21, the share of customs in the total revenue of the Government of India went up from 8.9 per cent to 14.8 per cent, and in 1917, an import duty on cotton textiles of 7½ per cent was imposed. Income tax began to be levied—it formed only 2 per cent of gross revenues in 1911-12, but increased to 11.75 per cent in 1919-20. Individual returns were demanded for the first time in 1917-18, and many Indian merchants following traditional business practices began to be taxed in accordance. A supertax was imposed on both companies and undivided Hindu business families in 1917-18, and a temporary excess profits duty was imposed in 1919.

Increase in Defence Expenditure

In addition to the burden of taxes was the sharp increase in prices. There was transport disruption

and bottlenecks like the sharp fall in shipping space available for non-military needs, which caused a decline in imports and an increase in prices. Prices of industrial goods were inflated by war demand. Prices of imported manufactures also increased as supply declined due to lack of cargo space and diversion of European industries to military needs. However, the export prices of Indian agricultural goods did not go up in the same proportion due to dislocation in world economic relations. What this meant was that while the Indian peasant paid more for prices of cloth, salt or kerosene, he could not expect a similar increase in the prices of the Indian agricultural exports like rice or indigo. Thus, the better-off peasant who produced for the market lost out in the shift in terms of trade against agriculture; so did his poorer counterpart who found that prices of the coarse foodgrain that was his food were going up faster than that of higher quality crops like rice or wheat. The latter trend was the result of commercialisation which encouraged a shift in acreage to higher priced crops. For example, in the United Provinces, wheat prices went up by 250 per cent between 1861-65 and 1917-21, but barley by 300 per cent and arhar by 400 per cent.

Increase in Financial Burden

While the War meant misery and a fall in living standards for most Indians (an indicator being the decline in the consumption of cotton piecegoods from 5102 million yards in 1913-14 to 2899 million yards in 1919-20), it also contributed to a great deal of profits for the Indian business groups. These groups took advantage of the War demand, the decline in foreign competition, the price-differential between agricultural raw materials (raw jute or raw cotton) and industrial goods, and the stagnation or decline in real wages. The super profits were partly dissipated by excessive dividends, but they still led to an impressive industrial expansion during a short but intense post-War boom (1919-20 to 1921-22). In eastern India, British jute magnates benefited: while raw jute prices collapsed during the War years due to the cutting-off of European demand, War needs boosted the price of jute manufactures like sandbags or canvas. The ratio of net profits (excluding interests) to paid-up capital in jute mills was a high 75 in 1916. A group of Calcutta-based Marwari businessmen earned wealth through speculation in the jute trade, and G.D. Birla and Swarupchand Hukumchand started the first Indian-owned jute mills around Calcutta after the First World War. But it was the cotton-textile industry of Bombay and Ahmedabad that, owing to the slackening of Lancashire competition, reaped real benefits. The War introduced fiscal protection due to government financial needs (7½ per cent import duty of 1917, while the excise on Indian textiles remained unchanged at 3½ per cent). There was a sharp decline in import of piecegoods and yarn and a rise in Indian textile mills production. The handloom section was badly affected by the higher cost of imported yarn and the competition among Indian factories as well as the beginning of an invasion of the Indian markets by Japanese cotton goods. From the import of 3104 million yards of British cotton piecegoods as against 1171.1 million yards produced by Indian mills in 1913-14, imports from Britain fell to 1453 million yards as against the 1720.8 million yards produced by Indian mills in 1922-23. By 1922-23, Indian mill production had surpassed Lancashire imports.

Post-War Boom

The British Indian government too changed its attitude towards Indian industrial development because of compulsions of financial demands (hikes in import duties were the result) and the realisation that a certain minimum economic self-sufficiency was necessary. In 1916, an Indian Industrial Commission was set up under Thomas Holland, which recommended that the government play a more active part in industrial development and build up an adequate administrative machinery to further assist progress. The Montford Report (1918-19) was accompanied by the 'Fiscal Autonomy Convention'—a Joint Parliamentary Committee recommendation that London should not override Indian fiscal decisions so long as the Government of India and the new legislatures were in agreement. (However, the proviso requiring agreement between the viceroy and legislature robbed the Fiscal Autonomy Convention of much of its value.) Moreover, in sharp contrast to British attitudes before the War, independent business ventures were tolerated in the post-World War I phase. Alfred Chatterton, who headed the department of industries in Mysore State, tried to develop certain light industries like sandalwood

Fiscal Autonomy Convention

oil and soap in Mysore, and Mysore's Diwan Visheshvaraya (1911-18) attempted to implement ambitious projects of the Krishnaraja Sagar Dam and the Bhadravati Iron Works before being forced to resign. Also, business groups, particularly the Marwaris, were developing countrywide connections and raising their voices jointly over issues like War taxation and post-War uncertainties in the rupee-sterling exchange ratio. Bombay nationalist lawyer Bhulabhai Desai organised a petition in September 1918 in favour of small traders against compulsory income tax returns. The British made repeated efforts to maintain a high exchange ratio, since this would minimise the government's sterling expenditure on Home Charges, benefit Englishmen interested in repatriating pensions or profits, and stimulate import of Lancashire goods by lowering prices. The Indian capitalists, on the other hand, demanded a lower exchange ratio in order to make imports more expensive and boost exports of Indian cotton manufactures and agricultural raw materials by reducing their prices; so also did Indian importers of Lancashire goods since it made keeping of contracts with British exporting firms difficult. The Nagpur Congress of December 1920 was to pass a special resolution on the issue.

Rise of Business Support

The result was a greater business interest and involvement in nationalism from the War years onwards. For instance, the Sabarmati Ashram (1915) received substantial financial support from the Ahmedabad mill-owner Ambalal Sarabhai; 74 per cent of the 680 signatories to Gandhi's March 1919 satyagraha pledge in Bombay city were merchants; Bombay contributed Rs 37.5 lakh out of the one crore rupees raised for the Tilak Swaraj Fund in 1921; and collective pledges by Indian merchants not to indent British goods was the chief form of boycott. Yet, business support during this period was far from uniform, with small and middle traders tending to be more pro-nationalist than the big industrialists. A.D. Gordon's study of the Bombay business world between 1918 and 1933 illustrates this point. It reveals that mill-owners and cotton exporters utilised government contacts to regulate and reduce raw cotton prices in the immediate post-War years. In retaliation, traditional merchants who brought raw cotton into Bombay city extended support to nationalism at a time when industrialist Purshottam Thakurdas, who had considerable cotton-exporting interests, was organising an Anti-Non-Cooperation Association (1920-21). Big industrialists were loyal to the state partly because they needed its support against labour unrest at a time when there were significant increases in the number of working class people. In organised industries and plantations, the number of workers rose from 2,105,824 in 1911 to 2,681,125 in 1921; these workers were paid poor wages when their employers were earning good profits. A relative labour shortage in the immediate post-War years caused by rapid industrial expansion and a decline in emigration to towns owing to epidemic created a somewhat stronger bargaining position for the workers and led to a sort of epidemic strike fever. Some examples are the Ahmedabad strike of March 1918 led by Gandhi, and the great Bombay textile strike of January 1919. The latter involved workers of C.N. Wadia's Century Mills who went on strike from December 31 for a 25 per cent increase in wages and a month's salary as bonus.

Labour Strikes

An 80-100 per cent rise in foodgrain prices had been counterbalanced by a mere 15 per cent increase in wages in Bombay city between 1914 and 18, at a time when the Wadia Enterprises had made super profits of Rs 22.5 lakhs in 1918 on a capital investment of Rs 20 lakhs! Other workers were persuaded to join the strike and soon the entire textile working class of over 100,000 were on strike. So also were clerks of mercantile houses, dock labourers of the Royal Indian Marine, and Parel railway engineering workers. The workers had the leadership of a few radical lawyers, Home Rule League politicians like H.B. Mandavale, Kanji Dwarkadas, Umar Sobhani and S.K. Bole's *Kamgar Hitvardhak Sabha*. The strike ended on January 21, following the mediation efforts of Police Commissioner C.A. Vincent that led to the grant of a 20 per cent increase in wages and a special bonus.

INDUSTRIES AND THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTION

Reports of tariff board, royal commissions and various committees along with information from public and private agencies provide a large amount of data for the period between the two World Wars, which presents three fundamental problems of

analysis. Firstly, concerned with well-established industries, the analysis tends to ignore newly emerging features, whether rural or urban, leading to a less-satisfactory perspective. Secondly, the tariff enquiries considered mostly deal with foreign trade and competition even though that was not a very large part of the total economic activity. Thirdly, the emphasis is on the problems faced by grievously-affected industries which failed to capture the relationship of the individual parts to the whole of the economic system. The consequent impression is that the domestic economy was commercialised and integrated into world economy by railways and imperialist policies in the 19th and 20th centuries. There is no indication how limited specialisation and division of labour affected the forces of both supply and demand on which large-scale industrial development depended.

Basic Problems of Analysis

Owing to the constraints imposed by colonialist policies, the two sectors of industry, unorganised and organised, showed a differential pattern of development. The unorganised cottage industries in villages and towns continued to decline, while organised industries displayed a slow and uneven growth. There was progress in some sectors, but in general the growth was lopsided and the economy did not advance as a comprehensive organic activity. Industries using primary agricultural produce, such as cotton and jute, were set up, but the basic industries of coal, iron and steel, essential for industrial development, did not make much progress. The policies of *laissez-faire* and free trade which began to be followed in England from the middle of the 19th century, succeeded in destroying the Indian industry beyond repair. An active state policy was followed in transport, irrigation and communication development but only with the aim of maintaining in India a market for British industrial goods in exchange for India's food and raw materials. In contrast, the policy with respect to industrial progress was passive. Nonetheless, circumstances compelled the government to grant a small degree of economic autonomy after the First World War. A fiscal commission appointed in 1921 recommended that "discriminate protection" was to be given to some existing industries, but it was a case of too little and too late while its application was tentative and piecemeal. Unlike free western nations, India did not impose protective tariffs to foster its home industry, and the pace of industrialisation was disappointingly slow.

Pattern of Industrial Development

There were two categories of organised industry—plantations and factories. There were coffee, rubber and tea plantations, indigo plantations having ceased to exist in the early 1920s. The plantations were mostly owned and controlled by the British and they enjoyed the support of the government. They made rapid progress since their inception in the middle of the 19th century with the exception of indigo. There were 525,000 acres under tea cultivation and 100,000 acres under coffee in the beginning of the 20th century. By 1949-50, there were over 800,000 acres producing more than 600 million pounds of tea. The corresponding figures for coffee were 220,000 acres and 50 million pounds by the year 1949-50. At that time India was producing about 12,000 metric tons of rubber in factories. The government helped the plantations to a great extent by making conditions easy for them to procure cheap labour plentifully.

Plantation Sector

The attitude of the British towards factory industries was not helpful. In fact it was obstructionist, thus slowing down the growth of the industries and retarding the evolution of the capital goods industry. However, there were other quite favourable circumstances which to a large extent overcame governmental indifference and discouragement. The serious problem of rural unemployment did not concern the government at all; nor did the government, in pursuit of its imperial interests, do anything to satisfy industrial needs. When conditions forced the government to take some measures, the response was either tardy or inadequate. The Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods movements were both an expression of protest by the people of India against such policies. They were an indication of the rising awareness of national self-respect and self-reliance. Despite the government's unhelpful attitude, the Indian economy did not stand still. A large internal market opened up due to the extension of railways, roads and means of communication, thus pushing India into the world market and foreign trade. Indians observed foreigners (mostly British) investing large amounts of money in industry and trade for high profits and began to follow their example.

Factory Sector

Owing to these factors, Indian agriculture was induced to shift from self-sufficiency in production towards commercialisation. The ratio of non-food to food production was 1:5 in 1893-94; it rose to 1:2 in 1945-46. Consequently, new industries were set up—gins and presses for the increase in cotton production, flour mills for wheat and so on.

Nevertheless, in the early years of the 20th century, the industrial development was more British than Indian. It was largely a British endeavour carried on in India with Indian raw materials and Indian labour which earned profits for the British. The capital invested was mostly British, and so were the entrepreneurship and technical skill necessary for industrialisation. For instance, in 1929-30, 6,606 joint stock companies were registered in India with Rs 265 crore as capital. The corresponding figures for 1946-47 were 21,853 companies with Rs 471.7 crore as capital. As against these figures, 841 companies were registered outside India with a capital of Rs 1,071 crore in 1929-30 and 834 in 1945-47 with a capital of Rs 1,086 crore. So, even in the closing years of the British rule, British investment in the corporate sector of the Indian economy was more than double of that invested by the Indians. The reasons put forward for this were that Indian capital was shy, and that normally foreign investment is larger in the earlier stages of industrialisation in a country. The first reason is not exactly true because Indian capital kept away from investing in industry due to the hazards and uncertainties created by government's policies. Nevertheless, the traditional Indian business communities (the Gujaratis, Parsis, Chettis, Naidus and Marwaris) had been investing in large-scale industries since the late 19th century. Indigenous capital gradually replaces foreign capital as industrialisation progresses in a country, but this did not happen in India because the government was not in favour of it.

Dominance of British Capital

The dominance of foreign capital in India was the consequence of the encouragement given to certain business trends. Most of the British capital was invested in plantations, jute factories, coal mining and railways. The emphasis thus was on industries producing raw materials and transport necessary for the export of raw material from India and the import and distribution of British manufactured goods in the country. This policy helped economic development to some extent but retarded growth elsewhere. Both encouragement and retardation were in the interests of the British economy. The British grip on industry was further reinforced by the managing agency system, a form of organisation peculiar to India. This managerial integration of industries was carried out by seven British managing agents who controlled 102 units in 1911, 133 in 1931 and 163 in 1951. Asoka Mehta writes: "The outstanding characteristic of our economy, as it has developed, is the concentration of control of industries in a few hands. A group of Managing Agents control about 500 industrial concerns with a capital of nearly 150 crore, and covering every field of industrial activity." This process of concentartion continued till the end of the British rule with the Parsis, Gujaratis, Marwaris and others taking the place of the British gradually.

Managing Agency System

In advanced countries, industrial evolution showed domination of consumer goods industries, then a balance between consumer goods and capital goods industry, and finally a tendency for the capital goods industry to grow more rapidly than the consumer goods industry. By this yardstick, the industrialisation of India was really slow. In 1925, the output of the consumer industries was 4.2 times the output of the capital industries. The first report of the National Committee stated in 1951: "The relative share of small and large enterprises in net output was roughly in the ratio of 5:1, that is, some 50 billion rupees of output are attributed to small enterprises (largely household enterprise), while only 10 billion rupees are attributed to larger enterprises (factories, railways, plantations, and the like)." Thus, instead of outpacing the rate of growth of consumer industry, the capital goods industry actually lagged behind. This could not be attributed to lack of natural resources which in India were plentiful. Basic materials like coal, iron and other minerals were available easily; the capital industries growth and the potential of water power was quite large. Nor can it be said that there was dearth of skilled labour. Indians in the past had won fame in weaving and steel making, but the tradition deteriorated due to opposition and neglect. The artisans were not employed in the factories. There

Slow growth of Capital Goods Industries

were no attempts to train the necessary number of people by providing them technical education and apprenticeship in actual workplaces.

Cotton Textiles

Among the factory industries in India during the inter-War years, the cotton textiles industry was the largest. It was maintained by private enterprise with regard to the investment of capital, value of output and number of workers employed. In 1911, there were 182 mills in Bombay Presidency and the number rose to 202 in 1941. The corresponding figures for the whole of India excluding Bombay in 1911 and 1941 were 261 and 390 respectively. In 1900-01, the mills produced 353 million pounds of yarn and 422 million yards of cloth, the figures rising to 1,300 million pounds and 3,770 million yards respectively in 1947. Although mainly an Indian industry, the mills initially employed foreigners as managers and engineers; the Indians later replaced them. Only 21 per cent of the total capital invested in industry in 1948 was foreign. The original pioneering proprietors were the Parsis, Bhatias, Bohras and Europeans, from whom the Gujaratis and Marwaris eventually took over in Bombay, Ahmedabad and other parts of India. There were also a few managing agents holding the ownership of some of the mills. A number of favourable factors led to the concentration of the mills mostly in Western India, especially Bombay. Cotton was grown in abundance in the Bombay Presidency, Gujarat, Kachch, Berar and the Central Provinces which were quite close to Bombay and Ahmedabad. A large number of the rural unemployed in the neighbouring areas fulfilled the demand for labourers. In the early years of the 20th century, the Chinese were the principal foreign customers of the mills, buying nearly 90 per cent of the total export of Indian yarn and piecegoods. In the second decade, however, the Japanese entered the competition, and cotton mills were set up in China leading to the gradual loss of this market. It was compensated to a great extent by a growing domestic demand for yarn and cloth. Most importantly, there was the competition from Lancashire and Manchester cotton mills, in which the government took the side of the foreigners and refused to offer any protection to the Indian cotton textile manufacturers until 1923.

Growth in Western India

In 1923, the Indian cotton textile industry, especially the mills in Bombay, faced a continuous economic crisis which stayed until 1939. The Bombay mills' production of finer counts of yarn was not enough to meet the domestic demand, while in respect of coarser varieties they faced stiff competition from mills situated outside Bombay. The Japanese, on learning about the demand for finer yarn, aggressively increased their exports which also cut into the British share of exports to India of such material. The Bombay manufacturers insisted on the use of tariffs to reduce the sales of British and Japanese finer products as the Bombay mills had to sell their products if they were to survive at all. But the shift to production of finer varieties was not easy. It involved satisfying the labour who would not accept a wage cut; improving the technology of production; and changing the speculative tendency among the owners. Above everything, the economy was not growing rapidly during the inter-War period. It would have been possible for the Bombay mills to adapt without much difficulty if Indian incomes and the demand for cotton products were growing swiftly. In 1921, an 11 per cent duty was levied on cotton cloth followed by a new 5 per cent duty on cotton yarn in 1922. But no tariff could expand the total market of the Bombay millowners for which costs had to be sharply reduced and a different mix of products had to be made. The tariff board did not foresee these implications initially, but they were clear by 1932. In the report of that year, the tariff board said that tariff protection was not meant to eliminate competition. It was a device by which "foreign competition should be replaced by internal competition" and advised the Bombay mills that they would face greater competition than in the past and that there were no tariff measures to eliminate competition from other domestic producers. This explains the paradoxical nature of the industry's career during the inter-War years. Nationally, the industry was profitable enough to attract capital and expand in some regions while the Bombay mills had to suffer grievous economic losses. Nevertheless, imports of cloth which touched 3.2 billion yards in 1913-14 went down to 1.97 billion yards in 1927. The imports in 1938-39 were only 13 per cent of the total factory cloth available in India.

Paradoxical Nature of Cotton Economy

Jute Mills

The large factory industry next in importance to cotton was jute. The jute industry was mostly concentrated in Bengal where raw jute was grown. Almost entirely controlled by foreigners, it enjoyed conditions very favourable to its growth. Raw material was available in plenty, and so was labour. Also, British capitalists provided money in adequate measure. The rising demand during the War years benefited the industry greatly. In fact its inability to expand capacity at that time hindered its growth to some extent. Capacity was increased when the First World War ended and machinery could be imported. The first mill financed and controlled by Indians was set up by the Birlas in 1921. A mill was then set up by Hukumchand in 1922. Profits were reduced from the wartime high but remained quite impressive on an average 27 per cent of the total paid up capital up to 1929-30. Then they dropped to 7 per cent and remained below 10 per cent in the next decade. Surprisingly, the rate of return of the jute mills remained lower than the cotton mills or lower than the average of all industries during the 1930s.

Rate of Returns

The profitability of the jute mill industry depended on the costs of the inputs, which were mainly raw jute, labour and capital. The last two were reasonably stable and predictable, but the price of raw jute continued to be uncertain. The demand for jute mill products was largely dependent on world traffic in agricultural produce. The mill operators' stake on the price of raw jute was quite high, and the profitability of individual jute mills was dependent on that. Efforts to reduce instability were encouraged by the economic and geographical character of the industry. Due to the exceedingly low cost of India's unskilled labour, foreign competition was not a decisive factor even though the industry's products were largely sold abroad. The Indian jute industry operated about 66,000 looms in the late 1930s while its closest competitor, Germany, had 11,000 and Dundee in Scotland, a mere 8,500. The cost advantage provided the Indian mills some apparent scope for market price rigging, thus barring foreign manufacturers from expanding or foreign consumers from looking for substitutes. Private cooperation among the mills was possible due to their concentration in Bengal, where 95 per cent of the looms were located at the end of the years between the Wars.

Cost Advantages

With a view to keeping average profits high, the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) tried to control output or capacity by sponsoring restrictive agreements within the industry, but was not quite successful in doing so. Initially (upto 1929) addition of new mills provided the growth in capacity and output. Thereafter, not many new mills were set up. The number of looms in the existing mills was increased which raised both capacity and output. As the restrictive agreements imposed by the IJMA were not observed, the industry suffered from continual excess capacity. The IJMA then turned to the government which refused to intervene stating that only unchecked competition would solve the industry's problems. As, however, the agriculturists producing raw jute and the workers in the mills suffered, the government issued an emergency ordinance in September 1938 restricting the hours of work and controlling the use of machinery. It threatened the industry with further legislation if the latter failed to discipline the mills. Faced with such a dire alternative, the IJMA put together an agreement which apparently worked due to the outbreak of the Second World War. It is not known what percentage of jute mill shares was held by Indians prior to 1914. After the War, the importance of Indians as shareholders grew and by 1939 the majority of the companies had one or more directors. Companies with Indian boards of directors and Indian managing agents were only a few, and they operated less than 15 per cent of the total number of looms in the industry. Having been in the new jute trade before 1914, the Marwaris played a substantial role in the setting up of Indian controlled jute mills. Their expanding investment in the industry and growing familiarity with its working were part of a generalised learning process. The development of a native network capable of international marketing added the necessary final touch.

Indian Jute Mills Association

Role of Marwaris

Iron and Steel

One of the necessary requirements for rapid industrialisation—the iron and steel industry—was a late comer in India and it did not grow fast

enough. In 1906-07, India produced 40,000 tons of iron and steel while importing 800,000 tons from Britain. Though iron and steel making capacity was furthered in the intervening years, India was still importing 968,000 tons in the year 1929-30. The Tatas established a costly pilot project during the middle of the First World War, which was expanded to triple its output after wartime restrictions ended. Meanwhile, the capacity abroad was also increasing which resulted in a sharp fall of international steel prices in 1921-22. Unprotected except by distance and light revenue tariffs as also perhaps by an overvalued rupee, the Indian market was faced with the full price impact of European competition. Beset by financial difficulties, the Tatas had to seek loans abroad and ask for tariff protection against the very low prices of their competitors in 1923. The tariff board granted it assuming that the infant industry would develop those inherent advantages which would quickly free the company from seeking further protection. This, however, did not happen because international iron and steel production capacity was rising at a rate which continuously outpaced the increase of international demand. The international market system which had earlier functioned reasonably well collapsed under such pressure. Consequently between 1923 and 1932, the price of steel imported into India declined by about 60 per cent. This long-term international price pressure made it necessary for the industry to seek tariff protection throughout the years between the Wars, which was granted in 1926 and 1933. It was felt that tariff protection would be needed for a long time to come. The issue became a subject of hot political debate, a major manifestation of the conflict between nationalist and imperial objectives.

Need for Tariff Protection

Towards the beginning of the Second World War, the Tatas were producing about 800,000 tons of steel which meant a capacity expansion of about 8 per cent per year in the 28 years between inception and 1939. The Mysore Iron and Steel Works started producing 28,000 tons of pig iron per year by the outmoded charcoal process after it was set up in 1923. It was an economic failure but it was kept going by the Mysore government in order to supply cast iron pipe. In 1936, the company started producing 30,000 tons of steel annually from the pig iron it made. India got another integrated metallurgical works when the Steel Corporation of Bengal began to produce steel from December 1939. However, the demand during the period between the Wars remained stagnant while steel production in India rose slowly. The average yearly consumption remained 1.1 million tons in the period 1921-39 and crossed that figure for only three years in the late 1920s when railways consumed more. The demand was slack because in India, unlike in other countries, there was no private demand for steel for machinery, trucks, automobiles, ships, food containers, and so on which could have contributed a great deal to total requirements. Government or government related activity like railways, military and public works projects were the main consumers of steel in India. As there was no increase in private demand, the industry depended heavily on limited government expenditure. The Steel Corporation of Bengal was actually the transformed Indian Iron and Steel Company set up in 1918 with the intention of producing steel from the pig iron supplied by the Bengal Iron Company. In 1939, the two companies i.e. Indian Iron and Steel Company and the Bengal Iron Company merged to become a single entity. During the Second World War, the Steel Corporation of Bengal produced about 200,000 tons of steel per year, but was too small to be a low-cost producer.

Steel Corporation of Bengal

Low Private Demand for Steel

The steel rerollers converting billets and scraps into sizeable products were the only other domestic source of finished steel. There were only a few in the beginning, but the 1934 tariff revision directing the Tatas to supply basic material to them at low prices increased the entry of new firms to that branch of the industry. Making only nine per cent of the total output of finished steel, the rerollers played a fairly important role in supplying merchant mill products not made by the Tatas. In 1939 the total capacity of 35 such units was 140,000 tons. Other manufacturers producing railway wagons, cable, steel wire products, cable and enamelled ironware and the like were also not successful. The twin problems of high costs and restricted demand did not allow them to grow and develop. For instance, after the First World War, it was estimated that India would need about 8,000

High Cost and Limited Demand

wagons annually for the railways to carry goods in the years to come. Many existing engineering firms entered into the wagon-building sector only to find that the demand never rose to that level. The railways cut back their requirements of wagons and, on top of it, British wagon-builders, in spite of heavy transport costs and a 15 per cent tariff, were able to offer prices lower than those offered by Indians. Thus, the basic cluster of industrial activities complementing steel production remained unexplored because capital was not available for long periods, the initial costs were often high, the problems of marketing were immense and the growth of total demand for various products very slow. Tariff protection was not the answer because engineering firms complained to the tariff board that such protection raised their input costs. Nor was the government willing to give subsidies to offset higher cost to them and to consumers because that meant raising taxes to compensate the loss of revenue which protective tariffs caused.

Sugar Manufacturing

Sugarcane was a major crop in India. It was the raw material for *khandsari, gur* and, from the beginning of the 20th century, factory-refined sugar. India used to be an exporter of *khandsari*, but the export trade declined in the 19th century due to the appearance of beet sugar and the improvement of cane quality in other parts of the World. Some sugar factories were set up after 1900, but the progress of the industry was very slow. By 1920, there were about 18 factories and some more were added in the following decade. Their output was small, the industry did not grow and India imported a large part of the refined sugar it consumed. Figures available for a five-year period beginning 1926 showed that total consumption of sugarcane products averaged 3.2 million tons, of which 64 per cent was *gur*, 6 per cent *khandsari*, 26 per cent imported sugar and 4 per cent refined sugar produced by Indian factories.

Slow Growth and Low Output

Meanwhile, planting of improved cane varieties led to a rise in production which combined with rapidly falling sugar prices threatened a major glut in India. In 1929, the government was told that foreign imports needed to be replaced by a much larger domestic sugar refining capacity, otherwise the sugarcane growers would be faced with serious economic hardships. The matter was referred to the tariff board which, for the first time, faced the issue of protecting agricultural interests. The board recommended a protective duty amounting to an ad valorem rate of 190 per cent which the government accepted and implemented. The effect of this measure was very encouraging. From a peak of 933,000 tons in 1929-30, the imports came down to zero by 1936-37. The high profit margin resulting from duty hike and the very low prices of sugar mill equipment in the depressed international market of 1930 encouraged the existing mills to expand their production capacities. There was an open invitation to new medium-sized entrepreneurs to enter the industry. The number of sugar mills rose from 27 in 1929-30 to 150 in 1936-37. According to a researcher (Rosen), by 1938-39 sugar refining ranked third among all organised industries in total capital and fourth in fixed capital invested, and the industry ranked fourth in value of industrial output after cotton textiles, jute, and iron and steel.

Rise of Production

Cement

India consumed an annual average of 149,000 tons of Portland cement in 1915-19 which increased to 1,067,000 tons in 1935-38. In 1920-24, the Indian manufacturers supplied 57 per cent and in 1937-38 nearly 95 per cent of the total requirement. The high capital needed for entry into the industry was offset by a very simple manufacturing process. Transport costs were high, thus providing a significant locational advantage to Indian manufacturers against their foreign counterparts. Consequently, seven new plants were set up, and the three existing ones increased their output between the end of the First World War and 1925. There was excess production along with fall in prices and profit reduction—a situation in which protection was of no help. Inter-company efforts to stabilise prices failed because there was no control over individual firms' production. So the two main groups running ten of the eleven plants in operation merged in 1936 to form the Associated Cement Companies. This attempt at monopoly output and price-fixing came to nought when the Dalmia-Jain Group sponsored five new plants in eastern India. Prices and profits fell once more and joint marketing and price-fixing arrangements were

Associated Cement Companies

made by the competitors of the Dalmia-Jain (group) after 1938. With the onset of the Second World War, the industry's production capacity was stretched to the maximum to satisfy the country's increasing demand.

Pulp and Paper

In the years between the two World Wars, paper consumption in India more than doubled from an annual average of 108,000 tons in 1923-26 to 218,000 tons a year in 1936-39. Tariff protection granted in 1925 did not help domestic producers in increasing their share of the total consumption, which remained constant at about 25 per cent. The industry's failure to grow more rapidly was due to supply constraint which protection could not remove. Initially, *sabai* grass was the most largely used domestic material for pulping; it was an item in short supply, obtained from badly located sources, thus burdening the users with very high transport costs. The tariff board advised the industry to change over to bamboo for pulp for which the Forest Research Institute had developed a satisfactory pulping process. It took some years to remove the teething problems of the process when the imports of wood pulp went up. There was also a rise in the use of bamboo, but its share of the market increased raipdly only after a special grant of protection was made to bamboo pulp in 1932. As bamboo could not be used for making newsprint, wood pulp had to be imported to meet that large segment of domestic demand. Paper manufacture also required sites where clean water was available throughout the year and cheap fuel and raw materials could be obtained from nearby. These locational advantages kept 90 per cent of the domestic production concentrated in Bengal till as late as 1937. Use of bamboo pulp and the development of fuel sources outside Bengal helped in setting up of factories in other areas subsequently.

Bamboo and Wood Pulp

Bengal as a Major Centre

Paper industry was fairly capital-intensive, with very large plants offering great economies of scale by concentrating on increasing the output. Upto 1936, there were only nine mills. Two large European controlled firms among them accounted for nearly 85 per cent of the total domestic output. They reaped high profits in the early 1930s by avoiding competition among them and by making greater use of existing machinery rather than by expanding their capacity. Their apparent prosperity, the impact of protection and the rise in the consumption of paper due to expansion of educational facilites encouraged the entry of five large Indian firms into this sector in 1936. The increase in output and capacity resulted in sharp competition and a fall in prices in 1938-39. The outbreak of the Second World War ended this by bringing in a change in demand conditions. The Indian paper mills increased their output aggressively and brought down the share of the two main British firms to 42 per cent of the total domestic production by 1943.

Other Products

India faced acute shortage of heavy chemicals during the First World War, but this did not lead to any significant change in the subsequent period. The growth of the industries using heavy chemicals, such as fertiliser, soap, glass, dyestaff and so on, was exceedingly slow and it kept the demand far below what was necessary for efficient indigenous production. For instance, the demand for sulphuric acid reached a maximum of 28,000 tons by 1939 as opposed to the five million tons the US consumed in 1920. Consequently, there were only a few small manufacturers who sold their necessarily costly products to the consumers scattered across the country. The demand for caustic soda used for the manufacture of textile, soap, vegetable oil, etc., was, however, quite substantial. The most efficient method of producing caustic soda was the electrolytic process in which chlorine was simultaneously produced. Except for the paper manufacturers, there were no large consumers of chlorine, local or foreign, available to the potential indigenous entrepreneur. He had to load his costs entirely on the caustic soda which in effect drove his customers away (due to high cost). Due to this lack of demand, the requirements were either imported or obtained at a high cost from inefficient local producers. In 1931, with a view to encourage cost reduction through reorganisation, the government levied temporary protective duties on a variety of chemicals. As the effort was fruitless, the protection was allowed to lapse in 1933. Nothing was done thereafter to aid the growth of this segment essential for general industrialisation.

Shortage of Heavy Chemicals

Match production was mostly by hand until the end of the First World War. The requirement for machine-made high-quality products was satisfied by imports from Sweden. When the government, in order to stimulate local manufacture, imposed stiff revenue duties on imports, the Swedes moved into India with their impressive technical and managerial skills. Their Western India Match Company (WIMCO) came into existence and pushed its advantages to the maximum to elbow out both the new Indian factories and the handicraft sector. Starting multi-plant operations, it quickly dominated the entire industry, supplying about 80 per cent of all matches produced in India.

Match Industry

Coal mines made impressive advances among the industries dealing in minerals. Unaffected by the swings of fortune in agriculture, it continued to fill the growing needs of fuel of the railways and factories. Production of coal began to increase in the opening years of the 20th century, and the First World War stimulated it further. Then followed a period of slackness ending in 1936 when demand started to increase. During the Second World War, production went up further when India started exporting coal.

Coal Production

Handicrafts and Small Scale Industry

Handicrafts or handmade products in India had for long been a product of towns and villages. While the urban artisans produced luxury items for the rich and for exports, the rural artisans supplied the requirements of the villagers. Both these sectors suffered greatly with the onset of colonial rule—the urban sector became nearly extinct, the rural sector survived precariously under increasingly harsh conditions. The Swadeshi Movement launched in the beginning of the 20th century provided a fresh impetus to the village industry, especially handlooms. There was a revival of handloom industry in Bengal which subsequently spread to different parts of India. A slow rehabilitation of this major segment of handicrafts began from 1906-07 which was most marked, as R.K. Mukherjee has shown, in the regions where weaving catered to the specific requirements of the local consumers. A corroboration of this finding comes from the sales figures of the famous Tata Empress Mills at Nagpur. During the First World War, the mill consumed 30 per cent of the yarn it produced for cloth manufacture, 20 per cent was exported to China and 50 per cent was sold to Indian handloom weavers. The production of cloth in handlooms increased from 1,033 million yards in 1905-06 to 1,703 million yards in 1938-39. It is found that nearly 35 per cent of the cloth consumed in India was made in handlooms. Special circumstances prevented the weaving industry in villages from entirely succumbing to the competition from machine-made cloth produced in the factories. Among them the two most important factors were the nature of the villagers' demand, and the financial capacity of the purchasers.

Handloom Industry

In 1919, there was a fresh incentive from Gandhi's forceful campaign in favour of *charkha* (hand spinning wheel) and *khaddar* (coarse handmade cloth) for the recovery of village industries. The All India Spinners' Association stated that *khaddar* worth Rs 9.5 lakh was made in 1924-25, Rs 72 lakh in 1930-31 and Rs 82 lakh in 1935. There was a quantum jump to Rs 1.2 crore during the Quit India Movement of 1941-42 after which it rose to 1.34 crore in 1944-45. Although the handloom industry contributed a fairly substantial share to the production of textile goods in the country, its overall progress during the years between the Wars was not quite satisfactory. In spite of the impetus provided by the Swadeshi Movement, Gandhi's powerful backing of *khadi* and some hesitant governmental measures, the condition of the handloom weavers in the country did not improve in any marked degree. In *The Handloom Industry of South India* (1935), K.S. Venkatraman supports such a conclusion. He states that the condition of the handloom weaver was at its worst during the 19th century, especially during the period of free trade in India, and that there was nothing to show that his economic condition had materially improved since the First World War. According to K.R. Gadgil, "The village industry was a decaying industry. Large numbers of those thrown out of work took to ordinary labour, while a fortunate few were absorbed in industry in towns; some also took to agriculture, while for the rest, i.e., those who still retained their hereditary occupations, they remained where they were, a poverty-stricken class, abnormally sensitive to the variations of the seasons."

Village Industries

Nonetheless, the path of traditional handicrafts was not always downward. Because of its considerable adaptability to available materials and market needs, the traditional handicraft sector could withstand the worst impact of competition from factories. For instance, iron smelting seems to have dwindled due to factory competition, but the availability of cheap factory-made semi-finished metal bars, rods and sheets helped blacksmiths and metalworkers to a great extent. The introduction of aluminium and the cheapening of brass expanded the market of utensil manufacturers, though probably at the cost of potters. Leather buckets lost ground to metal containers, but the market for footwear expanded considerably. The spread of commercial relationships made it necessary to acquire additional and often local capacities to process, fabricate, shape and repair. Cotton ginning and pressing, saw milling, rice-hulling, flour- and oil-milling belong to this category along with the making of furniture, metal trunks, locks, lanterns, cutlery and other housewares. Some of these could be carried on quite traditionally as handicrafts, while some others like cotton-ginning and oil-milling required a small input of mechanical power which could be manual, electrical or obtained from oil engines. But the introduction of low horsepower engines in various small-scale operations produced a few visible consequences. At least the reports of the various committees on smallscale industries in Bombay, Bengal, Punjab, UP and elsewhere during the years between the Wars leave the impression that the impact of the low horsepower engines was of not much significance.

Traditional Handicrafts

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS

The transformation of the early medieval groups in European countries into territorial societies of the later middle ages and the evolution from territorial groups into nationalities from the 18th century onwards, depended largely upon the economic developments of the period. The individual's identification with his fellow beings begins in small groups which grow as his interests become diversified and broadened requiring the cooperation of larger numbers. In India in the pre-British times, the predominance of medieval forms of agriculture, primitive techniques, slow means of transport and communication, largely nature-dependent production, domestic modes of industry and other factors created the conditions of a static life and self-sufficient isolated economy. Caste, clan, tribe and village were the inevitable forms of social organisations in these economic conditions. The British rule changed some of these conditions, but failed to modernise agricultural organisation and technique or transform industry, which are the necessary conditions for the integration of social groups and growth of nationalism.

British Failure to Modernise Agriculture

Then 20th century saw the operation of new forces which affected the world and had repercussions for both Britain and India. India became more integrated with the rest of the world. In spite of its dependent and colonial character, the Indian economy secured, to a degree, its freedom of action and mobility during the course of this century. Tara Chand has divided the economic history of 20th century India into a number of phases. The first phase covered the first 20 years—the pre-First World War economic competition between Britain and its aggressive rivals which culminated in the First World War. The second phase covered the years between the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the onset of World Depression (1929-33). During this period, Britain was occupied with the reconstruction of its War-damaged economy to restore the position of its monetary system and to replace its declining industries like coal, textiles, and iron and steel by new industries. At the same time, it was obliged to loosen the imperial stranglehold over the Indian economy—this was reflected in the autonomy it granted in fiscal matters, banking, Indianisation of manufacturing, plantation, and mining industries. The third phase, ending with the declaration of the Second World War saw the British economy experience severe depression in the first few years and then a slow recovery. The Conservative Party-led British government brought in certain measures to help the economy recover—protective tariffs, imperial preference, fiscal reform, the Ottawa Conference, the departure from gold, the depreciation of the currency, and a reduction in unemployment by promoting new industries like shipping and ship-building, automobiles, aeroplanes, electrical goods and chemicals, and subsidising

Phases of Economic History

agriculture. The Indian economy, however, suffered a setback—Indian interests were sacrificed by measures such as fixation of the exchange value of the rupee. India became dependent on import of foodstuffs from abroad, and it had to export gold for the first time. The cultivator was hit hard, unemployment increased, and the all-round general dissatisfaction found expression in the Salt Satyagraha (1930) and later in civil disobedience. The last phase coincided with the War period (1939-45), when the economy was wholly geared to War needs. While Britain emerged from the War victorious so far as the armed conflict against the Axis powers was concerned, its economy was ruined. Britain made no effort to set up a modernised economy in India.

Factors Leading to Agricultural Distress

Of the three principal sectors of economy—agriculture, industry and commerce—agriculture holds the pre-eminent position in India, with most people depending on agriculture for a livelihood and most of the working population engaged in agricultural pursuits. During the years of colonial rule, the dependence on agriculture increased, especially with the growing ruralisation of economy. Moreover, the first decades of the 20th century saw growing stagnation and deterioration in the agricultural sector. Let us evaluate the indicators with which this deterioration in agriculture could be measured. Population was one. From 1901 to 1951, India's population began to increase (the population of the Indian Union grew from 235.5 million to 356.9 million during this period), an increase that was very largely due to fall in mortality while the birth rate remained more or less constant. Deaths were reduced as a result of better methods of famine relief, improvement in health services, increasing use of medicines and control of epidemics. But the increase in population without a proportionate increase in agricultural and industrial productive activity brought down the standard of living of the masses, so that the burden on land and unemployment in rural areas increased. The percentage of population engaged in agriculture increased from 62.4 per cent in 1901 to 69.6 per cent in 1941, while the working force engaged in occupations other than agriculture fell from 43.9 million to 37.4 million, or from 37.6 per cent to 30.4 per cent, of the total working force. While in other countries increasing populations found increasing opportunities of employment in industries and other pursuits, in India the reverse was the tendency. The destruction of indigenous, small-scale and rural industry, which was the consequence of British policy, and the rise of prices of agricultural produce from 1861 aggravated this tendency. It obliged the artisans to abandon their less profitable occupations for agriculture. There was decline in the industrial population from 5.5 per cent in 1911 to 4.2 per cent in 1941, and this testified to the growing pressure on land.

Over-dependence on Agriculture

Rise of Population and its Impact

The increase in population far surpassed the area under cultivation and agricultural productivity. Although the area of cultivated land increased from 221 million acres in 1900-05 to 258 million acres in 1940-45 under food crops and from 53 million to 72 million acres under non-food crops in the same period, the population increased faster and the share of the individual fell from 103 per cent in 1901 to 84 per cent in 1951. At the same time, the value of agricultural output per acre in food crops fell from 26 per cent to 22 per cent (1900-05 to 1940-50), but in non-food crops it rose slightly from 38 per cent to 41 per cent during the same period. In 1901-02, the area under food crops was 187.63 million acres and the area under non-food crops, 33 million acres. In 1939-40, the area under food crops was 197.45 million acres and the area under non-food crops was 42.12 million acres. While the average rate of population growth for the decades from 1901 to 1941 was 6.4 per cent, the average rate of increase in total crop production (both food and non-food) during these forty years was only 2.3 per cent. The increase of commercial crops marked a departure from production based upon self-sufficiency and self-subsistence of the village, and was the result of a number of factors like the expansion of the means of communications; the growth in the demand for raw materials like jute and cotton to feed both foreign and home industry; and the necessity of meeting the Home Charges by export of grain and raw materials.

Mismatch Between Population and Productivity

The production of food crops was also affected by the increasing use of money in the village economy, due to which production for domestic consumption did not remain the sole object of cultivation. But the diversification of crops and extension of the area under marketable crops did not benefit the masses. The tendency was strengthened by the demands of the British manufacturers for India's raw materials. Consequently, cotton, sugarcane, jute and oilseeds began to occupy more and more area, thereby reducing the area under food crops. But even here, while the output doubled, the area under non-food crops remained only 18 per cent of the total. So, commercialisation made progress of a limited sort, and its nature and direction were determined by the overall needs of the British economy. At the same time, as the demand for food became greater, the ability of agriculture to meet it adequately diminished. In the 20 years, i.e., 1921-1941, while population expanded by 27 per cent, the area under cultivation increased only by eight per cent. From 1936 to 1950, the area under cereals increased by 10 per cent but production increased by only 4.3 per cent while population increased by 15 per cent. Meanwhile, the cultivator's misery increased with the increase in his burden of debt. Poverty, particularly of the poorer classes of peasants and village artisans, was intensified. According to a report of the Central Banking Committee (1931): "The indebtedness leads ultimately to the transfer of land from the agricultural class to the non-agricultural moneylender, leading to the creation of a landless proletariat with a reduced economic status. The result is said to be loss of agricultural efficiency, as the moneylender sublets at a rate which leaves the cultivator with a reduced incentive to raise a good crop."

Commercialisation of Agriculture

Productivity levels were affected owing to the growing fragmentation of holdings that led to an increase in uneconomic cultivation, and the gradual exhaustion of land fertility due to lack of investment in manures and fertilisers and of crop rotation. The estimates of annual per capita food output from the decade 1897-1906 to the decade 1937-46 showed a decline of about 30 per cent. The output of commercial crops increased and to some extent even compensated for the shortage of food production, but not enough. Further, during this period (1901-41), the total population of India increased by 36 per cent, while agricultural production lagged behind the growth of population. There was a seven per cent fall in productivity in the period 1900 to 1945, while the area under total cultivation increased by 20 per cent but the total agricultural output rose by 14 per cent only in the same period.

Impact on Agricultural Productivity

The effect of these conditions was that gradually the peasant became bankrupt. He was forced to sell his land and join the army of landless labourers. At the same time it led to increased concentration of land in the hands of landholders and moneylenders many of whom had little interest in agriculture. The rural debt of India shot up from Rs 3,000 million in 1911 to Rs 18,000 million in 1938—an evidence of the worsening economy of Indian villagers. Historians agree that sale and purchase of land which was rare in the pre-British times became common under British rule. According to the Bombay Land Revenue Administration Report, from 1926-27 to 1936-37, five million acres or more than 20 per cent of the total land held by the cultivators passed on into the hands of the moneylenders. The number of the actual cultivators declined by about nine per cent.

Rural Indebtedness

The result of diminishing food crops was that India, which was a significant exporter, became dependent on imports for its own consumption. From 1915-16 to 1919-20, the exports exceeded imports of foodgrains by 400,000 tons; in the period 1935-36 to 1939-40, the net imports exceeded exports by 1.38 million tons. The War years, especially after the fall of Burma in 1942, saw a decline in imports, but in 1946-47 imports rose again and reached the figure of 2.58 million tons. The decline in the export of wheat between the years before the First World War and the year 1933-34, according to Vera Anstey, was from 14 per cent to two per cent and that of rice from nine per cent to six per cent of the total production. The pre-War (1914-18) average of the export of wheat was 1,308,00 tons, but by 1931-32 it had been reduced to 20,000 tons. India then became an importer of wheat and in 1931, the government

Trends in Export and Import

had to levy a duty of Rs 40 per ton on imports in order to protect India's interests against competition from Australia. The fall in wheat exports was caused partly due to a decrease in the acreage of land under food crops, for the percentage of foodgrain crops to all crops went down from 80.4 in 1897-1905 to 67.5 in 1936-45, and partly due to greater consumption as a result of the growth in population. Although nine-tenths remained under cereal crops, India's dependence on foreign countries for supplies of foodgrains increased. The decrease in the area of cultivated land per capita and the decline in productivity combined to bring down living standards.

Growing Proletarisation

The triple burden of revenue and taxes paid to the government, the rent remitted to the landlord in zamindari areas and to leaseholders in Ryotwari areas, and the interest on loans to moneylenders, had a severe impact on the cultivators. The condition of the classes of petty landholders, tenants and landlords deteriorated, and the petty landholders tended to become tenants-at-will and the tenants, landless labourers. A noteworthy phenomenon was the growth in the number of agricultural labourers. Their proportion to the total agricultural population was 13 per cent in 1891; it rose to 25 per cent in 1901, and then to 38 per cent in 1931. The highest percentages of labouring classes were in the Deccan and the South, the Central Provinces, and the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. They were followed by the provinces of Eastern regions—Bihar and Orissa, Bengal and Assam. The Western provinces were the least affected. The regions of ryotwari tenure and permanent zamindari settlement were the worst sufferers, while in zamindari provinces where settlements were periodic and lands held jointly (as in Uttar Pradesh), the rural population was better protected against proletarisation. The number of landless labourers rose from 7.5 million in 1882 to 21.5 million in 1921, 33 million in 1931 and 44.8 million or 20 per cent of the population of India (minus Pakistan) in 1951. A very large percentage among them were casual labourers, besides a small number of attached labourers, i.e., labourers employed by big landholders on a more or less permanent basis. The extent of employment of the casual labourers in a year on the average was 189 days on agricultural and 29 days on non-agricultural work, i.e., they were properly employed only for about seven months in a year, and worked as casual labour for another two months. Even among these labourers, there prevailed degrees of poverty and differences in conditions of employment. Those at the bottom of the scale were serfs or 'bonded labourers' who worked under great limitations: they were bound to one master and could not work for another. The casual or part-time labourers were next on the scale. Then there were attached or full-time labourers who had no land of their own, and worked as helpers on the farms of landholders who were themselves engaged in cultivation. Tenants-at-will and share-croppers were labourers who possessed petty or 'dwarf' patches of land, whose produce was inadequate for livelihood and who were obliged to seek work to supplement their income.

Impact of Depression

The perennial difficulties of the agricultural classes were further enhanced by the Economic Depression of 1929, the rapid increase of population after 1921, and the general recession in production. In 1928-29, the value of agricultural crops was assessed at about Rs 10,340 million; and it was reduced by more than half, i.e. to Rs 4,730 million, in 1933-34. The fall in the money value of the produce was not accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the demand of rent and revenue in the districts, with the exception of a few Punjab districts. The land revenue was Rs 331 million in 1928-29 and Rs 300 million in 1933-34. The consequences of the drop in agricultural earnings were reduction in the purchasing power of the cultivators, loss of their savings, contraction of area under cultivation, increase in the cases of forced collection of land revenue, the worsening of debt, and the drain of gold. The export of gold between 1931 and 1939 was a first, as in the earlier times India was an importer of gold. During the eight years before the Second World War, nearly Rs 345 crore worth of gold was exported.

While the British agrarian policy harmed Indian agriculture on the whole, it created a small group which took advantage of the conditions to improve its economic condition and strengthen the bourgeois class. Among the agriculturists there were three sections—the larger landholders in the zamindari areas, the bigger farmers in the ryotwari region,

the moneylenders-landowners, businessmen and merchants who traded in cash crops which were showing increase in the area sown and the quantity of output. In the first section were landowners and cultivators who profited by the rise of prices in food crops, especially those who produced market crops like cotton, jute, tobacco, sugarcane, tea, coffee, groundnuts, oilseeds and linseeds. In Madras, the number of landlords grew from 19 per 1000 in 1901 to 34 per 1000 in 1931, and number of tenants from 1 per 1000 in 1901 to 16 per 1000 in 1931. In Bengal, between 1921 and 1931, the rent-receiving non-cultivating landlords increased by 62 per cent. Developments during the War years (1939-45) affected the big and medium landlords who benefited from the rise of prices of agricultural commodities and from debt reduction. The number of non-cultivating landholders, absentee landlords, moneylenders and investors continued to grow, with the tendency towards concentration of lands in the hands of fewer and fewer people becoming popular. According to the Rural Banking Enquiry Committee, less than 20 per cent of the agriculturists owned 67.7 per cent of the total agricultural lands in Bombay, 74.7 per cent in Punjab, and 35.1 per cent in the United Provinces. In Bengal, the amount of rent received increased from Rs 20 lakh in 1793 to Rs 832 lakh in 1940—which together with the proliferation of subinfeudation indicates a considerable increase in the number of holders of proprietary rights in land. Besides the growth of the well-to-do landholders and peasants, two other groups swelled the numbers of the agrarian middle-class. They were the moneylenders and merchants whose ranks swelled due to the large rise in rural indebtedness, increase in market crops, growth of export of raw materials and expansion of trade—because of replacement of local craft-products by imported factory goods, especially cloth. The moneylender supplied an essential need, and circumstances condemned the cultivator to depend largely on him. The government land revenue policy was mainly responsible for this state of affairs, and the cooperative system that was established could not alleviate its effects. According to the report of the Land Survey Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank in 1951, 93 per cent of the credit needs of the agriculturists were supplied by private agencies, leaving three per cent for the government, three per cent for cooperative societies, and one per cent for commercial banks. The commercialisation of agriculture as a result of increasing production of marketable crops gave great opportunities to the businessmen to invest their capital in raising, processing and marketing of such crops. The richer businessmen gave advances to the smaller ones, and they, in turn, were financed by British banks and export and import firms. For while the index of annual output of food crops declined from 100 in 1893/94-1895/96 to 93 in 1935-36 to 1945-46, the index of commercial crops went up from 100 to 185 during these years. The old business communities of the Marwaris, Gujaratis, Sindhis in the north and the Chettis of Madras benefited.

Advantages for a Minority Agriculturist Class

Rise of Propertied Class

Increasing Dependence on Private Agencies

The government adopted a few ameliorative measures to address the agricultural distress, which proved inadequate. In the latter half of the 19th century, Acts such as the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859, and its amendment in 1885, and the Bengal Act of 1907 were passed to ensure security of tenure. In order to protect the interests of peasants in Awadh, Punjab and Bundelkhand from the evils of borrowing, Acts were passed in 1900, 1901 and 1903. The first Act to establish cooperative credit societies aimed at eliminating the moneylender was passed in 1904. In the same year, the Imperial Institute of Agriculture was started at Pusa. From 1920 to 1946, many Acts were passed to minimise the effects of indebtedness in the provinces. There was also some effort to supply improved seeds giving greater yields, and to augment the use of manure and of better tools and ploughs.

Half-hearted Government Measures

To meet the needs for artificial irrigation in a country largely depending for water on the vagaries of the monsoon, the government undertook irrigation works such as repair of old canals and building of new canals in Punjab, the United Provinces, Sind, Rajasthan, Deccan and Madras. Unfortunately these measures fell short of needs. Indebtedness was high; debt legislation shook the confidence of the private creditors who advanced

92 per cent of the total amount borrowed by cultivators. As regards the Cooperative Credit movement, the Review of the movement for 1948-50 pointed out, "The idea of effecting the economic regeneration of the Indian peasantry through cooperation has remained unfulfilled." Moreover, cooperative societies met only three per cent of the credit needs of the farmers, with improvements only touching the agricultural fringe. Irrigation works produced marginal effects, for, in 1929, only about 14 per cent of the cultivated area received the benefit of canal water; this area increased to 23 per cent in 1945. The irrigated area per capita of population actually went down from 16 per cent in 1891, and 18 per cent in 1921 to 14 per cent in 1951. Dr Gadgil points out, "It seems, therefore, reasonable to argue that the comparative economic position of the large majority of agriculturists especially outside the cotton tracts worsened during the War years and the years 1918-1921 bringing as they did, scarcity and influenza, still further depressed it. From 1921-23, the agriculturist was slowly recovering the lost ground but the latest severe depression has reduced him to extreme straits. It has rendered agriculture, as a whole, unprofitable and by materially increasing the real burden of the agriculturist's monetary liabilities it has made the position of the mass of the cultivators absolutely helpless."

Cooperative Credit Movement

The Regionwise Effects of Depression on Agriculture

In north India, in the United Provinces, the British had, through fresh tenancy legislation like the Awadh Tenancy Act 1921 and the Agra Tenancy Act 1926, extended rent protection to tenants-at-will, and consequently they felt it was important to make concessions to landlord interests over revenue demand. In 1926, it was agreed to reduce the level of assessment in future revised settlements to 40 per cent of assets and to lengthen the settlement period from 30 to 40 years, but the disastrous price slump of 1929-32 ensued forcing large default in rent payments and pointing to the degree to which agriculture in the region had become dependent on cash economy and world prices. Fear of political dangers stemming from the Congress 'No Rent' and 'No Revenue' campaigns of 1931 led the British to scale down rents to their 1901 level in correspondence with the fall in prices. But the price was against further remissions of the revenue demand. In the years 1930-32, over 20 per cent was remitted from rents and 15 per cent from revenue—temporary measures which succeeded in shattering the idea of the land revenue as an effective fiscal instrument. Although land revenue still constituted a half of provincial revenues in the mid-1930s it had lost all elasticity. From Rs 61.8 m in 1889 it had risen slowly to Rs 69.1 m by 1929, and Rs 71.4 m by 1936-37. It declined to Rs 68.5 m in 1945-46. The British land revenue system was finally dismantled by the abolition of the zamindari system, though the grip of the dominant minority of the cultivating caste remained. This caste simply transferred its support to the new order, symbolised by Congress Raj, as British rule collapsed, and employed its political leverage to work itself free of the last vestiges of the crushing taxation it had once been called upon to bear.

North India

In eastern India, the Depression put an end to the rise in land prices since 1855 which had been brought about owing to an improvement in agricultural prices. Bihar saw a higher level of land prices till about 1928-29, because of various factors. The level of the revenue demand, fixed in 1793, was usually much lower in Bihar than in Bengal, and this prevented the auction of old zamindari estates in Bihar (unlike in Bengal where many old zamindars were ruined as a result). The Bengal zamindars also frittered away part of their resources by giving away portions of estates in long, sometimes permanent estates. With regard to the increase of rent, the Bihar zamindars enjoyed a comparative advantage over the Bengal zamindars, partly because of the lower level of awareness on the part of the Bihar peasantry of their legal rights, and partly because of the system of produce rent which was mostly confined to Bihar. Land prices crashed after 1928-29. The annual averages of the land prices in Bihar declined from 16.13 in the five-year period from 1923-24 to 1927-28, to 11.10 in the five-year period starting from 1928-29 to 1932-33, and slumped to 4.73 in the next five-year period, 1934-35 to 1937-38. The fall in Bengal was not so marked because of the low level of the land prices even before the Economic Depression. The slump lasted

Eastern India

for over a decade, and though agricultural prices tended to move upwards from 1937-38 onwards, land prices remained sluggish till 1940. Factors responsible for such a state of affairs included a sharp fall in the rental income of the zamindars and the increasing insecurity about realising even this diminishing income. This trend was further aggravated by some of the associated features of the Economic Depression of the time, such as the contraction in the supply of money and the instability in the credit market. There was a fall in the rental assets of the wards and attached estates in Bengal, temporarily under the control of the government and managed by the Court of Wards. During this period, the managers of the Wards estates adopted the coercive 'certificate procedure,' by which managers resorted to extra-judicial measures in order to realise rent arrears. Between 1928-29 and 1936-37 the number of such certificates increased by 162 per cent. Further, against the background of the growing kisan movement, a 'no-rent mentality' grew among peasants. The 'mentality' had become pervasive by 1940. The Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act (1936), which merely sought to reduce the burden of peasants' debt, was used by them as a pretext for evading this payment. In Bihar, the Depression, rather than the various legal and extra-legal coercions of zamindars, cut short peasants' struggle for commutations of produce rent into money rent.

No-rent Mentality

In western India, the resettlement of 1924 for Bardoli taluka proposed an increase of 22 per cent in the assessment, and led to the Bardoli satyagraha of 1928. The government was forced to reconsider the settlement, and an official committee appointed to enquire into the grievances of the people reduced the increase to six per cent. The experience frightened the government into turning down proposals to increase assessments in other parts of Gujarat. The Depression brought about a fall in exports, in prices and in the output of cash crops; in Dharwar, for example, the acreage under cotton fell by a third between 1924-25 and 1938-39. The slump added to the government's difficulties in collecting the land revenue, and the government had to give large remissions between 1932 and 1938. Good monsoons and rising prices led to an agricultural revival in some regions from the late 1930s. In Gujarat, remittances from the smaller *patidars* who had migrated to east Africa in the 1920s led to the construction of tubewells and improvement of land; profitable crops which needed capital, like tobacco, expanded, and factories processing agricultural commodities were erected in the villages. In 1939, the Congress government laid down that the assessment could not be increased by more than 50 per cent, and could not exceed 35 per cent of the rental value of the occupied land, the base of the land tax being clearly specified for the first time. The Second World War put a stop to all resettlements. Agricultural prices continued to rise during the Second World War, and the incidence of land revenue and probably, of rural debt, fell.

Western India

In south India, the Depression saw hundreds of village officials resign or being reduced to poverty. Many of them embezzled revenue collections in the 1930s. Exports of agricultural products from the Presidency fell sharply and so did agricultural prices between 1925-26 and 1933-34. The price of rice was more than halved, coarse grain prices fell sharply, and all suffered heavily: producers with large surpluses to sell, traders with large stocks, owners of rice mills, and moneylenders with large loans that they could not collect. The labourers and artisans who depended on these groups for employment and the sharecroppers who needed credit also suffered. Employers reduced wage rates or switched to payments in kind and the volume of employment was adversely affected. Many employees left the village for the city, but could not go abroad and, in fact, there was a net return of migrants in the 1930s. Grain looting and attacks on rich moneylenders and landlords were symptoms of the agrarian distress. The government increased rural credit but its own finances were strained and so it could do little. The rural economy grew much poorer in the 1930s; its terms of trade, whether in India or against the rest of the world, deteriorated sharply. The least affected were probably the middle farmers, those who consumed the bulk of their own produce and who could operate without much credit. Dharma Kumar in *The Cambridge Economic History of India,* Vol. II, points out that long-term trends in population and agricultural output affected these economic fluctuations. Until 1916 or so, the increase in agricultural output may have matched the increase in population; from then

South India

on, the two diverged. The rate of growth of population accelerated while that of agricultural output decelerated, as increases neither in acreage nor in irrigation were sufficient. Foodgrain output per head was 30 per cent lower in 1945 than in 1916. The forest cover was eroded; the *Yanadis* and other tribals who had lived by hunting were forced into agricultural labour. While employment in rural industries fell, the proportion of the population dependent on agriculture did not rise in South India. The percentage of the total population in agriculture was 70.4 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and Mysore in the 20th century; in Tamil Nadu, the population became less dependent on agriculture after 1931, and in Kerala from 1911 onwards.

Views of Dharma Kumar

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The Great Depression (1929-33)

The years between 1927 and 1937 were a period of impressive growth of the national movement. Through a series of developments, the bourgeois and dominant peasant groups gradually succeeded in establishing a kind of hegemony over the movement. The mass upsurges of the 1ate 1920s and the 1930s were triggered by the agitation against the Simon Commission, and encompassed factors such as the failure of the Congress to satisfy the expectations and aspirations that it had raised, the development of a Left challenge through trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, radical student organisations, Congress Socialists and Communists, and Right-Left confrontations within the Congress organisation itself. These upsurges were closely related to decisive economic changes brought on by the worldwide economic crisis as a result of the Great Depression of 1929.

Period of Nationalist Advance

The Depression affected India through a very sharp fall in prices, particularly of agricultural commodities. The all-India general price index (1873=100), which was 203 in 1929, fell to 171 in 1930, 127 in 1931, 126 in 1932, 121 in 1933, and 119 in 1934; it rose slightly higher to 136 in 1937. While agricultural prices had started declining from 1926, the collapse from 1930 was a truly catastrophic one. The all-India average of raw cotton prices (1873=100), which was 133 in 1929, fell to 70 in 1931. In Bengal the price of winter rice (1929=100) fell to 45.9 in 1932, while that of jute fell to 43.5 by 1934. In the United Provinces, wholesale prices (1901-05=100) slumped from 218 in 1929 to 162 in 1930, 112 in 1931, and 103 in 1934. The Depression raised revenue burdens sharply as also rent and interest payments, and affected the relatively better off or 'middle' peasants with a surplus to sell.

Impact of Depression

The Congress and a few Left-inclined Kisan Sabhas rallied peasant proprietors and tenant smallholders to agitate on issues like the reduction of revenue, irrigation charges, rent and debt burdens, return of alienated land, and abolition of zamindari. The movement spread much more widely over the countryside than during Non-Cooperation, and set up relatively stable organisations but lacked the vibrancy of Non-Cooperation. The links of the Congress with the landlords prevented it from openly supporting even specific kisan demands such as these, and rich peasants were beginning to manifest growing conservatism, as evident in areas like Gujarat, says Sumit Sarkar. Between 1921-2 and 1936-7 provincial tax revenues actually fell by eight per cent, while central tax revenues went up by 18 per cent. The Depression reduced the proceeds not only from the land revenue and provincial excise but also from the income tax. The centre raised customs duties, but provinces found it difficult to find alternative tax revenues. They could have developed their non-tax sources of income, especially irrigation and the forests. Their main source of non-tax income was government irrigation, particularly in the United Provinces. The Congress ministries formed the majority of the popular ministries in July 1937; they took office during a period of widespread economic distress and public agitation to reduce rates of land revenue and wipe out arrears.

Peasant Agitations

The Depression also brought about important shifts in the overall pattern of the British colonial exploitation of India, a pattern which, though somewhat weakened by the First World War, had remained fundamentally unchanged till 1929. This was caused by a crisis in the entire export-oriented colonial economy, adds Sarkar. Down to the late-1920s,

Changes in the Pattern of Colonial Economy

India imported about 11 per cent of British exports, including 28 per cent of Lancashire textiles. Her export surplus of agricultural raw materials with non-UK countries remained crucial for Britain's balance of payments, while considerable British capital investment in extractive and export-oriented industries (mining, tea and jute) was made in India. The Depression lowered the value of Indian exports from Rs 311 crore in 1929-30 to Rs 132 crore in 1932-33, and brought down imports from Rs 241 crore to Rs 133 crore, with Home Charges met only by massive exports of gold sold by Indians.

Decline of Indian Exports

The crisis of Lancashire trade proved irreversible: imports of cotton piecegoods from the UK fell from 1,248 million yards in 1929-30 to 376 million yards in 1931-32, and 145 million yards by 1939-40.

The fall in export earnings led to a balance of payment crisis, with trade surpluses no longer sufficient to pay for the Home Charges and there occurring a substantial outflow of capital. In an atmosphere of economic crisis and political unrest (the Congress started a Civil Disobedience Campaign in 1930 and had earlier threatened to repudiate the sterling debt), the confidence in the government's financial stability was reduced abroad and the prices of Indian government securities in London fell. The government was able to borrow in 1930, but failed to float a fresh loan in 1931, and considered default a possibility for the first time. While the Government of India wanted to devalue the rupee, the British government refused to let it do so, The British government insisted on a deflationary policy, and in the budgets for 1931-32 and 1932-33, nearly all items of expenditure were cut sharply, except for debt services which rose steeply. The government had achieved a budgetary surplus by 1932-33, but the cost to the economy was considerable. The huge sales of gold, for instance, were made by private individuals including thousands of farmers hit by the fall in agricultural prices. After India went off the gold standard, the resultant premium on gold led to large exports of gold from India; between 1932 and 1937, gold worth nearly Rs 3000 crore had been exported. These enormous amounts eased the government's budgetary position by not only covering the Home Charges, but also enabling the government to increase the sterling reserves and in turn borrow more cheaply. But finance members continued to follow financially orthodox procedures, and the government was severely criticised for its conservatism.

Balance of Payment Crisis

Huge Gold Export

The Government in Britain from 1932 onwards made political efforts to retrieve the situation for British and particularly Lancashire interests. However, the Lancashire trade could not be saved, and the Indian government owing to financial difficulties went in for protective duties on cotton, paper and sugar that benefited the Indian industrial growth. These developments have been construed as proof that India won economic independence long before 1947. But Sumit Sarkar refutes the contention, arguing that protective tariffs were repeatedly linked to Imperial Preferences for Britain, and that Lancashire represented a diminishing interest within the overall structure of British capitalist colonialism at that time. By 1935-36, non-traditional items like electrical goods, telecommunication and wireless apparatus, and sugar machinery were valued the same as textiles in British exports to India. The period also saw the setting up of subsidiary manufacturing units behind tariff walls in India by foreign companies like Lever Brothers and Metal Box in 1933, Dunlop and Imperial Chemicals by 1936-37, and the device of foreign-controlled 'India Limited' groups. These represented a new kind of imperialist interest in certain types of dependent Indian industrialisation. These moves towards indirect economic control through collaboration with Indian business groups paralleled constitutional developments of the same period. Financial controls were defended bitterly in the face of diminishing commercial domination—the rupee remained tied to sterling at the artificially high 1s 6d rate, the Reserve Bank was kept insulated from legislative influence, and the 1935 Act armed the Viceroy with many financial 'reservations' and 'safeguards'. India's invisible remittances to the UK that included Home Charges, dividends on private capital investments, insurance and bank remittances, freight charges and royalties, represented 16.31 per cent of Britain's total invisible earnings in 1922, 14.77 per cent in 1931, and 15.75 per cent in 1936.

Indirect Economic Control

The Indian bourgeoisie, meanwhile, found opportunities for a major advance with the slackening of older forms of colonial economic ties.

Indian Capitalist Advance

The Indian mill production of piecegoods increased from 2356.5 million yards in 1929-30 to 2982.7 in 1932-33 and 3905.3 in 1938-39, and it far surpassed Lancashire imports; however, Japan represented a major threat to Bombay. Sugar, cement and paper industries developed rapidly in the 1930s, while Tata Steel shook off protective barriers after 1934. The Indian capitalist advance spread from the Bombay-Ahmedabad region to Calcutta, the United Provinces, south India and to certain princely states like Baroda, Mysore and Bhopal. The Indian industry benefited from market protection offered by the Lancashire crisis and government tariffs, as well as from the sharp fall in agricultural prices, while commercial and rural depression may have contributed to a transfer of capital from trade, usury and land purchase to industry. The political consequences of this growing strength of the Indian capitalist groups were a massive expansion of bourgeois groups in national politics in the course of the 1930s and their decisive involvement in Civil Disobedience, constitutional discussions and ministry-making.

The effects of capitalist growth, particularly under conditions of colonial domination and the worldwide Depression, manifested themselves in growing burdens on the working class, through atrocious

Impact of Capitalist Growth

working conditions, repeated 'rationalisation' drives in 1928-29 and again after 1934, wage cuts and lay-offs. The pattern of consequent labour unrest peaked in 1928-29 with 203 strikes and lock-outs involving 506,851 workers and the loss of 31,647,404 working days in 1928. There was a decline in face of repression (the Meerut trial of 1929-33) and splits, but labour unrest witnessed a revival from the mid-1930s with 379 strikes and lock-outs involving 647,801 workers in 1937. While the weakening of ties with Britain and the capitalist world economy contributed to some indigenous capitalist growth, deep agrarian depression provided an effective counterbalance for the country as a whole. The per capita national income during the 1930s declined, and the significant demographic change from the 1920s sharpened problems. Population had risen by over 20 million between 1901 and 1921, from 284 to 306 million; the corresponding figures for 1931 and 1941 were 338 million and 389 million. This indicated a jump of about 80 million in an equivalent period. Economic stagnation and mass poverty continued to dominate late-colonial India: at constant (1938-39) prices, the per capita income rose from Rs 60.4 in 1916-17 to a mere Rs 60.7 in 1946-47.

Ottawa Agreements and Discriminatory Protection

The commercial and tariff policy pursued first by the East India Company and then the Indian administration under the Crown was deliberately

Economic Policy of the Colonial State

framed so as to give most favoured treatment to British economic interests. This was an area where India's subordinate status was most apparent, and British traders and industrialists at home expected to reap the visible benefits of the empire in the form of a protected market for their products and by maintaining their competitive advantage through free trade. Indian public opinion was not generally considered in the framing of a commercial policy in India, and the recommendations of the Government of India were usually overlooked in favour of those of the home government whenever they were supposed to be in conflict with purely British interests. Indian nationalist historians see tariff policy as the main instrument of British economic imperialism. The defenders of free trade maintained, however, that consumers in India could now obtain one of the major requirements of everyday life, clothing, at a much reduced cost, and the theory of comparative costs showed that India would have been better-off if she had not put her resources into unproductive industries but instead specialised in agricultural development.

Three separate issues dominated all discussions on developing the commercial policy in India. An important consideration was the fiscal needs of the government where tariffs were used merely as a

Issues Influencing Commercial Policy

revenue-yielding tax. Another was the problem of discriminatory protection either against Britain's chief competitors or in favour of Indian domestic producers. In the second half of the 19th century, both these questions

were swept aside in favour of free trade, which was accepted in principle though not always followed in practice. By 1900, the issues were revived first through a proposal for imperial preference and then, after the First World War, through the acceptance by both Indian and British governments of the principle of discriminatory protection for Indian industries. In 1932, the Ottawa Agreement made India a member of an empire trading area participating in a scheme of imperial preferences.

Before the Revolt, the commercial policy of the British in India was undoubtedly guided by the twin principles of affording discriminatory protection to British imports and using tariffs for revenue purposes. The actual yield from customs, excluding the duty on imported salt, came to one million pound in 1857-58. The serious state of the public finances after the Revolt and the possibility of an increase in the import duties to supplement government income reopened the whole question of the role of tariffs in India. In 1859, the Government of India sharply raised the import duties on various goods, and the abolition of the favourable treatment of British cotton goods aroused resistance in England from cotton spinners and cloth manufacturers. This resistance was intensified when James Wilson, the finance member in India, raised the duty on cotton twist to 10 per cent in 1860. Public opinion in Britain had begun to strongly move towards the adoption of free trade and the policy of the Indian government in raising import duties was seen as a violation of this principle as well as injurious to the interest of the Lancashire cotton industry. In 1882, practically all import and export duties were abolished, and for 12 years, the Indian trade was conducted virtually on the principle of free trade. But in 1894 financial stringency once again made it necessary to resort to tariffs for fiscal purposes. On Lancashire's insistence, the government also imposed an excise duty on Indian home-produced cotton cloth and yarn, so that no unfair protection should be given to Indian industries.

Tariff Issues

The end of the First World War left India with a complicated body of regulations regarding customs duty. India was granted full fiscal autonomy in 1921, and the Fiscal Commission recommended the granting of tariff protection to certain industries, provided the following conditions were fulfilled: that India possessed natural advantages for the industry; that the industry was one that was unlikely to develop without initial protection; and that the industry was one that was profitable without government support. A Tariff Board was set up in 1923 to implement the proposals and some of India's major industries such as textiles and iron and steel received a certain measure of protection. This was also the period when proposals were made to set up a system of imperial preference which eventually led to the conclusion of the Ottawa Trade Agreement. The Agreement, concluded at the Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference in 1932, saw India conceding lower import duty rates for a number of British commodities in return for preferential treatment in the UK for some raw material exports, like tea and hides and skins. India's participation in the Ottawa Pact was criticised both by nationalists and the Birlas (in public) on the ground that a preferential rate of duty on Indian exports to Britain was not very important in view of the fact that Britain took only one-fourth of India's total exports. It was also feared that other countries might impose retaliatory measures against India. The imperial preference improved Britain's share in Indian trade and boosted the absolute volume of exports. Britain's share in Indian exports went up from 23.5 per cent in 1930-31 to 32.1 per cent in 1933-34. A similar increase was seen in the percentage of British imports out of the total. But in the face of political opposition to imperial preference, the Legislative Assembly in 1936 refused to continue with the Ottawa Agreement, and formal notice of termination was given by the Government of India. A new trade agreement signed with Britain in 1939 largely preserved the privileged position of India's exports in the British market but considerably narrowed the scope of preference granted to imports. According to K.N. Chaudhuri in *Foreign Trade and Balance of Payments 1757-1947,* this measure and the conclusion of a series of trade agreements with Japan, while not being strictly bilateral trade agreements, revealed that India, even before the Second World War, was coming closer towards the adoption of a much more positive policy of controlling her international economy.

Tariff Board 1923

Critique of Ottawa Pact 1932

RISE AND GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONS

The slow beginnings of modern industry and the growth of utilities like the railways and the post and telegraph network caused the modern worker to make his appearance in India only in the second half of the 19th century. Historians like Bipan Chandra believe that the process of groups of workers in various parts of India emerging as an organised all-India class is, in turn, linked with the growth of the national movement because the notion of the Indian working class could not exist before the notion of the Indian 'people' had begun to take root. Though the late 19th century saw strikes by workers in the textile mills of Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Surat, Madras, Coimbatore, Wardha, in the railways and in the plantations, these were mostly sporadic, spontaneous and unorganised revolts based on immediate economic grievances, and had hardly any wider political implications. Some early attempts at an organised effort to improve the workers' conditions included Sasipada Banerjee's Workingmen's Club (1870) in Bengal, N.M. Lokhandy's Anglo-Marathi weekly *Dina-Bandhu* (Friend of the Poor-1880), and the Bombay Mill and Millhands' Association (1890). Early nationalists had a lukewarm attitude towards supporting the workers' rights mainly because in those early days of the anti-imperialist movement, they did not wish to weaken the common struggle against British rule by creating division within the ranks of Indians. They did support the agitation of the Indian labour employed in British-owned enterprises though, and the first organised strike by any section of the working class was that of the signallers' strike in May 1899 in the Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railway owned and managed by the British. But it was the Lancashire textile capitalist lobby which, apprehending the emergence of a competitive rival in the Indian textile industry under conditions of cheap and unregulated labour, had earlier demanded the appointment of a commission for investigation into labour conditions. The first commission was appointed in 1875 and the first Factory Act passed in 1881. The Act prohibited the employment of children under the age of seven, limited the number of working hours for children below the age of 12 and provided that dangerous machinery be fenced. The Factory Act of 1891 limited the working day to 11 hours with an interval of one and a half hours for women labour, and increased the minimum age of children who are employed from seven to nine.

Linkage with the National Movement

Attempts for Improving Workers' Conditions

Factory Act

It was the Swadeshi upsurge of 1903-08 that was a distinct landmark in the history of the labour movement, and it marked both the rise of the professional agitator and the organisation of labour into industrial strikes. Swadeshi leaders like Aswinikumar Bannerji, Prabhat Kumar Roychowdhury, Premtosh Bose and Apurba Kumar Ghose organised strikes and set up workers' organisations for workers in the Government Press, Railways and the jute industry. The Swadeshi period also saw radical nationalists look to the example of the Russian working class movement as a mechanism of effective political protest. Beginning with the Home Rule Leagues in 1915 and continuing through the Rowlatt Satyagraha in 1919, the national movement during the First World War and the post-War years picked up speed to culminate in the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement of 1920-22. The War and immediate post-War years also marked the beginning of the Indian trade union movement. The Madras Labour Union of April 1918, the first organisation with regular membership lists and subscriptions, was started by G. Ramanajulu Naidu and G. Chelvapathi Chetti, two young men connected with Annie Besant's *New India*. The organisation was presided over by Besant's colleague B.P. Wadia. Home Rule League supporters like *Baptista* and the *Bombay Chronicle* of B.G. Horniman also contributed to the beginning of trade unions in Bombay. The pressures for militancy came from below rather than from these early unions which usually played a restraining role. The early middle-class union leaders were inspired by nationalism but were loyalist in politics, like N.M. Joshi in Bomaby or K.C. Roychaudhuri in Calcutta. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (TLA) was founded in 1918 by Gandhi. With 14,000 workers on its rolls, the TLA was the largest single trade union of the time. Based on the principle of trusteeship and arbitration, the

Swadeshi Upsurge

Beginning of Indian Trade Union Movement

Textile Labour Association

TLA secured one of the highest hikes in wages (27½ per cent) during a dispute in 1918. Gandhi told the workers that "they were the real masters of the mills and if the trustee, the millowner, did not act in the interest of the real owners, then the workers should offer Satyagraha to assert their rights".

Factors Behind Growth of Trade Unions

Why did strikes hit India with such vehemence during the period? They were a form of expression of acute popular distress and discontent caused by factors like rising prices, a poor harvest and scarcity conditions over much of India in 1918-19, the influenza epidemic of 1918-19, and artisan unemployment (handloom cotton production touched an all-time low in 1919-20). Food riots were a manifestation of workers' anger: small-town markets and city grain shops were looted, and debt-bonds seized in the Bombay mill area and the Krishna-Godavari delta region in 1918. In Bengal, Noakhali, Chittagong, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Khulna, 24 Parganas and Jessore districts reported looting and many convictions. Such 'riots' contributed both to purely local upsurges like the anti-Marwari rioting by Muslims in central Calcutta as well as to larger outbreaks like the anti-Rowlatt Act upsurge in many Indian cities in April 1919.

Expression of Popular Discontent

The world situation too acted as a catalyst towards creating the post-War mass awakening. The developments in India were part of a worldwide upsurge that was anti-capitalist in the developed countries and anti-imperialist in the colonies and semi-colonies. Sumit Sarkar says that the new worldwide revolutionary mood was probably evident among the Indian soldiers coming home from distant lands—Kazi Nazrul Islam of Bengal, after a bout of military service, became a poet with definite socialist leanings, while an ex-sepoy Brijpal Singh assumed local leadership of an agrarian riot at Karhaiya in March 1921. The impact of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 was the most far-reaching. Official reports from 1919-20 onwards discovered Bolshevik ideas and Soviet agents everywhere, with Gandhi and C.R. Das accused of being Soviet agents, and socialist conspiracies in peasant movements. Revolutionary nationalists like Mahendra Pratap, M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji, V. Chattopadhyay and Bhupen Dutt visited Russia. The internationalism of early Soviet foreign policy under Lenin and Trotsky too had a heavy impact: the call for an immediate peace without annexation and indemnities, the proclamation of the right of nations to self-determination, and the publication of secret treaties which had promised Russia enormous territorial gains and privileges, and which were repudiated by the Bolsheviks after coming to power.

Impact of Bolshevik Revolution

All India Trade Union Congress (1920)

The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian national scene marked a determined bid to broadbase the national movement and for this, the mobilisation of workers and peasants was felt essential. It was also felt that workers should be organised into a national trade union. The most important development was the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in 1920. One of the moving spirits behind the formation of the AITUC was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had developed a close association with Bombay workers. Lala Lajpat Rai was AITUC's first president and Dewan Chaman Lal, who was to become a major name in the Indian labour movement, was its general secretary. In his presidential address to the first AITUC, Lajpat Rai emphasised, "…Indian labour should lose no time to organise itself on a national scale…the greatest need in this country is to organise, agitate and educate. We must organise our workers, make them class-conscious…" The manifesto issued to the workers by the AITUC urged them both to organise themselves and to intervene in nationalist politics. Though AITUC membership went up, with 183 affiliated unions listed by January 1925, the leadership remained very moderate, being either liberal or Congress. Meanwhile, moderates like N.M. Joshi believed that the political activities of labour organisations should not go beyond agitating for workers' economic welfare and the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, trusteeship and class-collaboration were emphasised.

Labour Leadership

The AITUC unfortunately suffered from two splits during the period of World Economic Depression

(1929-33). The first split took place in 1929. The main issue over which the split occurred was whether the AITUC would boycott the Royal Commission on Labour (1929) appointed by the British government or not. The moderate section within the AITUC wanted to join it while the radical or extremist sections wanted to boycott it. Finally, the moderates under N.M. Joshi left the AITUC and formed the Indian Trade Union Federation or the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) with V.V. Giri as the president. In 1931, there was another split. The communists left the AITUC and formed the Red Trade Union Congress.

Though the number of strikes declined during the 1920s, they tended to become more prolonged and bitter. From 70 working-days lost in 1921, the figure increased every year from 1924 onwards, and 1927 marked a new labour upsurge, with a loss of 202 lakh working days. There also emerged in some centres a more radical communist leadership. The Trade Union Act of 1926 recognised trade unions as legal associations. It laid down conditions for registration and regulation of trade union activities, but put some restrictions on their political activities (the ban on the use of the unions for civic and political purposes was in sharp contrast to the British practice of the Labour Party being financed in a large way by trade unions). As regards strikes, a powerful East Indian Railway strike was organised from February to April 1922 by Darasananandа and Viswananda; and in Ahmedabad, 56 out of 64 textile mills were closed down by a massive strike in April 1923 against a 20 per cent wage-cut when Gandhi was in jail. (A restraining influence, he was urging Ahmedabad workers not to embarrass their employers during a period of trade depression in 1925 by striking.) Madras city was an important centre of strikes, with four strikes organised in the Buckingham Carnatic mills in 1922-23. A massive strike was organised on the North-Western Railway from April to June 1925, sparked-off by the dismissal of a union leader, and made memorable by a procession in Lahore carrying flags stained red with the workers' own blood. Another massive textile mill strike was organised in 1924 by 150,000 workers to protest against the refusal of bonus.

Trade Union Act-1926

Labour Strikes

The years 1928-29 were the scene of a massive labour upsurge (particularly in railways, cotton textiles, and jute), and the communist influence on trade unions became pronounced from this time onwards. Various communist groups in different parts of India had earlier, in 1927, organised themselves into the Workers' and Peasants' Parties (WPPs), under the leadership of S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, P.C. Joshi and Sohan Singh Josh. The WPPs functioned as a left-wing within the Congress, and rapidly gained in strength within the Congress organisation at the provincial and the all-India levels. The Communist-led Girni Kamgar Union (GKU) became the pre-eminent union, with membership rising from 324 to 54,000 by the end of 1928. Communist influence spread also to workers in the railways, jute mills, municipalities, paper mills in Bengal and Bombay and in the Burma Oil Company in Madras. In the AITUC, too, by the time of the 1928 Jharia session, the left-wing had acquired dominance and the corporatist trend led by N M Joshi and others split away from the AITUC at the subsequent session presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru. Under the influence of the new ideas, workers participated in a large number of strikes and demonstrations all over India between 1927 and 1929. The AITUC boycotted the Simon Commission in 1927 and many workers participated in the massive Simon boycott demonstrations; there were numerous workers' meetings organised on May Day, Lenin Day and the anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

Workers' and Peasants' Party

Response to Labour Militancy

Alarmed at the increasing strength of the trade union movement and the growing militancy and political involvement of the working class, a massive capitalist and government counter-offensive was launched, the latter introducing its familiar repression and conciliation policy. Pathans were employed as strike-bearers in Bombay, and a communal riot followed in February 1929. The non-brahman minister, Bhaskarrao Jadav, tried to encourage anti-brahman sentiments among the largely lower-caste textile workers (the Communist leaders being mainly brahmans). The government was greatly alarmed at the militant situation, and offered unequivocal support for Indian capitalists against Indian workers which was earlier not given on issues like tariff

protection or rupee-sterling ratio. The government's Public Safety Bill gave it power to summarily deport Philip Spratt and Ben Bradley, the British Communists who helped to organise Bengal and Bombay workers. The Trades Disputes Act of April 1929 imposed a system of tribunals, and tried to ban strikes "undertaken for objects other than furtherance of a trade dispute or if designed to coerce Government and/or inflict hardship on the community". The Congress officially opposed both bills, though a large number of Congress workers were apparently absent during the debate on the Public Safety Bill.

Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Act

The most famous of the government's crackdown measures was the Meerut conspiracy trial. On March 20, 1929, 31 labour leaders including Dange, Mirajkar, Ghate, Joglekar, Adhikari, Nimbkar, Alve and Kasle from Bombay; Muzaffar Ahmed, Kishorilal Ghosh, Dharani Goswami, Gopen Chakrabarti, Radharaman Mitra and Sibnath Banerji from Calcutta; Sohan Singh Josh from Punjab; P.C. Joshi and Viswanath Mukherji from the United Provinces; and three Englishmen, Bradley, Spratt and Hutchinson, were arrested. The conspiracy trial was staged at Meerut, since the British "could not take the chance of submitting the case to a jury", admitted the Home Minister, H.G. Haig, in a confidential note in 1929. The trial was made good use of by the communists to propagate their ideals through defence speeches. It attracted worldwide publicity and was described as "a judicial scandal" by the Joint Council of the British Union Congress and Labour Party. The Meerut conspiracy trial lasted nearly four years, and heavy jail sentences were imposed in January 1933 (they were much reduced on appeal and after considerable international and national agitation). But since the most experienced and active labour leaders were kept locked up for much of the early 1930s, the trial did succeed in weakening the political role of the working class in the national struggle that followed.

Meerut Conspiracy Case

However, labour militancy did not cow down Meerut entirely. The Girni Kamgar, now led by Deshpande and B T Ranadive, organised a second general strike in 1929. The mill committees were more militant than before, and an official enquiry condemned the chaos that young, inexperienced and illiterate operatives asserting their authority in various ways brought about. The first general strike in jute mills took place in July-August 1929 under the communist-controlled Bengal Jute Workers' Union and it succeeded in preventing the extension of working hours from 54 to 60 per week. The AICC set up a Labour Research Department under Bakar Ali Mirza in 1929, and some Congress leaders like Subhash Bose in Calcutta and Bhulabhai Desai took advantage of the removal of established Communist trade unionists to extend their own influence over labour. The Congress took a lot of interest in the Golmuri tin-plate strike near Jamshedpur—a foreign-owned concern. In 1929, Bose organised a sympathy strike at Budge Budge, and even Rajendra Prasad visited Golmuri. In February-March 1930, there was an unsuccessful communist-led strike on the GIP railway. On the eve of Civil Disobedience in Calcutta in 1930, a young communist militant, Abdul Momin, led an extremely successful carters' strike against a ban on transport of goods during afternoons by using carts as virtual barricades to paralyse city transport. But the labour movement was declining fast by 1930, with the communists weakening, not just by repression but by a major change in their strategy. Till late 1928, they had followed a unity-cum-struggle policy with regard to the Congress, criticising its limitations, yet keen to build an anti-imperialist united front. But in December 1928, the Sixth Comintern Congress assumed a distinct left identity, and Indian Communists began to keep aloof from the nationalist mainstream, even attacking the relatively Left Congress elements like Nehru (who was expelled from the League Against Imperialism in 1930). Under the Gandhian leadership, the Congress began to distance itself from labour movements; further, the onset of the Depression led to an increase in employment and reduction in prices, thus weakening labour's bargaining power while somewhat reducing the discontent of the employed. Nevertheless, Civil Disobedience did witness some workers' participation, involving the textile workers of Sholapur, dock labourers of Karachi, and transport and mill workers of Madras. The government had to declare martial law to crush the Sholapur

Labour Research Development

Sixth Comintern Congress

insurgents who had virtually taken over the city administration for a few days. In Bombay, the day Gandhi breached the salt law on April 6, workers of GIP Railwaymen's Union offered a novel form of satyagraha by prostrating themselves on the tracks with red flags posted on them. The partial lifting of the Depression from about 1934 created a slightly more favourable situation for trade union struggles. While employment figures rose (14,247 new workers were taken in by jute mills in 1935), discontent was acute, since both White and Indian capitalists tried to retain the wage cuts they had enforced in previous years. Notable strikes were those affecting the Kesoram Cotton Mills in Calcutta and Ahmedabad textiles in 1935, the Bengal-Nagpur Railway in December 1936-February 1937, and a series of labour disputes in Calcutta jute mills and Kanpur textile mills during 1936 which led to massive general strikes in both cities.

The next wave of working class movement came with provincial activity and the formation of popular ministries during 1937-39. Prior to that, in April 1935, the Red Trade Union Congress of the Communists rejoined the AITUC, then controlled by followers of M.N. Roy and a few socialists. A Joint Labour Board was set up a little later to explore the possibilities of united action with the moderate National Trade Union Federation (NTUF). By 1936, the communists under their new General Secretary, P.C. Joshi, advocated a United Front strategy. R.P. Dutt and Ben Bradley, in an article in the British communist journal *Labour Monthly* in March 1936, called for work within the Congress with the aim of converting it into an "anti-imperialist people's front". The new spirit of unity was fostered among Left-nationalists (Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Bose), Socialists and Communists, and a powerful Left consolidation within the Congress and other mass organisations was created. So, when the campaign for the 1937 elections began, the AITUC, barring a few centres, supported Congress candidates. The Congress election manifesto declared that the Congress would take steps for the settlement of labour disputes and take effective measures for securing the rights to form unions and go on strike. The tenure of the Congress Provincial Governments saw a phenomenal rise in the trade union movement.

Joint Labour Board

Consolidation of the Left

From 1937 to 1939, the number of trade unions increased from 271 to 562 and the total membership of these unions increased from 261,047 to 399,159; the number of strikes too increased. The increased civil liberties under the Congress governments and the pro-labour ministries also gave a fillip to the trade union movement in the period. A peculiar feature of the strikes in this period, observes Bipan Chandra, was that a majority of them ended successfully, with full or partial victory for the workers.

Rise of Trade Union

Trade union membership went up by 50 per cent in 1938 as compared to 1937, and labour unity was strengthened when the AITUC and the moderate NTUF held a joint session in Nagpur in April 1938. The major industrial disputes included the great general strike in Bengal jute mills (March-May 1937), a series of strikes in Kanpur cotton mills, textile strikes in Amritsar and Ahmedabad, the strike in Martin Burn's Kulti and Hirapur iron and steel works in 1938, and a six-month long strike in the Digboi oil works in Assam in April-October 1939. Despite some Congress effort to rally the working class (Nehru and Bose appealed to workers to "unite, organise, and join hands with the Congress" at a big labour rally in Calcutta in October 1937), the bulk of the trade union movement remained under either Liberal or Leftist (mostly Communist) leadership.

The communist influence was discerned at this time even in the old Gandhian stronghold of the Ahmedabad textile mills. The Working Committee further expressed solidarity with Bengal jute workers in April 1937, and denounced repressive measures taken by the Fazlul Huq ministry in Bengal and Sikandar Hayat Khan's Unionists in Punjab. But the early, relatively pro-labour stance of the Congress ministries soon came under capitalist pressures, with Birla complaining of rampant 'indiscipline' in Congress provinces. The bourgeoisie threatened a flight of capital from Congress-ruled Bombay and the United Provinces to the princely states where labour laws did not exist. Sumit Sarkar points out that the drastic provisions of the Bombay Trades Dispute Act (November 1938), which were rushed through in two months without select committee discussions, were a

Bombay Trades Dispute Act

Congress attempt to placate the bourgeoisie and curb labour unrest in the strongest communist base. The Act imposed compulsory arbitration, six months' jail for illegal strikes, and new trade union registration rules that made things difficult for unions not recognised by the management. Almost the entire trade union movement minus the Ahmedabad Gandhian labour leaders like Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai, opposed the Act along with most non-Congress parties including the Muslim League. Around 80,000 people attended a protest rally in Bombay on November 6 addressed by Dange, Indulal Yajnik and Ambedkar. On November 7, there was a partially successful general strike throughout Bombay. During the Digboi strike of 1939 against the British-owned Assam Oil Company, the Congress ministry allowed free use of the newly introduced wartime Defence of India rules to smash the strike.

The Second World War brought another era of rising prices and disproportionate wages. When the War began on September 1, 1939, the working class of Bombay was the first to hold a massive anti-War strike on October 2, 1939. In 1940, the AITUC adopted a resolution disavowing any sympathy for imperialism or fascism, arguing that "participation in a war, which will not result in the establishment of freedom and democracy in India, will not benefit India, much less will it benefit the working class". The Left on the whole was unable to take a firm stand against the government's sharply-intensified repression and only individual efforts like those of Subhash Bose stood out. Bose led a successful satyagraha in Calcutta in July 1940 demanding the removal of the Holwell monument—a memorial to the British victims of the alleged Black Hole—and in January 1941, used the Communist underground network in his flight through Afghanistan and Russia to Germany. Muslim students too participated in large numbers in a movement linked with the honour of Siraj-ud-daula. The M.N. Roy group made an exception to this stance and formed a pro-government union called the Indian Federation of Labour which was sanctioned a grant of Rs 13,000 by the government. With the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, however, the Communists argued that the character of the War had changed from an imperialist to a people's war, and the working class ought to support the Allied powers to defeat fascism. This shift in policy led the Communists to dissociate from the Quit India Movement launched by Gandhi in August 1942, a move for which they were discredited. Sections of the working class did support the Quit India Movement though. Immediately after the arrest of Gandhi and other leaders on August 9, 1942, there were strikes and hartals all over India by workers in Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Bombay, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Jamshedpur, Madras, Indore and Bangalore. Establishments like the Tata Steel Plant and the Ahmedabad Textile Mill were the scene of workers' strikes.

Indian Federation of Labour

Shift in Policy

From 1945 to 1947, the working class movement witnessed a tremendous resurgence. Workers not only participated in the post-War political upsurge in large numbers, but were also part of the numerous meetings and demonstrations organised in towns and cities like Calcutta on the issue of the INA trials. Towards the end of 1945, the Bombay and Calcutta dock workers refused to load ships going to Indonesia with supplies for troops meant to suppress the national liberation struggles of South-East Asia. The most spectacular action by the workers in this period was the strike and hartal by the Bombay workers in solidarity with the mutiny of the naval ratings in 1946 On February 22, 200,000-300,000 workers downed their tools, responding to a call given by the Communist Party and supported by the socialists. Peaceful meetings and demonstrations developed into violent clashes with the intervention of the police. Barricades were set up on the streets which witnessed pitched battles between the police and the army. Two army battalions were needed to restore order in the city, and nearly 250 agitators died.

Post-War Resurgence

The final years of colonial rule were a period of sharp increase in strikes on economic issues all over the country, the all-India strike of the Post and Telegraph Department employees being the most well-known among them. Reasons for the strikes included the pent-up grievances during the War, problems due to post-War demobilisation, the continuation of high prices, the scarcity of food and other essentials, and a drop in real wages. The workers were also agitating in

Strikes

anticipation of a freedom which they hoped would secure their rights for them.

THE KISAN MOVEMENT

Changing Character of Peasant Movements

Peasant outbreaks against established authority were a familiar feature of the 19th century, but it was only in the 20th century that they began to be inextricably linked with the national movement. As noted before, the British rule introduced far-reaching changes in the Indian agrarian structure, which gradually collapsed under new administrative innovations. The annexation of Awadh in 1856 in the second half of the 19th century saw a strengthening of the hold of the *taluqdars* or big landlords over the agrarian society of the provinces. Exorbitant rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or *nazrana,* and arbitrary ejectments or *bedakhli* made life further miserable. In the 19th century, peasant mobilisations were primarily protests, revolts and rebellions aimed at loosening the bonds of feudal exploitation; they were also protests against the enhancement of rent, evictions and usurious practices of moneylenders. The demands included occupancy rights and commutation of produce rent into money rent, but in the absence of class consciousness or proper organisations, the revolts lacked political direction. The period was also marked by the great famines of 1876-78, 1896-97 and 1899-1900, and the large number of deaths of workers and peasants revealed the cumulative effect of oppressive land policies. Scarcity and famine conditions also created law and order problems in the countryside. According to the Famine Commissions of 1880, 1898 and 1901, the famine relief system was "devised not so much with any laudable philanthropic sentiments as by the anxiety of the government to protect the institution of property and stave off the growing threat to the established order".

Need for Peasant Solidarity

Peasants learnt from experience that they should not remain unorganised to fight against the forces of the government and landlords. In their rebellion against the excesses of land revenue, the peasants formed peasant organisations—like the kisan sabhas. Some of the major grievances of the peasantry of the period were: the absence of occupancy rights on the lands tilled by peasants in many regions, and the power of the landlords to evict them; the forcible payment of 'gifts' like *nazaranas* and *abwabs* over and above the regular taxes payable to landlords; the indebtedness of peasants to village merchants and landlords charging heavy interest rates owing to the heavy burden of land revenue, and the consequent difficulty in getting rid of the debt trap which continued from generation to generation; and the outbreak of the First World War which led many peasants to being charged with war funds and to undertake military service.

Local Peasant Movements

Prior to their organisation into kisan sabhas, peasants agitated on these issues on smaller, localised scales. In the early 20th century, a peasant movement was organised in Mewar where peasants were heavily exploited. At Bijolia, a big Mewar jagir held by a Parmar Rajput, 86 different types of cesses on kisans were levied, with the peasants collectively refusing to cultivate lands and trying to emigrate to neighbouring areas twice, in 1905 and in 1913. They also refused to contribute to war loans. The Bijolia movement developed Gandhian contacts and continued late into the 1920s. Champaran in Bihar and Kheda in Gujarat were two areas where peasant movements contributed substantially to the birth of Gandhian nationalism. Champaran had a history of peasant resistance. Champaran peasants had, since the 1860s, raised their objection to the *tinkathia* system by which European planters holding *thikadari* leases from the zamindars of Ramnagar, Bettiah, and Madhuban made peasants cultivate indigo on part of their land at unremunative prices. In the face of the decline of indigo from about 1900 due to competition from synthetic dyes, the planters tried to pass the burden on to the peasants by charging *sharahbeshi* (rent enhancement) or *tawan* (lump-sum compensation) in return for the obligation to grow indigo. The Motihari-Bettiah region saw widespread resistance from 1905-08, and the struggle was carried into the next decade through petitions, cases and contacts with some Bihar Congress leaders and journalists. It was during this time that Raj Kumar Shukla, a prosperous peasant-cum-petty moneylender, contacted Gandhi who had returned from South Africa in 1915. Gandhi mobilised indigo-cultivators into agitating for the abolition of

Champaran Agitation

tinkathia tax. Similarly at Kheda, collective refusals to pay revenue were common to the emerging rich peasant stratum, which had benefited in the late 19th century from expanding markets for tobacco and dairy produce and had started calling themselves *patidars* instead of *kanbis.* In 1918, War-related reasons led the peasants to campaign for a no-revenue campaign and Gandhi's intervention made Kheda the first real Gandhian peasant satyagraha in India. Bardoli, in Surat district, too, saw the development, at first on caste lines, of a certain amount of organisation in 1908—the *Patidar Yuvak Mandel*, founded by Kunvarji Mehta.

Kheda Satyagraha

The channelising of these sporadic bursts of peasant anger into a coherent form of organisation or peasant sabhas began in earnest only in the United Provinces. Active members of the Home Rule League in UP, particularly Gauri Shankar Mishra and Indra Narain Dwivedi, set up the UP Kisan Sabha in February 1918. By June 1919 the UP Kisan Sabha had established at least 450 branches in 173 tehsils of the province. The result was that a large number of kisan delegates from UP attended the Delhi and Amritsar sessions of the Indian National Congress in December 1918 and 1919. The Bihar Provincial Conference at Bhagalpur in August 1920 saw the participation of 180 peasant delegates whose support ensured victory for the Non-Cooperation resolution. The end of 1919 saw the first signs of grassroots peasant activity in the reports of a *nai-dhobi band* (a form of social boycott) on an estate in Pratapgarh district. By 1920, in the villages of *taluqdari* Awadh, kisan meetings called by the village panchayats and organised by local leaders Jhinguri Singh and Durgapal Singh became frequent. But soon a leader by the name of Baba Ramachandra became important.

Towards Consolidation

Baba Ramachandra, a Maharashtra brahman, was a wanderer who left home at the age of 13, had a stint as an indentured labourer in Fiji and finally turned up in Faizabad in the United Provinces in 1909. Till 1920, he wandered around as a *sadhu* reciting verses from a copy of Tulsidas' *Ramayana*, which he carried on his back. His appeal lay in combining kisan solidarity with considerable use of the *Ramayana* and caste slogans. In the middle of 1920, Baba Ramachandra led a few hundred tenants from the Jaunpur and Pratapgrah districts to Allahabad. He met Gauri Shankar Mishra and Jawaharlal Nehru and asked them to visit the villages to apprise themselves of the living conditions of the tenants. Between June and August, Jawaharlal Nehru visited several rural areas and developed close contacts with the kisan sabha movement. The kisan sabha at village Roor in Pratapgarh district was a centre of feverish activity after the cooperation of the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, Mehta, was secured. About one lakh tenants were reported to have registered their complaints with this sabha on the payment of one *anna* each. The demands and methods were fairly moderate—the abolition (or reduction) of cesses and *begar*, the refusal to cultivate *bedakhli* land, and the social boycott of oppressive landlords (*nai-dhobi bundh*) organised through panchayats. In August 1920, the *taluqdars* used the opportunity to strike at the growing kisan movement. They succeeded in getting Ramachandra and 32 kisans arrested on a trumped-up charge of theft on August 28, 1920. About 4,000-5,000 kisans collected at Pratapgarh to see their leaders and were dispersed after some persuasion. Ten days later, 60,000 kisans took a *darshan* of Baba Ramachandra from atop a tree in a sugarcane field. By October 1920, the foundation of the Awadh Kisan Sabha headed by Nehru, Mishra and Ramchandra was established (with 330 branches in Pratapgarh, Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Faizabad set up quickly). The new body asked the kisans to refuse to till *bedakhli* land, not to offer *hari* and *begar* (forms of unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through panchayats. The first big show of strength of the sabha was the rally held at Ayodhya, on December 20 and 21, which was attended by 100,000 peasants and which was marked by Baba Ramachandra turning up in ropes to symbolise peasant oppression. It also saw the participation of high and low castes. Thus, the Gandhian Congress began to establish its hegemony over the peasant movement in UP.

Baba Ramachandra

Awadh Kisan Sabha

In January 1921, however, the nature of peasant activity underwent a change with the centres of activity now being confined to Rae Bareli, Faizabad and Sultanpur districts. A militant strain could be seen in activities such as the looting of *bazaars*,

houses and granaries, and clashes with the police. Local figures—sadhus, holy men, and disinherited ex-proprietors—and non-recognised kisan sabha activists, took the lead. The government suppressed the acts of violence with little effort by firing upon crowds, arresting leaders and activists, and registering cases. In March 1921, the government brought in the Seditious Meetings Act to cover the affected districts, and all political activity came to a standstill. It was followed by the Awadh Rent (Amendment) Act, which helped to rouse hopes and assist in the movement's decline. In late 1921, peasant discontent surfaced again in Awadh and in the districts of Hardoi, Bahraich, Sitapur in northern UP. The Congress and Khilafat leaders provided the initial thrust, and the movement grew under the name of the *Eka* or unity movement. The main grievances were related to the extraction of a rent that was 50 per cent higher than the recorded rent, the oppression of *thekedars* to whom the work of rent collection was farmed out and the practice of share-rents. The Eka movement too employed religious symbols; assembled peasants vowed that they would pay only recorded rent, not leave when ejected, refuse to perform forced labour and abide by the panchayat decisions. The movement soon developed its own grassroots leadership in the guise of Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders who did not agree, in entirety, with the principle of non-violence urged by the Congress and Khilafat leaders. Severe repression followed by the authorities brought the Eka movement to an end by March 1922.

Seditious Meetings Act

Eka Movement

In Mewar, the anti-feudal peasant unrest began as anti-maharana but soon became anti-British in character. Vijai Singh Pathik and Manik Lal Verma had built up a powerful kisan movement around Bijolia, and some concessions in the shape of reduced cesses and *begar* were wrested from the jagirdar in 1922. Motilal Tejawat, an Udaipur spice merchant and a Gandhian, started organising the Bhil tribals of Mewar, while a no-revenue campaign began under Jai Narayan Vyas in Marwar. Pathik developed close contacts with the UP Congress leader Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who publicised the Bijolia movement in *Kanpur Pratap.* However, Madan Mohan Malaviya's intervention in favour of the Mewar government blocked this move at the 1921 Congress. Meanwhile, the movement grew and spread and at Neemuchana in Alwar state in May 1925, the state police fired on peasants protesting a 50 per cent increase in land revenue, killing 156 and wounding 600. The Congress, though, till 1938, continued to refuse to get officially involved in any movement in the princely states.

Mewar

A powerful peasant movement developed in 1919-20 on the estates of Darbhanga Raj, and spread over the districts of Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Purnea and Monghyr in north Bihar. High prices affected all those who had to buy part or all of their food like small tenants, share-croppers, agricultural labourers, while population pressures induced conflicts over land, grazing areas and timber. The *amlas* or agents employed by the estate were often petty zamindars who were very oppressive owing to financial pressures. Peasant meetings voicing grievances began to be held from early 1919, starting with a rally at Narar village on June 26-30 in Madhubani in north Darbhanga. Leadership was provided by Bishu Bharan Prasad, the son of a prosperous occupancy tenant, who sought inspiration from Gandhi's Champaran and raised demands against extortion by *amlas* and threats to customary rights of better-off tenants. The movement remained peaceful and restrained, and was defused when some concessions to better-off tenants were given in January 1920. The concessions included reduction of fees for transfer of land, and the waiving of some timber rights.

Bihar

Rampa Rebellion

The peasant movement acquired distinct militant overtones in the restive semi-tribal 'Rampa' region, north of the Godavari, scene of a guerilla war between August 1922 and May 1924 which was led by Alluri Sitarama Raju. Alluri, who claimed to possess astrological and healing powers, had wandered into the region to organise tribals to start village panchayats and a campaign against drink inspired by the Non-Cooperation Movement. Alluri's movement, which blended 'primitive rebellion' with modern nationalism, protested against injustices like exploitation by moneylenders, forest laws restricting shifting cultivation and age-old grazing rights, and the attempt to construct forest

Alluri Sitarama Raju

roads with unpaid tribal labour. Alluri claimed he was bullet-proof, and regarded violence as necessary. The British perceived him as a formidable guerilla tactician who had armed his followers by successful raids on police stations, and whose rebel band enjoyed the support of the local hill population. The Madras Government suppressed the rebellion at a cost of Rs 15 lakh. Alluri Raju was captured in 1924, and it was reported that he had been shot.

Bengal

In Bengal, share-cropping (*barga*) was spreading rapidly in the 1920s. Congress swarajists who enjoyed influence here bitterly opposed proposals to give tenancy status to *bargadars* due to their own zamindari or intermediate tenure-holding status. A number of *Namasudra* and Muslim *bargadar* movements in the mid-1920s took place in districts like Mymensingh, Dhaka, Pabna, Khulna and Nadia.

Moplah Rebellion, 1921

The Malabar district of Kerala was witness to the famous rebellion of the Moplahs. While the grievances of the Moplahs related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents, and other oppressive landlord exactions, the urge to resist first came from the Malabar District Congress Conference held at Manjeri in April 1920. This conference supported the tenants' cause and demanded legislation to regulate landlord-tenant relations. A tenants' association was formed at Kozhikode, and soon tenants' associations were set up in other parts of Malabar. The Moplah tenants were also swayed by the Khilafat Movement, and the social base of their agitation was mostly Muslim, though a number of Hindus did provide leadership to it. The government, disturbed by the growing popularity of the Khilafat-cum-tenant agitation, issued prohibitory notices on all Khilafat meetings on February 5, 1921. Prominent Khilafat and Congress leaders like Yakub Hasan, U. Gopala Menon, P. Moideen Koya and K. Madhavan Nair were arrested a few days later. The leadership then passed into the hands of the local Moplah leaders who were angered by repression and encouraged by rumours that the British, weakened as a result of the First World War, could no longer take strong military action. The British raid on a mosque in an attempt to arrest Ali Musaliar, a Khilafat leader, was followed by the police opening fire on unarmed crowd. Several people were killed. A clash ensued, and government offices were destroyed, records burnt and the treasury looted. The rebellion spread to Moplah strongholds of Ernad, Walluvanad and Ponani *taluqs*. In the first stage of the rebellion, the targets of attack were the unpopular jenmies (landlords), mostly Hindu, the symbols of governemnt authority such as kutcheries (courts), police stations, treasuries and offices, and British planters. Lenient landlords and poor Hindus were not touched. Some of the rebel leaders like Kunhammed Haji took care to see that Hindus were not looted or molested, and also ordered the execution and punishment of a number of pro-government Moplahs. But once the British declared martial law and repression, many Hindus were pressurised into helping the authorities, while some others voluntarily gave assistance. This helped strengthen the anti-Hindu sentiments of poor Moplahs. There were forced conversions, and attacks on Hindus increased. The hitherto largely anti-government and anti-landlord affair acquired strong communal overtones. The recourse to violence drove a wedge between the Moplahs and the Non-Cooperation Movement; the communalisation of the rebellion completed the isolation of the Moplahs, and British repression ended their resistance. So demolarised were the Moplahs by this turn of events that they did not participate further in politics till India attained independence.

Spread of Moplah Revolt

Communal Overtones

Bardoli Satyagraha, 1928

In Gujarat, the Bardoli taluq of Surat district, which had been chosen in 1922 as the place from where Gandhi would launch his civil disobedience (the campaign never took off owing to events in Chauri-Chaura), was selected for a significant no-tax movement launched in 1928. Local leaders such as the brothers Kalyanji and Kunverji Mehta of the dominant peasant landholding caste of *Kanbi-Patidars*, and Dayalji Desai, had worked hard to spread the message of Non-Cooperation in the district for a decade, and set up many national schools, persuaded students to leave government schools, carried out the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and captured the Surat municipality. A network of six ashrams spread out over the Bardoli taluq, comprising of 137 villages with a population of 87,000, did much to lift the taluq out of the

demoralisation that had followed the withdrawal of 1922. The *patidars* tilled their land with debt-serfs who were Dubla tribals known as *kaliparaj* ('black people'), and who constituted 50 per cent of Bardoli's population. The *kaliparaj* bonded labour was assured of a minimum of food and clothing by the *patidar*, and Gandhian constructive workers had been active among the *kaliparaj*. When the Bombay Government announced a revenue-hike of 22 per cent in Bardoli in 1927, in spite of declining cotton prices, the Mehta brothers persuaded Vallabhbhai Patel to organise a peaceful no-revenue campaign. Patel and the other local leaders made extremely skilful use of caste associations, social boycott, religious appeals and *bhajans* or devotional songs. Bardoli soon became a national issue. The Ahmedabad workers raised Rs 1300 through one-anna collections, while Lalji Naranji, the Indian Merchants Chamber representative in the Bombay Council, resigned his seat in protest when Bombay business efforts at mediation failed in July. The British feared a link-up between the Bardoli movement and the Communist-inspired Girni Kamgar strike, and made plans for sending armed police and even troops to Bardoli in late July. A settlement was reached on the basis of a judicial enquiry, and confiscated lands were returned.

No-revenue Campaign

During the 1930s the peasants rose in revolt in different provinces, with UP taking the lead again. The Congress tried to act as an arbitrator between the zamindars and tenants, asking tenants to send applications for rent-reductions to the local Congress offices. A resisting bureaucracy considered this an attempt to establish institutions parallel to those of government. Gandhi issued a manifesto to UP kisans on May 24, 1931, suggesting a compromise by which non-occupancy tenants should pay a minimum of eight *annas* in the rupee of the current rent, and occupancy tenants 12 *annas*. But peasants went a step ahead and stopped all payments, urged as they were by local leaders and activists who used the Congress name, but preached a far more radical message. Kalka Prasad or Anjani Kumar in Rae Bareli picketed the house of the Raja of Sheogarh, who had started a Khadi Vidyalaya as a protest against eviction of defaulting tenants. The Congress leadership provided a restraining influence with the main centres of agrarian radicalism in Rae Bareli, Bari Banki and Manjhanpur tehsil in Allahabad. But the British policy of combining repression and conciliation had taken much of the edge of peasant militancy, and the UP peasants won certain remissions which were still in excess of those granted in other provinces or in the earlier years of distress. The situation in UP also forced on the Congress leadership a partial but growing recognition of the importance of agrarian relations for the future of the national movement.

Peasant Revolts in the United Provinces

In Bihar, in the 1930s, the Congress leadership stuck to a strongly pro-zamindar line, but a strong Kisan Sabha emerged in Gaya district under Jadunandan Sharma. In Orissa, in September 1931, the Utkal PCC decided to set up *Krushak Sanghas* throughout the state, and officials complained that Congress village work was worsening zamindar-tenant relations. In coastal Andhra, pressures mounted for a no-revenue campaign by late-1931, under local leaders like Duggirala Balaramakrishnayya of Krishna district, whose Telugu ballad *Gandhi Gita* popularised both agrarian and nationalist agitations. The Andhra peasants living in zamindari areas were organised for the first time, particularly on the vast Venkatagiri estate in Nellore. Under the leadership of N.V. Rama Naidu and N.G. Ranga, a forest satyagraha was organised in 1931 against grazing fees levied by zamindars through which the zamindar attempted to curtail traditional peasant rights to fodder and timber. In Kerala, which had a history of caste discrimination, the Guruvayoor temple satyagraha, started under the Congress leader Kelappan, had a radicalising impact. Volunteer *jathas* covered on foot large parts of both Malabar and the princely states of Travancore and Cochin, and satyagarha continued till called off by Gandhi's orders in September 1932, during Civil Disobedience. A school-teacher A.K. Gopalan was one of the activists at Guruvayoor, and he soon became Kerala's most popular Communist leader.

Bihar and Orissa

Forest Satyagraha in Andhra

Guruvayoor Satyagraha in Kerala

The princely states saw a number of spontaneous local peasant outbreaks—the most recent incidents being in *Sikar thikana (jagir)* of Jaipur, against revenue, and at Lohanu in Punjab where an agitation against a tax on camels had led to firing

in 1935. The All-India States Peoples' Conference was a very moderate and elitist body till 1936, and confined itself to drawing up petitions and issuing pamphlets, while the Congress still stuck to a policy of non-interference. Nehru's address to the fifth session of the States Peoples' Conference urged the need for mass contacts in place of mere petitions, and the session drew up a programme of agrarian demands, like a one-third cut in land revenue, scaling-down of debts, and an enquiry into peasant grievances.

Peasant Agitations in Princely States

All India Kisan Sabha

The partial lifting of the Depression from 1934 and the attendant labour problems induced by anti-labour measures taken by industrialists led to an atmosphere of unity among Left-nationalists, Socialists and Communists. The new spirit also found expression through the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha during the Lucknow and Faizpur Congress sessions. The initiative came from Andhra, where N.G. Ranga was a leader since 1933-34 of the Provincial Ryot's Association and a separate Zamin Ryot's Association for zamindari tenants. Ranga began trying from 1935 to both extend the kisan movement to the rest of the Madras Presidency and draw in agricultural labourers into the movement. A South Indian Federation of Peasants and Agricultural Labour, set up in April 1935 with Ranga as General Secretary and E.M.S. Namboodiripad as a Joint Secretary, suggested the immediate formation of an All India Kisan body in its conference of October 1935 . The first session of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) was held in Lucknow in April 1936. Two other pioneers in its formation were Sahajanand Saraswati (leader of the Kisan movement in Bihar who was president of the Lucknow session) and Indulal Yajnik (former Gandhian from Gujarat who became editor of the *Kisan Bulletin*).

Lucknow Session

Objectives

The All India Kisan Sabha manifesto read: "The object of the Kisan movement is to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and the achievement of full economic and political power for the peasants and the workers and all other exploited classes." It defined the Kisan movement's main task as "the organisation of peasants to fight for their immediate political and economic demands in order to prepare them for their emancipation from every form of exploitation". The manifesto demanded the abolition of zamindari, a graduated tax on agricultural incomes in excess of Rs 500 in place of the present land revenue and the cancellation of debts. The minimum demands were: 50 per cent cut in revenue and rent, full occupancy rights to all tenants, abolition of *begar*, scaling down of debts and interest-rates, freedom from arrest and imprisonment for inability to pay debts, rents and revenue, and restoration of customary forest rights. Although it did not adequately address problems of class-differences within the peasantry, and of tensions between landholding peasants and landless labourers, the Manifesto suggested transfer of uncultivated government and zamindari lands to peasants with less than five acres and to the landless, who would hopefully get organised into cooperatives. No demand was made for any general ceiling on landholding.

Kisan Manifesto

The early activities of the kisan sabhas included the holding of spectacular peasant marches, the celebration of an All India Kisan Day (September 1, 1936, when one hundred village meetings were reported from the single district of Guntur in Andhra), and numerous local struggles. In the second session of the Kisan Sabha at Faizpur (December 1936), President Jawaharlal Nehru hoped to convert Congress into a real anti-imperialist 'joint popular front'. As a first step he suggested 'corporate membership' of trade union and kisan sabhas. The provisional Agrarian Programme adopted at Faizpur, while mainly reiterating the Karachi resolution, attempted to incorporate the minimum demands of the manifesto of the AIKS: reductions in revenue and rent, agricultural income tax, fixity of tenure, scaling down of debts, end of forced labour, and recognition of forest rights and of peasant unions. Kisans and workers were urged to keep up their day-to-day struggles against the exploiters—the British Government in India, the zamindars, landlords, industrialists and moneylenders. The AIKS decided to work independently of the Congress and proclaimed that the emancipation of peasants lay in "their own organisation".

All India Kisan Day

Faizpur Session

The activities of the kisan sabhas and the AIKS' own claims to be primarily a kisan party led Congress to undertake a measure of agrarian reforms, particularly during the period from 1937 to 1939 when Congress formed popular provincial governments in India. The pressure of a massive peasant movement lay behind the limited agrarian reforms of 1937-39.

Growth of Kisan Movement

The membership in the kisan sabhas shot up to half a million in 1938, with Bihar alone accounting for 250,000, followed by Punjab with 73,000, UP with 60,000, Andhra with 53,000, and Bengal with 34,000.

There were several types of kisan sabha movements launched in the various provinces. In Bihar, the Bakasht (meaning self-cultivated) movement of 1936-39, under the leadership of Karyananda Sharma, saw peasants fight landlords against eviction from *bakasht* land. Rent-collection seemed on the point of collapse between mid-1938 and mid-1939, and armed police pickets were often required to protect harvests that belonged to the landlords.

The Socialists and Communists were becoming increasingly important during this period (the Kisan Sabha adopted the red flag as a banner in October 1937). Sahajananda was moving rapidly to the Left, even coming up with a militant anti-rent slogan: *Laga lege kaise/Danda hamara zindabad* (How will you collect rent/Long live our *lathis*). While using the garb of the sanyasi, he declared in 1937 that as religious robes had long exploited the country, now he would exploit those robes on behalf of the peasants. He added in 1939 that Congress help was crucial to the movement and "because it represents the nation, it has not taken any false steps at critical junctures".

Sahajananda

In Bengal, numerous local struggles were fought. In the Burdwan district, the Canal Tax was imposed on the peasants after the construction of the Damodar Canal in 1937. The kisan sabha movement organised a satyagraha movement for the reduction of the Canal Tax. The movement was withdrawn after the government accepted the demand in part. The movement of Hajong tribals under Moni Singh in the Garo Hills of north Mymensingh (East Bengal) in 1937-38 was able to get produce-rent (*tanka*) reduced from one-half to one-fourth of the harvest. A movement of share-croppers took place in 1939. These poor peasants, who tilled the land of the landlord in return of a portion of the produce and who could be evicted at will, took the crop from the field to their threshing flour, instead of carrying it to the landlord's granary, where the crop was threshed and then divided between the sharecropper and the landlord. The movement acquired strength in the Dinajpur district in north Bengal, and the government made a compromise with the peasants that, in future, paddy would be stored in a place to be decided by the sharecropper and the landlord. The movement was successful and it taught peasants the power of organisation.

Movements in Bengal

The Congress Attitude

The Congress attitude towards the movement was an ambiguous one. The Congress tried to reduce debt burdens in most of its provinces through fixation of interest rates, raising statutory tenants of Awadh to the level of hereditary occupancy *raiyats*, restricting enhancements and reducing rents in *bakasht* lands in the United Provinces and Bihar, from which occupancy raiyats had been evicted during the Depression and *khoti* sub-tenants of raiyatwari landholders given some rights in Bombay. At the same time, Coupland's analysis of Congress agrarian legislation holds that "its treatment of the landlords was not intolerably severe…Congress policy might almost be called conservative." Coupland describes two proposals as radical: the Prakasam Committee recommendations in Madras suggesting raiyat ownership and rent-reduction to the level of 1802 in zamindari areas (a proposal that was quickly shelved); and an Orissa Act fixing zamindari rents at a level only 12½ per cent above revenues in adjoining ryotwari areas (vetoed by the Governor). The Congress legislation did not even meet the moderate aims set up by the Faizpur session, observes Sumit Sarkar, and adds that faced with a threat of 'civil disobedience' from zamindars in September 1937, the Bihar ministry toned down its tenancy bill. Congress leaders Abul Kalam Azad and Rajendra Prasad negotiated a secret agreement with landlords in Patna in December 1937, and at a subsequent landholders' conference, a delegate praised the Bihar government as "very reasonable". And while agrarian revolution was held to be the ultimate aim

Views of Coupland

Social Base

of the AIKS, the social composition of the Kisan Sabha belied the truth of the proclamation. The Kisan Sabha remained essentially the organisation of peasants with some land as small holders or tenants. The *Bhumihars* filled the leadership and other ranks of the Bihar unit, not Harijan or tribal agricultural labourers. The Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha memorandum to the Floud Commission failed to raise any specific demands for the *bargadars.* In Andhra, the initial Kisan Sabha base was among the fairly prosperous *Kamma* peasants of the Krishan-Godavari delta, and in Punjab kisan movements focused on issues like revenue enhancement and irrigation taxes. The Congress ministers and leaders became more and more hostile to Kisan Sabha militancy. The Congress denounced 'class war' in the September 1938 AICC session specifically in the context of Kisan Sabha agitations, at a time when the younger, more radical Nehru and Bose headed the Congress party. The Congress hesitation was on account of the rightwing element within the party which represented the dominant social groups in Indian society, but were afraid of the demand of the Kisan Sabha for the abolition of landlordism.

The next major round of peasant agitation took place during the Quit India movement launched by the Congress in August 1942. In fact, the massive upsurge of the peasantry, most of whom were drawn primarily from the peasant smallholders' group, made the movement formidable. They were mainly from the upper and middle castes, observes Sumit Sarkar (17 per cent Brahman, 27.5 per cent Rajput and *Bhumihar* as against 7.4 per cent untouchable and 4.2 per cent tribal in a sample of 1,214). Bihar was the province which witnessed the largest participation of the peasantry—it developed from being the province which in the 1930s had become the principal base of the Kisan Sabha, and where the bulk of the Kisan Sabha cadres had swung towards the side of the socialists. For a while Patna was cut off from all districts and there was considerable tribal participation, too. The eastern UP was similarly affected, particularly districts of Benaras and Azamgarh. The Tamluk sub-division of Midnapore in Bengal was notable for setting up the Tamluk *Jatiya Sarkar* or parallel government that lasted till September 1944. In Balasore district of Orissa, bordering on Midnapore, village *swaraj panchayats* were organised. Koraput, with a large tribal population, witnessed a massive upsurge. Other centres of peasant rebellion were east Khandesh and Satara in Maharashtra and Jambusar taluk in Broach district of Gujarat.

Peasant Agitations in 1940s

THE CONGRESS KARACHI RESOLUTION, 1931

The Karachi Resolution was the outcome of the Congress meet convened at Karachi on March 29, 1931 to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin or Delhi Pact. The Pact was recognised to contain ambiguous provisions and did not please all sections of Indians. Moreover, radical nationalists were angered by the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on March 23, just before the opening of the Karachi Congress. A demonstration was organised against Gandhi by the Naujawan Bharat Sabha at the Karachi railway station. Sumit Sarkar says that the Karachi session is significant mainly as revealing the weaknesses of the Left critics of Gandhi. During his stay in jail from October 1930 to January 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru had worked out a fairly radical agrarian programme and formulated what became a basic element in Left-nationalist strategy. He suggested a Constituent Assembly as the central political slogan. He vacillated after the Delhi Pact, but then agreed to the terms that Gandhi spelt out in the Karachi resolution (on whom Nehru had become psychologically dependent following the death of Motilal Nehru), and to move the key resolution endorsing the Karachi agreement. Other Left-leaning critics too were similarly disappointed. Yusuf Meherally, soon to become a prominent socialist leader, denounced 'the politics of compromise' and 'change of heart', and bitterly attacked the Birlas, Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Walchand Hirachand, Hussainbhai Laljis, who, he felt, were out and busy in making efforts to obtain the fruits of the suffering and sacrifices of others. However, he was not willing to make a break just then. He suggested that Gandhi would again have to give the call for struggle, as the Round Table Conference was bound to fail, and then the radicals would get a chance to call a fight.

Karachi Session 1931

Yusuf Meherally

Resolution on Fundamental Rights and National Economic Programme

The Karachi session became memorable for its resolution on Fundamental Rights and the National Economic Programme. According to Bipan Chandra, the session for the first time defined what Swaraj would mean for the masses. It also declared that "in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions." Politically, the resolution guaranteed the basic civil rights of free speech, free press, free assembly, and freedom of association; equality before the law irrespective of caste, creed or sex; neutrality of the state in regard to all religions; elections on the basis of universal adult franchise; and free and complusory primary education. As regards the tools of economic freedom, the Resolution promised substantial reduction in rent and revenue, exemption from rent in case of uneconomic holdings, and relief of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury; better conditions for workers including a living wage, limited hours of work and protection of women workers; the right to organise and form unions to workers and peasants; and state ownership or control of key industries, mines and means of transport. It further added that "the culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected". The Congress made the Karachi resolution its basic political and economic programme.

Basic Civil Rights

Economic Concessions

Minority Protection

The resolution on fundamental rights and economic policy has been interpreted as a major concession to placate the Left, some officials even suspecting in it the hand of M.N. Roy. Some months later Ambalal Sarabhai circulated a note among FICCI members sharply attacking parts of the resolution as threatening to bring about "a Government on Russian model". The nationalist school theory (Bipan Chandra *et al*) interprets the Congress resolutions at Karachi, Lucknow and Faizpur, the election manifestoes of 1936 and 1945-46 and the economic and social reforms of the Congress Ministries from 1937-39, in terms of the evolution of the Congress in a radical socio-economic-political direction. According to this school, the 1930s were a decade favourable to socialist ideas, and India was no exception. But though left-wing and socialist ideas grew, they did not succeed in becoming the dominant ideological trend within the national movement. Instead they became a basic constituent of the national movement and shifted it leftward. Sumit Sarkar argues, however, that there was in reality little socialism in the 20-points of the Karachi Resolution, which combined general democratic demands of civil liberies, legal equality, adult suffrage, etc., with a state policy of religious neutrality, and much of Gandhi's 11-points of 1930, fairly modest promises to labour, a vaguely-worded clause about control by the state of key industries and mineral resources, and a very moderate programme of agrarian change. Only "substantial reductions" were promised in land revenue and rent; no reference existed to the burning issue of rural indebtedness, and none either to eliminating landlordism or redistributing land.

Congress Radicalism

Sarkar states that the capitulation to Gandhi, despite the reservations of several Congress leaders, was an indication of certain basic weaknesses of the entire movement and not just of the leader. While marked by much scattered potentially radical manifestations, the Civil Disobedience saw no real alternative leadership emerge. In its absence, rural militancy remained either entirely spontaneous, sporadic, and uncoordinated, or under the leadership of village Gandhians had a limited outlook. Labour organisation and militancy had declined sharply since 1928-29, and the Communists, already weakened by the Meerut arrests, were busy fighting with other Left-nationalists. While Nehru was expelled from the *League Against Imperialism* in April 1930, Bose split from the AITUC at its Calcutta session in July 1931. It was not just radicals with more or less definite socialist leanings who were disappointed by the Pact. Subaltern studies have pointed out that the *patidars* of Kheda "considered the pact a betrayal" since revenue was not reduced and even the forfeited land remained largely unrestored, in sharp contrast to the Bardoli victory of 1928. Similarly, for coastal Andhra and the UP, the year 1931 was probably the psychological moment for full-scale no-revenue and no-rent movements in face of Depression, but for a crucial period of nine months the Congress held back the peasantry, trying to honour the truce.

Views of Sumit Sarkar

Subaltern Viewpoint

Views

- "The Empire is Commerce and England would never lose the hold we now have over our great Indian dependency—by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have."

  —**Joseph Chamberlain**

- "If Indian industries are in need of, or should now desire a measure of protection, protective measures would naturally seriously affect imports from the United Kingdom… The merchants of Lancashire or Dundee, to mention two interests alone, would not acquiesce in such a course."

  —Lord Curzon

- "It is impossible in the present… political condition of our country to convert the government to air views… the only solution … lies in every Indian businessman strengthening the hands of those who are fighting for the freedom of our country."

  —G.D. Birla (in 1930)

- "We can no more separate our politics from our economics."

  —**Purshottamdas Thakurdas**
  (President of FICCI at its second annual session in 1928)

- "If a Kisan Sabha sets up internal feud as between kisan and zamindars it harms the Congress cause. The Congress knows best how to deal with the different elements composing the nation… It is for the Congress to lay down the policies, not for individuals or for groups to dictate them by a threat or show of force."

  —Mahadev Desai

- "The outstanding problem of India is the peasant problem. All else is secondary."

  —Jawaharlal Nehru (1937)

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - (i) First World War exposed the various contradictions between Indian and British interests and brought about significant changes in India's politico-economic order like massive recruitments, heavy taxes and War loans, sharp rise in prices and credited conditions for emergence of new social groups which played an important role in the nationalist struggle.
  - (ii) The British Indian government changed its attitude towards Indian industrial development out of a combination of financial demands and the realisation that a certain degree of economic self-sufficiency and financial autonomy was needed.
- **Industrial sector and the problem of protection**
  - (i) Due to constraints imposed by colonialist policies, the unorganised and organised industrial sector showed a differential pattern of development. The unorganised industries (in villages and towns) continued to decline whereas organised industries displayed a slow and uneven growth, but in general the growth was lopsided and the economy did not advance as a comprehensive organic activity.
  - (ii) A fiscal commission in 1921 recommended "discriminate protection" for some existing indigenous industries, which was in reality a case of "too little and too late". India did not impose protective tariffs to foster home industry and the pace of industrialisation was disappointingly low.
- **Agricultural Distress**
  - (i) British failure to modernise agricultural organisation and technique resulted in stagnation and agricultural distress.
  - (ii) Factors like mismatch between population growth and growth in productivity, commercialisation of agriculture, impact of World Economic Depression and the government's half-hearted ameliorative measures resulted in intensifying agricultural distress which manifested in ever-growing rural indebtedness, proletarisation, depeasantisation (the process of transformation of land-owning peasants into landless labourers) and mass poverty among the artisans and peasants.
- **Great Economic Depression (1929-33)**
  - (i) An economic crisis engulfed the entire world during 1929-33 which affected India through a very sharp fall in prices and brought significant changes in the overall pattern of the colonial economy.

Summary

(ii) Fall in export earnings led to a balance of payment crisis, with trade surpluses sufficient to pay for Home Charges and a substantial outflow of capital ensuing.

(iii) The Indian bourgeoisie found opportunities for a major advance with the slackening of older forms of colonial economic ties. The effects of capitalist growth (particularly under conditions of colonial domination and worldwide Depression), manifested themselves in growing burdens on the working class, which in turn led to serious labour unrest in the late 1920s and the mid-1930s.

- **Ottawa Agreements and Discriminatory Protection**

(i) The agreement, concluded at the Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference in 1932, made India concede lower import duty rates for a number of British commodities in return for preferential treatment in the UK for some raw material exports.

- **Growth of Trade Unions**

(i) The First World War and immediate post-War years witnessed the beginning of the Indian trade union movement. The emergence of the working class as an organised all-India class was linked with the growth of the national movement.

(ii) Trade Union movement was an expression of popular discontent, especially among the working class, caused by factors like rising prices, poor harvests and scarcity conditions, influenza epidemic, unemployment among workers, massive profiteering opportunities for the industrialists but very low wages for the workers during the War and its aftermath. The contemporary world situation, especially the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (1917), also acted as a catalyst towards creating a post-War mass awakening.

(iii) Emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene led to a broad-based national movement and the emphasis was placed on the mobilisation of the workers and peasants for the national cause.

(iv) The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was established in 1920 and the Trade Union Act of 1926 recognised the legality of trade unions and laid down conditions for registration and regulation of their activities.

(v) In the late 1920s, a strong communist influence lent a militant and revolutionary content to the trade union movement.

(vi) The government responded to the rise of labour militancy by resorting to legislative measures like Public Safety Bill (1929) and the Trade Disputes Act (1929).

(vii) Under the Congress Ministries (1937-39) the movement witnessed a phenomenal rise. Though the workers initially opposed the Second World War, the communists supported it later when Russia joined the War on behalf of the Allied Powers in 1941, calling the War a “Peoples’ War”. The post-War period also witnessed tremendous working class resurgence.

- **Kisan Movement**

(i) Though peasant resistance against established authority was a familiar feature of the 19th century, it was in the 20th century that peasant (kisan) movements got inextricably linked with the national movement.

(ii) The major peasant movements were the movement under Baba Ramchandra in UP (1920), Eka movement (1921), Rampa rebellion under Alluri Sitaram Raju (1922-24), Moplah rebellion (1921), Bardoli Satyagraha (1928), movements in UP, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. There were also peasant agitations in princely states.

(iii) The All India Kisan Sabha was established in 1936 with the objective of gaining complete freedom from economic exploitation and achievement of full economic and political power for the peasants and workers.

(iv) Peasant participation in the Quit India Movement in the 1940s made it a formidable massive upsurge.

- **Karachi Resolution (1931)**

(i) Karachi Resolution (1931) was the outcome of the Congress meet in Karachi to endorse Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

(ii) It witnessed the passing of a resolution on Fundamental Rights and National Economic Programme. The Karachi session, for the first time, defined what Swaraj really meant for the masses.

CHAPTER 14

Towards Freedom and Partition

THE ACT OF 1935

Background

Declaring that the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing", the Congress asked the British to follow the principle of self-determination so as to establish a fully responsible government as soon as possible. Simultaneously, it resolved to work towards that objective. There were, however, many obstacles. The Rowlatt Report led to the enactment of two unpopular bills despite stiff opposition. Gandhi's call for satyagraha against these two iniquitous bills gave rise to *hartals* all over the country and disturbances in a number of places. The imposition of martial law in Punjab followed and climaxed into the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy (1919) where General Dyer ordered machine gun fire on a peaceful and unarmed crowd which resulted in the death of 400 people, and injuring nearly 1,200. The Muslims were also restive at that time due to the humiliating treatment of the defeated Turkey (in the First World War) by the Allied Powers, and launched the Khilafat Movement which had the support of Gandhi. All this led to a fundamental change in the policy of the Congress. It stated in 1921 that the "object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means". The point to note is the absence of the word constitutional, which meant that unconstitutional means provided they were legitimate and peaceful might also be employed. In consequence, the Montford Reforms introduced earlier had no chance of success either. As the Congress' attitude towards the Act of 1919 hardened, even the Moderates among them who were ready to cooperate with the government found the conditions difficult to bear. Thus was born the Swaraj Party (1923), notably of Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das, with the explicit objective of "wrecking the legislatures from within" by following a policy of "uniform, continuous and sustained obstruction with a view to making government through the Assembly and the Council impossible". The tactics worked, and the hypocrisy behind the dyarchical scheme of government was exposed.

Swaraj Party

The appointment of the Simon Commission in November 1927, two years before it was due, was an indirect admission by the government of the failure of its reforms. The reason put forward, however, was that unrest was mounting in India. But a private letter of Lord Birkenhead to the Viceroy, Lord Reading, stated that the Conservatives in power apprehended a Labour victory in the next general elections in England and did not like to leave the announcement of the commission to the successors. Furthermore, it was believed that such a move could be used as a bait to ensnare and thereby break the Swaraj Party. The commission was to look "into the working of the system of government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in British India and matters connected therewith" and to consider "to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the

Simon Commission (1927-28)

Objectives

question whether the establishment of Second Chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable". The commission was composed of only Whites, which disappointed the Indian public and led to its total boycott by the Congress. The untenable excuse offered by the British was that as their Parliament appointed the commission, its members necessarily had to be from that body.

All-White Commission

The commission faced black-flag demonstrations wherever it went in India and had to hear the slogan 'Simon Go Back'. Its offer to form a joint committee with the Central Assembly was also rejected unceremoniously. There was an All-Parties Conference under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru at Bombay in May 1928 to determine the principles of a constitution for India.

Nehru Report (1928)

The Nehru report recommended joint electorates with seats reserved for the minorities on population basis except in Bengal and Punjab. "Full protection was afforded to the religious and cultural interests of the Muslims, and even new provinces on linguistic basis were to be created with a view to the planning of Muslim-majority provinces. Nineteen fundamental rights were suggested for inclusion in the proposed statute. The report suggested that the Indian Parliament should consist of (a) the Senate elected for seven years, consisting of 200 members elected by the Provincial Councils; and (b) the House of Representatives with 500 members elected for five years through adult franchise. The Governor-General (to be appointed by the British Government but paid out of Indian revenues) was to act on the advice of the Executive Council which was to be collectively responsible to the Parliament. The Provincial Councils were to be elected, on the basis of adult franchise, for five years and the Governor (to be appointed by the British Government) was to act on the advice of the Provincial Executive Council." The All-Parties Conference subsequently accepted the report but did not include the three amendments Jinnah had suggested in the meeting. The Congress forwarded the report to the British and set a deadline of one year for its acceptance, failing which they would organise a non-violent campaign in 1930. Three months later the Muslim League rejected the report and came up with Jinnah's famous "fourteen points", their minimum acceptable conditions for a political settlement. Meanwhile, Ramsay MacDonald of the Labour Party had become the Prime Minister of England under whose advice the viceroy stated that "… it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status. So, there should be a conference of the Indians and the British to consider the final proposals of the Simon Commission (in limbo at that time) before they were submitted to the Parliament in England."

Round Table Conferences

Not only did the proposed Round Table Conference have a limited purpose and scope, but the 'Dominion Status' referred to as the subject matter was also capable of being interpreted differently. The Congress decided to boycott the Round Table Conference, declared that the nation's aim was to attain complete independence and launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in March 1930. Gandhi set out on his momentous march to Dandi to prepare salt from the sea accompanied by thousands of followers. There were numerous arrests, lathi-charges by the police (even on women and children), threats to newspapers and journals for publishing the details of such onslaughts on unarmed people, and enactment of a number of ordinances. The gap between the nationalists and the government appeared to be unbridgeable. Amidst such turmoil the Round Table Conference was convened in London, to be held from November 16, 1930 to January 19, 1931. As the Congress leaders were in jail, 'safe' representatives of other parties, communities and services were nominated by the government as the spokespeople of India. The three basic principles adopted in the conference were: (i) the form of the new government would be an all-India federation; (ii) the federal government, subject to certain conditions, would be answerable to the federal legislature; and (iii) the provinces would be autonomous. The conference ended with the declaration from Ramsay MacDonald that the "... responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon

Principles Adopted

legislatures, central and provincial, with such provisions as may be considered necessary …and also with guarantees… required by minorities". To ensure the participation of the Congress in the next conference, the Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed in March 1931 when all political prisoners were released and the Civil Disobedience Movement was terminated by the Congress. As the sole representative of the Congress to the second conference (September 1 to December 1, 1931), Gandhi gave a carte blanche to Jinnah in order to solve the vexed communal problem. Jinnah, having received secret support from the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, became too inflexible in his demands, leaving Gandhi with no other option but to return to India without any results. Gandhi was arrested on reaching India. Citing the absence of an agreed settlement as a pretext, the British proceeded to adjudicate on the respective quanta of representation of different communities which led to the infamous 'Communal Award' of 1932. Subsequently, Gandhi went on a fast to stop a political divide appearing between 'Caste Hindus' and the 'Scheduled Castes', when the Poona Pact was signed somewhat modifying the 'Communal Award'. In the Third Round Table Conference in London (November 17 to December 24, 1932) the details of the working basis was given in a White Paper, which suggested dyarchy in the centre and responsible government in the provinces. The Secretary of State for India placed a Bill in the British Parliament in February 1935 which on being passed became the Government of India Act 1935.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact 1931

Communal Award

Provisions of the Act of 1935

The three main provisions of the Government of India Act 1935 were: (a) an all-India federation; (b) responsible government; and (c) separate electorates for communal and other groups. The proposed federation would constitute provinces administered by governors or by chief commissioners and any Indian states which wanted to join. The federal executive would have dyarchy, which incidentally was not recommended by the Simon Commission. Defence, external affairs, religious and tribal matters were to be exclusively administered by the viceroy with assistance from councillors chosen by him. For other matters the viceroy would be assisted by a council of ministers (not more than ten) of his choice and would be responsible to the federal legislature. On top of it, he would have discretionary and special powers to deal with situations like grave threats to the peace and tranquillity of India when he had the liberty to reject the advice of the ministers. Naturally, the position of the ministers in the federal council was regarded as "…ornamental without being useful, onerous without ever being helpful to the people they are supposed to represent; it had responsibility without power, position without authority, name without any real influence". The federal legislature, consisting of an upper and a lower house, would elect members directly for the first and indirectly for the second. As the lower house is generally considered more popular, the procedure was faulty. Quite a few subjects were excluded from the purview and jurisdiction of the federal and provincial legislatures, such as Army and Air Force Acts, any amendment to the 1935 Act and so on. Thus, responsible government with safeguards meant concentration of all powers in the hands of the governor-general in the centre. In the provinces, the governor likewise was the pivot of the entire administration.

It is to be remembered that the Act was finalised after intense debates within the British Parliament alone. Not unnaturally, many of the admittedly limited concessions offered in 1930-31 under pressure of Civil Disobedience were reduced through this process, and the resultant Act was criticised by all sections of Indian public opinion (by Liberals, Jinnah as well as the Congress) as representing little real advance over 1919. Right-wing Tory pressure, for instance, spearheaded by Churchill with Lancashire support, replaced direct by indirect elections at the federal level, and extended and tightened up the machinery of official discretionary powers, reservations and safeguards. There was some progress in the provinces, with responsible government substituting for dyarchy in almost all the departments, while the electorate was raised from 6.5 million to nearly

30 million. The governors, however, had 'discretionary powers' over summoning the legislatures, agreeing to the passage of bills, and administration of special regions like those of the tribals and so on. Ministers were not allowed to offer advice on such matters. They had the option of exercising 'individual judgement', meaning that they could give advice but their views could be rejected on matters like minority rights, privileges of civil servants, and prevention of discrimination against British business interests. Then there was the odious Section 93 of the Act of 1935, under which a governor could take over the administration of a province for an indefinite period. The efficacy of a fairly strong centre was reduced by introducing a kind of dyarchy with the proviso that the federal structure would come into effect only after 50 per cent of the princes had formally acceded to it. As in the provinces, 'safeguards' were created for the federal elected ministers to limit their access even to the so-called transferred subjects. The Assembly had no control over the newly created Central Reserve Bank; ICS salaries and debt services were declared reserved subjects; and prior permission from the viceroy was necessary to legislate on currency and exchange. No doubt, financial control was transferred from London to New Delhi, as emphasised by some historians, only to be exercised by the governor-general, a British appointee.

Powers of the Provincial Governors

In the bicameral Central Legislature, members nominated by princes would occupy 30 to 40 per cent of the seats (104 out of 276 in the Council of State and 125 out of 375 in the Federal Assembly), while Muslims and other special electorates were given considerable weightage in the centre as well as in the provinces through the inclusion in the Act of the MacDonald Award (as revised by the Poona Pact). A dangerous provision of the Act was the transfer of relations between the Crown and Indian states to the 'Crown Representative'—in practice the Viceroy himself but functioning not through responsible ministers but via the purely official Political Department, local Residents and Political Agents. Actually, due to this the federal part of the Act of 1935 could not get off the ground.

Bicameral Legislative at Centre

With the petering out of the effects of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the chances of a Congress takeover of the central government receded. The princes were aware of it, and once they realised that the British were unwilling to reduce paramountcy claims in return for accession to federation, they became disinterested in the proposal. The Muslims, having regard to the unitary character of the proposed federation, were afraid that they would be swamped by the Hindu majority while the Congress denounced it as a hoax. The British were quite pleased because the deadlock allowed them to continue indefinitely the 1919 system of total official control at the centre. Lastly, it was a fact that the much publicised 'Dominion Status' offered by Irwin in 1929 was not even mentioned in the Act of 1935. A succinct estimate of the Act was given in a private communication of Linlithgow to Zetland where he stated that it was drafted "… because we thought that way the best way …of maintaining British influence in India. It is no part of our policy, I take it, to…gratuitously hurry the handing over of controls to Indian hands at any pace faster than that which we regard as best calculated, on a long view, to hold India to the Empire."

Unrest Before the Act of 1935

Linlithgow had solid reasons to feel satisfied because there were pressures from below in the years preceding the Act of 1935, particularly in Bengal. The educated youth there, already disillusioned with Gandhian non-violence, had become exasperated after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. Consequently, there was mounting violence and the number of terrorist acts exceeded the previous years' records. Two district magistrates were killed in addition to seven other murders. There were 92 incidents in 1931 in which even schoolgirls took part. Terrorism spread from towns to villages, at least in Chittagong where nearly 52 villages were notified as disturbed areas in May 1931. A scared British administration let loose oppression, subjected all Hindu youths aged between 16 and 25 in Chittagong town to night curfew and shot down a number of inmates of the Hijli jail on September 16. Rabindranath Tagore, who usually kept himself away from nationalist politics at that time and was not a supporter of terrorism, addressed a protest meeting

in Calcutta condemning these measures. Next, anyone suspected of being sympathetic to terrorists was arrested under a sweeping ordinance passed on October 29th. Earlier, in August 1931, in the North Western Frontier Province, the rapidly expanding *Khudai Khidmatgars* had joined the Congress formally, which led to official protests that the conditions of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact were breached. But the most serious threat to the British and to the policy of compromise followed at that time by the Congress came from rising discontent among the rural populace in the United Provinces. As wholesale prices kept falling, they found revenue, rent and debt burdens increasingly unbearable. Similarly in Gujarat, there was social boycott of the buyers of confiscated land and of village officials in Bardoli and Kheda, leading to a reduction in revenue collection. Having regard to the importance of the rural base in Gujarat, Gandhi spent much time there and threatened to cancel his forthcoming trip to London for the round table conference in August 1931 unless remedial measures were taken. This was done as a special case to avert the crisis, but the situation in the United Provinces was much more complex and explosive. There the Congress tried to arbitrate between the peasants and the zamindars, collecting applications for rent reduction, a move naturally resented by the officials because it was an usurpation of their functions. Gandhi had to issue a circular in May 1931 suggesting that the non-occupancy tenants pay half of the rent while those holding occupancy rights pay 75 per cent. It was an attempt to prevent agrarian radicalism as would be evident from his cautionary tone : "…let me warn you against listening to the advice if it has reached you that you have no need to pay the zamindars or *taluqdars* any rent at all". This gave rise to the official complaint that the peasants were taking the minimum suggested by Gandhi as the maximum and were often not paying at all. Moreover, radical leaders were emerging and, in the name of the Congress, spreading fiery messages among the people. In fact, the Congress was a restraining influence and things became quiet after Jawaharlal Nehru toured the area. It flared up again when the round table talks failed and the Congress authorised no-rent in some districts. The administration then applied a judicious mix of conciliation (remission of rent and revenue) and repression, and brought the situation under control. But the simmering unrest continued and by 1936 the United Provinces' Congress leadership recommended in principle the abolition of zamindari, much ahead of its counterparts in other provinces.

Discontent in the United Provinces

The lull in political activity brought about by the 1931 pact also gave rise to anti-feudal and anti-autocratic agitation in princely states, as in Kashmir. As the subject population there was overwhelmingly Muslim under a Hindu king, the chance of clashes with a communal tinge was always there. In July 1931, the agitation started by a group of Muslim graduates which included Sheikh Abdullah led to a mass attack on Srinagar jail in which 21 people were killed. In consequence, there was a communal outburst to quell which repressive measures were taken. There were mob attacks on police in September when the British responded with military help to assist the beleaguered Maharaja. In the small state of Pudukottah near Trichinopoly, there was similar trouble in July 1931 when rioting mobs protesting against new taxes overpowered the police and military, burnt court records, released prisoners from jail, and forced the ruler to cancel the additional levy for the time being. Officials in Orissa complained that the Congress village development work was leading to antagonism between the peasants and zamindars in districts like Puri. There was a no-revenue campaign in coastal Andhra by late 1931 and it was led by local leaders like Duggirala whose Telugu ballad *Gandhi Gita* provided inspiration to nationalist and agrarian movements. In Krishna and Guntur districts, people were protesting against moneylenders and *mahajans* in September 1931. There was a satyagraha in the Guruvayoor temple in Kerala in November 1931 by the Congress who protested against caste discrimination on temple entry; the protest had a radicalising impact. Volunteers marching on foot traversed the areas of Malabar and the princely state of Cochin and Travancore, and the satyagraha continued even though the Civil Disobedience Movement was beginning at that time. Ultimately,

Popular Unrest in States

Gandhi had to call back the satyagrahis among whom there was A.K. Gopalan, who was soon to become Kerala's most popular communist peasant leader.

Official Attitude

The official attitude towards such unrest was to launch a counter-offensive through a pre-emptive strike. According to D.A. Low, it is not correct to hold Willingdon responsible for the change in British thinking because the stance had already been formed during the Civil Disobedience Movement and had been supported by the bureaucrats who did not like Willingdon's predecessor Irwin's treatment of Gandhi as an equal. The basic idea was not to create another Jallianwalla Bagh, but to invest civil officials with sweeping, near-military powers (D.A. Low, *Congress and the Raj*). This would be evident from Home Member Emerson's comment that the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 must be "…accompanied by the determination to strike at once and strike hard, if and when settlement breaks down". Anticipating this, an Emergency Powers Ordinance was drafted months before the actual crackdown of January 1932. A further reason was the shift to the Right in British politics when the renegade Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald formed a National Government in September 1931 with Tory support. There was also the counter-offensive launched to manage the deepening World Economic Crisis by Lancashire and British business interests. The outcome of this was the British threat to withdraw Government of India's fiscal autonomy when it was decided to raise the cotton duty from 20 to 25 per cent to meet the crisis due to a fall in revenue income. Ultimately, however, the new tariff was introduced so as to protect the payment of Home Charges and remittance of profits at the cost of some sacrifice for the sectional interests of Lancashire. British business continued to insist on commercial safeguards so as to protect foreign capital in India against 'discrimination' by nationalist government. All these developments preordained the Second Round Table Conference to a failure even before it had started. The minorities issue was the stumbling block when not only Muslims but also depressed castes, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans demanded separate electorates. Behind-the-scenes intrigue was provided by the representative of British business in India, Benthall.

Stalemate

He coaxed the Muslim delegates to obtain their support in return for a promise "…that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and...do what we can to find places for them in European firms…" Gandhi tried to end the stalemate by making all constitutional progress conditional upon a solution of the communal problem which would be the "crown of the Swaraj constitution and not its foundation". He even went to the extent of acceding to all Muslim claims, provided they supported the Congress demand for Swaraj. It was all to no avail because Gandhi's magnanimity was not shared by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs who were in no mood to give the Muslims a majority in Punjab. The princes on their side were no longer interested in joining the Federation, taking into account the changed conditions after the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience. Moreover, the Congress was regarded in the conference at par with a variety of sectional interests, some of them quite minor or unrepresentative.

Resumption of CDM

On returning to India, Gandhi found Jawaharlal and Ghaffar Khan in jail and the North West Frontier Province, the United Provinces and Bengal reeling under oppressive measures. When his request for a meeting with Willingdon was rudely rejected, there was no other alternative but to resume Civil Disobedience again. The British were ready with their pre-emptive plans with a battery of ordinances like Unlawful Association, Unlawful Instigation, Boycotting and so on. Congress leaders, activists and sympathisers were arrested all over the country, its organisations banned and properties confiscated.

Official Repression

The repression unleashed did not deter the Congress from offering resistance for about a year and a half before giving up. The number of arrests between January 1932 and March 1933 was about 120,000 and convictions up to April 1933 numbered 74,671. Muslim participation was generally low, but the North West Frontier Province recorded the highest number of convictions (6053), or 0.25 per cent of the entire population as against 0.007 to 0.064 per cent elsewhere. The number of

convictions among women was 3630 and the real mass movement characteristic of Civil Disobedience was indicated by the fact that illiterates comprised 759 out of 954 convictions in Madras and 1550 out of 2004 in the United Provinces. Quite a range of activities comprised the movement "because so very many things had now become illegal, and civil liberties almost totally suppressed…The forms of defiance included picketing of cloth and liquor shops, closing of markets and boycotting of White or loyalist business concerns, symbolic hoisting of Congress flags, holding in public illegal Congress sessions, salt satyagraha, non-payment of *chaukidari* taxes, no-rent as well as no-revenue, forest law violations, a certain amount of illegal Congress functioning (including even a secret radio transmitter near Bombay in August 1932) and the use of bombs—the latter two methods later strongly condemned by Gandhi." (Sumit Sarkar) Willingdon labelled Bombay city and Bengal as two black spots. Massive participation of petty Gujarati traders in the former nearly ruined White firms, to prevent which the government introduced very effective blacklisting and pushed through a law establishing official regulation of the cotton trade. The no-revenue movement in Gujarat lost steam because of the 1931 truce; even then the *patidars* in Ras village in Kheda defiantly held on till 1933, some of them having been stripped naked and whipped in public and given electric shocks by the police. They also lost some 2,000 acres in the process. In Andhra and Tamil Nadu, there was not much activity as compared to that in 1930; Bihar witnessed several mass attacks on police stations while in the United Provinces the activity remained confined to urban areas. Salt Satyagraha was revived in coastal areas of Bengal and the no-rent movement in some districts, and the Congress reluctance to inject a dose of agrarian radicalism helped separatist Muslim peasant movements to grow. But the biggest threat to the British in Bengal was terrorism although the province was governed by Anderson, a specialist in repression who had earned opprobrium in the Irish Civil War. Even so, Civil Disobedience was on the wane towards the close of 1932, not due to any loss of faith in the Congress, but due to the inability to withstand overwhelmingly superior forces. There was, however, the halo of sacrifice and martyrdom, which enabled the Congress to win elections from 1934 onwards. Nonetheless, there is some truth in the comment of Hardiman: "…voting is not the same as agitating…The days of the classic Gandhian satyagrahas had passed."

Business Realignments

Business realignment was another important feature of the run-up to the Act of 1935 because of the considerable ambivalence in bourgeois attitudes towards Civil Disobedience. Throughout 1932, the movement in Bombay was quite strong due to considerable Gujarati merchant support. There was even a takeover of the Indian Merchant's Chamber by a nationalist group in early 1932 in that city. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) also stayed away from the constitutional discussions which G.D. Birla subsequently explained to the British was because of the unwillingness of its members. He, however, hastened to assure them that the door for cooperation had not been entirely closed. With the loss of momentum in the agitation, political 'realism' and certain sectional economic interests pushed certain business groups towards more cooperation with the British. This led to an entirely uncalled for accommodation in the Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference in the summer of 1932. There, India agreed to lower import duties on a number of British commodities and in return got preferential treatment in Britain for some raw material exports like jute, tea and hides, the competition for which was almost non-existent. It was ratified fairly easily in the Legislative Assembly even though Birla along with the nationalists condemned the agreement in public. As regards cotton textiles, the manufacturers were much more worried about Japanese imports of coarse varieties than the competition from a weakened Lancashire. So, the infamous Lees-Mody Pact of October 1933 followed, under which Bombay cotton magnates agreed to more concessions for British piecegoods provided Lancashire imported more of Indian raw cotton. This was said to be necessary because Japan had reduced its Indian raw cotton intake due to the high anti-Japanese

Ambivalent Bourgeois Attitude

Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference

Lees-Mody Pact 1933

tariff walls in India. "Nationalists were furious at this 'betrayal' through acceptance of lower tariffs for Lancashire, and so were Ahmedabad textile magnates who produced fine cloth in competition with Lancashire and had no desire to see long-staple cotton it needed flowing away to the U.K. But Bombay mill owners and Tatas (who signed a similar agreement with British steel interests in face of Belgian competition soon afterwards) together represented a formidable combination, and politically, too, Thakurdas was pleading for 'some understanding' by June 1932 and Birla repeatedly tried his hand as mediator between the government and Gandhi during 1932-34." (Sumit Sarkar)

However, a total sell-out or unqualified collaboration by Indian business groups was not possible because there was after all some objective compulsions, both economic and political. India had a permanent grouse against British insistence on pegging the rupee to 1s 6d ratio since it was favourable to imports and it required for its maintenance deflationary fiscal and monetary policies. India continued to follow 'sound finance' policies dogmatically by cutting down expenditure on irrigation and railways while elsewhere in the capitalist countries governments fought economic depression by greatly increasing public expenditure. There were massive gold sales by Depression-affected peasants, forcing the Congress to picket gold export shops in Bombay and there were rumours that men like Thakurdas and Birla were secretly making "lakhs…from this immoral traffic". Furthermore, strong Lancashire business interests combined with the ultra-Tory, Churchill-led opposition prevented every move to go beyond the Simon constitutional framework which made collaboration difficult. Ultimately, such opposite pressures towards collaboration and conflict brought about a change in business attitudes, which wanted the Congress to abandon mass agitation and move towards Assembly and eventually ministerial participation. This change in thinking overcame the fairly sharp split between near-loyalists and nationalists among the Indian business class which prevailed during the early 1930s. It also suited the Congress since the Civil Disobedience was steadily losing ground in face of overwhelming repression.

CONGRESS MINISTRIES (1937-1939)

Early in 1936, the Congress decided at Lucknow, as also subsequently at Faizabad, to fight the elections but to keep the issue of participation in the government open uptil the post-election period. As before, the left-wing of the party did not push its differences with the others to the end due to their mutual respect and trust of each other and to their commitments to the anti-imperialist struggle. Aware of the damage that a split could cause, it did not go past the point of no return. The Congress won the elections to the provincial assemblies held in February 1937 with a massive mandate. It had contested the elections on a programme of total rejection of the Act of 1935, the restoration of civil liberties, the release of political prisoners, the radical transformation of the agrarian system and some more measures. Despite the narrow franchise, the Congress won 716 out of the 1,161 seats it contested. Excepting Bengal, Punjab, Assam, the North West Frontier Province and Sind, it had a majority in all the other provinces and was the largest single party in three of the provinces where it failed to secure a majority. The Congress Working Committee held out for some time in a tussle with the government and then decided to accept office under the Act of 1935. It formed ministries in six provinces: Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and the United Provinces. Subsequently, in Assam and the North West Frontier Province also, the Congress formed ministries. Its main objective was to prevent the provincialisation of the party, which the British wanted to accomplish, as also to guide and coordinate the functions of the ministries. For this purpose, a central control board calling itself the Parliamentary Sub-Committee was constituted with Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Rajendra Prasad as its members. The Congress had, therefore, a dual function to perform. It had to govern the provinces, but also act as an opposition in the centre where the real power lay. "It was to bring about social reform through the legislature and administration in the provinces and at the same time carry on the struggle for

Massive Congress Mandate

independence and prepare the people for the next phase of mass struggle." Thus began the Congress' strategy of Struggle-Truce-Struggle in a historical context. Gandhi provided a sort of guideline by writing in the *Harijan* of August 7, 1937: "These offices have to be held lightly, not tightly. They are or should be crowns of thorns, never of renown. Offices have been taken to see if they enable us to quicken the pace at which we are moving towards our goal." Sometime earlier, he had cautioned the Congress that the Act of 1935 was to be used "in a manner not expected by them (British) and by refraining from using it the way intended by them".

Struggle-Truce-Struggle Strategy

There was a tremendous psychological change in the country when the Congress assumed office. People felt victorious and free on seeing *khadi-clad* Congressmen recently released from jail ruling in the secretariat and issuing orders to the very set of people who had taken them to jail the other day. The atmosphere was electric, as Jawaharlal Nehru described it in his book, *The Discovery of India*: "There was a sense of immense relief as of the lifting of a weight which had been oppressing the people, there was release of long repressed mass energy which was evident everywhere … At the Headquarters of the Provincial Governments, in the very citadels of the old bureaucracy, many a symbolic scene was witnessed … Now, suddenly, hordes of people, from the city and the village, entered these sacred precincts and roamed about almost at will. They were interested in anything; they went into the Assembly Chamber, where the sessions used to be held; they even peeped into the Ministers' rooms. It was difficult to stop them for they no longer felt as outsiders; they had a sense of ownership in all this … the policeman and the orderlies with shining daggers were paralyzed; the old standards had fallen; European dress, symbol of position and authority, no longer counted. It was difficult to distinguish between members of the Legislatures and the peasants and townsmen who came in such large numbers."

Along with prestige, responsibilities of the Congress also quantitatively increased. The Congressmen were required to show now that they could not only lead the people in mass struggles but also use state power for their benefit. Though their responsibilities were tremendous, the Congress ministers were restricted in their power and financial resources. It was obviously not within their power to change the basically imperialist character of the administration; nor was it for them to introduce radical reforms. Moreover, their tenure was quite short, twenty-eight months and within that time and with the limitations on their power, they tried to bring about as much improvement in the lives of the people as possible so as to give the people an idea of Swaraj. They reduced their salaries from Rs. 2,000 to Rs 500, made themselves accessible to common people and in a short time introduced many ameliorative legislations promised in their election manifesto. The extension and protection of civil liberties had been a major concern of the Congress since its inception and was taken up by the ministries in right earnest. Emergency powers like the Public Safety Act and the like acquired by the provinces in 1932 were all repealed, and bans on books, periodicals and political organisations were lifted. As the ban on the Communist Party had been imposed by the centre, it could not be removed but the communists had more freedom of action than in the immediate past in the Congress-ruled provinces. All restrictions on the press were removed and security deposits taken from them returned. Undercover functions of the police like shadowing and reporting on the activities of political workers were discontinued. In this, the Congress presumably acted under Gandhi's suggestion to render the military and police practically idle so as to prove that the Congress could rule without the military and with the least possible help from the police. The release of all political prisoners was one of the first acts of the Congress ministries, and in Bihar and the United Provinces, where some were still held due to the governors' refusal, the ministers resigned to force the issue and succeeded in the end.

Activities of Congress-led Ministries

This was where the Congress Governments differed from the non-Congress Ministries in provinces like Bengal and Punjab. There the curbs on civil liberties were not removed and political prisoners continued to languish in jails despite repeated

hunger strikes by them. The Congress move in Bombay to release lands confiscated during the no-tax phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement could be given effect only after the threat of resignations by the ministers. There were, however, a few blemishes like the prosecution of a Socialist leader for making an inflammatory speech in Madras who was released due to the furore in the Congress ranks led by Jawaharlal Nehru. It seems on being asked by Nehru whether or not he (Nehru) would also be arrested if he committed a similar offence, the premier (C.M.) of Madras, Rajagopalachari, replied in the affirmative. There was much concern in the Congress over such incidents and right-wing ministers were asked not to tamper with civil liberties. Having received massive support from the peasants and workers, the Congress was required to provide economic relief to them. The Congress election manifesto promised agrarian reform by modifying the system of land tenures, and the reduction of rent and land revenue. A thorough overhaul of the agrarian structure by completely eliminating the zamindars was out of question because the Congress had to lean on the zamindars for support. Actually, in large parts of the country, the smaller landlords were ardent supporters of the national movement. In order to fight the main enemy, British colonialism, it was necessary to win over or at least neutralise as large a part of the landlord classes as possible so that the enemy could be isolated and deprived of all social support within India. Also, there was not enough time. The Congress knew that the ministries would be short-lived. As their main policy was to oppose imperialism, they could not cooperate with it and a sense of impending crisis was always present; it was inherent in the situation. The time constraint became more acute as war clouds gathered over Europe in 1938, and the ministries had to do things in a hurry. Another difficulty was the existence of reactionary second chambers in the form of legislative councils in most of the Congress-held states like Assam, Bihar, Bombay, the United Provinces and Madras. These were dominated by upper caste people like zamindars, etc., and in order to get a legislation passed the Congress had to cajole and coax them. For instance, the Bihar and the United Provinces Governments made compromises with the zamindar and merchant members of their upper houses. Lastly, the land tenure systems in different states of India had evolved over the centuries and were a maze of rules, regulations, customs and conventions. It required a lot of time to unravel the matter but the ministries did not have so much time. "The problem of debt and money lending was also integrated with peasant production and livelihood in too complex a manner to be tackled by an easy one-shot solution. Consequently, any effort at structural reform was bound to be an extremely formidable and time-consuming operation, as was to be revealed later after independence when the Congress and the Communists attempted to transform the agrarian structure in different states of the Indian union." (Bipan Chandra)

Congress Manifesto

Constraints of the Ministries

Yet, within these constraints, the agrarian reforms initiated by the Congress went a long way, dealing in general with the questions of tenancy rights, security of tenure and rents of the tenants, and the problem of rural indebtedness. For instance, in the United Provinces, full hereditary rights were given to all statutory tenants in Agra and Awadh while taking away the landlord's right to prevent the growth of occupancy. Ten years was fixed as the time limit after which the rents of the hereditary tenants could be changed, while restrictions were placed on the rights of the landlords to enhance rents even after this period. The practice of arresting or imprisoning a tenant for non-payment of rent was stopped, and illegal demands like *nazranas* (gifts) and *begar* or forced, unpaid labour were banned. The reforms in Bihar were even more radical. There, increases in rent since 1911 were abolished, which led to a reduction of nearly 20 per cent in rent. Also, factors like falling prices, deterioration of soils, and neglect of irrigation were taken into account to reduce rent. A very radical measure was the grant of occupancy rights to under-ryots if they had tilled the land for a minimum period of 12 years. Pending rents remaining unpaid were considerably reduced and the interests on them were brought down from 12 per cent to 6.25 per cent. Lands confiscated for

Agrarian Reforms

non-payment of rents between 1929 and 1937 were given back to previous tenants on payment of half the arrears. Orissa passed a tenancy bill in May 1938 to grant the free transfer of occupancy holdings, reduce the interest on arrears of rent from 12.5 per cent to 6 per cent and abolish all illegal levies on tenants. Similar measures of tenancy reform were carried on in the legislatures of Bombay, the Central Provinces and the North West Frontier Province, thus improving and securing the status of millions of tenants in the zamindari areas. The basic landlord system was not affected, nor was there any improvement in the conditions of the landless who were the sub-tenants (presumably because they had no vote).

Pro-labour Orientation

Taking in general a pro-labour stance, the Congress ministries tried to advance workers' interests and promote industrial peace. They established conciliation mechanisms so as to prevent the workforce from going on strike and advocated compulsory arbitration before taking such a step. This alarmed the Indian capitalist class who requested the ministries to hasten slowly in such matters. The Bombay Ministry appointed a Textile Enquiry Committee which recommended, among other things, an increase in wages amounting to a crore of rupees. The scheme was implemented despite strong protests from the millowners. The Industrial Disputes Act was passed in November 1938, which the Bombay Premier, B.G. Kher, said was based on the philosophy of "class collaboration and not class conflict". Emphasising on conciliation, arbitration and negotiation, the Act was against lightning strikes and lockouts until after a period of four months during which the Court was to give an award. "The Act was strongly opposed by Left Congressmen, including Communists and Congress Socialists, for restricting the freedom to strike and for laying down a new complicated procedure for the registration of trade unions, which, they said, would encourage unions promoted by employers. In Madras, too, the Government promoted the policy of 'internal settlement' of labour disputes through government-sponsored conciliation and arbitration proceedings. In the United Provinces, Kanpur was the seat of serious labour unrest as the workers expected active support from the popularly elected government. A major strike occurred in May 1938. The government set up a Labour Enquiry Committee, headed by Rajendra Prasad. The Committee's recommendations included an increase in workers' wages with a minimum wage of Rs 15 per month, formation of an arbitration board, recruitment of labour for all mills by an independent board, maternity benefits to women workers, and recognition of the Left-dominated *Mazdur Sabha* by the employers. The employers straightaway rejected the report, but ultimately accepted the principal recommendations under government pressure. Likewise, in Bihar, a committee headed by Rajendra Prasad recommended strengthening of trade union rights, amelioration of the conditions of labour, and conciliation and arbitration proceedings before strikes and lockouts.

Industrial Disputes Act

Other Social Welfare Measures

Certain other measures of social reform and welfare taken by the Congress include the introduction of prohibition in selected areas in different states and improvement in the conditions of the untouchables or Harijans—as Gandhi used to call them, the term meaning 'children of God'. Laws were passed enabling them to enter temples, and to get free access to public office, public sources of water such as wells and ponds, roads, means of transport, hospitals and other similar institutions maintained out of public funds, restaurants and hotels. Courts and other public authorities were directed not to admit any custom or usage imposing civil disability on Harijans. Scholarships and freeships were increased for Harijan students, and efforts were made to induct more of them in police and other government jobs. Primary, technical and higher education along with health and sanitation were regarded as areas needing immediate attention. There was expansion of girls' education. More importance was given to vocational training so as to improve manual and productive work. Khadi, spinning and village industries were supported and given subsidies. A campaign for mass adult education was started. Attempts were made to

National Planning Committee 1938

promote indigenous industries like automobile manufacture by removing the obstacles hindering their growth. A National Planning Committee was appointed in 1938 by Congress President, Subhas Bose, for planned development.

The Congress strategy was to continue within bounds of legality the non-mass struggle phases of the national movement along with mass political activity and popular mobilisation. Actually, one of the purposes of accepting office was to promote mass political activity. A circular was sent to all Congressmen in July 1937 stating that organisational and other work outside the legislature was to remain the major occupation of the Congress. It stressed that "without it legislative activity would have little value" and that "the two forms of activity must be coordinated together and the masses should be kept in touch with whatever we do and consulted about it". Naturally, a question was raised about the forms this mass political activity should take and how work in administration and legislature was to be coordinated with political work outside. Also, there was the question of the attitude the popularly elected government should adopt towards popular agitation, especially towards those crossing the borderline of legality. As there were no precedents to follow, different provinces adopted different methods. Visalakshi Menon, who conducted the only study of this nature, said that in the United Provinces, the coordination of legislative and administrative activities and extra-parliamentary struggle was quite successful. Diverse forms of mass mobilisation there ranged from the organisation of Congress committees in villages to the setting up of popular organs of authority in the form of Congress police stations and panchayats dispensing justice under the leadership of local Congress committees. There were mass petitions to officials and ministers, and grievance cells were set up in districts to acquaint the ministers and MLAs with the problems faced locally. Mass literacy campaigns were started to educate adults and to inform them about the work of the ministers. It is, however, not clear how such activities were carried on in the provinces where the Congress right-wing was powerful. In any event, this type of activity started waning in the United Provinces by 1939.

Emphasis on Organisational Work

Then there was the dilemma of a ruling party organising protests against itself, and what if the demonstrations turned violent? "The issue was, perhaps, posed as an easily solvable problem as far as Congressmen committed to non-violence were concerned, but there were many other Congressmen and non-Congressmen (for example, Communists, Royists, Socialists and Revolutionary Terrorists) who were not so committed, who felt that the expanded civil liberties should be used to turn the masses towards more militant or even violent forms of agitation, and who tried to prove through such agitation and inadequacy of non-violence, the Congress strategy of S-T-S and the policy of the working of the reforms." (Bipan Chandra) Another problem was that while Congressmen in general accepted the ministries as their own, there were some who were not so well disposed. They were bent on showing the Congress as a political organ of the upper classes and one which was, perhaps, no different from the imperialist authorities so far as the masses and their agitation was concerned. This pushed some others into thinking that all hostile critics and militants were forces of disorder and all forms of protest would continually get out of hand. Unfortunately, leaders like Rajagopalachari and K.M. Munshi did not hesitate to use their respective state apparatuses in a politically repressive manner which complicated matters further. Still, the expansion of civil liberties brought about an immense surge in popular energies everywhere. Kisan Sabhas were formed, trade union activities and memberships increased while student and youth movements flourished everywhere. The popular movements in many places were on a collision course with the Congress governments, which made Jawaharlal Nehru privately unhappy. But his public stance was quite different; there he came out in support of the ministers to "protect them from petty and petulant criticism". There was even a resolution passed in September 1938 criticising those, "including a few Congressmen", who had been "found in the name of civil liberty to advocate murder, arson, looting and class war by violent means". It went on to

Official Dilemma

say that the Congress "will consistently, with its tradition, support measures that may be undertaken by Congress governments for the defence of life and property".

It was only natural for the Left to be extremely critical of the Congress governments' handling of popular protests, as would be seen in the summing up of the situation by R. Palme Dutt of the Communist Party: "The experience of the two years of Congress Ministries demonstrated with growing acuteness the dangers implicit in entanglement in imperialist administration under a leadership already inclined to compromise. The dominant moderate leadership in effective control of the Congress machinery and of the Ministries was in practice developing an increasing cooperation with imperialism, was more and more acting openly in the interests of the upper class landlords and industrialists, and was showing an increasingly marked hostility to all militant expression and forms of mass struggle … Hence a new crisis of the national movement began to develop." Gandhi also had this thought of a developing crisis but his point of view was very different from that of the communists. He condemned militancy and violence of the popular protests, but did not like the increasing use of colonial laws and the colonial law and order enforcing machinery to deal with popular protests. He objected to the Madras Government's Criminal Law Amendment Act excoriated its "obnoxious clauses". He was apprehensive that such measures would alienate the people, particularly the peasants and workers, and would make it difficult to organise the next wave of extra-legal mass movement against colonial rule. It was for this reason, he wrote in December 1938, that if the Congress ministries "find that they cannot run the State without the help of the police and the military, it is the clearest possible sign, in terms of non-violence, that the Congress should give up office and again wander in the wilderness in search of the Holy Grail".

Leftist Critique of Congress Ministries

As a consequence, serious weaknesses developed in the party during the period of the Congress ministries. There were factional strife and internal squabbles on ideological and personal planes. A particularly galling example was the quarrel between the ministers and the Assembly party in the Central Provinces leading to the resignation of the premier, Dr. N.B. Khare. The movement for bogus membership started and began to gain momentum. Jobs and positions of personal advantage proved to be a big draw for opportunists, self-seekers and careerists who brought in their wake increasing indiscipline among the ranks. A despondent Gandhi remarked: "We seem to be weakening from within." He complained bitterly against the growing misuse of office and creeping corruption in Congress ranks and told the *Seva Sangh* workers in May 1939: "I would go to the length of giving the whole Congress organisation a decent burial, rather than put up with the corruption that is rampant." Earlier, in November 1938, he had written in *Harijan*: "If the Congress is not purged of irregularities and illegalities, it will cease to be the power it is today and fail to fulfil the expectations when the real struggle faces the country." His advice was to give up office and start another phase of Satyagraha. Similar was the feeling of Jawaharlal Nehru who wrote to Gandhi on April 28, 1938: "I feel strongly that the Congress Ministries are working inefficiently and not doing much that they could do. They are adapting themselves far too much to the old order and trying to justify it. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position that we have built up with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the levels of ordinary politicians who have no principles to stand by and whose work is governed by a day to day opportunism … I think that there are enough men of goodwill in the Congress … But their minds are full of party conflicts and the desire to crush this person or that group." The beginning of the Second World War brought forth a political crisis leading to the resignation of the Congress ministries. Gandhi was relieved and felt that this would end the rampant corruption in the Congress. He wrote to Rajagopalachari on October 23, 1939: " I am quite clear in my mind that what has happened is best for the cause. It is a bitter pill I know. But it was needed. It will drive away all the parasites from

Limitations and Weaknesses

the body. We have been obliged to do wrong things which we shall be able to avoid."

The imperialist historian, R. Coupland, in his book, *The Constitutional Problem in India,* however, found in the Congress ministries in their last year "little to distinguish" them from the other government or from pre-1937 bureaucracies insofar as maintenance of law and order was concerned. But he appreciated that "…the Congress Governments can be said to have stood the test imposed on them in the field of law and order". He was highly critical of the "totalitarianism" of the Congress High Command, which, in his opinion, had "completely undermined the federal principle, and, together with a number of pro-Hindu measures of Congress ministries, led to a decisive alienation of the Muslims". It was an echo of the standard Muslim League critique put forward for instance by Jinnah at the Patna session of the League in December 1938 when he denounced "Congress Fascism". Azad in his book, *India Wins Freedom,* along with British writers on the Partition years like Penderel Moon and H.V. Dodson, also gave prime importance to certain Congress attitudes and policies between 1937 and 1939 that were responsible for Muslim alienation. Considering that the major revival of the League after 1937 began in the United Provinces, the Congress rejection of a coalition there had often been regarded as a decisive factor in subsequent League intransigence. The League and the Congress were quite close in the United Provinces during the elections as also on an all-India plane. In the former, both of them were contesting the National Agriculturist Party while in the latter their election manifestoes were nearly the same. Both were critical of the Act of 1935 while the League harboured a wish to cooperate with the Congress on the basis of the Lucknow Pact (1916).

Views of Coupland

POLITICS OF SEPARATISM AND THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

Background: Growth of Communalism

Two persons, one a Hindu and the other a Muslim, told the Indians of the 19th century to believe in the supremacy of reason in religious, social and moral affairs. There is a remarkable coincidence between the basic ideas of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the first half and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the second half of the 19th century. Both of them regarded the Western system of responsible government as the ideal form of government for the country, but found that the stage of social development India had reached then was much below the standards such an administration called for. Ram Mohan went on espousing these ideals till his end, but Syed Ahmad could not live up to his ideals and fell into the trap of communalism.

Communalism is a modern phenomenon—rooted in modern social, economic and political colonial structure—that emerged out of modern politics based on mass mobilisation and popular participation. Its social roots lay in the rising middle-classes who propagated imaginary communal interests to further their own economic interests—communalism was a bourgeois question par excellence. Bypassing basic economic interests, the communalists claimed to protect interests which did not exist.

Religiosity itself did not amount to communalism but in a country where lack of education and low awareness of the outside world was a sad reality, religion had the potential of becoming, and was used as, a vehicle of communalism. This is what really happened in India, a land of religious pluralism.

Communalists were backed in their communal campaign by the colonial state. The colonial state and the communalists were helped in their sinister motives by the fact that often socio-economic distinctions in Indian society coincided with religious distinctions. The inherent class contradictions were given a post-facto communal colouring by the vested interests. Conservative social reactionary elements provided full support to the process of growth of communalism in India.

Communalism or communal ideology consists of three stages, one following the other. The first stage or element is the belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests, that is, common political, social, economic and cultural interests. The second

Stages of Communalism

element consists of the notion that in a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests of the followers of one religion are different from those of the followers of another. The third stage is reached when the idea gains ground that not only the secular interests of one religion, or the community following it, are different from the secular interests of another religion, or the community following it, but also the two are mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.

People falling prey to the first stage are not content by describing a person as a nationalist. He has to be a Sikh nationalist, a Hindu nationalist and so on. The second category of communalists, despite their communal leanings, still retains some liberal, democratic, humanist and nationalist beliefs. "Most of the communalists before 1937—the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Ali Brothers after 1925, M.A. Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai and N.C. Kelkar after 1922—functioned within a liberal communal framework. (Bipan Chandra). The third category of communalists is dangerous because of their fascist tendencies; they are motivated by fear and hatred, and prone to use violence of language, deed and behaviour, the language of war and enmity against political opponents. "We may take note of several other connected aspects. While a communalist talked of, or believed in, defending his 'community's' interests, in real life no such interests existed outside the field of religion. The economic and political interests of the Hindus, Muslims and others were the same. In that sense they did not even constitute separate communities. As Hindus or Muslims, they did not have a separate political-economic life or interests on an all-India or even regional basis. They were divided from fellow Hindus or Muslims by region, language, culture, class, caste, social status, social practices, food and dress habits, etc., and united on these aspects with followers of other religions. An upper class Muslim had far more in common, even culturally, with an upper class Hindu than with a lower class Muslim. Similarly, a Punjabi Hindu stood closer culturally to a Punjabi Muslim than to a Bengali Hindu; and, of course, the same was true of a Bengali Muslim in relation to a Bengali Hindu and a Punjabi Muslim. The unreal communal division, thus, obscured the real division of the Indian people into linguistic-cultural regions and social classes as well as their real, emerging and growing unity into a nation." (Bipan Chandra)

Unreal Communal Division

To regard the communal problem in India as a consequence of the Hindu-Muslim religious differences is not quite correct. Especially as, during the colonial period, the British used such differences to further their interests. There was nothing unique about Indian communalism. It was the product of the conditions which, in other societies, produced similar phenomena and ideologies like Fascism, anti-Semitism, racism, the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland and the Christian-Muslim conflict in Lebanon.

Causes for the Growth of Communalism

When the British established their hold on India, they were somewhat respectful towards the last of the Mughals. But their respect evaporated when they saw the flippancy and decay in the court, and their attitude towards the Muslims hardened after the 1857 uprising. The Wahabi attempts to establish a *Dar-ul-Islam* or abode of Islam (in India) following 1857 probably led the British to change their strategy towards Muslims, which was adopted after the 1870s. The Hindus with their relatively higher political consciousness started demanding their dues from the British who found them much more inconvenient than the politically, economically and educationally backward Muslims. W.W. Hunter, supposedly the leading authority on India at that time, pleaded for a change in the policy towards Muslims in his book, *The Indian Mussalman* (1871) adding that they were too weak to stage a rebellion. The Muslims on their part realised that due to their backwardness in education and politics they would never get their due share in a representative government, and this apprehension gradually turned to 'Hinduphobia' which suited the avowed British policy of divide and rule. Other factors also helped to grow this divisiveness. These were as follows:

Policy of Divide and Rule

(i) The communalisation of Indian History—Ancient India was viewed as the Hindu period and Medieval India as the Muslim period of Indian history. It is not correct to consider religion as the guiding

force for the entire medieval period. Although the rulers were Muslims, there were Hindu collaborators as well. Moreover, the Muslim masses were as poor as the Hindu masses and were thoroughly oppressed and exploited by the ruling elite. (ii) The creation of heroes with a communal touch—Maharana Pratap, Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh—were taken to be nationalist heroes and Akbar, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb as foreigners. The first three were nationalists because they were Hindus, while the Mughals were foreigners because they were Muslims. This reasoning is not valid in a historical sense because nationalism as it is defined now did not exist in medieval India. (iii) Government jobs were used as a bait to encourage communalism. Jawaharlal Nehru's comment on this aspect of the British policy in his book, *The Discovery of India,* reads: "This enormous patronage was exercised to strengthen the British hold on the country, to crush discordant and disagreeable elements, and to promote rivalry and discord amongst various groups anxiously looking forward to employment in government service. It led to demoralisation and conflict and the government could play one group against the other."

Partition of Bengal (1905)

Although started as an administrative measure, the partition of Bengal (1905) soon turned into a political advantage for the government because it divided the province into areas of Hindu majority and Muslim majority. Through this measure the government wanted to weaken the nationalism of Bengal and develop a Muslim block against it. The move against partition was in the form of Swadeshi Movement along with the boycott of British goods. As if to counter that, the All India Muslim League was set up towards the end of 1906 by people like Aga Khan, zamindars, ex-bureaucrats and others with official patronage. Their purpose apparently was to prevent young Muslims from joining the Congress and to seek favours from the government for this service as also for their loyalty. The Muslim separatism growing out of it was also influenced by signs of Hindu revival, the blatant propaganda of the government that the partition would be beneficial to the Muslims and the rash of communal riots which broke out in Eastern Bengal. Morley-Minto's proposal of separate electorates in the legislative bodies (in their reforms of 1909) encouraged communalist tendencies. The measure was introduced with the notion that the Indian society consisted of a mere collection of various interests and groups with the Hindus and the Muslims as basically two separate groups. Confusing the logic of the proposal it was, however, declared that the Muslims were "a separate, distinct and monolithic community". It meant grouping of constituencies, voters and elected candidates on the basis of religion and limiting the campaign and politics within its confines. It was explained that through this measure, Muslims would be granted representation in the councils not according to their 'numerical strength' but also according to their 'political importance'. The real purpose was to strengthen the hands of their allies, the Muslims, and to prevent Hindu-Muslim unity. It was nicely summed up by David Page in his book, *Prelude to Partition*: "The granting of separate electorates appears to have been an attempt by the Raj to shore up a crucial part of its system of control…it was an attempt to extend and broaden the base of its rule by extending and broadening the support of its traditional allies."

Formation of Muslim League (1906)

Separate Electorates for Muslims

Hindu communalism, though not as vigorous as the Muslim variety, also made its appearance at this time. The Punjab Hindu Sabha, founded in 1909, directed its ire against the National Congress for trying to unite Indians into a single nation and 'for sacrificing Hindu interests' to appease the Muslims.

Hindu Mahasabha 1915

"The first session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was held in April 1915 under the presidentship of the Maharaja of Kasim Bazar. But it remained for many years a rather sickly child compared to the Muslim League. This was for several reasons. The broader social reason was the greater and even dominant role of the zamindars, aristocrats and ex-bureaucrats among the Muslims in general and even among the Muslim middle-classes. Among the Parsis and Hindus, increasingly, it was the modern intelligentsia, with its emphasis

on science, democracy and nationalism, and the bourgeois elements in general, which rapidly acquired intellectual, social, economic and political influence and hegemony. Landlords and traditional religious priests, whether Hindu or Muslim, were conservative and supporters of the established, colonial authority. But while among the Hindus, they were gradually losing positions of leadership, they continued to dominate among the Muslims. In this sense the weak position of the middle class among the Muslims and its social and ideological backwardness contributed to the growth of Muslim communalism." (Bipan Chandra)

Absence of a Strong Muslim Middle-Class

In 1916, the Congress agreed to the Muslim League's demand for separate electorates as a temporary arrangement so as to arrive at a settlement. It came to be known as the Lucknow Pact, but it remained as an agreement between the leaders and not between the people. It was not a Hindu-Muslim settlement because the Muslim League did not represent all sections of the Muslim community. Even then, the Pact became redundant soon when the government granted much more to the Muslims in the Act of 1919. Then followed the Khilafat agitation when Pan-Islamism and Indian nationalism joined forces to protest against the British action against Turkey after the First World War. As Turkey was the seat of the Khalifa, the religious head of all Muslims, an attack against the country was regarded as an affront by all Muslims. Gandhi supported the agitation to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, but the movement lost its steam when Khilafat (Caliphate) was abolished in Turkey by the Turkish government itself. In consequence, communal violence broke out at an unprecedented level on issues of cow-slaughter, playing of music before the mosques and such matters. Khilafat bodies representing Hindu-Muslim unity became extinct. The Muslim League and its Hindu counterpart, the Hindu Mahasabha, got a fresh lease of life. The *Tabligh* (propaganda) and *Tanzim* (organisation) movements started among the Muslims in reply to the *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* among the Hindus. The setting up of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangha accelarated the slide towards communalism.

Lucknow Pact and Khilafat Issue

There was hope for Hindu-Muslim unity with the arrival of the Simon Commission and its boycott by nearly all sections of political opinion. Giving up their demand for separate electorates, a section of the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah agreed to joint electorates provided there was one-third representation for the Muslims in the central legislature, etc. The Congress accepted the demands, the Hindu Mahasabha rejected them and the Nehru Report failed to satisfy Jinnah who said that the time had come for a "parting of the ways". This drift led to a chasm, which was the starting point for communalism to be transformed into an irresistible mass force. The Act of 1935 sanctioned provincial autonomy and increased the number of voters. In the elections held in 1937 under separate electorates, the Congress results were impressive while the Muslim League fared badly. Securing only 4.8 per cent of the votes, the Muslim League could not claim that it represented the Muslims. A triumphant Congress decided to go to the Muslims directly; an alarmed Jinnah told the Congress to stay out; and the disappointed Hindu Mahasabha (their results were worse) under the leadership of Savarkar joined hands with Golwalker's RSS to vilify the Muslims and accused Congress of supporting "our most inveterate enemies". At the Lahore Session of the Muslim League in March 1940, Jinnah demanded a sovereign state for the Muslims on the ground that Hindus and Muslims were two nations.

"Parting of the Ways"

1937 Elections

Genesis of Pakistan

The idea of a separate homeland for Muslims of British India was the brainchild of a young Cambridge university undergraduate, Rahmat Ali. Taking for granted that the provinces of Punjab, the North West Frontier Province (also known as Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan were the national home of the Muslims, he arranged the first letters of the first three and 'istan' from the last to coin the word 'Pakistan'. To answer why, if at all, a separate space was needed, he

Pakistan Embryo

wrote: "Our religion, culture, history, tradition, economic system, laws of inheritance, succession, and marriage are fundamentally different from those of the Hindus. These differences are not confined to the broad basic principles. They extend to the minute details of our lives. We, Muslims and Hindus, do not interdine; we do not intermarry…Our national customs and calendars are different, even our diet and dress are different." His pamphlets of 1933 and 1935 demanding a separate national status for the Muslims in British India were not seriously taken at the time, not even by the Muslim League. Generally, it is believed that the poet Muhammad Iqbal floated the idea of a separate Muslim state for the Indian Muslims and provided the necessary emotional content. At the Allahabad session of the Muslim League, he said: "I have no hesitation in declaring that if the principle, that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homeland, is recognised as the basis of a permanent communal settlement …I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British empire or without the British empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India." It would be seen from the context of his speech that the great Urdu poet-philosopher was thinking of an autonomous Muslim-majority area in the North-West India within a single weak Indian federation and not partition.

Ideas of Muhammad Iqbal

In the first election for the provincial legislative councils under the Act of 1935, the Muslim League had limited success, winning only 110 out of the 485 reserved Muslim seats. It could not secure a majority even in the Muslim-majority states, while the Congress had absolute majority in six provinces and was the largest single party in the North West Frontier Province. When the Congress formed ministries in 1937, the League expressed its willingness to become coalition partners in Assam, Bengal and Punjab and requested for induction of League ministers in the United Provinces and Bihar. Unwilling to dilute its secular principles, the Congress advised the League members to accept the Congress pledge and to join the party, if they wanted to be ministers. Jinnah interpreted these moves of the Congress as a calculated policy against the Muslim League. He levelled sweeping and fantastic allegations against the Congress ministries and dubbed the Congress a 'Hindu organisation' which was out to crush all minorities. He came to the conclusion that the Muslims could expect neither justice nor fair play from the Congress ministries. In 1938, the Muslim League appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Raja of Pirpur to report on the oppressions of the Muslims in what it called the Hindu Congress Provinces. The Pirpur report fabricated cases of horrible atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims by the Hindus. The report alleged that there was an identity of purpose between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha and that despite its non-communal professions, a vast majority of the Congress members were Hindus who looked forward, after centuries of British and Muslim rule, to re-establishing a purely *Hindu Raj.* The report, however, admitted that there were a few Congressmen who followed a truly national policy and concluded that the Muslims thought that no tyranny could be as great as the tyranny of the majority.

1937—A Turning Point

Pirpur Report

It was in 1940 that the most unequivocal declaration of Hindus and Muslims as separate nations was made by Jinnah at the Lahore session of the Muslim League when he said: "They (Hindus and Muslims) are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality…The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures…To yoke together two such nations under a single State, one of a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State." The resolution passed in the meeting stated: "It is the

Lahore Session

considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states, in which the constituted units shall be autonomous and sovereign…" The resolution did not specify the areas which would form the proposed state of Pakistan. In 1942, Jinnah told Professor Coupland that Pakistan would be a Muslim State or States comprising the North West Frontier Province, Punjab and Sind on one side of India and Bengal on the other. There was no reference to Assam and Baluchistan nor any claim on Kashmir and Hyderabad. In a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission on May 12, 1946, the Muslim League nonetheless demanded that the six Muslim provinces (Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind, Bengal and Assam) should be grouped together as one entity.

Pro-League Attitude of The British

It is difficult to shed the belief that despite their vaunted sense of fair play and justice, the British love to fish in troubled waters. At least they did so in their colonial days. Based on such an axiom, the imperialist War-time strategy was to increasingly encourage the Muslim League to make all sorts of claims. For example, the statement on July 17, 1939 mentioned the necessity of holding consultations with the representatives of several communities of India. In the 'August Offer', the purpose of this declaration of intent was revealed. The statement on August 8, 1940 "made it clear that the British would not transfer responsibilities 'to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life.' This in effect conceded one of Jinnah's central demands since the outbreak of the War; not only was the League the sole spokesmen for India's Muslims, there must also be a kind of League veto on future constitutional changes." As the Pakistan slogan was evolving, to be adopted by the Lahore session of the Muslim League in March 1940, British instigation was very much there in the final stages of its preparation.

Different Political Visions

After the Congress had formed ministries in 1937, the League urgently needed some kind of a positive platform because the federal clauses of the Act of 1935 showed less and less signs of ever coming near implementation. Moreover, those clauses were regarded by Muslim leaders as the prelude to an unacceptably strong and Hindu-dominated central government. Consequently, a number of alternative proposals were circulated during 1938-39, and in March 1939 the League formed a sub-committee to discuss the various schemes. Among the proposals, the Aligarh scheme of Husain Qadri and Zafrul Hasan put forward four independent states of Pakistan, Bengal, Hyderabad and Hindustan. The other plans did not suggest complete partition, and wanted instead formation of distinct autonomous Muslim blocs within a loose Indian confederation. For example, the Punjab Unionist chief minister Sikandar Hayat Khan recommended a sort of three-tier structure with autonomous provinces grouped into seven regions which would have their own legislatures. He suggested that these would together constitute a loose federation with the centre having charge only over matters like defence, external affairs, customs and currency, as if in anticipation of the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946.

Search for Alternatives

This search for alternatives did not commence on its own; there were considerable British encouragement and reminders behind the process. In his book, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Khaliquzzaman says that on March 20, 1939, Secretary of State Zetland patiently heard a redefinition of Rahmat Ali's scheme when he himself suggested two Muslim Federations, one in the North-West and the other in the East to include Bengal and Assam. British encouragement is even more clear in the Linlithgow-Zetland papers, classified earlier but opened now. Uma Kaura writes that the viceroy told Jinnah on February 6, 1940, six weeks before the Lahore resolution, that British sympathy should not be expected "for a party whose policy was one of sheer negation". The viceroy's advice to Jinnah was: "If he and his friends wanted to secure

that the Muslim case should not go by default in the UK, it was really essential that they should formulate their plan in the future."

Pakistan Resolution

As regards the famous resolution of March 23, 1940, moved by Fazlul Haq after substantial modifications, its fame probably rests on its vagueness and opacity. The wording is astonishingly clumsy, leaving (probably by design) much room for ambiguity and equivocation. Neither Pakistan nor Partition were explicitly mentioned, and in the early 1940s some Muslim politicians even argued that the Hindu press and politicians had started the Pakistan bogey by misinterpreting the resolution in order to block legitimate but more modest Muslim demands. Territorial adjustments were not defined and Independent States seemed to imply separation but could possibly mean no more than full autonomy within a loose federation. The use of the plural and the stress on the sovereignty of the units became important after Partition, for they provided the theoretical basis for the Awami League agitation (started under Fazlul Haq) against a Punjabi-dominated unitary conception of Pakistan which eventually led to the breakaway of Bangladesh.

Sikandar Hayat Khan, whose proposed scheme was similar in some respects to the Cabinet Mission Plan, was emphatic in his opposition to Pakistan and went to the extent of saying so in a speech in the Punjab Assembly on March 11, 1941. He said that he did not like Muslim Raj here and Hindu Raj elsewhere and added that if Pakistan meant unalloyed Muslim Raj in the Punjab then he would have nothing to do with it. Referring to the scheme offered by him, he stated his preference for a loose confederation and

Sikandar Hayat Khan's Scheme

explained that his original resolution at Lahore had included references "to the centre and coordination of the activities of the various units". As the leader of the Unionist Party which had Sikh and Hindu members besides Muslims, perhaps this was required of him. Few Muslim leaders, however, took the idea of Pakistan seriously when it was mooted. Probably even Jinnah wanted to use it as a bargaining counter useful to block possible constitutional concessions to the Congress and gain additional favours for the Muslims. Despite that, Sikandar's speech acknowledged that though "a vast majority of educated Muslims …do not believe in any of these schemes" (of Partition), its nebulousness made Pakistan a convenient slogan to charge up the Muslim masses. Though the Unionist preference for a social and political status quo and the party's open alignment with the British made Sikandar to evoke a picture of communal amity, he was quite correct in predicting the future trend. Indeed, within a few years a populist, demagogic communalism would grow in Bengal and Punjab and the independent Muslim state of Pakistan of the future would be regarded as the solution to all problems.

"For the moment, Pakistan was useful for the British to maintain a constitutional deadlock in India, but while encouraging Jinnah within limits, they had no intention of surrendering to all his demands. League claims for Muslim non-official advisors in the provinces under Section 93, more seats in the expanded Executive Council, and parity with Congress in it in case the latter decided to join in the future, were all rejected. Jinnah consequently in the end turned down the August Offer, and next year compelled Sikandar Hayat Khan and Fazlul Haq to decline membership of the new National Defence Council." (Sumit Sarkar)

The British obstinacy in pursuing their own interests thus did not bear fruit all the time. Anyway, the League's compulsion to greater cooperation with the British had its economic reasons. Khaliquzzaman says that pressure was exerted by business magnates in this direction as also by "our Muslim *taluqdars* and *zamindars*… interested in smaller contracts for the supply of wood, charcoal and other small commodities. They could hardly be expected to forego the chance of a lifetime."

The 'August Offer' was rejected by the Congress because Gandhi said that it widened the gap between nationalist India and the British rulers while Nehru trashed the concept of Dominion Status as dead as a doornail. The League was miffed by the British refusal to agree to its claims and expressed disappointment in a like manner, the upshot of which was that the stalemate

continued. The British Secretary of State, Amery, smugly declared that "the constitutional deadlock today is not between a consentient Indian National Movement asking for freedom and a British Government reluctant to surrender its authority, but between the main elements of Indian national life." His smugness did not last long since the Japanese threat of an invasion of India loomed large after the fall of Singapore, Rangoon and the Andamans in February-March 1942. This forced the British at long last to make some gestures to win over Indian public opinion. There was also the Roosevelt query on Indian political reforms during his talks with Churchill in Washington in December 1941, and Chiang Kai-shek's (Chairman of the Kuomingtang or the Chinese Nationalist Party) publicly expressed sympathy for 'India's aspirations for freedom' during his visit to India in February 1942. So, there was an announcement by Churchill on March 11, 1942 that the War Cabinet had reached a unanimous decision on Indian policy. The leader of the Commons, Stafford Cripps, would visit India to personally negotiate the proposals with Indian leaders. Cripps had come to India on a private visit in December 1939 when he had a talk with an upcoming League leader of the United Provinces, Liaqat Ali Khan. Apparently, from these discussions, Cripps developed the idea of a "rather loose federation …with the right of provinces to withdraw if they wish". This time, before coming to India, Cripps managed to persuade the War Cabinet to agree to a "draft declaration promising post-War Dominion Status with right of secession, a constitution-making body elected by provincial legislatures, with individual provinces being given the right not to join it, and with States being invited to appoint representatives". Paragraph of the draft declaration called for "immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country" on urgent issues but insisted that the British during the War would have to retain "the control and direction of the defence of India". On knowing the agenda of Cripps, Linlithgow threatened to resign but held back after receiving an anodyne from Churchill: "It would be impossible owing to unfortunate rumours and publicity, and the general American outlook, to stand on a purely negative attitude and the Cripps Mission is indispensable to prove our honesty of purpose…If it is rejected by the Indian parties …our sincerity will be proved to the world."

Cripps Mission

Numerous ambiguities and misunderstandings dogged the Cripps Mission and in the end led to its dismal failure. Though Churchill had assured Linlithgow that the draft declaration was the British Government's utmost limit and that Cripps was bound to follow it, apparently Cripps had strayed out of the path considerably. He did so in his talks with Azad and Nehru, perhaps driven by his own desire for a settlement and a not unfavourable initial Congress response. The Congress obviously could not agree to the clauses regarding nominations of states representatives by rulers and criticised them strongly. It seems Amery considered (privately) the clauses to be the "first public admission of the possibility of Pakistan". Azad and Nehru, as the official representatives of the Congress, kept the discussions focussed throughout on the provisions for immediate changes while Gandhi remained entirely in the background. Cripps apparently assured Azad and Nehru that the new Executive would approximate to cabinet government, not formally but in conventions because the Act of 1935 could not be changed in War time. He drew a parallel by stating that due to conventions the governor's special powers had not really prevented the Congress ministries from effectively ruling the provinces during 1937-39. Cripps, in his telegram to Churchill on April 4, referred to the "new arrangement whereby the Executive Council will approximate to a cabinet…" Control over defence was next taken up for discussions and there too an agreement was in sight on April 9, due to the mediation efforts of Colonel Johnson who had come to Delhi as Roosevelt's emissary to help resolve military problems. It was agreed that an Indian would take charge of the Defence Department while the British Commander-in-Chief would retain control over field operations and head a War Department whose functions were specified. By now, Linlithgow and Commander-in-Chief Wavell were seriously

Failure of the Cripps Mission

worried that Cripps was giving too much power to the Congress and, with Churchill's help, they torpedoed the agreement at the finishing stage. Cripps was pulled up by Churchill in a telegram where he was criticised for not consulting the viceroy and the commander-in-chief adequately and for giving too much importance to Colonel Johnson. The cable also faulted the "allusions to a National Government" and directed Cripps "to bring the whole matter back to Cabinet's plan which you went out to urge". The talks ended abruptly the same evening without any results when the Congress negotiators found Cripps saying completely different things.

Nehru was very keen to mobilise genuine and effective Indian support to the anti-fascist War, and hence wanted a settlement desperately. He was now placed in an embarrassing position because Gandhi and Congress Working Committee members were cynical and apathetic from the beginning. Cripps added to Nehru's misery by roundly blaming the Congress for the failure of the talks, in a bid to save his own political career. Churchill obliged Cripps by warmly congratulating his efforts on April 11 as proving " how great was the British desire to reach a settlement…The effect throughout Britain and in the United States has been wholly beneficial." According to Tomlinson (*The Indian National Congress and the Raj*), for Churchill, certainly, "it mattered not so much that something should be done as that some attempt should be seen to be made". In this example of skulduggery, doubts remain whether or not Cripps was a willing accomplice in the game. What then was the Cripps proposal in sum and what was its relevance to the Pakistan movement? The Declaration brought by Cripps promised India Dominion Status and a constitution-making body after the War in which members would be elected by the provincial assemblies and nominated by the rulers in the princely states. The Pakistan issue was dealt within the provision that any province which was not prepared to accept the new constitution would have the right to sign a separate agreement with Britain regarding its future status. The Congress wanted full independence in place of Dominion Status and objected to the representation of the princely states in the constituent assembly not by the people of the states but by the nominees of the rulers, and above everything the provision for the partition of India.

Role of Mohammad Ali Jinnah

The emergence of Pakistan was to a great extent due to the adroit handling of the political situation by Jinnah who once remarked that he alone with the help of his Secretary and his typewriter won Pakistan for the Muslims. He returned to India as a barrister in 1906 and as a secular, liberal nationalist follower of Dadabhai Naoroji. He joined the Congress almost immediately and assisted Dadabhai at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 as his Secretary. He opposed the Muslim League at the time of its formation. His opposition was so strong that the first president of the League, Aga Khan, wrote subsequently that Jinnah had been their toughest opponent in 1906. Jinnah was bitterly hostile to everything that Aga Khan and his associates had done or were trying to do and denounced their principle of separate electorates as a measure to divide the nation against itself. Sarojini Naidu called him the 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity' as he went on spreading the message of national unity in the meetings he addressed from 1906. Communalism, historian Bipan Chandra says, is a slippery slope along which one slides down (much against his wishes) having stepped on it in the first place. Something similar happened when Jinnah entered the Central Legislative Council from Bombay as a Muslim member under the system of separate electorates. "The real slide down began when from a nationalist pure and simple he became a communal nationalist in 1913 when he joined the Muslim League. This, of course, meant that he was still basically a nationalist. He remained in the Congress and still opposed separate electorates arguing that it would divide India into 'two watertight compartments'. But he also started assuming the role of a spokesperson of the Muslim 'community' as a whole. These dual roles reached the the height of their effectiveness in the Lucknow Congress-League Pact of which he and Tilak were the joint authors. Acting as the spokesperson of Muslim communalism, he got the Congress to accept separate electorates and the system of communal reservations."

But his commitment to secular politics and nationalism still remained intact. Protesting against the passage of the Rowlatt Act, he gave up his seat in the Legislative Council. He did not endorse the communal assumption that self-government in India would lead to Hindu rule, and stressed that the real political issue in India was Home Rule or "transfer of power from bureaucracy to democracy". When the Congress embarked on a mass agitation programme based on the breaking of existing laws peacefully in 1919-20, Jinnah parted from Gandhi. He left the Congress along with liberals like Surendranath Banerjea, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bipin Pal, C. Sankaran Nair and many others. Realising the futility of liberal politics, he turned to communal politics and became a liberal communalist. The inexorable logic of communalism succeeded in converting him from a nationalist to a communal nationalist and then to a liberal communalist. But his nationalism was not diminished. Reviving the moribund League in 1924, he started building it up on a platform for safeguarding 'the rights and interests of the Muslims'. He subscribed to the basic communal idea that "Muslims should organise themselves, stand united and should press every reasonable point to protect their community". Even then he was pleading for Hindu-Muslim unity based on a fresh Lucknow Pact, so that the fight against the British could be carried out together. He cooperated with the Swarajists to oppose government policies and measures in the Central Legislative Assembly. When in 1925 a young man told him that he was a Muslim first, Jinnah gently advised him that his identity was an Indian first and then a Muslim. He supported the move to boycott the Simon Commission, but did not join the public demonstrations against it.

Jinnah's Conversion into Communal Politics

Around this time Jinnah's entire social base was made up of communal-minded persons, which probably rendered almost impossible any attempt by him to give up communalism because that would have meant a loss of all political influence. During the discussions on the Nehru Report this picture became very noticeable as Jinnah gradually accepted the points of view of reactionary communalists like Aga Khan and M. Shafi. Nationalists leaders like M.A. Ansari, T.A.K. Sherwani, Syed Mahmud and even his own erstwhile lieutenants like M.C. Chagla started distancing themselves from him while he became the leader of Muslim communalism as a whole. His transformation was complete as he wrote the famous fourteen points incorporating the demands of the most reactionary and virulent sections of Muslim communalism. His alienation from the main currents of nationalism became more pronounced when the Congress organised the huge mass movements of 1930 and started adopting a more radical socio-economic programme. Also, the younger generation of Muslims began to veer increasingly towards nationalist and left-wing politics and ideologies. Jinnah decided to absent himself from the scene and left for Britain. But he was a man of action and politics was his calling. So, he came back and initially thought of reviving the League on the basis of liberal communalism. For a whole year in 1936, he advocated Hindu-Muslim cooperation while stressing his nationalism and desire for freedom. It was quite evident from his speech at Lahore in March 1936 when he said: "Whatever I have done, let me assure you there has been no change in me, not the slightest, since the day I joined the Indian National Congress. It may be I have been wrong on some occasions. But it has never been done in a partisan spirit. My sole and only object was the welfare of my country. I assure you that India's interest is and will be sacred to me and nothing will make me budge from that position." Advising the Muslims to organise themselves separately, he at the same time asked them to "prove that their patriotism is unsullied and their love of India and her progress is no less than that of any other community in the country".

Jinnah's Fourteen Points

It seems that he wanted the League to win enough seats so as to force another Lucknow Pact on the Congress. He was pinning his hopes on the assumption that by participating in the 1937 elections, the Congress was going back to the constitutional politics of the pre-Gandhian era. Moreover, after the Communal Award there was nothing much for the League to demand, and

Jinnah and the League had to fight the elections on a semi-nationalist Congress-type programme. The 'Muslim' touch was given to it by the demand for the promotion of Urdu language and measures for the improvement of Muslims in general. The election results showed that he was disastrously wrong, and he was forced to decide on a course of action containing three choices. The first was to continue with semi-nationalist, liberal communal politics, which appeared to have exhausted itself. The second was to abandon communal politics altogether, which amounted to writing his political obituary. "The third alternative was to take to mass politics which in view of the semi-feudal and semi-loyalist social base of the League and his own socially, economically and politically conservative views could only be based on the cries of Islam in danger and the danger of a Hindu Raj." (Bipan Chandra) Deciding on the third choice, he plunged into extreme communalism putting all the force and brilliance of his personality behind this type of politics based on themes of hate and fear. He made the conscious choice of playing on the fears and insecurity of the members of his community so as to establish the point that the Congress' plans were diabolical. He went on to say that the Congress did not want to free India, but wanted to establish a Hindu Raj with the help of British imperialism, and that their plan was not only the extermination of the Muslims, but also the destruction of Islam in India.

His Alternatives

In 1938, Jinnah said in his presidential address to the League: "The High Command of the Congress is determined, absolutely determined to crush all other communities and cultures in this country and establish Hindu Raj in this country." At Aligarh, addressing students in March 1940, he said: "Mr. Gandhi's hope is to subjugate and vassalise the Muslims under a Hindu Raj." Again at Aligarh in March 1941: "Pakistan is not only a practicable goal but the only goal if you want to save Islam from annihilation in this country." He gave a dire warning in his presidential address on April 1941: "… the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence." On August 18, 1946, while the carnage resulting from his 'Direct Action' call was in progress, he referred to the interim government as the "caste Hindu Fascist Congress" … and added that it wanted to "dominate and rule over Mussalmans and other minor communities of India with the aid of British bayonets". With Jinnah taking politics to levels such as this, no wonder his associates went still further. Z.A. Suleri and F.M. Durrani surpassed themselves in Goebbelsian demagogy. Fazl-ul-Haq, holding a responsible position as Premier of Bengal, told the 1938 session of the League: "In Congress provinces, riots had laid the countryside waste. Muslim life, limb and property have been lost and blood had freely flowed…There the Muslims are living in constant terror, overawed and oppressed by Hindus … Their mosques are being defiled and the culprit never found nor is the Muslim worshipper unmolested." In Karachi, a prominent Sindhi League leader took a leaf out of the book of the Nazis in March 1941 and proclaimed: "The Hindus will have to be eradicated like the Jews in Germany if they did not behave properly." Jinnah was not in a position to rein in such people since he himself was using similar intemperate language in his speeches.

The Muslim Card

The League than made vicious attacks on nationalist Muslims. 'Showboys of the Congress', 'traitors to Islam', and 'mercenary agents of the Hindus' were the epithets used to describe Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other nationalist Muslims. They were subjected to social terror through religious fanaticism during 1946-47 and even to physical attacks. Jinnah in his presidential address in April 1943 chose to describe Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan as the person in-charge of the Hinduising influences and emasculation of the martial Pathans. Then religion was used for the purposes of propaganda. Muslims were asked to vote for the League in 1946 because "a vote for the League and Pakistan was a vote for Islam". It was a practice to hold League meetings in mosques after Friday prayers. Promises were made that Pakistan would be ruled under the *Shariat*. The *Quran* was often used as the League's symbol, and the electoral battle between the League and the Congress was increasingly represented as a fight between Islam and *Kufr* (infidelity).

Attack on Nationalist Muslims

Propaganda

A heavy price for this campaign of fear and hatred which began towards the end of the 19th century and gained momentum after 1937 was paid by the people in the riots in Calcutta starting on August 16, 1946, by the Hindus in Noakhali and by the Muslims in Bihar. It would, however, appear that the steepest price was paid by the Muslims who remained in or opted to migrate to Pakistan. Jinnah apparently thought of going back to liberal communalism, perhaps even secularism once Pakistan came into existence. This would be seen in his address to the people of Pakistan on August 11, 1947. In that presidential address to the Constituent Assembly, he said: "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of the State… We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of a State…Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and that you will find in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State." It had, however, come at a time when everything was lost and irretrievably gone. The monster of rapid, extreme communalism was already on the rampage dividing India into two entities. That was not all; in time to come it would destroy Jinnah's own "concept of Pakistan and do more harm to the Muslims of Pakistan than the most secular of persons could have predicted or even imagined. On the other hand, despite the formation of Pakistan and the bloody communal riots of 1947, nationalist India did succeed in framing a secular constitution and building a secular polity, whatever its weaknesses in this respect may be. In other words, ideologies have consequences." (Bipan Chandra).

Possibility of Conciliation

For quite some time two controversies related to the communal problem kept surfacing, the first of which stated that had Jinnah been conciliated during 1937-39, things would have been different. The second one, more an offshoot of the first, was the rejection of the Muslim League's offer to form a coalition government in the United Provinces with the Congress in 1937. It was believed that suffering a rebuff to his political ambitions, a disappointed and disgusted Jinnah took the road to separation. It would be necessary to remember here that before he was "rebuffed", Jinnah was already a committed nationalist. Moreover, every effort was made by the Congress to assuage and accommodate Jinnah during 1937-39. But Jinnah, already under the spell of extreme communalism, was left without any negotiable demand which could be rationally put forward and argued. It remains a historical fact that he refused to tell the Congress leaders what the demands were whose acceptance would satisfy him and make him join the Congress to fight imperialism. The impossible condition he laid down to even start negotiations was that the Congress leadership should first renounce its secular character and declare itself a Hindu communal body and accept the Muslim League as the sole representative of the Muslims. It was an absurd demand, impossible for the Congress to accept. Rajendra Prasad summed up pithily the reasons for the Congress' stance by stating that should the Congress accept that it was a Hindu body, it would mean denial of the party's past, falsification of its history and betrayal of its future. In fact, it could be regarded as a betrayal of the Indians and their future. It is remarked that the Congress had accepted Jinnah's demand and 'conciliated' him, we might well have been living under a Hindu replica of Pakistan or a Hindu fascist state. There was no way for serious negotiations even to begin.

Jinnah's Absurd Demand

The Communal Dichotomy

Jinnah was at that time trying to follow his nationalistic ideology along with communal politics, a posture that could not be maintained for long. Separation formed an important part of the communal ideological programme, making the movement for Pakistan almost inevitable. Giving up that demand meant giving up communal politics. As that was not possible, Jinnah and the Muslim League convinced themselves in early 1940 that the Hindus and the Muslims are two separate nations and must have separate homelands. The demand for Pakistan started in this manner. Not to be outdone, the Hindu communalists also had an agenda of their own.

They did not ask for the creation of a Hindustan since that would look like an endorsement of the League demand. They went one step ahead and said that India was exclusively a place for the Hindus. The Muslims should either get out or be prepared to live as second-class citizens. The development in the United Provinces in 1937 was also nearly similar to the Hindustan-Pakistan issue. Owing to an ingrained class bias, mass-based politics was anathema to the League as also to Jinnah. As regards the Congress, they could not take up constitutional politics because the people had not much to do there. In fact, long before the ministerial negotiations had started in the United Provinces or had broken down, Jinnah had categorised the Muslims in India as a distinct third party, separate from the ruling British and the nationalists whom the Congress represented. Elaborating on it, S. Gopal said: "Any coalition with the League implied the Congress accepting a Hindu orientation and renouncing the right to speak for all Indians." The nationalist Muslims who had identified themselves with the Congress would have been betrayed by such a move. Also, it would mean giving up the radical agrarian reforms the Congress planned to take up in the 1936 Faizpur session, a programme the Congress ministry was duty-bound to follow. Equally duty-bound was the League to oppose such measures representing as it did the landlords' interests. It would have been next to impossible to pass any pro-peasant legislation in a government consisting of such antagonistic elements. In fact, it was the Congress Socialists and the Communists, quite important in the United Provinces Congress at the time, who put pressure on Nehru to reject any coalition with the League and threatened to carry out a public campaign on the issue if their demand was rejected. Also to be taken into account was the fact that the League raised its battle cry, "Islam in danger", in the election campaign before the ministry was formed when Jinnah himself appealed to the voters in the name of *Allah* and the *Quran*. In any event, if the denial of two seats in a provincial ministry resulted in the conversion of an eminent leader to a vicious communalist, then how long could he have remained conciliated? Arguments such as this render history and politics as a joke or a subject to individual whims. "The fact is that communalism is basically an ideology which could not have been, and cannot be, appeased; it had to be confronted and opposed… The failure to do so was the real weakness of the Congress and the national movement." The Communists also tried to negotiate with the League during 1942-46 in the belief that they would be able to wean away its better elements. They were not successful at all, and in the process they lost some of their best cadres to Muslim communalism. Actually, the Left as also the Congress negotiated with the Muslims under the false assumption that liberal communalism could be conciliated and then persuaded to fight extreme communalism which was anti-national. It was only the nationalist Hindus and Muslims who opposed communalism after 1937. Hindu and Muslim liberal communalists did not raise their voices against it, instead they chose to keep quiet.

Failure to Contain Communalism

It is axiomatic that not all historical situations have an instant solution. No such solution existed in 1947, certainly not for a socio-political problem like communalism. A number of years, perhaps even decades, are needed to prepare conditions and create forces for a solution. Failure to do so bedeviled the Congress and the national movement at almost every step. It continued even though Gandhi constantly emphasised Hindu-Muslim unity and was prepared to sacrifice his life for such a cause and Nehru brilliantly analysed the socio-economic roots of communalism. Indian nationalists could not wage a mass ideological-political struggle against all forms of communalism on the basis of patient and scientific exposure of its ideological content, its socio-economic roots, and political consequences. The Congress ignored the necessity of evolving a long-term strategy to fight communalism at the political, ideological and cultural levels and instead relied solely on negotiations with communal leaders.

POST-1945 UPSURGE

The dramatic change witnessed in India between the end of the Second World War and the country gaining freedom was brought about partly by popular initiative.

The INA Trials

The first issue to draw the people out was the fate of the members of Subhas Bose's Indian National Army who were taken as prisoners by the British in the eastern battlefront. A considerable number of them were from the British-Indian army captured by the Japanese in South-East Asia. Forgetting that those men were regarded as heroes by their countrymen, the British, in a foolish bid to display their notions of justice, decided to put several hundreds of the 20,000 on public trial besides dismissing from service and detaining without trial no less than 7,000 in number. More foolishly, they held the first trial in the Red Fort, Delhi, in the autumn and winter of 1945-46 where the accused were a Hindu (P.K. Sehgal), a Muslim (Shah Nawaz) and a Sikh (Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon). Nehru donned his barrister's gown after 25 years and defended them along with Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai.

The stir it caused would be apparent from the Intelligence Bureau note of November 20 (1945) reading: "There has seldom been a matter which has attracted so much Indian public interest and, it is safe to say, sympathy…this particular brand of sympathy cuts across communal barriers." B. Shiva Rao, a journalist, reported in a despatch after visiting the Red Fort prisoners on the date of trial: "There is not slightest feeling among them of Hindu and Muslim…A majority of the men now awaiting trial in the Red Fort are Muslims. Some of these men are bitter that Mr. Jinnah is keeping alive a controversy about Pakistan." There was an uneasy feeling among the British that the spirit of the I.N.A. would spread in the Indian army, more so when the Punjab Governor reported in January 1946 that a Lahore reception for the released I.N.A. prisoners had been attended by Indian soldiers in uniform.

The lending of Indian army units to the French and Dutch so as to help them in restoring their colonial rule in Vietnam and Indonesia was another issue which aroused Indian public opinion, especially the urban public. Even the army was weary of such a move, which was a testimony to the spread of anti-imperialist feeling among the people. For once, Wavell showed reluctance to carry out the order, but was overruled in October 1945 by Supreme Allied Commander Mountbatten. There were the post-War problems of unemployment and high-prices, rendered more serious by food shortage due to partial crop failures in Bombay and Bengal, a cyclone in Madras and reduced procurement in the surplus province of Punjab. What made the officials jittery was the possibility of another Congress revolt, a repeat of the agitation of 1942. This time they expected it to be more harmful with attacks on railways and telegraphs, agrarian revolts, labour strikes, loss of discipline in the army, and the presence of the I.N.A. men with a military background. The Congress leaders' speeches glorifying the martyrs and heroes of the 1942 movement (especially Nehru's), their insistence on punishment of people guilty of atrocities, and their calling for the release of the I.N.A. prisoners unnerved Viceroy Wavell considerably. However, he realised soon that all this sound and fury was election propaganda, and the I.N.A. featured in the speeches because the Congress would lose much ground in the country if they were ignored. The same intelligence report also stated Asaf Ali commenting that if the Congress came to power it would certainly not allow them in the army and might even "put some of them on trial". There was also a Congress campaign against the communists, which was a little more shrill than that demanded legitimately for their passivity in 1942. There was nothing like that against the Hindu Mahasabha, some of whose leaders were ministers in 1942, nor against Rajagopalachary whose views on the Quit India and Pakistan issues in 1942 were nearly the same as those of the communists. In fact, he remained a top Congress leader.

Congress militancy soon faced the roadblocks it had faced in the past. In the month of November 1945 alone, three British persons including Pethick-Lawrence referred to G.D. Birla as getting "alarmed at the virulence of Congress speeches". Wavell informed Pethick Lawrence on December 5 that there "…have recently been indications that the Congress leaders want to reduce political tensions by making it clear that there must not be any mass movement until after the elections…the strong capitalist element behind Congress …is becoming nervous about the security of its property." This

was followed by an assurance from Birla to a London official the very next day: "There is no political leader including Jawaharlal who wants to see any crisis or violence…Popular impatience and the prevalent atmosphere are responsible for these strong speeches. Even leaders are often led. But I think unrestrained language will be heard less and less in the future." The turning point bringing a sort of temporary truce was a popular protest in Calcutta on November 21-23 on the I.N.A. issue. The Forward Bloc brought out a procession of students who demanded the release of the I.N.A. prisoners and squatted on the road leading to the secretariat for the whole night after they were prevented from going further. They were joined by their Communist and League rivals carrying red and green flags. Spontaneously they tied the Congress, Communist and League flags together as a symbol of all-in anti-imperialist unity. "Sarat Bose in sharp contrast, who had been adored as the brother of Subhas, refused to come to address them and later blamed the Communists for instigating violence. After the first round of police firing which killed two students (a Hindu and a Muslim), trouble spread all over the city on 22 and 23 November with strikes by Sikh taxi-drivers and Communist-led tramway-men as well as in many factories…" (Sumit Sarkar) There were 14 instances of firing, in which 33 were killed and 200 injured; 150 army and police vehicles were destroyed and 70 British and 37 American soldiers were injured. The reactions were significant: Patel told an election rally in Bombay not to waste energy over trifling quarrels with the police; Gandhi started a reasonably friendly dialogue with the Bengal governor Casey and the Congress in a statement reaffirmed its faith in non-violence as opposed to the glorification of the by no means non-violent 1942 struggle. Concessions made by the British, in turn, included remission of prison sentences passed against the first batch of the I.N.A. soldiers, dilution of charges against the others and withdrawal of Indian soldiers from Indonesia. Wavell started working on a 'breakdown plan', a middle course between repression and retreat and envisaged a withdrawal of the British army and officials to the Muslim-dominated provinces, thus leaving the rest to the Congress. Though the Cabinet Mission Plan superceded it, Wavell's plan was an interesting document reflecting the desire in some high official circles to make Pakistan an Indian northern Ireland. There was a flare up again in Calcutta when Abdul Rashid of the I.N.A. was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment in February 1946. Order was restored after 84 deaths and 300 injuries in two days of street clashes.

Popular Protest against Trials

British Response

Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, 1946

It was, however, the naval mutiny in Bombay on February 18-23, 1946 which shook the British establishment to its core. War-time needs forced recruitment of personnel from communities other than the politically underdeveloped martial races in the Royal Indian Navy, but the racial bias in that so-called senior service continued undiminished. Protesting against bad food and racial insults, the ratings in the Signals training establishment Talwar went on a hunger strike on February 18. The next day they were joined by another shore installation and 22 ships in the harbour who raised the Congress, League and Communist Party flags on the masts of the rebel fleet. In a way they were repeating the story of Sergei Eisenstein's famous silent film classic, *Battleship Potemkin*, based on the rebellion of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in 1905. The R.I.N. ratings were asked to return to their barracks, which they did only to find themselves surrounded by army guards. Next day they made a fatal mistake by trying to fight their way out of the encirclement with rebel ships providing artillery support. People started bringing food to the Gateway of India and shopkeepers invited them to take away free whatever they needed, unconsciously following Eisenstein's film sequence of the Odessa steps where sympathetic townspeople fraternised with the rebels only to be mowed down by the czar's Cossack army bullets. Mercifully, the events in Bombay did not resemble that kind of mayhem, though two army units had to be called, 228 civilians were killed and 1,046 injured in violent street fighting. By February 22, 78 ships and 20 shore establishments were involved in the strike while 300,000 workers downed their tools

RIN Mutiny 1946

Bombay Strike

in Bombay. It was the only time when Jinnah came to the aid of Patel who persuaded the ratings to surrender on February 23, promising that political leaders would not allow victimisation, a promise soon forgotten. Though Nehru applauded the mutiny for breaking down the 'iron wall' between the army and people, Patel announced "…discipline in the Army cannot be tampered with…We will want Army even in free India." Gandhi told the ratings to peacefully resign their jobs with the startling observation that "…a combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent actions is unholy…" In response, Aruna Asaf Ali of the Congress Socialist Wing commented that it was not proper for Congressmen, who were themselves going to the legislatures, to ask the ratings to give up their jobs and added that it would be far easier "to unite the Hindus and Muslims at the barricades than on the constitutional front". Unfortunately, the R.I.N. ratings were not regarded as heroes like the I.N.A. men, though their sacrifices were no less if not more.

The mutiny of the R.I.N. ratings of February 1946 proved to be the last nail in the coffin of British colonial aspirations in India. This can be very well construed on the basis of all the events that took place and the last message conveyed by the Naval Central Strike Committee: "Our strike has been a historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of men in the services and in the streets flowed together in a common cause. We in the services will never forget this. We know also that you, our brothers and sisters, will not forget. Long live our great people! Jai Hind!"

Other Developments

Tebhaga Movement

The recommendation of the Floud Commission relating to *tebhaga,* or two-thirds of the crop, instead of the half or even less given to the peasants, was the demand raised by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha in September 1946. The growing number of poor peasants who had become landless due to Depression and famine were organised by the communists and urban student militants in some areas in north Bengal. From harvest time in November, they began to take paddy to their own homes so that they could take their two-thirds share and then hand over the rest to the landlord. From north Bengal, the movement spread to Medinipur, 24 Parganas and other districts in which Muslims took part despite the Calcutta and Noakhali riots. The League Ministry provided a sop to the movement by introducing a bill but balanced it by increasing police repression from February 1947. Some 49 people were killed. Militants then wanted arms which the communists could not provide. Social limitations emerged, the Hindu Mahasabha started the campaign for Bengal partition and the movement petered out.

Travancore Agitation

In January 1946, the Dewan of Travancore, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, announced the plan of an 'American-model' constitution with assemblies elected by universal suffrage but an executive controlled by him. He was doing so with a view to forming an independent Travancore under his control once the British left, which he declared as his intention in June 1947. This was resisted by the communists who had a very powerful base among coir-factory workers, fishermen, toddy-tappers and agricultural labourers in north-west Travancore. While the State Congress did not mind a compromise, the communists launched a massive campaign with the slogan *Amerikkan modal-Arabyan kadalil* (throw the American model into the Arabian sea). From September 1946 the government started repression of the communists and the trade unions with police camps, mass arrests and brutal torture in jails. Self-defence groups were set up by volunteers who had some elementary military training. A general strike was launched in Alleppey-Chertala area on October 22, followed by a partially successful attack on Punnapra police camp two days later. Martial law was imposed on October 25, and on the 27th, the volunteer headquarters at Vayalar was captured by the army and over 800 people were killed. The Punnapra-Vayalar massacre stopped the Congress from aligning with the totally discredited Dewan who agreed to the integration of Travancore with India the following year (1947) because the alternative was a bloody revolution. The Punnapra-Vayalar

Punnapra-Vayalar Movement

incident thus prevented the Balkanisation of India, forcing Travancore to join India.

Tebhaga and Punnapra-Vayalar stopped short of a full-fledged armed uprising, but Telangana witnessed, between July 1946 and October 1951, the biggest peasant guerrilla war so far in modern Indian history. Three million people in about 3,000 villages spread over 16,000 square miles were engaged at one time in this struggle against the Asafjahi Nizams of Hyderabad. The people of this princely state, composed of mainly Hindu Telugu, Marathi and Kannada-speaking language groups, were ruled by a Urdu-speaking Muslim elite. There was total absence of political and civil liberties and the worst forms of feudal abuse. The misrule was acute in the Telangana region where Muslim and upper-caste Hindu landlords or *deshmukhs* extracted *vetti* or forced labour and payments in kind from the peasants. Trouble started in July 1946 when the men of the deshmukh of Visunur killed Doddi Komaryya who was trying to protect a poor washerwoman from being evicted from her land in Jangaon *taluka* of Nalgonda district. Trouble first spread to other talukas of Nalgonda and then to the adjoining Khammam and Warrangal districts. The communists, who had a very strong base in the area, led the struggle, helped by the availability of plenty of muzzle-loading, locally-made guns due to the lax Arms Act in the state. The communist-led agrarian revolt thus retained, till the entry of the Indian army in September 1948, the broader dimension of a national liberation struggle against the Nizam and his Razakar bands, though a limiting factor was the aloofness or hostility of the urban Muslim population, including even a substantial section of the working class. Besides guns, the peasants carried lathis, slings with stones and chilli powder for defence. Facing brutal repression, they started forming regular guerrilla units and raised the pitch of the struggle to its greatest between August 1947 and September 1948. The communists used the anti-Nizam slogans of the Congress by radicalising the content: the call for the resignation of revenue collectors was changed to burning and destruction of revenue and rent records. The guerrillas stopped *vetti* in villages they controlled, raised agricultural wages, returned lands unjustly seized earlier and began measures to improve irrigation and the health of the people.

Telangana Upsurge

All this changed in September 1948 when the police action appeared to be also a move to stop the Communists from making further inroads. It seems Patel was willing to strike a deal with the Nizam, as would be seen in the remarks of a state Congress leader Swami Ramananda Tirtha: "I wonder why the Government of India was disproportionately lenient towards the Nizam." The guerrillas got a lot of arms from the Razakars driven out by the army and continued mistakenly to fight against the newly-independent Indian State, which the communists admitted subsequently to be unwise. Anyway, losing their hold in the three districts under them, they were forced to take refuge in the deep forests of the Nallamallai hills across the Krishna. They established some new bases there, but their revolutionary zeal was sapped. Internal political differences emerged and sheer survival became the overriding concern. Yet, after the defeat, the communists were tremendously supported by the people for some years. They won every assembly seat in Warrangal and Nalgonda in the 1952 election and sent one of their leaders, Ravi Narayan Reddi, to Parliament who polled more votes than Nehru. The Telangana uprising indirectly speeded up Hyderabad's accession, "frustrating the compromise bid of the November 1947 stand-still agreement by Patel and V.P. Menon. Another objective of the national movement in this region, the formation of Andhra Pradesh on language basis, was realised some years later. (On June 2, 2014, Telangana became the 29th state of India.)

CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER

Why did the British finally quit? The answer to such a question depends on the point of view and the perspective, imperialist or radical. For first, it was the natural outcome of the benign British mission of helping the Indians to find their feet, to set them on the road to self-government. There was the unfortunate fact of the partitioning of the country, solely due to the traditional inability of the Hindus and the Muslims to agree on anything,

more so when the issues were who should govern and how. The second view was that the British departed because the mass actions launched mostly under communist leadership during the period 1946-47 made the conditions impossible for their further stay. However, the bourgeois in the Congress became frightened of the revolutionary upsurge compelling them to make a deal with imperialist Britain so as to come into power, and the country had to be partitioned. Commenting on these two views, historian Bipan Chandra writes: "These visions of noble design or revolutionary intent, frustrated by traditional religious conflict or worldly profit, attractive as they may seem, blur, rather than illumine, the sombre reality. In fact, the Independence-Partition duality reflects the success-failure dichotomy of the anti-imperialist movement led by the Congress. The Congress had a two-fold task—structuring diverse classes, communities, groups and regions into a nation and securing independence from the British rulers for this emerging nation. While the Congress succeeded in building up nationalist consciousness sufficient to exert pressure on the British to quit India, it could not complete the task of welding the nation and particularly failed to integrate the Muslims into this nation. It is this contradiction, the success and failure of the national movement, which is reflected in the other contradiction, Independence, but with it Partition."

Imperialist and Radical Perspectives on Partition

Towards the end of the Second World War, it was clear that the nationalist forces were successful in their struggle for hegemony over the Indian society. While the British had defeated Hitler, they faced defeat in India. The space occupied by the British was much less than that occupied by nationalist consciousness in Indian minds. The I.N.A. trials underlined the fact that hitherto unpoliticised areas and apolitical groups were entirely in support of the movement it gave rise to. Members of the armed forces and the bureaucracy were no longer shying away from attending Congress meetings and openly contributed money for the cause. While the militancy of the politicised sections of the people was demonstrated by their sacrifices in the movement of 1942, the students and others showed their support to the I.N.A. and R.I.N. men with unprecedented fearlessness. Consequently, British officials were demoralised and Indian officials changed loyalties, thus pointing to the success of nationalism. The nationalist movement loosened imperialistic controls, weakened the colonialist structure and reduced British political strategy to a mass of contradictions. The British rule in India was largely maintained on the basis of acceptance and consent by a wide section of Indian people, the zamindars and the loyalist upper classes, who were the beneficiaries of British favours and offices. Through them, the British administered the country, implemented the colonialist policies and introduced the much-needed reforms belatedly. The implicit faith of the people in the British sense of fair play and justice also helped the rulers to acquire a prestigious image, the personification of which was the district officer, a member of the Indian Civil Service, the famous 'steel frame' of the Raj. "When the loyalists began to jump overboard, when prestige was rocked, when the district officer and the secretariat official left the helm, it became clear that the ship was sinking, and sinking fast. It was the result of years of ravage wrought from two quarters, the rot within and the battering without."

The New Mood

The British presence in the Indian Civil Services (ICS) was gradually going down since the early decades of the 20th century as not many Europeans were opting for it and due to the increasing 'Indianisation' resorted to in response to popular demand. By 1939, the numbers of Europeans in the ICS were nearly equal to that of the Indians. This parity was maintained for some time by reducing the number of entrants and then recruitment was stopped from 1943. The total number of ICS officers came down from 587 to 429 (British) and 614 to 510 (Indian) during the years 1940-46, leading to a situation when only 19 British officers were available for 65 posts in Bengal. Moreover, the relatively new British entrants were not from the aristocracy of the 'old India hands'. Most of them were not the products of 'Oxbridge', nor did they regard their tenure as a mission to 'civilise' the 'child-people' of India. It was just a career option subject to the usual economic worries, burdened with the weariness

Changing Social Base of ICS

due to long absence from home owing to the War. Thus, they were a group with dwindling morale who manned the outposts of the empire during the close of the War. Anyway, it was not the shortage of men which led to the hobbling of the Raj and the ICS; it was the contradictory British policy of conciliation and repression adopted to deal with the nationalist upsurge which sapped the spirit of both. One of the earliest example of this was the politeness with which Irwin treated Gandhi and the savagery which followed next. After the Cripps Mission, there was no more concession to offer excepting freedom. The loyalists were aghast by the brutality of the repressive measures, while the conciliatory gestures were regarded as emasculation of the Raj. The service class was bewildered due to the absence of a clear-cut directive, because the same set of people were directed to wield the stick and to dangle the carrot. Their dilemma was acute when the popular ministries came to power. "People could not fail to notice that the British Chief Secretary in Madras took to wearing khadi or that the Revenue Secretary in Bombay, on tour with the Revenue Minister, Morarji Desai, would scurry across the railway platform from his first-class compartment to the latter's third-class carriage so that the Honourable Minister may not be kept waiting." The Indian officials did not become outwardly disloyal but took to wearing their patriotism on their sleeves by parading "a third cousin twice removed who had been to jail in the civil disobedience movement". The repression during the Quit India Movement of 1942 was generally harsh, the price for which was sought by Congressmen in their demand for enquiries against offending officials when provincial ministries were formed subsequently. It was feared that the impending storm would be irrepressible, and the post-imperial relationship between India and Britain became the prime concern of British policy-makers in an effort to salvage something from a hopelessly lost empire.

Was Partition Inevitable?

Why the Congress agreed to the partitioning of the country remains a difficult question to answer even after a lapse of more than half a century. The British conceded it so as to get out of the mess they had created by encouraging communal tendencies; the Muslim League joyously accepted it having finally achieved its objective; but why the Congress? One facile explanation is that the leaders were thirsting for power and that they ignored Gandhi's advice who even wished to end his life. It was forgotten that Gandhi, Nehru and Patel were only accepting the inevitable which resulted from the failure of the Congress to engage the Muslim masses in the nationalist struggle which in turn, gave rise to rabid communalism, especially from 1937. This spread of communal feeling among the Muslims was amply illustrated in the elections of 1946 when the Muslim League won 90 per cent of the Muslim seats. It was then that the battle against communalism was lost, to be brought into stark relief by the riots which engulfed Bengal and Punjab in August 1946. Around June 1947 the Congress leaders were convinced that the killing and violence resulting from Jinnah's infamous Direct Action could only be stopped by immediate transfer of power. This belief was further reinforced by the non-functioning of the Interim Government for all practical purposes which made the emergence of Pakistan an unavoidable reality. At the AICC meeting on June 14, 1947, Patel said that the Congress had no other option but to admit that Pakistan had already come into existence in Bengal and Punjab and in the Interim Government. Nehru was disappointed that the Interim Government had turned into a battleground where ministers were engaged in wordy conflicts and formed cliques to take decisions and the Finance Member, Liaqat Ali Khan, thwarted all attempts to work by other ministries. Then there was the Bengal Provincial Government's curious inaction suggesting its covert encouragement of the rioters and the Interim Government's inability to prevent governors from supporting the League's activities. The appalled Congress leadership was faced with the utter futility of continuing with the Interim Government while people were being killed mercilessly in thousands. It was felt that immediate transfer of power would stop this butchery by ushering in a government exercising its power to protect the people.

Congress and Partition

"There was an additional consideration in accepting immediate transfer of power to two dominions. The prospect of balkanisation in the provinces was ruled out and princes were not given the option to be independent; in fact, the latter were, much to their chagrin, cajoled or coerced into joining one or the other dominion. This was no mean achievement. Princely states standing out would have meant a greater blow to Indian unity than Pakistan was."

The Partition, thus, was the end of the process of yielding to the League's insistent demand for a sovereign Muslim state by giving concessions in doses over a period of time. Cripps accepted the autonomy of Muslim-majority provinces in 1942. Gandhi compounded it further while talking to Jinnah in 1944 and agreeing to the right of self-determination there. The Congress accepted without protest in December 1946 the explanation of the British Cabinet that the grouping of (Muslim-majority) provinces in their plan was compulsory. It called for division of Punjab as also by implication of Bengal if the country was partitioned in the resolution of March 1947, and caved in finally by accepting the 3rd June Plan for partition. This capitulation was in sharp contrast with the loud declarations the Congress had made before. They gave away the North West Frontier Province to Pakistan by meekly accepting the grouping of provinces while proclaiming the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly. They told the people that they would not surrender to the blackmail of the violence in 1946 but did exactly that in 1947 because of their inability to stop the communal carnage.

C.R. Formula

The Rajagopalachari Formula of 1944 and the Wavell Plan of 1945 were two attempts to resolve the constitutional deadlock after the failure of the Cripps Mission. While the Congress leadership was jailed for launching the Quit India Movement on August 9, 1942, the Muslim League observed March 23, 1943 as 'Pakistan Day' and passed a resolution in April reiterating that the scheme of Pakistan was the final 'national' goal of Muslim India. In March 1944, Rajagopalachary, with Gandhi's consent, put up a scheme for Congress-League cooperation in regard to Pakistan. It envisaged the League's full support of the demand for independence and cooperation with the Congress in forming a provisional government during the transitional period. A plebiscite at the end of the War was to determine whether the Muslim-majority areas in the north-west and north-east wanted to form a separate state or not. If the option was for a separate state, arrangements would be made for defence and such other important matters. Lastly, these terms would be mandatory only after the transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility to the Government of India. Jinnah insisted that the Muslims as a separate nation had the right of self-determination and only their opinion should be taken into account. Though the Congress was eager for independence, it could not agree to this theory of two nations.

Wavell Plan

The Wavell Plan was a modification of the Cripps proposal of 1942 recommending a balanced representation of the main communities in the Governor-General's Executive Council with equal proportions of Muslims and caste Hindus. A meeting of the representatives of all political parties was convened at Simla on June 25, 1945. The Congress leaders were released from jail and Gandhi attended the conference, which was adjourned after three days.

Simla Conference

Then Jinnah demanded that as the League was the sole representative of the Indian Muslims, the non-League Muslims should not be taken into the Council and that there should be a kind of communal veto in the Executive Council with decisions opposed by Muslims needing a two-third majority. Wavell did not agree and the stalemate continued. By dissolving the conference in face of these two demands by the League, Wavell in effect gave Jinnah the veto he wanted, as no attempt was made to call the League's bluff and go ahead with forming an Executive excluding it if necessary.

Labour Party in Power

Meanwhile the War had ended, the Labour had swept into power in England with a massive majority and fond hopes were raised in Congress circles when Pethick Lawrence, regarded as a friend of India, became the Secretary of State for India. Wavell was somewhat concerned that the Labour might give away "India to their Congress

friends as soon as possible", as he noted in his diary, adding that in such an event he might be required to step on the "brake pedal…gently but firmly". He was not required to do that because the subjective difference in attitudes was little more than marginal, with many Labour leaders like Foreign Secretary Bevin being in reality imperialists who like everyone else hated the idea of the British leaving India but like everyone else had no alternative to suggest. Sumit Sarkar says: "What was changing fast was the total objective situation, worldwide, as well as Indian. Nazi Germany had been destroyed, Japan surrendered after Hiroshima holocaust in August 1945, socially-radical regimes with Communist leadership or participation were emerging throughout Eastern Europe and seemed to be on the point of doing so even in France and Italy, the Chinese revolution was forging ahead, and a tremendous anti-imperialist wave was sweeping through South-East Asia, with Vietnam and Indonesia resisting efforts to restore French and Dutch colonial rule. With a war-weary army and people and a ravaged economy, Britain would have had to retreat; the Labour victory only quickened the process somewhat."

Anyway, Wavell was not asked to do anything radical by the Labour government in Britain. Considering that the last elections were held in 1934 for the centre and in 1937 for the provinces, it was necessary to resume constitutional activities.

Elections of 1945-46

So, the decision to hold elections to Central and Provincial Legislatures in India was announced, and after talks in England, Wavell reiterated the promise of "early realisation of full self-government", carefully avoiding the word 'independence'. It was also promised that after the elections, talks would be held for setting up a constitution-making body and with the help of Indian political parties an Executive Council would be formed. In the elections held in the winter of 1945-46, the Congress did very well winning almost all of the non-Muslim seats in the provinces. It secured a majority of the Muslim seats in the North West Frontier Province and some in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Assam and Bihar. Although the Muslim League captured an overwhelming majority of Muslim seats, it had the requisite numbers to form ministries only in Bengal and Sindh. A coalition ministry of Akali Sikhs and Unionist Hindus and Muslims and some others was formed in Punjab under Malik Khizr Hyat, the Unionist Party leader. The Congress formed ministries in the remaining eight provinces.

Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)

Pethick Lawrence announced in the House of Lords on February 19, 1946 that a special mission of Cabinet Ministers comprising his own self, Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander would visit India to discuss with the Indian politicians the matter of an interim government in association with Wavell. During the visit they would also deliberate on the principles and procedures for framing a new constitution giving India freedom. British Prime Minister Attlee stated subsequently that Britain was "very mindful of the rights of minorities and minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority." The last sentence might have sounded like sweet music to the Congress, indicating probably a welcome shift in the traditional policy of the British Government towards the Muslim League. Wavell, however, suspected the Cabinet Mission of being over-friendly with the Congress and was shocked when Cripps personally brought a glass of water to Gandhi, compelling him to note in his diary that the Mission was "living in the pocket of Congress". In fact, the occasional leaning of the Mission towards the Congress was not due to the pro-nationalist sympathies of the Labour Party, nor was it due to Cripps-Nehru friendship. The tilt was due to the "necessity to avoid the mass movement or revolution which it is in the power of the Congress to start, and which we are not certain that we can control", according to an entry in Wavell's diary dated March 29, 1946. "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Congress leadership once again spiked its own guns in its eagerness for quick and easy power and desire at all costs to preserve social order. There were widespread police strikes in April (in Malabar, the Andamans, Dhaka, Bihar and Delhi), threats of an all-India railway stoppage throughout the summer,

and on 29 July—less than three weeks before the Great Calcutta Killing of 16 August—a total, absolutely peaceful, and remarkably united bandh in Calcutta under Communist leadership in sympathy with postal employees. The Home Member on 5 April warned that he had doubts 'whether a Congress rebellion could be suppressed', particularly because 'a call to a general strike would be widely obeyed…labour is mostly amenable to Communist and Congress leadership'." (Mansergh, Vol. VII, p. 151) The strike wave of 1946 in fact surpassed all previous records, with 1,629 stoppages involving 1,941,948 workers and a loss of 12,717,762 man-days.

Instead of using this seething discontent among the working class to their advantage, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution in August condemning the growing lack of discipline and obligations on the part of the workers. Nehru provided the much-needed relief to Wavell by appearing "to realise the unreasonableness of the (railway) men's demands and the danger of giving way to them". On becoming a minister in the Interim Government in September, Sarat Bose faced a strike threat by Delhi electricity workers and called the troops as also British technicians, thus amusing Wavell to no end. All this time, the Congress was engaged in negotiations and ministry-making manoeuvres, which ultimately led to a communal blood-bath and partition.

Meanwhile, Jinnah's insistence regarding Pakistan succeeded in stalling the discussions when on May 16, the Cabinet Mission put up a plan to end the stalemate. It presented Jinnah the choice to opt for a 'moth-eaten' Pakistan or a loose, three-tier confederal structure in which the Muslims would have the chance of dominating the north-west and north-east provinces of a still-united India. A full-fledged Pakistan was ruled out by the Mission because that would include a large number of non-Muslims, for example, 48.3 per cent in Bengal and Assam. The League's demand for communal self-determination would require the separation of Hindu-majority West Bengal and the Sikh and Hindu-dominated Ambala and Jalandhar divisions of Punjab. A Partition of Bengal and Punjab would go against regional ties, raise any number of economic, administrative and military problems, and still fail to satisfy the League. The alternative suggested was a weak centre controlling only foreign affairs, defence and communications. The provincial assemblies in existence would be categorised under three sections for the purpose of electing the Constituent Assembly. Section A would constitute the Hindu-majority provinces while Sections B and C would contain the Muslim-majority provinces of the north-west and the north-east, including Assam. All of them would have the authority to establish intermediate-level executives and legislatures of their own.

Provisions of the Cabinet Mission

In his book, *India Wins Freedom*, Maulana Azad described the acceptance of this plan by the major parties as a glorious event; it, however, also failed gloriously due to the mutually-antagonistic interpretations of the same major players. The League wanted the grouping to be compulsory so that in future Groups B and C would secede into Pakistan, and expected that the Congress would reject the Plan. By accepting the plan, the Congress not only disappointed Jinnah but also Wavell, who was thinking of inviting the League alone to form the Interim Government in such an event. Nevertheless, the Congress opposed compulsory grouping and was not happy with the Mission's clarification that the grouping would be compulsory at first, but the provinces had the right to go out of it once the constitution had been finalised. When Nehru declared on July 10, 1946 that the only commitment made by his party was participation in the Constituent Assembly elections, Jinnah retracted his earlier acceptance on July 29, and he called upon the 'Muslim Nation' to achieve Pakistan by 'Direct Action' from August 16, 1946.

In the meantime Wavell tried to cobble a short-term coalition Interim Government at the centre but was not successful because Jinnah demanded a ratio of five Congress Hindus, five League Muslims, one Sikh and one Scheduled Caste. The Congress rejected it stating that the party had the right to include *Harijans* and Muslims among its nominees and wanted the new dispensation to be a genuine Cabinet, unlike the Executive Council of the earlier viceroy. So Wavell began by setting up a caretaker government made up of officials,

but within a few weeks he tried to get the Congress in it somehow even if the League stayed out. His change of stance now from that assumed by him at the Simla Conference was due to the possible mass action, presaged by an actual postal walk-out and a looming all-India strike in the railways. His letter of July 31, 1946 to the Secretary of State reads: "If Congress will take responsibility they will realise that firm control of unruly elements is necessary and they may put down the Communists and try to curb their own Left Wing. Also I hope to keep them so busy with administration that they have much less time for politics." Wavell's comments were endorsed in a report of August 9, from the Director of the Intelligence Bureau: "…the labour situation is becoming increasingly dangerous…Until a responsible Indian government is introduced at the centre, there is little that can be done…I am satisfied that a responsible government, if one can be achieved, will deal more decisively with Labour than is at present possible." Apparently, Patel was in favour of joining the government to prevent the spread of further chaos in the country and threatened to resign from the Working Committee if his views were not accepted. Wavell came to know of this, changed tracks, and tried to bully the Congress into accepting Compulsory Grouping by telling Gandhi and Nehru that if they refused he would not convene the Constituent Assembly. Taking exception to his minatory tone, Gandhi replied the next day: "We are all plain men though we may not all be soldiers and even though some of us know the law." The Secretary of State, on hearing about the fracas, sent a 'panic-stricken telegram' asking Wavell to avoid any break. The upshot of all this was that on September 2, a Congress-dominated Interim Government was sworn in with Nehru at its head. Nehru once more emphasised his party's opposition to compulsory grouping and added that he was open to referring the matter to the Federal Court as envisaged in the Cabinet Mission plan.

Formation of the Interim Government

Jinnah's call for 'Direct Action' on August 16, 1946 marked the beginning of communal riots all over India on an unprecedented scale. The League ministry in Bengal had declared August 16th, a holiday. Chief Minister Suhrawardy, addressing a meeting in the Calcutta Maidan, promised the audience immunity from police and army interference. Large-scale Muslim attacks began thereafter in Calcutta and Governor Burrows reported to Wavell that the "CM spent a great deal of time in the (Calcutta Police) Control Room in Lall Bazar, often attended by some of his supporters", showing "an exasperating preoccupation with the sufferings undergone by the members of his own community". The riots continued in Calcutta up to August 19, then abated with sporadic incidents here and there, spread to Bombay (September 1), Noakhali in East Bengal (October 10), Bihar (October 25), Garhmukteshwar in UP and turned to a raging holocaust in Punjab from March 1947 onwards. The igniting spark everywhere was provided by communal passions but the issue of immediate responsibility varied from place to place. In Calcutta, according to Burrows, it was Muslim toughs versus Hindu goons and particularly Sikh goons, "a pogrom between two rival armies of the Calcutta underworld", which left at least 4,000 dead, 10,000 injured and the task of removing the rotting corpses. The British inaction for 24 hours was in sharp contrast to their alacrity seen in such situations earlier. In Bombay city, stabbing incidents were much more prominent than large-scale rioting and in Noakhali, the tradition of agrarian unrest was reflected in the murderous attacks on Hindu landlords, traders and professional groups. Bihar erupted into violence on October 25, while observing the 'Noakhali Day', leaving nearly 7,000 Muslim peasants dead in what was an old Congress (and communist-led Kisan Sabha) stronghold. Then followed Garhmukteshwar where Hindu pilgrims butchered about a thousand Muslims. The nadir was reached in the greatest holocaust of it all—that in Punjab. With Sikh support, Congress manouevred continuation of Khizr Hyat ministry even though the leader's Unionist Party had only 10 seats as opposed to the 79 seats held by the League. A civil disobedience campaign by the League brought the ministry down on March 3, 1947, prompting Master Tara Singh to bring a large procession in front of the Lahore Assembly next day where

Direct Action

Communal Violence

brandishing a sword he raised the slogan *Raj Karega Khalsa,* probably as a counter to the League's battle-cry, *Larke Lenge Pakistan.* Rioting on a large-scale broke out in Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Attock and Rawalpindi along with some rural areas in the last three districts. The number of dead was around 5,000 by August 1947, the precursor of the war of extinction which raged both sides of the border after the partition. Refugee trains started to arrive, sometimes carrying only the dead. Penderel Moon working at that time in Bhawalpur in south-west Punjab estimated that approximately 60,000 were killed in the west and 120,000 in the east. A virtually complete and forcible exchange of population commenced that left behind 6.7 million acres of land in west Punjab and 4.7 million acres in east. According to Moon, "Muslims lost the most lives, Hindus and Sikhs most property." Further, "Muslim population (mainly peasant) was less interested in blood than in the quiet enjoyment of Hindu property and Hindu girls." In central and east Punjab, killing was the norm because the warring sides were more or less evenly matched. The Sikhs there pushed out and annihilated the Muslims with a ferocious determination so as to provide land for the two million Sikhs coming from the west (Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit*). Moon also referred to the curious passivity of the British (if not active connivance) while this enormous human tragedy was unfolding and pointedly mentioned the destruction of two main bazaars of Amritsar in March 1947 without a shot being fired. All this happened in the city of Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, Moon observed ironically. Anticipating a movement by the Congress, the British had made a plan to bring five army divisions to India around June 1946. Yet no such move was made while a horrific carnage was taking place in the months before the partition. Nehru's Interim Government presided over this communal slaughterhouse with helpless frustration, because the title notwithstanding the government was no more than the Viceroy's Executive Council of the past. Wavell lorded over everything, to the extent of overruling ministers on the issue of releasing the I.N.A. prisoners in his last cabinet meeting on March 19, 1947. He made collective functioning, in fact, any kind of functioning, quite impossible by inviting Jinnah to join the government on October 26, 1946 on the basis of a League nominee, Jogen Mandal, belonging to a scheduled caste as the counterweight of a Congress Muslim. The Secretary of State justified the decision by saying that without the League's presence in the Government, civil war would have been inevitable. Jinnah had finally succeeded in putting the British in his pocket.

The League did not give up its Direct Action programme, nor did it accept the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan. It continued to insist on compulsory grouping which reduced the opponents of Pakistan in Assam and the North West Frontier Province to a helpless minority. Having realised that it would be suicidal to leave the administration in the hands of the Congress, Jinnah tried for and got a foothold in the Government to fight for Pakistan. To him participation in the Government meant the continuation of the civil war or direct action by other means. The League did not attend the Constituent Assembly where a general 'Objectives Resolution' drafted by Nehru was passed in January 1947. The resolution stated that the independent sovereign republic envisaged would have autonomous units and adequate minority safeguards, with social, political and economic democracy as its fundamental aims. To embarrass the Congress, the Finance Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan of the League, passed a demagogic budget in February 1947 levying heavy taxes on big businesses, the majority of which were Hindu. Wavell applauded it, noting in his diary that this clever move "drives a wedge between Congress and their rich merchant supporters like Birla, while Congress can not object to its provisions." Unable to tolerate the disruptionist activities of the League, nine members of the Interim Government wrote to the viceroy on February 5, 1947 demanding resignation of the League members. The developing crisis was temporarily averted by Attlee's announcement of February 20, 1947, setting a date for British withdrawal from India—June 30, 1948. It was an unstated acceptance of Wavell's assessment that an irreversible decline of Government authority had taken place. They

Objectives Resolution January 1947

could dismiss the viceroy on the ground that he was pessimistic, which they did in a discourteous manner. The news was common gossip in New Delhi before Wavell was even informed of it. But they could not dismiss the truth of what he said.

Exasperated by the League's combative attitude and sickened by the terrible loss of lives in the riots, a considerable section of the Congress leadership and cadres started losing their secular ideals. Nehru's anguish over Bihar and Azad's spirited protest to Wavell for allowing hooligans in Calcutta a free run were sort of neutralised by Sardar Patel's defence of the Hindus in Bihar. (We would be committing a grave mistake if we expose the people of Bihar and their ministry to the violent and vulgar attacks of the League leaders, Patel told Rajendra Prasad.) All this led the Congress to think what was so long unthinkable, the partition of India. The vacillating section was also influenced to look for such a solution by the persistent demands of the communalist groups of Hindus and Sikhs in Bengal and Punjab. Their apprehension of the prospect of compulsory grouping in Muslim-dominated areas which might later secede into Pakistan was very real. By then, the Hindu Mahasabha had already set up a committee to examine the feasibility of a separate Hindu province in West Bengal. Wavell noted in his diary what Nehru had told him in private on March 10: "The Cabinet Mission Plan was the best solution if it could be carried through—the only real alternative was the partition of Punjab and Bengal." After the unceremonious exit of Wavell, his successor, Mountbatten, was informed by the Congress president Kripalani sometime later: "Rather than have a battle we shall let them have their Pakistan, provided you will allow the Punjab and Bengal to be partitioned in a fair manner". (H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*).

Change in Congress Attitude

Before Mountbatten's arrival, Prime Minister Attlee had told the Parliament that the pronounced differences among Indian political parties was holding up the constitutional process and that the British Government would take steps to transfer power by June 1948. Apparently, Mountbatten descended in India with a deadline to finish the business, and the encomiums he earned from all and sundry for his decisiveness seem to be a little overdrawn. His speed of action was quicker than others like Wavell because he was given more power than his predecessors to take on-the-spot decisions. Underlying all that was the British urgency to quit at the earliest opportunity. The point was made by Cripps at the Commons while debating on Attlee's statement. "The alternative," Cripps said, "was to station large number of British troops in India, an unwise and impractical step." In his 'break-down plan' of September 1946, Wavell also suggested total withdrawal by March 31, 1948. Moreover, the gruesome bloodbath resulting from Direct Action of the League compelled acceptance of the freedom-with-partition formula sometime before Mountbatten assumed charge. A further scheme, that of the transfer of power on the basis of grant of Dominion Status along with a right of secession, was not suggested by Mountbatten. It was an innovative plan to do away with the need to wait for agreement in the Constituent Assembly on new political structures. It was put forward by V. P. Menon to the Secretary of State in January 1947. Menon says in his book, *Transfer of Power in India,* that Patel had privately agreed with his scheme even though outwardly it meant a departure from the 1929 Lahore resolution. Such a course of action, according to Menon, would ensure a peaceful and very quick transfer of power, win for India influential friends in Britain, and allow for some continuity in the bureaucracy and army. Mountbatten helped in carrying forward the scheme at a great speed, which left many inconsistencies in the arrangements for the transfer of power and failed totally to prevent the massacre in Punjab. It is for such reasons that Penderel Moon's observation that Mountbatten's claim "to great merit for the manner of our departure from India rings somewhat hollow" seems correct.

Atlee's Declaration

Holding 133 separate discussions with Indian political leaders, Mountbatten concluded that the Cabinet Mission Plan was unworkable and put up an alternative code named, of all things, Plan Balkan. It recommended the transfer of power to separate provinces or to such confederations formed before the transfer, giving the assemblies

of Bengal and Punjab the option to vote for the partition of their provinces. The various units formed by this process along with princely states rendered independent by the lapse of paramountcy, would then have the choice of joining India or Pakistan, or remaining separate. The plan was, however, quickly abandoned, as Nehru reacted violently against it when Mountbatten informed him about it privately in Simla on May 10. The V.P. Menon-Patel suggestion of transfer of power to two central governments, India and Pakistan, on the basis of grant of Dominion Status was taken up instead. Accepted by the Congress, League and Sikh leaders on June 2 and announced the next day, this became the basis of the India Independence Act, which was ratified by the British Parliament and Crown on July 18 and implemented on August 15. Mountbatten himself, as well as his admirers, have been full of praise for the decision, on an 'absolute hunch', of showing the first plan privately to Nehru beforehand. The historically much more significant point surely is that Nehru's opposition was sufficient to make Mountbatten abandon a plan on which British officials had been working for several weeks—once again revealing the potential strength of the Congress position, which its leaders repeatedly failed to use due to their desire for a quick and peaceful accession to power.

Balkan Plan

India Independence Act

There is no doubt that Nehru quickly spotted in the fragmentation or Balkanisation proposal an imperialist design to build up in India a number of small client-states and thus create something like a Northern Ireland situation. Interestingly, the alternative adopted also held back certain non-communal regional possibilities. For example, many League members in Bengal were not too keen to be administered by a distant Punjab and toyed with the idea of forming a united, independent Bengal. Suhrawardy and Abul Hashem among them got in touch with Sarat Bose of the Congress who apparently was quite receptive to the idea while he faced bitter opposition from the Hindu communalists to the proposed obviously Muslim-majority state. Even though anti-Muslim riots in the Hindu-majority states weakened the bonds of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan-led Congress in the North West Frontier Province with the nationalists, he was bold enough to raise the demand for a free Pathan state so as to prevent the League from getting the province for Pakistan. As the June 3 Plan offered the provincial assemblies only two choices, India and Pakistan, no other development was possible. The Congress leadership in 1947 had ditched the Pathans, their consistent supporters since the 1920s, very badly indeed. Even though the North West Frontier Province assembly with its Congress majority had voted in favour of the Constituent Assembly, the province had to go through a plebiscite on the question of choice between joining India or Pakistan. There was a protest from the Congress, but not as forceful as that relating to Plan Balkan. Nor was there a demand for a decision by universal franchise or inclusion of the independent Pakhtoonistan option in the choice before the voters. The provincial Congress stayed away from the plebiscite in protest and the North West Frontier Province went to Pakistan by a vote of just 9.52 per cent of the total population. A disappointed Frontier Gandhi said later with ample justification that the Congress leadership had thrown them to the wolves.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

The British Government introduced the Indian Independence Bill in Parliament on July 4, 1947, and on July 18, the Indian Independence Act was passed. The Act did not spell out any new constitution for India. Its purpose was to "enable the representatives of India and Pakistan to frame their own constitutions and to provide for the exceedingly difficult period of transition". The Act formalised and gave legal effect to the Plan of June 3, 1947 supposedly authored by Mountbatten.

The Act provided for the Partition of India and the establishment of the two Dominions (India and Pakistan) from the appointed date, namely, 15 August 1947 and for the legislative supremacy of these Dominions. The British Government divested itself of all powers and control over the affairs of the Dominions after August 15th. Pending the adoption of a new constitution for each Dominion, the existing Constituent Assembly

would be Dominion Legislature, and either Dominion and every Province would be governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Each Dominion was empowered to modify this Act, through the Governor-General up to March 31, 1948, and thereafter by the Constituent Assembly."

There was sorrow and joy on the eve of August 15, 1947: Gandhi sat grieving over murder, rape and arson; Nehru heralded India's 'tryst with destiny'; millions danced in the streets while thousands upon thousands boarded the refugee trains.

CONSEQUENCES OF PARTITION

The consequences of partition, following the Independence of the sub-continent, must have appeared heart-wrenching to many, especially to the freedom fighters who made untold personal sacrifices to uphold the unity of their motherland. As for the common people, the Hindus in Pakistan and the Muslims in India, the immediate question was that of survival. Freedom-with-Partition meant to them, right then and in the years to come, a cruel choice between threat of sudden violence and the squeezing of employment and the economic opportunities, or a forcible tearing out of age-old roots to join the stream of refugees.

Causes for Partition

While several reasons can be attributed to the inevitability of partition in 1947, the prime reason is generally seen to lie in the persistent efforts of the Muslim League from 1940 onwards to obtain a separate homeland for the Muslims. Using an astute combination of constitutional methods and direct actions, the League, under Jinnah, consolidated its position and forced the political situation into a deadlock. At the same time, partition could not have taken place without British help, with British authorities using communalism as a bulwark against the rapid rise of nationalism. Besides giving credibility to the Pakistan demand, the British recognised the League as the sole representative of Muslims and gave the League the power to veto progress in political settlements. Despite working towards a united India post-1946, which was in their interest, the authorities could not stand up to the threat of Jinnah's direct action. Official inaction deteriorated the communal situation until partition appeared to be preferable to civil war. For its part, the Congress failed to prevent the partition despite its long-standing commitment to a united India, owing to its failure to draw the Muslim masses into the national movement and its inability to evolve a strategy to fight communalism successfully.

Theories of Partition

Bipan Chandra observes in *India's Struggle for Independence* that there are two theories, imperialist and revolutionary, that seek to explain why partition took place. "The imperialist answer is that independence was simply the fulfilment of Britain's self-appointed mission to assist Indians to self-government. Partition was the unfortunate consequence of the age-old Hindu-Muslim rift, of the two communities' failure to agree on how and to whom power was to be transferred. The radical view is that independence was finally wrested by the mass actions of 1946-47 in which many communists participated, often as leaders. But the bourgeois leaders of the Congress, frightened by the revolutionary upsurge, struck a deal with the imperialist power by which power was transferred to them and the nation paid the price of Partition."

Views of Bipan Chandra

According to Bipan Chandra, the Independence-Partition duality reflects the success-failure dichotomy of the anti-imperialist movement led by the Congress. The two-fold task of the Congress comprised both in structuring diverse classes, communities, groups and regions into a nation and in securing independence from the British rulers for the new nation. Congress nationalism, while succeeding in building up nationalist consciousness sufficient to pressurise the British into quitting India, failed to weld the nation and to integrate Muslims into this nation. However, by the end of the Second World War, the Congress had succeeded in diminishing the authority of the Raj by expanding the base of the national movement. New groups that imbibed the nationalist consciousness included people in hitherto unpoliticised areas, such as army officials and bureaucrats, who began to openly attend meetings,

contribute money, and vote for the Congress. The Quit India Movement saw, for example, students and others expressing their solidarity with the I.N.A. and R.I.N. men. Parallel with the growing success of the national movement was the demoralisation that was setting in among British officials and the changing loyalties of Indian officials and loyalists. The British rule was maintained in part on the basis of the consent of sections of Indians, in particular the zamindars and the upper classes or the 'loyalists' who included those Indians who manned the administration, supported government policy and worked the reforms that the British introduced. The British also created a moral justification to their rule by successfully getting Indians to believe in British justice and fair play, accept the British officer as the *mai-bap* of his people, and appreciate the prevalence of *Pax Brittanica.* The Raj ran to a large extent on prestige and the 'steel frame of the Raj' or the ICS and its officers embodied this prestige.

Nature of Bureaucracy

Following the end of the First World War, there was a drop in European recruits to the ICS and a corresponding increase in the number of Indian recruits owing to the policy of Indianisation. By 1939, parity had been achieved by British and Indian members. Overall recruitment was first cut in order to maintain this balance, and later stopped in 1943. Between 1940 and 1946, the total number of ICS officials fell from 587 to 429 and Indian ICS officials from 614 to 510. By 1946, only 19 British ICS officials were available in Bengal for 65 posts. There was a further shift in the composition of the ICS: recruits were no longer Oxbridge graduates whose fathers and uncles were 'old India hands' but grammar school and polytechnic boys for whom serving the Raj was a career, not a mission. The Second World War led to war-weariness and inflation-related economic worries, with many officials being due to retire and others expecting to seek premature retirement. Moreover, the British policy of conciliation and repression was no longer tenable. After the Cripps Offer of 1942, there was little left to be offered as a concession except transfer of power. The brutal repression of the 1942 movement angered loyalists and liberals, as did the government's refusal to release Gandhi even when he appeared close to death during his 21-day fast in February-March 1943, and its decision to go ahead with the unpopular I.N.A. trials.

British Motives

As regards the modalities of the transfer of power, the Congress demand was for transfer of power to one centre, with minorities' demands being worked out in a framework ranging from autonomy to Muslim provinces to self-determination on secession from the Indian Union—but only after the British left India. The British worked for a united India, friendly with Britain and an active partner in Commonwealth defence, for it was believed that a divided India would lack depth in defence, frustrate joint defence plans and be a blot on Britain's diplomacy. Britain did not see Pakistan as her natural future ally. In the post-1946 period, the British, in keeping with their strategic interests in the post-independence Indian subcontinent, adopted a stance very different from their earlier posture of encouraging communal forces and denying the legitimacy of nationalism and the representative nature of the Congress. This was because while the continuance of rule demanded one stance, withdrawal and post-imperial links called for another. But Jinnah's thinly-veiled threat to Attlee that he should 'avoid compelling the Muslims to shed their blood…(by a) surrender to the Congress' had been made as had been the call to Direct Action. According to Bipan Chandra, the British could keep India united only if they gave up their role as mediators trying to effect a solution Indians had agreed upon and intervened with a firm hand instead, including putting down communal elements. But they, in fact, took the easy way out by withdrawing from India at the earliest. Rather than identifying the forces that wanted a united India and countering those who opposed it, they preferred to woo both sides into friendly collaboration with Britain on strategic and defence issues.

Mountbatten Plan

Mountbatten based his formula on dividing India while retaining maximum unity. The partition of the country would involve partitioning Punjab and Bengal as well, so that the limited Pakistan that

emerged would meet both the Congress and the League's positions to some extent. The League's position on Pakistan was conceded so that it would be created, but the Congress' position on unity would be taken into account to make Pakistan as small as possible. Since the Congress were asked to concede their main point, i.e., a united India, all their other points would be met. Whether it was integrating princely states into the Indian union or unity for Bengal or Hyderabad joining up with Pakistan instead of India, Mountbatten supported India on these issues. The Mountbatten Plan or the Plan of June 3, 1947 sought to effect an early transfer of power on the basis of Dominion Status to two successor states, India and Pakistan.

The Congress was willing to accept Dominion Status because it wanted to assume full power immediately and meet the explosive situation in the country. At the same time, it wanted to avail of the opportunity to learn the ropes of administration from British officers and civil service officials who were staying for a while to let Indians settle in their new positions of authority. For Britain, Dominion Status offered a chance of keeping India in the Commonwealth. The rationale for the early date of transfer of power, August 15, 1947, was to get the Congress to agree to Dominion Status. Patel told the viceroy that the situation was where "you won't govern yourself, and you won't let us govern". Despite the steady erosion of government authority, the British could still assert their authority, but did not care to, though the situation, rather than warranting withdrawal of authority, cried out for someone to wield it. The 72-day timetable, June 3 to August 15, further proved disastrous for both transfer of power and division of India. Senior officials in India, like the Punjab Governor Jenkins, and the Commander-in-Chief, Auchinleck, felt that peaceful division could take a few years at least. The Partition Council was left to dividing assets, down to typewriters and printing presses, in a few weeks in the absence of any transitional institutional structure to tackle division-related structures. Mountbatten had hoped to be the common Governor-General of India and Pakistan and provide the necessary link but Jinnah wanted the position for himself. As a result, even the joint defence machinery set up failed to last beyond December 1947 by which time Kashmir had already been the scene of a military conflict rather than a political settlement.

Rationale for Early Transfer

Timetable Proved Fatal

It has been pointed out that while the League demanded Pakistan and the British conceded it because it was in harmony with the politics they had pursued in part, it is not clear why the Congress, which had fought for unity for long years, gave up its ideal of a united India. The answer lay less in the personal failings of the top leaders such as temptation for power, and more in a basic failure of the entire organisation. The Congress acceptance of partition was the consequence of its failure over the years to bring the Muslim masses into the nationalist mainstream and stem the advancing tide of Muslim communalism since 1937. While the Congress understood by 1946 that Muslims were behind the League as the latter had won 80 per cent Muslim seats in the elections, the need to concede the demand for Pakistan was felt in 1947 when communal riots engulfed the country. The Congress then concluded that partition was a lesser evil than a civil war. The breakdown of the Interim Government only confirmed the inevitability of Pakistan, a breakdown that was hastened by a spate of communal riots from August 16, 1946 onwards which transformed the Indian scene.

Weaknesses of the Congress

Communal Riots and Massacres

The riots started with Calcutta on August 16-19, 1946, spread to Bombay from September 1, 1946, Noakhali in east Bengal (October 10), Bihar (October 25), Garmukteswar in the United Provinces (November) and affected Punjab from March 1947 onwards. Inflamed communal passions and the question of the granting of immediate responsibility were the most common factors behind the riots. In Calcutta, where the League ministry had declared a holiday on Direct Action Day, large-scale Muslim attacks began after a maidan rally. During the rally, Chief Minister Suhrawardy spent a great deal of time in the Control Room in Lall Bazar, often attended by

Riots of 1946-47

some of his supporters, and showed an exasperating preoccupation with the sufferings undergone by members of his own community. Hindus and particularly Sikhs retaliated and by August 19 at least 4,000 people had been killed and 10,000 injured. The removal of a very large number of decomposed bodies lying in the streets posed a major problem. Both Wavell and Patel noted that more Muslims than Hindus probably died in the Calcutta riots where killings took precedence over rape, desecration of temples or mosques or attacks on property. The British deployed the army only after 24 hours after the riots began. A second round of riots in Calcutta, between March 26 and April 1, 1947 was followed by chronic disturbances and stabbing incidents till the eve of Independence. Large parts of the city remained out of bounds for members of one or other community for months.

October Disturbances

There were disturbances in October 1946 in Noakhali and Tippera in east Bengal districts, known for their tradition of agrarian unrest, and where peasants were mostly Muslims while Hindus predominated among landlords, traders and professional groups. In the October disturbances, attacks on property and incidents of rape figured more prominently than murder—there were about 300 deaths but loss of property amounted to crores of rupees. The attacks were probably the handiwork of hooligans who exploited the communal feelings.

Bihar, the United Provinces and Bombay

Riots in Bihar, in the wake of observance of 'Noakhali Day' on October 25, revealed a mass upsurge of Hindu peasants against Muslims, resulting in a massacre with at least 7,000 deaths. An old Congress and Kisan Sabha stronghold was the scene of a madness according to Nehru, that had "seized the people", as they suspected landlord instigation to divert the attention of their tenantry from agrarian problems. It was also noted that the Congress-run administration and many party members had also become victims of Hindu communalism. Bihar was followed by Garhmukteswar in the United Province where Hindu pilgrims killed a thousand Muslims. In Bombay city, many people were stabbed and about 162 Hindus and 158 Muslims died in September 1946.

Punjab Holocaust

But it was Punjab that saw the greatest holocaust. The death of Haryana Hindu Jat leader, Chhotu Ram, in January 1945 had weakened the Unionist bloc, and a game of political manoeuvring had resulted in the Unionists getting only 10 seats against the League's 79. This development gave a fillip to Muslim communalist and pro-Pakistan attitudes. A League campaign of civil disobedience from January 1947 brought down the Khizr Hayat Khan's ministry on March 3rd, and on March 4th, a provocative Sikh demonstration in front of the Assembly Chamber in Lahore was followed by large-scale riots in Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Attock and Rawalpindi, and in the rural areas of the three districts. Sikh and Hindu traders and moneylenders were the main target in these Muslim-majority regions. About 5000 had been killed by August 1947. After Independence, however, a war of extermination was launched on both sides of the border, when refugee trains sometimes arrived carrying only dead bodies.

P. Moon's Estimates

According to Penderel Moon, around 180,000 had been killed, of which 60,000 were from the west and 120,000 from the east. By March 1948, six million Muslims and four and a half million Hindu and Sikhs had become refugees owing to a complete and forcible exchange of population. These refugees left behind 4.7 million acres of land in east Punjab and 6.7 million acres in the west. On the whole, "Muslims lost the most lives, Hindus and Sikhs lost the most property", according to Moon.

British Inaction and Indifference

The British made no attempt to bring in the army to control the riots, though they had been planning to bring five army divisions to India in the context of a possible Congress movement. Wavell, replying to Muslim requests from Bihar to use aerial bombardment to stop the riots, refused to do so on the grounds that "machine gunning from the air is not a weapon one would willingly use, though the Muslims point out…that we did not hesitate to use it in 1942". The police did nothing when the two main bazaars of Amritsar were

destroyed. The Interim government could do little to stop this growing communal inferno, given the few powers it had at its disposal. Wavell overruled the ministers on the question of release of I.N.A. prisoners in his very last cabinet meeting on March 19, 1947. Wavell persuaded Jinnah to join the government on October 26, on the basis of a League scheduled caste nominee (Jogen Mandal) balancing a Congress Muslim. The League was allowed to join without giving up its implication of Direct Action programme, its rejection of the Cabinet Mission long-term plan, or its insistence on compulsory grouping with decisions being taken by a majority vote by a section as a whole. The move would have reduced opponents of Pakistan in Assam and North West Frontier Province to the position of a helpless minority. The League also refused to attend meetings of the Constituent Assembly which then had to confine itself to pass, in January 1947, a general 'Objectives Resolution' drafted by Nehru stating the ideal of an 'independent sovereign republic' with autonomous units, adequate minority safeguards, and having social, political and economic democracy as its fundamental aims.

Objective Resolution

The League's obstructionist attitude included its refusal to attend Nehru's 'tea-party Cabinets' or informal sessions to coordinate policies before meeting the viceroy. A budget was moved in February 1947 by finance minister Liaquat Ali Khan imposing heavy taxes on mostly Hindu big businesses. To Wavell this was 'a clever move', since it drove a wedge between the Congress and their rich merchant supporters like Birla, since the while Congress could not object to the budget's provisions. Confronted by the events in Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar and Punjab, the secular ideals of many within the Congress ranks and leadership tended to evaporate. While leaders like Nehru and Azad consistently denounced Hindu communalism, Patel sympathised with hostile Hindu reactions to Nehru's condemnation of Bihar. "We would be committing a grave mistake if we expose the people of Bihar and their ministry to the violent and vulgar attacks of the League leaders." (Patel to Rajendra Prasad)

The League's Attitude

The most insistent demands for partition now started coming from Hindu and Sikh communalist groups in Bengal and Punjab, who were alarmed by the prospect of compulsory grouping into Muslim-dominated sections which might lead to Pakistan later. During this period, the Hindu Mahasabha set up a committee to investigate the feasibility of a separate Hindu province in West Bengal. By March 10, 1947, Nehru was telling Wavell in private that though "the Cabinet Mission Plan was the best solution if it could be carried through the only real alternative was the partition of the Punjab and Bengal". A major consideration in accepting partition was that it ruled out the far worse possibility of 'balkanisation' of the country. The Congress had the viceroy's support and behind him the British government in refusing the option of independence to the princely states. Through persuasion or force, they were made to join either the Union of India or Pakistan.

Prevention of Balkanisation

Radcliffe's Award

Sir Cyril or Lord Radcliffe's boundary award, purposely delayed until the achievement of Independence, was opened on August 16, 1947. Hindu Indians, Pakistanis and Sikhs had accepted the provisions of the award in advance so that its presentation was just a formality. Sir Cyril, the Chairman of the Boundary Commission, was chosen for his legal acumen and reputation for fairness. No old India hand, he was given the difficult task and responsibility of drawing boundaries and deciding disputed points within a six-week deadline. Given the limitations of time, knowledge and understanding, problems connected to the demarcating of a boundary line, such as the location of canal headwaters in relation to the canals themselves, road and rail communication, the fate of mixed or isolated people and the location of pasture lands in relation to villagers' flocks and herds, were not given the attention they deserved. For the people, there were three areas of special grievance: the Pakistanis' resentment over the exclusion of Calcutta from eastern Pakistan; the dispute over Kashmir—the allotment of half the mixed Gurdaspur district to India made

Boundary Commission

Areas of Specal Grievance

access to Kashmir practicable owing to a new road running from Pathankot; and the Sikh community's resentment at finding their four million-strong community divided down the middle. An ethnic, linguistic, partially cultural and religious unit, the Sikhs felt frustrated, betrayed and truncated and the result was the Punjab massacres. The Sikhs were an important component of the British Indian Army and many Sikh leaders had hoped the British would reward them at the end of the Second World War by helping them to create their own nation in Punjab. Moreover, they had been equally opposed to the British rule and had contributed several 'nationalistic' martyrs to the cause of freedom. Tara Singh, the most important leader of the Sikh political movement and the first to raise the demand for a separate free Punjab in 1942, even later demanded that it be called either "*Sikhistan*" or "*Khalistan"*. After the partition of the country, the Sikhs were caught in the middle of Punjab's new boundary line and suffered the highest number of casualties in the massacres that followed. Bitter memories of the days of the old Punjab province when Sikhs and Muslims were in conflict (Sikhs had been eliminated from Lahore and Muslims from Amritsar) were revived and a Sikh-Muslim civil war started, with Hindu Jats joining in East Punjab.

Plight of the Sikhs

Quite relevant in this regard are the first lines of W.H. Auden's deeply ironic poem *Partition*, referring to Cyril Radcliffe who had been given the impossible task of drawing the boundary line partitioning India, within a time span of seven weeks. He also had to cope with dysentery and the heat.

> "Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
> Having never set eyes on the land he was called to partition
> Between two peoples fanatically at odds.
> With their different diets and incompatible gods."
> (Excerpted from *The Times of India*, Bookmark, August 14, 2005)

The aftermath of the births of India and Pakistan was migration, exile, hate and folk memory of conflict. Cautious estimates peg the loss of life at half a million people. The devastation in terms of the injured, misery and hate was far greater. The refugees numbering five-and-a-half million poured into West Pakistan while a roughly equal number of Sikhs and Muslims migrated eastwards. About 400,000 people left Sind.

Mountbatten foresaw the danger of the carnage when he assembled a boundary force of 50,000 men, says V.A. Smith in *The Oxford History of India.* But Nehru refused to allow any participation of British troops and when the moment of crisis came, the force proved too involved on either side to be effective. With the infux of refugees in southeast India, consternation, hatred and violence spread. In late August, Delhi witnessed a civil war of sorts and refugee excesses. For a time, the existence of the central government itself was threatened. When Mountbatten, who had gone to Shimla for a break, was asked to return immediately by V.P. Menon on the instructions of Nehru and Patel, he demurred and he was told there was no point in returning later since there would be no central government if he delayed his return. Bipan Chandra in *India's Struggle for Independence* writes that the early date of Partition, August 15, 1947, and the delay in announcing the Boundary Commission Award—both Mountbatten's decisions—compounded the tragedy of partition. A senior army official, Brigadier Bristow, posted in Punjab in 1947, believed that the Punjab tragedy would not have occurred if partition had been deferred for a year or so. Lockhart, commander-in-chief of the Indian army from August 15 to December 31, 1947, endorsed this view: "Had officials in every grade in the civil services, and all the personnel of the armed services, been in position in their respective new countries before Independence Day, it seems there would have been chance of preventing widespread disorder." While the Boundary Commission Award was ready by August 12, 1947, Mountbatten decided to make it public after Independence Day so that the responsibility did not fall on the British.

Mountbatten's Folly

Gandhi was deeeply distressed by the idea of high-level bargaining by the Congress through which quick power would be attained in the major part

of India at the cost of a partition on religious lines. The popular view attributes Gandhi's distress to his advice being ignored by his disciples, Nehru and Patel, who wanted power at any cost. The real reason, however, as suggested by Gandhi's own statements, lay in the communalisation of the masses and the demand for separate homelands by the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. During this period, Gandhi made a few abortive moves in the negotiations that the leaders were involved in, such as the suggestion made to the Cabinet Mission and to Mountbatten that Jinnah should be made the Indian Prime Minister and the British should remain for some time to protect the interests of the Hindus for a change.

A Disillusioned Gandhi

"Increasingly isolated from the Congress leadership, the old man of 77 with undiminished courage decided to stake his all in a bid to vindicate his life-long principles of change of heart and non-violence in the villages of Noakhali, followed by Bihar and then the riot-torn slums of Calcutta and Delhi. He lived with a handful of companions in hostile Muslim-dominated villages, held out the threat of a fast unto death if Bihar Hindus did not mend their ways (November 6, 1946), and from January 1947 set out barefoot through Noakhali village roads, once sweeping away with his own hands garbage strewn on his path by angry Muslims, and starting every morning with what had become his favourite hymn, Rabindranath's 'If there is none to heed your call, walk alone, walk alone.' Gandhi's unique personal qualities and true greatness was never more evident than in the last months of his life: total disdain for all conventional forms of political power which could have been his for the asking now that India was becoming free; and a passionate anti-communalism which made him declare to a League leader a month after Partition, while riots were ravaging the Punjab: 'I want to fight it out with my life. I would not allow the Muslims to crawl on the streets in India. They must walk with self-respect.' (Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*)" (Sumit Sarkar: *Modern India 1885-1947*)

Sarkar adds that the Gandhian presence at times did work miracles. Gandhi undertook several fasts to stop communal rioting; peace returned to Calcutta on August 15 after he had persuaded Suhrawardy to stay with him in riot-torn Beliaghata. He undertook a fast unto death from September 1 to September 4, 1947. Riots began in Delhi soon afterwards, with a massacre of Muslims as revenge for Punjab, and the Gandhian fast in January 1948 had a temporary impact. Gandhi was also protesting against the Home Minister Patel's communalist attitude when he undertook the Delhi fast. Patel had spoken of a total transfer of population in the Punjab, and was refusing to honour a prior agreement by which India was obliged to give Rs 55 crores of pre-Partition Government of India financial assets to Pakistan. On January 30, Gandhi was killed by a Hindu fanatic, Nathuram Godse, in a conspiracy hatched by a Poona Brahmin group originally inspired by V.D. Savarkar—a conspiracy which the police of Bombay and Delhi did nothing to foil. Sumit Sarkar adds that while moving and heroic, the Gandhian way in 1946-47 was an isolated personal effort with a local and rather short-lived impact.

Views of Summit Sarkar

Several local communist-led struggles also took place during this time and while they did offer an alternative of united mass struggle against imperialism, they never really coalesced into an organised and effective countrywide political agitation. These included countryside upsurges in Bengal, parts of Kerala and Telangana in Hyderabad state. The fear they inspired, however, helped to bring about a 'peaceful' transfer of power purchased at the cost of partition and a communal holocaust. June 1948 was fixed as the deadline for transfer of power, declared Attlee in the House of Commons on February 20, 1947, and even if Indian politicians had not agreed on a constitution by that date, the British would relinquish power "whether as a whole to some form of central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people". British powers and obligations vis-à-vis princely states would also end with transfer of power, but these powers would not be transferred to any successor government in British India.

Rehabilitation after Partition

The first census of India after Independence, recorded two per cent of the total population of India as refugees. Delhi received the largest number of refugees, with a sharp rise in the population from under 1 million to a little less than 2 million during the period 1941-1951. The refugees were settled temporarily in various historical and military locations such as the *Purana Qila,* Red Fort and Kingsway Camp. Later, from 1948 onwards, several camp sites were converted into permanent housing complexes through extensive building projects undertaken by the Government of India– Lajpat Nagar, Rajinder Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Nizamuddin East, Jangpura and Kingsway Camp. Several welfare schemes such as the provision of education, employment opportunities, and easy loans to start businesses were provided to the traumatised migrant people to start a new life.

Rehabilitation in India

Many Hindus and Sikhs fled West Punjab (Pakistan) and settled in East Punjab (which then consisted of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh) and in Delhi. Many Hindus fled from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and settled across eastern India and north-eastern India, mainly in states like West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. Some refugees were shifted to the Andaman Islands due to which the Bengalis formed the largest linguistic group in some regions of Andaman Islands. The Hindus coming from Sindh areas settled predominantly in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and some even settled further afield in Madhya Pradesh. Ulhasnagar ('city of joy'), a township in Maharashtra, was founded to settle refugees.

According to the 1951 Census of Pakistan, 80.1 per cent of its total refugees came from the East Punjab and nearby Rajputana States–Alwar and Bharatpur. This was the effect of the retributive genocide on both sides of the Punjab where the Muslims of East Punjab were forcibly expelled just as the Hindus/ Sikhs were evicted from West Punjab. People migrated from other parts of India too: Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Bombay, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Madras and Mysore. Most of these Urdu-speaking people, known as *muhajirs* (migrants) in Pakistan, moved to the Karachi-Hyderabad region in Sindh. East Pakistan (Bangladesh) received the second largest number of refugees who came mainly from West Bengal, Bihar and Assam.

Resettlement of Rufugees in Pakistan

In recent times, historians have been examining the experiences of ordinary people during the period of extreme physical and psychological situations which arose due to the Partition. Scholars such as Urvashi Butalia in her book, *The Other Side of Silence,* have written about the harrowing experiences of women in those violent times. Women were abducted, raped, sold, often many times over, forced to settle down to a new life with strangers in unknown circumstances. Deeply traumatised by all that they had undergone, some started to develop new family bonds in their new circumstances. But the governments of India and Pakistan proved insensitive to the complexities of human relationships.

Plight of Women

Both governments promised each other that they would try to restore women abducted during the riots. India claimed that 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women were abducted or displaced in Pakistan, and the Government of Pakistan claimed 50,000 Muslim women were similarly affected in India. According to one estimate, 30,000 women were 'recovered' overall (22,000 Muslim women in India and 8000 Hindu and Sikh Women in Pakistan), in an operation that ended as late as 1954.

The governments believed the women to be on the wrong side of the border. They tore them away from their new relatives, and sent them back to their earlier relatives or families. They failed to consult the women concerned, undermining their right to take decisions regarding their own lives. It is said that most of the Hindu and Sikh women refused to go back to India fearing that they would never be accepted by their families, a fear mirrored by Muslim women.

Views

- "The Act (of 1935) continued and extended all the existing features of the Indian constitution: popular representation, which went back to 1892, diarchy and ministerial responsibility, which dated from 1921, provincial autonomy, whose chequered history went back to the eighteenth century presidencies, communal representation, which first received overt recognition in 1909, and the safeguards devised in 1919, were all continued and in most cases extended. There were the federal principle with its corollary of provincial autonomy, and the principle of popular responsible government in the provinces."

  —**Percival Spear**

- "We framed the Act of 1935 because we thought that was the best way… of maintaining British influence in India."

  —**Lord Linlithgow**, Viceroy (1936-43)

- "The progress of constitutional advance in India is determined by the need to attract Indian collaborations to the Raj."

  —**B.R. Tomlinson**

- "We are provided with a car, all brakes and no engine."

  —**Jawaharlal Nehru**

- "One communalism does not end the other; each feeds on the other and both fatten."

  —**Jawaharlal Nehru**

- "The British were neither the foes of the Hindus nor friends of the Muslims. They set up Pakistan not as a gesture of friendship towards the Muslims, but under the compulsion of their international policies."

  —**Wali Khan**

- "I felt that if we did not accept partition, India would be split into many bits and would be completely ruined. My experience of office for one year convinced me that the way we have been proceeding would lead us to disaster. We would not have had one Pakistan but several. We would have had Pakistan cells in every office."

  —**Sardar Vallabbhai Patel**

- "I have not become His Majesty's first Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

  —Winston Churchill

- "The British Cabinet saw the growing rift between the Congress and the Muslim League as their trump card... Both Linlithgow and the Cabinet looked to the rivalry of the Congress and the League as their most useful weapon against the demands of either."

  —B.R. Tomlinson

- "The offer of Cripps really gave us nothing. If we accepted his offer, we might have cause to rule it in future. In case the British went back on their word, we should not even have the justification for launching a fresh struggle. War had given India an opportunity for achieving her freedom. We must not lose it by depending upon a mere promise."

  —Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

- "It was not so much that Britain pursued a policy of divide and rule as that the process of devolving power by stages in a politically and socially desperate country was inherently divisive."

  —R.J. Moore

- "The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again—and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard everyday of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it."

  —Jawaharlal Nehru

- "Congress, as well as the Muslim League, had accepted partition...The real position was, however, completely different...The acceptance was only in a resolution of the AICC of the Congress and on the register of the Muslim League. The people of India had not accepted partition with free and open minds. Some had accepted it out of sheer anger and resentment and others out of a sense of despair."

  —Maulana Azad

- "I alone with the help of my Secretary and my typewriter won Pakistan for the Muslims."

  —M.A. Jinnah

- “The growing division of opinion between the Congress and Muslim League produced a deadlock which throughout the war remained unbroken despite successive British offers, notably in the Cripps Plan of 1942 and in the three-tiered proposal of 1946. At this stage the British Government, placing its emphasis on responsible rather than strictly representative government, and on the maintenance of the unity of India, failed to carry the Congress and Muslim League with it. Indians were concerned rather with the struggle for effective power and, on the Muslim League’s side, with the implications for them of representative government. Alarmed by the fact that with its weakening civil and military resources in India it could no longer guarantee the maintenance of law and order, the British Government declared in February 1947 that the transfer of power must be completed by June 1948. The final, headlong rush to independence and partition was in fact completed by 15th August 1947.

  —**C.H. Philips**
- “Our time in India is limited and our power to control events almost gone. We have only prestige and previous momentum to trade on and they will not last long.”

  —**Lord Wavell**
- “To look upon the communal problem in India merely as the Hindu-Muslim question, one of religious antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims, is misleading. The communal problem at its base was more politically-motivated than religiously oriented. Apart from the Hindus and the Muslims there was a third party in the communal triangle; the British rulers interposed themselves between the Hindus and the Muslims and thus created a communal triangle of which they remained the base.”

  —**Grover & Grover**
- “The wheels of fate will someday compel the English to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the steam of their centuries’ administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth will they leave behind them.”

  —**Rabindranath Tagore** (three months before his death in 1941)

Summary

- **The Act of 1935**

  Background ● The years between the appointment of the Simon Commission in November 1927 and the formation of popular ministries in the provinces in 1937 were full of complex and often contradictory political developments.
  - The Simon Commission came in 1928 to examine the working of the system of government as proposed by the Act of 1919 (Montford Reforms) and explore possibility of further constitutional advance in India, but was boycotted by Indians as it did not have a single Indian representative.
  - As an alternative, the Nehru Report became the first Indian effort to draft a constitutional scheme. It recommended joint electorates with reserved seats for minorities, dominion status, linguistic provinces, 19 fundamental rights and responsible government at centre and in provinces.
  - The Congress gave a one-year ultimatum to the Government to accept dominion status or else, it said, civil disobedience would be launched for complete independence.
  - Three Round Table Conferences (RTCs) were held in London between 1930 and 1932. Congress represented by Gandhi attended the second RTC, which got deadlocked on question of safeguards to minorities.
  - The British government on the basis of the discussion at the three RTCs, drafted its proposals for reforming the Indian constitution, which were embodied in the ‘White Paper’, that ultimately emerged in the form of the Act of 1935.
  - The Act of 1935 proposed an all-India Federation, responsible government and provincial autonomy, separate electorates for communal and other groups, bicameral legislature at the centre, subjects to be administered divided into reserved and transferred categories at the centre, direct election of provincial legislators, etc.
  - The 1935 Act was condemned by nearly all sections and unanimously rejected by the Congress.

Summary

- **Congress Ministries (1937-39)**
  - Elections to provincial assemblies held in 1937 led to massive victory for the Congress which formed ministries in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and the North West Frontier Province. These ministries ruled for 28 months and introduced several welfare measures for the masses. The ministries resigned in October 1939 after the outbreak of World War II.
- **Politics of Separatism Pakistan Movement**
  - The idea of a separate state of Pakistan for the Muslims was the brain-child of a Cambridge scholar, Rahmat Ali, who coined the term. Muhammad Iqbal too had an idea of an autonomous Muslim-majority area. He often expressed it overtly in his writings and speeches.
  - The 1937 elections proved to be a turning point for the Muslim League. It suffered a humiliating defeat and subsequently at its Lahore Session in March 1940, the League passed a resolution calling for grouping of geographically contiguous areas where Muslims are in majority (North-west and East) into independent states in which constituents units shall be autonomous and sovereign, and adequate safeguards to Muslims where they are in minority.
  - The post-1937 years witnessed serious changes in the politics of both the Hindu and the Muslim communal forces. The British government also played an active role in the popularisation of the demand for Pakistan.
  - The once secular and nationalist Mohammad Ali Jinnah got converted into an extreme communalist during late 1930s and early 1940s and the emergence of Pakistan to a considerable extent became a reality because of his adroit management of the political situation as the sole leader of the Muslim League.
  - The main weakness of the Congress was its failure to evolve a long-term strategy to contain the proliferation of the communal ideology at the political, ideological and cultural levels.
- **Post-1945 Upsurge**
  - The popular actions between 1945 and 1947 reveal on the whole the anti-colonial consciousness of the common masses in India—a requisite inner strength to match any neo-colonial design. The people displayed, and more importantly so in the communally devised, divisive circumstances, their enormous capacity to rise above their differences, and stand and act unitedly.
  - The initial explosion took place over the prosecutions against the imprisoned members of the Indian National Army. There was countrywide protest when the three I.N.A. heroes (Sehgal, Shah Nawaz and Dhillon) belonging to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, and symbolising the unity of the people, were put on the docks in the historic Red Ford of Delhi. The developments in Calcutta, however, surpassed all other places and turned the city into a storm centre. Jawaharlal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai fought the case on behalf of the soldiers.
  - The mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay in February 1946 shook the very foundations of the British establishment.
  - The most extensive of all the post-War agrarian agitations, the Tebhaga Movement swept 19 districts of Bengal and drew millions of peasants into it, including a high percentage of Muslims.
  - Although not as extensive as the Tebhaga Movement, the outburst in the Telugu-speaking Telengana region of Hyderabad state was the most enduring, as well as the most militant of all similar agitations because the Nizam's government failed altogether to break the rebellious peasantry and the rebels could mobilise all categories of peasants in a long drawn armed struggle against their feudal oppressors.
- **Constitutional Negotiations and the Transfer of Power**
  - The Attlee Government in February 1946 announced the decision to send a high-powered mission of three British Cabinet members (Pethick Lawrence, A.V. Alexander and Stafford Cripps) to India to devise ways and means for a negotiated, peaceful transfer of power.
  - The main provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan were—rejection of Pakistan, grouping of existing assemblies into three categories A, B and C, three-tier executive and legislature at province, princely

Summary

states and Union level, election of a Constituent Assembly by provincial assemblies, provinces to have autonomy and residual powers, princely states had the option to have an arrangement with the successor government or the British government, freedom of a province to come out of the section or the Union, etc.

- The Congress interpreted the grouping to be optional while the Muslim League interpreted it to be compulsory. Cabinet Mission upheld League's view and League followed by Congress accepted the mission proposals in June 1946.
- League withdrew from the Plan in July 1946 and gave a call for "direct action" from August 16, 1946.
- An interim government was formed in September 1946 headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and the League joined the interim government in October 1946 and pursued an obstructionist policy.
- Congress members demanded removal of League members in February 1947 and the latter demanded dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.
- Attlee's government set a deadline (June 30, 1948) for transfer of power on February 20, 1947.
- Indian Independence Bill was introduced on July 4, 1947 and passed by the British Parliament on July 18, 1947. The Act aimed at enabling the representatives of India and Pakistan to frame their own constitution. It formalised and gave legal effect to the 'June 3 Plan' authored by Mountbatten.
- Mountbatten Plan (June 3, 1947) provided for the partition of India and the establishment of the two Dominions (India and Pakistan) from August 15, 1947 and for the legislative supremacy of these Dominions. The British government divested itself of all powers and control over the Dominions from August 15, 1947.

► **Consequences of Partition**

- Freedom-Partition duality reflects the success-failure dichotomy of the Congress-led anti-imperialist movement. Partition brought untold miseries for millions of people, especially in Northwest and eastern India, as they lost lives and properties in communal violence and had to make a cruel choice of joining Pakistan or India.
- The major factors responsible for the inevitability of the Partition were—the policies and actions of the Muslim League resulting in a political crisis, the British policy of divide and rule and the official failure in checking the deteriorating communal situation (especially in the late 1940s), the failure of the Congress in drawing the Muslim masses into the freedom struggle, and to evolve a suitable strategy to successfully contain communalism and thereby live upto its ideal of an united India.

CHAPTER 15

Consolidation of India As a Nation

INTRODUCTION

The most important challenge India faced soon after it attained independence was that of defending its newly acquired sovereignty and preserving national unity. The national leadership under the Congress began to give concrete shape to the process of nation-building that had been initiated decades ago by the national movement. The national movement played a pivotal role in welding Indians together politically and emotionally into a nation and integrating them into a common framework of political identity and loyalty. The duration and deep social penetration of the national movement carried the feeling of unity and nationhood to the mass of the people.

The Process of National Consolidation

Realising that the making of the nation was a prolonged and continuous process, which was open to continuous challenges and interruptions, disruption and even reversal, the national leadership was fully aware of the task of furthering the process of unifying India and sustaining and promoting national integration through ideological and political endeavours. Given the immense diversity of India in terms of its languages, religion, ethnicity, and culture, the leaders felt that the Indian nation had to be built on a very broad foundation. India could only be unified and its segmentation overcome by accepting this immense diversity and not counter-posing it to the process of a nation-in-the-making. The emergence of a strong national identity and the preservation of India's rich diversities were to be seen as simultaneous processes. Regional cultural identities were to develop not in conflict with but as part of the all-India identity. In other words, the differences in language, religion and culture and ethnicity were to be seen not as obstacles to be overcome, not as antithetical to national consolidation, but as positive features that were sources of strength to emerging nationhood. Hence the consolidation of independent India was to occur around the concept of 'unity in diversity'.

However, it was also realised that India's diversity could be a source of weakness. Diversity could be used for divisive purposes and transformed into disruptive tendencies such as casteism, communalism, linguism and regionalism. The problem of integrating diverse loyalties was therefore quite real, especially as rapid social changes led to increase in the scale and number of social conflicts. The issues of jobs, educational opportunities, access to political power and share in the larger economic cake could and did fuel rivalries and conflicts based on region, religion, caste and language. Unlike in other parts of the world, special efforts were necessary in India to carefully promote national unity. The broad strategy for national consolidation, after 1947, involved territorial integration, mobilisation of political and institutional resources, economic development, and adoption of policies which would promote social justice, remove glaring inequalities and provide equal opportunities.

Broad Strategy

The leadership evolved a political institutional structure conducive to national consolidation at the heart of which lay the inauguration of a democratic and civil libertarian polity. The augment that democracy and national integration were not compatible in case of newly liberated and developing countries and that an authoritarian political structure was necessary to hold together such a diverse

nation as India was rejected. On the contrary, it was argued that for a very diverse country like India, it was democracy that was needed, and not force or coercion, to bind the country together. India, Nehru underlined, could only be held together by a democratic structure with full freedom as also opportunity for the diverse socio-economic, cultural and political voices to express themselves.

The constitutional structure established in 1950 encompassed the demands of diversity as well as the requirements of unity. It provided for a federal structure with a strong Centre but also a considerable degree of autonomy for the states. The makers of the Constitution kept in view the difference between decentralisation and disintegration on the one hand and between unity and integration, and centralisation on the other. Thus the constitutional structure was not only conducive to national integration but also provided the basic framework within which the struggle against divisive forces could be carried on.

Constitutional Structure

It is also worth noting that from the beginning, the founding fathers of the Indian Republic stood for secularism as the basis for the nation. Undaunted by partition and the accompanying riots, they remained loyal to the secular vision of the national movement. They tried to effectively deal with communal violence and on the whole succeeded in protecting the religious minorities.

Independent India's foreign policy also served as another unifying force. The policy of non-alignment and anti-colonialism and Nehru's growing stature as international figure contributed to a sense of national pride in India among all sections of people across the country irrespective of their political alignment.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S IDEAS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Born in 1899, Jawaharlal Nehru strode the Indian political scene like a colossus from the 1930s till the time of his death in 1964. He shot into prominence in 1929 when, as a Congressman, he criticised the Nehru Report which his father Motilal had prepared for a new constitution of India. Brij Kishore Goyal in his book *Thoughts of Nehru* writes: "His (Nehru's) contribution to the freedom struggle has been very important. He readily sacrificed the comforts of affluence and submitted himself to trials and tribulations galore for the sake of India's freedom. He underwent not less than nine years of incarceration during the national movement. He was the symbol of youth, courage and revolt in the Indian National Congress. He was chairman of the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in 1929 and was instrumental in changing the goal of the freedom struggle from dominion status to complete independence. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress several times. When India achieved Independence, he was elected the Prime Minister of India and led the nation for 17 long years until he was snatched away from us by the hands of cruel death on May 27, 1964."

Modern India is immensely indebted to Nehru. Gandhi helped India in finding herself; Nehru helped India to become aware of others. While Gandhi is regarded as the Father of the Nation; Nehru is considered to be the architect of its resurgence. The rearing up and sustenance of democracy in India was in large measures a contribution of Nehru; through it, he ensured equality and dignity for all. The Indian people were immobilised in the morass of social, economic, political and cultural stagnation, and he pulled them out of it. His contribution in the field of economy was most pronounced; the Five Year Plans carried out in the spirit of democracy and socialism are a testimony to that. Building the economic structure of India with great care, he gave his concept of a socialistic pattern of society a meaningful content. He termed various projects for industrial growth, the national laboratories for researches in diverse scientific disciplines and the steel works as the centres of pilgrimage of modern India. Bestowing on the world the ideas of peace, peaceful co-existence and non-alignment, he secured a place for India in the comity of nations. He objected to colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism and was rewarded for his labours by seeing in his lifetime more than forty countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America throwing off the yoke of foreign rule. He strove for the consolidation of friendship and cooperation among the people of the world, and came to be regarded as a friend

Nehru's Contributions

of humanity. He had many missions in his life and worked for their fulfilment till the last.

On Humanism

An abiding faith in humanity was a distinguishing feature of Nehru's thought and 'scientific humanism' was the hallmark of his character, genius and nature. He wanted people to be "practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian". Not given to idle philosophising about ultimate truth, soul and such ideas of medieval mysticism, he considered humanity as his God and social service his religion. To him, the acid test for what was good and what was not was the good of humanity. His views on ethics and religion, on the state and its governance were all influenced by what was good for the individual and not by orthodox theories. M.N. Das says in *The Political Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru*: "…his humanism and liberality are fostered by an inner respect for the individual self". His individualism developed from his faith in himself, a principle he applied while considering the good of the society or the state. To him, the good of the society should also mean the good of the individual. That was the reason for his opposition to fascism and what it stood for. As he wanted the good of all men, his socialism was different from that of the Communist states. He did not want to sacrifice men for abstract concepts of political theories.

Scientific Humanism

On Religion

It is not correct to regard Nehru as an irreligious man. He considered observance of rituals and reading of scriptures as unimportant. An admirer of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, he was attracted towards religion at an early age but he did not believe in its symbolic observance. Even under the overpowering influence of Gandhi, he did not seem to profess any particular religion. At any time in his grown-up life he could have passed for any religious denomination, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim, provided by religion we mean the innermost virtues of life. Religion meant to him the very essence of character, truthfulness, love and the purity of mind. In his *Autobiography*, he defines religion as "…the inner development of the individual, the evolution of his consciousness in a certain direction which is considered good. What the direction is will be again a matter of debate. But as far as I understand it, religion lays stress on this inner change and considers outward change as but the projection of this inner development." Also, he did not see any conflict between religion and science. He says in *The Unity of India*: "Perhaps there is no conflict between true religion and science, but, if so, religion must put on the garb of science and approach all its problems in the spirit of science. A purely secular philosophy of life may be considered enough by most of us. Why should we trouble ourselves about methods beyond our ken when the problems of the world insistently demand solution? And yet that secular philosophy itself must have some background, some objective other than merely material well-being. It must have some spiritual values and certain standards of behaviour, and when we consider these, we enter immediately into the realm of what has been called religion."

Nehru did not believe in a personal god. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who knew him well, used to say that the "greatest lack in him is his inability to believe in God". People wondered how Gandhi with his absolute faith in God was so fond of Nehru with his atheistic temperament. But Gandhi said, "While Jawaharlal always says he does not believe in God he is nearer to God than many who profess to be His worshippers." Still, Nehru held the opinion that belief in something is a necessity. At the same time he believed that too much "reliance on supernatural factors may lead, and has often led, to a loss of self-reliance in man and to a blunting of his capacity and creative ability". He thinks that it is necessary and desirable to have faith "in things of the spirit which are beyond the scope of our physical world, some reliance on moral, spiritual and idealistic conceptions, or else we have no anchorage, or objectives or purpose in life". *The Discovery of India* contains a passage, "It is impossible not to believe in something, whether we call it a creative life-giving force, or vital energy inherent in matter which gives it its capacity for self-improvement and change and growth, or by some other name, something that is as real, though elusive, as life is real when contrasted with death."

Concept of God

On Caste System

In *The Discovery of India*, Nehru wrote, "Almost everyone who knows anything at all about India

has heard of the caste system; almost every outsider and many people in India condemn it or criticise it as a whole." Nehru did not like the caste system any more than he admired the widely heralded '*spiritual'* foundations of Indian civilisation, but even he was ambivalent towards it. Although he noted that the caste system had resisted not only the powerful impact of Buddhism and many centuries of Afghan and Mughal rule and the spread of Islam as also the strenuous efforts of innumerable Hindu reformers who raised their voices against it, he felt that it was finally beginning to come undone through the force of basic economic changes. And yet he was not sure what all this change would unleash. He wrote: "The conflict is between two approaches to the problem of social organisation, which are diametrically opposed to each other: the old Hindu conception of the group being the basic unit of organisation, and the excessive individualism of the West, emphasising the individual above the group." In making this observation, Nehru neatly captured the conceptual contours of most recent debates over caste.

On Truth

With regard to truth, Nehru was of the view that the "true path of man is the path of truth and peace" and hence, "let us tread the path of truth and dharma". Once he said, "I am something other than a Prime Minister, too. I am also a human being. I often found myself struggling for some light, for a vision of what one should do, for a glimpse of the truth and the pathway to the truth. Scientists should note that they do not have a monopoly of the truth, that nobody has a monopoly, no country, no people, no book. Truth is too vast to be contained in the minds of beings, or in books, however, sacred." His observations on truth in *The Discovery of India* are much more profound: "Truth as ultimate reality, if such there be, must be eternal, imperishable, unchanging. But that infinite, eternal and unchanging truth cannot be apprehended in its fullness by the finite mind of man which can grasp, at the most, some small aspect of it limited by time and space, and by the state of development of that mind and the prevailing ideology of the period. As the mind develops and enlarges in scope, as ideologies change and new symbols are used to express that truth, new aspects of it come to light, though the core of it may yet be the same. And so truth has ever to be sought and renewed, reshaped and developed, so that, as understood by man, it might keep in line with his thought and the development of human life. Only then it does become a living truth for humanity, supplying the essential need for which it craves, and offering guidance in the present and for the future." Believing in the spirit of free enquiry, reason, knowledge and experience, Nehru felt that truth could only be attained through such measures. (His) "…concept of truth is therefore something dynamic and not static; it is a life-giving impulse, but not a dead thought and ceremonial, or a hindrance to the growth of the mind and of humanity". (M.N. Das)

Truth as Ultimate Reality

On Ethics

Nehru's views on the relationship between ends and means were similar to that of Gandhi. The Machiavellian saying, "End justifies the means" did not appeal to him. Actually, he paid an eloquent tribute to Gandhi while explaining his stand on such matters: "If I have gained any experience in the last thirty or forty years of my public life, or if I have learnt any lesson from the Great Master who taught us many things, it is this, a crooked policy does not pay in the end. It may pay temporarily." That great lesson was not lost on Nehru. Even in the hurly-burly of politics, he did not forget that only through good means is the right end reached. Nehru's adaptation of such a policy did not spring from a philosophical or theological point of view. He followed it because his scientific temperament was convinced of the soundness of this principle. He realised that doing a thing by the right means would lead to good results. Elaborating on this point, he stated: "Gradually, I began to apply the thought, to apply my scientific mind to this business and I came to the conclusion that every action naturally has a result. Every right action must have, to that extent, a right result, even though it may not be sure, and that, somewhere, every wrong action must have a wrong result." At the Constituent Assembly in September 1948, he said, "I am convinced that, if we adhere to the right course and do not stray away from it even from the opportunist point of view of some present advantage, we shall win through. Any country that

Purity of Means

bases its case on a essential falsehood cannot gain its ends." Taking a Gandhian view, he observed: "I think there is always a close and intimate relationship between the end we aim at and the means adopted to attain it. Even if the end is right and the means are wrong, it will vitiate the end or direct us in a wrong direction. Means and ends are thus intimately and inextricably connected and cannot be separated." It is a glowing commentary on his moral fibre that in an era when realpolitik (concerning only self-interest) was practised in the field of foreign policy by nearly all the nations, he saw the need for applying right means to right ends: "So long as we do not recognise the supremacy of the moral law in our national and international relations, we shall have no enduring peace."

On Non-violence

Immersing the ashes of Gandhi at the confluence of the Ganga and Jamuna, Nehru said that the path of violence was perilous and freedom seldom existed for long where there was violence. He added that those who chose the path of violence did not have faith in democracy. Brij Kishore Goyal writes in his book *Thoughts of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore*: "Nehru's faith in non-violence was deepened owing to several factors. In the first place, he was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and on Gandhiji's bidding he had actively participated in the non-cooperation, satyagraha, mass or individual disobedience. Gandhi's identification of non-violence with truth or God may or may not have appealed to his practical temper, yet he saw it paying dividends. Secondly, Nehru's own psychological make-up and the influence of the environment in which he had been brought up could not have made him anything else but a believer in non-violence. Thirdly, Nehru had a deep sense of history which had brought home to him the futility of violence both in individual and national life. The bloody wars which had besmeared the pages of the long history of mankind had created more problems than they had solved and Nehru had become convinced that no true and lasting civilisation could be founded on the pillars of hatred, force, coercion and violence."

Nehru found himself in a quandary when it came to identify non-violence with truth. What is truth is an ancient question to which a thousand answers have been given, yet the question remains. Anyway, he was not for identifying truth wholly with non-violence. Unlike Gandhi who regarded truth as an ethical or religious principle, Nehru considered non-violence as a weapon of practical necessity to fight the British. He was of the opinion that armed rebellion appeared to be out of question for the Indian people. "In a contest of violence, the organised power of the British Government or any state was far greater than anything raised against it." Nehru knew that people could be taught both violent and non-violent resistance, but he opted for the latter because of its efficacy. But his attitude towards non-violence was not dogmatic. Admittedly, violence was evil, but there were things which were greater evils than violence. If there is a choice between these two evils, then one has to choose the lesser evil. "…If the Congress or the Nation at any future time comes to the conclusion that methods of violence will rid us of slavery, then I have no doubt that it will adopt them. Violence is bad but slavery is far worse. I prefer freedom with violence to subjection with non-violence." Like Gandhi, he also regarded non-violence as a brave man's defiance of evil and national subjection. It was not a coward's refuge from action, but the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant.

A Weapon of Practical Necessity

Views on Culture

Jawaharlal Nehru possessed a rare intellectual capacity to absorb and reconcile many divergent trends. He was a man who could blend the visionary with the rational, the ideal with the practical, custom with modernity, tradition with progress. Nehru's association with Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan naturally widened his love for the visual arts, music, dance and drama. He explained the essence of culture in terms of inner growth, behaviour towards others, capacity to understand others and to make oneself understood. Nehru wrote, "The cultured mind should have its windows and doors open. It should have the capacity to understand the other's viewpoint fully even though it cannot always agree with it. The question of agreement or disagreement only arises when we understand a thing. Otherwise it is blind negation which is not a cultural approach to any question."

Nehru believed that nobody belongs one hundred per cent to a particular race or culture. In the course of history, every culture is moulded by external influence. He compared a culture to the root and the outside influences to the flowers and branches of a plant; only a proper balance between the roots, leaves and flowers keeps a plant alive. Nehru believed that each nation and each separate civilisation develops its own culture with the passage of time and is influenced by geography, climate and other factors as well. He wrote that the Indian culture in the past was affected greatly by the Himalayas, the forests and the great rivers of India. In his *Will and Testament*, Nehru wrote that the Ganga has been the symbol of India's culture. Nehru always looked forward to furthering the cause of India's cultural associations with the rest of the world. He firmly believed that India's cultural relations with the world would lead to a better understanding between Indians and the people of other nations, and argued that the British who indulged in unashamed and naked exploitation of India were responsible for the cultural poverty of India. The greatest contribution of Nehru to India's renovating culture was his emphasis on science and what he called the scientific temper. Nothing impressed and distressed Nehru more than the Indian attitude to rationality, the ambivalence that was found even in the Indian intellectual who, when put to the test, placed himself back in the dark ages of superstition, taboos, totems and astrology. He knew that this was a sad gap in an otherwise estimable heritage and he strove hard all his life to preach the gospel of science. He also injected into our cultural renaissance a feeling of righteous indignation against all violation of human dignity, against regimentation and dictatorship, and against racialism and communalism. Like Gandhi and Tagore, Nehru also believed in synthesis. He himself was a product of a cultural synthesis. He believed in science and glorified in its achievements but science and technology were only handmaidens to serve the people and their service was his worship. His regard and respect for human dignity was one of his most outstanding contributions to the Indian view of life and it was badly needed in a society that had consigned egalitarianism and individual human worth to the Vedantic realm and tolerated political, economic and social conditions that constituted a continuing erosion of human dignity. Even more than what he said and wrote, it was his personality and the way he lived and interacted with his fellow human beings that constituted his greatest contribution to India's cultural renaissance.

Culture as Root

Emphasis on Scientific Temper

On Science

Nehru moulded the character of modern India in the role of the country's prime minister for seventeen years. He worked hard to make the scientific component an essential feature of modern India. So great was his zeal for the science and for the scientific approach to life that he missed no opportunity of imparting his views to others. He had a scientific approach to India's political, social and economic problems. He believed in enlightenment and was a votary of reason and emancipation of the intellect. His scientific attitude made him an exponent of modernism. He wanted India to accept the scientific approach as the sole antidote to medieval obscurantism, priesthood, ecclesiasticism and social stagnation that had enveloped India in darkness. Nehru saw science as a great intellectual discipline to broaden man's personality and make him look at things objectively and dispassionately. "What is science?" he asked, and replied, "It is the search for truth, truth of the physical world… truth arrived at by a process of trial and error, by experiment, not taking something for granted until it is proved, and rejecting everything that is disproved or does not fit in with the facts before us." And he continued, "It (science) not only gives us a greater understanding of the world as it is, but creates ultimately a temper, an objective temper, a dispassionate scientific temper which should help us in dealing with other problems." It was this scientific temper he cherished, which he wished to inculcate in the Indian people.

Nothing sums up Nehru's faith in science better than the Scientific Policy Resolution of the Government of India which was tabled in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1958. The resolution acknowledged the role of science and technology in national prosperity, and in the social and cultural advancement of the people. To implement the policy, he appointed a Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet. As prime minister, Nehru made it a point to inaugurate and participate

Scientific Policy Resolution

in the annual sessions of the Indian Science Congress. Besides maintaining close personal contact with top Indian scientists, he took every opportunity during his journeys abroad to visit scientific institutions and meet scientists. Eminent scientists with whom Nehru had a close relationship included Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Henry Dale, Alexander Flemming, A.V. Hill, Frederic Joliot-Curie, Niels Bohr, J.D. Bernal, J.B.S. Haldane and P.M.S. Blackett. It is true that India's high-tech achievements in atomic energy and space research today owe a lot to the vision and inspiration of the country's first prime minister.

On Democracy

"Democracy is the best of various methods available to us for the governance of human beings," said Nehru. He felt that through such a form of government alone could the individual rise to the highest of his individuality and the nation to the highest of its nationhood. Nonetheless, he did not attempt to define democracy because "to define anything that is big is to limit it". Democracy, he felt, "is a dynamic, not a static, thing, and as it changes it may be that its domain will become wider and wider. Ultimately, it is a mental approach applied to our political and economic problems." He was, therefore, more concerned with the problems a democratic form of government is likely to face and not much with the theories behind it. He felt that the welfare and happiness of the people should be the sole concern of a democratic form of government. On being asked to enumerate his problems, he replied that his problems were 360 million in number, which happened to be the total population of India at that time. Explaining further, he said: "It has an essential truth in it: that all our problems have to be viewed from the point of view of the 360 million individuals, not some statistical mass which you see drawn in curves and graphs on paper…we must think in terms of individuals, individual happiness and individual misery." Democracy has been defined by James Bryce as "nothing more nor less than the whole people expressing their sovereign will by their votes". Nehru, perhaps, would not have entirely agreed to such a cut and dried definition because to him democracy was more than people expressing their sovereign will by their votes. In one of his speeches, he made it clear as to what indeed democracy meant to him: "I would say that democracy is not only political, not only economic, but something of the mind, as everything is ultimately something of the mind. It involves equality of opportunity to all people, as far as possible, in the political and economic domain. It involves the freedom of the individual to grow and to make the best of his capacities and ability. It involves a certain tolerance of others and even of other's opinions when they differ from yours. It involves a certain contemplative tendency and a certain inquisitive search for the truth—and for, let us say, the right thing."

Freedom

Brij Kishore Goyal comments in his book, *Thoughts of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore*: "Evidently his (Nehru's) political meaning of freedom could be stretched to metaphysical lengths. For ultimately what do we require freedom and liberty for? For spiritual and moral progress of mankind, for the complete growth and fruition of all that is best in the individual." Goyal's conclusions apparently have been derived from a speech Nehru made in Indore in 1957 at the All India Congress Committee Session: "We have definitely accepted the democratic process. Why have we accepted it? Well, for a variety of reasons. Because we think in the final analysis it promotes the growth of human beings and of society; because as we have said in our Constitution, we attach great value to individual freedom; because we want the adventurous and creative spirit of man to grow. It is not enough to produce merely the material goods of the world. We do want high standards of living, but not at the cost of man's creative spirit, his creative energy, his spirit of adventure; not at the cost of all those fine things of life which have ennobled man throughout the ages. Democracy is not merely a question of elections."

Conditions for True Democracy

As regards the requirements for the success of democracy, they can be listed thus: "(i) a background of informed public opinion, (ii) a sense of responsibility on the part of the citizens, (iii) self-discipline of the community, (iv) tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but also of those who do not agree with us, and (v) material well-being of the society". Nehru placed emphasis on the last requirement by saying, "No democracy can exist for long in the midst of want and poverty and inequality. We talk of freedom, but today political freedom does not take us far

unless there is economic freedom. Indeed, there is no such thing as freedom for a man who is starving or for a country which is poor. It is obvious that a vote by itself does not mean very much to a person who is down and out and who is starving. Such a person would be much more interested in food to eat than in a vote. If the economic problems are not solved, then the political structure tends to weaken and crack up." All this can be achieved, in his opinion, by parliamentary democracy because "parliamentary democracy involves peaceful methods of action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken and attempts to change them through peaceful ways again".

On Socialism

On socialism, Nehru wrote: "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way, but in the scientific economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic doctrine, it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals to me. Real world order and peace will only come when socialism is realised on a world scale…I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and I am no believer in kings and princes or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even kings of the old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy."

Panacea for all Social Problems

"The reasons for Nehru being a socialist were very many," writes B.K. Goyal. "Firstly, the Indian background supplied sufficient material for his thinking on socialist lines. The grinding poverty of the masses on the one hand and the abnormally luxurious ways of living of the few on the other, shook to its very foundation the conscience of Nehru who himself had been brought up in all comforts and luxuries which the riches can afford. The appallingly poverty and misery of the Indian people which he noted during his nationwide tours convinced him of socialism as the only panacea for all social ills. Secondly, the study of Marx had left deep impression on his mind. Marx's economic interpretation of history and the doctrine of class struggle or class war were to him by far the most convincing. The success of the Russian experiment with socialism had again confirmed his faith in the socialist ideal. Thus even before India achieved independence, Nehru had lent support to the section in the Congress which was steadily but surely developing its faith in socialism. The way Gandhi had espoused the cause of the downtrodden and the social underdog, the priority which he had accorded to the economic regeneration of India even before the achievement of political freedom, and the enthusiastic response which the majority of India's population had accorded to Gandhi's programme of social uplift, left no room for doubt in Nehru's mind about the necessity of socialism to rid India of its many ills.

"Further, Nehru himself was steeped in history and had a deep sense of it. Combining his own assessment with Marx's interpretation of history Nehru had come to the conclusion that, for the most part, the conflict in the world was directly or indirectly the result of exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the poor by the rich."

Nehru did not agree that socialism and individualism were incompatible, that in any scheme of bringing about socialism, the freedom of the individual will be the first casualty. He wrote in *The Unity of India*, "I do not see why under socialism there should not be a great deal of freedom for the individual; indeed, far greater freedom than the present system gives. He can have freedom of conscience and mind, freedom of enterprise, and even the possession of private property on a restricted scale. Above all, he will have the freedom which comes from economic security, which only a small number possess today. Personally I am prepared to accept political democracy only in the hope that this will lead to social democracy."

Form of Socialism

As regards the form his socialism would take, Nehru observed: "We have said that our objective is a socialistic pattern of society, a society in which there is equality of opportunity and the possibility for everyone to live a good life… We have to lay great stress on equality, on the removal of disparities, and it has to be remembered that socialism is not spreading out of poverty. The essential thing is that there must be wealth and production." To usher in socialism, Nehru preferred peaceful methods and not liquidation of properties of capitalists or confiscation of their properties without paying due

compensation. "I believed more and more in Socialism. More and more in some parts of Communism…But I always conditioned it that the methods should be peaceful, broadly speaking, peaceful, and not wrong. Whether the two can be synchronised or not it is difficult to say. But I am deeply convinced that the methods in certain communist societies, that is, too much coercion and suffering are not the right methods." Nehru's socialism is original, convincing, enlightened and it co-exists with individualism. It stands for levelling up and not levelling down. He preferred inequality without poverty and not equality with poverty. When Nehru spoke of equalisation of wealth, he meant equalisation of plenty.

On Communalism

Jawaharlal Nehru was the child of the Indian renaissance. By temperament, training and conviction he was opposed to obscurantism, medievalism, communalism and sectarianism. His thoughts on communalism are refreshing and instructive, especially at the present time when the Indian nationhood is threatened by all sorts of narrow creeds, irrational norms and fissiparous tendencies. Nehru was a votary of secularism.

A Votary of Secularism

Nehru was perhaps one of the first Indian leaders to understand the broader social, economic and political dimensions and character and causation of communalism. From the beginning of his political career in the early 1920s, Nehru was totally opposed to communalism. During his political tours in 1928 and in his various addresses to the youth and student conferences, he made communalism a major target of attack. Deeply appreciative of the unique ability to synthesise diversity which characterised the Indian civilisation, Nehru derived the political parameters of contemporary secularism from the tradition of tolerance and synthesis which constituted the essential parameters of the idea of India, an idea which went back deep into our civilisation, which was responsible for the continuity of our civilisation and which, over millennia, had enabled our civilisation to survive every kind of vicissitude—military, political or economic. He wrote, "We talk about a secular India… what it means is that it is a State which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities, that as a State, it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the State religion… India has a long history of religious tolerance. That is one aspect of a secular state, but it is not the whole of it. In a country like India, which has many faiths and religions, no real nationalism can be built except on the basis of secularity."

Nehru was an agnostic and was hardly attracted by religion, except as a cultural force and a matter of heritage. On one occasion he said, "Any organised religion invariably becomes a vested interest and thus inevitably a reactionary force opposing change and progress." Nehru was against organised religion and by implication also against mixing religion with politics. He despised politicisation of religion. He compared the Indian communalist's methods with the working of the Nazis in Germany. He believed that communalism was a middle-class phenomenon and felt that so long as politics was dominated by middle-class elements, one could not do away with communalism altogether.

Communalism—A Middle-Class Phenomenon

Nehru recognised the economic background of communalism but believed that it was due much more to political causes. He also made it clear that religious hostility or antagonism had very little to do with the communal question. "The present communal question is not a religious one, although sometimes it exploits religious sentiments and there is trouble," Nehru wrote. According to him, a secular state did not mean that people should give up their religion. It meant that the state protected all religions but did not favour any one religion at the expense of the other and did not itself adopt any religion as the state religion. It was in this spirit that, under Nehru's guidance, constitutional guarantees were given to all religions in India.

He held that communalism had arisen because of certain conditions within the Indian society. But, argued Nehru, because communalism also served the needs of colonial domination, the colonial power had encouraged it in diverse ways. He also argued that communalism did not benefit the religious community whose interests it claimed to defend and promote. Nor was Nehru's objection to communalism on ideological grounds alone. For our nation, it was also a politically disruptive

phenomenon, for Indian unity could be maintained only on the basis of secularism, Nehru observed.

On Nationalism

"Nationalism has a place in each country and should be fostered, but it must not be allowed to become aggressive and come in the way of international development." Nehru knew that without nationalism on the part of its citizens, a country could not make progress, but he believed that nationalism had to be kept within limits and made compatible with internationalism. The absence of communications and means of transportation in the past enabled some nations to ignore the others and live in isolation. But this is no longer so; life in isolation for a nation is unthinkable. "National isolation is neither a desirable nor a possible ideal in a world which is daily becoming more of a unit. Love for one's country does not mean hatred for other countries. Humanity is one and indivisible. Geographical barriers which have given birth to different human groups in the form of nations or countries should not be allowed to come in the way of thinking of oneness of the world and the common interests of different countries. Nationalism that developed in Europe was responsible for innumerable bloody wars including the two great wars of this century. The world has already suffered to a colossal extent on account of narrow and misguided nationalism. The future of humanity is not safe if the same spirit is allowed to take its hold of all countries of the world. Peace will elude our grasp, however much we try, if we do not abandon the narrow nationalistic approach to problems of the world. The only possibility of achieving real peace lies in greater international co-operation on every plane," commented Nehru. At the same time, he did not regard nationalism as an antiquated cult and believed it to be a living force in the history of the modern nations. Because of the weaknesses of nationalism, "… ideas began to percolate that the days of nationalism were over and internationalism in the shape of communistic or proletarian movements seemed to condemn nationalism". But Nehru considered nationalism as a healthy force, an emotional attachment to the motherland, "conditioned and limited in many ways". It was absolutely necessary for a subject country, because to preach cooperation with a colonial power in the name of internationalism would be the height of absurdity. He exposed the hollowness of such an argument in a scathing manner: "Those who tell us so," remarked Nehru, "seem to imagine that true internationalism would triumph if we agreed to remain as junior partners in the British Empire or Commonwealth of Nations. They do not appear to realise that this particular type of so-called internationalism is only an extension of a narrow British Nationalism."

Nationalism and Internationalism

Brij Kishore Goyal writes in his book *Thoughts of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore* that "Nehru synthesised the ideal of nationalism with that of internationalism. Internationalism is an ideal worth being sought after only in a world where all nations participate in the universal endeavours on a footing of equality and national sovereignty. When such a state is achieved, to think only in terms of one's own country and to idealise and glorify only in its own traditions, its own people and assert a sense of superiority will go against the spirit of true internationalism. He wanted the freedom of India so that she may discharge all her duties to the world as an equal partner in the comity of nations."

His International Outlook

It was but natural that the next step from internationalism was to be the ideal of one world. Inaugurating the Asian Conference at New Delhi on March 23, 1947, Nehru said: "We have arrived at a stage in human affairs when the ideal of one world and some kind of World Federation seems to be essential, though there are many dangers and obstacles in the way. We should work for that ideal and not for any grouping which comes in the way of this larger group. We, therefore, support the United Nations structure which is painfully emerging from its infancy. But in order to have one world, we must also, in Asia, think of the countries of Asia cooperating together for the larger ideal." Following the same vein he observed in 1949, "…We wish to have the closest contacts, because we do from the beginning firmly believe in the world coming close together and ultimately realising the ideal of what is now being called one world."

Asian Conference

As the present system of nation states evolved out of groups and clans having common traditions,

customs, manners and languages, it is quite natural to expect that out of this multiplicity will emerge a world state. Nehru felt that in the modern age of science and technology there would be no choice for us but to work for the achievement of the ideal of world cooperation because the alternative would be world disaster.

Need for a World State

Faith in the UNO

The United Nations Organisation (UNO) was very close to Nehru's heart because he believed in its purposes and principles. He reposed great faith in the United Nations Organisation and observed in the Constituent Assembly: "The United Nations, in spite of its failings and weaknesses, is something that is good. It should be encouraged and supported in every way, and should be allowed to develop into some kind of world government or world order." In an address at the General Assembly on November 3, 1948, he elaborated: "We were taught by our leader (Gandhi) never to forget not only the objectives we had, but also the methods whereby we should achieve those objectives. Always he laid stress on this, that it was not good enough to have a good objective, that it was equally important that the means of attaining these objectives were good; means were always as important as ends. You will permit me to repeat here, because I am convinced that however good the ends, the larger ends of the United Nations or the lesser objectives which we may from time to time have before us either as individual nations or as groups of nations, it is important that we should remember that the best of objectives may not be reached if our eyes are bloodshot and our minds clouded with passion."

The problems of Arabs and Palestinians had been in his mind since long and in *Glimpses of World History*, 1933, Nehru commented: "In Palestine, the British Government holds a mandate from the League of Nations. The people inhabiting it are predominantly Muslim Arabs, and they demand freedom and unity with their fellow Arabs. But British policy has created a special minority problem here—that of the Jews—and the Jews side with the British and oppose the freedom of Palestine, as they fear that this would mean Arab rule. The two pull different ways and conflicts necessarily occur. On the Arab side are numbers, on the other side great financial resources and worldwide organisations of Jewry. So England pits Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism, and makes it appear that her presence is necessary to act as an arbitrator and to keep the peace between the two."

On Arab-Israel Conflict

In his speech in the Lok Sabha on August 14, 1957, Nehru said: "Ever since Israel came into existence, it has been a source of a constant irritation to the Arab countries. The invasion of Egypt by Israel two years ago is fresh in our memory. Apart from this there is a big problem of the old Palestine refugees. The Arab countries have looked upon Israel as an outpost from which their freedom might anytime be threatened. Israel, on the other hand, fears the Arab countries which surround it. There can be no real peace in the area till this difficult problem is settled in a satisfactory way. Naturally, settlement can be reached only with the goodwill of the countries of this area. There can be no settlement by war which, if it occurs, may well become a major war. I do not suggest that any attempt should or can be made to deal with the problem now. The question should not be raised at this stage, but will have to wait for some time. Only when the other problems of West Asia have advanced towards a solution and the passions have cooled to some extent can this difficult problem be tackled."

Nehru abhorred racialism and colonialism and rejoiced in their demolition everywhere. Speaking in Bangalore on January 17, 1960, he told his audience what the future presaged: "After long years of alien domination, colonialism and suppression, the countries of Asia and Africa want to think and act for themselves. They have rejected the idea of being told what to do and what not to do. If they are convinced of a particular line of action they co-operate; that is the basic idea, conscious or sub-conscious, in the mind of Africa which is changing with the speed of lightning. That change has affected and will affect the whole context of world events."

Anti-Racialism and Anti-Colonialism

The Principle of Non-Alignment

Nehru was opposed to power blocs and supported non-alignment consistently upholding the principle in his speeches in Parliament: "What does joining a bloc mean? After all it can only mean one thing: give up your view about a particular question, adopt the other party's view on that question in order to please it and gain its favour. It means that and nothing else as far as I can see, because if our view is the view of that party, there is no giving up and we do go with that bloc or country. The question only arises when we are opposed to it on that point; therefore, we give up our viewpoint and adopt the other one in order to gain a favour…If by any chance we align ourselves definitely with one power group, we may perhaps from one point of view do some good, but I have not the shadow of a doubt that from a larger point of view, not only of India but of world peace, it will do harm. Because then we lose that tremendous vantage ground that we have of using such influence as we possess (and that influence is going to grow from year to year) in the cause of world peace. Our main stake in world affairs is peace, to see that there is social equality and that people who are still subjugated should be free…" (March 8, 1948). And again on December 9, 1958: "When we say our policy is one of non-alignment, obviously we mean non-alignment with military blocs. It is not a negative policy. It is a positive one, a definite one and, I hope, a dynamic one. But, insofar as the military blocs today and the Cold War are concerned, we do not align ourselves with either bloc…The policy itself can only be a policy of acting according to our best judgement, and furthering the principal objectives and ideals that we have…There is no question of sitting on the fence or trying to woo this person or that person or this country or that country. We want to be friends with all of them. It is said that there are only two ways of action in the world today, and that one must take this way or that. I repudiate that attitude of mind. If we accept that there are only two ways, then we certainly have to join the Cold War—and if not an actual military bloc, at least a mental military bloc. I just do not see why the possession of great armed might or great financial power should necessarily lead to right decisions or a right mental outlook. The fact that I have got the atom bomb with me does not make me any more intelligent, wiser or more peaceful than I otherwise might have been. It is a simple fact, but it needs reiteration. I say this with all respect to the great countries. But I am not prepared even as an individual, much less as the foreign minister of this country, to give up my right of independent judgement to anybody else in other countries. That is the essence of our policy." And yet again on November 22, 1960: "As I have said repeatedly, I do not like the word 'neutral' as being applied to India. I do not even like India's policy being referred to as 'positive neutrality' as is done in some countries. Without doubt, we are unaligned; we are uncommitted to military blocs; but the important fact is that we are committed to various policies, various urges, various objectives and various principles; very much so. When proposals have been made that we should form some kind of a bloc of neutral countries, I have not taken very kindly to them. While I do not like the system of blocs as such, we meet and discuss, have some measure of common thinking, sometimes common action, and we cooperate…and now, with a large group of independent countries from Africa also more or less joining this unaligned group—nor a formal group—it has made a big difference."

A Positive and Dynamic Policy

Policy of Positive Neutrality

INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES

With the impending lapse of paramountcy, the question of the future of the princely states began to be debated, and the more ambitious rulers or their dewans (like those of Hyderabad, Bhopal or Travancore) dreamt of an independence that would keep them autocratic as ever. Their ambitions were encouraged by the Government of India's Political Department under Conrad Corfield till Mountbatten enforced a more realistic policy. A trend visible in the states was an upsurge of the states' people's movement which began in 1946-47 and demanded political rights and elective representation in the Constituent Assembly; it was even quite socially-

radical in nature, for example, in Travancore or Hyderabad. The Congress' attitude was to criticise the Cabinet Mission Plan for not providing for elected members from states. Nehru presided over the Udaipur and Gwalior sessions of the All India States' People's Conference that took place in December 1945 and April 1947, and declared at Gwalior that states refusing to join the Constituent Assembly would be treated as hostile. The leadership position was typified in the approach of Sardar Patel who took charge of the new states in place of the Political Department in July 1947 and that of V.P. Menon who became secretary and used popular movements as a lever to extort concessions from princes while simultaneously restraining them or even using force to suppress them once the prince had been brought to heel, as in Hyderabad. Kashmir offered resistance. On May 20, 1946, Sheikh Abdullah was arrested while leading the National Conference's 'Quit Kashmir' movement against the unpopular and despotic Hindu maharaja of a Muslim-majority state. When Nehru rushed to the Sheikh's support, even he was briefly arrested on June 20 for defying a ban on his entry into the state. It was only after Patel assured Wavell that Nehru had acted against this advice that negotiations with Kashmir's prime minister, Kak, took place. The negotiations culminated in the Maharaja's accession to India after raiders from Pakistan invaded Kashmir in October 1947. The incident changed princely perceptions and the Nawab of Bhopal declared on hearing of the appointment of Patel and Menon to head the new states department: "This alters the whole outlook for the States."

Popular Upsurge Princely State

A man of iron will and absolute intrepidity, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel tackled the question of 550 and odd princely state territories and principalities in a strategic manner. Almost within a year Patel redrew the map of independent India with every princely state joining the Indian Union. It is said that he accomplished a silent revolution by ensuring the absorption and assimilation of most of the principalities without shedding even a drop of blood.

Patel–Bismarck of India

To construct an amicable solution to such a complicated problem, Patel issued a statement to the princes wherein he appealed to their sense of patriotism and reiterated that the new states department, in no way, desired to have supremacy over them. Patel declared, "If at all, any sense of supremacy is required, it would be with common understanding and for common good. We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour, we can raise the country to new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to unexpected calamities. I hope the Indian States will realize fully that if we do not cooperate and work together in the general interest, anarchy and chaos will overwhelm us all great and small, and lead us to total ruin."

Princely states were incorporated in two phases, using a skilful combination of baits and threats of mass pressure. By August 15, 1947, all states except Kashmir, Junagadh and Hyderabad had agreed to sign an Instrument of Accession with India with central authority vested in the three areas of defence, external affairs and communications. Since these three functions had been of paramountcy to the Crown and there had since been no change in internal political structures, the princes agreed to the accession. Another process was under way—that of 'integration' of states with neighbouring provinces or into new units like the Kathiawar Union, Vindhya and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh along with internal constitutional changes in states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin, which for some years retained their old boundaries. The process was accomplished within the span of a year. In return, very generous privy purses were offered and some princes were made into governors or *rajpramukhs.* While Sardar Patel takes the greatest credit for achieving the rapid unification of India, the potential presence of mass pressures too played an important role. The Eastern States Union formed by recalcitrant princes crumbled in December 1947 in the face of the powerful *Praja Mandal* (as well as some tribal) agitations in Orissa states like Nilgiri, Dhenkanal and Talcher. When the Muslim ruler of Junagadh in Kathiawar tried to join Pakistan, a combination of popular agitation with Indian police action saw him revert back to the Indian Union. The Congress, which had a strong base in Mysore since the late 1930s, launched a fairly uninhibited

Mode of Integration

'Mysore Chalo' agitation on its own in September 1947. This forced substantial political changes towards democracy by October 12. V.P. Menon persuaded the Travancore Dewan, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, to give up his dream of continued personal power through the 'American model' by pointing to the 'Communist menace'.

Lord Mountbatten himself started negotiations with the Nizam of Hyderabad. At one stage, it seemed that there was a settlement but the Nizam found himself helpless against the pressures of the *Razakars* (an armed private militia floated by the Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen and led by Syed Qasim Razvi at the time). The *Razakars* started tormenting the local public. Thus, to end the crisis, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, with the consent of the Governor-General, initiated army action (Operation Polo), though it is generally called a 'police action'. In 108 hours, the Nizam surrendered and Hyderabad acceded and merged with Union of India. Thus, the *'yajna'* for consolidation of a united and integrated India undertaken by leaders of the newly-born nation was completed with the merger of Hyderabad. Ramchandra Guha says that Patel's guiding hand was indeed wise and sure. Even Nehru might not have supervised the princes' extinction with such patience and foresight. But Patel could not have done this herculean task without V.P. Menon who made hundreds of trips to the chiefdoms.

The Telangana armed struggle weakened the Nizam and also provided an important reason for military intervention.

FRAMING OF A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION

The British colonial rule and the anti-colonial freedom struggle played a decisive role in the evolution of modern democratic ideas and institutions in India. Elements of the pre-colonial Indian society merged with the colonial rule and ideas of democracy and nationalism began to take shape in the early 19th century.

Growth of Democratic Ideas and Institutions

Colonial exploitation required a new economic and administrative infrastructure which, in turn, set new social forces of production into motion. From this emerged a new social mobility making possible the growth of reformist, nationalist, liberal and democratic ideas. While the demand for the introduction of democratic and representative institutions in India dates back to the days of Raja Rammohan Roy and Indian Renaissance, the movement lacked the support of any prominent social class and was confined to a small section of educated Indians. It thus lacked a revolutionary will and the power to bring about a social and ideological transformation of Indian society. Unlike the anti-feudal social movements of the West and the transition to capitalism, the democratic movement in India took place without any break with pre-capitalist ideologies. Democracy and capitalism in India were thus both revivalist and imbued with local parochial traditions of caste, language, religion and region. The introduction of western education in India was the most significant development in the growth of liberalism, democracy and nation-building in the modern Indian context, and it enabled the educated manpower to organise business and industry along scientific lines. It produced the leadership of the national movement, and the Congress-nationalist platform was organised with the initiative of the educated elite.

The demand of the early nationalists was confined to the introduction of representative institutions within the framework of British lordship over India. Thus early Congress politics during the moderate era was marked by its incapacity to seek mass support for its policies and action. Extremist leadership tried to overcome this limitation by appeals to the religious ideology of Hindu revivalism. Instead of achieving a democratic consensus of all communities on the basis of a common socio-economic programme of nationalism, Hindu revivalism widened the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims and strengthened Muslim fears that the Congress was essentially a Hindu party. The 20th century saw the movement of nationalism and democracy registering significant advances with the passing of a number of acts that democratised Indian society and polity. The participation of the working people in these movements greatly enhanced the stature and strength of the nationalist movement and its leadership. Finally, the Quit India movement and the post-Second World War social situation led to the transfer of power to Indians, but the price had

to be paid in terms of the worst communal holocaust and partition of India in 1947.

The establishment of the 385-member Constituent Assembly by the colonial government in 1946 was the culmination of the struggle for democratic government and independence in India. While representing various shades of opinion including those of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, this body of Constitution-makers was not fully representative in character, with 292 members being chosen by the legislative assemblies of 11 provinces elected on a restricted franchise of about one-fifth of the adult population. About 93 members were nominated by the rulers of the native states under the overall British hegemony. India's partition in August 1947 reduced this body to 298 members of which 208 owed their loyalty to the Congress Party. The Constituent Assembly directed the establishment of democratic institutions in India and functioned both as the Parliament and the Constitution-making body until January 1950. Being the most influential section, the Congress Party directly influenced the philosophy of the Indian Constitution. The real shape of the Indian Constitution was determined not by an autonomous body of legal experts but by the Congress' liberal creed. The Constitution was a legal form of the political philosophy upheld by the Congress party; all decisions about the establishment of liberal-democratic institutions in India, for example, the form of government, federalism, secularism and democratic rights, were taken at the level of the Congress party and its high command.

Constituent Assembly

In the making of the Constitution, the Congress followed the examples of the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and the French National Assembly of 1778-91, going beyond legalistic terms and references, but unlike its predecessors, it never initiated a radical liberal revolutionary break in the social situation. The division of India, however, gave the Congress the right to evolve a constitutional framework of its own choice in the Constituent Assembly. Both the Congress leadership and most of the Constituent Assembly members were deeply influenced and impressed by the western liberal tradition of democracy, and from the beginning of the freedom struggle itself, their advocacy of basic human rights and political freedom of individual citizens epitomised the liberal democratic creed. Being duty-bound to incorporate these promises in the Indian Constitution, the Constituent Assembly declared the Fundamental Rights as the most sacred part of the Constitution. The individual, rather than the village, family, caste or community, was regarded as the basic legal unit. In the background of a highly communal structure characterised by social division around local-parochial ties and an inward-looking social outlook, this stance marked a great step forward in the direction of bourgeois justice and equality. The system of courts further made enforceable the right to freedom of speech and expression, religion and faith, assembly and association, occupation, and the acquisition, holding or disposing off property. In the process, judicial review and the independence of the judiciary were made sacred. A hierarchical system of courts was provided with the Supreme Court of India standing at the apex. The objective of judicial review and the independence of the judiciary were intended to defend the rights and property of individual citizens; the courts were vested with absolute powers to defend the Constitution in the context of bourgeois democracy in India. On the other hand, the Directive Principles of the Constitution were declared to be fundamental though they remained non-justiciable.

The evolution of liberal traditions of authority has a long history in India; the system was not established overnight by the decision of the Constituent Assembly. Beginning with the period of the Indian Renaissance up to Independence in 1947, the Indian political elite familiarised itself with the working of the British system of governance. Since it had the experience of working with the British model, it looked towards the same system while opting for the state structure to govern Indian polity in the future. A Parliamentary system of government patterned on the Westminster model was adopted by the Constituent Assembly for creating a formal institutional network of state power in India.

Westminster Model

While the parliamentary system of governance envisages the collective responsibility of the Executive (the Council of Ministers) to the Legislature, the decision-making authority rests with the Prime Minister who heads the Council of

Ministers. The Prime Minister is not only the leader of the majority party or coalition of parties in the Parliament, but is also the spokesperson of the nation and the State, and he exercises an overwhelming influence in shaping the policy of the State and the government. According to many political scientists and commentators in India and Britain, the prime ministerial form of government is what exists at present. The institution of presidency is merely nominal, the president being appointed for five years by an electoral college consisting of the elected members of both houses of the Union Parliament and the state legislative assemblies. The President of India acts on the aid and advice of the council of ministers headed by the prime minister.

Prime Ministerial Form of Government

Likewise, at the state level also, the real executive power is vested in the Chief Minister by virtue of his position as the majority party leader in the state legislature. The role of the Governor has become controversial, as the governor, on the one hand, acts as the nominee of the Centre by virtue of his being appointed by it, and, on the other hand, according to the Constitution, he is supposed to act in accordance with the will of the majority party and its leadership in the state legislature. His loyalties are divided between his role as the Centre's loyal nominee on the one hand and his loyalty to the Constitution on the other, a conflict that becomes far more prominent if the ruling party at the state level happens to be in political opposition to the ruling party at the centre.

Role of Governor

The introduction of the representative system of government based on universal adult franchise was one of the most significant advances towards democratising the Indian political system. It led to the creation of the Election Commission (Article 324) to supervise the entire procedure and machinery for national and state elections. On the whole, India's experience with elections has been a positive one, and elections have become the chief system by which the strength of any leadership or a party is tested. The introduction of universal suffrage strengthened the already established caste-class authority in terms of economic power, social position and political authority, while at the same time giving a voice to the hitherto disenfranchised sections of society. In this way, elections have been the means to test the legitimacy of political authority in India. Indian voters have utilised their right to franchise with wisdom whenever electoral choices have been seen as being critically important for the health of democracy. Elections have thus become central to India's political life, and are seen as the solution to any crisis. However, certain limits exist within the context of Indian politics. The elections were not introduced with any revolutionary aim, and were utilised as a vehicle for legitimising the existent social and economic power of the dominant castes and classes. Barring a few exceptions, the elections have not helped the toiling people to diminish the socio-economic and political hold of vested interests in society. Numerous instances show that high caste, more land, more money and more education continue to be the requisite for political success. The institution of elections has been manipulated by vested interests time and again to assert caste, communal, linguistic and regional chauvinism. Adequate media network and the funds to fight elections are increasingly important tools for meeting political ends.

Universal Adult Franchise and Suffrage

Elections as Lifelines of Democracy

Weaknesses of the Electoral System

One of the strongest features of democracy in the contemporary world is the decentralisation of decision-making powers, resource mobilisation and allocation. Federalism provides an adequate organisational structure for the administration of a large-scale society. For a diverse society like India, federalism exists as the sole medium of satisfying a community's distinct political and cultural aspirations. In 1916, when both the Congress party and the Muslim League reached the Lucknow Pact, the first major democratic consensus towards federalism was taken, though the consensus was not followed upon in the best spirit as a necessity for Indian unity. From the beginning, while the achievement of maximum centralisation was a motivating factor behind Congress actions, the

Muslim League worked for maximum decentralisation. While the Congress nationalists and various other Hindu majority factions fought to vest these powers with the Centre, the Muslim League and other minority groups worked for greater power to state governments. This debate about the demarcation of powers between the Centre and states was a stumbling block facing the All-Parties Committee headed by Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, the Round Table Conference and all subsequent negotiations, and it led to the British government sending two Missions to India between 1942 and 1947. While the Congress-led nationalists made many compromises to avert India's partition, the Muslim League opted for the partition of India rather than for a strong federal polity.

Principles of Decentralisation and Federalism

After the partition of India, the Constitution-makers made a plea for a unitary Centre though federal principles were not ignored. The result has been a federal form of government unitary in essence. The Constitution itself provided innumerable provisions by which the Centre and a strong ruling party at the Centre could easily infringe upon the powers of federating units. For example, the Constitution's empowering of the Centre-nominated governors of the states to dismiss the elected state governments and the power of the Centre to give direction to the state and its power to declare emergency also tended to strengthen forces of centralism.

Federal in Structure but Unitary in Spirit

The administrative and financial structure of the Indian state, its economy and its organisation led to the strengthening of the centralised political structure in India. The resources for various development plans in agriculture, industry, education and health had to come through arrangements with the Planning Commission which was established in March 1950. In the process, the Planning Commission became biased in favour of centralisation and the activities of socio-economic development became central subjects. Bureaucracy in India existed as a legacy of the centralised state: of the 1,000 ICS officers serving at the time of Independence, 453 were Indians who became policy-makers of the Indian state. Not everyone in the Constituent Assembly was convinced about the overwhelming importance of the officers to the independent Indian state: while democrats, reformers and nationalists wanted to get rid of them, the votaries of the centralised state ultimately prevailed. Besides the bureaucracy, the role of para-military forces like the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has helped to strengthen the centralised political power structure in India.

Centralised Political Structure

LINGUISTIC ORGANISATION OF STATES

A major aspect of national consolidation and integration was the reorganisation of the states on the basis of language. During the British conquest of India the boundaries of the provinces were drawn in a haphazard manner without paying any heed to linguistic or cultural cohesion of the people. The outcome was that most of the pre-1947 provinces were multi-lingual and multi-cultural, with the interspersed princely states adding a further element of heterogeneity.

The case for linguistic states as administrative units was very strong as language is closely related to culture and therefore to the customs of the people. Apart from that, the spread of education and growth of mass literacy could only be possible through the medium of the mother tongue. Democracy would become a reality for the masses if politics and administration were conducted through their language. But the problem was that the mother tongue could not be the medium of education or administration or judicial activity unless the state was formed on the basis of such a predominant language. It was precisely for this reason that the Indian National Congress undertook political mobilisation of the masses in the mother tongue after 1919 and amended its constitution and reorganised its regional branches on a linguistic basis in 1921. Since then a need for redrawing the provincial boundaries on linguistic lines was increasingly felt. Even Gandhi who urged people to "discourage all fissiparous

Logic of Linguistic Organisation

tendencies and feel and behave as Indians" argued that "the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was necessary if provincial languages were to grow to their full height". Hence the logic of reorganising the states after 1947 on a linguistic basis was more or less universally acknowledged.

Dar Commission

Though the issue of linguistic reorganisation of India was raised quite early in the Constituent Assembly, it was only in 1948 that the Linguistic Provinces Commission headed by Justice S.K. Dar was constituted to enquire into its desirability. The Dar Commission, however, advised against the step at the time for it said it might threaten national unity and also be administratively inconvenient. That is why the Constituent Assembly did not incorporate the linguistic principle in India's Constitution. Under tremendous pressure, especially from the South, the Congress appointed the 'JVP' (Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya) Committee in December 1948 to examine the issue afresh. This Committee also advised against the creation of linguistic states for the time being, citing other important issues of need for national unity and security and economic development. The JVP report was followed by popular movements for states' reorganisation all over the country, which continued with varying degrees of intensity till 1960.

JVP Committee

Reorganisation of Madras State

It was laid down by the Congress leadership that a new state could be created where the demand for a linguistic state was insistent and overwhelming and where other language groups involved were agreeable to it. In this context, the JVP accepted that a strong case for the formation of Andhra Pradesh out of the Madras Presidency existed, particularly as the Tamil Nadu leadership was agreeable to it. The demand, however, could not be conceded immediately as there emerged a conflict over the city of Madras between the two sides. Though Madras belonged to Tamil Nadu on linguistic and geographic grounds, the Andhra leaders expressed their unwillingness to concede it. Patti Sriramalu, a popular Andhra freedom fighter, undertook a fast unto death on October 19, 1952 demanding a separate Andhra state. His death after 58 days was followed by three days of violence all over Andhra and the government in its response conceded the demand. In October 1953, the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were formed.

States Reorganistion Commission

The formation of Andhra Pradesh encouraged other linguistic groups to raise similar demands. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, though at that time did not favour such demands of redrawing India's internal administrative boundaries, appointed the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in August 1953 with Justice Fazl Ali, K.M. Panikkar and Hridaynath Kunzru as members to examine the entire question of the reorgansation of the states of the Union "objectively and dispassionately". The SRC in its report submitted in October 1955 recognised the linguistic principle and recommended redrawing of state boundaries on that basis. It emphatically laid down that due consideration should be given to administrative and economic factors. The Commission, however, opposed the splitting of Bombay and Punjab. Though the Commission's recommendations met with strong reaction in many parts of the country, they were accepted with certain modifications and immediately implemented by the government.

States Reorganisation Act

In November 1956, the Parliament passed the States Reorganisation Act which provided for fourteen states and six Centrally-administered territories. The Telangana area of Hyderabad state was transferred to Andhra; Kerala was created by merging the Malabar district of the old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin. Certain Kannada-speaking areas of the states of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg were added to the Mysore state. The state of Bombay was enlarged by merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad with it.

In Maharashtra, there was a strong reaction against the SRC's report and the States Reorganisation Act which resulted in widespread riots in January 1956. Powerful protest movements were launched by opposition parties supported by a wide spectrum of public opinion. This forced the government in

June 1956 to divide the state of Bombay into two linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujarat with the city of Bombay forming a separate, Centrally-administered state. This move was also strongly opposed by the people of Maharashtra. Nehru, in July, reverted to the formation of a bilingual greater Bombay. This move again was opposed by the people of both Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad led the movements in the two parts of the state. Even a large section of Maharashtrian Congressmen joined the demand for a unilingual Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital. C.D. Deshmukh, the then finance minister in the Central Cabinet, resigned from his office on this question. On the other hand, apprehending that they would be a minority in the new state, the Gujaratis did not agree to give up Bombay City to Maharashtra. This led to serious violence which soon spread to Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat, with sixteen people killed and about 200 people injured in police firings. Finally the government in May 1960 agreed to bifurcate the state of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat, with Bombay City being included in Maharashtra and Ahmedabad being made Gujarat's capital.

Issue of Bombay

The other state where an exception was made to the linguistic principle was Punjab. In 1956, the States of PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) had been merged with Punjab, which, however, remained a trilingual state having three language speakers—Punjabi, Hindi and Pahari—within its borders. A strong demand was raised in the Punjabi-speaking part of the state for carving out a separate *Punjabi Suba* (Punjabi-speaking state). The issue assumed communal overtones when the Sikh communalists led by the Akali Dal and the Hindu communalists led by Jan Sangh used the linguistic issue to promote communal politics. While the Hindu communalists opposed the demand for a Punjabi Suba by denying that Punjabi was their mother tongue, the Sikh communalists put forward the demand for a Sikh state, claiming Punjabi written in Gurmukhi as a Sikh language. Even though the demand was supported by the Communist Party and a section of Congress, the issue had got mixed up with religion. However, Nehru and a majority of Punjab Congressmen felt that the demand for a Punjabi state basically was a communal demand for a Sikh-majority state dressed up as a language plea. Neither Nehru along with the Congress leadership in Punjab nor the SRC accepted the demand for a creation of a state on religious or communal grounds. The SRC rejected the demand on the grounds that there was not much difference between Hindi and Punjabi and that the minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change did not exist among the people of Punjab. After a great deal of haggling, an agreement was arrived at between the Akali Dal and the Government of India in 1956 leading to the merger of Punjab and PEPSU.

Issue of Punjab Suba

Subsequently, the Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh organised a powerful agitation around the demand for the creation of a Punjabi Suba. Allegeding that the non-acceptance of the demand was an act of discrimination against the Sikhs, the Akali Dal argued that the Sikhs needed a state of their own in which they could dominate as a religious and political community because of their population preponderance. This was opposed strongly by the Jan Sangh and other Hindu communal organisations on the ground that the demand represented an effort to impose Sikh domination and Sikh theocracy on Punjab. They denied that Punjabi was the mother tongue of Hindus in the Punjabi-speaking part of the state and asked the Hindus to register themselves as Hindi-speaking in the 1961 Census. However, it is interesting to note that the Mazhabi Sikhs (Harijan and landless agricultural Sikh labourers) also opposed the demand for Punjabi Suba because they were apprehensive that such a new state would be dominated by their class opponents, the rich peasants, who as Jat Sikhs were the main support base of the Akali Dal.

Though Nehru did not concede the demand for Punjabi Suba primarily because of its communal underpinnings, but the way for its creation (in consonance with Nehru's criteria) was cleared by two later developments. Firstly, Master Tara Singh was ousted by Sant Fateh Singh from the leadership of the Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee

(SGPC) and the Akali Dal, and the latter declared that the demand for Punjabi Suba was entirely language-based. Secondly, major political and social organisations in Haryana demanded a separate Hindi-speaking state and those in Kangra asked for its merger with Himachal Pradesh. Finally, Indira Gandhi in 1966 agreed to the division of Punjab into two Punjabi and Hindi-speaking states of Punjab and Haryana, with the Pahari-speaking district of Kangra and a part of Hoshiarpur district being merged with Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh, the newly built city and capital of United Punjab, was made a Union Territory and was to serve as the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana.

Division of Punjab

Hence, by 1966, the decade-long strife and popular struggles for linguistic reorganisation of the country was largely completed, making room for greater political participation by the people. In this context, Bipan Chandra and *et al* in *India After Independence* write: "Events since 1956 have clearly shown that loyalty to a language was quite consistent with, and was rather complimentary to loyalty to the nation. By reorganising the states on linguistic lines, the national leadership removed a major grievance which could have led to fissiparous tendencies. States reorganisation is, therefore, 'best regarded as clearing the ground for national integration'. Also, even though during the agitation for states' reorganisation the language of warring camps was used, language has not subsequently defined the politics of the states."

Neither has the linguistic reorganisation of states in any manner adversely affected the federal structure of the Indian Union or weakened or paralysed the Centre as many had feared. There has hardly been any complaints of discrimination on the part of the states in the raising or expending of resources on grounds of language. Rather the national government has been largely strengthened by the creation of coherent state units.

However, it must be pointed out here that states' reorganisation did not resolve all the problems relating to linguistic conflicts. Disputes over boundaries between different states, linguistic minorities and economic issues such as sharing of waters, power and surplus food still persist. There have also been occasional outbrusts of linguistic chauvinism (for instance, in Maharashtra and Assam). But, on the whole, the linguistic reorganisation of states has proved to be a major factor of stability in the process of national consolidation.

THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL LANGUAGE

In the first twenty years of Independent India the language problem emerged as the most divisive issue. It created apprehensions that the political and cultural unity of India was in danger. But it was only natural that in a multilingual society like India, the linguistic diversity would inevitably give birth to strong political currents around issues linked to language, such as educational and economic development, job and other economic opportunities and access to political power. The problem posed by this linguistic diversity to national consolidation took two major forms: (a) the dispute over official language of the Indian Union, and (b) the linguistic reorganisation of the states.

Problem of Linguistic Diversity

The language controversy took a virulent form as a conflict arose between the Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi speaking zones of the country and there was an opposition to Hindi in the latter. The dispute was not over the question of a 'national language', that is all Indians would adopt one language after some time, since the view that one national language was essential to an Indian national identity had already been rejected overwhelmingly by the secular majority of the national leadership. It was asserted that India's multi-linguality was a reality which had to be preserved. Moreover, the national movement had carried on its ideological and political work through the different regional languages of the country. The national movement's demand then was the substitution of English by the mother tongue as the medium of higher education as well as political and judicial administration in each linguistic zone. The issue of a national language was resolved when the Constituent Assembly virtually accepted all the major languages as "languages of India" or India's national languages. However, there was a need for 'one common language' in which the Central government would carry on its work and maintain contact with the state governments, since the country's official

Issue of National Language

work could not be carried on in so many languages. Hence the entire debate was centred around the issue of what would be this common language, the language of all-India communication or India's official and link language.

Two languages—Hindi and English—were chosen for the purpose. In fact, the nationalist leadership in the pre-1947 period was somewhat convinced that English (being an alien language) would not continue to be the all-India medium of communication. For instance, Gandhi was convinced that the creative genius of the Indian people could never be totally unfolded nor could their culture flower in a foreign language, though he clearly realised and appreciated the value of English as a language of international interaction and discourse as well as the window to western science and thought. He argued that English in India occupied "an unnatural place due to our (Indians') unequal relations with Englishmen". English "has sapped the energy of the nation… and it has estranged them from the masses… The sooner therefore educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people", he said. Nehru too echoed these sentiments in his 1937 article on *The Question of Language* and in the debates in the Constituent Assembly.

Arguement Against English

Hindi or Hindustani, on the other hand, had the support of many to become the official language. It had played a crucial role as a link or official language during the freedom struggle, especially during the phase of mass mobilisation. It had been even accepted by the leaders from non-Hindi speaking regions because it was considered to be the most widely spoken and understood language in the country. It also received enthusiastic support from many prominent leaders like Tilak, Gandhi, C. Rajgopalachari and Subhas Bose. In its sessions and political work, the Congress had substituted Hindi and the provincial languages in place of English. Amending its constitution in 1925, the Congress declared that the proceedings shall be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani. The English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker was unable to speak Hindustani or whenever necessary. It also declared that the proceedings of the provincial Congress Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the province concerned and Hindustani may also be used. The Nehru Report in 1928, reflecting a national consensus, laid down that Hindustani which might be written in Devanagari or Urdu script would be India's common language but the use of English would be continued for some time, a stand which was finally adopted except for replacing Hindustani by Hindi. The real debate which arose in the Constituent Assembly was would Hindi or Hindustani replace English, and if so, what would be the timeframe for such a substitution?

Support for Hindi

The initial debates were marked by sharp differences as the issue of the official language had been highly politicised from the beginning. The question of Hindi or Hindustani was soon resolved, though with considerable acrimony. Both Gandhi and Nehru supported Hindustani, written in Devnagari or Urdu script. Though many supporters of Hindi disagreed, they tended to accept the Gandhi-Nehru viewpoint. But with the announcement of partition, the champions of Hindi were greatly emboldened, especially since the protagonists of Pakistan claimed Urdu as the language of the Muslims and of Pakistan. Branding Urdu 'as a symbol of secession', the votaries of Hindi demanded that Hindi in Devnagari script be made the national language. This demand split the Congress Party down the middle and the Congress Legislature Party finally decided for Hindi against Hindustani by 78 to 77 votes, even though Nehru and Abdul Kalam Azad fought for Hindustani. However, the Hindi bloc too was forced to compromise as it had to accept that Hindi would become the official and not the national language. More significantly, what produced a divide between Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi areas was the issue of the timeframe for shift from English to Hindi. While the spokespersons of Hindi areas advocated for an immediate switchover to Hindi, those from the non-Hindi areas demanded for retention of English for a long if not indefinite period. The latter wanted the status quo to continue till a future Parliament decided to switch over to Hindi as the official language. Though Nehru favoured making Hindi the official language, he also wanted continuation of English as an additional language, and a gradual transition to Hindi. He in

Hindi vs Urdu

fact actively encouraged the knowledge of English because of its relevance in the contemporary world.

Why Hindi

The status of Hindi as the official language primarily rested on the fact that it was the language of the largest number, though not of the majority, of the people of India. Secondly, Hindi was understood at least in the urban areas of northern India from Punjab to Bengal and in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Those who were not in favour of Hindi pointed out that the language was less developed than other languages as a literary language and as a language of science and politics. But their main apprehension was that adoption of Hindi as the official language would place non-Hindi areas, especially the South India, at a disadvantage in the educational and economic spheres, and particularly in competition for appointments in government and the public sector. In other words, the opponents of Hindi argued that imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi areas would result in their economic, political, social and cultural subordination to Hindi areas.

Constitutional Sanction for Hindi

Being aware of the problem, the Constitution-makers provided that Hindi in Devnagari script with international numerals would be India's official language. English was to continue for use in all official purposes till 1965, when it would be replaced by Hindi. Hindi was to be introduced in a phased manner and after 1965 Hindi was to become the sole official language. However, the Parliament would have the authority to provide for the use of English for specified purposes even after 1965. The Constitution made the government duty-bound to promote the spread and development of Hindi. It also provided for the appointment of a commission and joint committee of the Parliament to review the progress in this respect. The state legislatures were to decide the matter of official language at the state level, though the official language of the Union would serve as the language of communication between the states and between the Centre and the states.

However, the issue remained a subject of intense controversy and the implementation of the language provisions of the Constitution proved quite formidable. It became increasingly acrimonious with passage of time. It was hoped that with the rapid growth of education Hindi also would spread thereby gradually weakening the resistance to Hindi. By 1965 it was believed that the protagonists of Hindi would overcome the drawbacks of the language and win the confidence of non-Hindi areas. But nothing of this sort happened. The spread of education was too slow and the chances of Hindi succeeding as an official language were spoilt by the proponents of Hindi themselves. Instead of adopting a gradual and moderate approach in gaining acceptance of Hindi in non-Hindi areas, the more fanatic among the Hindi proponents preferred imposition of Hindi through government action. This certainly proved counter-productive.

Drawbacks of Hindi

It is also true that Hindi suffered from a lack of social science and scientific writing. There were hardly any academic journals in Hindi in the 1950s outside the literary field. Instead of developing Hindi as a means of communication in higher education, journalism and other areas, the Hindi leaders were more interested in making it the sole official language. They did not develop a simple standard language which would get wider acceptance or at least popularise the colloquial Hindi as spoken and written in Hindi areas and in many other parts of the country. Instead they tried to Sanskritise Hindi by replacing commonly understood words with newly-coined, unwieldy and little understood ones in the name of the 'purity' of language and to free it of alien influences. This obviously made it more difficult for the non-Hindi speakers to understand and learn the new version. This new trend was even reflected in the news bulletins of the All India Radio, which otherwise would have played a significant role in popularising Hindi. The proponents of Hindi resisted all attempts to simplify the Hindi of news broadcasts. The result was that many uncommitted persons joined the ranks of the opponents of Hindi.

Though the commitment to the transition to Hindi as the official language was never given up by Nehru and the majority of Indian leaders, sharp differences on the issue surfaced during the 1956-60 period which revealed the presence of disruptive tendencies. In 1956, the Report of the Official Language Commission, set up in 1955 in terms of a constitutional provision, recommended that Hindi

should start replacing English progressively in various functions of the Central government with effective change taking place in 1965. Since two of the commission's members (Summit Kumar Chatterji from West Bengal and P. Subbaroyan from Tamil Nadu) dissented accusing the other members of a pro-Hindi bias and asked for the continuation of English, the report was reviewed by a special joint parliamentary committee. For implementing the recommendations of the joint committee, the President issued an order in April 1960 stating that, after 1965, Hindi would be the principal official language but English would continue as the associate official language without any restriction being placed on its use. Hindi would also become an alternate medium of the examinations for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) after some time, but for the present it would be introduced as a qualifying subject in the examinations. Thereafter, the Central government, in accordance with the President's directive, took a series of measures to promote Hindi. These measures included the establishment of the Central Hindi Directorate, publication of standard works in Hindi or translation of certain works into Hindi in various fields, compulsory training of Central government employees in Hindi, and translation of major texts of law into Hindi and promotion of their use by the courts.

Official Language Commission

On the one hand, these measures aroused suspicion and anxiety in the non-Hindi areas and groups, and on the other, did not fully satisfy the Hindi leaders. There were accusations and counter-accusations between both the groups. Nehru's viewpoint that an official language could not and would not be imposed on any region of the country and that the pace of transition to Hindi would have to be determined keeping in view the wishes of the non-Hindi people received support of the leaders of Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). Subsequently an Official Language Act was passed in 1963 which aimed at removing a constitutional restriction placed on the use of English after a certain date, namely, 1965. The Act, however, did not solve the matter. The Act laid down that "the English language may… continue to be used in addition to Hindi". The non-Hindi groups criticised the use of the word 'may' in place of the word 'shall' saying it did not provide a statutory guarantee. The death of Nehru in May 1964 increased their fears which were fuelled by certain hasty steps taken and circulars issued by various ministries to prepare the ground for the changeover to Hindi in 1965.

Official Language Act 1963

Lal Bahadur Shastri, who succeeded Nehru as prime minister, exhibited relatively less sensitivity to the opinion of non-Hindi groups. He declared that he was considering making Hindi an alternative medium in public service examinations. This implied that while non-Hindi speakers could still compete in the all-India services in English, the Hindi speakers would have the advantage of being able to use their mother tongue.

In protest, many non-Hindi leaders changed their line of approach to the problem of official language. While they had earlier wanted a slowing down in the process of replacing English with Hindi, they now started demanding that there should be no fixed deadline for the changeover. The Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) and C. Rajagopalachari even demanded that the Constitution should be amended and English should be made the official language of India. On January 17, 1965, the DMK convened the Madras State Anti-Hindi Conference which gave a call for observing January 26 as a day of mourning in Tamil Nadu. The student community, concerned for their careers and apprehensive that they would be overtaken by the Hindi-speakers in the all-India services, were the most active in leading a widespread agitation and mobilising public opinion. Raising the slogan—'Hindi Never, English Ever'—they demanded amendment of the Indian Constitution. As the government made efforts to suppress the agitation, widespread rioting and violence followed in the early weeks of February 1965 leading to large-scale destruction of railways and other Union property. The depth of the anti-Hindi feeling can be gauged from the fact that several Tamil youth, including four students, burned themselves to death in protest against the official language policy. C. Subramaniyam and Alagesan, two Tamil ministers in the Union cabinet, also resigned in protest. The agitation continued for about two months, taking a toll of over sixty lives through police firings. Efforts were also made by the Jan Sangh and the Samyukta Socialist Party

Protest Against Hindi

(SSP led by Ram Manohar Lohia) to organise counter-agitation in Hindi areas against English, an effort which did not get much public support.

The agitation forced both the Madras and the Union governments and the Congress party to revise their stand. The Congress Working Committee announced a series of measures which were to form the basis for a central enactment embodying concessions. This led to the withdrawal of the Hindi agitation. The enactment was delayed because of the Indo-Pak war of 1965, which silenced all dissension in the country.

It was during the prime ministership of Indira Gandhi that a bill to amend the 1963 Official Language Act was moved on November 27, 1967. The Bill was adopted by the Lok Sabha on December 16, by 205 to 41 votes. The new Act provided that the use of English as an associate language in addition to Hindi for official work at the Centre and for communication between the Centre and non-Hindi states would continue as long as the non-Hindi states wanted it. The Act gave them full veto powers on the question. A virtual indefinite policy of bilingualism was adopted. It was also laid down that the public service examinations were to be conducted in Hindi and English and in all the regional languages with the proviso that the candidates should have additional knowledge of Hindi and English by a parliamentary policy resolution. The states were directed to adopt a three-language formula according to which, in the non-Hindi areas, the mother tongue, Hindi and English or some other national language was to be taught in schools while, in the Hindi areas, a non-Hindi language, preferably a southern language, was to be taught as a compulsory subject.

Official Language Amendment Bill

Another major step in this regard was taken by the Government of India in July 1967. On the basis of the Report of the Education Commission in 1966, it was declared that Indian languages would ultimately become the medium of education in all subjects at the university level, though the timeframe for the changeover would be decided by each university to suit its convenience. Since 1967, the problem of language gradually disappeared from the political scene, demonstrating the capacity of the Indian political system to deal with a contentious problem on a democratic basis, and in a manner that promoted national consolidation.

REGIONALISM AND REGIONAL INEQUALITY

Another challenge that the process of nation-building encountered was the problem of regionalism. Though it emerged in the 1950s as a major threat to national unity, regionalism at no stage became a major factor in the politics and administration of India. Gradually it tended to become less and less important though all problems related to regionalism did not get resolved for good.

According to Bipan Chandra, local patriotism and loyalty to a locality or region or state and its language and culture do not constitute regionalism, nor are they disruptive of the nation. Even to cherish pride in one's region or state is not regionalism, which is quite consistent with national patriotism and loyalty. From the very beginning the national movement recognised regional identities and functioned as an all-India movement rather than a federation of regional national movements. The national leadership at no point of time did counterpose the national identity to regional identities.

Bipan Chandra's Views

Defending the federal features of the Indian Constitution also cannot be perceived as regionalism. The demand for a separate state within the Indian Union or for an autonomous region within an existing state, or for devolution of power below the state level, may be objected on several practical grounds, but not for being a regionalist demand, unless it is put forward in a spirit of hostility to the rest of the population of a state. If the socio-economic, political and cultural interests of one region or state are asserted against the entire country or against another region or state in a hostile manner and a conflict is promoted on the basis of such alleged interests, it can be dubbed as regionalism, says Bipan Chandra.

In this sense, there has been very little inter-regional conflict in India since independence. The major exceptions in this regard are the politics of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu in the 1950s and the early 1960s, and, to

some extent, the communal politics in Punjab in the 1980s. Regionalism, says Bipan Chandra, could have flourished in the country if any region or state had felt that it was being culturally dominated or discriminated against. This did not happen in a considerable measure. In fact, the Indian national leadership quite successfully accommodated and even celebrated India's cultural diversities. The different areas of India have had full cultural autonomy and they have been enabled to fully satisfy their legitimate aspirations. The linguistic reorganisation of India and the resolution of the official language controversy (already discussed in this chapter) have played a very crucial role in this respect by eliminating a potent cause of the feeling of cultural loss or cultural domination and therefore of inter-regional conflict.

Though several regional disputes over the issue of sharing of river water, construction of irrigation and power dams and state boundaries still exist (some of them are persisting for a very long period of time), on the whole, they have remained within narrow and acceptable limits. The Union government has often successfully mediated between the aggrieved states to diffuse the crisis and prevent sharper inter-regional tussles.

Economic Inequality—a Colonial Legacy

Economic inequality among different states and regions of India was a legacy of the two hundred years of British rule. Some regions were more backward than others. Only a few enclaves around the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had undergone modern industrial development. For instance, in 1948, Bombay and West Bengal accounted for about 60 per cent of India's total industrial capital and more than 64 per cent of the country's industrial output. Further, agriculture, which was the primary sector of the Indian economy providing more than 70 per cent of the employment of the working population, stagnated under colonialism. Agrarian stagnation was more profound in eastern India in comparison with the northern and southern parts. This also resulted in regional economic disparity. "Regional economic disparity was also reflected in per capita income. In 1949, while West Bengal, Punjab and Bombay had per capita incomes of Rs 353, 331 and 272 respectively, the per capita incomes of Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan were Rs 200, 188 and 173 respectively." (Bipan Chandra, et al, *India After Independence*)

Policy of Balanced and Coordinated Development

The need for tackling the problem of regional disparity and imbalance was recognised by the national government from the beginning. Securing a balanced and coordinated development of the industrial and agricultural economy in each region therefore became a major policy plank of the policy makers at the central level. The Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) of 1956 focussed on this assertion to raise the country's standard of living. Thus recognising the importance of regional balance in economic development as a positive factor in promoting national integration, the National Integration Council of 1961 stated that "a rapid development of the economically backward regions in any state should be given priority in national and state plans, at least to the extent that the minimum level of development is reached for all states within a stated period".

The national government devised several policies and programmes to reduce the economic disparity between the poorer states and regions and their rich counterparts. The Finance Commission was constituted to decide the principles of transfer of financial resources from the Centre to the states. Various finance commissions tried not only to do justice among the states but also to reduce inter-state disparity by giving preferential treatment to the poorer states, by allocating larger grants to them than their population would warrant and by transferring resources from the better-off states to them.

Planning for Regional Development

The national government has also used planning as a powerful instrument to address the problem of regional inequality. The second and third five year plans were devised with a focus on removing regional inequality. The Third Plan explicitly stated that "balanced development of different parts of the country, extension of the benefits of economic progress to the less developed regions and widespread diffusion of industry are among the major aims of planned development".

Keeping this in mind, the Planning Commission allocated greater financial resources to the backward states. The assistance in the form of both grants and loans was given on the basis of a formula which assigns importance to the degree of backwardness of a state. There was a visible bias

in favour of the backward states in the devolution of resources from the Centre to the states (both in the form of financial and Plan transfers) which has increased with time.

Public Investment

The Government of India has used public investment as an instrument of reducing regional inequality in the country. In this effort, the government has considerably relied on public investment in major industries such as steel, fertilisers, oil refining, petrochemicals, machine-making, and in several irrigation, transport and power projects, with consideration towards backward states in this regard. In the planning and location of the public sector undertakings, balanced regional development has been an important consideration despite the fact that such a consideration entailed a certain economic cost to the enterprises concerned. The two backward states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have gained most from such investment. Others like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and the states in the north-east have also benefited from the development of infrastructure, especially roads. The government has also provided incentives like subsidies, tax concessions, concessional banking and institutional loans at subsidised rates to the private sector to invest in backward areas of the country. The government also used the system of licensing of private industrial enterprises, which prevailed from 1956 to 1991, to guide location of industries in backward regions.

Priority to Poorer States

In 1969, fourteen banks in India were nationalised by the government led by Indira Gandhi and the expansion of the network of the branches of these banks was done to favour backward areas. Banks and other public sector financial institutions were directed to promote investment in these areas. Several Central government schemes such as the Food and Work Programme and the Intensive Rural Development Programme were undertaken to eradicate poverty in the country, especially in the backward areas. The poorer states were given a priority to certain extent in various programmes related to education, health, family planning and the public distribution system.

However, one sector where the principle of the reduction of regional disparity has not been kept in view is that of investment in irrigation and subsidies to agricultural development. This has resulted in an increase in agricultural disparity. For instance, in the 1960s, when the Green Revolution began, the investment in rural infrastructure and technological innovation was concentrated in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, the places where irrigation was or could be made available readily. In contrast, investment in and development of rain-fed dry land agriculture was neglected. However, the spread of the Green Revolution technology later—during the 1970s to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Rajasthan, and during the 1980s to the eastern states of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam—has to some extent redressed this regional imbalance.

Inter-state Migration

Another factor which has partially contributed to the lessening of regional inequality is the migration of labour. Economic mobility of population through migration of unskilled labour from the backward areas and of skilled labour to them can contribute to reduction of regional disparity. There has been a substantial labour migration between the states. Some states like Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Kerala have in fact benefited from out-migration just as West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra have benefited from in-migration. States like Punjab and Karnataka have had the benefit of both out-migration and in-migration. Though inter-state mobility of population is guaranteed by the Constitution, efforts have been made by some states to put checks on it.

Low Rate of Economic Growth

At the all-India level, the main reason for continuing regional disparity has been the relatively low rate of economic growth (though in recent years the growth rate has been quite impressive). The rate of growth of the Indian economy was around 3.5 per cent till the end of the 1970s and around 5 per cent in the 1980s. This was not high enough to have a significant impact on regional inequality despite policies consciously designed to favour backward regions. A reduction in economic inequality may come about, provided the right type of regional development policies continue to be followed.

Secondly, the roots of backwardness in some states lie in their socio-economic and political organisation

itself. For instance, the agrarian structure in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh seems to be quite regressive and in many parts of these states land reforms have not been adequately implemented. Similarly, in Orissa like in Bihar, the process of consolidation of land has been tardy and the feudal mentality still prevailing in these states is one of the main impediments of progress. Political and administrative failure also bolsters backwardness. This is especially true in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (which ironically are two of the most politicised states) where high levels of corruption, maladministration and deteriorating law and the order conditions are the order of the day. This is not to say that such problems are absent in other states of the country. In many states including Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the Central assistance is poorly utilised and is often diverted to non-development heads of expenditure. Further, development of infrastructure, including roads and electricity in the backward states, has been neglected and the existing infrastructure is grossly inadequate (and also riddled with inefficiency and corruption) to attract private investment. In contrast, some states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana and Karnataka, have attracted a great deal of private investment of funds and have advanced economically. Hence there is a need for greater administrative efficiency to generate better rates of economic growth in the backward regions. The backward states also have to increase the level of their social expenditure on education, public health and sanitation (which are State subjects) to generate development.

Regressive Socio-economic Order

NEHRU'S FOREIGN POLICY

Nehru is often called the architect of India's foreign policy. He realised the importance of the need to have direct contact with other nations and to cooperate with them in enhancing world peace and freedom; he also understood the importance of India maintaining an identity as a free nation and not becoming a satellite of any other nation, however mighty. In his address to the Constituent Assembly on December 4, 1947, Nehru laid the foundations of India's foreign policy: "....the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But in the ultimate analysis, a government functions for the good of the country it governs, and no government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of the country."

Nehru—Architect of Foreign Policy

The main challenge to Nehru was the need to evolve a policy that could help India compete on the world arena with the modern states, and for that, he realised, a drastic socio-economic and technological transformation of the country was required. His objective was to transform India without becoming dependent on any particular country or group of countries to the extent of losing independence of thought or policy. What India needed was peaceful relations with all nations so that it could concentrate on its developmental efforts, and relations good enough for it to get the necessary help in that direction without compromising its freedom. In the circumstances, non-alignment seemed to be the right policy.

Need for Independent Policy

Non-Alignment

The global environment that India faced after independence was very different from what existed before the Second World War. The major players on the world stage before the War, namely, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan, lay subdued, their vast empires shrunken or shrinking fast. The United States, which had followed an isolationist policy, keeping aloof from active international involvement, became dramatically active. The then Soviet Union (now known as Russian Federation after the disintegration of USSR in 1990) had acquired unprecedented influence in Eastern Europe besides gaining recognition as a powerful state for crushing the German might on the Eastern Front where most of the German military casualties had occurred. The US demonstrated its nuclear weapon capability in 1945; the USSR followed suit with its own nuclear test in 1949. The Cold War that began in the wake of the Second World War had no precedent in history. Almost the entire developed world was divided into two opposing nuclear-armed blocs, with the US and the USSR leading as 'superpowers'. The balance of power diplomacy of the pre-Second World War years thus disappeared from

Evolution of India's Foreign Policy

One of the factors that facilitated India's ready interaction with the world outside, immediately on independence, was the already well-established diplomatic engagement even under colonial rule. At independence, India was a member of 51 international organisations and a signatory to 600 odd treaties. India had signed the Versailles Treaty after the First World War, largely as a result of having contributed more than a million soldiers to that war. In the 1920s, it was a founding member of the League of Nations, the International Labour Organisation, and the International Court of Justice. It participated in the Washington Conference on Naval Armaments in 1921-22. From 1920 there was an Indian high commissioner in London. Even before the First World War, Indian nationals were staffing a few diplomatic posts. It was no accident that Indians formed the largest and most influential non-Western contingent in the United Nations and allied agencies very soon after independence.

The basic framework of India's foreign policy was structured much before 1947.

A significant and inevitable fallout of the Western influence on the nationalist intelligentsia was a growing interest in and contact with the dominant international currents and events. Gradually, the nationalist thinkers came to realise that colonialism and imperialism had an international character and much wider implications. With the development and crystallisation of an anti-imperialist nationalist ideology, there emerged a nationalist foreign policy perspective.

In place of an aggressive imperialism, the nationalists advocated a policy of peace. C. Sankaran Nair, the Congress president in 1897, said, "Our true policy is a peaceful policy." So, the emerging themes during 1880-1914 were—

1. solidarity with other colonies fighting for freedom, such as Russia, Ireland, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia, Sudan, Burma and Afghanistan;
2. pan-Asian feeling that got reflected in—
   - condemnation of annexation of Burma in 1885,
   - inspiration from Japan as an example of industrial development,
   - condemnation of the participation of Japan in the international suppression of the I-Ho-Tuan uprising (1895),
   - condemnation on the imperialist efforts to divide China,
   - defeat of Czarist Russia by Japan which exploded the myth of European superiority, and
   - Congress support for Burma's freedom.

After the conclusion of the First World War, the Congress insisted on being represented at the Peace Conference. In 1920, the Congress urged the people not to join the army to fight in the West. In 1925, the Congress condemned the dispatch of Indian Army to suppress the Chinese nationalist army under Sun-Yat-Sen.

In 1926 and 1927, Nehru was in Europe where he came in contact with the socialists and other leftist leaders. Earlier, Dadabhai Naoroji attended the Hague session of the International Socialist Congress. He was a close friend of H.M. Hyndman, the famous socialist. Lajpat Rai also made contacts with the American socialists during his visit to the USA from 1914 to 1918. Gandhi had close relations with Tolstoy and Rolland Romain. In 1927, Nehru attended the Congress of Oppressed Nationalists at Brussels on behalf of the Indian National Congress. The conference was organised by political exiles and revolutionaries from Asia, Africa and Latin America, suffering from political and economic imperialism. Nehru was one of the honorary presidents along with Einstein, Madam Sun-Yat-Sen, Rolland Romain and George Lansbury. Nehru came to understand the international character of US imperialism during his European experience. Nehru was also nominated to the executive council of the League Against Imperialism. The Congress also decided to open a foreign department to be in touch with the other peoples' movements. In 1927, Nehru also visited the Soviet Union and was very impressed by the achievements of the infant socialist state. He saw Russia as a bulwark against imperialism.

The 1930s saw the rise of Fascism in Europe and the struggle against it. The nationalists saw imperialism and fascism as organs of capitalism. They lent support to the struggle against fascism in other parts of the world in Ethiopia, Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia. In 1939, at the Tripuri session, the Congress dissociated itself from the British policy which supported fascism in Europe.

In 1939, the Japanese attack on China was condemned by the nationalists. The Congress also sent a medical mission under Dr Atal to China to work with the armed forces there.

On the Palestine issue, the Congress lent support to the Palestinians. It expressed sympathy with the Jews, but urged that the Palestinians not be displaced and that the issue be settled by direct dealing between the Jews and the Arabs without Western intervention. It also opposed the partition of Palestine.

the industrialised countries. The Third World became a surrogate field for superpower competition. Meanwhile, decolonisation was proceeding apace, and more and more independent countries were emerging, mostly in Asia and Africa. China was aligned with the Soviet Union till the mid-fifties. India found itself the largest country with the ability to manoeuvre between the two blocs.

Logic of Non-alignment

At this point of time, the erstwhile Soviet Union did not possess the economic or military support to influence the countries emerging from the colonial yoke. It was the West, which tried to incorporate the newly independent countries into its strategic grouping. Alignment with the West was economically attractive, but it would have created a dependent relationship, which was seen by most of the newly independent countries as obstructive to self-reliant development. The idea of aligning with the Communist bloc was not possible for India, in spite of its socialist leanings; it could not visualise a Chinese-type restructuring of the society and economy, as it was basically attuned to a liberal democratic political vision. Political non-alignment was, therefore, prudent as well as pragmatic.

NAM

The principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and maintenance of one's own sovereignty (which are the basic postulates of India's foreign policy) evolved into the crystallisation of the concept of non-alignment. The term 'non-alignment' got currency in the post-Bandung Conference (1955). Non-alignment implies the active refusal of a state to align itself with either party in a dispute between two power blocs. In the conference of non-aligned powers (the first non-aligned movement or NAM summit), held in Belgrade in 1961 and attended by 36 Mediterranean and Afro-Asian powers, Jawaharlal Nehru explained the essence of non-alignment: "We call ourselves the conference of non-aligned countries. Now the word *non-aligned* may be differently interpreted but basically it was used and coined almost with the meaning: non aligned with greater power blocs of the world. Non-aligned has a negative meaning but if you give it a positive connotation it means nations which object to this lining up for war purpose, military blocs, military alliances and the like. Therefore, we keep away from this and we want to throw our weight, such as it is, in favour of peace."

Non-alignment is the characteristic feature of the foreign policy of India. India was one of the founder-members of NAM. In the Cold War era, India refused to favour any superpower and remained non-aligned. Non-alignment, however, is not to be confused with neutrality. A neutral state remains inactive or passive during hostilities between two blocs. Neutrality is maintained basically in times of war, whereas non-alignment has relevance both in times of war and peace. Neutrality is equivalent to passivity: a neutral country has no opinions (positive or negative) on issues at all. However, adherence to non-alignment is to have positive and constructive opinions on international issues. India has firmly and convincingly asserted its 'non-aligned' and not 'neutral' stand on various issues. Non-alignment as one of the principles of India's foreign policy attempts to promote international peace, disarmament and territorial independence. It aims at democratisation of international relations by putting an end to imperialism and hegemony and establishing a just and equal world order.

INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS (1947-64)

Relations with Nepal

When India and Pakistan became independent, the debris of colonialism was still around. The end of the Second World War did not bring to a close the ownership of vast areas of land in Asia and Africa. Britain had the largest area, followed by France and others including Holland, Belgium and Spain. Before 1947, the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal or Nepal *Adhirajya* was the only independent country in name under the benign but iron grip of colonialist British along with a host of other powers who wanted to have a finger in a not-too-large and wholesome pie. From 1846 to 1951, the Rana family, a member of which always held the office of prime minister, ruled the roost, maintaining his grip on the administration by special rules of succession. A change was brought in November 1951, when the last Rana (prime minister) was forced to resign, and the 15 feudal chieftainships were integrated into the kingdom on April 10, 1961.

India is credited with having encouraged the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951 and bringing to power the Nepali Congress party. As regards Goa, Portugal treated Goa as part of its metropolitan territory and was unwilling to cede it until relations between India and the Portuguese deteriorated. Goa was finally liberated from Portuguese control by military intervention (Operation Vijay) in December 1961.

Liberation of Goa

Adjacent to British India and a part of it up to 1935, Burma or present-day Myanmar became an independent country on January 4, 1948. About 80 kilometres east of the southern tip of India, the Indian Ocean island of Ceylon, known in antiquity as Taprobane, Serendip, Lanka, Sinhala Deepa and Seelan, was freed by the British on February 4, 1948 and it came to be known as Sri Lanka in 1972. The land-locked Central Asian country of Afghanistan or Ariana, Bactria and Khorasan of yore was the cockpit of European power rivalry between England and Russia mostly during the 19th and early 20th centuries because it controlled the route to India. Regarded as an outpost of the Mughal Empire, it became a monarchy subsequently. The monarchy was overthrown in 1973 and it became a Marxist 'peoples republic' after Noor Taraki's coup of 1978.

Other Neighbours

Relations with Pakistan

The Muslim state of Pakistan was formed on August 14, 1947 by partitioning British India. It consisted of an eastern wing including mainly the eastern half of Bengal province and parts of Assam and the western wing comprising parts of Punjab, the Afghan border states, Sind, Baluchistan and portions of Kashmir which the tribals overran with active help from the newly-formed Pakistan army. Pakistan continued as a dominion for nine years, and then proclaimed itself as an Islamic republic on March 23, 1956. A federal parliamentary system was in operation till such time when Field Marshal Ayub Khan usurped power in a military coup in October 1958. Indo-Pakistan relations were far from being cordial both owing to the probelm of Kashmir and the allotment of assets at the time of Partition. The short war of April 1948 was complicated further when India denied water to Pakistani canals, an issue that together with Kashmir issue and the that of refugee property was to dominate the tenor of Indo-Pakistan relations. While the property problem was resolved by the 1950s, water remained a critical issue, heightened by the Indian intention to absorb the Sutlej outlet for its own development. In 1960, an agreement between India and Pakistan transformed the criss-cross pattern of undivided Punjab. India was to have the outfall of the three eastern rivers, the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi, while Pakistan had that of the three western ones, the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. To supplement the waters of the Jhelum and Chenab, a series of cross canals was constructed with the help of the World Bank. This settlement owed a lot to Nehru and it proved to be lasting. But Kashmir continued to be the running sore of India and Pakistan. Controversy centred around the terms of the plebiscite to which Nehru had originally agreed. Successive UN efforts to secure an agreement failed; eventually Kashmir was to draw up its own constitution and vote for union with India. At the time of the first conflict, says Percival Spear in *The Oxford History of India*, Patel would have ceded Kashmir on the principle that fewer the Muslims in India the better. For Nehru, nationalism was more important; a Kashmir willingly united with India would be living proof of its viability in Indian conditions.

Indo-Pak Relations

Kashmir Issue

Relations with China

China was one of the first countries with which independent India established diplomatic relations. When China's nationalist government under Chiang Kai Shek was overthrown by the communists in 1949, India recognised the new government led by Mao Tse Tung. India constantly supported the Chinese bid to get the membership of the United Nations. India sought to pursue a policy of friendship with China since independence, but the results were frustrating.

To understand the genesis of strains in Sino-Indian relations, acquaintance with the developments in Tibet is necessary. In 1950, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Tibet and brought it under occupation. This shocked India, as it shared about 2,000 miles of frontier in the Tibet region and had inherited certain rights and obligations over Tibet from the British rule. However, instead of confronting China on that issue, India concluded an agreement in 1954—known as Panchsheel—with China. The agreement formalised the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The

Panchsheel—containing five principles—was to be the guiding principles in Indo-Chinese relations. The five principles were: (i) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (ii) mutual non-aggression; (iii) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (iv) equality and mutual benefit; and (v) peaceful co-existence. The 1954 treaty also recognised the right of China to set up its commercial agencies in New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong. India, in return, was allowed to establish its own trade centre in Tibet.

Panchsheel

Through the 1954 treaty, China gained from India the latter's acquiescence to the conversion of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet into sovereignty. But the treaty failed to provide an agreed definition of the Indo-Tibetan (or Indo-China) boundary.

India realised the danger of an undemarcated and undefended border, but it made no effort either to demarcate it or defend it. The McMahon Line delineating the border of the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) had been a British response to the attempt by China under the Manchus to assert control in Tibet during 1906-1911. It was formed in 1914 by an agreement between Henry McMahon, the British foreign secretary in India, and Tibetan officials. The Chinese had not agreed to it. In Aksai Chin, there had been no agreement either with Tibet or with China. The Aksai Chin was claimed by India as part of Jammu and Kashmir, but the region was never properly surveyed. India was politically heedless in relying excessively on a colonial agreement in the NEFA; it was strategically mistaken in not recognising the importance of Aksai Chin for a resurgent China seeking to spread its control over Xinjiang and Tibet. Analysts have pointed out that conceding Aksai Chin to China during 1959-1960 could have, perhaps, got the Chinese recognition of the McMahon Line. However, weak strategic thinking prevented that option from being developed and unncecessary passions prevented it from being made politically acceptable.

McMahon Line

Aksai Chin

In 1959, a popular uprising took place in Tibet which was promptly suppressed by China. Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled from Tibet and was given political asylum in India much to the dislike of China. In the same year, China occupied Longju and 12,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh. China made open accusations that India was the command centre of the Tibet rebellion, even though the Indian government did not recognise any Tibetan government in exile on Indian soil. Around the same time, India discovered in Aksai Chin a road built by the Chinese to connect its Sinkiang province to Tibet. Tension began to build up between the two countries. This marked the beginning of the end of the Indo-Chinese friendship treaty of 1954.

Tibetan Uprising

The developments with respect to Tibet prompted China to indulge in border violations on the Indian frontiers. China steadily encroached into Indian territories from 1959 to 1962. In October 1962, China launched a massive attack all along the border from NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency now Arunachal Pradesh) to Ladakh. Thus started the Indo-China War, which ended in a military debacle for India. The Indian forces, unprepared and ill-equipped, were overwhelmed. China made a unilateral declaration of its withdrawal in November 1962. But it continued its occupation of a large chunk of Ladakh territory which provided it the strategic link between Sinkiang and southern China.

Indo-China War

The six Afro-Asian countries—Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma, Ghana, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the United Arab Republic (UAR)—met in Colombo in 1962 to find a peaceful solution to the Sino-Indian border dispute. The meeting came out with three proposals—better known as Colombo Proposals—which were as follows:

Colombo Proposals

(i) China would withdraw 20 km behind the traditional line with no corresponding withdrawal by India, and the demilitarised zone would be manned by civilian posts of both sides.
(ii) In the eastern sector, the line of actual control would be recognised by both countries as the ceasefire line.
(iii) In the middle sector, the *status quo* would be maintained.

The Colombo Proposals, however, failed to get a favourable response from China due to which Indo-China relationship remained tense for many years.

IMPACT OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT ON THE WORLD

The national movement for liberation in India, and India's subsequent independence on August 15, 1947, inspired nationalist movements in other colonial countries of the world and acted as a role model for decolonisation. India was one of the first countries to gain independence after the Second World War. Though the British rule had divided the country, India's independence was of historic importance. Even before independence, mass demonstrations were held in 1946 in support of the independence of Indonesia and Indo-China (present-day Vietnam), and against the use of Indian soldiers by the British colonial rulers of India to restore the Dutch and the French rule in Indonesia and Indo-China, respectively.

Jawaharlal Nehru, soon after assuming office as the Prime Minister in the Interim Government of India, declared at a press conference on September 27, 1946: "The kernel of our policy is the ending of colonialism all over Asia, or for that matter, in Africa and elsewhere and racial equality... and the end of domination or exploitation of one nation by another. This is the only way to bring about world peace and progress." Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism were among the most significant objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) founded by Nehru with the help of other leaders of the World in 1961. The NAM pursued these objectives by extending support to the movements of national independence in the colonies. The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) which led Namibia's struggle for independence was a member of the Non-Aligned Movement since long before Namibia became independent in 1990. Apart from this, the forums of the Commonwealth and, much more importantly, of the United Nations, were used by India to support the cause of the countries still under foreign rule.

The Indian national movement, under the leadership of Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, developed a strong international outlook, with the elimination of colonialism and racism all over the world as the foremost priority and, for this, established contacts with freedom movements in other countries. Africa had a special place, partly because of Gandhi.

India's Role in Freedom Movement in Africa

Nehru in his address to the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi on March 23, 1947 said: "We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to their rightful place in the human family." One of the first acts of Nehru, after becoming Prime Minister in the Interim Government, was to send instructions to Indian envoys in Africa that India did not want Indians to have any special privileges at the cost of Africans anywhere. Thus he called upon the Indians to cooperate with Africans in order to help Africans win independence.

The Indian nationalist movement and the South African nationalist movement, although they started in different times, developed on parallel lines–in organisation, forms of resistance and ideology. India had, therefore, a special appreciation of the concerns and aspirations of Africa. During the Second World War, the bond between the national movements of these two countries became even stronger. During the war, Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain, made it clear that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India, while General Smuts, the South African prime minister, acclaimed in the West as a liberal, was equally vocal that equality was not for the blacks. Thus, in 1942, in India, the 'Quit India' movement under the slogan 'do or die' was launched as the final assault against colonial rule. In South Africa, young militants calling for 'positive action', founded the African Youth League. Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu were its founders.

The Indians living in South Africa were no longer considered recent immigrants; they were born there and had developed deep roots in that country. Taking inspiration from the Indian national movement, they recognised that their destiny was linked to that of the African majority and increasingly participated in joint struggles against racist measures. The militant group under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. Monty Naicker, took over leadership of the community by the end of the Second World War, from the so-called 'moderates' who were compromising with

the racist regime, and entered into an agreement with the African National Congress (ANC) in 1947.

India's Initiative against Apartheid

In 1952, India together with 12 other Asian and Arab States, called on the General Assembly to consider the wider issue under the title "question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa". To emphasise the importance attached to this issue, leaders of the Indian delegation personally led the annual debates until 1957 after which, with the independence of Ghana, India requested Ghana to take the lead. In April 1958, Nehru said in the Lok Sabha: "In South Africa, it is the deliberate, acknowledged and loudly proclaimed policy of the Government itself to maintain this segregation and racial discrimination. This makes the South African case unique in the world. It is a policy with which obviously no person and no country which believes in the United Nations Charter can ever compromise, because it uproots almost everything the modern world stands for and considers worthwhile, whether it is the United Nations Charter or whether it is our ideas of democracy or of human dignity."

In 1960, India joined the African States in calling for a Security Council discussion on apartheid after the gory Sharpeville massacre which took place on March 21, 1960.

At Sharpeville, 50 km south of Johannesburg, a group of 20,000 blacks gathered near a police station. The Pan Africanist Congress (AAC), a splinter group of the ANC, had organised a nationwide demonstration for the abolition of South Africa's pass laws. Demonstrators were instructed by their leaders to surrender their passes in protest against authority and invite arrest. After some demonstrators became violent, as reported by police, the police officers opened fire with submachine guns killing 69 demonstrators and injuring more than 180 people including women and children. An emergency was declared and more than 11,000 people were arrested, and the PAC and ANC were declared illegal. The Sharpeville massacre attracted global attention to the apartheid policy of South Africa. India co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution of 1962 urging all countries of the world to impose sanctions against South Africa and form a special committee against apartheid.

Views

- "The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again—and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard everyday of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it."

  —Jawaharlal Nehru

- "Congress as well as the Muslim League had accepted partition… The real position was, however, completely different… The acceptance was only in a resolution of the AICC of the Congress and on the register of the Muslim League. The people of India had not accepted partition with free and open minds. Some had accepted it out of sheer anger and resentment and others out of a sense of despair."

  —Maulana Azad

- "I felt that if we did not accept partition. India would be split into many bits and would be completely ruined. My experience of office for one year convinced me that the way we have been proceeding would lead us to disaster. We would not have had one Pakistan but several. We would have had Pakistan cells in every office."

  —Sardar Patel

- "The process of nation-building was initiated and illuminated after independence by a highly imaginative and dedicated team of political leaders who had been earlier active in the national liberation struggle. Every one of the leaders had a contribution to make. For example, Sardar Patel's role in integrating hundreds of the princely states with the Indian Union and in facing up administratively to the trauma of the Partition and the Partition riots was outstanding. It was, however, Jawaharlal Nehru's fate to become the guiding star of India's nation-building after 1947 and to define and lay down its basic contours, for he was fully conscious that independence

had to be taken beyond mere political independence, the process of the making of Indian nation had to be pushed forward, and the foundations of a democratic equitable and socialist India had to be firmly laid."

—**Bipan Chandra**

- "The Constitution of a country is always the meeting point of the inheritance of its past and the vision of its future. It is the inheritance of the past and the vision of the future that have contributed to making the Indian constitution a durable cluster of institutions, a magnificent monument of India's freedom struggle, a vehicle of its aspirations and a mirror of India's sense of itself, past, present and future."

—**L.M. Singhvi**

- "Nehru's prescription against poverty was industrialisation which would create more jobs in the construction and provide more goods in its production. This in turn required state regulation along socialist lines. For ignorance he turned to education with an emphasis on its higher levels and on technical skills. To deal with Brahmanism there must be social reforms, a raising of the 'scheduled castes' and a reform of the Hindu social code."

—**Percival Spear**

- "The Constitution could be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances."

—**B.R. Ambedkar**

- "Inspite of the leadership's earlier reservations and ominous forebodings by sympathetic observers, the (linguistic) reorganisation resulted in rationalising the political map of India without seriously weakening its unity. If anything its result has been functional, in as much as it removed what had been a major source of discord, and created homogenous political units which could be administered through a medium that the vast majority of the population understood. Indeed it can be said with the benefit of hindsight that language, rather than being a force for division, has proved a cementing and integrating influence."

—**Rajni Kothari**

- "Our great provincial languages… are ancient languages with a rich inheritance, each spoken by many millions of persons, each tied up inextricably with the life and culture and ideas of the masses as well as of the upper classes. It is axiomatic that the masses can only grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own language. Therefore, it is inevitable that we lay stress on the provincial languages and carry on most of our work through them… Our system of education and public work must therefore be based on the provincial languages."

—**Jawaharlal Nehru in 1937**

- "So far as all these evil forces of fascism, colonialism and racialism or the nuclear bomb and aggression and suppression are concerned, we stand most emphatically and unequivocally committed against them… We are unaligned only in relation to the Cold War with its military pacts. We object to all this business of forcing the new nations of Asia and Africa into their (US and Russia's) Cold War machine. Otherwise, we are free to condemn any development which we consider wrong or harmful to the world or ourselves and we use that freedom every time the occasion arises."

—**Jawaharlal Nehru** on Non-alignment

- "Nehru's foreign policy was a many splendoured phenomenon. Nehru used foreign policy as an instrument to defend and strengthen India's newly won independence and to safeguard India's national interests and to develop the self-reliance, self-confidence and the pride of the Indian people, even while serving the cause of world peace and anti-colonialism. It is significant that successive prime ministers after Nehru, till today, have continued to follow the broad framework of his foreign policy."

—**Bipan Chandra**

- "The Drafting Committee wanted to make it clear that though India was to be a federation, the federation was not the result of an agreement by the states to join in a federation and that the federation not being the result of an agreement, no state has the right to secede from it. The federation is a Union because it is indestructible. Though the country and the people may be divided into different states for convenience of administration, the country is one integral whole, its people a single people living under a single imperium derived from a single source."

—**B.R. Ambedkar**

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - Preservation of India's sovereignty and unity emerged as the main challenge before the national leadership after 1947.
  - Given the immense diversity of India, the leadership chose democracy as the most suitable form of national organisation and evolved a political institutional structure conducive to national consolidation.
  - The broad strategy of national consolidation after 1947 involved territorial integration, mobilisation of political and institutional resources, economic development, adoption of policies for promotion of socio-economic justice and removal of glaring inequalities.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru's Ideas and their Influence on National Developments**
  - Jawaharlal Nehru is considered to be the "architect of resurgence of modern India".
  - Nehru's ideas on humanism, religion, truth, ethics, non-violence, culture, science, democracy, socialism, communalism, nationalism, internationalism, UNO and non-alignment. Considerably influenced the path of development India took after independence.
- **Integration of Princely States**
  - The years 1946 and 1947 witnessed a new upsurge of State People's Movement demanding political rights and elective representation in the Constituent Assembly. The incorporation of princely states in India occurred in two phases, with a skillful combination of baits and threats of mass pressure in both, under the astute leadership of Sardar Patel. States like Kashmir, Junagadh and Hyderabad posed some problems but were finally integrated.
- **Framing of a Democratic Constitution**
  - The democratic movement in India emerged without any break with pre-capitalist ideologies. The introduction of modern Western education was the most significant development in the growth of democratic ideas and institutions in India.
  - The struggle for democratic government and independence culminated with the formation of the Constituent Assembly in 1946. This Constituent Assembly directed the establishment of democratic institutions in India and functioned both as the Parliament and the Constitution-making body until January 1950.
  - A parliamentary system of government patterned on the Westminster model was adopted by the Constituent Assembly.
  - The major features of the Constitution were: a parliamentary form of government, collective responsibility of the executive to the legislature, principle of majority, universal adult franchise, elections, principles of federalism and decentralisation, centralised political structure, fundamental rights and directive principles, etc.
- **Linguistic Organisation of States**
  - The case for linguistic states as administrative units was very strong as language was closely related to culture and customs of people.
  - In 1948, both the Linguistic Provinces Commission headed by Justice S.K. Dar and the JVP Committee advised against the creation of linguistic states on grounds of threat to national unity at the initial stage, but popular movements for it continued till 1960.
  - Formation of Andhra Pradesh from the erstwhile Madras State in 1953 raised similar demands and the States Reorganisation Commission examined the issue objectively and dispassionately.
  - In November 1956, the States Reorganisation Act provided for 14 states and six Centrally-administered territories. Linguistic reorganisation of states has not adversely affected the federal structure of the Indian Union.

Summary

- **The Question of National Language**
  - A major language controversy arose in the 1950s and the 1960s in a form of conflict between the Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi speaking zones of the country.
  - The status of Hindi as the official language of India was mainly based on the fact that it was the language of the largest number and the Constitution-makers made Hindi in Devnagari script with international numerals as official language.
  - Finally the issue was resolved with the amending of the 1963 Official Language Act. The Act provided the use of English as an associate language in addition to Hindi for official work at the Centre and for communication between the Centre and non-Hindi states. An indefinite policy of bilingualism was adopted.
- **Regionalism and Regional Inequality**
  - There has been relatively less inter-regional conflict in India except for the movement of the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the communal politics of 1980s in Punjab.
  - Regional inequality persists in India though several policies and programmes have been directed towards lessening regional economic disparity and imbalance.
  - The major reasons for persistence of regional inequality were a long spell of low rate of economic growth, regressive socio-economic and political organisation in some states, lack of proper utilisation of Central assistance and failure of administration and governance in many of the states.
- **Foreign Policy of Non-alignment**
  - As the architect of India's policy, Jawaharlal Nehru pursued a deliberate policy of non-alignment in order to preserve India's newly acquired sovereignty and in order that India did not get entangled in the power-games of the two power-blocs. Through non-alignment India attempted to promote international peace, disarmament and territorial independence. Non-alignment did not mean 'neutrality' or 'passivity' but meant voicing positive and constructive opinions on international issues and promoting democratisation of international relations by putting an end to imperialism and hegemony, thereby establishing a just and egalitarian world order.
- **Relations with Neighbours**
  - Though India, by and large, maintained friendly relations with her neighbouring countries, there were serious problems with Pakistan, and with China after the 1950s. The Kashmir issue still remains the central bone of contention between India and Pakistan whereas the Chinese aggression of 1962 embittered Sino-Indian relationship for many years.

CHAPTER 16

Caste and Ethnicity After 1947

INTRODUCTION

We have already discussed in some earlier chapters how during the 19th and 20th centuries efforts were made by social reformers and the national leadership to end caste rigidities and other forms of oppression in the Indian society. The caste system, sometimes called as the 'steel frame of Hinduism', came under serious criticism as it perpetuated inequality and oppression of lower castes and the untouchables. In this regard the efforts made by Jyotiba Phule in Maharashtra and Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala through their organisations (Satya Shodhak Samaj and Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam respectively) were significant. From 1920 onwards, Gandhi integrated the issue of abolition of untouchability into the national movement and major campaigns and struggles, such as the Vaikom (1924-25) and Guruvayur Satyagrahas (1931-32) were organised. Other leaders like B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswami Naicker took up the issues of the lower castes and untouchables and fought for their socio-economic and political emancipation.

Post-1947 Initiatives

With independence, major initiatives in the area of removing caste injustice and inequality were attempted. The Constitution extended political rights to all citizen and irrespective of caste, religion, language, sex and race. It specifically declared in Article 17 that "untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable with law." In 1955, the Parliament passed the Untouchability (Offences) Act which further specified that any offences were punishable with a fine, and cancellation of licences and public grants. In 1976, the protection of Civil Rights (Amendment) Act was passed which provided for enhanced and stringent punishment, appointment of officers and special courts to deal with offenders, legal aid for victims, etc. The Constitution also made provisions for reservation of seats in legislatures and educational institutions and government jobs for Scheduled Castes. Thus, in modern times, the long-drawn struggle against the caste system during the freedom struggle and after 1947 has considerably reduced caste discrimination, especially in the urban areas. However, what is worth noting is that caste may have declined in importance as a social factor but is increasing in importance as a political factor.

Rise of Caste-Identity

In the post-1947 period, the caste system's imbrications with politics have not only made it possible for hitherto oppressed caste-groups to be accorded political freedom and recognition but also raised consciousness about its potential as a formidable political capital. In fact, sociologist Dipankar Gupta has poignantly exposed this contradiction when he elaborates the differences between Ambedkar and the Mandal Commission's view of caste. While the former designed the policy of reservations or protective discrimination to eradicate untouchability as an institution from Indian socio-political order, the latter considered caste as an important political resource. The Mandal Commission can be considered the intellectual inspiration behind the transforming of caste-based identity to an asset that may be used as a basis for securing political and economic gains. The upper castes, by virtue of their predominant position, were already occupying positions of strength in the political and economic system, and when the Mandal Commission heightened the consciousness

of the 'Dalits' by recognising their disadvantage in terms of caste-identity as an advantage, the confrontation ensued.

The caste system, which is based on the notions of purity and pollution, hierarchy and difference, has despite a possessing a certain social mobility, been oppressive towards the Shudras and the outcastes who suffered the stigma of ritual impurity and lived in abject poverty, illiteracy and denial of political power. The origin of confrontational identity politics based on caste may be said to have its origin on the issue of providing the oppressed caste groups with state support in the form of protective discrimination. This caste-based group-identity, reinforced by the emergence of political consciousness around caste identities, is institutionalised by the caste-based political parties that profess to uphold and protect the interests of specific identities, including those of the castes. Consequently, we have the upper caste dominated Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the lower caste dominated Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) or the Samajwadi Party (SP). The fact is that the Left parties too have tacitly followed the caste pattern to extract mileage in electoral politics (for example, use of caste idioms by them for mobilising agricultural labours in Andhra Pradesh in the 1950 elections). The cumulative result of the politicisation can be summarised by arguing that caste-based identity politics has had a dual role in the Indian socio-political order. It has relatively democratised the caste-based Indian society but simultaneously undermined the evolution of class-based organisations.

Politicisation of Caste

In short, caste has become an important determinant in Indian society and politics. The new lesson of organised politics and consciousness of caste affiliations learnt by the hitherto despised caste groups has transformed the contours of Indian politics where shifting caste-class alliances are being encountered. The net effect of these mobilisations along caste-identities has resulted not only in the empowerment of newly emerging groups but also an increase in the intensity of confrontational politics.

In this context, we shall discuss the emergence of the backward class and Dalit movements in India and their role in electoral politics later in this chapter. Closely related to the issue of caste identity is the issue of formation of identity based on ethnicity.

Let us discuss the issue of ethnicity in India and its various dimensions with special reference to the tribals in the country.

Defining Ethnicity

The word 'ethnicity' is derived from 'ethnos' which literally means nation. However, ethnicity is not defined as nationhood. Ethnicity may be defined as a collectivity of people of a distinct nation in terms of race, descent and culture. Thus, an ethnic group is a social collectivity having certain shared historicity and certain common attributes, such as race, tribe, language, religion, dress and diet. A combination of them in a group makes it an ethnic group, which is perceived as such by its members and by members of other groups. This self-perception may be termed as ethnic consciousness for status and for recognition as a distinct social category.

Ethnicity is not a pre-ordained or static category; it is a manifestation of the common economic, political, social and cultural interests and their protection by certain members in a pluralistic society, say like India. Thus, ethnicity very often is used as an instrument of mobilisation for realising social, economic and political objectives of an ethnic group. The number of attributes or markers which form the basis of an ethnic group depends on the choice of these factors (culture, race, language, religion, customs, history, economic experiences) by the ethnic group or its leadership. But there are differences among the scholars regarding the number of attributes which constitute an ethnic group. Scholars in India generally consider that mobilisation as ethnic which is based on multiple attributes—language, religion, culture, history, economy, etc. For instance, the language-based mobilisation is viewed as linguistic mobilisation and the group as such is considered as a linguistic group. Similarly, caste-based mobilisation is considered as dalit, backward or any other caste mobilisation. The religion-based mobilisation is called communal mobilisation in India. But the scholars who follow American and

Meaning of Ethnicity

European traditions categorise even the mobilisation based on a single attribute such as language, religion and caste as ethnic mobilisation. They do not distinguish between communal and ethnic mobilisation. For instance, Paul R. Brass uses ethnic and communal mobilisation interchangeably. On the other hand, sociologist Dipankar Gupta in his book *The Context of Ethnicity: The Sikh Identity in a Comparative Perspective* differentiates between communalism and ethnicity. He argues that the ethnic mobilisation is related to the nation-state—the territory and sovereignty, whereas communal mobilisation does not involve the nation-state. Communal mobilisation is confined to the government and two or more communities in the conflict, one of which alleges that the government discriminates against it in preference to the other. The point in dispute could be job, specific rights of the communities, etc. Gupta says that in ethnic mobilisation the loyalty of one ethnic group to the referrent of nation-state is questioned. It is not so in the case of communal mobilisation. Also, group identities are not permanent. In the changing context of time and space, an ethnic identity can become communal and vice versa. However, the general tendency among scholars is to consider the multi-attributes involved in mobilisation of the communities as ethnic.

Different Views

ETHNIC MOVEMENTS AFTER 1947

General Ethnic Movements

Ethnic movements were witnessed in almost all major regions of India, both before and after the country's independence. They manifested in the form of movements for regional autonomy, movements for creation of separate states, and the demand for secession or insurgency. These ethnic movements were also termed as self-determination movements, which in several cases gave rise to conflicts or riots on the lines of ethnic divide based on all or some of the attributes or markers—tribe, caste, language, religion, etc. These self-determination movements challenged the nation-state building model that was introduced by Nehru during his tenure as prime minister. This Nehruvian (or Mahalanobis model as it was also called) model was based on the premise that in the course of development or modernisation, the identities formed on the basis of ascriptive factors: language, caste, religion, tribe will disappear and development would take place on the secular lines. But much before the impact of this model could be felt, it was questioned on all the major considerations of language, region and nationality. Although the movements began with the demand based on a single attribute like language or culture, they enlisted the support of people who shared more than one attribute in the particular region. Starting with the rejection of the Indian Constitution by the Nagas in the North-east, it spread in the form of the Dravidian ethnic movement and the demand for the formation of linguistic states with classic example being the movement for creation of a separate state of Andhra Pradesh in south India, movements in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and Shiv Sena's campaign against the South Indians (especially the Tamils) in Mumbai.

Self-determination Movements

Tamil Nadu

Following the legacy of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (popularly known as Periyar) three issues—language, the Dravidian culture, and religion—formed the basis of the ethnic movement in Tamil Nadu (the then Madras State) in the 1950s and 1960s. The leadership of the movement argued that imposition of the North Indian Hindi language, Aryan culture and Brahmanical Hindu religion on the Dravidians was detrimental to the development of the Dravidian identity. Therefore, the Tamil ethnic movement had demanded stopping of the imposition of Hindi language and even secession from India. (It has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.) However, towards the end of the 1960s, the demand for secession was given up by the Tamil nationality or ethnic group which shifted its demand to autonomy for states. Though the Dravidian assertion in India became milder after the late 1960s, sentiments against the imposition of Hindi language still are an important factor of mobilisation there.

Case as Tamil Nadu

Though the Government of India initially did not favour the demand for the linguistic reorganisation of the states, it had to reconsider the demand following the death of a Gandhian, Patti Sriramalu, who died after a 58-day-long hunger strike on

October 19, 1952 while demanding a linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh. Government's acceptance of the demand to create Andhra Pradesh led to the reorganisation of the states on linguistic basis in 1953. But reorganisation of the states did not end the demand for separate states.

Punjab

The ethnic movement in Punjab was based on three types of issues—regional, religious and economic. The leadership in Punjab led by the Akali Dal argued that since Sikhs follow a separate religion and speak a different language, they should be given a separate state. The demand on some occasions got reflected in the communal divide between the Hindus and Sikhs in the then Punjab, resulting in ethnic conflict. The Sikhs launched a Punjabi Suba movement during the 1950s and 1960s demanding a separate state of Punjab for them. Akali Dal's strategy during the Punjabi Suba movement included constitutional means like memoranda, rallies and marches; penetration into the Congress organisation in order to influence the party in favour of a separate state; and agitational means which included marches to shrines, intimidation and force. This resulted in creation of a separate state of Punjab on November 1, 1966.

The Case of Punjab

In Paul R. Brass's opinion, the attitude of the Central government towards ethnic conflicts or mobilisation in the 1950s and 1960s was worked by an unwritten code—aversion to the demand for creation of states on religious grounds; no concession to the demands of the linguistic, regional or other culturally defined groups; no concession to groups involved in ethnic dispute unless there was support to the demand from both groups involved in the conflict. Brass says that demand for creation of a separate the state of Punjab was accepted only when there was also a demand for creation of the separate state of Haryana for Hindi-speaking population of the same state.

Views of Paul Brass

In the 1980s, the ethnic movement of Punjab re-emerged which challenged the sovereignty of the Indian state. The movement demanded a separate Sikh state of Khalistan based on the tenets of Sikhism. The Khalistan movement and the issues related to it were generally referred to as 'Punjab Crisis' which became a violent movement and came to be identified with terrorism in the popular, academic and political discourse. The advocates of a Khalistan state argued that Sikhs as followers of a minority religion have been discriminated in India despite their contribution to Indian economy and the army. The rise of the Khalistan movement and the terrorism associated with it in the 1980s was in sequence to the political developments in the country preceding it. The 1970s were marked by the challenge of the Akali Dal to the dominance of Congress in the Punjab. The Congress in order to meet the Akali challenge took the help of Sikh religious leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale in the 1980 Legislative Assembly elections in Punjab. The use of the services of Bhinderanwale had its cultural and political implications for the country and the state. It encouraged Bhinderanwale to assert his authority independently and assume the leadership of the Khalistan movement. Not only were a large number of Sikh youths attracted to the movement, but the movement also received tacit support of some foreign forces. When the movement turned violent with the militants taking recourse to terrorist methods, the government led by Indira Gandhi responded with the 'Operation Blue Star', sending armed forces to nab terrorists who were hiding in the Golden Temple premises at Amritsar who included their leader Sant Bhinderanwale. This of course backfired and led to the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984. The Khalistan movement no doubt resulted in the ethnic divide between the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab.

Punjab Crisis

Some scholars have explained the ethnic movement in Punjab of the 1970s and 1980s in terms of socio-economic and political factors. Those who explain it in terms of the socio-economic factors argue following the Marxian perspective that the 'Punjab crisis' occurred in the wake of green revolution. They say inability of the Sikh farmers to meet the rising cost of investment in agriculture, rising unemployment among the youth and growth of the consumerist culture which gave rise to the feeling of losing Sikh identity, etc., contributed to the rise of militancy in Punjab. The scholars who give the political explanation find the socio-economic explanation inadequate and argue that the Punjab

crisis was the result of a manipulation of the religion and problems of the people by the politicians.

Jammu and Kashmir

The ethnic movement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was based on language, religion and geopolitical factors. A section of Kashmiris have argued that since the ethnic composition of the state in terms of language, religion and geography is different from that of the dominant ethnic groups in the country, the Kashmir region should be treated differently. Some of them, considering themselves not as members of the Union of India, have demanded secession from India. Some others have advocated the state's merger with Pakistan. Certain sections have demanded a separate state for the region and still some others have advocated merger of the two Kashmirs—one occupied by Pakistan and the other that is in India—to form a single state. Supporters and proponents of this line of thought have launched insurgency involving violence which has resulted in tremendous loss of human and material resources in the last six decades. They have been supported by foreign forces, especially Pakistan. The popular leadership in the state also has been divided on the issue of the relationship of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian nation-state. In the late 1940s, Hari Singh, the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, initially opposed the accession of the state into the Union of India. But he had to agree to it in the face of attack by Pakistani forces. Another popular leader Sheikh Abdullah had supported the state's merger with the Indian Union, but later on wavered on the issue. Abdullah formed the Plebiscite Front, which led to his imprisonment by the Central government from 1953 till 1964.

Jammu and Kashmir

The factors responsible for the growth of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, according to Balraj Puri, are attitude of the Central government, the lack of opposition in the state, derailment of democracy by the Central and state leadership, rising unemployment and other problems of the people, Cold War and Pakistan. Even within Jammu and Kashmir, there are ethnic movements by the smaller groups in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir demanding autonomy within the state. These regions allege that they are discriminated against by the dominant religious community—the Muslims of Kashmir and the prosperous areas.

TRIBES IN POST-COLONIAL POLITICS

The tribals provide the most appropriate examples of the ethnic movements in the country. In their case, almost all factors, both real and imagined, which the tribal communities share among themselves—culture, customs, language, race, religion (indigenous or otherwise), economic problems—contribute to their mobilisation. Even if their mobilisation starts with a single attribute or marker, it is the multiple markers which in due course operate. Tribal ethnic movements in India have expressed themselves in several forms—insurgency, movements for protection of the culture and economy of the 'sons of the soil' from the outside exploiters, secession from the Indian Union, movements for autonomy or demand for separate state, and ethnic conflicts and riots.

Nature of Tribal Movement

Scholars differ on the criteria of identification of the tribals or the Scheduled Tribes (STs). But certain characteristics are common to all tribals. They are: (i) their close association with nature, mainly the forests; (ii) relatively traditional means of cultivation and less developed market in tribal areas; (iii) near absence of the rigid division within the community and discrimination on the basis of birth, unlike the caste division among the Hindus; (iv) presence of the traditional chiefs or headmen and better position of women among tribals as compared to the non-tribals; and (v) attachment/reverence to traditional customs and culture. According to the Constitution of India's, "isolation, backwardness and cultural distinctiveness" are the characteristics of the Scheduled Tribes (Article 342). These characteristics, however, have undergone change as a result of modernisation—education, impact of Christianity on many tribes, changing cropping pattern or penetration of market, economic differentiation and emergence of middle classes and, in some cases, decline in the authority of the traditional chiefs. These changes have given rise to the ethnicisation of tribes reflected in their ethnic movements. Article 342 mentions 212 Scheduled Tribes in the country.

Characteristics of Tribals

The tribes are found in all parts of the country—all states of north-east India, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep Islands. The tribals of north-east are called frontier tribes and those of other parts of the country are called non-frontier tribes. Of the entire tribal population, 11 per cent are found in north-east India and 89 per cent are found in other regions. Tribals have been involved in collective action for fulfilment of one or the other goals.

Two Types

Frontier Tribes

Though a large body of literature explaining the ethnic problems of the North-East region of India exist, there are wide differences in the discourse explaining them. The problems in the form of insurgency, autonomy movements, ethnic conflicts and riots have been analysed broadly by a two-fold perspective: (a) the 'nation-building perspective' and; (b) the 'federation-building perspective'. The advocates of the nation-building perspective (like S.K. Chaube, B.P. Singh, B.G. Verghese and Myron Wienor) argue that the problems of the North-East are related to the issues of nation-state building; conflict between the new middle classes, especially among the tribals of the region, which have emerged as a result of modernisation and the traditional leadership; inability of the system to meet the rising aspiration of this group. The proponents of the federation-building perspective make a critique of the first view. Scholars like Sanjib Baruah, Udyan Sharma, Sanjay Hazarika, Sajal Nag and M.P. Bezbaruah argue that the problems of the North-East region arose because the national leadership overlooked the perspective of the people of the region in their quest for 'nation-building'. In the process of building the nation-state the Central government adopted a step-motherly treatment towards the North-East. The leadership also ignored the 'periphery' and the smaller nationalities, showing an arrogant attitude towards them and being indifferent to the human rights violation in the region. These scholars have argued in favour of a 'federation-building' perspective (in place of 'nation-building' perspective) to address the issues of the region. However, it must be understood that the task of integrating the tribal people into the mainstream of the Indian society has been extremely complex, given the varied conditions under which they live in different parts of the country and their different languages and distinct cultures.

Two-fold Perspective

The Problem of the Nagas

The Nagas are the inhabitants of the Naga hills along the North-East frontier on the Assam-Myanmar border. According to the 1961 Census, the Nagas numbered around 500,000 constituting less than 0.1 per cent of the country's population. They consist of many separate tribes speaking different languages. The colonial government had isolated the Nagas from the rest of the country and left them more or less undisturbed though Christian missionary activity was permitted, which had led to the growth of a small educated stratum.

The Nagas

After 1947, when the Government of India followed a policy of integrating the Naga areas with the state of Assam and India as a whole, it was opposed by a section of Naga leadership. Under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo, the Nagas rose in revolt against the government demanding separation from India and complete independence. They were encouraged in their efforts by some of the British officials and missionaries. These separatist Nagas in 1955 declared the formation of an independent government and launched a violent insurrection.

The movement of the Nagas which is often referred to as 'Naga insurgency' is called the 'Naga national movement by the Nagas. It is the oldest movement relating to the ethnicity or the nationality question in the country. The nationality/ethnicity in Nagaland had all dimensions relating to the ethnic movement—demand for autonomy, secession from India and ethnic conflicts. The Nagas believe that they form a nation which is different from other ethnic groups or nationalities/nations in India. They had always enjoyed their sovereignty with a distinct culture, customs and history. A section among them believes that they have never been part of India and they would like to retain their identity, and by joining the Indian Union their sovereignty would be compromised. They do not recognise the merger of Nagaland with the Union of India and consider it as something that was done under coercion. That is why many Nagas did not

Nature of the Naga Movement

recognise the Indian Constititon, and the Sixth Schedule meant for North-East India, and did not participate in the first general election held in 1952.

Before India's independence in 1918, a section of the Naga elite consisting of those educated in the Christian educational institutions and few neighbouring village headmen formed the Naga Club to articulate the socio-economic and administrative problems of the people of Naga Hills. The Naga Club, in a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929, pleaded to exclude the Nagas from the administrative reforms which it was supposed to recommend and retain the Nagas under direct British administration. Subsequently, in 1945, at the initiative of the deputy commissioner of the Naga Hills district, an organisation of individual Naga councils called the District Tribal Council was formed. In the same year, the name of the District Tribal Council was changed to Naga National Council (NNC). The NNC, in June 1947, reached an agreement on a nine-point programme with the representative of India, the governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hyder.

Naga Club

The main provision of the agreement included protection of tribal land from alienation, creation of administrative autonomy and special responsibility of the Indian government to implement the agreement. However, asserting that the Nagas were a separate nation from India, they announced formation of the HonKin Government or the 'People's Sovereign Republic of Nagaland'. This resulted in conflict between the Indian government and the Nagas.

The Government of India responded with a two-track policy. On the one hand, the government made it clear that it would firmly resist the secessionist demand for the independence of Naga areas and would not tolerate recourse to violence. Towards a violent secessionist movement it would strongly follow a policy of suppression and non-negotiation. As prime minister Nehru put it, "It does not help in dealing with tough people to have weak nerves." Consequently, when one section of the Nagas organised an armed struggle for independence, the government sent its army to Nagaland in early 1956 to restore peace and order.

Government Policy

"On the other hand," says Bipan Chandra, "Nehru realised that while strong and quick military action would make it clear that the rebels were in a no-win situation, total physical suppression was neither possible nor desirable, for the objective had to be the conciliation and winning over of the Naga people. Nehru was wedded to a 'friendly approach'. Even while encouraging the Nagas to integrate with the rest of the country 'in mind and spirit', he favoured their right to maintain their autonomy in cultural and other matters. He was, therefore, willing to go a long way to win over the Nagas by granting them a large degree of autonomy. Refusing to negotiate with Phizo or his supporters as long as they did not give up their demand for independence or the armed rebellion, he carried on prolonged negotiations with the more moderate, non-violent and non-secessionist Naga leaders, who realised that they could not hope to get a larger degree of autonomy or a more sympathetic leader to settle with than Nehru." (*India After Independence*)

By middle of 1957 the armed rebellion of the Nagas crumbled and the more moderate Naga leaders headed by Imkongliba Ao came forward to negotiate for the creation of the state of Nagaland within the Indian Union. This finally led to the creation of a separate state of Nagaland from the state of Assam in 1963. However, it should be pointed out that there were differences among the Naga leadership over the issue of Nagaland as a separate state within the Union of India and Nagaland as a sovereign state/nation. The former founded Nagaland Nationalist Organisation (NNO) and the latter formed the Democratic Party of Nagaland. The NNO which was active in getting Nagaland made into a separate state were in favour of giving up violence and accepting the Constitution of India.

Creation of Nagaland

The question assumed a new dimension following the signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975. According to it, the Nagas accepted the Indian Constitution, surrendered their arms to the Government of India, and in turn the government released Naga political prisoners and promised their rehabilitation. The signing of the Shillong Accord was not welcome by a section of the Nagas. This section denounced the accord for compromising Naga sovereignty and betraying Christianity. Mixing the issue of Naga

Shillong Accord

sovereignty with Chinese leader Mao Tse-Tung's ideology of socialism, this section formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) under the leadership of Tanghkul Naga T. Muivah and Isak Swu. The NSCN leadership has guided the Naga movement. Under the prime ministership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, they raised two main issues—the issue of sovereignty of Nagaland and creation of a *Nagalim* (Greater Nagaland), a territory merging all areas of the North-Eastern states where Nagas stay. The demand of *Nagalim* has been opposed by the other North Eastern states of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam which have some Naga population. There has also been ethnic conflicts and riots between the Nagas and the Kukis—the two major tribes of Nagaland.

NSCN

Nagalim

The Bodos of Assam

Since 1980s, the tribals of Assam—the Bodos, Karbis and Adivasis—have been involved in collective ethnic mobilisation. The Bodos and Karbis are indigenous Assamese tribes whereas the Adivasis consisting of tribes like Oraons and Santhals had immigrated to Assam as tea plantation labourers mainly from Orissa, Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh during the colonial period. The Bodos are found in lower Assam districts like Kukhrajhar and the Karbis inhabit the Karbi Anlong district. Both the Bodos and Karbis have been demanding creation of separate states respectively from within the present state of Assam. The Adivasis, who cultivate land as poor peasants, have demanded protection of their rights in terms of reservation in government jobs, and protection from the dominant ethnic tribes as there have been several instances of violent ethnic riots between the Adivasis and the Bodos.

Tribals of Assam

The tribals of Assam participated in a six-year-long Assam agitation in the 1980s led by the All Assam Students Union (AASU). The movement, which united the tribals and non-tribals of Assam on the basis of their shared perception of their belonging to a backward and discriminated state, was directed against the 'foreigners'. The movement was led mainly by students and the middle classes which became violent on several occasions. The AASU got transformed into a political party—the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP)—which formed the government in the state in 1985. The Bodos and Karbis which had participated in the AASU movement started agitation for creation of their separate states. They have alleged that the AASU movement was led by the dominant communities of Assam who utilised the support of the smaller tribes like them. Once the AASU signed the Assam Accord with the Government of India and formed the AGP government in the state, the AASU leadership did not give due recognition to smaller tribes like them and attempted to impose their cultural code on the Bodos and Karbis. These tribes assert that they are different from the Assamese.

AASU

Assam Accord

The Bodo movement led by the All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) had presented a 92-point charter of demands to the government including demands for the recognition of their culture and language, and providing opportunities for their economic and educational development. It must be noted that, like the Karbis, the Bodos do not question the sovereignty of the Indian state. Unlike the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the Bodos have demanded a separate state for them within the Indian Union under the Constitution. The government has responded by setting up Bodo Autonomous Councils to grant the Bodos local autonomy.

ABSU

The Case of Mizoram

A problem similar to that in Nagaland emerged in Mizoram in the late 1950s and 1960s. The secessionist demands backed by some British officials emerged in Mizoram in 1947 but failed to get much support from the youthful Mizo leadership. The leadership in Mizoram concentrated on the issues of democratisation of Mizo society, economic development and adequate representation of Mizos in the Assam legislature. However, unhappiness with the Assam government's relief measures during the famine of 1959 and the passage of the Act in 1961 that made Assamese the official language of the state, led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF), with Laldenga as its president.

Mizo National Front

While participating in electoral politics, the MNF created a military wing which received arms and

ammunition and military training from east Pakistan and China. In March 1966, the MNF declared independence from India, proclaimed a military uprising and attacked military and civilian targets. The Government of India responded with immediate massive counter-insurgency measures by the army, thereby crushing the insurrection within a few weeks. Most of the hard core Mizo leaders escaped to the then east Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

"In 1973, after the moderate Mizo leaders had scaled-down their demand to that of a separate state of Mizoram within the Indian union, the Mizo district of Assam was separated from Assam and Mizoram given the status of a Union Territory. Mizo insurgency gained some renewed strength in the late 1970s but was again effectively dealt with by the Indian armed forces. Having decimated the ranks of the separatist insurgents, the Government of India, continuing to follow the Nehruvian tribal policy, was now willing to show consideration, offer liberal terms of amnesty to the remnants of the rebel forces and conduct negotiations for peace.

A settlement was finally arrived at in 1986. Laldenga and the MNF agreed to abandon underground violent activities, surrender before the Indian authorities along with their arms, and re-enter the constitutional political stream. The Government of India granted full statehood to Mizoram." (Bipan Chandra, et al, *India After Independence*)

The Case of Meghalaya

The 1960s witnessed movements by some ethnic groups in Assam which assumed the form of an agitation for a separate state of Meghalaya. The three main tribes of Meghalaya—Khasis, Jaintias and Garos—inhabit the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills of the state. Their social existence is marked by a matrilineal system that accords better position to women vis-à-vis the matrilineal system commonly found. During the colonial period, as in the case of some other northeastern tribes, an educated Christian elite emerged among these tribes, especially the Khasis. Shillong, which remained the capital of Assam for around a century, proved conducive for the growth of an elite section among the tribes.

Tribes of Meghalaya

The tribals of Meghalaya have been coexisting with non-tribals of Meghalaya, especially in Shillong since the late 19th century, following shifting of the capital of Assam from Cherrapunjee to Shillong. The non-tribals who migrated into Shillong and other parts of Meghalaya from the late 19th century consisted of mainly Bengalis, Biharis, Rajasthanis, Sikhs and even the Assamese—till the formation of Meghalaya as a separate state in 1972. The non-tribals, despite their differences, formed a separate ethnic group in the sense that their culture, features, customs, etc. were different from those of the tribals.

The move for a separate Meghalaya in the 1960s began with the combined resentment of the tribals and non-tribals against the language policy of the Assamese government which sought to make Assamese language the medium of instruction in school as well as the official language. However, the relations between the tribals and the non-tribals of Meghalaya underwent changes following the formation of the Meghalaya state in 1972. The policies followed by the state government resulted in an ethnic divide. The state government introduced land regulations prohibiting the transfer of land from the tribals to non-tribals, reserved seats in the legislative assembly for the tribals (56 out of 60 assembly seats for the tribals), and reserved 85 per cent state government jobs for the tribals. This provoked a reaction from the non-tribals of the state who alleged that their contribution to the economy of the state was not recognised and they were being discriminated against.

Causes of Ethnic Divide

The views of the tribals are articulated especially by the organisations of women and students, and politicians, most assertive among them being the Khasi Students Union (KSU) and the Federation of Khasi, Garo and Jaintia People (FKGJP). The KSU and other tribal representatives argue that due to the influx of the outsiders—the non-tribals, their cultural identity is eroded and their economic opportunities are exploited. The Central government symbolised by the army and the Central para-military forces is seen to be encroaching upon their rights. Therefore, the tribals of the state demand the cancellation of trade licenses of the non-tribals, their removal from the state and increase in the reservation for the tribals in the state government jobs. The KSU and other tribal organisations often

KSU and FKGJP

raise these issues through pamphlets, in the rallies, and through newspapers. The divide between the ethnic groups also resulted in ethnic riots on some occasions. Since the late 1990s the state has also seen the rise of some insurgent groups.

Non-Frontier Tribes

The issues which formed the basis of collective mobilisation of non-frontier tribes (tribes other than the North-eastern tribes in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa, etc.) in the post-1947 period vary from state to state. These have included the movements for creation of separate states for the tribals out of the existing states, like Jharkhand out of Bihar and Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh, or separate districts within the same state like the demand by the Dang tribes for creation of a separate state within former Bombay state; against the encroachment of tribal land for the creation of dams resulting in the displacement of the tribals as in the Narmada Valley. Some scholars have observed that during the 1990s the tribals have been mobilised by the Hindutva forces against the Christian and Muslim tribals in some states, especially in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. This contributed to the division of tribals on communal basis.

Issues of Non-Frontier Tribes

In modern history, tribal revolt had been forceful against the intervention of the British authorities in the power of the tribal chiefs and against exploitation of their natural resources by the British and their collaborators such as the outside businessmen and bureaucrats or *dikus.* The tribal chiefs mobilised their fellow tribals in order to restore their power and resources and evoked their golden past in order to retain their ethnic identity and autonomy. The British administration retaliated against these movements with ruthless violence including assassination of the leaders of these movements. Birsa Munda revolt in Chhota Nagpur was among the most prominent of such movements during the pre-Independence period. Such movements have been termed as 'millenarian movements'.

Millenarian Movements

The movement for autonomy expressed in the form of demands for separate states, districts out of present states and creation of autonomous administrative bodies are among the most commonly raised demands of the tribal movements. The basis for such demands are tribal grievances against the dominant political formations; their cultural and linguistic identities seen as being under the threat of erosion; their economic resources and opportunities which are appropriated by others/ outsiders; the failure to accord them due recognition, etc. The tribal leadership, both traditional and modern, mobilises the tribals into collective action. The acceptance of their demands depends on the political circumstances. But once a set of demands is accepted, the leadership looks for other issues. For example, after the creation of a separate state of Jharkhand out of Bihar, the tribal leaders attempted to change the domicile laws. Similarly after the creation of a separate state of Meghalaya, the tribal leadership introduced legislation changing the rules regarding inheritance and transfer of land. Thus, ethnic mobilisation is a continuous process in a democracy.

Major Grievances

BACKWARD CASTES AND THEIR ROLE IN POST-COLONIAL ELECTORAL POLITICS

Rise of Backward Castes

The backward castes consist of intermediate castes which remain above the Scheduled Castes and below the upper castes. These castes consist of the cultivating castes, artisans and service castes. These backward castes are now called Other Backward Classes or the OBCs. The principal intermediary OBCs are Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris, Gujjars and Jats in mostly north Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and few of them in Haryana and Madhya Pradesh; Kappus, Reddies, Kammas, Vokkaliggas, Lingayats, Mudliars in south Indian states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu; and Patels, Kolis, Kshatriyas and Marathas in west Indian states like Gujarat and Maharashtra. They belong to the upper or dominant backward classes. The service castes and artisans, principal castes among them being carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, water carriers, etc., are found in almost all states in varying numbers. They are also known as the Most Backward Castes (MBCs)

Backward Castes and Classes

in some states. In fact, the OBCs include heterogeneous caste groups with differences in their socio-economic conditions and political participation.

It is to be noted that the OBCs who share common characteristics in terms of their position in the social hierarchy differ from each other depending on their agrarian history. Not all intermediary castes which are presently identified as OBCs belonged to the inferior group so far as their position in the agrarian structure was concerned. For instance, Jats in most part of Uttar Pradesh, in Punjab which also consisted of the area of present-day Haryana and in the Bharatpur region of Rajasthan were a dominant community even in the pre-1947 period.

Different Social Positions

The Jats had their own traditional caste councils (or *khaps*) headed by the hereditary chief (or *Chaudhary*) to manage their social and juridical affairs. They were independent peasant proprietors involved in the cultivation of land who paid their rent to the state through their own representatives. While they were independent of any landlord between them and the state, they were placed in the dominant position over other village communities. But most of other intermediary castes were not independent peasant-proprietors. Rather they were the tenants of landlords, who in several instances were absentee landlords staying in urban areas. These intermediary castes (especially the service and artisan castes) were exploited by the landlords in several ways. Thus, despite belonging to different castes, the intermediate castes, artisans and service castes shared certain cultural and economic characteristics. This explains why the OBCs are those castes which are socially and educationally backward, but not necessarily economically and politically backward.

The backward classes emerged as a powerful social, economic and political block during the post-independence period in the countryside as a result of the policies of the state. But there has remained

Emergence of Backward Castes

internal differentiation among them. While the intermediary castes came to control the affairs of the village society, the artisans and the service castes joined the ranks of the marginalised groups of the wage labourers, marginal farmers and poor farmers. Even though the upper backward or the intermediary castes also are undergoing differentiation in terms of the economic and educational entitlements, these differences get blurred in political terms.

The most important policies of the state which had considerable impact on the backward castes were the land reforms which consisted of the abolition

Impact of State Policies

of landlordism, putting ceilings on the size of the landholdings, consolidation of landholdings, and Green Revolution in the selected areas of the country, and welfare schemes for the welfare of the lower backward classes. Besides the state policies, the changes which occurred from within the society—population growth, breaking down of the jajmani system—also affected them. Although the state policies in different states of the country did not have the uniform and desired impact on the backward classes in the country, they definitely facilitated their emergence. The backward castes became owners of their land (which they had been cultivating before the land reforms as tenants) and began to dominate the local political institutions like the village panchayats in several parts of the country. They came to control the vote banks in the villages mainly due to their numerical strength along with their control over village land. For instance, castes like Jats, Yadavs, Kurmis, Gujjars, Lingayats, Vokaliggas, Patels, Kolis, Marathas, Reddies, Kammas and Kappus, etc., emerged as dominant castes in different parts of the country.

The Green Revolution played a significant role in this transformation. It not only disturbed the traditional agrarian relations but it also facilitated the emergence of capitalism in agriculture characterised by large scale mechanisation,

Role of Green Revolution

displacement of human labour in agriculture, commercialisation of agriculture and growth of market economy. However, capitalism in agriculture had a differential impact on the backward classes. It benefited the economically better section (the upper backward classes) whereas it negatively affected others. While the upper backward classes produced primarily for market consumption and remained largely the self-cultivators, those belonging to the lower backward classes ended up as wage labourers and even migrated to the cities.

The fact that the OBCs belong to distinct economic categories and to the middle castes, the artisans and service castes has given rise to issues which are both economic and caste-related. However, the nature of these issues has changed over a period of time. For example, the social issues were combined with those of abolition of landlordism and the demand for providing ownership right to OBCs in land before the implementation of the first phase of land reforms. These were replaced by the issues which emerged mainly after the Green Revolution—remunerative price of crops, subsidised inputs, better infrastructure along with the issue of reservation in political institutions and public jobs for backward classes.

Issues Related to OBCs

Another factor which is related to the changes in the socio-economic condition of the backward classes is rise of a middle class among the OBCs. Despite the failure of the education policies, a group of educated persons, who became their spokespersons, had emerged among the backward classes. However, this group was not as big as it was among the high castes. In north India, Charan Singh, S.D. Singh Chaurasia and Chaudhry Brahm Prakash were some of the spokespersons of the backward classes belonging to the early decades following Independence.

Middle Class Among OBCs

Electoral Mobilisation of Backward Castes

The backward class politics in India has largely been related to electoral mobilisation and creation of a support base among them by the political parties and leaders. Other issues like reservation for the OBCs or their mobilisation on class issues like those related to the farmers also get linked to the electoral politics. The increasing participation of the OBCs, and their entry into the state legislatures and parliament is indicative of the empowerment of the backward classes. During the post-1947 period, there were attempts on the parts of individual leaders and political organisations to mobilise the backward classes into participatory politics. The backward classes in south India emerged before India's independence and they benefited from this legacy in the post-independence period. The main leaders and political parties which mobilised the backward classes in north India included Charan Singh, Karpoori Thakur, Socialist parties and the different political formations at different point of times like Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Through a two-fold policy combining issues of caste with issues of class, Charan Singh (an active member of the Congress Party) emerged as a powerful spokesperson of the middle-class peasantry especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. He carved out a political base for himself among the castes like Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeries, Kachhis, Lodhs, etc. Though Charan Singh himself belonged to a Jat caste (the Jats were not included in the official OBC category till 2000 in Uttar Pradesh and 1999 in Rajasthan), he identified himself with the backward castes and took up their issues actively in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact he played an important role in the Congress government's abolition of landlordism. Within the Congress, Charan Singh emerged as the representative leader of the backward classes.

Charan Singh

This created division within the Congress; a section of the high caste Congress leadership accused him of identifying with the backward classes. They argued that Charan Singh's activities had alienated the Congress from the high castes, and suggested that attempts should be made to win back the support of these castes to the Congress. Charan Singh defended himself by arguing that he was not favouring the backward classes. Rather the Congress had neglected them. When Charan Singh came out of Congress in 1967 and formed the coalition government of the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD), he gave 29.63 per cent representation to the backward classes in the ministry. Merger of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal headed by him with the Samyukt Socialist Party (SSP) resulted in the formation of the Bharatiya Lok Dal in 1974 and it made him a close ally of the socialists. This won him many allies among the backward classes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Through allies like Karpoori Thakur in Bihar and Devi Lal in Haryana, Charan Singh emerged as a leader of the backward classes and peasantry in north India. Meanwhile, after becoming the self-cultivators as a result of the land reforms and Green Revolution and having availed of educational

Samyukta Vidhayak Dal

and other policies, a generation of leaders belonging to the intermediary castes emerged on the political scene by the 1970s in north India. After the death of Charan Singh in 1987 and Karpoori Thakur in 1989, these leaders have come to occupy an important place in politics of north India, especially Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar are some such examples. As far back as in the 1930s in Bihar, three major backward classes—Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeries—formed Treveni Sangh to replace the dominance of high castes—Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs—in the electoral politics. This alliance, however, did not last long.

In this context Sanjay Kumar in an article *(New Phase in Backward Caste Politics in Bihar, 1990-2000)* says that it was the 1995 Bihar Assembly election which reflected a new trend towards the empowerment of the OBCs in the state. The election led to a polarisation of the backward support base. The Yadavs supported the Janata Dal while the Kurmis and Koeries supported the Samata Party. The fact remains that despite the division in their support to different parties including the BJP, the OBCs have become a force to reckon with in politics of Bihar. The division of support of backward classes to different parties is indicative of the competitive politics among the backward classes, for their empowerment.

OBCs in Bihar

Citing the case of Gujarat, Ghanshyam Shah argues that the support of the OBCs to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the state does not mean their support for the ideology of 'Brahmanical dominance'. It is rather 'part of an electoral game' in which the needs of the upper backward classes are taken care of.

Thus it can be said that after the backward classes emerged as a social bloc by the 1970s in north India their mobilisation has largely been in terms of electoral politics, i.e., allotment of tickets by political parties to the OBCs, their entry into the legislative assemblies and Parliament and formation of governments by the political parties headed by the backward class leaders or those who identify with them. The political parties with different denominations led by Charan Singh, the Janata Dal of different factions and Samajwadi Party (SP) led by Mulayam Singh Yadav can be identified as backward class parties. The emergence of the BSP in the 1980s as a political force opened an opportunity for an alliance of the Bahujan Samaj, the backward classes and the dalits. This brought together the Bahujan Samaj Party and BJP—the representatives of the OBCs and dalits—together to form the government in Uttar Pradesh in 1993-94. But because of the contradictions among the OBCs and the dalit social basis of these parties and personality differences between the leaders, they could not continue the alliance. Even a large number of the BJP leaders belong to the OBCs.

Backward Class Parties

It must be noted that backward class mobilisation by different parties has largely been confined to the upper backward or the intermediate castes, who form the dominant sections of the village society. The artisans and the service castes, generally known as the Most Backward Classes (MBCs), remain largely excluded from empowerment. However, some attempts are also made to empower them. For example, in 1975, the Congress government appointed the Most Backward Class Commission in Uttar Pradesh, generally known as Sathi Commission—named after its chairman, Chhedi Lal Sathi. Even Rajnath Singh, the former BJP chief minister of Uttar Pradesh appointed Social Justice Forum under the chairmanship of Hukum Singh in 2001 in order to suggest measures to empower the MBCs of Uttar Pradesh. But these measures were unsuccessful for one or the other reasons.

Sathi Commission

At the same time that Charan Singh was attempting to carve out his base among the backward classes in Uttar Pradesh, the socialists were involved in this pursuit in north India. In an attempt to end the monopoly of the high castes, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia sought to mobilise the backward classes as soon as he broke away from the Congress. He advocated 60 per cent reservation for the backward classes, dalits and minorities in the government jobs. Merger of the Indian National Backward Classes Federation, a splinter group of the All India Backward Classes Federation in 1957, with the Socialist Party brought the socialists and the backward classes together. Throughout the 1960s, the socialists and backward class leadership continued to raise the issues of the backward

Ram Manohar Lohia

Backward Classes Commissions

The government has appointed two Backward Classes Commissions since independence which have given the criteria to identify backward classes on the basis of communities or castes.

The first Backward Classes Commission was appointed in 1953 under the Chairmanship of Kaka Saheb Kalelkar. The Commission used four criteria for identifying the Backward Classes: (i) low social position in the traditional caste hierarchy of Hindu society; (ii) lack of general educational advancement among the majority of a caste/community; (iii) inadequate or lack of representation in government services; and (iv) inadequate representation in trade, commerce and industry. The Kalelkar Commission on these bases identified 2,399 castes and communities as Backward Classes. However, there were differences within the Commission. Therefore, the government did not accept the recommendations of this Commission.

The second Backward Classes Commission was appointed in 1978 under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal and this was known as Mandal Commission. The Commission formulated 11 indicators: four on caste based social backwardness, three on educational backwardness and four on economic backwardness. In the Commission's opinion backwardness was related to caste. Accordingly, it identified 3,743 castes as backward on the basis of the above mentioned indicators. Since then these castes have come to be known as Other Backward Castes (OBC's) meaning thereby backward castes other than Scheduled Castes.

The Commission recommended reservation of 27 per cent of jobs for OBCs in central services, public sector undertakings, nationalised banks, universities and affiliated colleges and government aided firms in the private sector. Some quantum of reservations for OBC students was recommended in all scientific, technical and professional institutions of education run by the Central and state governments. The Commission also made recommendations for economic and occupational development of the OBCs.

classes. The most important of these was the demand to implement the Kaka Kalelkar report.

The introduction of the report of the Mandal Commission (named after its chairman B.P. Mandal) by the V.P. Singh-led National Front government in 1990 recommending 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs in central government jobs made reservation a national issue in Indian politics. The Mandal Commission was the result of a consistent demand by the backward class leadership to get the first backward class commission report, the report of the Kaka Kalelkar Commission, accepted. The Kalelkar Commission was also the result of the demand for such a commission by the backward class leadership at the time of Independence. But Kalelkar's recommendation of class as the criterion for identification of the backward classes and rejection of the Commission's report by the Parliament led to the demand for appointment of another commission which would take social and educational backwardness as the criteria for identification of the backward classes.

Like Ambedkar who raised the demand for reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the demand for reservation for the backward classes was raised by Punjab Rao Deshmukh, a Congress leader, in the Constituent Assembly. On January 26, 1950 Deshmukh founded the All India Backward Classes Federation (AIBCF) in order to articulate this demand. Within the AIBCF the differences grew between those having allegiance to the Congress on the one hand and those having allegiance to the Socialist Lohiaites. This resulted in the split in the AIBCF, with the splinter group naming itself as National Backward Classes Federation (NBCF). The former was headed by Punjab Rao Deshmukh and the latter was headed by R.L. Chandpuri. After the death of Chandpuri, Chaudhry Brahm Prakash became its leader. Besides, a large number of informal and unregistered organisations existed in different states and at different levels in the country.

AIBCF

The appointment of Mandal Commission by the Janata Party government in 1978 was the result of the pressure exerted by the backward classes leadership and their political clout. However, the implementation of the Mandal Commission report has not settled the issue of reservation. Newer groups continued to demand that they be recognised as the OBCs. Whether a community can get itself identified as an OBC is a political question which depends on several factors.

DALIT MOVEMENTS

The recent trend of growth of academic interest in dalit mobilisation and movements has seen greater mobilisation and political participation of dalits in the electoral process of the country as a

whole. Though dalit mobilisation at an all-India level had started prior to independence with the efforts of Ambedkar, it gained momentum with the mobilisation efforts of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) after its formation in 1984.

Concept of Dalit

The term 'dalit' is a Marathi word which literally means "crushed or ground underfoot" or "broken into pieces". It is the contemporary version of the word "untouchable" and owes its genesis to the nineteenth-century writings of Jyotiba Phule as well as the literature of the Dalit Panthers, a political group formed in 1972 in Maharashtra. Dalits generally refer to the Scheduled Caste alone, the castes that were outside the Hindu varna system and were known as *Avarnas* or *Ati-Shudras.* They are considered as impure and untouchables and were placed in the caste hierarchy which perpetuated inequality. Sometimes, apart from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and even other converted minorities are grouped under the dalit category. But here we shall refer to the Scheduled Castes alone.

Composition of Dalit Population

The Dalits constitute around 15 per cent of the Indian population and belong to the lower rungs of the Indian society, socially and economically. As per the 1991 Census, their number was 138 million (15.8 per cent) and according to the 2001 Census, they constitute more than 1,666 lakh (about 16.2 per cent) of the Indian population. They are spread throughout the country though they are concentrated more in some states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Maharashra. Their population is spread throughout the parliamentary and assembly constituencies but in the country as a whole it constitutes around one-third of the electorate.

Who are Dalits

The Dalits are mainly poor peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers in the rural economy. In the urban economy, they basically form the bulk of the labouring population. Dalits not only belong to the lower 'caste' category but also belong to the lower 'class' category of the Indian society. Studies show that their condition as a whole has not changed significantly over the years even though the government has pursued several pro-poor policies and programmes. The post-independence regime has not been successful in bringing about a systematic redistribution of resources in favour of those at the bottom of society. The state has failed to pursue a consistent, albeit non-radical, strategy of supplying basic needs of health, education and simple welfare to the poor.

Elite Dalit Section

The policy of protective discrimination pursued by the government has resulted in the emergence of an elite (mainly middle class) sector among the dalits. It is this section which has been the main beneficiaries of the state policies. Nevertheless it is this elite section which has been responsible for mobilising the dalits and asserting their political identity in contemporary India.

Articulation of Dalit Interest

We have earlier mentioned that the first articulation of dalit interest was initiated by B.R. Ambedkar in the 1920s at the all-India level. Before that there were attempts made to bring about reforms in their condition. For instance, Phule in Maharashtra and Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala tried to ameliorate the conditions of the lower caste people in several ways. But their attempt was towards reform rather than towards the mobilisation of the dalits for political objectives. Ambedkar who differed with Gandhi and the Congress on several important questions relating to dalit issues remained the only spokesperson and the pre-eminent advocate of the dalits from 1919, for more than three and a half decades in the pre-1947 period. Though the Congress talked about the necessity of abolishing untouchability, it did not articulate any concrete demand or programme to protect the interests of the depressed classes till 1917. In contrast, mobilisation by Phule and Ambedkar in the 1930s was based on the premise that unless the caste system was destroyed the social evil of untouchability cannot end and that it is possible only when the dalits acquire political power. With this view in mind Ambedkar established the All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) in 1942. Prior to AISCF,

AISCF

Ambedkar had formed several organisations, the most important among them being the Indian Labour Party (ILP) which was formed in 1936. However, it is worth noting that the ILP aimed at mobilising a broader section of the Indian society and not the dalits exclusively.

He sought to use the ILP to appeal to a wider audience including the industrial workers and the agricultural labourers. Ian Duncan says that Ambedkar formed the ILP probably because he was convinced that a wider support base than the Scheduled Castes was essential and hence he embarked on a more class-like strategy.

Indian Labour Party

The formation of the AISCF was a very significant development in the history of dalit mobilisation in India despite its limited success and its defeat in the elections of 1946 and 1951. The electoral reversals made Ambedkar realise that a separate political party needed to be formed with a wider electoral strategy. However, Ambedkar died in 1956 and the AISCF was dissolved soon after. In 1957 the Republican Party of India (RPI), the first of its kind; accepted the fundamental provisions of the Constitution and decided to pursue its objectives through the medium of parliamentary democracy. For almost two decades the RPI successfully functioned and established its base in Maharashtra and to a limited extent in Uttar Pradesh, though it is in the latter that the RPI succeeded more in electoral terms than in Maharashtra. It launched some major agitations such as the agitation for land distribution in 1959 and 1964-65. These agitations, however, were more of an aberration rather than a general feature of RPI politics. They were, in fact, isolated episodes and not 'harbingers of sustained mass movements'. The sporadic nature of RPI politics was perhaps the main reason why the party could not keep its base intact and always had to confront the problem of losing its support base as soon as the agitations ended.

Republican Party of India

The Republican Party, however, became largely weakened due to internal differences on the issue of aligning with the Congress. A section of the RPI leadership, being pragmatic, wanted to join hands with the Congress whereas others were of the view that such an alliance with the Congress would result in a dilution of the greater objective of the party which was that of promoting solidarity of the Scheduled Caste population in the country. With some of its leaders joining the Congress, RPI broke into several factions. The failure of the RPI to sustain the lofty ideals of Ambedkar and to fulfil the aspirations of the dalit youths led to the formation of the Dalit Panthers in Maharashtra in 1972. The Dalit Panthers drew its ideological inspiration from the thoughts of Ambedkar and Karl Marx. Having its base mainly among the youth and students, the Dalit Panthers projected themselves as an alternative to the Republican Party. They talked about revolution, but there is little evidence of any concrete strategy being evolved. The agitation for renaming Marathwada University as Ambedkar University resulted in the anti-dalit riots in 1978 in the rural areas of Maharashtra in which main aggressors were the middle-caste Marathe Kunbi non-Brahman peasants.

Limitation of RPI

Dalit Panthers

By the 1980s, the Dalit Panthers developed serious differences over issues such as whether or not to include the non-dalit poor and non-Buddhist dalits, primacy of cultural versus economic struggle, as well as over personalities, for example, Raja Dhale versus Namdeo Dhasal. Splits began to occur and most factions, as in the case of the Republican Party twenty years earlier, joined or allied with Congress over time. In 1990, Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar, made an effort to unite all dalit organisations for contesting the Maharashtra State Assembly elections. A huge morcha of five lakh people was organised in Mumbai but later differences cropped up again.

In north India, a new political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), emerged in the 1980s under the leadership of Kanshi Ram (and later Mayawati who became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh) which declared electoral power as its basic aim and strategy. Formed in 1984, the BSP marked a new beginning in the history of dalit mobilisation and politics in India. The BSP succeeded at a time in north India when the dalit parties in western India were under disarray. According to Gail Omvedt the formation of BSP was deliberate. The BSP has its root in a government employee's federation called the BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Central Government Employees Federation) which was formed in 1978 by Kanshi Ram in Punjab. It was later on extended to Uttar Pradesh. The BAMCEF initially supported the activities of the RPI in Maharashtra and sought the support of all

Bahujan Samaj Party

BAMCEF

the Scheduled Caste people and politicians from other parties. Its primary aim, however, was to organise the elite section of the dalits who had benefited from the government's reservation policy. The BAMCEF provided the initial organisational and financial base for the Bahujan Samaj Party. Kanshi Ram argued and mobilised dalits on the grounds that the further advance of the community could only be possible if the whole community stood in a group. He was successful in this effort considering that within a span of little more than a decade in the early 1990s the BAMCEF had a membership of around two lakh people.

Another significant development that took place in the course of the formation of the BSP was the formation of the Dalit Shoshit Sangharsh Samaj Samiti (popularly known as the DS4) in 1981. The formation of DS4 was of critical importance since it is through this organisation that Kanshi Ram tried to increase his influence among the other sections of the society, which were hitherto not touched by the BAMCEF. The DS4, in fact, served as the organisational base for the formation of BSP and took up political issues. Firstly, through its mouthpiece *The Oppressed Indian,* the DS4 carried out its ideological campaign; and secondly, by organising meetings, rallies (mainly bicycle rallies) and social action programmes it made mass contact throughout the country. It sought to "educate, organise and agitate" the oppressed groups and tried to restore their self respect and dignity in society. Hence it appears that the DS4 was the precursor to the formation of the BSP by Kanshi Ram and in this sense the formation of BSP was a calculated and deliberate move.

Formation of DS4

Having done the necessary spade work Kanshi Ram inaugurated the Bahujan Samaj Party on April 14, 1984. He acquired another strong partner by persuading Mayawati to join the party in Uttar Pradesh. Mayawati belonged to the *chamar* caste and her family was associated with the Republican Party in Uttar Pradesh. She studied in Meerut and Delhi Universities and was in the teaching profession before joining politics. She emerged as a strong contender for power both in the politics of Uttar Pradesh as well as at the Centre.

BSP Leadership

Kanshi Ram deliberately tried to construct a new ethnic category—the Bahujan—which included the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the converted minorities. This he did deliberately keeping in mind that the SCs alone could not have given him the much needed power because of their number which is around 15 to 16 per cent of the population in the country. With a careful appeal to the ex-untouchables and with appealing slogans like: '*Brahmin, Bania, Thakur, Chor, Baki Sab DS4*' (Brahmins, Banias and Thakurs are thieves, others are DS4), the BSP made an immediate impact on the dalits' vote bank in north India. The electoral performance of the BSP over the years has been impressive. However, the dalit-based BSP seems to have been shifting its ideology from time to time according to its strategic needs. Gail Omvedt says that the BSP ideology can best be described as vague. She argues that there is no clear ideology in the programme and functioning of the party. The sole thrust is on the breaking of the caste system after acquiring state power. What is, however, true is that the BSP atleast initially had no economic programmes as such and hence the party has not been clear what it intends to do after acquiring power. It is because of this ideological vagueness one finds that most of its agitations were symbolic in nature and they were not around economic issues. Hence one notes that the perception of the BSP regarding the Indian society seems to be similar to the perceptions, which emerged in south India during the colonial period as reflected in the Dravidian movement of Naicker (Periyar) and the early ideology of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and also that of Jyotiba Phule.

Bahujan—A New Ethnic Category

What is ironical is that the BSP which has emerged as a political force to reckon with in the Indian political scenario, is willing to ally with any political force, be it Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress, or the Samajwadi Party, as long as it advances its vote share and gets political power. Such a deal with the BJP got Mayawati her chief ministership in Uttar Pradesh in 1995 and, much to the annoyance of those who regarded V.P. Singh as the "messiah of social justice", the BSP happily dumped him to support Devi Lal and Chandra

Electoral Strengthen of BSP

Shekhar in 1990. The BSP has succeeded in securing a sufficient base among the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh for it to became a significant factor in electoral calculations of other parties. Moreover, the lack of dominance of any one party in elections has given it an importance it might not have had otherwise.

Other Efforts

Non-dalit parties and groups taking up issues of concern to dalits have also played a significant role in dalit empowerment. The agricultural labour unions set up by different parties and non-governmental organisations that have taken up agricultural labour issues such as wage demands, demands for employment guarantee schemes, right to work, house-sites, abolition of child labour, right to education, etc., have all contributed to a new dalit self-confidence. Exclusively dalit organisations have also mushroomed. Dalit youth in rural areas have organised Ambedkar Sanghams. In urban areas, students, teachers, youth, and office workers have been organised into associations, but these are more concerned with advancing the interests of their members and have little link with rural areas or the urban poor.

However, it is worthy noting that "despite all the efforts of dalit parties and other political groups, the majority of dalits still vote for the Congress. It is this simple but overwhelming ground reality that has propelled dalit leaders over the years towards the Congress and not simplistic explanations based on theories of co-option or betrayal. If their aim is to change this, dalit ideologues will have to understand the underlying causes." (Bipan Chandra, et al, *India After Independence*)

Views

- "One of the strongest aspects of the new ideology of casteism is the doctrine that lower castes can be 'empowered', enabled to 'share in the governance of the state' and given 'a position in the decision-making process' through job and other reservations. Political theorists have differed a lot on many questions but have hitherto agreed that the exploited, oppressed, and suppressed can only be empowered through their own political mobilisation and through extension of social, economic and political democracy to them."

  —**Bipan Chandra**
  (in *Essays on Contemporary India*)

- "The essence of our struggle for freedom was the unleashing of a liberating force in India. This force did not even affect the frontier people in one of the most important tribal areas (the North-East region)… Thus they never experienced a sensation of being in a country called India and they were hardly influenced by the struggle for freedom or other movements in India. Their chief experience of outsiders was that of British officers and Christian missionaries who generally tried to make them anti-Indian."

  —**Jawaharlal Nehru**

- "The Dalit movement, in the familiar sense of organised resistance of the ex-untouchables to caste oppression, may not be traced beyond colonial times. However, in a wider sense of the struggle of lower castes against the hegemony of Brahmanical ideology, it has to coexist with the history of caste itself. The broad framework of caste remaining the same, the Dalit movement could also be seen in a historical continuum with its previous phases. In another sense, it could be taken as the articulation phase of the numerous faceless struggles against the iniquitous socio-economic formation ordained by the caste system, that has occupied vast spaces of Indian history."

  —**Anand Teltumbde**

- "It is impossible to construct a uniform hierarchy of caste based on the notion of purity and pollution. No caste would acquiesce to its placement among the so-called 'untouchables'. No caste would agree that members of other castes are made up of substances better than theirs. No caste would like its people to marry outside the community. No caste would like to merge its identity with any other caste. No caste accepts that it has originated from a shameful act of miscegenation. Any suggestion of being half-breed is dismissed haughtily across the board by all castes."

  —**Dipankar Gupta**

- "The emergence of the BSP has been an important milestone toward the goal of achieving an autonomous dalit political identity. The swearing in of Mayawati, a dalit woman, as chief minister of the state of Uttar Pradesh—India's most politically important state, supplying the largest number of legislators to the national assembly—is an event whose importance cannot be exaggerated. In a political dispensation controlled until recently almost entirely by hereditary landlords or westernised upper castes, the rise of India's plebian politicians is nothing short of revolutionary. The consistent rise in the vote share of the BSP in Uttar Pradesh is indicative of the rising awareness of political autonomy, although this electoral phenomenon remains largely limited to north India."
  —**Sagarika Ghose**
- "Examine the Gandhian attitude to strikes, the Gandhian reverence for caste and the Gandhian doctrine of Trusteeship of the rich ... Gandhism is the philosophy of the well-to-do and leisured class."
  —**B. R. Ambedkar**

Summary

- **Introduction**
  - After 1947 several initiatives were undertaken by the government to remove caste injustice and inequality.
  - Though caste as a social factor has declined in importance, it has increased in importance as a political factor.
  - The net effect of mobilisation along caste identities have resulted in the empowerment of the newly emerging groups and also increased the intensity of confrontational politics.
  - Ethnicity is a collectivity of people in terms of race, descent and culture. An ethnic group is a social collectivity that has certain shared historicity and common attributes.
- **Ethnic Movements After 1947**
  - Ethnic movements emerged in the country in several forms: movements for regional autonomy for creation of separate states, the demand for secession and insurgency.
  - Ethnic movements occurred specially in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir which challenged the notion of India as a nation-state.
- **Tribes in Post-Colonial Politics**
  - Tribals provide the most appropriate examples of the ethnic movements, whose social existence is characterised by 'isolation, backwardness and cultural distinctiveness'.
  - The tribals of Northeastern region are called frontier tribes and their problems in the form of insurgency, autonomy movements and ethnic conflict have been explained by a two-fold perspective—(a) "nation-building" perspective, and (b) "federation-building" perspective.
  - The insurgency in Nagaland was one of the first ethnic challenges which emerged after independence. The problem was partially solved with the creation of a separate state of Nagaland which was carved out of Assam in 1963, though the problem of *Nagalim* or "Greater Nagaland" still persists.
  - Tribes in Assam like the Bodos, Karbis and Adivasis have been involved in collective mobilisation since the 1980s.
  - The tribals and non-tribals of Assam participated in the All Assam Students Union (AASU) agitation in the 1980s. The AASU later became Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) which formed a government in 1985.
  - The tribals, feeling neglected, have carried on their struggle for autonomous status.
  - Like Nagaland, Mizoram witnessed a movement for autonomy under the leadership of the Mizo National Front (MNF), which attained full statehood in 1987 under Laldenga.

Summary

- Meghalaya also became a separate state in 1972. The movement for a separate state of Meghalaya began as a protest against the language policy of Assam. However, after 1972, the policies of the new state government resulted in an ethnic divide.
- The issues of mobilisation of non-frontier tribes (tribes other than the North-eastern tribes) vary from state to state.
- The movement for autonomy expressed in the form of demands for separate states, districts out of present states and creation of autonomous administrative bodies are among the most commonly raised demands of the non-frontier tribes.

► **Backward Castes and their Role in Post-Colonial Electoral Politics**

- Backward castes are intermediate castes between the Scheduled Castes and the upper castes who share common characteristics in terms of their position in the social hierarchy and differ from each other depending on their agrarian history.
- These classes emerged as a powerful socio-economic and political bloc under the influence of state policies like abolition of landlordism, ceiling and consolidation of landholdings, Green Revolution, etc.
- The mobilisation of the OBCs has been around two issues: their electoral participation and reservation.
- However, the backward class mobilisation by different political parties has been largely confined to the upper backward or the intermediate castes who form the dominant sections of the village society.

► **Dalit Movements**

- The Marathi word 'dalit' generally refers to the Scheduled Castes though others like the Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and even converted minorities are also grouped under it.
- Though the mobilisation of dalits at an all-India level had started prior to 1947 under B.R. Ambedkar, it gained momentum with the mobilisation efforts of the Republic Party, the Dalit Panthers and the DS4 which ultimately led to the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party in 1984.
- The formation of organisations like the Indian Labour Party (1936), the All India Scheduled Caste Federation (1942), the Republican Party of India (1957), the Dalit Panthars (1972), Backward and Minority Central Government Employees Federation (1978), Dalit Shoshit Sangharsh Samaj Samiti (1981) and Bahujan Samaj Party (1984) were milestones in the development of dalit consciousness.
- Non-dalit parties and groups have also played a significant role in the employment of dalits.

CHAPTER 17

Economic Development and Political Change

INTRODUCTION

During the colonial era the British government's economic policies in India were concerned with protecting and promoting British interests rather then promoting the welfare of Indians. The administration's primary preoccupation—that of maintaining law and order, tax collection and defence—absorbed the bulk of the meagre public revenues. The pre-Independence period was a period of near stagnation for the Indian economy. By the time of Independence, the economy was mostly rural and agricultural in character. Almost 85 per cent of the people were village dwellers who derived their livelihoods from agricultural and related pursuits using traditional, low-productivity techniques. Industries employed less than a tenth of the labour force, with the bulk of the labour being in traditional cottage and small-scale processing activities. The modern factory industry with three million employees out of a total of 140 million was also dominated by jute and cotton manufacturers and other agriculture-based industries. Illiteracy was a high 84 per cent and the majority (60 per cent) of children in the 6 to 11 age group did not attend school. Mortality rates were high in the absence of a good public health service and sanitation. An impoverished economy apart, independent India inherited some useful assets in the form of a national transport system, an administrative apparatus in working order, concrete development projects and reserves of foreign exchange.

Background

The Congress leadership, in its attempt to prepare for independence, set the ball rolling on schemes that would aid in the planning and reconstruction of the Indian economy and society. As early as 1938, despite strong opposition from leaders like Gandhi, the then Congress president, SC Bose, had appointed a National Planning Committee under Nehru's chairmanship to work out concrete development programmes covering all major segments of the economy, and this committee influenced educated public opinion on the value of planning. A section of industrialists approved of the idea and produced the outline of an overall development programme in 1944, to be subsequently discussed. In 1946 the Advisory Planning Board was appointed to review the reconstruction programme. The Board pointed to the lack of any government agency for taking a comprehensive view of planning and for tracing the repercussions of various plans. It recommended the creation of "a single, compact authoritative organisation… responsible directly to the Cabinet… which should devote its attention continuously to the whole field of development".

National Planning Committee

The Post-war Reconstruction Programme, that was launched in 1944, initiated preparatory work on development projects. Between 1944 and 1946, the central government-created Planning and Development Department outlined the broad strategy and policies for developing major sectors and began the process of translating them into concrete programmes and projects. But it was the setting up of the Planning Commission in January 1950 (discussed later in the chapter) that was to initiate the concept of a coordinated planning of

Planning and Development Board

development programmes under the auspices of the Central government. These included the Grow More Food Scheme, started during World War II, outlining policies of use for later agricultural programmes. A five-year plan was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture to increase food and fibre production. Some 160 irrigation projects were launched, including the Damodar Valley; new industrial projects, notably in fertilisers, locomotives and newsprint, were under construction and negotiations for steel, machine tools and telephone were in progress. Substantial foreign-exchange resources were available in the form of sterling balances. The government's main concern in the new economic policy was to control severe inflationary pressures and to alleviate shortages of essential food items which had been aggravated by the Partition. The communal disturbances and the refugee problems following Partition had derailed long-term development policy by placing a massive burden on Indian financial and administrative resources.

IPR 1948

The Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) of 1948 signalled the acceptance of the principle that the government will initiate and regulate development in one of the key sectors of the economy. The directive principles of state policy incorporated in the Constitution, that defined the broad objectives of socio-economic policy, had mentioned the right of citizens to an adequate means of livelihood, regulation of ownership and control of material resources for the common good, and the avoidance of concentration of wealth and means of production. At the same time, the IPR emphasised the need to expand existing state enterprises and start new enterprises rather than take over private firms. The areas reserved for public sector were relatively restricted, with new developments taking place in certain sections of the industry including defence, metallurgy and heavy machinery. The IPR was revised in 1956 to widen the scope of the public sector both by direct investment and by regulating the private sector. The Industries Development and Regulation Act (IDRA) enacted in 1961 gave the government the powers to regulate, through licensing of new capacity, the growth of the private sector. The IPR was modified in 1970 in response to growing criticism of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the control system. Licensing requirements for the creation of new capacity for an undertaking below a specified size were relaxed, but tighter restrictions were imposed on expansion of large business houses. In 1969, the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices was legislated. A further modification of licensing policy, announced in 1973, was made permitting large business houses to participate in 'core' industries, and simplifying and rationalising licensing procedures.

IDRA 1961

MRTP Act

Debate on Economic Policy

These decisions, marking a fundamental departure from the policies of the colonial government, remained controversial, particularly in the early 1920s when socio-economic questions were debated in the Congress. The Gandhians and representatives of the business and propertied classes opposed, having ideological differences of their own, the efforts of radicals to opt for drastic land reform, centralised state planning of development and a dominant role for the state in the economy. The radicals argued for the mitigation of inequalities as an important component of growth, and pressed for land reforms, greater public ownership and strict regulation of the private sector as a means of achieving greater equity. In the event, the concept of planned development gained adherents among many people in the Congress leadership.

However, an elaborate system of checks and balances built into the Constitution and reinforced by the political process effectively limited the role of central planning. The creation of the Planning Commission, even as an advisory body was challenged at the very beginning and the then finance minister, John Mathai, resigned on the ground that the commission was an extra-constitutional institution with too much power. At the same time, the planning agency's ability as an advisory body, to bring an overall viewpoint and the basic goals to bear on decisions, was limited. The planners' influence was marginal in many critical areas of policy, notably the procurement and distribution of food, the allocation of foreign exchange and the system of regulating the private sector. But the Planning Commission did have some power: the prime minister was its chairman; since financial sanctions for projects were dependent on the commission, it was given considerable scope to shape investment decisions. And it played a major role in reconciling the competing claims of

states and ministries, and in ensuring that their programmes fitted into a coherent national plan, which was again subject to larger political considerations.

Till the 1980s, the public sector dominated in India. Since the early 1990s, however, a much greater role has been assigned to the private sector to overcome difficulties of growth and to make the economy a market-oriented one. The pre-liberalisation period was marked by the use of non-market devices such as controls and licenses. Since the early 1990s, the situation has undergone a radical change.

Changes in Recent Times

Since mid-1991, the government has introduced new policies aimed at bringing about a qualitative change in the economy by effecting structural adjustments and, thus, stabilising the economy. In a nutshell, the trend of the reforms is seen in the following features.

(i) A market-oriented economy is emerging with increase in competition as a result of doing away with regulations, controls and governmental restrictions that had checked the growth of the private sector in the past. Industries earlier reserved for the public sector have been opened to the private sector.

Liberalisation of the economy has largely relieved imports and exports from government imposed restrictions. Reduction in custom duty rates and encouragement to foreign investment in various areas have placed the Indian economy in line with those of other countries.

(ii) State intervention has been restricted with an attempt to reduce the number of industries reserved for the public sector and disinvestment of a share of the PSU capital. The role of the state has also been curtailed by lifting the government restrictions that had checked the activities of the private sector. However, the state will increase its contribution in areas where the private sector participation is not preferable and it will play an increasingly important role as a regulator of the economy.

(iii) While planning has not been discarded, it has become more indicative than before. Setting directions for the economy rather than rigid economic targets forms the basic role of planning now. State intervention has became more market-oriented.

In this chapter, we shall confine our discussions to the developments in Indian economy till the Nehruvian Period (1964). We shall also briefly discuss the developmental policies in the field of science and technology and environment in post-colonial India.

AGRARIAN REFORMS

Given the predominance of agriculture in the Indian economy, agriculture as a sector was given a great deal of attention. Keeping in mind the decline in agriculture, an Agricultural Labour Enquiry, launched in 1951, revealed that 20 per cent of agricultural families comprised landless workers, with about 40 per cent families having holdings of less than 2.5 acres. As many as 50 per cent of the cultivating families had holdings of less than 5 acres each and operated only 16 per cent of cultivated areas. Since 1950, however, a number of reforms have created a more balanced growth. The most important of these has been the launch of a comprehensive programme of land reforms created by the Planning Commission, the Central government and the state government. The land reform programmes comprised the following.

Abolition of Intermediaries

The abolition of the rights of intermediaries has been a major reform in the land tenure system in the post-Independence period. The legislation for the abolition of intermediary tenures—known as *zamindaris, jagirs, inams,* etc.—which covered about 40 per cent of the area of the country, was enacted by the majority of the states. This reform brought more than 20 million occupancy tenants into direct relationship with the state. This raised their economy and social status. In some areas, where intermediary tenures did not exist, legislation was enacted to provide them with security of tenure at regulated rents. The management and control of village land resources passed to the village panchayats, constituted simultaneously with the land reforms, headed by the elected village president.

The intermediaries were paid compensation for the tenancy rights and control over land resumed by the government. (It has been estimated that the total amount of compensation paid to the intermediaries was to the tune of Rs 635 crore.)

The compensation was paid either in cash or in interest-bearing government bonds, or in both these forms. The bulk of it was payable in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal. The compensation amount was usually related to the intermediaries' income from these rights. However, it was not necessarily full compensation, particularly in the case of the bigger intermediaries. Therefore, to some extent, the intermediary rights were confiscated rather than purchased by the state.

Compensation for Intermediaries

The abolition of intermediary rights had some important consequences: (i) introduction of a uniform land tenure system all over the country, excepting tribal areas where there was some form of collective control of land; (ii) growth of capitalist elements in agriculture; (iii) stability in land relationship; and (iv) institutional and psychological change in the village life.

Impact

Redistribution of Land

The census of land holdings and cultivation carried out in 1954-55 showed a high degree of inequality in the distribution of land. It was considered necessary to follow up the abolition of intermediaries with redistribution of land. The second stage of reform, thus, consisted in (i) fixing a ceiling on holdings, and (ii) redistributing the surplus land among the landless and small holders.

The legislation on the ceiling on land holdings came into existence during the 1950s itself. However, it varied a great deal from state to state. For example, the Telengana region in Andhra Pradesh, the Marathwada in Maharashtra and the Karnataka part of Mysore proposed ceiling on a land holding yielding a net income of Rs 3,000 per annum, which in terms of size worked out between 18 and 27 acres. Kerala imposed a ceiling at the level ranging between 15 and 32.5 acres depending upon the quality of land. In Uttar Pradesh, the range of ceiling was between 40 and 80 acres once again depending on the quality of land.

Land Ceiling Acts

Features of the Land Ceiling Act

Despite variations from state to state, the following were the common elements of the land ceiling legislation:

(i) The ceiling was applied either to the holding of an individual owner or to the aggregate area held by the members of a family.

(ii) In many states, the transfers of land after a date prior to the enactment of the legislation were to be disregarded. This was done to prevent large landowners from defeating the aims of ceiling legislation.

(iii) Certain categories of farms, such as plantations, specialised farms and sugarcane farms attached to sugar factories, were exempted from the ceilings.

(iv) Ceilings were fixed according to the quality of land. Broadly, the ceiling was fixed at around 30 standard acres.

In distribution of the land acquired as a result of the ceiling laws, tenants who were displaced due to resumption of land by the landowner for personal cultivation, farmers with uneconomic holdings and the landless were given preference.

The ceiling policy was mainly distributive in nature, i.e., the surplus land acquired through it was to be distributed among the weaker sections of the society. But the policy did not prove to be a success due to *benami* transfer. Under the *benami* system, big landholders transferred the surplus land with them to their relatives, friends and other acquaintances. It is called *benami* because even though land is transferred to a person, that person is not the actual cultivator. The actual cultivator is the original owner of that land.

As an alternative approach to the redistribution of land, Acharya Vinoba Bhave launched the *Bhoodan* (land gift) Movement in 1951. The movement appealed to substantial landholders to gift a part of their land for redistribution to the landless. The target of land collection was fixed at 50 million acres. The movement achieved some success only in Bihar. However, it succeeded in creating an awareness among the public of the need for redistribution of land.

Bhoodan Movement

The most important cause of the failure to redistribute land is the prevailing balance of political forces in the country.

Consolidation of Land Holdings

Agricultural holdings in India are not only small but also fragmented. The most important cause for

fragmentation is that at the death of the owner of a land, the land is divided among his successors. A study undertaken by the Planning Commission in 1953-54 revealed that 82.8 per cent of an owner's holdings in Andhra Pradesh, 66 per cent in Gujarat and Maharashtra, 77.2 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 70 per cent in Mysore, 83.9 per cent in Punjab, 98.4 per cent in Kerala, 62.4 per cent in Rajasthan and 94.9 per cent in Uttar Pradesh were below 10 acres in size.

Fragmentation of Land

Indian agriculture has suffered since a long time from small size of land holdings and their fragmentation. The construction of irrigation facilities, levelling, terracing, bunding and fencing of land, improvement of soil and cultivation, protection against stray cattle and pests, and use of agricultural machinery and improved equipment become more difficult when the land holding is split up into tiny plots. So, the land reform policy adopted after Independence visualised massive investment in improvement of the quality of land, its operational conditions and management of its physical conditions. One important area in this connection has been the consolidation of land holdings.

Consolidation means that all the plots of a landholder, situated in different parts of the village, are brought together in one or two compact blocks. For this purpose, all land is reduced, on the basis of quality and location, to a standard grade. Out of the common pool, every owner gets land in proportion of his contribution to the standard grade. During the First Five Year Plan, 21 lakh acres of land were consolidated in Bombay, 29 lakh acres in Madhya Pradesh, 48 lakh acres in Punjab and 44 lakh hectares in Uttar Pradesh. By the end of 1957, consolidation operation was completed on roughly 15 million acres and was proceeding on additional 12 million acres of land.

Consolidation under First Five Year Plan

The net output of agriculture and related activities is estimated to have registered a 50 per cent increase. Total crop production, the most important component of agriculture, has registered a 80 per cent increase or an annual rate of a little under three per cent compared to less than half a per cent per annum during the first fifty years of the 20th century. The major part of the additions to crop output was the result of improvements in yield per unit area which averaged around 1.7 per cent a year, with the trend growth rate of cropped area between 1949-50 and 1970-71 being roughly 1.3 per cent a year. The greater dynamism of agriculture in the post-Independence era has been possible due to a series of larger and better-integrated programmes undertaken as part of the Five-Year Plans. The more important reforms that expanded crop area were the result of farmers' initiated extension of cultivated area, and extension of irrigation through increases in cropping intensity. Between 1950-51 and 1971-72, gross irrigated area increased by 16 million hectares; fertiliser consumption increased from less than 100,000 tonnes in 1950-51 to nearly 2.2 million tonnes a year in the early 1970s. A countrywide network of extension services has helped make this possible—these include the intensification of crop research and its better organisation; a manifold increase in credit through cooperatives, land development banks and other institutional agencies that have helped to reduce the cost of capital to the farms; better arrangements for distribution of inputs and marketing of produce; and the introduction of guaranteed minimum support price since the early 1960s.

Increase in Output

The launch of the Five Year Plans and their subsequent implementation saw the total cropped area rising at an annual rate of 1.25 per cent. There were certain noticeable gains. The 1960s saw an increase in the spread of minor irrigation and fertiliser use, and there were major advances in cereal cultivation technology through the introduction of high-yielding varieties. But the scope for increasing cultivated area diminished in the 1960s, and despite the spread of irrigation and the associated increase in the intensity of land use, there was a sharp fall in the growth of gross cropped area. A deceleration in the growth of agricultural output led to the absence of a compensating rise in per hectare yields. Increases in rice yields slowed down somewhat in the late 1960s. Trends in actual output since the mid-1960s are in fact below the potential generated by the increased absorption of inputs, especially water and fertilisers.

Imbalances in the growth of production for different crops remain—wheat output among cereals have grown at a rate faster than average. In the first three Plans, this was due to a shift of area, but in subsequent plans this was due to a sharp increase in yield improvement. This increase, however, slowed down in the case of rice, with both area and yields showing a marked deceleration in the late 1960s. The yield performance of non-cereal crops, and particularly of the protein-rich pulses, registered a consistent inferiority in relation to cereal crops. Prior to 1964, the aggregate output of commercial crops grew faster than cereals because the area allocated to the cultivation of commercial crops was larger. After this period though, there was a reversal of trends, both because total crop area was expanding slowly and because the shift in total area was now in favour of foodgrains. Other factors contributing to the trends include a disproportionate pace of technical change in cereals and other crops, the absence of a coherent policy on relative support prices and the failure to provide price supports to a few key crops.

Trends in Crop Production

Regarding the effects of these reforms on the agricultural sector, *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Volume II c.1757-c.1970* ed by Dharma Kumar notes: "Land reform eliminated such grosser manifestations of feudalism like the zamindari and the jagirdari. However, other elements of land reform, for example, ceilings and protection of tenants, have not been as successful, and the amount of surplus land acquired and distributed under ceiling laws was small. The substantial decline in the area leased-in relative to total operated area since the mid-1950s, was both due to resumption of leased land by owners for self-cultivation and the acquisition of ownership rights by tenants. Despite some improvement in distribution of owned land (the proportion of households not owning any land having declined), the impact on the landless and small landholders has been a marginal one. The number of households not cultivating any land has increased three-fold from 1954 to 1971 and those households cultivating less than two and a half hectares have registered a rise of 40 per cent.

Impact of Reforms

Analysing further the inability of the plans to meet the desired objectives in agriculture output, *The Cambridge Economic History* points to the problems in implementation. The public sector's role is essentially to facilitate output growth in the private sector by creating, expanding and improving the infrastructure and by maintaining constant prices for outputs relative to inputs. While part of the shortfall in agricultural output targets was the result of the public sector's inability to achieve the targets for the infrastructure programmes, farmers' responses played an important role too. Planners had assumed that farmers will take to new inputs and associated techniques of cultivation fairly easily. However, it has been found that individual farmers take time to learn new techniques and adapt them to their specific circumstances; the workings of public extension services and input supply organisations are not properly coordinated or even if they are, may be inaccessible to farmers; severe institutional constraints on the proper management of land and water affect the productivity of inputs like fertilisers; and there is need for the formulation of an integrated policy for pricing of different crops and inputs in a situation where technical progress varies generally between regions and crops, and where the farmers' responses to price incentives do not fit conventional models. As a result shortfalls in agricultural programmes have been numerous.

Limitation of the Plans

Yet another problem related to the difficulties of reconciling the requirements of growth and equity, is sometimes due to a lack of clarity about the relative weight to be attached to these objectives. Agricultural programmes have been based on the debate on whether to concentrate agricultural extension and inputs in limited areas (or segments of farmers) with potential for immediate growth, or to spread them evenly in the interests of equity. Government policy has tended to focus on both the intensive and the extensive approach; but it has not always been possible to enforce the policy decided upon. Even where extension and input supplies were sought to be reached as widely as possible, the maximum benefits usually accrued to relatively large farmers. Again, the government, despite its commitment to ceilings on land ownership, tenancy reform and minimum wages for farm workers, was not entirely successful in implementing the reforms, and the result was the creation of a state of uncertainty and tension in the rural sector which is not conducive to growth.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES

Planners spoke for a mixed economy with a public and a private sector, with basic industries to be owned and developed by the state and other sectors by private capital. In the public sector were placed steel plants, oil and its products, electrical works, machine-making, aircraft and shipbuilding, and in the private were placed cement, engineering and motor manufacture. On the eve of independence, the possibilities for industrial development were substantial, prompted mainly by the expansion of industrial output of large-scale enterprises between the outbreak of the Second World War and Independence. The Indian economy based subsequent manufacturing activity on the framework created during the Second World War that saw the total output of manufacturing industry register a greater increase than ever before. While the economy lacked an adequate scientific and technical cadre or the faculties for training them, it had a large pool of literate people and several universities and scientific organisations from which it could draw its workforce. These provided the base for large-scale planned industrial development under state patronage. The government's statement of April 1945 was reflective of this trend: "a vigorous and sustained effort is necessary in which the State, no less than private industry, must take a part, and that Government have decided to take positive steps to encourage and promote the rapid industrialisation of the country to the fullest possible extent".

Industrial Expansion

The output of the industrial sector has been varied: the net output of mining and manufacturing industries has risen by 160 per cent and that of modern industry by over 250 per cent. Diversification in economy saw the share of agriculture falling from around 50 per cent in the early 1950s to around 45 per cent in the early 1970s. The expansion of the industrial sector was accompanied by changes in the structure of industry: developments since 1951 saw an increase in the share of modern factory-type industry in the total industrial output. There has been diversification in the composition of factory industry, with expansion marking the textile and agricultural processing industry, and the fast growth of other lines of manufacture. There has been rapid expansion in metallurgical, chemical and engineering industries, many of which either did not exist before 1950 or existed in rudimentary forms then. In 1951, for example, the engineering industry comprised mostly units manufacturing consumer goods, spare parts and simple items of machinery. Today, more sophisticated manufacturing includes machinery, transport vehicles and electrical equipment. As a result of the widening and deepening of the industrial base, the economy's dependence on import for many items of basic raw materials and capital equipment has been reduced.

Trends in Expansion

Certain industries grew faster than others. Industries producing intermediate products and capital equipment expanded faster than consumer goods industries. The three-fold increase in aggregate index of industrial production between 1951 and 1969 was the result of a 70 per cent increase in consumer goods industries, a quadrupling of the intermediate goods production and a ten-fold increase in the output of capital goods. The share of intermediate and capital goods increased from less than one-third of the value added by the large-scale industry in 1951 to a share of nearly two-thirds by the mid-1960s. The expansion of small-scale industry was another development of the period. According to national income estimates, net output of non-factory industry has more than doubled in twenty years. Cotton cloth output of the non-mill sector, consisting of handloom and small-scale powerloom mills, has increased nearly fourfold since 1951, with 80 per cent of the increase in total cloth output being contributed by the decentralised sector. The total production of cloth rose from 4.7 billion metres in 1951 to 7.8 billion metres in 1973. The success of this sector can be credited to the government's policy of using differential taxation and methods to improve productivity by restraining the growth of large-scale enterprise and increasing the competitive viability of small-sector units. Similarly, the government has provided technical guidance, financial assistance and common service facilities in order to ensure the expansion of the modern small-scale industry, like sericulture and coir, but government efforts to promote hand spinning have not been successful.

Post-Independence, industrial transformation created a dynamic indigenous entrepreneurial class

and the growth of industries was away from the traditional locations. The British rule saw the importance of private foreign enterprise in the industrial sector in jute, plantation, textiles, cement, paper and chemicals. Since Independence, government policy has seen the share of the equity and management of foreign-owned pre-Independence enterprises gradually pass into the hands of indigenous entrepreneurs either wholly or partly.

Growth of Indigenous Industrial Class

In the case of new enterprises, while foreign participation increased, foreign-owned establishments ceased to exist; foreign help consists mainly of technical and financial collaboration in indigenous enterprises. The decline of foreign enterprise has been accompanied by a rise in the number of indigenous entrepreneurship. Besides the expansion of Indian industrial houses already present before Independence, like the Birlas, Tatas, Gujarat textile interests and Dalmias, new industrial houses have emerged, some of them recording rapid growth.

The other significant trend is the more diversified growth of industry. During the colonial era, industrial development was highly localised in a few, mostly coastal areas, with the bulk of organised industrial activity being centred in and around Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Ahmedabad, Coimbatore and Kanpur were the only interior locations to have industries. Since Independence, the government's policy of encouraging a more widespread distribution of manufacturing industry has resulted in the rise of industrial centres like Hyderabad, Poona, Bhopal, Bhilai, Bokaro and Bangalore, in the interior.

Industrial Diversification

One of the problems in industrial development was the prolonged negotiation with potential foreign collaborators and aid donors, which caused major delays in key sectors such as steel, fertilisers and oil. The implementation of the Bokaro Steel Project is a case in point. Originally conceived as a plant to be designed and built by indigenous organisations on the basis of a mixture of different technologies, the project ran into a prolonged controversy about the capability of indigenous organisations, the role of the public sector and the extent to which domesticated fabricated equipment could be used. The Government of India withdrew its initial request for US support and sought Soviet assistance. The project had to be redesigned anew, and the role of Indian designers and engineers was curtailed partly at the instance of Soviet design organisations and partly because Indian policymakers did not want to risk giving projects of such size and complexity to indigenous organisations. The plant, originally scheduled to be completed in 1968, was commissioned only in 1974. The indigenous technological base being narrow, full-scale collaboration with foreign enterprise and turnkey jobs backed by performance guarantees were attractive to public and private entrepreneurs, but such arrangements were costly. Foreign collaborations of this kind were not undertaken also because it was felt that they would impede the development of indigenous technology, engineering and machine-building.

Problems of Industrial Development

Private industrial sector performed below expectations. One of the reasons was the elaborate systems of licensing and controls which were a source of delay in the implementation of private sector projects. Whether it was to create new capacity, enter into collaboration with foreign firms, or import know-how or capital goods, an entrepreneur had to obtain government clearances for each, besides having to go through prolonged procedures for screening and evaluating the applications. The criteria used for approval of capital goods imports were too rigid, and requests for capital goods imports could be rejected on the ground that a particular item of equipment could be manufactured domestically. The main reason behind the non-fulfilment of targets for private industry lay in the shortfalls of agricultural programmes and the failure of the public sector to realise its targets—in terms of both—real investment and production targets—for key intermediate and capital goods. Since a good part of private industrial expansion, especially in intermediate and capital goods, was directly dependent on public sector demand, the public sector's inability to achieve the targeted levels of real investment meant that the demand for a variety of private sector manufactures was less than plan projections. As a result, key inputs for private industry, notably electricity and transportation, did

Slow Growth of Private Sector

not exhibit projected growth. This, together with localised bottlenecks and the inability to make up for shortages in domestic production through imports, may have impeded private industry.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The declared goals of development policy in Nehruvian India were to bring about a rapid increase in living standards, provide full employment at an adequate wage, and reduce inequalities that arise from the uneven distribution of income and wealth. All these could be achieved, felt Nehru, through industrialisation which would create more jobs, a process requiring state regulation along socialist lines. In 1950, the Colombo Plan for mutual development by the states of South and South-east Asia led to the creation of the National Planning Commission with Nehru as its first chairman. A larger National Development Council was set up two years later. The Planning Commission drew up a succession of five-year plans for national development, the economic inspiration for this being provided by Professor Mahalanobis. The aim was to raise the national standard of living by means of greater agricultural production and make India self-sufficient, and initiate a process of industrial development which would, by increasing production and jobs and stimulating trade, increase the gross national product at a rate faster than that of population growth. Planning envisioned a mixed economy with public and private sectors. Basic industries were to be owned and developed by the state and other sections by private capital. The practical and theoretical reason for this division lay in the fact that private capital, responsible for only six per cent of the national income at the time of Indian Independence, would fail to raise the sums required for the large projects reserved for the public sector.

Objectives of Developmental Policy

Successive five-year plans have emphasised the necessity to pursue all these objectives at a simultaneous level. The First Plan emphasised that development was no longer "a process merely of increasing the available supplies of material goods", and was instead a steady advance "towards realisation of wider objectives such as full employment and removal of inequalities". The simultaneous pursuit of these objectives did not mean they were all deemed to be equally important, one reason being the unavoidable conflict between different objectives. Thus, the maximum use of idle labour for the purpose of development was the ideal that had to be tempered by the realisation that the rate at which idle labour can be absorbed is limited by the lack of necessary equipment and other materials needed to improve labour productivity. Moreover, the aim was not only to achieve full employment at current real wage rates but also equally to increase productivity of labour so as to ensure that larger employment can be provided at rising levels of income. The latter objective could be achieved only in the context of rising output and a substantial increase in the community's productive equipment which, in turn, was meant for investment.

Conflicting Objectives

It was felt that income redistribution and past accumulated wealth, regarded in principle as an alternative instrument for mitigating poverty and inequality, were impractical and undesirable ways to do so. This derives in part from the recognition that differential rewards are a necessary incentive to encourage skills, effort and enterprise. Also, at current levels of real income, even a fully egalitarian distribution would not be enough to eliminate poverty. Growth of income was thus essential. According to the First Plan, while inequalities were not to be condoned, it was important to ensure continuity of development without which, in fact, whatever measures might be adopted for promoting economic equality might only end up in dislocating production and harming prospects for ordered growth. Political constraints included taking into account opposition to any significant redistribution from the established urban rich, the nascent industrial entrepreneurs and the affluent propertied classes in rural areas. These groups wielded effective power and commanded the resources needed to contest elections, with the result that a large majority of legislators were drawn from their ranks. At the other end, while landless labourers, tenant farmers and small cultivators commanded a larger majority, they were not really effectively organised for political action. Keeping in mind these realities of power and the rejection of extremist solutions by the Congress

Constraints of Development

leadership, Constitution provisions in effect limited the scope for any far-reaching alterations in existing distribution of land and other property.

Objective of High Growth Rate

The major aim of policy has remained a high rate of growth, with a coordinated programme of development. The state played a leading role that was essential for raising the rate of savings and for ensuring a regulated flow of scarce resources to areas of high priority. Successive plans have regulated the level and composition of investment, especially in the public sector, to specified targets of aggregate income, both in the medium and long term, keeping in mind the volume of resources generated through domestic savings, external aid and export earnings and also interrelations between the different facets of the economy. Shortage of savings and foreign exchange were seen to be critical constraints on growth and every plan devised ways to overcome this shortage. While the First Plan focused on domestic savings, the Second and Third Plans took into account the prominence of foreign exchange, with the third in fact debating the feasibility of domestic resource mobilisation. The rationale for emphasis on heavy industry in the Second Plan rested on the balance of payments considerations.

Difference in Emphasis in Plans

Successive five-year plans have taken heed of the elements of growth strategy. The quantitative targets of output, income, and investment, the quality of data and the sophistication of analyses that underlie the programme vary from plan to plan. Significant changes of accent and emphasis in response to experience have ensured that each plan would have a specific focus. The First Plan was thus essentially a collation of public investment projects, perceived as part of the Post-War Reconstruction Programme. The Second Plan defined the development strategy in more precise terms and articulated the rationale for emphasising rapid expansion in the domestic production of metals and machinery. The strategy further took into account the possible resultant adverse effects, such as effects involving capital intensive investments on employment during the transitional period. It was suggested that a policy of special facilities and incentives be offered to encourage labour-intensive techniques for producing mass-consumer goods.

Third Plan

The late 1950s marked a sharp deterioration in balance of payments arising in part from stagnation of exports and in part due to the earlier liberal import policy. Given that large payment deficits existed despite the reimposing of strict import controls, the focus was now on the seriousness of the foreign exchange constraint. As follow-up, the Third Plan recognised that under optimistic assumptions, India would still face a foreign exchange deficit problem. Foreign aid was an important component of plan projections, taking into account the substantial increase in aid requirements in the immediate future. At the same time the plan posited that with more active export promotion and a planned use of aid to expand domestic production of import substitutes, dependence on aid could be reduced and then ended. Another important component of the Third Plan was the new ground it broke on population policy. The census figures of 1961 had revealed a very rapid increase in population, and the government undertook a bigger and more active role in organising a family planning programme. The overall strategy of development outlined in the Second Plan was criticised for neglecting agriculture and its inability to solve unemployment. The growing food shortages, persistent unemployment and inflation in the late 1950s led to new initiatives in the form of the intensive agriculture projects and a special rural works programme. The Third Plan retained its emphasis on rapid expansion of metal, machinery and basic chemical industries and stepped up the need to plan in advance key sectors, including the creation of organisations for planning, survey and design. The Third Plan addressed the problems of resource mobilisation, more importantly the role of fiscal policy in mobilising savings and promoting social justice. The situation in the early 1960s was a more optimistic one, despite food and foreign exchange shortages and inflation. A paper prepared in the Planning Commission in 1964 outlined a programme for guaranteeing a minimum income to everyone by 1975 involving a much higher rate of growth in output and investment and a large redistributive effort.

With the significant exception of land reforms, aimed at abolishing zamindari, imposing on the size of ownership holdings and protecting tenants,

policies for mitigating inequalities focused on achieving a more equal distribution of increases in income and wealth. The plans included a number of programmes designed to increase the welfare of the poorer underprivilged people in the rural areas. The poor were expected to benefit from a reduction in mortality resulting from the rapid expansion of highly subsidised public health facilities, water supply and sanitation. They were also provided with reservations, scholarships and other forms of assistance to permit them, particularly the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, to access higher education and training facilities better. In addition, there were special programmes on a limited scale for backward classes and tribal areas,' and these were aimed at increasing productivity of small and marginal farmers and landless labour and of drought-prone areas, all involving substantial subsidies to the beneficiaries.

Policies of Rural Reconstruction

The First Plan, launched in 1951, placed special emphasis on the increase of agricultural production in order to free India from its great dependence on foreign supplies. This was considered successful and production increased by 25 per cent over the five-year period. Examples of large-scale planning included the Bhakra-Nangal dam project near Ropar at the head of the Sutlej-Himalayan valley, and the great power and irrigation projects of the Damodar valley and the Hirakud valley. The Second Five-Year Plan was more ambitious, with the total outlay at 7,800 hundred crore rupees being more than the first. The emphasis being on industrialisation, it was now that the three great steel plants, already started during the First Plan and co-sponsored by Great Britain, West Germany and Russia, were developed. The plan aimed to increase the national income by 25 per cent. Owing to its larger scale, the Second Plan's performance was greater than that of the First Plan. The United States provided foreign loans that took care of credit difficulties. The Third Plan of 1961 involved an expenditure of 8,000 million pounds, and aimed at expanding basic industries and making India self-sufficient in its food supply. Difficulties increased in the supply of foreign currency despite aid provided by the World Bank, and these difficulties delayed the start of the Fourth Plan until 1969. The achievement of the first decade after independence included a rise of 42 per cent in national income, 20 per cent in per capita income and 16 per cent in consumption.

The plans notwithstanding, India experienced several economic problems during the years. During the first two plans there was statistical increase in India's gross national income and per capita income. New industries were providing new jobs and greater expectations; more money encouraged consumption and a feeling of having a good standard of living, with the middle classes being affected the most favourably. The burden of the plans were bearable then. There was a change from 1960 onwards. The growth in the national income declined from 4.3 per cent per annum to 3 per cent against the planned 7 per cent in the Third Plan. The per capita income remained static instead of increasing to somewhere between 8 and 9.5 per cent as it had done in each of the first two plans. With the Third Plan, instead of 'taking-off' in the economic sense, India faced currency, production and export difficulties. While some of this was the result of bad harvests (in 1963-64, 79.4 million tons of grain were produced against the planned 100 million), the main cause was the very large increase in population, a development the planners had not taken into account.

The Demographic Trends (1947-1964)

The Census of India 1951, was a troublesome task, being the first census of independent but divided India. The inter-country migration of people was still going on. The scars and trauma of the refugees in particular were fresh and under such circumstances data for census were collected.

In 1951, the population of India stood as 36,10,88,090 which rose to 43,92,34,771 in 1961. The population density, according to the Census of 1951 was 117, while it increased to 142 in 1961. Sex ratio decreased from 946 to 941 in 1961. Literacy rate in 1951 was 18.33 which increased to 28.3 in 1961. In 1951, 82.7 per cent of the population lived in villages which decreased to 82 per cent in 1961.

Many of the achievements and gains of planned development were practically neutralised by the growth in numbers of people. Social amenities could not be developed in pace with the growing

population. Infrastructure fell much short of the need. The food and industrial production could not meet the demands of the growing numbers.

Nehru's Vision of a Socialist and Welfare State

Jawaharlal Nehru's achievements in the task of consolidating independence, nation-building and nation-making were quite considerable. He clearly grasped that independence meant the capacity to resist economic and political domination. During most of the Nehruvian era, despite a multitude of problems and difficulties, there was a mood of hope and expectation in the country, a certain faith in its future, and a confidence in its future destiny.

Nehru's commitment to socialism continued after Independence. He kept up the campaign for the spread of the socialist idea and set up the aim of fundamental transformation of Indian society in a socialist direction. He defined Indian politics in terms of social change. In 1955, at Avadi, the Congress, under his leadership, adopted the goal of the establishment of a "socialistic pattern of society". In 1959, at Nagpur, the goal was redefined as socialism. Socialism was even more rigorously asserted at Bhubaneshwar in 1964. Throughout the period from 1947 to 1964, Nehru shifted leftwards ideologically—and this despite the trauma of the India-China War of 1962. Though he failed in building socialism, he is credited with carrying the socialist vision to millions and thus making socialism a part of the consciousness of the Indian people.

Nehru's ideas of how to build socialism in an underdeveloped country with a democratic polity were greatly influenced by his personal experience of the national movement and his critical study of the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet experiment.

In Indian conditions, Nehru viewed socialist transformation in terms of a series of reforms within existing structures which would ultimately amount to a revolution. Revolution, after all, could be a series of 'surgical operations' or reforms enacted through the due process of law by a democratic legislature. Socialist transformation might also be seen as a series of compromises, provided a compromise was not made on the basic principle. According to Nehru, socialism was the question of balancing two opposite forces: the urge to change and the urge for continuity.

Nehru believed that civil liberty and democracy were basic to socialism. Democracy was essential for socialism and there could be no real democracy without socialism. So close was the integration of the two in his approach that he often described socialism as economic democracy. Nehru often favoured a third way between the capitalist development of the West and the socialist development of the East—a reconciliation of the rival ideologies. He defined this third way as "socialism by democratic consent". He was critical of the capitalist democracies because it led to the supremacy of the profit motive, an acquisitive mentality, economic inequality, and growth of monopolies and economic concentration. He differed with communism mainly on two grounds: (i) absence of democracy and civil liberty, and (ii) recourse to and emphasis on violence.

Socialism by Democratic Consent

The most important aspect of Nehru's strategy was the belief that virtually the entire people should be carried by the socialist forces. It meant that socialist transformation required a societal consensus or the consent of the overwhelming majority of the people. He emphasised the need to carry all shades of public opinion with him. Nehru also visualised that the strategy of relying upon the whole people would reduce the hostility of the dominant, propertied classes who would, on the one hand, be faced with the will of the people and, on the other hand, not be threatened with total destruction. He was of the opinion that the middle strata, which was very large in India, had to be handled with care and caution. Any frontal attack on the propertied classes would push the middle strata and the powerful propertied classes into fascist position. Fascism had to be fought, when necessary, but it was better not to let the threat mature.

Need for Consensus

Nehru was convinced that the existing balance of socio-political forces did not favour the rapid introduction of socialist measures. He therefore worked within the limits of existing balance in favour of the poor and radical social change. For this, he relied a great deal on the processes

unleashed by adult franchise, spread of education, panchayati raj and cooperative institutions.

The economic policy under the Nehruvian socialism was that India was to have a mixed economy as a transitional stage for a long time. Socialism meant first of all planning. Then, it meant that the state was to own and start all basic and strategic industries. The public sector was to grow progressively both in trade and industry. Agriculture and small scale industries would remain in the private sector. Economic concentration and monopoly capitalism would not be permitted, while the cooperative principle would be encouraged all along the line. Socialism would organise small and medium industries through cooperatives. In general, planning, public sector, government control of private sector, state trading and cooperatives in agriculture and industry would be used to weaken reliance on the market forces and the profit motive.

Economic Policy

The aims of the Nehruvian model for growth and industrialisation of the Indian state and economy were to raise the standard of living through greater agricultural production to make India self-sufficient and enhance industrial development. The latter would increase production and jobs and stimulate trade, and increase the gross national product at a rate faster than the rate of population growth. Tied up with the model of economic growth was the vision for a progressive socio-cultural set-up. Nehru committed the Congress to universal education. There was a large extension of higher and technical education and of research studies. Many universities, institutes of technology and research centres were established; the emphasis was on science and technology because these spheres were thought to be the weakest during the British period. New research centres ranged from foodgrains and fertilisers to atomic research. General universities grew so much that the number of graduates who passed out of these institutes were more than the increased job opportunities created by the expansion of industry and commerce. However, in the case of elementary education, Nehru was hampered by the allotment of education to the states. The Centre took a greater interest in higher studies in the name of national interest but at the cost of neglecting primary education. Thus, universal elementary education was generally enforced in the large cities but neglected in the rural regions. Literacy at the time of Independence had been about 15 per cent; at the end of the Nehruvian era, it was reckoned at about 25-30 per cent, the ratio of boys to girls being two to one. The educationists ran into the traditional reluctance of the upper castes to educate the masses.

Objectives of Nehruvian Model

Education

In the area of civic rights too, important reforms were initiated despite orthodox opposition, particularly regarding rights of women. Nehru helped to reform the Hindu personal law, still largely based on the ancient text, *The Laws of Manu.* In this system the group overshadowed the individual and the woman was subordinate to the man. Despite opposition, the Hindu Succession Act and the Hindu Marriage Act came into force in 1955 and 1956, respectively. The first gave to women equal rights with men in the matter of succession to and the holding of property. The second legalised monogamy, providing for divorce with alimony and maintenance. Two further acts protected the Hindu widow and wives who were separated from their husbands were given maintenance provisions, and provided for the guardianship of minors and a stricter control of adoptions.

Civic Rights

There were provisions made for those labelled 'Scheduled Castes' in the Constitution because they were listed in separate state schedules. According to the 1961 Census, they numbered 14.5 million and there were nearly 30 million more classified as 'Scheduled Tribes'. Legislation was passed against discrimination in such matters as access to wells, shops and entertainment, but the main form of government action consisted of educational grants and quotas in employment. At another level, 'Panchayati Raj' was launched which was an effort to revive village life by giving rural communities local committees with independent powers subject to guidance and stimulus from local officials. In 1952, a pilot plan with 55 selected projects was launched with American help. Each area covered about 500 square miles and 500 villages, within which a wide programme of development including panchayats

Panchayat Raj

was inaugurated. This pilot scheme grew into the Panchayati Raj, as decided by the National Development Council in 1958. The panchayat, the cooperative and the school were the basic village institutions, and an elected panchayat was put in charge. All other activities, of women, youth, farming, culture of the area, drew from the panchayat. An ascending order of local activity was established from the village through the block and the zila to state headquarters. The Block Panchayat Samiti contained the elected presidents of village panchayats (sarpanch), as did the zila parishads. The process was initiated keeping in mind that 800,000 villages in India would be integrated in this manner.

The industrial welfare state that was created from the Nehruvian vision owed its origins to the varied set of influences to which its founder was exposed. Though a disciple of Gandhi, Nehru did not believe in non-violence. His early contact with the kisans of Uttar Pradesh (then the United Provinces) gave him an idea of the magnitude of India's poverty and introduced him to the evils of landlordism and entrenched property. He thus wanted socialism as the pattern for Indian society. But Nehru rejected communism following his visit to Russia in the 1920s, as the system was too regimented in its organisation and too harsh in its application. A passionate believer in personal rights and democracy, Nehru was convinced that no people living under a democratic regime would agree to pay the sort of price (forfeiture of democratic rights) that the Soviet regime had extracted from its people. Viewing socialist transformation as a process and not as an event, Nehru envisaged a gradual change for the transformation of India. He advocated industrialisation as the solution to poverty, but an industrialisation that required state regulation along socialist lines. Similarly, the entrenched caste system could be tackled education with an emphasis on higher levels and technical skills, and social reforms. The Nehruvian model for development did not face any major opposition during the early decades of independent India. Given the Nehruvian mystique and Congress stature, people accepted their prescription for India's ills, with no overt opposition to their rule and the real opposition came from within the ranks of the Congress.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

Science for Development

From the very beginning the policy-makers, especially India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, were convinced of the indispensability of science and technology in economic and social developments of the country and in providing solutions to its problems. It was evident when Nehru in a message to the Indian Science Congress (ISC) in January 1938 said: "It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom, and tradition of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people." Considering planning to be science in action, and the scientific method to be the very essence of planning, Nehru reiterated this view in the Scientific Policy Resolution (SPR) passed by the Lok Sabha in March 1958.

National Laboratories and Other Institutions

As part of the effort to promote self-sustaining scientific and technological growth, the foundation stone of the National Physical Laboratory, the country's first national laboratory, was laid on January 4, 1947. Subsequently, a network of seventeen national laboratories, specialising in different areas of research, was established. Highlighting the importance of science and scientific research in the country's socio-economic and strategic needs, Nehru assumed the chairmanship of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) himself, which provided both finance and direction for the newly established national laboratories and other scientific institutions. The need for generating a scientifically and technologically trained workforce for the country led to the establishment of an institute of technology, patterned after the US' Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at Kharagpur (West Bengal) in 1952. Four more of these Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) were established later at Madras, Bombay, Kanpur and Delhi and more were created including one at Roorkee (which was the earliest training institute for engineers established by the British) and the one at Guwahati in Assam. The extent of the effort put in developing science and its success is revealed by the expenditure

on scientific research and science-based activities which increased from Rs 1.10 crore in 1948-49 to Rs 85.06 crore in 1965-66. The number of scientific and technical personnel rose from 188,000 in 1950 to 731,500 in 1965. The enrolment at the undergraduate level in engineering and technology rose from 13,000 in 1950 to 78,000 in 1965. Similarly, the number of undergraduate students studying agriculture increased from about 2,600 in 1950 to 14,900 in 1965.

Indian Space Programme—A Historical Perspective

The genesis of the Indian space programme lay in the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) which was established in 1962 by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). In the year 1969, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was formed under the DAE and later in 1972 the space programme was formalised with the constitution of the Space Commission and the Department of Space (DOS) to formulate and implement space policies in the country. The DOS is the executive wing of the Space Commission which operates through the ISRO, the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), National Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere Radar Facility (NMRF) besides sponsoring research projects in other institutions.

Institutions for Space Science

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) had its beginning as the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) in 1962. Thumba is located close to the magnetic equator in Thiruvananthapuram. It was renamed in honour of Dr Vikram Sarabhai, who is regarded as the father of the Indian space programme. In November 1963, India marked its first venture into space, with the launch of a two-stage **Nike Apache** rocket from the VSSC (then TERLS). The first rockets launched by India were built in the United States of America.

Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Shriharikota Range (SDSC-SHAR) Sriharikota Island, in the Bay of Bengal, was chosen in 1969 as a satellite launching station. In 1971, the centre became operational with the launch of an RH-125 sounding rocket. The centre was named as 'Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR', on September 5, 2002, in memory of Satish Dhawan, the former chairman of the ISRO. The achievements of the SHAR include the establishment of launch complexes for sounding rockets, SLV-3, ASLV and PSLV. The complex has been augmented for GSLV too.

In 1972, under the aegis of the ISRO, the **Space Applications Centre** (SAC) was established in Ahmedabad to promote research and development in space applications. Some of the achievements of the SAC include development of communication and meteorological payloads for INSAT satellites, and optical and microwave payloads for the IRS satellites. It also lends its infrastructure to conduct training courses for the students of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP).

To monitor and control the geostationary and geosynchronous satellites launched by the ISRO, the **Master Control Facility** (MCF) was set up in 1982 in Hassan (Karnataka). The second MCF was established in Bhopal in 2005.

The **Physical Research Laboratory** (PRL), established in November 1947, is referred to as the cradle of space sciences in India. The PRL, located in Ahmedabad, has been functioning as India's national institute for space and allied sciences. This research laboratory has ongoing research programmes in astronomy, astrophysics, atmospheric sciences and aeronomy. In the beginning, the PRL was involved in research on cosmic rays and properties of the upper atmosphere. Later, with grants from the Atomic Energy Commission, research areas were expanded to include theoretical physics and radio physics.

The **Laboratory for Electro-Optics Systems** was established in 1993 at the same place where the first Indian satellite Aryabhatta was fabricated in 1975 i.e. Bangalore (now Bengaluru). The laboratory has developed sensors for tracking the earth and stars for the satellites which were launched when space research was initiated in India. It has developed sensors for satellites like Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Apple, IRS, SROSS, INSAT-2 and even

participated in India's first moon mission, Chandrayan-1.

In 1989, the **Development and Educational Communication Unit** of the ISRO was established. It has been, since then, involved in societal research with the sole objective of bringing India's indigenously developed space technology to the people of rural India. The unit gets the necessary technical support from the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad.

The **National Atmospheric Research Laboratory** (NARL), funded by the Department of Space, was started in 1992 as National Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere (MST) Radar Facility (NMRF). The NMRF, in September 2005, was expanded into a research institute and renamed as National Atmospheric Research Laboratory. At present, it is an autonomous research institute engaged in fundamental and applied research in the field of atmospheric sciences.

The year 2000 saw the establishment of the **North-Eastern Space Applications Centre** (NESAC). It is a joint initiative of the Department of Space and the North Eastern Council to enhance usage of remote sensing technology to discover natural minerals in the north-eastern states of India with the help of the latest space science and technology.

India's Space Ventures

The beginning of India's space programme was marked by the launch of the first sounding rocket from the TERLS on November 21, 1963. The first rockets were two-stage rockets that India imported from Russia and France. While Russia's M-100 could carry a payload of 70 kg to an altitude of 85 km, the French Centaure was capable of reaching 150 km with a payload of approximately 30 kg.

From 1965, the ISRO started launching indigenously made sounding rockets. By 1975, all sounding rocket activities were consolidated under the Rohini Sounding Rocket (RSR) Programme. The first truly Indian sounding rocket was RH-75. At present, the ISRO has established two main space systems–the Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) series and Indian Remote Sensing Satellites (IRS) system.

The first indigenously built Indian satellite was Arybabhatta which was launched in April 1975. It was placed in orbit by the Russian Cosmos rocket from the cosmodrome at Baikanur (now in Kazakhstan). Later in June 1979, an experimental satellite for earth observations, Bhaskara-I was placed in orbit by an inter-cosmos rocket from a Russian cosmodrome (Volgograd). It was the first experimental remote sensing satellite built in India.

On June 19, 1981, APPLE, an experimental geostationary communication satellite, was placed in orbit by Ariane rocket from Kourou in French Guyana.

A major breakthrough in Indian space technology came with the development of Space Capsule Recovery Experiment (SRE-1). A 550-kg capsule intended to demonstrate the technology of an orbiting platform for performing experiments in micro-gravity conditions was launched into a 635-km polar SSO as a co-passenger with CARTOSAT-2. Small and experimental satellites–ANUSAT (Anna University Satellite), STUDSAT (student satellite), YOUTHSAT, etc. were sent into space by the ISRO to promote a sense of innovative participation in the students of India. The nanosatellite Jugnu weighing 3 kg, designed and developed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur under the guidance of ISRO, was also launched by PSLV-C18 in October 2011.

The Indian National Satellite (INSAT) system, which comprises satellites placed in geo-stationary orbits, was established in 1983 with the commissioning of INSAT-1B. The INSAT system was a joint venture of the DOS, the Department of Telecommunication (DOT), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), All India Radio and Doordarshan.

The INSAT-1 series, comprising INSAT-1A, INSAT-1B, INSAT-1C and INSAT-1D, was built by the American company, Ford Aerospace and it could partially serve India's needs. In July 1992, INSAT-2A was launched from French Guyana. The INSAT-2A was the first in a series of five satellites to be built by the ISRO to replace the ageing INSAT-1D. Likewise INSAT-2C (December 1995), INSAT-2D (1997) and INSAT-2E (1999) were launched from French Guyana. In 2000, the INSAT-3 series built by the ISRO started with the launch

of INSAT-3B. In the coming years, INSAT-3C (2002), INSAT-3A (April 2003), INSAT-3E (September 2003) and INSAT-3D (August 2013) were launched. INSAT-4 series satellites include INSAT-4A, INSAT-4B and INSAT-4CR.

The GSAT series of satellites started with the launch of GSAT-1 in April 2001. In fact, the GSAT satellites are India's indigenously developed technologies of communications satellites used for digital audio, data and video broadcasting. These are also part of the INSAT system. In May 2003, GSAT-2, a 2000-kg class experimental communication satellite was launched from the SHAR and placed in orbit by Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)-D2. In September 2004, GSAT-3, which is famous as EDUSAT, was launched. GSAT-3 is the first dedicated 'Educational Satellite'.

In May 2011, GSAT-8 was successfully launched by Ariane-5 VA-202 from Kourou, French Guyana. Weighing about 3100 kg at lift-off, it is configured to carry 24 high power transponders in Ku-band and a two-channel GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN).

Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellite system, started in 1988 with the launch of IRS-1A, has become the largest civilian remote sensing satellite constellation in the world. The successors of the IRS-1A are IRS-1B (1991), IRS-1C (1995), IRS-1D (1998), IRS-1E (1993), IRS-1D (1997), IRS-P4 or OCEANSAT-1, IRS-P6 or RESOURCESAT-1, IRS-P5 or CARTOSAT-1, CARTOSAT-2, CARTOSAT-2A, OCEANSAT-2 (2009), CARTOSAT-2B (2010), RESOURCESAT-1, RESOURCESAT-2 (2011), and so on. The IRS satellite system provides imageries in a variety of spatial resolutions, spectral bands and swaths. The data is used for several applications covering agriculture, water resources, urban development, mineral prospecting, environment, forestry, drought and flood forecasting, ocean resources and disaster management.

India has developed the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). The first satellite in the series IRNSS-1A was launched in July 2013 by PSLV-C22 from the SHAR and placed in a geo-synchronous orbit. IRNSS-1B is the second satellite in the series launched in April 2014.

Development of Launch Vehicle Technology in India

Since Independence India has also made tremendous strides in launch vehicle technology to achieve self-reliance in the satellite launch vehicle programme with operationalisation of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). In July 1980, India demonstrated the first successful launch of SLV-3, which carried the 40-kg Rohini satellite. With this India became the sixth country in the world to put into orbit its own satellite. The 22.7-metre-tall SLV-3 was an all solid four stage vehicle with a lift-off weight of 17 tonnes.

The Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) got its first success in the third attempt. It released a 106-kg satellite Rohini series (SROSS-C) into orbit. In May 1994 with its second consecutive success ASLV-D4, launched from Sriharikota, placed the 113 kg SROSS-C2 satellite, with a life span of 3 years, into orbit.

The development of the PSLV represented ISRO's first attempt to design and develop an operational vehicle that could be used to put into orbit application satellites. The first developmental flight of the PSLV failed but the second one proved a grand success for India's space programme. The first successful PSLV put the remote sensing satellite IRS-P2 into orbit at an altitude of 820 km. Similar successes were repeated by PSLV-D3 (1996), PSLV-C1 (1997), PSLV-C2 (1999) and PSLV-C3 (2001). It should be noted that the PSLV-C3 carried satellites of Germany and Belgium, besides the Indian TES weighing 1,109 kg. The ISRO received a fee of about $ 8,50,000 each from Belgium and Germany. With this India entered into the highly competitive commercial market for launching foreign satellites.

Development of Cryogenic Engine in India

In 1986 Indian scientists began developing a one-tonne cryogenic engine to try and understand how to handle liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen. At the same time, a design team was formed at ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Centre at Mahendragiri to come up with the design of a seven-tonne turbo-fed engine. In 1990, India approved an offer by the Soviet Union's Glavkosmos

after rejecting offers from the US and France for both the sale of engines and transfer of technology. However, the Indian scientists did not have access to everything and could not learn as much as they wanted to.

In 2009, the ISRO reached a milestone when the indigenous cryogenic engine was tested at Mahendragiri and cleared for a full flight. But it failed due to the fact that the cryogenic upper stage could not sustain ignition. In December 2010, the second developmental launch of the GSLV-D3 ended in an explosion due to a technical snag in the first stage. In 2012, a high altitude test facility was built in Mahendragiri to demonstrate successful ignition for simulated flight conditions.

Space Missions

On October 22, 2008, India became the sixth nation in the world to launch a moon mission– Chandrayaan-1. The remarkable achievement about precisely inserting Chandrayaan into the lunar orbit was that India did it in its very first attempt, where the US failed in its several initial attempts.

On November 5, 2013, the ISRO's PSLV-C25 rocket launched the Mangalyaan spacecraft in a bid to fulfil India's ambitions of reaching the red planet, Mars. It was India's first interplanetary mission. The success of the Mangalyaan has made the ISRO the fourth space agency in the world to reach Mars and the first nation in the world to do so in its first attempt.

History of Computer Science in India

The computer age in India started in 1955 with the installation of Hollerith Electronic Computer Model-2M (HEC-2M) at the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata. The computer, HEC-2M, was designed by A.D. Booth in England. Mahalanobis, the founder of the ISI, had ordered a computer from the British Tabulating Machines (BTM) which agreed to sell a computer to the ISI without any technical support. The ISI was required to install and maintain the computer using its own scientists and engineers. For this, Mohi Mukherjee and Amresh Roy were sent to England in December 1954, to observe the design and assembly of the computer and to gather requisite information needed to effectively use and maintain the machine to be installed at Kolkata. The computer was ready in June 1955. It arrived in July 1955 and started working in August 1955.

In the 1950s, a group led by R. Narasimhan at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai began designing a 'pilot' computer. It was ready in 1956. A year later, in 1957, the same group started working to design a full scale computer. It should be noted that the ILLIAC team of the University of Illinois helped the TIFR team a lot. The machine got completed in 1959, was commissioned in 1960 and was installed in the new building of TIFR in 1962. It was named TIFRAC (TIFR Automatic Calculator) by the then prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Indians found the HEC-2M, installed at the ISI, Kolkata, very difficult to use. Mahalanobis started searching for another easy-to-use machine. In 1958, he negotiated with the USSR, with the help of the United Nations Trade Assistance programme, to send URAL-1. The URAL-1 was a first generation machine using vacuum tubes, almost similar to TIFRAC. In 1958, the ISI was the only institution in the country with two working computers and a group that could programme them and maintain them.

In 1960, after the inauguration of the TIFRAC, the ISI made an endeavour to build a second generation digital computer using transistors. Thus a project started with the collaboration of the Jadavpur University, Kolkata. The machine, named ISIJU, got completed in 1966 but the project was declared unsuccessful.

In 1963, India bought two computers from the USA–CDC 3600 and IBM 1620. The IBM 1620 was installed at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) while the CDC 3600 was put in the campus of the TIFR. In 1966, the IITK bought an IBM 7044 (with funds provided by the Indian government). The first commercial computer to be installed in India was an IBM 1401. It was used in Mumbai by an oil marketing company, ESSO Standard Eastern Inc.

The decade of the 1970s was the period when there was self-reliant growth of the computer industry in India, through the Department of Electronics (set up in 1971) and the Electronics

Commission of India Limited (ECIL). The ECIL designed the Trombay Digital Computer (TDC-12) and sold this and its other versions in the market. In the same decade, Tata Consultancy Limited (TCS) was established and by 1975, it began to export software. The National Informatics Centre (NIC), established in the 1970s, set up networks such as NICENET and the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), which provided opportunities for data sharing, monitoring and e-mail. In 1976, the Computer Maintenance Corporation (CMC) was set up to provide users a complete range of services connected with all aspects of computers, that is, as a one-point computer support company.

In the 1980s, two interesting examples of the adage 'necessity is the mother of invention' came about. The need to make voting and vote-counting tamper-proof during elections in India, led to the manufacture of the electronic voting machine (EVM) by the ECIL and Bharat Electronics Limited. The imposition of computer export ban by the USA on India led Indian scientists to design parallel processing machines, called PARAM. PARAM 8000 is considered India's first supercomputer. It was indigenously built in 1990 by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and was replicated and installed at ICAD Moscow in 1991 under the Russian collaboration.

India has achieved a great deal in the field of computer science in terms of self-reliance.

Development of Nuclear Science

India's endeavours in nuclear science and technology can be traced back to the early 1940s when Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha, in March 1944, submitted a proposal to the Sir Dorab Tata Trust to establish a nuclear research institute. Hence on December 19, 1945, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) was created and Dr Bhabha was appointed its first director. After independence, the Government of India passed the Atomic Energy Act in April 1948. Under the Act, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) was established.

As early as on June 26, 1946 Jawaharlal Nehru declared: "As long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest devices for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop her scientific researches and I hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal." In 1948, Nehru, the then prime minister of independent India, declared at the time of the establishment of the IAEC, "We must develop this atomic energy quite apart from war–indeed I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes... Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way." Nehru played a prominent role in international politics. He became the founder-member of the Non-Aligned Movement, and advocated the idea of nuclear disarmament. However, he refused to stop India's nuclear options at a time when many countries of the world continued to maintain nuclear arsenals.

In January 1954, the IAEC made a decision to establish a new facility–the Atomic Energy Establishment, Trombay (AEET), which later became the 'Indian Los Alamos'. In August 1954 the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was set up with Dr Bhabha as its secretary. The DAE was directly answerable to the Prime Minister of India. The atomic energy budget was increased 12 times during 1954 and 1956. By 1958, the DAE consumed one-third of India's research budget and in 1959, the AEET had more than one thousand scientists and engineers.

In 1955, construction work of India's first nuclear reactor, Apsara (1 MW research reactor) started with British assistance. Apsara achieved criticality on August 4, 1957. With this, India became the first nuclear power of Asia (except the USSR). In September 1955, Canada (after more than a year of negotiations) agreed to supply India with a powerful research reactor (40 MW). In February 1956, the USA, under its programme, 'Atoms for Peace' agreed to supply 21 tonnes of heavy water. The new reactor was dubbed the Canada-India Reactor, US or CIRUS (commonly written as Cirus). Cirus went critical at the AEET in January 1966.

The procurement of the Cirus was a turning point in the nuclear history of India. Even though the sale was made with the understanding that the

reactor would be used for peaceful purposes, it was a time when there were no international policies to regulate nuclear technology transfers. And in fact India was conscious to ensure that no harsh regulation accompanied the reactor. Now, India started a programme to manufacture the natural uranium fuel indigenously. The programme got success under the metallurgist Brahm Prakash when he succeeded in developing the techniques for producing the precisely manufactured and high quality material.

In July 1958, the project Phoenix was envisaged to build a plant with a capacity of 20 tonnes of fuel a year. This resulted in the construction of a plutonium plant at Trombay (work began in March 1961 and it was commissioned in mid-1964, after the death of Nehru).

In 1974, India, for the first time, tested a nuclear device (codenamed 'Smiling Buddha') at Pokhran in Rajasthan. The plutonium produced in the Cirus reactor was used in the Pokhran test. The test raised concerns in the world that nuclear technology supplied for peaceful purposes could be diverted to manufacturing of nuclear weapons. In 1998, further nuclear tests were done under the codename 'Operation Shakti'.

India, however, is determined not to use nuclear weapons first. The nuclear programme is more prominently directed towards the production of nuclear energy to supplement power production. To this end, there are nuclear power plants established at various places in India.

HISTORY OF ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION IN MODERN INDIA

In 1992, Ramchandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil made a systematic attempt in the writing of the environmental history of India, through their monograph, *This Fissured Land*. The authors marked that in pre-colonial India, resource utilisation was in harmony with nature and resource sharing among various strata of the society was cordial. According to them, the caste society with different claims on different resources led to a state of equilibrium and in turn provided stability to the resource demand and supply.

Sumit Guha, another noted historian, in his book, *Environment and Ethnicity,* tried to bridge the gap between pre-British and British period. His area of study was the regions dominated by the Marathas where rich repositories of Maratha documents have been put to excellent use. In his study he avoided the illusionary divide between forest and agriculture and notions of ethnicity in the wider context of environment. Sumit Guha has demonstrated with fresh evidence that tribal polities did not evolve in isolation. Further, he has pointed out that the large areas of Western Plateau (Maharashtra) outside the rain-drenched Konkan coast were rendered treeless even during the heydays of Maratha rule. To analyse the deeper continuity, Sumit Guha has relied upon archaeological as well as anthropological evidences to substantiate historical evidence thereby stressing the significance of processes rather than watersheds or events.

In the analysis of the State's perspective on land, it has been marked that even in the pre-British period, rulers like the Marathas saw the forest as an obstacle–tree cover multiplies the danger from robbers, rebels and wild animals. Forest clearance had been also equated in terms of fresh revenue possibilities though it had been an arduous and difficult task.

Another important area of Indian environmental history is the attempt made by historians to challenge the portrayal of the adverse role played by the British. Such historians, for instance, David Hardiman, have argued that it was the British who initiated a systematic forest conservation policy in India. It has been argued that the original 'greens' in India were colonial officials. They have tried to prove that the colonial forest policy was rooted in an enlightened understanding of environmental issues developed in particular by a group of Scottish medical personnel serving in the colonies, who sought initially to understand the connection between climate and health, but very quickly became experts in botany and ecology. These medicos were the first to suggest that there was a close connection between deforestation and environmental desication and pressed strongly for State-led conservation of forests.

It is clear from the positions taken by both the protagonists as well as the opponents that the colonial environmental agenda as reflected in the British forest policy in India was based on the premise that forest resources were valuable natural assets on which the State possessed absolute proprietary rights. The inherent meaning of this premise was that the communities exercising traditional rights over forests were not justified in their claims and should be de-legitimised from such claims in order to protect the forests.

Major Factors of Deforestation

The Industrial Revolution in England exploited the famous oak forests (of England) to the extent that even their traces had begun to vanish, with timber becoming an urgent requirement. The maritime expansion and wars among colonial powers for grabbing more colonies had maintained a constant pressure on the ship-building industry. In such a situation Indian teak was discovered as a product of quality and durability. The importance of Indian timber for England may be gauged from the general perception that England was saved in its war against Napoleon due to a regular supply of teak timber from India.

Another factor responsible for the destruction of forests in India was the expansion of railways in India. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the laying of railway lines all across India required a very large number of sleepers for providing the foundational base—the railway tracks were placed on them. The volume of this destruction can be roughly gauged from the figure of 35,000 trees needed annually to meet the Madras presidency requirement of nearly 2,50,000 sleepers. The sub-Himalayan trees of Garhwal and Kumaon were completely stripped. The destruction of forests was also caused by a policy of felling trees without accurately estimating the requirement of sleepers. In fact, a large number of trees rotted at the felling site itself.

Environmental Policies: A Politico-Legal Analysis

From the establishment of the forest department in 1857 to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010, India has come a long way in trying to cope with the problem of declining forest cover. In the colonial period, to rationalise unbridled exploitation as well as to appease the voices of opposition from both within and outside officialdom, British colonisers took some measures that were given the shape of policy. Following are some of the major milestones in the evolution of forest policies under the British rule and in independent India.

Policies under British Rule

Establishment of the Forest Department Governor-General Dalhousie, called for the establishment of a forest department owing to the failure of forest administration up to the revolt of 1857. The idea behind such a step was to ensure a sustained supply of timber for the sleepers of the railways. In 1865, the Imperial Forest Department was formed and Dietrich Brandis, a German botanist, was appointed the first Inspector General of Forests.

First Indian Forest Act, 1865 Hurriedly drafted, the Act was the first attempt by the colonial State to assert its monopoly. It was mainly passed to facilitate the acquisition of the forest areas that had been earmarked for railway supplies. It merely sought to establish the claims of the State to the forests it immediately required, subject to the provision that the existing rights of the people were not abridged. The Act also empowered forest officials to issue local rules for conserving forests.

Indian Forest Act, 1878 Since the Forest Act of 1865 had been drafted in a haphazard manner, soon after its enactment, efforts began for a more comprehensive piece of legislation. An initial draft prepared by Brandis was circulated for discussion and in 1875 a conference of forest officers was convened to frame a new Act. Three positions cropped up in the course of the deliberations on the proposed legislation: (i) The *annexationists* wanted complete State control over all forest areas; (ii) the *pragmatists* argued for State management of ecologically sensitive and strategically valuable forests, allowing others to remain under communal systems of management; (iii) the third position, often called the *populist* stand, completely rejected all forms of State interference holding that tribals and peasants must exercise sovereign rights over woodland.

The debate was finally resolved in favour of

the annexationists. Thus Brandis' memorandum of 1875 together with Baden Powel's paper formed the basis of the 1878 Act. The Act cleared all confusions regarding the proprietary status of the forests and made an attempt to wipe out the centuries-old customary rights of the rural populations and forest dwellers. It classified the forests into three categories:

(i) 'Reserved' Forests: In such regions, which were compact and connected to the towns, a legal separation of rights was aimed at. A permanent settlement either extinguished all private rights or transferred them elsewhere or in exceptional cases allowed their limited exercise.

(ii) 'Protected' Forests: Such forests were also controlled by the State but here the rights were recorded and not settled. The control of the State was firmly maintained by delineating detailed provisions for the reservation of a particular tree species when it became commercially viable and closing the forests whenever required for grazing and fuelwood collection.

(iii) 'Village' Forests: Such forests were under the control of the villages and were used by their inhabitants.

Policy pronouncements were supported by setting up institutes to promote better utilisation of forest resources. A forest school was established at Dehradun in 1878 for the training of forest rangers. This school received the status of a forest college in 1906 after which forest officers also began to receive training in India.

Forest Policy, 1894 One very harsh provision of this policy was the fact that forest preservation was placed secondary to agriculture. It said, "Wherever an effective demand for culturable land exists and can be supplied by forest area, the land should ordinarily be relinquished without hesitation." Besides, a fourfold classification of forests was also made:

(a) Forests (mainly on hill slopes), the preservation of which is important on physical and climatic grounds;

(b) Forests which supply valuable timbers for commercial purpose;

(c) Minor forests, generally specified to meet the fuel fodder and timber requirements of the dependent communities;

(d) Pasture lands, to cater to the requirements of the local population.

Indian Forest Act of 1927 This may be termed as the first comprehensive piece of legislation on forests in the pre-independent era. It is notable that with some amendments in the subsequent years, the Indian Forest Act of 1927 continues to be operational even today. Some of the basic features of the 1927 Act were as follows.

(i) It enhanced the powers of the State to create reserved forests, village forests and protected forests.

(ii) It awarded penalties for the violation of the Act.

(iii) It envisaged State regulation of timber and non-timber forest produce.

(iv) It formalised the duties and powers of the forest bureaucracy.

Critique of Pre-colonial Environmental Policies

There were no provisions for development of forest infrastructure or forest-based industries under the colonial policies. Unlike industrial and agricultural commissions, no commission was set up to promote forest wealth. Wildlife protection was never important for the British. Forestry research and education were taken up by the State but no follow-up action was taken. There was no long-term positive policy that would result in an increase in the forest area. Even the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission of India (1928) and Sir Herbert Howard Committee (1944) were not given importance.

Environmental Policies in Independent India

Independent India inherited the colonial policies relating to forests. There was no environmental policy as such. Consciousness of environmental protection as a whole came much later. However, the spatial and temporal context of the old legislations could not fit independent India's requirements. The population of India had increased substantially and so had the attendant demands of fuel, food, fodder, timber, etc. Urbanisation and industrial development had also increased as had the defence necessities.

The growing realisation of forest as essential to the physical and climatic balance of a country had assumed specific importance in the context of two factors—firstly, the rapid deforestation during the two World Wars by the colonial State and

secondly, the heedless exploitation of private forests by native princely states and zamindars during the last years of the British rule. Under such circumstances, a radical change in approach was much needed. Given below is a chronological account of efforts made in this direction in independent India.

Central Board of Forestry (1950) The beginning of the new approach in independent India started with the constitution of the Central Board of Forestry (CBF) to guide the government in formulation of various policies and programmes. The meeting and recommendations of the CBF resulted in the pronouncement of a new National Forest Policy on May 12, 1952.

National Forest Policy, 1952 The preamble of the first forest policy of free India spelt out six supreme essentials for the formulation of the policy, including balanced and complementary land use; balanced physical and climatic conditions; checking denudation in the mountainous regions, erosion along big rivers and invasion of the sea-lands on the coastal tracts. The policy advocated that one-third of the geographical area of the country should have forest cover and further suggested that mountainous regions which were more prone to erosion and denudation should have 60 per cent area under forests whereas the plains can have 20 per cent forested area. The policy suggested that there should be no diversion of forestland for agricultural purpose anywhere in the country. This was a remarkable departure from the colonial policy. Also, proper attention was to be paid to the preservation of rare fauna like the lion, one-horned rhino etc. For this, sanctuaries and national parks were to be set up.

National Forest Policy, 1988 The flaws and shortcomings of the 1952 policy coupled with the realisation that it had been unable to address the multifarious issues of independent India promoted the formulation of a new forest policy. The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) recommended that there were two important bases on which the National Forest Policy should rest–

(i) Meeting the present and future requirements for protective and recreative functions of forests; and

(ii) Meeting the demand of industrial wood for forest-based industries, defence, communications and other public purposes as well as fuelwood and fodder for the agricultural community.

The next development which influenced the National Forest Policy, 1988, was the passage of the Forest Conservation Act (1980). Another important event of 1980 was the constitution of the N.D. Tiwari Committee to examine the adequacy of the existing administrative, legal and institutional arrangements for protecting the environment. The committee recommended inclusion of fuel and fodder supply in the Minimum Needs Programme.

In 1987, a meeting of the central board of forestry, presided over by the prime minister and attended by chief ministers of different states, was held to discuss the nature of future forest policy. The new forest policy, announced in December 1988, was a marked departure from the 1952 National Forest Policy in that it aimed at conservation. Henceforward, forests were not to be exploited for industrial and other commercial purposes but were meant to conserve soil and environment and meet the subsistence needs of the local people. The vital points of the 1988 policy were–

(i) maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and restoration of ecological equilibrium;

(ii) meeting the basic needs of the people, especially fuel wood, fodder and small timber for the rural and tribal people;

(iii) maintaining the natural relationship between forests and the tribal and other poor people living in and around forests by protecting their traditional rights and concessions in the forests; and

(iv) preservation of natural heritage by conserving the natural forests and protecting the vast genetic resources for the benefit of the future generations.

Establishment of Ministry of Environment and Forests In June 1972, the United Nations' Stockholm Conference on Human Environment propounded the concept of 'ecodevelopment' implying a process of ecologically sound development of positive management of the environment for human benefit. The Constitution of India was amended by the 42nd Amendment

Act in 1976 to incorporate environmental concerns in the document, vide Articles 48A and 51A. In 1980, the recommendations of N.D. Tiwari Committee led to the establishment of the Department of Environment in November 1980 as a nodal agency for environmental protection and ecodevelopment in the country. In 1985, this department was upgraded to the Ministry of Environment and Forests. In 2014, it was renamed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). It is the nodal agency of the Central government for overseeing the implementation of India's environmental and forest policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including lakes and rivers, biodiversity, forests and wildlife; ensuring the welfare of animals; and prevention and abatement of pollution.

Environmental Policy and Legislation in India

Environmental Policy refers to a course of action relating to human activities that aims at preventing or mitigating their harmful impact on nature and its resources. It attempts to ensure that human-induced changes to the environment do not affect humans themselves in a harmful manner.

Environmental policy generally addresses environ-mental issues like management of our ecosystem, protection of our biodiversity and natural resources, conservation of wildlife and endangered species, management of waste, and air and water pollution.

The earliest laws relating to some environmental concerns were the Bengal Smoke Nuisance Act of 1905 and the Bombay Smoke Nuisance Act of 1912 for controlling air pollution. Wild Birds and Animal Protection Act was enacted in 1912. The River Boards Act of 1956 was enacted for regulation and development of inter-state rivers. The Insecticide Act was enacted in 1968 to regulate import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution and use of insecticides to prevent risk from them to humans and fauna. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 governs wildlife conservation and protection of endangered species and prohibits trade in them. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 was enacted to deal with water pollution. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act came in 1981. But it was with the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 that the government was empowered to take steps to protect the environment as a whole.

The Environment (Protection) Act was passed by the Indian Parliament on May 23, 1986. Through this Act, which refers to the Stockholm Conference of 1972 and Article 253 of the Indian Constitution, the Union government has now considerable powers for preventing, control of and abatement of environmental pollution. The Act covers handling of hazardous substances, prevention of environ-mental accidents, research, inspection of polluting units, setting up of laboratories and dissemination of information.

We may also mention in this context the launch of the Ecomark scheme in 1991 to encourage consumers to buy products of less harmful environmental impact. The Green Rating Project aims to recognise good environmental performance. It is for creating environmental awareness as well as bringing industrialists, environmentalists and others on a common platform to ensure industrialisation involves environmental sustainability. It is built on voluntary disclosure by companies and the rating system it involves provides a 'reputational incentive'.

The National Environment Policy (NEP), 2006 was made by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to view the key environmental challenges, their causes and effects, objectives of policy formulation and strategies and action programme to satisfy the objectives and mechanisms that need to be implemented and reviewed.

Botanical Survey of India

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) was established on February 13, 1890, with the basic objective being to explore the plant resources of the country and to identify the plant species with economic virtues. Sir George King, the superintendent of the 'Royal Botanic Garden', Calcutta was appointed its first ex-officio Honorary Director. After independence, the BSI was reorganised as a part of scientific development of the country. At present, it works as the apex research organisation under the MoEFCC for carrying out taxonomic and floristic studies on wild plant resources in the country.

Chipko Movement—A Satyagraha for Environmental Conservation

The Chipko Movement is generally associated with the struggle of the people of Uttarakhand to protect the forests of the region. Launched in the 1970s, the genesis of the Chipko Movement is traced to the changes effected in the management and use of forest resources in the Garhwal region by the English settlers and by the rulers of the hill kingdom. The term *chipko* was derived from a poem composed by a folk-poet of the region, Ghan Shyam Taturi. The immediate event that sparked off the Chipko Movement was the stopping of forest felling by a group of peasants in a remote Himalayan village Gopeshwar on March 27, 1973. The state forest department had auctioned the trees on that area to a sports goods manufacturing unit of Allahabad. The peasants embraced the trees physically to prevent their being cut.

This embrace—*chipko*—symbolised the union of humans with nature: nature could be defiled only after the death of the humans who had embraced the trees. Following this, under the leadership of Sundarlal Bahuguna, a march was organised in the district of Chamoli and very soon the movement spread to Uttarkashi and then to the rest of the hilly region.

Ramchandra Guha, in his book, *Environmentalism: A Global History,* writes, "Chipko Movement was representative of a wide spectrum of natural resources conflicts that erupted in different parts of India in the 1970s and 1980s—conflicts over access to forests, fish and grazing resources; conflicts over the effects of industrial pollution and mining; and conflicts over the silting of large dams. One can understand each of these conflicts sequentially, as an unfolding of the processes of *Degradation – Shortages – Protest – Controversy (local) – Controversy (national)*. Applying this scheme to Chipko, for instance, we note that deforestation in the hills led on the one hand to shortages of fuel, fodder and small timber for local communities and on the other to shortages of raw material for wood-based industry (with Himalayan timber being especially prized as the only source of softwood in India). When the State inclined markedly in favour of one party to the conflict, namely the industry, the other party, i.e., peasants, responded through collective action. Picked up by a press that is amongst the most voluble in the world, the protests then gave shape to a debate on how best the Himalayan forests should be managed – by communities, the State, or private capital; on what species should be planted and protected – conifers, broad-leaved, or exotics; and on what should constitute the forest's primary product – wood for industry, biomass for villagers, or soil, water and clean air for the community at large. Finally, this region-specific debate led in turn to a national debate on the direction of forest policy in the country as a whole."

The great significance of the Chipko Movement is that it was an alternative people's initiative. The destruction brought on the community of the hill region by the development agencies alien to the region made the people indignant; the outward manifestation of this was a form of *satyagraha* quite similar to the Gandhian mode of non-violent resistance. Both men and women played pivotal roles in the movement. Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Sundarlal Bahuguna, Govind Singh Rawat and Dhoom Singh Negi were some of the persons associated with the movement. Chandi Prasad Bhatt was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1982, and Sundarlal Bahuguna, in 2009, was awarded the Padma Vibhushan for their work towards environmental protection.

Role of Women in Chipko Movement The Chipko Movement is often projected as a success of collective power of women. It is true that though many of the pioneers were men, women formed the backbone of the surge. It is said that a group of women led by Gaura Devi started a movement which spread through the Himalayan region—right from Kashmir in the north to Arunachal in the far east. The aggressive participation of women in this resistance movement was owing to the multi-dimensional problems being faced by them. The gradual degradation of the hilly region caused water shortage, landslides, lack of fodder and firewood—all of which affected women directly. These women believed in the traditional equilibrium and human-nature relationship. But for them, in fact, it was a fight for sheer survival.

Zoological Survey of India

Since its inception in 1916 the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), now a premier institution under the MoEFCC, has been undertaking survey, exploration and research, leading to the advancement of knowledge on the exceptionally rich faunal diversity of the country. With its headquarters at Kolkata and 16 regional centres located in different parts of the country, the ZSI has in recent years, reoriented its

plan of work by grouping the survey and studies under six major programmes: fauna of states; fauna of conservation areas; fauna of important ecosystems; status survey of endangered species; ecological studies/environment impact assessment survey; and computerisation and dissemination of data.

Environmental Education

In 1983-84, the Ministry of Environment and Forests launched the **Environment Education, Awareness and Training Scheme** to enhance people's understanding regarding the human-environment relationship and to enhance skills and capabilities to protect the environment and improve it. It gives importance to promotion of non-formal environmental education and creating environmental awareness among the people through seminars, workshops, symposia, training programmes, the National Green Corps and eco-clubs.

The National Musecum of Natural History, New Delhi, established in 1978, promotes non-formal education in various aspects of environment through exhibitions and educational programmes and activities for children and people in general.

National Green Tribunal

In October 2010, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010 was brought into force. It was established for the effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The NGT is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but guided by principles of natural justice.

Views

- "Nehru had a view of India which was quite different from that of the other leaders in respect of at least three main items, which are relevant for all economic policies in India, namely, industrialisation, self-reliance and socialism. Industrialisation was Nehru's basic approach to India's transformation. Nehru articulated this approach from his understanding of history in general and India's history in particular, and based on the national movement for independence. From the very beginning the urge to develop the living conditions of the poor, the deprived was linked to independence. In fact, this can be put in terms of Mahatma Gandhi's own words when he talked about *swaraj*. His concept of *swaraj* was very clearly the *swaraj* for the poorest person, of the individual villager and everyone who was deprived."

  —Arjun Sengupta

- "The qualitative technological transformation in India—the Green Revolution—came about not during his (Nehru's) lifetime but soon after his death. But the foundations for the technological development were laid during Nehru's time."

  —G.S. Bhalla

- "Two simple points can be made about India's environmental present and future: (a) One, if India learns from the outstanding work that has been undertaken to promote community-based natural resource management in the 1980s and 1990s and ensures that these efforts are replicated on a mass scale in those ecological regions to which they are applicable, then a large part of India's rural poverty can be wiped out in the next 10 to 20 years; (b) On the other hand, and this is the second point, India's urban areas will be reeling under severe pollution, traffic congestion and wastes, making urban life almost unbearable. And, we have not even started addressing urban problems and have very few innovative paradigms which can give us any real hope. There, is thus both a lot to look forward to as well as to dread."

  —Anil Agarwal

Summary

Introduction

- On the eve of independence, India inherited an impoverished economy. But it also inherited some useful assets in the form of a national transport system or working administrative structure, some projects and foreign exchange.
- The establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950 initiated a coordinated planning of development programmes under the auspices of the Central government.
- A reasonably sound economic foundation was laid during the Nehruvian Period (1947-65).
- Till the early 1980s, the public sectors played a dominant role in Indian economy. From the early 1990s, the government introduced new policies aimed at bringing about qualitative change in the economy through structural adjustments.

Agrarian Reforms

- Agriculture was given a great deal of attention and a number of reforms were initiated to increase production.
- One major reform was the abolition of rights of intermediaries which resulted in the introduction of a uniform land tenure system in major parts of the country, growth of capitalism in agriculture, stability in land relationship, etc.
- The Land Ceiling Act, redistribution of surplus land among the landless small holders and the Bhoodan movement met with limited success.
- Consolidation of land holdings, extension of cultivated areas, and irrigation facilities led to an improvement in agriculture production. However, the reforms had their limitations and weaknesses.

Development of Industries

- Industrial development was carried out with a mixed economic approach with public industries to be owned and developed by the state and other sectors by private capital.
- Industrial sector rapidly expanded though the trend of expansion varied from sector to sector and state to state.
- Post-1947 industrial transformation helped in creation of a dynamic indigenous entrepreneurial class and growth of industries away from the traditional locations.
- The private sector, however, witnessed a slow pace of development. The main reasons for this were the policies of the government, shortfalls of agricultural programmes and failure of the public sector to realise its targets, and localised bottlenecks.

Planning and Development

- For Nehru, industrialisation would provide solutions to the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment.
- Planning envisaged a mixed economy with the aim of raising national student of living by means of greater agricultural production and rapid industrial development.
- Successive Five-Year Plans emphasised the necessity to pursue these objectives though there were serious constraints and problems.

Progress of Science

- Policy makers, especially Nehru, was convinced of the indispensability of science and technology in socio-economic development of India.
- Investment in scientific education, research and development led to the creation of a large body of technical workforce.

Summary

- The importance of nuclear energy (both in terms of the country's civilian and strategic needs) was realised.
- The country has also witnessed tremendous progress in space science and research.

► **Ecology and Environment Policy in Colonial India**

- In colonial period, the British took some measures that were given the shape of policy to rationalise unbridled exploitation as well as to appease the voices of opposition both from within and outside the officialdom.
- In 1865, the Imperial Forest Department was established as well as the first Indian Forest Act came into existence. Subsequently, Indian Forest Act, 1878 and Indian Forest Act, 1927 were enacted by the British.

► **Ecology and Environmental Policy in Post-Colonial India**

- The Indian government began a series of efforts for the protection of environment and preserving ecological stability in the 1970s, especially after the 1972 UN's Stockholm Conference on Human Environment.
- The major policy instruments of the government in dealing with environment issues are: National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development (1992), the National Forest Policy (1988), and the Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution (1992).
- Other major legislations and policies include: the Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972), the Environment (Protection) Act (1986), the National Environmental Tribunal Act (1995), the National Environment Policy (2006) and the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.

Appendices

Major Chronological landmarks of Modern India (1707-1964)

1707 Death of Aurangzeb at the age of 89. Accession of Prince Muazzam to the throne with the title of Bahadur Shah I (1707-12).

1708 Shahu becomes the Chhatrapati of the Marathas (ruled, 1708-49).
Death of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur assumes leadership of the Sikhs in the Punjab (Banda executed in 1716).

1712 Jahandar Shah's accession to the throne (ruled, 1712-13).

1713 Farrukhsiyar becomes Emperor (ruled, 1713-19) Balaji Vishwanath appointed as Peshwa. Abdulla Khan appointed as Wazir and Hussain All as Commander-in-Chief of Mughal Empire.

1717 Farrukhsiyar grants *a firman* to the English Company exempting their trade in Bengal from payment of duties in return for a lumpsum payment of Rs. 3,000 per annum. *Jizya* reimposed (abolished in 1719).

1719 Assassination of Farrukhsiyar. Accession of Muhammad Shah (ruled, 1719-48).

1720 Baji Rao I appointed as Peshwa. Fall of the Saiyyid brothers.

1724 Saadat Khan appointed Nawab of Awadh. Asaf Jah declares himself a virtually independent Nizam in the Deccan.

1737 Baji Rao's raid on Delhi.

1739 Nadir Shah's invasion of Delhi.
The Marathas take Salsette and Bassein.

1740 Appointment of Balaji Baji Rao as Peshwa. Alivardi Khan becomes Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
Dost Ali, Nawab of Carnatic, killed in a battle with the Marathas.

1742 Dupleix appointed French Governor of Pondicherry.

1744-48 First Anglo-French Carnatic War.

1746 La Bourdonnais, French Governor of Mauritius, captures Madras.

1748 Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle and restoration of Madras to the English Company.
Accession of Ahmad Shah as Mughal Emperor (1748-54).

1749 Death of Shahu and accession of Raja Ram (grandson of Raja Ram I and Tara Bai) as Chhatrapati.

1760-54 Second Anglo-French Carnatic War.

1751 Clive's capture of Arcot and its successful defence against Chanda Sahib.

1754 Dupleix's dismissal.
Alamgir II becomes Mughal Emperor (ruled, 1754-59).

1756 Death of Alivardi Khan, Nawab of Bengal. Accession of Siraj-ud-daula as Nawab of Bengal.
Siraj-ud-daula captures Calcutta and the Black Hole episode.

1757-63 Third Anglo-French Carnatic War.

1757 Ahmad Shah Abdali invades Delhi and Agra. Battle of Plassey.
Mir Jaffar installed Nawab of Bengal. Clive appointed Governor of Fort William, Bengal (First term, 1757-60).

1758 The Marathas over run the Punjab.

1759 Ali Gauhar, son of Emperor Alamgir II, revolts against his father and invades Bihar. Ghazi-ud-din murders Alamgir II.

1760 The English win the battle of Wandiwash. Marathas win battle of Udgir against the Nizam.
Mir Kasim becomes Nawab of Bengal (ruled, 1760-63).

1761 The Third Battle of Panipat between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Pondicherry falls to the English. Shahzada

	Ali Gauhar becomes Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II (ruled, 1761-1806). Madhava Rao assumes charge as Peshwa (ruled, 1761-72).
1763	The English Company deposes Mir Kasim and reappoints Mir Jaffar as Nawab of Bengal (1763-65).
1764	Battle of Buxar.
1765	Najm-ud-daula recognised as Nawab of Bengal.
	Clive's Second Governorship of Bengal (1765-67).
	Shah Alam II grants the *Diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English Company.
1766	The English Company granted the Northern Circars.
1767-69	The First Anglo-Mysore War.
1770	A severe famine in Bengal.
1771	The Marathas escort Emperor Shah Alam II to Delhi.
1772	Warren Hastings assumes office as Governor of Bengal.
1773	The Regulating Act passed by the British Parliament.
1774	The Rohilla war between the Rohillas and the Nawab of Oudh supported by the Company.
	Warren Hastings becomes the first Governs-General (1774-85). The Supreme Court established at Calcutta. The trial and execution of Nand Kumar.
1775-82	The First Anglo-Maratha War.
1780-84	The Second Anglo-Mysore War.
1782	Death of Haider Ali.
1784	Pitt's India Act passed by the British Parliament.
1786	Cornwallis assumes office as Governor-General (1786-93, again 1805).
1790-92	The Third Anglo-Mysore War.
1793	Permanent Settlement of Bengal announced. Charter Act of 1793 passed by the British Parliament.
1794	Death of Mahadaji Sindhia.
1795	The Battle of Kharda between the Nizam and the Marathas.
1798	Zaman Shah (grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali) invades India.
	Lord Wellesley assumes charge as Governor-General (1798-1805).
1799	The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. Death of Tipu Sultan.
	Ranjit Singh captures Lahore.
1800	Death of Nana Fadnavis.
1801	Wellesley annexes Carnatic.
1802	Treaty of Bassein between Baji Rao II and the English.
1803-05	The Second Anglo-Maratha War.
1805	The Company's forces fail to take Bharatpur. Recall of Wellesley.
1806	Vellore Mutiny.
1808	Malcolm's mission to Persia and Elphinstone's mission to Kabul.
1809	Treaty of Amritsar between Ranjit Singh and the Company.
1818	The Charter Act of 1813 passed by the British Parliament.
1814-16	The Anglo-Nepal War.
1817-18	Military operations against the Pindaris. The Third Anglo-Maratha War.
1819	Eiphinstone appointed Governor of Bombay (1819-27).
1820	Munro takes over as Governor of Madras (120-27).
1824-26	The First Anglo-Burmese War.
1827	Malcolm takes charge as Governor of Bombay.
1828	William Bentinck takes over as Governor-General (1828-35).
1829	*Sati* declared illegal
1830	Raja Rammohan Roy visits England (died there in 1833).
1831	Ranjit Singh meets William Bentinck at Rupar.
	Bentinck deposes Raja of Mysore and the Company takes over the administration of Mysore.
1833	The Charter Act of 1833 passed; abolition of the Company's trading rights.
1834	Bentinck annexes Coorg (Southern Malabar coast).
1835	English adopted as the official language by the English Company.
1838	Tripartite treaty between the Company, Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja.
1839	Death of Ranjit Singh.
1839-42	The First Anglo-Afghan War.
1843	British annexation of Sind announced.

1845-46 The First Anglo-Sikh War.
1848 Lord Dalhousie assumes charge as Governor-General (1848-56).
1848-49 The Second Anglo-Sikh War and annexation of the Punjab.
1848 The annexation of Satara by the Doctrine of Lapse.
1852 The Second Anglo-Burmese War.
1853 First Railway line between Bombay and Thana opened. Annexation of Nagpur. The Charter Act of 1853 passed by the British Parliament.
1854 Dalhousie annexes Jhansi.
Charles Wood's Despatch on Indian Education.
1855 The Santhal Insurrection.
1856 The annexation of Awadh.
1857 Establishment of Universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.
Outbreak of the Mutiny, Revolt and First War of Indian Independence.
1858 Queen Victoria's Proclamation (November 1).
1861 The Indian Councils Act, 1861 passed by the British Parliament.
Enactment of the Indian Civil and Criminal Code.
The Indian High Courts Act passed. 1863 Death of Dost Mohammad, the Afghan Amir.
1865-66 The Orissa Famine.
1865 Telegraphic communication with Europe opened. 1869 Opening of the Suez Canal.
1872 The Kuka revolt in the Punjab.
1873 The Bihar Famine.
1875 The trial and deposition of the Gaekwad of Baroda.
The Prince of Wales visits India.
1876 The Royal Titles Act made Queen Victoria Kaiser-i-Hind.
1876-77 The Delhi Durbar organised by Lytton.
1876-78 The Great Deccan Famine.
1878-80 The Second Afghan War.
1878 The Vernacular Press Act passed.
1880 Lord Ripon assumes charge as Governor-General.
1881 First Factory Act passed in India.
1882 Appointment of the Hunter Commission on School Education.
1883 The Ilbert Bill Controversy.
First Indian National Conference meets at Calcutta.
1885 The First Indian National Congress meets at Bombay.
Bengal Tenancy Act passed.
The Third Anglo-Burman war.
1889 The Maharaja of Kashmir forced to abdicate.
Second visit of the Prince of Wales.
1891 The Age of Consent Bill passed. Manipur Rebellion.
1892 The Indian Councils Act passed by British Parliament.
Split in the Arya Samaj.
1893 Organisation of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India.
Mortimer Durand's Misssion to Kabul.
1895 Tilak organises the Shivaji Festival.
1896-97 The Great Famine in India.
1897 Murder o' two Englishmen, Rand and Ayerst at Poona.
1899 Curzon becomes Governor-General of India.
1899-1900 Another Great Famine in India.
1904 Younghusband Mission to Lhasa. Indian Universities Act passed.
1905 Foundation of the 'Servants of India Society'.
1906 **October**: The Partition of Bengal comes into force.
Lord Minto receives the Agha Khan Muslim Deputation at Simla.
December 31: The Muslim League formed at Dacca.
1907 Anglo-Russian Entente signed.
Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh deported to Mandalay.
1908 **April 30:** Execution of Khudiram Bose.
July 22: Tilak sentenced to six years' transportation on charges of sedition.
1909 The Ir.aian Councils Act passed. Madan Lai Dhingra shoots dead Curzan Wyllie in London.
S.P. Sinha appointed Law Member of Viceroy's Executive Council.
1911 The Coronation Durbar at Delhi
1912 Delhi becomes the new capital of India.
December 23: Bomb thrown at Lord Hardinge on his state entry into Delhi.
1913 Gandhi starts his satyagraha in South Africa against Asiatic Law Amendment Act.

November 1: Ghadar Party formed at San Francisco to organise a rebellion in India to overthrow British **rule.**

1914 **June 16:** B.G. Tilak released from jail after long imprisonment

August 4: Outbreak of World War I.

September 29: *Kamagata Maru* reaches back Budge Budge, Calcutta.

1915 Death of G.K. Gokhale and P.S. Mehta. Formation of Home Rule League by Mrs. Annie Besant.

Foundation of Benares Hindu University. Tilak organises Home Rule League at Poona.

1917 **April:** Gandhi launches the Champaran campaign in Bihar to focus attention on grievances of indigo planters.

June: Madras Government interns Mrs. Besant.

August 20: Montagu's announcement regarding introduction of Responsible Government in India.

1918 Indians declared eligible for King's Commission in the Indian Army. Trade Union movement begins in India. All India Depressed Classes League formed.

1919 **April 6:** Call for All-India hartal against Rowlatt Bills.

April 9: Deportation of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew; trouble begins at Amritsar.

April 13: Jallianwala Bagh tragedy at Amritsar.

Government of India Act 1919 passed.

1920 First meeting of the All-India Trade Union Congress.

Foundation of Aligarh Muslim University. Hunter Commission Report on Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre published. Non-cooperation Movement launched by Gandhiji.

1921 M.N. Roy's attempts to organise the Communist Party of India at Tashkent.

1921 **August:** Moplah rebellion on the Malabar coast.

1922 **February:** Violent incidents at Chauri Chaura and Gandhiji calls off the Non-Cooperation Movement.

1925 The Communist Party of India formed.

1927 Appointment of the Simon Commission.

1928 Nehru Report recommends principles for the new constitution of India.

1929 Sarda Act passed prohibiting marriages of girls below 14 and boys below 18 years of age.

Meerut Conspiracy case against the Communists.

April 8: Bhagat Singh and his friend throw a bomb in the Imperial Legislative Assembly.

October 31: Lord Irwin's announcement about Dominion Status as the goal of British policy in India.

December 31: The Congress adopts the goal of Complete Independence for India.

1930 **January 1:** Jawaharlal Nehru hoists the tricolour of Indian Independence on the banks of the river Ravi at Lahore.

February 14: The Congress passes the Civil Disobedience Movement Resolution.

March 12: Gandhiji begins Dandi March (March 12-April 5) to manufacture illegal salt.

1931 **March** 5: Gandhi-Irwin Pact signed.

1932 Ramsay MacDonald announnces the Communal Award (modified by the Poona Pact, September 24).

1935 **August 4:** The Government of India Act passed.

1937 **July:** Congress ministries formed in the provinces.

1939 **April:** Subhash Chandra Bose resigns the Presidentship of the Congress.

October: Lord Linlithgow declares Dominion Status as the ultimate goal of British policy in India.

Congress ministries resign in the provinces.

December 12: The Muslim League celebrates Deliverance Day.

1940 **March:** The Muslim League adopts the Pakistan Resolution.

August: The Viceroy declares British icy towards India's constitutional problem (August after).

October: The Congress starts the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement (suspended in December).

1941 Death of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941).

1942 **February:** Japanese bombardment of Rangoon. Singapore falls.

March-April: Cripps Mission visits India.
July 14: Congress Working Committee adopts the Quit India Resolution.
August-September: The Revolt of 1942.

1943 **June:** Subhash Chandra Bose reaches Tokyo.
October 21: Bose announces the formation of Provisional Government of Free India.

1945 **June:** Wavell calls the Simla Conference in a bid to form the Executive Council of Indian political leaders.

1946 **February:** Mutiny of naval ratings at Bombay.
March-June: Cabinet Mission visits India.
July: Elections for the Constituent Assembly held.
September: Jawaharlal Nehru heads the Interim Government.
December 9: Indian Constituent Assembly meets at New Delhi.

1947 **February** 20: Lord Attlee announces Britain's decision to transfer of power to Indian hands before June 1948.
June 3: Lord Mountbatten announces transfer of power in August 1947.
July: Indian Independence Act passed by the British Parliament.
August 15: India becomes Free.

1948 **January** 30: The Death of Mahatma Gandhi.

1949 **November** 26: Adoption of the new Indian Constitution.

1950 **January 26:** The Constitution of the Indian Republic comes into force.
Dr. Rajendra Prasad becomes the first President of India.

1951 First Five-Year Plan inaugurated

1951-52 **Oct.- Feb.:** First National General Election

1956 States Reorganisation Act passed. Second Five-Year Plan inaugurated.

1957 Second National General Election

1961 Third Five-Year Plan launched

1962 Third National General Election

1964 **May 27:** Death of Jawaharalal Nehru

Governors-General and Viceroys of India: Significant Events in their Rule

Governors-General

1. Warren Hastings 1773-1785

(i) Regulating Act of 1773.
(ii) Act of 1781, under which the powers of jurisdiction between the governor-general-in-council and the Supreme Court at Calcutta, were clearly divided,
(iii) Pitt's India Act of 1784.
(iv) The Rohilla War of 1774.
(v) The First Maratha War in 1775-82 and the Treaty of Salbai in 1782.
(vi) Second Mysore War in 1780-84.
(vii) Strained relationships with Chait Singh, the Maharaja of Benaras, which led to Hastings' subsequent impeachment in England,
(viii) Foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784).

2. Lord Comwallis 1786-1793

(i) Third Mysore War (1790-92) and Treaty of Seringa-patam (1792).
(ii) Cornwallis Code (1793) incorporating several judicial reforms, and separation of revenue administration and civil jurisdiction,
(iii) Permanent Settlement of Bengal, 1793.
(iv) Europeanisation of administrative machinery and introduction of civil services.

3. Sir John Shore 1793-1798

(i) Charter Act of 1793.
(ii) Battle of Kharda between the Nizam and the Marathas (1795).

4. Lord Wellesley 1798-1805

(i) Introduction of the Subsidiary Alliance System (1798); first alliance with Nizam of Hyderabad,
(ii) Fourth Mysore War (1799).
(iii) Second Maratha War (1803-05).
(iv) Took over the administration of Tanjore (1799), Surat (1800) and Camatic (1801).
(v) Treaty of Bassein (1802).

5. Sir George Barlow 1805-1807

Vellore Mutiny (1806).

6. Lord Minto I 1807-1813

Treaty of Amritsar with Ranjit Singh (1809).

7. Lord Hastings 1813-1823

(i) Anglo-Nepal War (1814-16) and the Treaty of Sagauli, 1816.
(ii) Third Maratha War (1817-19) and dissolution of Maratha Confederacy; creation of Bombay Presidency (1818).
(iii) Strife with Pindaris (1817-1818).
(iv) Treaty with Sindhia (1817).
(v) Establishment of Ryotwari System by Thomas Munro, governor of Madras (1820).

8. Lord Amherst 1823-1828

(i) First Burmese War (1824-1826).
(ii) Capture of Bharatpur (1826).

9. Lord William Bentinck 1828-1835

(i) Abolition of sari and other crael rites (1829).
(ii) Suppression of *thugi* (1830).
(iii) Charter Act of 1833.
(iv) Resolution of 1835, and educational reforms and introduction of English as the official language,
(v) Annexation of Mysore (1831), Coorg (1834) and Central Cachar (1834).
(vi) Treaty of 'perpetual friendship' with Ranjeet Singh.
(vii) Abolition of the provincial courts of appeal and circuit set up by Cornwallis, appointment of commissioners of revenue and circuit.

10. Lord Metcalfe 1835-1836

New press law removing restrictions on the press in India.

11. Lord Auckland 1836-1842

(i) First Afghan War (1838-42).
(ii) Death of Ranjit Singh (1839).

12. Lord Ellenborough 1842-1844

(i) Annexation of Sindh (1843).
(ii) War with Gwalior (1843).

13. Lord Hardinge I 1844-1848

(i) First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46) and the Treaty of Lahore (1846).
(ii) Social reforms including abolition of female infanticide and human sacrifice.

14. Lord Dalhousie 1848-1856

(i) Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49) and annexation of Punjab (1849).
(ii) Annexation of Lower Burma or Pegu (1852).
(iii) Introduction of the Doctrine of Lapse and annexation of Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambhalpur (1849), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1854) and Awadh (1856).

(iv) "Wood's (Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control) Educational Despatch" of 1854 and opening of Anglo-vernacular schools and government colleges,
(v) Railway Minute of 1853; and laying down of first railway line connecting Bombay and Thane in 1853.
(vi) Telegraph (4000 miles of telegraph lines to connect Calcutta with Bombay, Madras and Peshawar) and postal (Post Office Act, 1854) reforms,
(vii) Ganges Canal declared open (1854); establishment of separate public works department in every province,
(viii) Widow Remarriage Act (1856).

15. Lord Canning 1856-1857
(i) Establishment of three universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857.
(ii) Revolt of 1857.

Viceroys

1. Lord Canning 1858-1862
(i) Transfer of control from East India Company to the Crown, the Government of India Act, 1858.
(ii) 'White Mutiny' by European troops in 1859.
(iii) Indian Councils Act of 1861.

2. Lord Elgin I 1862-1863
Wahabi Movement

3. Lord John Lawrence 1864-1869
(i) Bhutan War (1865)
(ii) Setting up of the High Courts at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras (1865).

4. Lord Mayo 1869-1872
(i) Opening of the Rajkot College in Kathiawar and the Mayo College at Ajmer for political training of Indian princes.
(ii) Establishment of Statistical Survey of India.
(iii) Establishment of Department of Agriculture and Commerce.
(iv) Introduction of state railways.

5. Lord Northbrook 1872-1876
(i) Visit of Prince of Wales in 1875.
(ii) Trial of Gaekwar of Baroda.
(iii) Kuka Movement in Punjab.

6. Lord Lytton 1876-1880
(i) Famine of 1876-78 affecting Madras, Bombay, Mysore, Hyderabad, parts of central India and Punjab; appointment of Famine Commission under the presidency of Richard Strachey (1878).
(ii) Royal Titles Act (1876), Queen Victoria assuming the title of 'Kaiser-i-Hind' or Queen Empress of India.
(iii) The Vernacular Press Act (1878).
(iv) The Arms Act (1878).
(v) The Second Afghan War (1878-80).

7. Lord Ripon 1880-1884
(i) Repeal of the Vernacular Press Act (1882).
(ii) The first Factory Act (1881) to improve labour conditions.
(iii) Continuation of financial decentralisation.
(iv) Government resolution on local self-government (1882).
(v) Appointment of Education Commission under chairmanship of Sir William Hunter (1882).
(vi) The Ilbert Bill controversy (1883-84).
(vii) Rendition of Mysore.

8. Lord Dufferin 1884-1888
(i) The Third Burmese War (1885-86).
(ii) Establishment of the Indian National Congress.

9. Lord Lansdowne 1888-1894
(i) Factory Act (1891).
(ii) Categorisation of civil services into imperial, provisional and subordinate,
(iii) Indian Councils Act (1892).
(iv) Setting up of Durand Commission (1893) to define the Durand Line between India and Afghanistan (now between Pakistan and Afghanistan).

10. Lord Elgin II 1894-1899
Two British officials assassinated by Chapekar brothers (1897).

11. Lord Curzon 1899-1905
(i) Appointment of Police Commission (1902) under Sir Andrew Frazer to review police administration.
(ii) Appointment of Universities Commission (1902) and passing of Indian Universities Act (1904).
(iii) Establishment of Department of Commerce and Industry.
(iv) Calcutta Corporation Act (1899).
(v) Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904).
(vi) Partition of Bengal (1905).
(vii) Curzon-Kitchener controversy,
(viii) Younghusband's Mission to Tibet (1904).

12. Lord Minto II 1905-1910

(i) Popularisation of anti-partition and Swadeshi Movements,

(ii) Split in Congress in the annual session of 1907 in Surat.

(iii) Establishment of Muslim League by Aga Khan (1906).

13. Lord Hardinge II 1910-1916

(i) Creation of Bengal Presidency (like Bombay and Madras) in 1911.

(ii) Transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi (1911).

(iii) Establishment of the Hindu Mahasabha (1915) by Madan Mohan Malaviya.

(iv) Coronation *durbar* of King George V held in Delhi (1911).

14. Lord Chelmsford 1916-1921

(i) Formation of Home Rule Leagues by Annie Besant and Tilak (1916).

(ii) Lucknow session of the Congress (1916).

(iii) Lucknow pact between the Congress and Muslim League (1916).

(iv) Foundation of Sabarmati Ashram (1916) after Gandhi's return; launch of Champaran Satyagraha (1916), Kheda Satyagraha (1918), and Satyagraha at Ahmedabad (1918).

(v) Montagu's August Declaration (1917).

(vi) Government of India Act (1919).

(vii) The Rowlatt Act (1919).

(viii) Jallianwalla Bagh massacre (1919).

(ix) Launch of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements.

(x) Foundation of Women's University at Poona (1916) and appointment of Saddler's Commission (1917) for reforms in educational policy.

(xi) Death of Tilak (August 1, 1920).

(xii) Appointment of S.P. Sinha as governor of Bihar (the first Indian to become a governor).

15. Lord Reading 1921-1926

(i) Chauri Chaura incident (February 5, 1922) and the subsequent withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement,

(ii) Moplah rebellion in Kerala (1921).

(iii) Repeal of the Press Act of 1910 and the Rowlatt Act of 1919.

(iv) Criminal Law Amendment Act and abolition of cotton excise,

(v) Communal riots in Multan, Amritsar, Delhi, Aligarh, Arvi and Calcutta,

(vi) Kakori train robbery (1925).

(vii) Murder of Swami Shraddhanand (1926).

(viii) Establishment of Swaraj Party by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru (1922).

(ix) Decision to hold simultaneous examinations for the ICS both in Delhi and London, with effect from 1923.

16. Lord Irwin 1926-1931

(i) Visit of Simon Commission to India (1928) and the boycott of the commission by the Indians.

(ii) An All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow (1928) for suggestions for the (future) Constitution of India, the report of which was called the Nehru Report or the Nehru Constitution.

(iii) Appointment of the Harcourt Butler Indian States Commission (1927).

(iv) Murder of Saunders, the assistant superintendent of police of Lahore; bomb blast in the Assembly Hall of Delhi (1929); the Lahore Conspiracy Case and death of Jatin Das after prolonged hunger strike (1929), and bomb accident in train in Delhi (1929).

(v) Lahore session of the Congress (1929); Purna Swaraj Resolution.

(vi) Dandi March (March 12, 1930) by Gandhi to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.

(vii) 'Deepavali Declaration' by Lord Irwin (1929).

(viii) Boycott of the First Round Table Conference (1930), Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931) and suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement.

17. Lord Willingdon 1931-1936

(i) Second Round Table Conference (1931) and failure of the conference, resumption of Civil Disobedience Movement.

(ii) Announcement of Communal Award (1932) under which separate communal electorates were set up.

(iii) 'Fast unto death' by Gandhi in Yeravada prison, broken after the Poona Pact (1932).

(iv) Third Round Table Conference (1932).

(v) Launch of Individual Civil Disobedience (1933).

(vi) The Government of India Act of 1935.

(vii) Establishment of All India Kisan Sabha (1936)

and Congress Socialist Party by Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan (1934).

(viii) Burma separated from India (1935).

18. Lord Linlithgow 1936-1944

(i) First general elections (1936-37); Congress attained absolute majority,

(ii) Resignation of the Congress ministries after the outbreak of the Second World War (1939).

(iii) Subhash Chandra Bose elected as the president of Congress at the fifty-first session of the Congress (1938).

(iv) Resignation of Bose in 1939 and formation of the Forward Bloc (1939).

(v) Lahore Resolution (March 1940) by the Muslim League, demand for separate state for Muslims,

(vi) 'August Offer" (1940) by the viceroy; its criticism by the Congress and endorsement by the Mulsim League,

(vii) Winston Churchill elected prime minister of England (1940).

(viii) Escape of Subhash Chandra Bose from India (1941) and organisation of the Indian National Army,

(ix) Cripps Mission's Cripps Plan to offer dominion status to India and setting up of a Constituent Assembly; its rejection by the Congress,

(x) Passing of the 'Quit India Resolution' by the Congress (1942); outbreak of 'August Revolution'; or Revolt of 1942 after the arrest of national leaders,

(xi) 'Divide and Quit' slogan at the Karachi session (1944) of the Muslim League.

19. Lord Wavell 1944-1947

(i) C. Rajagopalachari's CR Formula (1944), failur of Gandhi-Jinnah talks (1944).

(ii) Wavell Plan and the Shimla Conference (1942).

(iii) End of Second World War (1945).

(iv) Proposals of the Cabinet Mission (1946) and its acceptance by the Congress,

(v) Observance of 'Direct Action Day' (August 16, 1948) by the Muslim League.

(vi) Elections to the Constituent Assembly, formation of Interim Government by the Congress (September 1946).

(vii) Announcement of end of British rule in India by Clement Attlee (prime minister of England) on February 20, 1947.

20. Lord Mountbatten 1947-1948

(i) June Third Plan (June 3, 1947) announced,

(ii) Introduction of Indian Independence Bill in the House of Commons,

(iii) Appointment of two boundary commissions under Sir Cyril Radcliff for the partition of Bengal and Punjab.

Constitutional Development in India at a Glance

Regulating Act of 1773 (i) the beginning of parliamentary control over the Government of the Company;

(ii) subordination of presidencies of Bombay and Madras to Bengal; the governor of Bengal made the governor-general; council of the governor-general established; a Supreme Court established at Fort William.

> This Act "laid the foundation of a unitary type of goverment in British India". According to Lord North, "Every article in it is framed with a view to the placing of the affairs of the Company on a solid, clear and decisive establishment." According to Burke, the Regulating Act was "an infringement of national right, national faith and national justice".

Pitt's India Act, 1784 (i) reiterated the supremacy of British Parliament over the administration of the Company.

(ii) reduced the strength of the council from four to three.

(iii) the Company's territories in India were called "the British possessions in India".

(iv) Governor's council(s) established in Madras and Bombay.

> **Sir C. Ilbert** : "The Act enunciated a system which with its cumberous and dilatory procedure and its elaborate system of checks and counter-checks, though modified in details, remained substantially in force uptill 1858."

Charter Act, 1813 (i) Company's monopoly over Indian trade terminated; Indian trade thrown open to all the British subjects;

(ii) missionaries allowed to preach in India.

Charter Act, 1833 (i) Govenor-general of Bengal designated as governor-general of India;

(ii) the first faint beginnings of a Central Legislature for India;

(iii) fair and impartial treatment to Indians in matter of selection for state service.

> According to Lord Morley, the Act of 1833 was the most important Act passed by the Parliament till 1909.

Charter Act, 1853 (i) the last of the Charter Acts,

(ii) Indian Civil Service opened for all;

(iii) for the first time, the legislature given the right to frame its own rules of procedure.

Act of 1858 (i) Indian administration taken over by the British Crown; viceroy to be the Crown's representative;

(ii) office of secretary of state and Council of India created.

Indian Councils Act, 1861 (i) Legislative Councils established at the centre and in the presidencies and provinces;

(ii) Councils to include non-official members

Indian Councils Act, 1892 (i) enlarged the size and functions of central and provincial councils;

(ii) the council to have the right to discuss budget under certain conditions;

(iii) members of the council granted the right to ask questions.

Indian Councils Act, 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) (i) first attempt at introducing a representative and popular element;

(ii) Councils, for the first time, referred to as 'Legislative Councils';

(iii) separate electorates for Muslims introduced;

(iv) the beginning of non-official resolutions in the council.

Government of India Act, 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms): (i) Dyarchy in the provinces; relaxation of central control over the provinces;

(ii) Indian legislature made more reprsentative and bicameral; Legislative Assembly and Council of State to consist of 140 and 60 members.

Government of India Act, 1935 (i) introduced federation and provincial autonomy; the envisaged federation never came into being;

(ii) the bicameral central legislatures to consist of Federal Assembly and Council of State;

(iii) three-fold division of legislative power (federal, provincial and concurrent lists).

Indian Independence Act, 1947 (i) Sovereignty and responsibility of British Parliament abolished;

(ii) Dominion legislature became sovereign;

(iii) Governor-general and provincial governors became constitutional heads;

(iv) the Crown ceased to be the source of authority.

Indian National Congress Annual Sessions

Year/Place	President	Details
1. 1885 (Dec. 28) Bombay	W.C. Bonnerji	first session, attended by 72 dele-gates; objectives of the Congress outlined,
2. 1886 (Dec. 28) Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	attended by 436 delegates; witnessed the merger of National Congress and National Conference, attended by 607 delegates; appeal made to the Muslims to join hands with other national leaders.
3. 1887 (Dec. 27-28) Madras	Syed Badruddin Tyabji	attended by 1248 delegates.
4. 1888 (Dec. 28-29) Allahabad	George Yule	
5. 1889 (Dec. 27-28) Bombay	William Wedderburn	
6. 1890 (Dec. 28-29) Calcutta	Pheroz Shah Mehta	
7. 1891 (Dec. 26-27) Nagpur	P. Ananda Charlu	
8. 1892 (Dec. 28-29) Allahabad	W.C. Bonnerji	
9. 1893 (Dec. 27-28) Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji	
10. 1894 (Dec. 27-28) Madras	Alfred Webb	
11. 1895 (Dec. 28-29) Poona	Surendranath Banerjea	
12. 1896 (Dec. 27-28) Calcutta	Rahimtulla Sayani	
13. 1897 (Dec. 22-29) Amravati	C. Sankaran Nair	
14. 1898 (Dec. 27-28) Madras	A.M. Bose	
15. 1899 (Dec. 27-28) Lucknow	Romesh Chandra Dutt	demand for permanent fixation of land revenue.
16. 1900 (Dec. 27-29) Lahore	N.G. Chandavarkar	
17. 1901 (Dec. 27-28) Calcutta	Dinshaw E. Wacha	
18. 1902 (Dec. 23-26) Ahmedabad	Surendranath Banerjea	
19. 1903 (Dec. 28-30) Madras	Lai Mohan Ghose	
20. 1904 (De:. 26-28) Bombay	Henry Cotton	
21. 1905 (Dec. 27-30) Benaras	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	expressed resentment against the partition of Bengal.
22. 1906 (Dec. 26-29) Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	the word 'swaraj' mentioned for the first time
23. 1907 (Dec. 26-27) Surat	Rash Behari Ghosh	split in the Congress into the Moderates and the Extremists.
24. 1908 (Dec. 29-30) Madras	Rash Behari Ghosh	constitution of the Congress drawn.
25. 1909 (Dec. 27-29) Lahore	Madan Mohan Malaviya	expressed disapproval over formation of separate electorates on the basis of religion (of the Indian Councils Act, 1909).
26. 1910 (Dec. 28-29) Allahabad	William Wedderburn	
27. 1911 (Dec. 26-28) Calcutta	Bishan Narayan Dhar	
28. 1912 (Dec. 27-28) Bankipur	R.N. Mudholkar	
29. 1913 (Dec. 26-28) Karachi	Syed Mohammed	
30. 1914 (Dec. 28-30) Madras	Bhupendranath Basu	

Year/Place	President	Details
31. 1915 (Dec. 27-30) Bombay	S.P. Sinha	
32. 1916 (Dec. 26-30) Lucknow	A.C. Majumdar	reunion of Congress factions; the Lucknow Pact signed.
33. 1917 (Dec. 28-29) Calcutta	Annie Besant	
34. 1918 (Dec. 26-31) Delhi	Madan Mohan Malaviya	
35. 1919 (Dec. 27-28) Amritsar	Motilal Nehru	strongly condemned the Jallianwalla massacre; and boosted the Khilafat Movement.
36. 1920 (Dec. 26-31) Nagpur	C. Vijayaraghavachariar	a new Constitution for the Congress framed.
37. 1921 (Dec. 27-28) Ahmedabad	C.R. Das (in prison) Hakim Ajmal Khan (acting president)	
38. 1922 (Dec. 26-31) Gaya	C.R. Das	the Swarajya Party formed.
39. 1923 (Dec. 28-31) Kakinada	Maulana Mohammad Ali	
40. 1924 (Dec. 26-27) Belgaum	M.K. Gandhi	
41. 1925 (Dec. 26-28) Kanpur	Sarojini Naidu	
42. 1926 (Dec. 26-28) Gauhati	S. Srinivasa Iyengar	
43. 1927 (Dec. 26-27) Madras	M.A. Ansari	the Independence Resolution adopted; re-solved to boycott the Simon Commission.
44. 1928 (Dec. 28-31) Calcutta	Motilal Nehru	the first All India Youth Congress came into being.
45. 1929 (Dec. 29-31) Lahore	Jawaharlal Nehru	passed the Purna Swaraj Resolution; authorised the Working Committee to launch civil disobedience programme.
46. 1931 (March 29) Karachi	Vallabhbhai Patel	endorsement of Gandhi-Irwin pact, resolution on Fundamental Rights and National Economic Programme passed.
47. 1932 (April 24) Delhi	Amrit Ranchhorddas Seth	
48. 1933 (April 1) Calcutta	Nellie Sengupta	
49. 1934 (Oct. 26-28) Bombay	Rajendra Prasad	
50. 1936 (April 12-14) Lucknow	Jawaharlal Nehru	the President urged the Congress to adopt socialism as its goal.
51. 1936 (Dec. 27-28)	Faizpur	Jawaharlal Nehru the session held in a village for the first time.
52. 1938 (Feb. 19-21)	Haripura	Subhash Chandra Bose National Planning Committee set up under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru.
53. 1939 (March 10) Tripuri	Subhash Chandra Bose	Rajendra Prasad took over as president after Subhas Chandra resigned.
54. 1940 (March 17-19) Ramgarh	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	
55. 1946 (Nov. 23) Meerut	Acharya J.B. Kripalani	
56. 1948 (Dec. 18-19) Jaipur	Pattabhi Sitaramayya	

(The sessions for the years 1930, 1935 and 1941-1945 could not be held.)

Newspapers and Journals

Name of the Paper/Journal	Year and Place from which Published	Name of the Founder/ Editor
Bengal Gazette (also *Calcutta General Advertiser),* weekly	1780, Calcutta	Started by James Augustus Hicky (Irishman)
India Gazette	1787, Calcutta	Henry Louis Vivian Derozio associated with it.
Madras Courier (First paper from Madras)	1784, Madras	–
Bombay Herald (First paper from Bombay)	1789, Bombay	–
Indian Herald (in English)	1795, Madras	Started by R. Williams (English-man) and published by Humphreys
Digdarshana (First Bengali monthly)	1818, Calcutta	–
Calcutta Journal	1818	Started by J.S. Buckingham
Bengal Gazette (First Bengali newspaper)	1818, Calcutta	Harishchandra Ray
Sambad Kaumudi (Weekly in Bengali)	1821	Raja Rammohan Roy
Mirat-ul-Akbar (First journal in Persian)	1822, Calcutta	Raja Rammohan Roy
Jam-i-Jahan Numah (First paper in Urdu)	1822, Calcutta	An English firm
Banga-Duta (a weekly in four languages–English, Bengali, Persian, Hindi)	1822, Calcutta	Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and others
Bombay Samachar (First paper in Gujarati)	1822, Bombay	–
East Indian (daily)	19th century	Henry Vivian Derozio
Bombay Times (from 1861 onwards, *The Times of India)*	1838, Bombay	Foundation laid by Robert Knight, started by Thomas Bennett.
Rast Goftar (A Gujarati fortnightly)	1851	Dadabhai Naoroji
Hindu Patriot	1853, Calcutta	Girishchandra Ghosh (later, Harishchandra Mukerji became owner-cum-editor)
Somaprakasha (First Bengali political paper)	1858, Calcutta	Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan
Indian Mirror (fortnightly–first Indian daily paper in English)	Early 1862, Calcutta	Devendranath Tagore
Bengalee (this, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*–the first vernacular papers)	1862, Calcutta	Girishchandra Ghosh (taken over by S.N. Banerjea in 1879)
National Paper	1865, Calcutta	Devendranath Tagore

Name of the Paper/Journal	Year and Place from which Published	Name of the Founder/ Editor
Madras Mail (First evening paper in India)	1868, Madras	–
Amrita Bazar Patrika [Bengali in the beginning, later English, a daily)	1868, Jessore District	Sisirkumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh
Bangadarshana (in Bengali)	1873, Calcutta	Bankimchandra Chatterji
Indian Statesman (later, The Statesman)	1875, Calcutta	Started by Robert Knight
The Hindu (in English)– started as weekly	1878, Madras	G.S. Aiyar, Viraraghavachari and Subba Rao Pandit (among the founders)
Tribune (daily)	1881, Lahore	Dayal Singh Majeetia
Kesari (Marathi daily) and Maharatta (English weekly)	1881, Bombay	Tilak, Chiplunkar, Agarkar (before Tilak, Agarkar and Prof Kelkar were the editors respectively)
Swadeshamitram (a Tamil paper)	Madras	G.S. Aiyar
Paridasak (a weekly)	1886	Bipin Chandra Pal (publisher)
Yugantar	1906, Bengal	Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutta
Sandhya	1906, Bengal	Brahmabandhab Upadhyay
Kal 1906, Maharashtra	–	
Indian Sociologist	London	Shyamji Krishnavarma
Bande Mataram	Paris	Madam Bhikaji Cama
Talvar	Berlin	Virendranath Chattopadhyay
Free Hindustan	Vancouver	Taraknath Das
Ghadr	San Francisco	Ghadr Party
Reshwa	Before 1908	Ajit Singh
Bombay Chronicle (a daily)	1913, Bombay	Started by Pherozeshah Mehta, Editor– B.G. Horniman (Englishman)
The Hindustan Times Akali Dal Movement	1920, Delhi	Founded by K.M. Panikkar as part of the
The Mila-p (Urdu daily)	1923, Lahore	Founded by M.K. Chand
Leader (in English)	–	Madan Mohan Malaviya
Kirti	1926, Punjab	Santosh Singh
Bahishkrit Bharat (Marathi fortnightly)	1927	B.R. Ambedkar
Kudi Arasu (Tamil)	1910	E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar)
Kranti	1927, Maharashtra	S.S. Mirajkar, K.N. Joglekar, S.V. Ghate
Langal and Ganabani	1927, Bengal	Gopu Chakravarti and Dharani Goswami
Bandi Jivan	Bengal	Sachindranath Sanyal
National Herald (daily)	1938	Started by Jawaharlal Nehru

Personalities Associated with Specific Movements

SWADESHI MOVEMENT

Lokmanya Tilak spread the message of swadeshi to Poona and Bombay and organised Ganapati and Shivaji festivals to arouse patriotic feelings. He stressed that the aim of swadeshi, boycott and national education was attainment of swaraj. He opened cooperative stores and headed the Swadeshi Wastu Pracharini' Sabha.

Lala Lajpat Rai took the movement to Punjab and parts of northern India. He was assisted in his venture by Ajit Singh. His articles, which were published in *Kayastha Samachar,* endorsed technical education and industrial self-sufficiency.

Syed Haider Raza popularised the Swadeshi Movement in Delhi.

Chidambaram Pillai spread the movement to Madras and organised the strike of the Tuticorin Coral Mill. He founded the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in Tuticorin on the east coast of the Madras Province.

Bipin Chandra Pal of the Extremist clan played a major role in popularising the movement, especially in the urban areas. He was the editor of *New India*.

Laikat Hossain of Patna suggested boycott and organised the East Indian Railway strike in 1906. He also wrote fiery articles in Urdu to rouse nationalist sentiments in Muslims. He was suoported by other Muslim swadeshi agitators like **Ghaznavi, Rasul, Din Mohammed, Dedar Bux, Moniruzzaman, Ismail Hussain, Siraji, Abdul Hussain** and **Abdul Gaffar.**

Shyamsunder Chakrabarti, a swadeshi political leader, helped in organising strikes.

Ramendra Sunder Trivedi called for observance of *arandhan* (keeping the hearth unlit) as a mark of mourning and protest on the day the partition was put into effect.

Rabindranath Tagore composed several songs to inspire freedom struggle and revived Bengali folk music to rouse national pride. He also set up some swadeshi stores and called for the observance of *raksha bandhan* (tying of threads on each other's wrists as a sign of brotherhood).

Aurobindo Ghosh was in favour of extending the movement to the rest of India. He was appointed as the principal of Bengal National College founded in 1906 to encourage patriotic thinking and an education system related to Indian conditions and culture. He was also the editor of *Bande Mataram* and through his editorials encouraged strikes, national education etc in the spirit of the Swadeshi Movement. H° was assisted by **Jatindranath Bannerji** and **Barindrakumar Ghosh** (who managed the Anushilan Samiti).

Surendranath Banerjea who held moderate nationalist opinion launched powerful press campaigns through newspapers like *The Bengalee* and addressed mass meetings. He was assisted by **Krishnakumar Mitra** and **Narendra Kumar Sen.**

Ashwini Kumar Dutt, a school teacher, set up Swadesh Bandhab Samiti to propagate the Swadeshi Movement and led the Muslim peasants of Barisal in their protests.

Promotha Mitter, Barindrakumar Ghosh, Jatindranath Bannerji founded the Anushilan Samiti in Calcutta.

G.K. Gokhale, president of the Benaras session of the Indian National Congress, 1905, supported the Swadeshi Movement.

Abdul Halim Guznavi, a zamindar and a lawyer, set up swadeshi industries and helped Aurobindo Ghosh to extend revolutionary activities outside Bengal. He was assisted by **Abul Kalam Azad.**

Dadabhai Naoroji at the 1906 Congress session declared that the goal of the Congress was to attain swaraj.

Acharya P.C. Roy, in order to promote swadeshi, set up the Bengal Chemicals Factory.

Mukunda Das, Rajanikanta Sen, Dwijendralal Roy, Girindramohini Dosi, Sayed Abu Mohammed composed patriotic songs on swadeshi themes.

Girishchandra Ghosh, Kshirodeprasad Vidyavinode and **Amritlal Bose** were playwrights who contributed to the swadeshi spirit through their creative efforts.

Ashwini Coomar Bannerji a swadeshi activist, led the jute mill workers to form an Indian Millhands' Union at Budge-Budge in August 1906.

Satish Chandra Mukherji through his Dawn Society promoted an education system under indigenous control.

Motilal Ghosh of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* group contributed several fiery articles in the paper to arouse patriotic sentiments and was in favour of Extremisin.

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay through his *Sandhya* and *Yugantar* (brought out by a group associated with Barindrakumar Ghosh) popularised swaraj and the Swadeshi Movement.

Jogendrachandra set up an association in March 1904 to raise funds to facilitate students to go abroad for technical and industrial training.

Manindra Nandi, a zamindar from Kasimbazar, patronised several indigenous industries.

Kalisankar Sukul brought out several pamphlets on Swadeshi Movement and argued that a new kind of business class should be built to promote national interests.

Sunder Lai, a student from UP, was drawn towards terrorism.

Kunwarji Mehta and **Kalyanji Mehta** began organisational work through the *Patidar Yuvak Mandal*.

Lala Harkishan Lai promoted Swadeshi Movement in Punjab through the Brahmo-leaning group which began the *Tribune* newspaper. He also founded the Punjab National Bank.

Muhammed Shafi and **Fazal-i-Husain** were leaders of a Muslim group in Punjab involved in constructive swadeshi, rather than boycott.

V. Krishnaswami Iyer headed the 'Mylapore' group in the Madras Presidency.

G. Subramaniya Iyer, T. Prakasam and **M. Krishna Rao** were other leaders in the south but were opposed to **V.K. Iyer. Prakasam** and **Krishna Rao** started *Kistnapatrika* in Masuliparnam in 1904.

Subramaniya Bharati, a member of Tamilian revolutionary group and an eminent poet, played a significant role in arousing nationalism in the Tamil areas.

Prabhatkusum Roy Chaudhuri, Athanasuis Apurbakumar Ghosh were Sawyers who helped in organising labour; Premtosh Bose was another pioneer labour leader.

Hemachandra Kanungo was one of the first revolutionary leaders, and after his return from Paris (he had gone there to get military training), a combined bomb factory and religious school was set up in Calcutta.

Khudiram Bose and **Prafulla Chaki,** two revolutionaries, murdered Kennedy on April 30, 1908. **Pulin Das** organised the Deccan Anushilan, with the Barrah dacoity as its first major venture.

Madan Mohan Malaviya and **Motilal Nehru** were in favour of cooperation with provincial governments and non-political Swadeshi Movement.

Sachindranath Sanyal emerged as a revolutionary leader **in** Benaras through contacts with **Mokhodacharan Samadhyay** (the editor of *Sandhya* after the death of Brahmabandhab).

The **Savarkar** brothers founded the *Mitra Mela* in 1899 and were directly involved in extremism in Maharashtra.

Dinshaw Wacha persuaded mill-owners in Maharashtra to sell *dhotis* at moderate prices.

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

M.K. Gandhi issued a manifesto in March 1920, announcing his doctrine of non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement. He was the main force behind the movement and urged the people to adopt swadeshi principles and habits including hand spinning, weaving and work for removal of untouchability. He addressed lakhs of people during his nation-wide tour in 1921. He suspended the movement after an outburst of violence at Chauri Chaura in UP in February 1922.

C.R. Das moved the main resolution on non-cooperation in the annual session of the Congress in Nagpur in 1920 and played a major role in promoting the movement. A successful lawyer, he boycotted the law courts and gave up a lucrative practice. His three subordinates and supporters, **Birendranath Samsal** in Midnapore, **J.M. Sengupta** in Chittagong and

Subhash Bose in Calcutta played a major role in uniting the Hindus and Muslims.

Jawaharlal Nehru carried on the non-cooperation propaganda and encouraged the formation of kisan sabhas to take up the cause of the peasants exploited by government policies. He was against Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement.

J.M. Sengupta, a Bengali nationalist leader, supported the labourers on tea plantations in Assam in their protests and strike.

Basanti Debi, wife of C.R. Das, was one of the first women volunteers to court arrest in 1921.

Birendranath Samsal organised the anti-union board agitation in the Contai and Tamluk sub-divisions of Midnapore. In November-December 1921, Samsal initiated a no-tax movement among the Mahishya substantial tenantry of Midnapore.

Jitendralal Banerji organised the peasants in 1921-22 to resist settlement operations in Bogra, Pabna and Birbhum.

Subhash Chandra Bose supported the movement and resigned from the civil service. He was appointed the principal of the National College in Calcutta.

Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammed Ali) who were the foremost Khilafat leaders vehemently supported Gandhi in his nation-wide tour to spread the movement. At the All India Khilafat Conference, Muhammed Ali declared that 'it was religiously unlawful for the Muslims to continue in the British Army'. The Ali brothers were arrested later.

Motilal Nehru renounced his legal practice in response to the non-cooperation call by Gandhi. He was arrested in 1921. Other notable lawyers who gave up their practice included **M.R. Jayakar, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, T. Prakasam** and **Asaf Ali.** Their sacrifice inspired many others, who boycotted government jobs and entered the mainstream of freedom struggle.

Lala Lajpat Rai was initially not in favour of the policy of non-cooperation (he was against the boycott of schools) but later he supported the movement. In fact he protested against its withdrawal in 1922.

Rajendra Prasad actively supported the Gandhian movement in Bihar.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel spread the movement in Gujarat and regarded non-cooperation as a feasible alternative to revolutionary terrorism to fight against a colonial government.

Motilal Tejawat organised the Bhils and the Bhil movement strengthened the non-cooperation activities.

Alluri Sitaram Raju led the tribals in Andhra and combined their demands with those of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Hasrat Mohani, a Khilafat leader, condemned the arrest of the Ali brothers and demanded complete independence.

Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Cowasji Jehangir, Phroze Sethna and Setalvad, all of whom belonged to the industrialist section, launched an Anti-Non-Cooperation Association in 1920.

Kunhammad Haji, Kalathingal Mammad, Ali Musaliar, **Sithi Koya Thangal** and **Imbechi Koya** ThangaLacted as presidents of the Khilafat Republics set up at a number of places.

K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, Yakub Hasan and **P. Moideen Koya** were the Khilafat leaders and supporters of the Non-Cooperation Movement. They were arrested in February 1921.

Muhammad Osman, another Khilafat agitator, organised volunteer groups and trade unions in Calcutta.

Swami Vishwanand (supported by **Ramjas Agarwala,** a Marwari mine owner) and **Swami Darsananand** organised the coal miners of the Raniganj-Jharia belt for the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Kishan Singh and **Mota Singh** called for no-revenue movements and headed the 'Babbar Akali' group, which emerged as a dissident of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee, in 1921 in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.

Jairamadas Daulatram was a close associate of Gandhi and promoted the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Swami Govindanand, a supporter of Gandhi, was jailed for five years on charges of sedition in May 1921. He later became a critic of the Congress.

S.A. Dange, R.S. Nimbkar, V.D. Sathaye, R.V. Nadkarni, **S.V.** Deshpande and K.N. Joglekar were members of a radical student group and promoted the movement although they were not in line with Gandhi's views. They were influenced by **R.B. Lotwalla,** a millionaire with a socialist leaning. Dange, in April 1921, wrote *Gandhi versus Lenin* and was in fav6ur of swaraj which would nationalise factories and distribute zamindari land among farmers.

Thiru Vika supported the labour uprising and strike at the Buckingham and Carnatic textile mills from July to October 1921.

Singaravelu Chettiar was a lawyer and labour organiser in Madras and played a significant role in merging the labour and freedom movements. He was the first communist in south India and was in favour of using non-violent non-cooperation against 'capitalistic autocracy'.

Konda Venkatappaya, A. Kaleswara Rao, T. Prakasam and **Pattabhi Sitaramaya** led the Non-Cooperation Movement **in** the Andhra delta region.

Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya inspired the inhabitants of the small town of Chirala-Parala in Guntur district to resist the Government's plan to make the town a municipality and the hike in local taxes.

N.C. Bardaloi, an Assam Congress leader, favoured non-cooperation but was against strikes in plantations, **as** he himself was a planter.

'Assam Kesari' **Ambikagiri Roy Chaudhuri's** poetry had **a** profound impact on the Assamese and helped in arousing nationalist spirit **in** them.

Muzaffar Ahmad formed the pioneer communist group in Calcutta. He was influenced by **M.N. Roy** and **Nalini Gupta.**

Someshwarprasad Chaudhuri, a student in Calcutta, organised the peasants protesting against indigo cultivation on the Rajshaski-Nadia and Pabna-Murshidabad border.

Purushottamdas Tandon, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Govind Ballabh **Pant** and **Lai Bahadur Shastri** began their political careers in 1920-21, with the onset of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Premchand, a well-known novelist, resigned his post in a Gorakhpur government school in February 1921 and started contributing to the journal *Aaj*. His novels *Premasliaram, Rangbhumi* etc reflect Gandhian principles and values and endorse non-cooperation as an effective weapon to j.ain freedom.

Baba Ramchandra organised peasants' revolt in south and south-east Awadh and helped merge the peasants' revolt with the Non-Cooperation Movement. He was arrested in February 1921.

A. Shah Nairn Ata announced himself 'King of Salon' and initiated no-taxes movement.

M.N. Roy, a communist leader, was the editor of the communist journal *Vanguard*. He condemned the sessions court's sentence to death to 172 of the 225 accused in the Chauri Chaura incident (later, 19 were hanged and the rest transported) as against 22 policemen killed.

Bhagwan Ahir, an army pensioner in Gorakhpur village, was beaten up by the British police. The incident flared up nationalist sentiments in the village, which then led to the killing of 22 policemen in Chauri-Chaura, by the peasants.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

M.K. Gandhi formally launched the Civil Disobedience Movement on April 6, 1930 by picking a handful of salt after the completion of historic 'Dandi March' from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, thus breaking the salt law imposed by the Government. He was the major force behind the movement and inspired grass-root participation in the freedom struggle.

C. Rajagopalachari led a salt march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast in Tamil Nadu, in support of the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was arrested on April 30, 1930.

K. Kelappan, a Nair Congress leader, launched the Vaikom Satyagraha and marched from Calicut to Payanneer in defiance of salt laws.

Jawaharlal Nehru was actively involved in the movement and was arrested on April 17, 1930 for defiance of the salt law. He formulated a radical agrarian programme and suggested formation of the Constituent Assembly as the prime political slogan.

P. Krishna Pillai defended the national flag and

resisted lathicharge on the Calicut beach on November 11, 1930. He later founded the Kerala Communist Movement.

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan formed a clan of non-violent revolutionaries, the Khudai Khidmatgars (known as Red Shirts), who played an active role in the movement.

Sarojini Naidu, the first Indian woman to become the president of the Congress, was involved in a march towards the Dharsana Salt Works, a government salt depot. Other leaders who participated in this total non-violent affair were Imam Saheb, Gandhi's comrade of the South African struggle, and Manilal, Gandhi's son.

Surya Sen's Chittagong Revolt Group carried out a raid on two armouries and declared the establishment of a provisional government. He issued a manifesto in the name of Indian Republican Army and called on the Indians to revolt against the British rule.

Abbas Tayabji, a leader of the nationalist Muslims in Bombay, took the place of Gandhi in the movement after the latter's arrest. However, he too was arrested by the Government.

Ambalal Sarabhai and **Kasturbhai Lakhai** gave their cooperation to Motilal Nehru in removing the barriers between the Congress and the Bombay mill-owners and industrialists.

Industrialists such as **G.D. Birla** (who donated from one to five lakh rupees), **Jamnalal Bajaj** (who served as the AICC treasurer for several years and represented Gandhian leadership in Bombay), **Homi Modi, Walchand Hirachand, Lalji Naranji, Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Lala Sri Ram** etc supported the movement in its first phase. Homi Modi, in his presidential speech to Bombay Mill-owners' Association in March 1931 said that though the Swadeshi Movement had helped the Indian industry, frequent strikes had dislocated trade and industry. Naranji and Thakurdas, who had remained indifferent to the nationalist struggle in 1921, demanded Indian control over finance, currency, fiscal policy and railways. However, from September 1930, there was a sharp decline in support from the industrialists and traders; with the prominent businessmen having differences of opinion with the Congress.

Chandraprabha Saikiani instigated the aboriginal Kachari villagers in Assam to break forest laws.

Subhash Bose and **J.M. Sengupta** led the faction group in Bengal Congress and set up rival organisations to conduct civil disobedience. Bose criticised Gandhi, when the latter suspended the movement in May 1933. He was supported by Vithalbhai Patel.

Bonga Majhi and Sornra Majhi led the movement in Hazaribagh along the sanskritising lines with the Congress.

Kalka Prasad, a local leader in Rai Bareilly, promoted the no-rent campaign.

Santi and **Suniti Chaudhari** assassinated the district magistrate of Tippera, Stevens. Their action marked the entry of women in the revolutionary movement.

Seth Achal Singh, a nationalist landlord, financed the Gram Seva Sangh in Agra and remained indifferent to riots in the area, while strictly following the policy of non-violence.

Sheikh Abdullah, a Muslim graduate, started an agitation and attacked the Srinagar jail on July 31,1931 where 21 persons were killed in police firing. He also developed close contacts with a group of anti-autocratic Jammu Hindus led by **P.N. Bazaz.**

Mohammed Yasin Khan, a Muslim leader in Punjab, organised the Meos (semi-tribal peasant community with leanings towards Islam) to protest against Maharaja Jaisingh Sawai's hike in revenue, *begar,* and reservation of forests for the purpose of hunting.

K.M. Ashraf, who became India's first Marxist historian, was associated with the movement.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was an upholder of Gandhian policies since 1920's, began to drift away with the launch of Harijan campaign by Gandhi. He started a breakaway Congress Nationalist Party.

Satyamurthy, Bhulabhai Desai, M.A. Ansari and **B.C. Roy** demanded a return to electoral politics by way of **a** revived Swarajya Party.

Jayaprakash Narayan, Achhut Patwardhan, Yusuf Mehrali, Ashok Mehta and Minoo Masani wanted the Congress to have affinity with left-wing.

Sampurnanand formulated 'A Tentative Socialist Programme' for India and a Congress Socialist Party was started in 1934, which was supported by **Narendra Dev.**

K.F. Nariman and **Yusuf Meher AH** led the Congress youth wing and later emerged as socialist leaders.

Swami Govindanand led the movement in Karachi and Sindh.

N.V. Gadgil with his socialist leanings lent support to a temple entry movement in 1929 and established friendly ties with the non-brahmin Satyashodhak Samaj (represented by Keshavrao Jedhe of Poona).

B.R. Ambedkar, who was the leader of the untouchable Mahars, attended the Round Table Conference in 1930. However, the Congress failed to win over the political agitation of the Mahars.

Gopabandhu Chaudhuri popularised the movement in Orissa and led the salt satyagraha in the coastal areas of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts.

Tarunaram Phookan and **N.C. Bardoloi,** two prominent Congress leaders, were against the movement in Assam. They refused to take up forest satyagraha officially.

Jadunandan Sharma activated the Kisan Sabha Movement in Gaya district of Bihar.

Duggirala Balaramakrishnaya of the Krishna district initiated a no-revenue campaign in 1931 in coastal Andhra. He also wrote a Telugu ballad *Gandhi Gita* which aroused patriotic sentiments.

N.V. Rama Naidu and N.C. Ranga organised a forest satyagraha in Venkatagiri estate in Nellore in 1931.

A.K. Gopalan, a school teacher, was a popular activist at Guruvayoor in Kerala and later became Kerala's most popular communist peasant leader.

Mannu Gond and **Chaitu Koiku** offered forest satyagraha in Betul in Central Provinces.

Maulana Bhasani, organised a large *praja sammelan* at Sirajgunj and demanded abolition of zamindari and reduction in debts,

B.T. Ranadeve and **S.V. Deshpande** in Bombay and **Abdul Halim, Somnath Lahiri** and **Ranen Sen** in Calcutta were the young communist militants who organised several labour strikes.

V.B. Karnik, Maniben Kara, Rajani Mukherji and **Niharendu Dutta** were other leaders who started trade union activities.

M.N. Roy and his followers popularised socialist ideas in the villages and a no-tax campaign was started in Awadh.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

M.K. Gandhi planned an all-out campaign to compel British withdrawal from India, after the failure of the Cripps Mission to reach a compromise. At the historic August meeting at Gowalia Tank in Bombay, Gandhi proclaimed his *mantra*–'do or die'. He was arrested on August 9, 1942. He undertook a 21-day fast in February 1943 to protest against the Government actions against Indians involved in the movement.

Jayaprakash Narayan was a member of the Congress Socialist group and played a prominent role in the movement.

Ram Manohar Lohia, Aruna **Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, Chhotubhai Puranik, Biju Patnaik, R.P. Goenka** and **Achyut Patwardhan** were leaders associated with the underground movement and revolutionary activities in support of Quit India Movement.

Chittu Pande, who called himself a Gandhian, formed a parallel government and captured all the ten police stations in Ballia, in east UP in August 1942.

Usha Mehta actively supported the movement and was an important member of a small group which ran the Congress Radio.

Jawaharlal Nehru initially supported the arch Moderates, who were opposed to Gandhi's plan, but later, he moved the Quit India Resolution on August 8,1942.

Sumati Morarjee helped **Achyut Patwardhan** in his underground activities. She later became India's leading woman industrialist.

Rashbehari Bose, a revolutionary activist, was

elected the president of the Indian Independence League (formed in March 1942) in June 1942. He was living in Japan since 1915 as a fugitive. He mobilised Indian soldiers taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese forces (after the British was defeated in South East Asia) for an armed rebellion against the British colonial rule.

Captain Mohan Singh, an Indian soldier fighting on behalf of the British was taken as prisoner of war by the Japanese. He was persuaded by a Japanese army officer to work with the Japanese for India's freedom. He was appointed the commander of the Indian National Army.

Subhash Chandra Bose joined the Indian National Army in 1943. One of his most famous declarations was *"Turn niujhe kh -on do mai tumhe azadi doonga"* (You give me blood, I will give you freedom). The INA played a significant role in the independence struggle under the leadership of Subhash Bose.

C. Rajagopalachari and **Bhulabhai Desai** were the arch-Moderates, who were in favour of recognising the rights of Muslim majority provinces to secede through plebiscites after independence had been gained. They resigned from the AICC in July 1942.

K.G. Mashruwalla brought out two militant issues of *Harijan* (after the arrest of Mahadev Desai) to arouse the sentiments of people.

K.T. Bhashyam, a Congress leader in Bangalore, played an active role in the trade union field and organised strikes by about 30,000 workers.

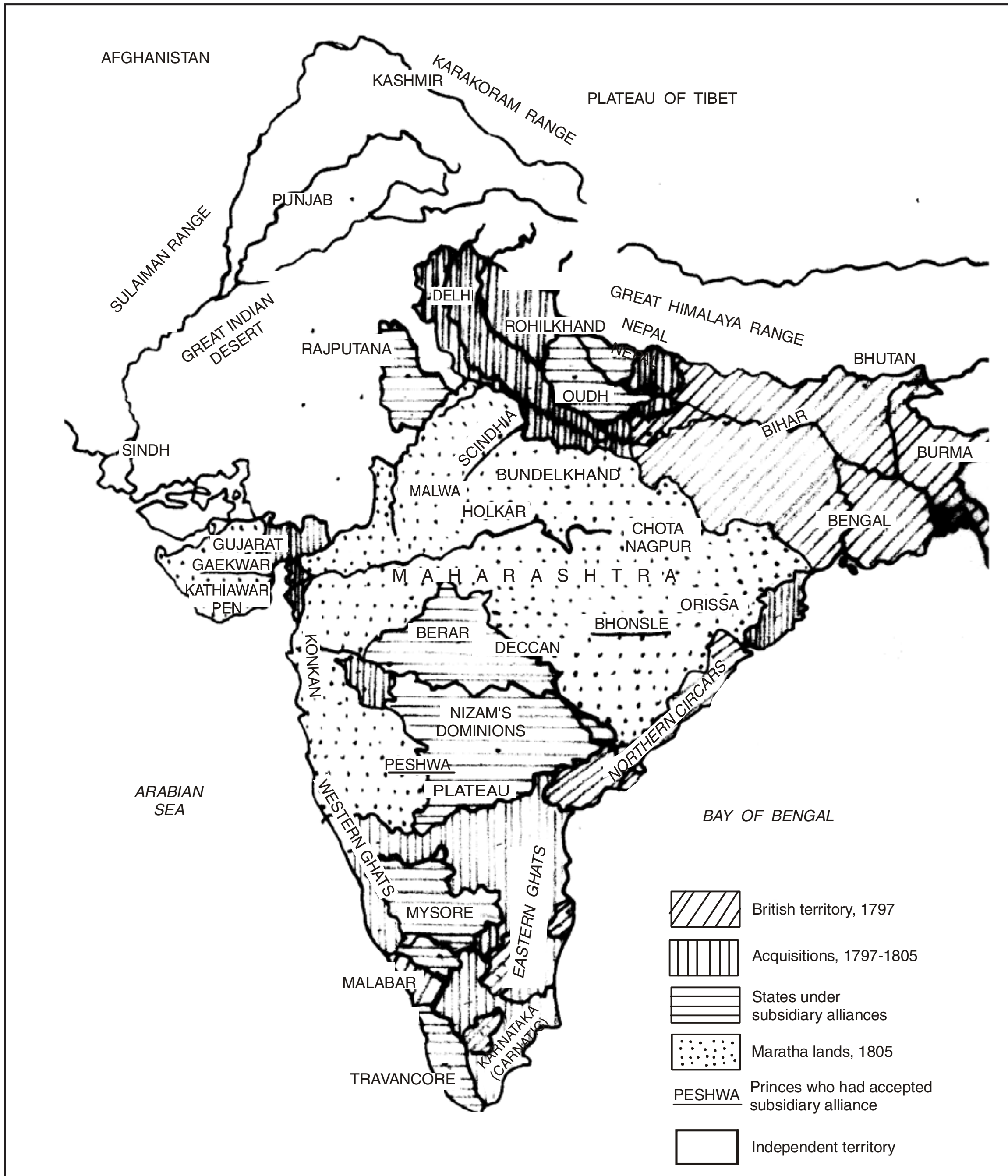
Satish Samanta, a local Congress leader and the first % *sarbadhinayak* of the Tamluk Jau'ya Sarkar, helped in establishing a rebel 'national government' in Tamluk sub-division of Midnapore.

Matangini Hazra, a 73-year-old peasant widow in Tamluk, was killed in violence on September 29, 1942, when the Sutahata police-station was captured. Matangini kept the national flag aloft even after being shot.

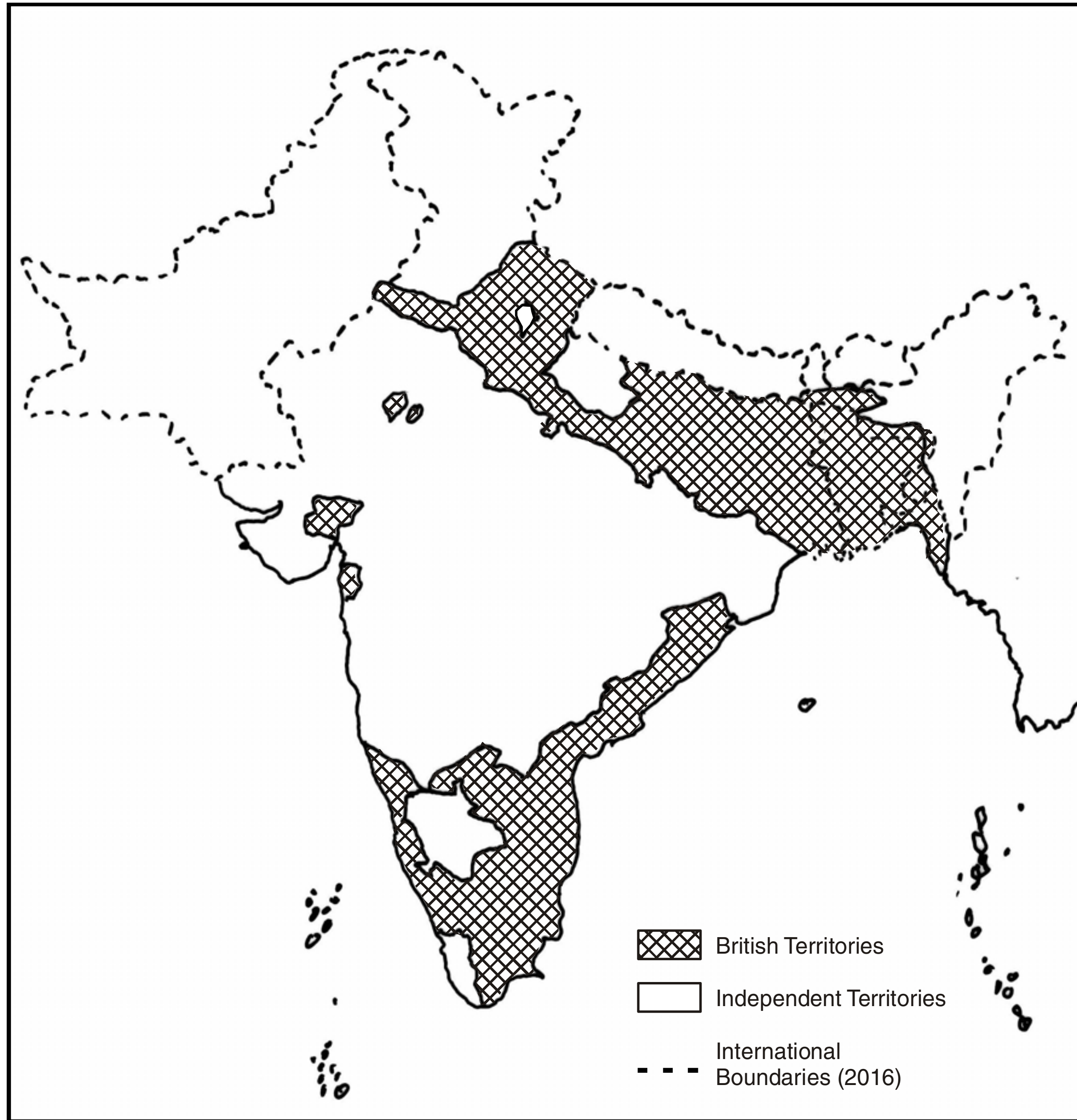
Lakshman Naik, an illiterate villager, led a large tribal population from Koraput to protest against the Jeypore zamindari and attack police-stations. Lakshman Naik was hanged on November 16, 1942 for allegedly murdering a forest guard.

Nana Patil headed a rebellion in Satara.

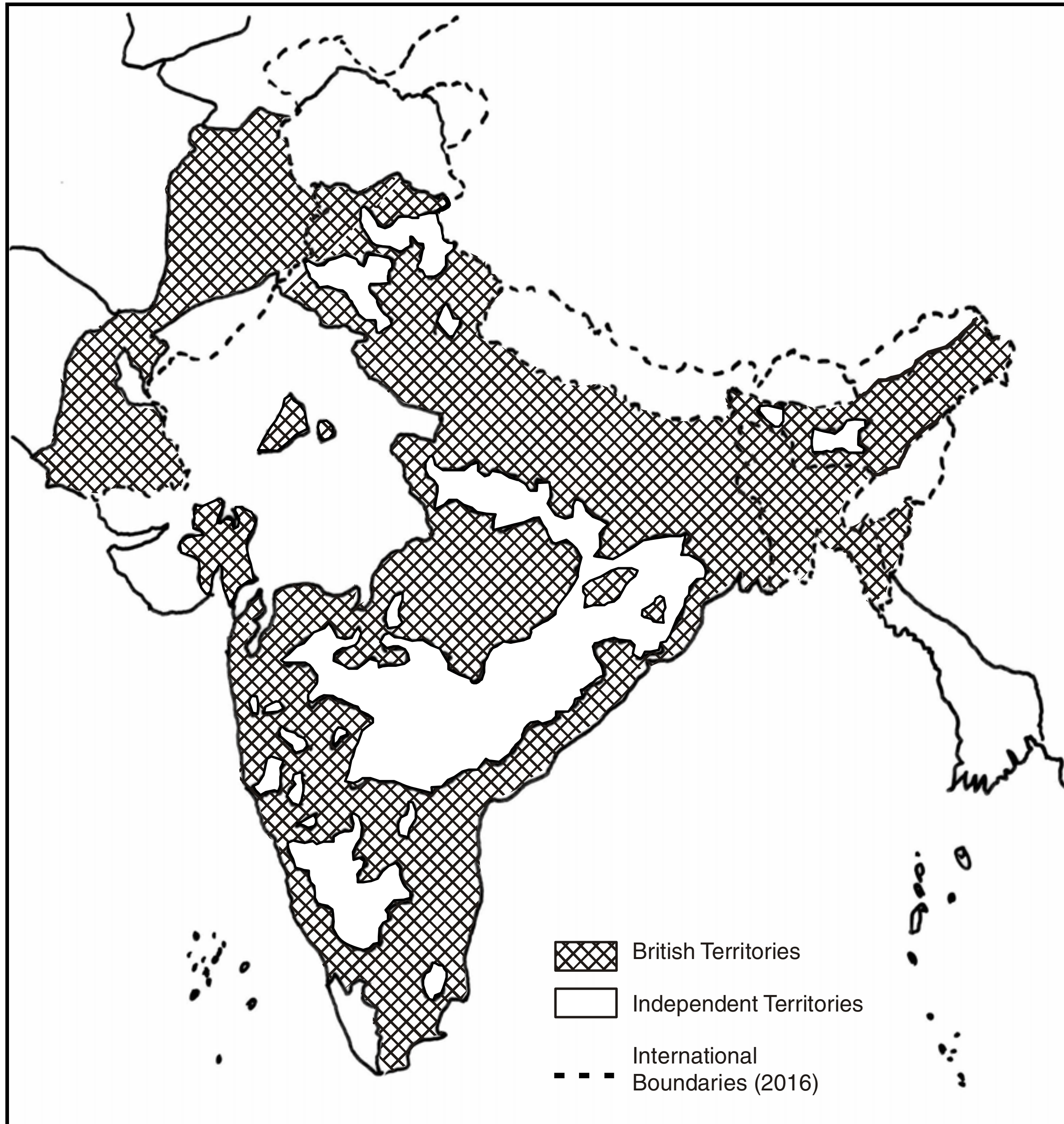
Selected Maps



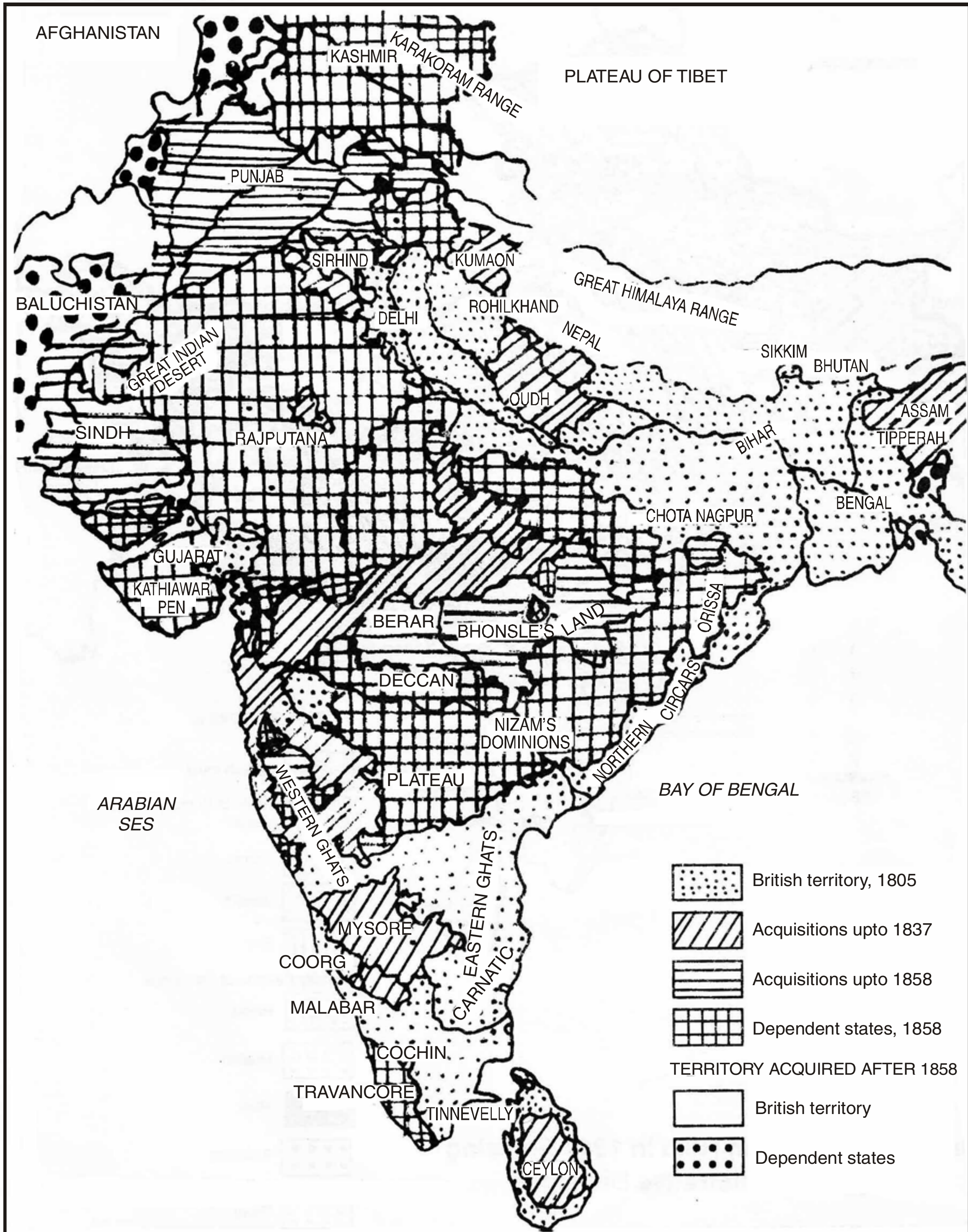
India, 1797-1805



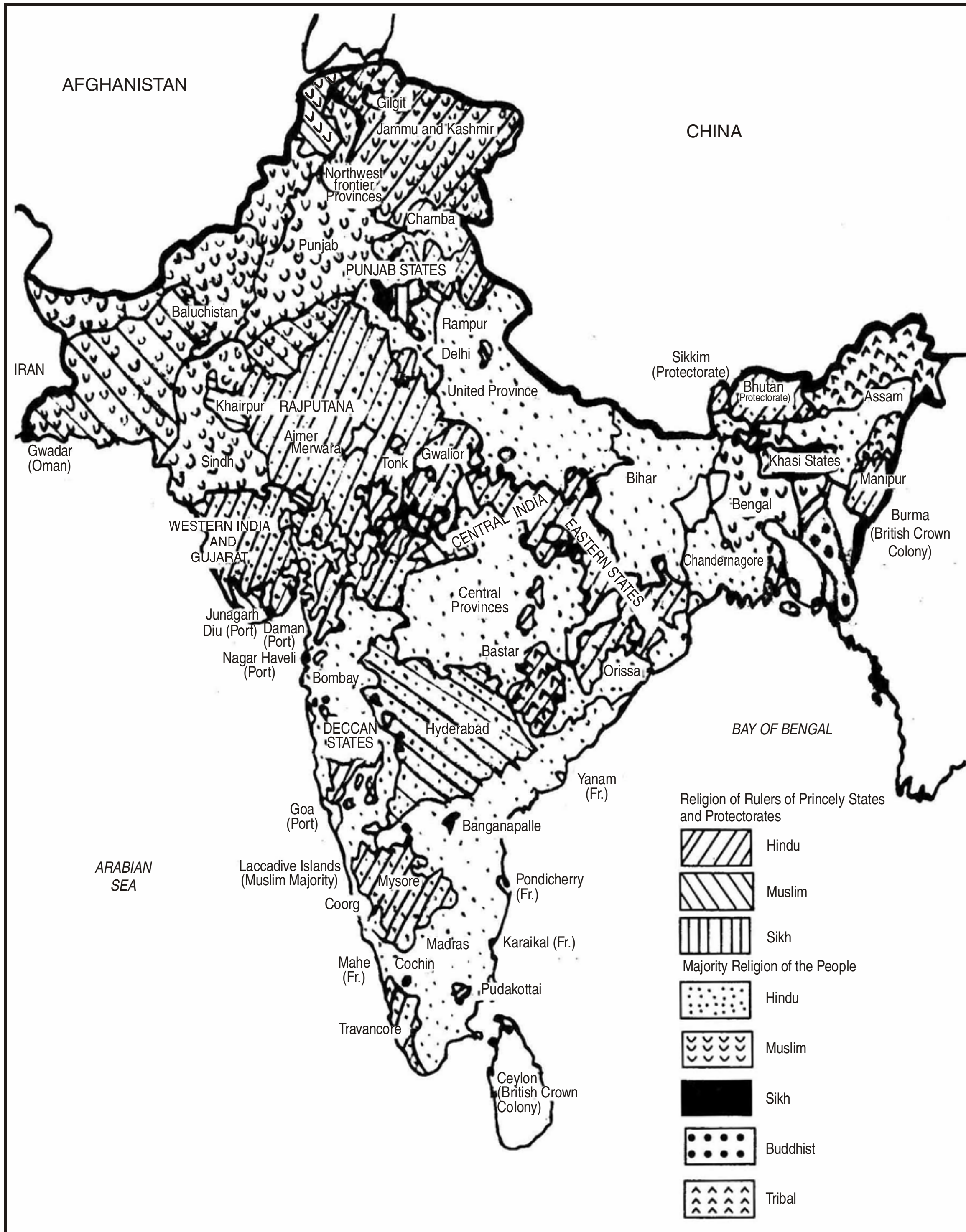
British Conquests in India as of 1805



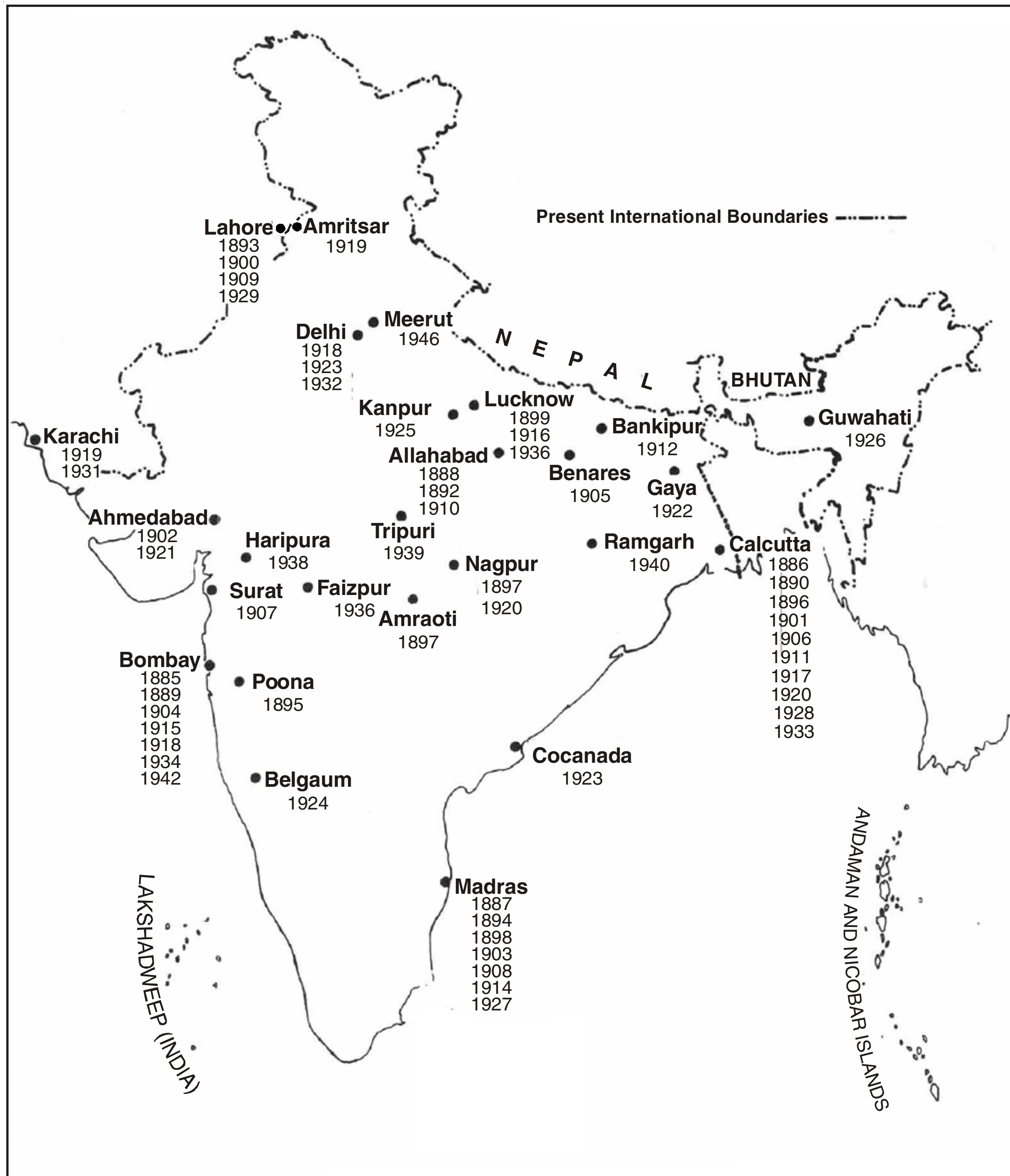
British Conquests in India as of 1856



India Under British Rule upto 1858



India Under British Rule in 1947 showing Major Administrative Divisions.



Congress Sessions 1885–1947