WAR-TIME NATIONAL UPSURGE

I. "ENEMY'S ENEMY, THE FRIEND"

The British rulers had a definite aim in view in revoking the partition of Bengal, in encouraging the moderates against the extremists and in preparing the ground for the emergence of the Muslim League. And that was to stem the advance of the national struggle, and as a part of the strategy, to isolate the extremists from the moderates and the Muslims from non-Muslims. To a great extent, they were successful in their attempts. But, this success was only temporary.

There were inherent contradictions in the policies adopted by the rulers to stem the tide of the national struggle, which began to surface soon after the beginning of a new upsurge more powerful and widespread than the anti-partition agitation.

As we have seen earlier, the rulers thought it possible to rally the Muslim community in favour of the partition and
against the basic slogans raised by the anti-partition agitators. But, what happened really was something different. As the Muslims as a community decided to enter into politics, they began to turn against the Hindus, on the one hand, and against the British, on the other.

When the rulers, yielding to the pressure of the general nationalist movement, decided to unify Bengal, it shook the rapport which the leaders of the Muslim community had with the rulers at the time of the emergence of the Muslim League. The founders of the Muslim League described this decision as an event which proved the “stupidity of rallying against the sister communities with the help of foreign powers”.

Furthermore, before long, circumstances arose wherein many of the big and small West Asian Muslim countries, including Turkey, got into a war against Britain. The Balkan War of 1912 and the First World War which erupted two years later, created anti-British feelings among the Muslim masses of various countries, including India. That is, contrary to the expectations entertained by the British rulers when they encouraged the formation of the Muslim League, the organized public opinion of the Muslim community began to take an anti-British turn. It was in that direction that world politics and Indian politics had turned.

These circumstances brought many Muslim youths, like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who later became eminent in Indian politics, to anti-imperialist politics. Azad has referred in his autobiography to the criticism made by the Arab and Turkish revolutionaries of the stand taken by the Indian Muslims of not participating in the struggle for Indian independence, when he visited the Arab countries in 1908. The Urdu newspaper Hilal, which he started on his return to India, played a significant role in spreading the ideas of revolutionary politics among the Muslims.

Maulana Mohamed Ali, who later played a leading role in the Khilafat movement, brought forth the antagonism between England, on the one hand, and the Islamic nations
like Turkey, Persia (Iran) and Morocco, on the other; and to its repercussions on the Indian Muslims. He also referred to an incident in which he himself came into conflict with the government in 1913. Briefly, things were moving in a direction which created doubts in the minds of the British rulers as to whether their hope of utilizing the Muslims as an organized community against the other sections of the people would be belied.

If the attitude of the Muslim community which had, at least temporarily, rallied against the national independence movement was of the nature stated above, it is needless to speak of the attitude of the Indian revolutionaries at home and abroad. Although the decision to revoke the partition of Bengal and to introduce new administrative reforms served to appease the moderates, it did not cool down the fire of intense feelings of the extremists and the revolutionaries in India. On the other hand, it actually intensified it further. These developments created in them, the hope of bringing the rulers down to their knees, if only revolutionary actions were carried on in a more determined and organized manner.

The revolutionaries living outside the country in the background of the Balkan War and the First World War, however, adopted the attitude of "the enemy of the enemy is the friend". They formulated a plan to enlist the support and assistance of the governments of Germany, Japan, America and the post-revolutionary Russia (at the end of the war) and the governments of the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and other West Asian Muslim countries to the movement for India's national independence. They concentrated their efforts in Germany, since they thought that Germany, being the most powerful enemy of Britain, would naturally take interest in weakening it.

The German ruling circles thought that large-scale export of arms for the use of the Indian revolutionaries and providing them training in their use as well as the technical knowhow to make bombs and other equipments would create a new situation in India, compelling the British to deploy a
considerable section of their army from the European front to India, which would, in turn, change the course of the war in Europe in their favour. This was the hope the rulers of Germany had entertained in cooperating with Indian revolutionaries.

Accordingly, discussions were held between the German Government and the Indian revolutionaries living in Germany with a view to serve the interests of both the parties. A committee to aid India, consisting of Indians and Germans as members, was formed to assist the revolutionary activities in India. All these developments took place within a month after the outbreak of the war between Britain and Germany. This committee was later on reorganized with the Germans withdrawing from it.

We have already noted that Indian revolutionaries were active in many countries like England, France, Canada and America. Many of these countries were directly opposed to Germany in the war. Consequently, Indians in these countries could not expect to get help from them. In fact, the governments of these countries, as participants in the war against Germany, were keen to ensure that no activities against the interests of Britain took place in their countries. So, as the war broke out, Germany became the centre of activities of the Indian revolutionaries living abroad.

In the initial stages of the war, America remained neutral and Russia was against Germany. But, towards the end of the war, the situation changed drastically. America allied itself with Britain and France against Germany, whereas Russia, where a new Bolshevik Government was established following the October Revolution of 1917, kept out of the war. In the circumstances, the anti-British revolutionary activities which were being carried out in America during the earlier stages of the war came to an end. At the same time, the Indian revolutionaries sought to get in contact with the post-revolutionary Bolshevik government of Russia. Germany remained the main centre of the organized activities of the overseas Indian revolutionaries during both
the initial and later stages of the war. It was from Germany that delegations were sent to America and other countries to coordinate the activities of the revolutionaries in all countries. In fact, the Berlin committee functioned as the centre to make arrangement for sending to India as much arms and trained personnel as possible.

In the early stage of the war, when America had remained neutral, a German diplomatic office functioning there made arrangements to acquire large supplies of arms, ammunition and other weapons. There was a plan to buy 8000 fire-arms and 40 lakhs bullets and other materials and ship them to India secretly. The necessary funds for this purpose were provided by the German government.

Similarly, various other activities were planned in countries like Japan, China, Indo-China, Philippines and Indonesia. The Islamic countries of West Asia rendered assistance in a more open manner. Several Muslim revolutionaries from India visited these countries and established relations with the rulers there. Utilizing this opportunity, many non-Muslim revolutionaries also followed them. Several revolutionary organizations emerged in which revolutionaries belonging to the different communities could work together.

As a result of all these activities a "Provisional Revolutionary Government" was formed in Afghanistan in December 1915, with Raja Mahendra Pratap as President, Barkatulla as Prime Minister and Obeidulla as Home Minister. This revolutionary government become another centre of revolutionary activities as the "Aid-India Committee" of Berlin.

Side by side with the activities of the revolutionaries in Berlin and other centres, plans had been made to organize anti-British insurrections in India and the neighbouring countries. In Singapore, a military mutiny was carried out. Of the two military contingents stationed there, a British battalion had been shifted leaving an Indian battalion to guard the area. There were about 300 German prisoners in their custody. Taking this opportunity, the organizers of the mutiny tried to
free the German prisoners and arrest or even kill the high military officers. They also planned to organize the military personnel to kill the Englishmen and liberate Singapore from the British. Similar plans were also made in Burma and several other South East Asian centres to organize mutiny and liberate the region.

Within India, arrangements were made to organize countrywide revolts using the arms to be obtained from America and other countries. The main role in these activities was played by the revolutionaries of Bengal, the Muslim revolutionaries of Punjab and the surrounding areas and the revolutionaries who had arrived from America, Canada, Japan, China, Philippines and other countries taking the pledge to work for a successful revolution in India. There was also a small leadership core to coordinate the activities of the various revolutionary groups spread over areas from East Bengal and Orissa to Punjab and to organize revolts on a prescribed day in accordance with a plan made for the purpose. This was the most well organized venture ever undertaken after the 1857 revolt.

But, the plan failed to materialize. Although the ship carrying arms supplies from America reached the specified place on schedule, they did not reach the destination on account of the failure of the plan to receive and distribute the shipment.

The military revolts and similar other ventures also ultimately failed. The details of the revolts planned in India were made known to the authorities through the British spies who had infiltrated into the leading group organizing the revolt, enabling the authorities to crush the revolt before it broke out. Thus, this revolt also met with the same fate as did the earlier revolts like the one in 1857. Many of the participants became victims of arrests and repression. The British began to take action further to consolidate their power with the satisfaction of having totally suppressed the planned revolts.
For the revolutionaries, however, this defeat was, in fact, the beginning of another upsurge, as it had often been the case with earlier setbacks. Even before the end of the World War, the anti-imperialist movement had begun to gain strength in various other forms, which turned into a countrywide mass upsurge in the post-war years.

II. THE MATURED BOURGEOISIE

As we have seen, both the revolts of 1857 and those that took place during the World War ended unsuccessfully. However, there is a significant difference between the revolts of these two periods.

The First World War broke out after the rise of a new (bourgeois) class leadership in place of the old decadent feudal domination. In 1857, this new class in India was growing in its womb. Consequently, it could give rise only to social reform movements of the type started by Ram Mohan Roy and others as the primary form of bourgeois development. Since its aim was to appreciate and copy the British civilization, rather than conducting an anti-British struggle, the leadership of the 1857 revolt was in the hands of the feudal forces. That is, the bourgeois modernization movement that emerged in the form of the social reform movement was against an anti-British struggle. On the other hand, the First World War broke out after the Indian bourgeoisie rose to the position of leadership of an organized national movement which, started with raising slogans of social reform, entered the phase of raising economic and political demands.

In the years immediately preceding the war and during the war, Indian bourgeoisie recorded an unprecedented growth. Rather than confining themselves to light industries like cotton textiles, they entered the field of heavy industries considered to be the heart of industrialization. In the years immediately preceding the war, the first steel mill in India was established with the initiative of the Tata
family. This was the first heavy industry established in Asia with the exception of only Japan, which constituted the economic evidence to the maturity the Indian bourgeoisie had attained.

All industries in India including this steel mill grew on an unprecedented pace during the war. Under the conditions of war, the Indian Government could not but increase production in the Indian industrial sector and use Indian industrial products. They were thus compelled to an extent to go back on the earlier policy of discouraging the development of Indian industries.

At the same time, Indian capitalists came into contact with capitalists in countries like America and France who were interested in a victory of the British camp in the war and sought their cooperation in the development of industries in India. For instance, Tata made an attempt to negotiate with the American capitalists for the expansion of the steel mill. Though it did not succeed, it helped to maintain the relations in the years to come. The progress the Indian bourgeoisie achieved in the economic field got reflected itself in the political field. They no longer handled Indian politics as “the most loyal subjects of the Crown” as before, but firmly demanded certain political rights in return for the assistance they rendered to the rulers under the prevailing world situation in general, and in the war in particular. That is, the Indian bourgeoisie had grown as a class confident in its growing strength, and working with the objective of gaining self-rule, step by step, through negotiations with the British.

The split in the Congress and the formation of the Muslim League were regarded at that time as a setback to an advance in this direction. But that was not the truth. The moderate leaders of the Congress after the split, the extremists functioning as a separate party outside the Congress, and the Muslim League formed with the blessings of the British rulers against the Congress—all of them were
working, though in different forms, in accordance with the aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie.

Even the moderate-led Congress incorporated in its constitution the objective of self-rule within the British Empire. It may be recalled that it was on this issue that the moderates and extremists had fought within the Congress. The moderates had now accepted the objective suggested earlier by the extremists. Both sections had made it clear that the differences between them were not on the objective but only on the means of achieving the objective. Nor was the Muslim League opposed to the aim of self-rule; what they were demanding was the due share of the Muslim community after India was granted self-rule. Thus, although divided into three camps, the Indian bourgeoisie constituted one class with a common objective of self-rule.

The policies and programmes proposed and sought to be implemented by the revolutionaries to achieve this objective were acceptable to none of these sections. None of them subscribed to the programme of conducting a revolution in India with the assistance of the anti-British powers, including Germany, on the principle of “enemy's enemy is one's friend”.

At the same time, none of them was prepared to accept and meekly submit as “loyal subjects of the British” to whatever the British rulers did. On the contrary, they did not hesitate to press India’s right to self-government and to carry on agitations to win that demand, simultaneously rendering all possible help to the British in effectively conducting the war. In other words, they all adopted the policy of gaining more power by taking advantage of the crisis the rulers were facing and also of the fact that they needed India’s assistance in facing the crisis. Thus, in 1916 the Congress and the Muslim League jointly accepted, in principle, the objective of self-government for India and decided to bring pressure on the rulers for administrative reforms with wider powers to the Indians. As a first step towards realizing this objective, they reached an understanding on the
share which the Muslim and non-Muslim communities should get under the new extended powers. Simultaneously, steps were also taken to remove the impediments in the way of extremists rejoining the Congress, thus paving the way for restoring unity in the Congress.

Although these efforts fructified only two years after the commencement of the war, the work in this direction had started much earlier. Thus, a Hindu-Muslim convention was held in Allahabad in January 1911. The convention in which 60 Hindu and 40 Muslim representatives participated, however, failed to arrive at a decision. But Gokhale who played a prominent role in the convention, advised that the ‘misgivings in the minds of the Muslims about the domination of the Hindu majority should not be dismissed lightly’.

Following this, talks were held between the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League in different forms and at different places. The leaders of both the organizations were convinced that the power to be shared between them could be won from the British only if they resolve the differences between them and stand unitedly.

Similar efforts were also made to bring about a reconciliation between the moderates and the extremists within the Congress. But no progress could be made in these efforts until the beginning of the war, mainly because many of the extremist leaders were either in prison or were subjected to other forms of repression.

The situation began to change soon after the outbreak of the war. Tilak was released from prison. The urge for restoring unity within the Congress was also strong among the moderates. Many made efforts to bring the extremists back in the fold of the Congress by holding discussions with Gokhale and Tilak separately. After his release from the prison, Tilak also was holding an attitude helpful to bring about unity. He unambiguously declared that he for one did not approve of violence as a means to win the demand for self-government. Denying that he and his party were following the policy of boycott, Tilak pointed out that many prominent
members of his party were functioning as members of municipalities and legislatures. He had overtly and covertly approved of their activities.

Nevertheless, it was not easy to restore unity between the moderates and extremists in the Congress. Leaders like Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale of the moderate group continued to maintain hostility towards the extremists as before. Only after the passing away of these two eminent leaders could unity be restored in the Congress.

As a result of the efforts made for about six years, unity in the Congress was achieved in 1915. The reunited Congress and the Muslim League expressed their opinions on the details of the administrative reforms that India must achieve. Both the organizations held their respective annual conferences at the same place (Lucknow) to give approval to the proposals of administrative reforms prepared jointly by them. It became clear that the Indian bourgeoisie, divided into two organizations (the Congress and the League), had a common objective and a common practical programme. True, this unity was not enduring; the two organizations continued to clash with each other. As a result of capitalist development, new generations of bourgeoisie began to emerge from among the various communities which hitherto had remained backward. This new generation of the bourgeoisie from among the non-Brahmins in some provinces, the depressed castes all over India and the Christian and Sikh religious minorities, etc., began to form their own organizations, as did the Muslims earlier, and raise the question of sharing power. It was as a natural consequence of this that the "communal question" became an integral part of Indian politics, which culminated in the partition of the country into Indian Union and Pakistan. The ordinary bourgeois nationalist is unhappy about this development and put the blame on the British as well as on the Muslim communalists. But he never bothers to go deep into the historical background of these developments. India is a country with two major religions, the Hindus and the Muslims, in addition to other
religious minorities, and several castes among the Hindus themselves. The bourgeoisie that emerged from among these different religions and castes possessed the character of their respective religions and castes. Therefore, although they have uniformity and common interest with regard to bourgeois development, these different bourgeois sections have to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie belonging to their respective religions and castes. The bourgeois nationalist does not understand that this is the fact that underlies the "communal question".

The Lucknow agreement of 1916 was the strongest evidence to show that the Indian bourgeoisie had realized the fact that despite the difference in interest as members of particular castes and religions, they belonged to the same class and have to stand united to face the British rulers. The same realization was witnessed also at the Round Table Conferences and in various negotiations. Although each maintained its identity, they adopted an approach of jointly raising the common demand before the rulers and fighting each other on the details with regard to the winning of the demand.

As noticed earlier, the revolutionaries were trying to organize an anti-British revolt with the help of Germany and other world powers. As distinct from this, the moderates, the extremists, the Muslim League and all other bourgeois politicians took the attitude that "England's need is India's opportunity". Realizing that organizing a revolt was dangerous, they not only kept themselves away from it, but also formulated the strategy of agitation and negotiation on the belief that if enough pressure was exerted on the British, it would be possible to gain more powers step by step leading finally to self-rule.

Later events proved that this strategy was more 'practical' than that of the revolutionaries. The class forces, particularly the class conscious working class, capable of ending the British rule by revolutionary means had not yet developed. Therefore, the freedom struggle was fought under the leadership of the bourgeoisie who had already become strong
enough to carry on that struggle. And it was the bourgeoisie alone which has benefited from independence, because it was into their hands that power was transferred 31 years after the Lucknow Pact, and it was only a handful of monopolists capable of collaborating with foreign monopolists and the landlords that were able to grow further by exercising this power. The masses of people, on the other hand, were getting more and more pauperized as an inevitable consequences of capitalist development. Furthermore, the freedom struggle culminated in the division of the country into two, and in the death of millions of people in communal riots.

The Indian bourgeoisie acquired the capability to bargain with the British rulers and to exert pressure on them with popular support. And this was what became manifest in Indian politics during the war.

III. THE HOME RULE LEAGUE

The moderates feared that if the Congress constitution and rules were amended enabling the extremists to take part in its activities, the entire organization would go into their hands. Subsequent events proved that this fear was not unfounded. For instance, Tilak was accorded grand receptions by the masses of the people all along the way to the Congress session held for the first time after the split. And in the Congress session held a year later, Mrs. Annie Besant, who had been a supporter of the extremists, was elected president. The moderates had hitherto been keeping the party presidency as their exclusive preserve by defeating the proposals to elect Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai to that position. Now a person of radical orientation had been elected president. This was a clear indication of the political changes that had come about during the war.

This was a development which caused anxiety to the British rulers as well as the moderates. The Home Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council wrote in a secret despatch
in January 1913: "The position is one of great difficulty. The Moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heels of Tilak and Besant." It was this situation that motivated the Government of India to propose certain administrative reforms to placate the moderates.

But the political evaluation made by the moderates went wrong in one respect. They thought that things would be all right if the extremists were denied re-entry into the Congress. This was totally baseless, for, the extremists were able to propagate their own political line even while remaining outside the Congress. Besides, a capitalist class had already developed in the country, determined to widen its power by exerting maximum pressure on the rulers. The extremists were, therefore, in a position to carry on their work in accordance with their own political outlook, irrespective of whether they were inside or outside the Congress.

A new political organization, the Home Rule League, appeared on the scene as the organizational form of the activities of the extremists. To be exact, two organizations of the same name emerged in 1915, one formed by Tilak in Maharashtra and the other by Annie Besant in Madras.

Tilak had been released from prison in the middle of 1914. The scene he witnessed in the country on his release appeared to him to be entirely different from what it was when he was taken to the prison. Accordingly, he proposed certain changes in the polices and programmes of his party. The main theme of this change was the new outlook of the bourgeoisie: "England's need is India's opportunity".

It may be recalled that Tilak brought forth the radical politics as opposed to the politics of the moderates, stressing the need to organize agitations to achieve Swaraj. Many thought that he would advocate opposition to the British, denying the assistance needed by them more than ever before on account of the situation created by the war. Instead, he openly declared willingness to fully cooperate with the British

to win the war. He suggested formation of a ‘citizens’ army’ with large-scale recruitment from among the people to fight the war. He thought that training in arms and experience in warfare for a people who had been disarmed under the British rule would help brighten the future of India. Accordingly, he engaged himself in the recruitment of the people to the army on a big scale.

This was only one aspect of Tilak’s political outlook. The Home Rule League which was organized under his initiative represented the other aspect of his political outlook. Tilak argued that if Indians were to be motivated to participate actively in the war efforts of the British, they must be convinced that the success in the war would help them realize their political objective and that India should be granted ‘home rule’.

Accordingly, the Home Rule League was formed in April, 1916 in Maharashtra. Though it was under his initiative, he was not even an office bearer of the organization. Through his journals he gave the widest possible publicity to the idea of Home Rule. Explaining the need to form such an organization, he wrote: It has generally been accepted that the time has come for organizing public opinion in favour of ‘Home Rule’ and for launching an agitation for it. The authority for taking up this task with responsibility naturally lies with the Congress. The moderates have, however, rejected the proposal for organizing a Home Rule League on the plea that the Congress was engaged in the task of preparing a scheme for self-government. The Congress, being a big, unwieldy and loosely organized body, is unable to evolve a scheme for Home Rule and to work actively for the political success of that movement. As such, there must be some one to do the primary base work for this. No time can be lost in this regard, any further. The League will be an organization that intends to take the initiative in this regard.

Even before the release of Tilak from prison, Annie Besant had started an agitation for home rule with its centre at Madras. She also had carried her activities to England.
Since, unlike Tilak, she was one of the recognized leaders of the Congress, Mrs. Besant introduced a resolution in the Congress proposing the formation of a separate organization, Home Rule League, to carry on the work for home rule. The Congress, however, rejected the resolution. Instead, it appointed a committee with Mrs. Besant as a member to "formulate a scheme for self-rule". Mrs. Besant was therefore committed to abide by the decision till the committee completed its work. As soon as that work was over, she felt herself free to organize the Home Rule League without going against the decisions of the Congress. Thus, the Home Rule League was formed in Madras in September 1916.

Although the Home Rule League was born as two parallel organizations under separate leaderships, the aims and objects and the immediate programmes of both were identical. Both campaigned with the aim of organizing popular agitation by rallying the people behind the demand of maximum autonomy possible within the British Empire and to reach its echo in the domestic politics of England.

In the words of Mrs. Besant, "The price of India's loyalty is India's freedom". In other words, England need not expect unconditional assistance from India to face the situation created by the war and it will get India's full cooperation only if her right to independence was recognized.

Subsequently, when she was elected president of the Congress, she had stated in her presidential speech:

Early in the war, I ventured to say that the war could not end until England recognised that autocracy and bureaucracy must perish in India as well as in Europe. The good Bishop of Calcutta, with a courage worthy of his free race, lately declared that it would be hypocritical to pray for victory over autocracy in Europe and to maintain it in India.\(^2\)

She said that India demanded home rule for two reasons. One was inevitable and of vital importance and the other, too, though not of the same importance, had its own significance. The first was that freedom was the birthright of every nation. India's interests had been subjected to the interests of British imperialism without her consent. The second was that India's economic resources were not being utilized in the most useful way for India. This would be evident if the expenditures incurred on elementary education and on the army maintained mainly for imperialist aggression were compared with each other.

Although formed as two parallel organizations, one under the leadership of Tilak and the other under Mrs. Besant, the emergence of the Home Rule movement was an important event in Indian political history. Sir Subramonia Iyer, who was the President of the Home Rule League led by Annie Besant (he was a former Judge and acting Chief Justice) wrote a letter to President Wilson of the United States stating: We are today a slave nation. We have been chained. But, if we are promised Home Rule immediately, we shall be able to send 5 million men to the war within 3 months and five million more in another 3 months.

Iyer's letter caused a stir internationally. It came to the notice of the Congress of the United States. Britain's refusal to concede the demands of the people of India came under criticism in various other countries. Even in England, it raised a lot of furore. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, characterized the letter as "shameful". In protest, Iyer renounced his titles of 'knighthood' and 'Dewan Bahadur'. Tilak also sent a letter to the president of the Peace Convention held at the close of war, in which he pointed out that a free India would be a great source of strength to the world organization that was to be established.

The leaders of the Home Rule movement did not confine themselves to writing letters to the rulers of foreign countries. A delegation led by Lala Lajpat Rai was sent to the United States to attract the attention of the American people to Indian
freedom. According to a report sent by N. S. Hardikar, a member of the delegation, he addressed meetings at 83 places. He mentioned specifically the reception accorded to him in colleges, newspaper establishments and other institutions.

Tilak and Mrs. Besant endeavoured to strengthen the support of the democrats in England, who claimed to be fighting against autocracy, and of countries allied to Britain. Behind this effort were the masses of India on the one side, and the Indian bourgeoisie who were gaining self-confidence, on the other. Thus, under the leadership of the extremists who had been pushed out of the Congress a decade earlier, India witnessed a political urge with a clear aim and perspective.

A word about the name of this movement and the organization. As we have seen earlier, the aim of the movement as formulated first by the extremists under Tilak and subsequently accepted by the Congress was “Swaraj”. There is a history behind the selection of the term “Home Rule” in place of Swaraj. It was the time when the people of Ireland were engaged in a fierce battle. The central slogan of that struggle was “Home Rule for Ireland”. Its echo was heard in India. The term “Home Rule” indicated that the Indian people were fighting for the same objective for which the Irish people were fighting. There is also an indication that the methods of struggle used in Ireland would be employed in India too. The Home Rule agitation in Ireland in 1916 assumed the nature of the revolutionary struggle which was well known as the ‘Easter Revolt’. Thousands of Indians inspired by that struggle rallied under the banner of the “Home Rule League”. India had never witnessed such a widespread mass movement before.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

The emergence and growth of the Home Rule movement angered the British rulers. They decided to take repressive
actions against the organizers of this movement as they did against those who started similar movements earlier. In particular, actions were taken again against Tilak and Mrs. Besant.

Though the Bombay High Court set aside the government's demand of security for good behaviour served on Tilak, the government prohibited his entry into certain provinces. Similar ban orders were issued against other leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal. Mrs. Besant was interned along with her two colleagues.

None of these actions, however, weakened the movement. On the contrary, these actions only helped to strengthen the loyalty of the people to this movement and their opposition to the government. Protesting against these actions, Subramonia Iyer declared that he was prepared to undergo punishment for standing firmly by the Home Rule movement even if the government were to ban it. Following the example set by him, nearly 2000 persons, among whom were popular leaders, registered their protest. Protest meetings were held all over the country.

In the background of the country-wide protest, the All India Congress Committee met and demanded the release of Mrs. Besant and her colleagues. To back up this demand, it elected her the president of the session.

As noted earlier, the Muslim League was working independently of both the Home Rule League and the Congress. But it participated in the protest against the suppression of the Home Rule movement. It was decided to start a peaceful resistance struggle jointly by the Congress and the Muslim League to protest against repression.

Thus, the repression unleashed by the government to destroy the organization formed to fight for home rule gave rise to a country-wide agitation for the release of its leaders. The leaders of the movement earned the regard and respect of millions and turned out to be more dangerous to the rulers.

Realizing the danger involved in the agitation and also the futility of repressive actions, the ruling circles of both
India and England began to make fresh moves to appease at least the moderate section, if not the entire Indian political leadership.

Early in 1917, Austin Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, emphasized the need to grant wider powers to Indians. Critically examining the administrative reforms proposals submitted by the Viceroy, Chamberlain pointed to the need to consider the change that had been brought about by the world war and to the "objectives of independence and national sovereignty" for which the Allied Powers were fighting. In particular, he exhorted the British rulers to consider the Russian (February) Revolution, the enthusiastic welcome it had received in Europe and America and its impact on Indian public opinion as well as on the attitude of the British towards the Indian problem and to take strong and courageous steps to meet Indian demands. It is clear that it was not the internal situations alone that led Chamberlain to take this stance.

This also makes it clear that even the British rulers were convinced of the correctness of the political evaluation expressed in the statement that "England's need is India's opportunity". Not only that the Allied Powers had not gained anything in the war, but, as the Russian Revolution showed, cracks were getting wider in their ranks. In the circumstances, alienating the Indian bourgeoisie would be detrimental to the imperial interests represented by them. On the other hand, if they could be appeased, it would be possible to collect enough men and material with their full cooperation and fight the war more effectively. These were the considerations that turned Chamberlain and other rulers to the path of administrative reforms.

There was yet another development. In Mesopotamia, the allied forces met with a miserable military defeat. The commission appointed to probe into the reasons for the defeat submitted its report in July 1917 attributing the defeat to the mismanagement on the part of the Government of India in
the conduct of the war and to acts of corruption indulged in by its officials.

The report created a big stir in England. The Government of India and the Secretary of State for India came under fierce attack in the Parliament. Montagu, then an Under Secretary of State for India, attacked the government in scathing terms: "The government of India is too wooden, too iron, too inelastic, too antedeluvian to be of any use for the modern purposes we have in view." Chamberlain was forced to resign as Secretary of State for India, and in his place, Montagu himself was appointed. Within a month Montagu made an important announcement in the Parliament: "The policy of H. M. Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of 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 as an integral part of the British Empire."

The announcement, couched in a vague and ambiguous language though, created the impression that the British Government was now ready to recognize the content of the terms "Swaraj" and "Home Rule". But Montagu stated that the policy would be implemented in progressive stages, the timing and content of which were to be determined by the British and Indian governments "responsible for the welfare and progress of India". He further stated that what inspired them in taking this decision were the cooperation they were getting from those who got new opportunities and the confidence the Government had in the sense of responsibility they were showing. Montagu expressed the hope that there would be plenty of opportunities for a public discussion on these proposals.

In other words, the next step towards administrative reforms would come only if the British rulers became

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convinced that Indians were using the powers granted to them "to the satisfaction" of the rulers. The idea conveyed to the Indian leaders was that they could hope to reach the goal of Home Rule step by step only if they worked out the reforms to the satisfaction of the authorities. This did not satisfy the leaders of the Home Rule movement. They demanded a deadline for granting Home Rule. Presiding over the Congress session, Annie Besant suggested Home Rule before 1923.

The reaction of the moderates was different. They warmly welcomed Montagu's announcement characterizing it the "Magna Carta" of India. They tried to keep away the extremists as far as possible, as they had done earlier at the Surat session of the Congress. They also tried their best to prevent installation of Mrs. Besant as the president of the Congress in the same way as they did earlier in the case of Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai. Only that they failed in their attempt this time due to the changed political climate in the country. There was a clear indication of another split in the Congress which had been reunited just a year ago at Lucknow.

There were also certain other developments following Montagu's announcement. One concerns the claims made by the Sikhs in Punjab and the non-Brahmins in South India. Since the demands put forth by the Muslim League had already been accepted in the proposals for administrative reforms formulated at Lucknow, no fresh demands were made this time on behalf of the Muslims. The Sikhs demanded the right to communal representation through separate electoral constituencies similar to that granted to the Muslims. Non-Brahmins also demanded separate representation or through reservation in general constituencies.

A more dangerous development that took place was the organized opposition of the I.C.S. and other service personnel, both serving and retired. No organized movement of this magnitude had been carried out by the British officials or non-officials in India since the earlier agitation against
Ilbert Bill. Now, with Montagu’s announcement of reforms, they started organizing themselves on the apprehension of losing all the privileges they had hitherto been enjoying. They also organized communities like the Anglo-Indians and Christians and encouraged organized agitations of the native princes on the plea that they had the right to protect their own interests.

It was in this background that Lord Montagu visited India with the stated purpose of meeting the representatives of the various political parties and organizations and giving a concrete shape to the proposed reforms by ascertaining their opinions. But, in effect, this led to the weakening of the Home Rule movement by making the different sections and organizations take stands mutually opposed to each other. Just like utilizing the Muslim community and its political organization, the Muslim League, against the Swaraj movement immediately before the Minto-Morley reforms, so Montagu’s visit to India turned out to be instrumental in providing opportunities to organize communities like the Sikhs, non-Brahmins, Christians and Anglo-Indians and uniting them with the native princes and official and non-official Englishmen.

Meanwhile, the war began to turn in favour of England. By the middle of 1918, Germany began to weaken, while the Allied Powers began to gain strength owing to the economic assistance received from the United States, compelling Germany to surrender in November, 1918. Lord Montagu wrote in his diary in February 1918: “I have kept India quiet for six months at a critical period of the war”, adding that Indian politicians had nothing but his visit to think about at that time.5

The change favourable to England came not long after Montagu wrote this note in his diary. India’s assistance, which Montagu had considered essential when he made his announcement, was not considered that important now in the changed circumstances. This was reflected in the new

5. Ibid, p 464.
administrative reforms proposal known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

As we had noticed earlier, the meaning of the slogans “Swaraj” and “Home Rule” was that India should get the full right to self-government, at least by stages, of the same nature as the Dominions of Canada and Australia. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was a total rejection of this demand. The Report made it clear that the concept of self-government referred to earlier in Montagu's announcement could be made applicable only in the case of local bodies like municipalities. Even at that level, there would be a few nominated members along with the elected ones. That is to say, they would not be fully elected bodies.

At the provincial level, there would be a legislative assembly with a majority of elected members. But, even there, there would be a number of nominated members. Furthermore, the administration would be in the hands of the Governor and a two-member Executive Council. The main feature of the new “reforms” was that one of the two members of the Executive Council would be an Indian and that certain unimportant portfolios would be assigned to ministers from among the elected members of the assembly. But, the Governor had the right to change the decisions taken by the ministers in relation to their respective portfolios. It was clear that since all the important portfolios were reserved for the Governor and his Executive Council and since the Governor had the right to interfere with matters within the powers of the ministers, these reforms did not even touch the fringe of the demand raised by the Home Rule movement.

In the case of the Central Government, the matter was still worse. There, the Governor-General and his Executive Council would exercise all the powers. The reforms at the central level pertained only to an increase in the number of elected members in the legislature and the extended right of members to ask questions. Another feature of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was that it gave rise to a new force directly opposing the developing political movement in the
country. It contained the proposal to form a new body—the Chamber of Princes—designed to fight to protect the vested interests of the princes.

In brief, Montagu returned to England after formulating proposals that would render lifeless even the announcement that he was compelled to make in the British Parliament in August 1917 due to the international pressure created in the atmosphere of the First World War.

V. TOWARDS SPLIT AGAIN

The election of Annie Besant as the president of the Congress clearly showed that the moderates and extremists in the Congress once again started working unitedly. But the contradiction between the two groups started becoming sharper within months after the Congress session held under Mrs. Besant's presidency. The immediate reason for this was the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals. The difference of opinion that existed between the moderates who cheerfully welcomed the proposals and the extremists who declared them totally unacceptable led the organization towards a split.

But this time, unlike the developments a decade earlier, the differences did not lead to the expulsion of the extremists from the Congress. In fact, the moderates left the Congress and started a separate organization, called the Liberal Federation.

Its beginning was in Bengal, and that too, before the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford report. The moderates in Bengal formed a new organization, the National Liberal League, and issued a statement: We must be prepared to give our accord and support to the positive side of the scheme, if it takes us a long way to our objective. On the contrary, if it falls short of our expectations, we must express our disappointment and protest against it.
The Bengal radicals who met after the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford report, on the other hand, declared that the proposals for reforms were disappointing and unsatisfactory and that it would not lead to a responsible government. These conflicting opinions expressed by the moderates in Bengal before the publication of the report and by the radicals immediately after it gave rise to three main trends of opinion at the all-India level.

The first one was that of the moderates who regarded that the reforms were in the right direction and constituted "a real and substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government". The second was that of the leftist section which maintained that basically and in details they were totally wrong and were beyond improvement. The third trend which was in between these two, held that the proposals were unsatisfactory, and argued for demanding substantial changes, instead of totally rejecting them.

Even among the leader of the Home Rule movement, there were people holding the latter two views. For instance, Tilak, one of the two most eminent leaders of the movement, was the powerful sponsor of the policy of "responsive cooperation", which became well known later in Indian politics. That is, the nationalists must extend their cooperation to the government commensurate with the cooperation extended by the government to the Indian nationalist leaders working with the objective of Swaraj or Home Rule.

Mrs. Annie Besant, Tilak's comrade-in-arms in the Home Rule movement, on the other hand, advocated a policy of unconditional cooperation. Thus, both Tilak and Mrs. Besant were against non-cooperation.

Yet the moderates started their moves against the leaders of the Home Rule movement alleging that Tilak, Mrs. Besant and other leaders and ranks of the Home Rule movement were on the side of non-cooperation. They further alleged that the extremists who occupied official positions in the Congress following the restoration of unity were striving to lead the organization along the path of non-cooperation.
In fact, it was on this ground that the moderate leaders formed the Liberal Federation.

The extremist section holding official positions in the Congress, in fact, adopted such an attitude as would avoid another split in the organization. They decided to convene a special session of the Congress in Bombay to resolve the differences that existed between the two groups and evolve a line generally acceptable to all sections in the Congress. They hoped that the conference with the participation of both the groups would help to arrive at a joint decision based on mutual accommodation. The moderates, however, did not participate in the conference. Instead, they held their own conference in Calcutta and formed the Liberal Federation, as mentioned above.

It must be specifically mentioned that, though separate conferences were held, one in Bombay and the other in Calcutta, the policy adopted in both of them on the reforms proposals was, by and large, the same. One pointed to the specific drawbacks in the proposals and suggested specific modifications with a preface that the reforms proposals were acceptable to them. The Congress led by the extremists also made the same critique and suggestions. But unlike the moderates, they prefaced their resolution with the statement that the proposals were totally disappointing. This was the difference between the two.

It would, however, be wrong to suggest that the difference was only in terminology. Behind the difference in terminology, there was a fundamental difference in regard to policy and approach. Neither the moderates like Surendranath Banerji nor the extremists like Tilak and Mrs. Besant had any doubt on the question of accepting whatever was offered as a means to demand more. The difference between the two was over the question of how to get more. The extremists proposed to enter the legislatures and such other forums in order to use them as a platform to oppose the rulers on every occasion. They believed this to be the only way to win Swaraj or Home Rule. The moderates, on the other hand,
characterized this approach as negative and suggested to function in a more "constructive and constitutional" manner.

As indicated earlier, despite the difference in the means, the goal of both the groups was the same. Both groups wanted the self-governing of the provinces stipulated in the reforms proposal to be widened with more departments transferred to the elected ministers. Both wanted no delay in establishing responsible government at the Centre about which the reforms proposal was silent. That is, they wanted at least some departments at the Centre to be transferred to the elected members as in the case of the provinces. They also wanted that at least half of the official members of the Executive Councils should be Indians both at the Centre and the provinces, in addition to the elected ministers.

In brief, both the moderates and the extremists were unanimous in the opinion that as a first step towards Swaraj or Home Rule, the elected representation of the people at the Centre and provinces must get more powers than what was envisaged in the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals.

The identity of views with regard to the basic objective as well as to the reforms proposals to be implemented immediately, on the one hand, and the differences of opinion with regard to the means to be adopted to achieve this aim, on the other, went to prove that the strength of the (bourgeois) class which both the moderates and extremists equally represented, was growing rapidly.

It may be recalled that when the bourgeoisie first emerged as a political force, they adopted the means of declaring absolute loyalty to the British rule and of making humble representations to secure petty demands. Now they were not satisfied with petty immediate demands as was the case in the earlier days. The Indian bourgeoisie had now transformed itself into a class confident of its own strength to get from the British self-government for India in the sense of full control of elected representatives over the internal administration, remaining an integral part of the British Empire though, and confident of getting the support of the peoples
and governments of the capitalist countries like the U. S. A. and France in acquiring this right.

The problem was how to use this strength. The bourgeoisie as a class knew that it was impracticable to obtain arms and arms training from foreign powers and create a revolutionary army to smash the British rule in the way the revolutionaries were trying to do before and during the war. For that reason, one section of the bourgeoisie represented by the moderates believed that the practical approach was to maintain, as before, friendly relations with the rulers and cooperate with them fully, although the purpose was to win the new objective as well as the immediate demands. The other section represented by the extremists, on the other hand, believed that to achieve these same aims, it was necessary to organize agitations to exert pressure on the rulers, while adopting at the same time an approach of friendship and cooperation towards them.

What led to the difference of opinion was Tilak’s slogan of “conditional cooperation.” This is important. The very term “conditional cooperation” makes it clear that the allegation of the moderates that Tilak and his comrades were arguing for complete non-cooperation was baseless. Let us note in passing that this was what led later to the conflict between the extremists under Tilak’s leadership and the Congressmen led by Gandhi.

If it was the word “conditional” in the term “conditional cooperation” that was opposed by the moderates as well as the co-workers of Tilak like Mrs. Besant, with the beginning of the Gandhian period, the opposition came to the second word of the term, namely, “cooperation”. That is, if in the earlier stages, the adversaries of Tilak blamed him for the approach of unconditional cooperation, the followers of Gandhi opposed his approach of cooperation with the government even if it was conditional.

A fact that can be called an ‘irony of history’ must be specifically mentioned here. Among those who were opposed to the “conditional” part of “conditional cooperation”
included Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Later on, the same Gandhi became a powerful opponent of the second part of the term, namely, “cooperation”. Since Tilak had died at the beginning of the second stage, there was no occasion for a direct confrontation between him and Gandhi. It is certainly an irony of history that Gandhi who adopted the approach of Annie Besant and the moderates in opposing “conditions” to cooperation, should become the leader of the Non-cooperation Movement within months and that the followers of Tilak should oppose, at least partially, the Non-cooperation Movement led by Gandhi, in consonance with their line of “conditional cooperation”.

Tilak himself had realized during the last days of his life that things were moving in that direction. In April 1920—four months before his demise—Tilak formed a new organization, the Congress Democratic Party. The manifesto published in the name of the new party proposed to participate in the ensuing elections according to the new reforms and bring under the control of the Congress all provincial legislatures and to use these positions to “offer cooperation or resort to constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will.

It is significant that Tilak now felt it necessary to form a party of his own to oppose the growing trend of non-cooperation in the Congress, just as he had in the earlier days, formed a party of the extremists to oppose the frigid policy then followed by the moderates.

Tilak’s decision to form another organization to oppose from within the Congress the policy of non-cooperation and to fight for the policy of “conditional cooperation” at a time when the old moderates were forming their organization, the Liberal Federation, outside the Congress marked a new stage in the history of the freedom movement and the leading role of the bourgeoisie in it. While protecting its own class interest, the bourgeoisie has a political aim of rallying the entire people behind it. With regard to Swaraj or Home Rule,
there is no difference between the moderates and the extremists; the entire bourgeoisie is one for it. But it had not yet been able to create unanimity on the question of how to work towards achieving that national objective. Therefore, the bourgeoisie itself had now come to the scene to form different organizations with different means to achieve the common objective.

Like Naoroji and Gokhale in the earlier period, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Mrs. Besant were those who came to the forefront and played their respective roles at the various stages of the development of the same class having the same objective, though differing on the question of achieving this objective. In addition to them, now a towering personality had come to the scene—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. This is the meaning of the differences of opinion over the term "conditional cooperation" and the Congress Democratic Party formed by Tilak in its background.
I. TILAK AND GANDHII

The last Congress session which Tilak attended was the one held at Amritsar. Hardly three months after this session, this stalwart who dominated the Indian political scene for nearly three decades breathed his last. Even before the Amritsar session, Tilak had become aware that he was being pushed to the back row. He also knew of the person who was forging ahead, pushing him back. Durga Das, then a young journalist, had an informal talk with Tilak at the Amritsar Congress, which he has recorded thus:

I may not live to see it (Home Rule), but the next generation will if we work hard and apply our mind to the new task. I recognise, however, that the Punjab disturbances, the martial law regime and the Jallianwala massacre, which
have made men like Sir Sankaran Nair and poet Tagore throw up their jobs and houours, have charged the political atmosphere with a spirit of revolt, of which Gandhi is the new symbol. I will not stand in his way, even though I feel that responsive cooperation will yield the maximum benefit.\(^1\)

The talks between Gandhi and Tilak at Amritsar were historic. As we have seen in the previous chapter, many have considered it an irony that Tilak who, entering the political arena as the spokesman of anti-British resistance and Boycott, gradually eclipsed the moderate leaders, should turn himself into a spokesman for cooperation, though “conditional”, with the British.

An equally surprising irony was that Gandhi also underwent a similar transformation. Gandhi who was active in South Africa in the recruitment to the British Army in the Boer War and later in the First World War, in a meeting called by the authorities in 1918, disagreed with the offer made by Tilak to assist the British on conditions in their war. The same Gandhi who then suggested to Tilak that the assistance should be unconditional, had now transformed himself into the spokesman of unconditional non-cooperation.

Equally significant, as were the changes that came about in the political positions of Tilak and Gandhi, was the contrast in their character, capabilities and their general world outlook. It was due to pressure of circumstances that Tilak, a distinguished scholar in science, literature and other branches of knowledge, became an agitator and thereby a victim of intense wrath of the authorities. As for Gandhi, he had not only taken to English education, the carrier to the highest position that the young generation of Indians at that time could aspire for, but had gone to England to become a barrister. Only later, when he went to South Africa for employment, he, too, became an agitator because of pressure of circumstances. Gandhi, who was the leader of the struggle

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of Indians in South Africa, had neither the experience in Indian politics nor was he, comparatively speaking, well known. That was the position when he attended the Amritsar Congress. On the other hand, Tilak had attained great fame through continuous political agitations under his leadership and the consequent sufferings which was evident from the epithets `Lokmanya' and `Tilak Maharaj' that the people conferred on him.

Politically, Gandhi was a moderate while in South Africa and even after his return to India; he was a faithful disciple of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Tilak’s adversary in politics. Gandhi had mentioned several times, while Gokhale was alive and even after his demise, of the teacher-disciple relationship between Gokhale and himself. It was this Gandhi, who had been active in Indian politics only for about five years as the faithful disciple of this well-known moderate, who now faced Tilak. But during his last days, Tilak had the sagacity to realize that he himself was being eclipsed by the rise of the disciple of his political adversary, Gokhale, whom he had earlier overtaken. And that was what he pointed out in his informal talk with Durga Das.

It is indisputable that the months immediately before and after the Amritsar Congress were crucial for Indian politics. It marked the end of a historic period which we have termed the “Tilak Era”, and the emergence of a new one named after Gandhi. Basic changes were taking place in the objectives of the freedom struggle as well as in the individuals and groups participating in it, in the method of the struggle and organizational forms. The entry of Tilak and his colleagues and the subsequent waves of mass upsurge that swept over the country had imparted a specific characteristic to the first two decades of the 20th century. Similarly, the entry of Gandhi and the subsequent events in the post-war years imparted their own specific characteristics to that period.

However different Gandhi and Tilak were in their individual character, abilities, and general world outlook, both had one particular characteristic in common. Both were
equally adept in assimilating the essence of the times they lived in and of the thoughts and emotions of the people they came in contact with, in declaring the aims and chalking out the path and in building up the organization on that basis covering them into an art and science.

Millions recognized as their own the emotions expressed by Tilak while he was alive, and by Gandhi after he entered the arena. Both lived and worked in a manner which instilled such an awareness among the people. It was this popular sentiment that made Tilak ‘Likmaya’ and ‘Tilak Maharaj’ and Gandhi the ‘Mahatma’ and the ‘Father of the Nation’.

Tilak and Gandhi had complete identity not only in their ability to rally the millions behind them but also in the class interests that they protected. Both worked, succeeded and failed in protecting the same (bourgeois) class interests. Tilak aroused the hopes and enthusiasm of the millions to accelerate the growth of the bourgeoisie by raising the slogans of “Swaraj”, “Swadeshi”, “Home Rule”, etc., as the objectives and by adopting the agitational programmes of non-cooperation and conditional cooperation. Gandhi, on the other hand, gave a firmer basis to the achievements registered under Tilak and created a mass upsurge necessary for the further growth of the bourgeoisie in the conditions characteristic of his time.

Tilak entered Indian politics at a time when the general outlook of national independence and bourgeoisie democracy had diffused among the educated middle class. Giving a concrete form to the urge of this section of the people for independence and their democratic consciousness, Tilak evolved slogans and forms of struggle, such as “Swadeshi” “Swaraj”, Boycott, resistance, use of mother tongue in place of English, and so on. This was Tilak’s individual contribution to Indian politics. And he brought up a new generation which adopted these aims and forms of struggle.

Tilak’s political activities resulted in strengthening the anti-British freedom struggle of the people and in the creation
of an army of fighters in this struggle, on the one side and, on the other side, in the creation of the capability of the bourgeoisie to strengthen economically and politically and to bargain with the British rulers more effectively. It is true that the organizational consciousness among workers, peasants and other sections of the masses also grew along the development of the struggle for independence. Their agitations and struggles were taking place here and there. In many of these, worker-capitalist contradictions were evident. In such instances, national leaders like Tilak did not hesitate to stand by the workers, peasants and other toiling masses, which made them mass leaders.

In those days, these mass agitations were not so strong as to be evidently dangerous to the class interests of the capitalists and landlords. On the contrary, Tilak and his colleagues had adopted slogans and forms of struggle which helped to rally workers and peasants along with the educated middle classes behind Swadeshi and Swaraj which were beneficial to these vested interests as well.

By Gandhi’s time, conditions had begun to change. The experience that the Indian people had gained just before and during the war and the numerous revolutionary struggles that had taken place outside India in the post-war years had aroused a new political awareness and enthusiasm for action among India’s millions. The experience of fighting in the battlefield abroad had basically changed the outlook of tens of thousands of Indians. Symptoms of a new revolutionary thrust were discernible all over India, as a continuation of the struggle for Swaraj and Home Rule led by Tilak and others and as an inseparable part of the simultaneous revolutionary upsurge that was going on all over the World.

An important development which deserves special mention here is the wave of strikes that spread among industrial workers during 1918-19. True, workers had gone on strike on many occasions in several parts of India. But such a strike-wave that equally affected all the important industrial centres was unprecedented. Moreover, unlike on previous
occasions when things were let off with the end of a strike, now attempts were made to form a permanent organization of the workers. In other words, work at the local level had already begun leading to the formation of an all-India trade union organization in another couple of years.

The strike in early 1918 in Ahmedabad against the cut in bonus lasted for a month. It ended with a partial victory for the workers in that it compelled the management at least to reduce the rate of the cut. Not long after the Ahmedabad strike came the strike in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras. It was in protest against the racial discrimination practised by the officers of the Mills owned by the British and for other demands. The workers of Bombay cotton textile mills and of the jute mills of Bengal struck work towards the end of 1918 and early 1919. Both these strikes ended by securing a wage increase by 10 per cent.

Gandhi had played a role in the Ahmedabad strike. The fast he undertook to express sympathy with the demands and struggles of the workers, and the leadership he gave to the union formed subsequently became a model to what became famous later as the ‘Gandhian labour organization’.

In about same period, a labour union was organized in Madras under the leadership of Wadia and Chakkarai Chettiar, which became a model for non-Gandhian trade union movement. Thus, it was during the period when an organized trade union movement was evolving, though with two different perspectives and adopting two different means of struggle, and participating in such a movement that Gandhi entered Indian politics.

He took up the issues not only of industrial workers, but also the important live issues of peasants and organized agitations and struggles for their solution. The peasants of Champaran district in Bihar who were cultivating indigo for British capitalists had a number of grievances. At the request of his colleagues who were working to get these grievances redressed, Gandhi went there and gave leadership to a Satyagraha organized for the purpose. This and the subsequent
struggle launched in the Kheda district of Gujarat against increased land tax were the first examples of putting into practice the method of struggle (satyagraha) which he experimented with in South Africa. It may be noted that it was in between these two peasant struggles that he gave leadership to the strike in Ahmedabad.

The success, though partial, of these struggles paved the way to the rise of Gandhi as a leader of all-India repute. The awareness that Gandhi was pushing him aside and emerging as the leader of the new militancy of the Indian people was instilled in Tilak by the receptions that people gave to the policies adopted by himself and by Gandhi on certain issues that came up in Indian politics during this period. We shall return to this later. However, an obvious difference between Tilak and Gandhi needs to be pointed out here. Tilak was both a political agitator and a political thinker. He began with providing definitions to Swaraj, Home Rule and other objectives. To achieve these aims, he adopted the forms of struggle which were suited to that purpose and which could be learned from the history of other bourgeois democratic countries.

Gandhi on the other hand, did not have such well thought-out objectives or from of struggle. He observed the people around him, the problems they faced and the means they themselves adopted to solve them, and suggested solutions and organizational forms based on common sense. Gandhi used the method of Satyagraha with which he had experimented in South Africa, in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad to solve the issues faced by the entire Indian people.

While emerging as the new leader of the Indian people and adopting these methods, Gandhi had no objectives other than those set out by Tilak. But he evolved his programme of political work on the basis of the life issues the people faced and imbibing inspiration from them. And that prompted him to give up the moderate outlook of Gokhale whom, in the early period, he had adopted as his political guru.
It was this that enabled him to push back the radical movement of Tilak, and rise as the founder leader of a new all-India movement of mass struggle.

II. THE JALLIANWALA BAGH

Side by side with holding discussions on the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the rulers had taken steps to sharpen the weapons of repression as another aspect of their policy.

A few months after the first announcement on the reforms in the Parliament, Viceroy Chelmsford appointed a committee in December 1917 with Justice Rowlatt as chairman “to investigate and report on the nature and extent of criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India and to advise as to the legislation neccessary to deal effectively with them”.

The Revolutionary Conspiracies Enquiry Committee, popularly known as the Rowlatt Committee had, in addition to the chairman, two Englishmen and two Indians as members. Its proceedings were held in complete secrecy. Apart form the facts and figures presented before it by the Government, the Committee did not care to examine witnesses, nor did it try to ascertain public opinion by any other means. It simply prepared a history of the Indian revolutionary movement on the basis of the information provided by the Government and examined the actions the Government had taken to meet the movent.

The Rowlatt Committee proposed legislations giving approval to the continuance, in other forms, of the existing extra-ordinary powers vested with the local officials. On the basis of the Committee’s report, the Indian Government drafted two bills with the object of simplifying the procedures for the trial of persons accused of crime and sedition and drastically cutting the rights of the accused. The bills contained provisions to harass political workers. They conferred powers on the Governments to demand security from
any person, impose restrictions on residence, curb freedom of activities, to search house and arrest persons at any place. These provisions could be invoked against any person the government considered appropriate and detain any one without trial. Though there were provisions to constitute a committee to examine the complaints of those subject to actions on the basis of this law, they had no right to appear before the committee through a lawyer or even to seek legal advice in filing an appeal. The authorities claimed that such draconian measures were essential to give protection to life and property.

This legislation aroused sharp protests from all sections of the Indian people. Meetings and demonstrations were organized all over the country against this ‘lawless law’. All the non-official Indian members of the Central legislature unanimously opposed this repressive bill and four of them tendered their resignation in protest. India had not seen such a widespread political agitation since the days of the partition of Bengal.

But the Government did not heed to these protest actions. The bill which was passed exclusively with official votes on 18th March 1919 came into operation on 21st March 1919.

It was by taking the initiative in starting a satyagraha movement against this that Gandhi entered the political scene on an all-India scale. First, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy, as he did in many later struggles, demanding withdrawal of the law. When the Government refused to concede this demand and brought the law into force, he drafted a pledge to be taken by those who were prepared to disobey the law: We pledge to refuse civilly to obey this law and other laws that may be proposed by the committee to be appointed and participate faithfully in these struggles without causing violence to persons or properties.

Gandhi called a meeting of the first 24 signatories to the pledge (Gandhi was one of them). A Satyagraha Sabha was formed with Gandhi as chairman. To mark the beginning
of the struggle, Gandhi gave a call for a day’s countrywide _hartal._

The response to this call was amazing. The _hartal_ originally fixed for 30th March was changed to 6th April. But on the 30th itself meetings and demonstrations were held in many places. Reckless firing was resorted to in Delhi causing death to some, and injuries to many. The British nurses in the police hospital even refused to treat those wounded in the firing. We won’t nurse rioters—said they. The beating and shooting by the police at Delhi and Amritsar enraged the people. Local leaders appealed to Gandhi to visit the trouble spots. And Gandhi, who started on his journey, was prohibited by the authorities from entering Delhi and Punjab and was forced to return to Bombay. The people of Bombay, hearing the news, took out a huge procession, braving the attacks of the mounted police and received Gandhi. Later, Gandhi and his colleagues were arrested while they were proceeding to Ahmedabad. Enraged by these actions, the people expressed their protest in many forms.

These incidents took place on 30th March the date initially proposed by Gandhi for _hartal._ By 6th April there were more widespread and more militant demonstrations by the people, and more ruthless actions by the authorities. In Lahore, Gujranwala, Kasur and many other places in Punjab and there were open clashes between the militant people and the angry authorities. This was an unprecedented expression of mass emotion not witnessed even during the peak days of the agitation against the partition of Bengal.

An incident that took place soon after 6th April in Punjab turned the very course of history, which became notorious as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the beastly repression in Amritsar on 13th April.

Punjab was the main centre of the new popular upsurge under Gandhi’s leadership. The Governor Michael O’Dwyer unleashed a reign of repression to suppress the movement. Dr. Satpal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, two prominent
leaders, were deported. The people protested by observing hartal and staging huge demonstrations.

It was in the midst of these events that news of Gandhi's arrest reached Punjab. And the demonstration, peaceful but militant, naturally became one against the arrest as well. The police opened fire at the demonstrators. Alleging that the people infuriated at this indulged in violence, including the murder of certain Europeans, the Government handed over Amritsar to the military. Dyer took over the administration of Amritsar city.

With the assumption of power by Dyer, the repression became more intense. People were arrested indiscriminately. All meetings and demonstrations were banned. Despite all these, Dyer could not cow down the people, and he decided to "teach them a lesson". Dyer chose as his target of attack the public meeting scheduled to be held at the Jallianwala Bagh on 13th April at 4.30 p.m. According to Dyer, 6000 people (others put it at 10,000) attended the meeting. He cared neither to inform the participants that the meeting was illegal nor to disperse them. On the contrary, he gave all facilities to the people to reach the meeting ground and when it was full, fired at them, causing death and injury "beyond necessary" as it was later accepted officially. The first official estimate put the dead at 280 later rising to 500; unofficially, it was put at over 1,000.

The Jallianwala Bagh is a very small place. There is only one narrow way to get in and out of there. In case of lathi-charge or firing, there was no way out other than to bear it all. Later, during the course of an enquiry, Dyer was asked why the people were first allowed into such a place and fired at, and whether they could not have been dispersed without a firing. His reply was revealing. He said that the firing saved his prestige as an enforcer of law and order. He did not hesitate to blurt out that his intention was to terrorize not only the people of Amritsar but the whole of Punjab.

This was not the policy of General Dyer alone. He had the full support of both the Indian and the British governments
A section of non-official Englishmen in England and India praised Dyer as their "protector". But democrats and various other sections of people in England protested against this brutal massacre. To appease them the authorities appointed an enquiry committee to go into the massacre. At the same time, they saw to it that the report of the commission was favourable to Dyer.

Nonetheless, even the European majority of the committee could not fully accept General Dyer's actions. They agreed that the firing was ordered without warning the people and it continued too long. The Indians who were a minority in the committee pointed out that the opinion expressed by the majority was inadequate. They said Dyer's action was inhuman and "un-British".

Parallel to this official enquiry, an unofficial enquiry was conducted by a committee appointed by the Congress during the same time. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Fazlul Haq, and Abbas Tyabji were the committee members (when Motilal was elected President of the Congress in 1919, M.R. Jayakar took his place). the Committee took evidence from about a thousand persons. Details of the brutal events which shocked human consciousness that took place under the O'Dwyer-Dyer administration were brought out in its report.

The conclusions of the Committee were as follows. The provocative actions of Michael O'Dwyer in Punjab infuriated the people. Had not Gandhi been arrested and Satpal and Kitchlew deported, the people would not have gone violent. When the infuriated people took to violence, martial law was introduced to suppress the people which could in no way be justified, killing about 1200 people and subjecting the people to revengeful actions. The massacre was unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration.

Not only the firing in the Jallianwala Bagh, but every subsequent step taken by the authorities was clear evidence of the brutality of the regime. In fact, the martial law was imposed officially only after the event. People were ordered
to crawl while passing through a particular road. Flogging and whipping people whom the authorities thought guilty became a common practice. A number of places were marked for this purpose. All these were in addition to awarding sentence to 289 persons, including 51 to death and 46 to life imprisonment.

Despite these actions taken to stem mass upsurge, they brought contrary results. Feelings of protest and revenge spread wide and deep among the people. It was by giving expression to these feelings that Gandhi stepped into all-India politics for the first time, adopting means different from those of other renowned leaders. He made the Jallianwala Bagh massacre an issue for his struggle. It was an issue which had aroused protest from all people, including the moderates, members of the Central legislature who were more loyal to the British than the Moderates and the Indian members of the Jallianwala Bagh Enquiry (official) Committee. Gandhi took position in the forefront of a movement under which the masses were organized on an unprecedented scale on that issue.

In the beginning itself, Gandhi revealed one characteristic of his form of struggle. The day after the Jallianwala Bagh incident—on 14th April—in a speech at Ahmedabad, he strongly condemned the "violence on the part of the people". He confessed that it was a mistake "of a Himalayan magnitude" on his part that he called for a struggle trusting the people who behaved such an irresponsible manner. On 18th April, he issued a statement suspending the civil disobedience action under his leadership. He decided to organize Satyagraha volunteers to ensure that the people never resorted to such violent actions again.

Thus, it became clear that Gandhi was a leader who could mobilize people for struggle on such a scale that not a single political leader, including Tilak, could so far do and, at the same time, suspend the struggle in the name of "violence on the part of the people" which no other leader dared to do. These two aspects of the Gandhian form of struggle
were evident at every subsequent stage of the freedom struggle. It is needless to state whom or which class these two aspects of the Gandhian form of struggle served.

III. THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

Along with the protest movement against the repression before and after the Jallianwala Bagh incident there arose an equally important political issue, the Khilafat.

The Sultan of Turkey, known as the Caliph, was in the camp of Germany in the war. Earlier in the Balkan war also Britain and Turkey were arrayed in opposite camps. We have indicated earlier that this had helped anti-British feelings to grow among the Muslims in India. With the end of the war the issue became more serious, because Turkey was among the vanquished powers. The war ended imposing limitations on the Caliph's powers and on the borders of his territory. 'Khilafat' was the movement formed to express the protest of Indian Muslims against this and in sympathy of the non-Muslims with their Muslim brethren.

During the war the British Prime Minister and the President of USA had issued a number of statements with due regard to the feelings of Indian Muslims. The British Prime Minister Lloyd George made a categorical statement that they had no intention whatsoever to snatch away from Turkey the immensely rich areas of Asia Minor and Thrace. President Wilson of U.S.A. concurred with this stand. The rulers of Britain and the U.S.A. gave these assurances at a time when they were not sure of the success of their side in the war. However, their attitude changed after the war. Whatever assurances given during the war were freely violated. Thrace was handed over to Greece. Asia Minor was shared between Britain and France. Even in the remaining parts of Turkey, the Sultan (Caliph) was reduced to a nominal ruler. The real ruler was a commission appointed by the imperialist powers including Britain.
The Indian Muslims raised their protest against this, for the Caliph was deprived of a part of his country, and powers, and also for the serious breach of trust on the part of Britain and the allied powers. The All-India Khilafat Committee was the organizational form of the anger of India at the British policy of denying Indian national demand and of the protest against the violation of assurance given with regard to the future of the Caliph.

Two individuals who played a leading role in this movement deserve special mention. They were Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, known as the Ali Brothers. During the war, they had been acclaimed for their anti-British politics. The speeches they made and the journals they published under the editorship of Mohammed Ali served as sharp weapons against the British rule for which they were imprisoned in 1915 and released only towards the end of 1919. The Khilafat Committee demanding justice to the Caliph was formed while they were in prison. Upon their release, the Ali Brothers became the unquestioned leaders of the Committee.

Even before this, Gandhi had included the demand of justice to the Caliph in his charter of demands. Following the War Conference in Delhi, Gandhi in a letter to the Viceroy told him that granting home rule to India and assuaging the feelings of the Muslim community on the question of the Caliph constituted the principal condition for the security of the British Empire.

As for the leaders of the Khilafat Committee, they had to demonstrate that theirs was not merely a Muslim movement, but one that had the full support of the Indian people. Therefore, Gandhi was chosen as the president of the Khilafat Committee with a new leadership that included the Ali Brothers.

These developments took place at the end of 1919, when the wave of mass upsurge against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was sweeping the country and the opinion that there was no question of cooperating with the Montagu-Chemford
Reforms was gaining strength. The annual conference of the Congress was scheduled to be held at Amritsar to discuss these issues and take suitable decisions. Consequently, the Khilafat also came under discussion. Situations were becoming ripe for launching country-wide agitations on these three issues.

Soon after the Congress session, an all-India Khilafat conference also was held in Amritsar. The conference constituted a delegation that included many outstanding leaders belonging to both the Muslim and Hindu communities to take up the issue with the Viceroy. A memorandum submitted to the Viceroy which was signed by Gandhi, Swami Shradhanand, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya among others. Simultaneously, in England, another delegation led by Maulana Mohammed Ali met Prime Minister Lloyd George.

The official response to both the delegations were disappointing. There were clear indications in the replies given by the Prime Minister and the Viceroy that the powers of the Caliph and the frontiers of his territory would be reduced by a treaty marking the end of the war. (The treaty conditions incorporating these were published later.)

Following this, Gandhi issued a “manifesto” in which he categorically stated that there was no way out but to resist this injustice through non-violent non-cooperation. It became clear that he was going to practise the very means which he had used in South Africa and in the Champaran and Kheda districts in India to solve an all-India political issue. And it was the same means which Gandhi used within another few months in the agitation against the Reforms Act framed on the basis of the Montagu-Chelmsford report. Thus a countrywide mass upsurge on an unprecedented scale was developing in India.

That Khilafat too became an issue for mass upsurge was of particular significance. For, it was an event which demonstrated the failure of the scheme evolved by the rulers to split the people’s unity developed in the struggle against
the partition of Bengal. Congress leaders belonging the Hindu community, including Gandhi, and the Muslim leaders, including the Ali Brothers, jointly condemned the breach of trust committed by the British rulers. All of them appealed to the people that Hindu-Muslim differences should not hinder the united fight against the rulers to win Home Rule for India and to restore the Caliph's powers.

True, the Hindu-Muslim unity evident in the Khilafat movement did not last long. Within a few years it got shattered and communal riots broke out in many parts of the country. Some of the leaders who stood united on the Khilafat issue passed themselves as Muslim leaders and some others as Hindu leaders and began to play politics with a communal bias. Many issues like cow-slaughter, playing of instrumental music before mosques, etc., were raked up. Tens of thousands of people belonging to both the communities rallied in opposite camps. The efforts for unity made by Gandhi and his close associates who tried to stop this tendency failed. The tragic culmination of this tendency was the assassination of Gandhi a quarter of a century later.

There are some who point to these incidents to severely criticize Gandhi's politics based on Khilafat. They derided him as a "mere idealist" who was after the mirage of Hindu-Muslim unity, forgetting the "reality" of the "communal fanaticism" of the Muslim leaders. There were even those who argued that the attempt to restore the powers of the Caliph was reactionary and unacceptable to a movement based on modern democracy and secularism. (Jinnah who later became the leader of the Muslim divisive movement was one of them.) Gandhi and others had built up the Khilafat movement to save the Caliph, who was removed from power declaring Turky a republic by Kamal Pasha. The revolutionary changes contained in this were a total negation of the Khilafat movement, these critics contended.

All these are correct. But that cannot obliterate the historic importance of the Khilafat movement. However short the period, however opposed to modern democratic
(republican) principles the slogan be, the fact remains that
millions with no communal bar, were organized and rallied
together with a single political objective. They challenged
the mightiest imperialist power of the time. The important
thing was that Khilafat and Hindu-Muslim unity based
on it helped for the spread of the Indian independence move-
ment, which was slowly developing following the suppression
of the 1857 struggle.

For historical reasons, the Muslim masses were cultur-
ally backward as compared to the Hindus. Besides, the
thought that they were the successors of those who ruled
Delhi for some centuries, distorted their political outlook.
Utilizing these two facts, the British tried to rally the Muslim
community against India’s freedom struggle. These divisive
tactics of the British had a temporary success in that they
were able to estrange the League from the Congress in the
years following the partition of Bengal.

It was in this background that the Muslim community
rallied against the British, without fully imbibing the out-
look of modern democracy though, for a whole decade
beginning from the Balkan War to the end of the First World
War. Following the removal of the Caliph, their anti-British
feelings spread wider than ever before. Thus they, together
with the non-Muslims who for different reasons had thrown
themselves into the anti-British struggle, gave rise to an
unprecedented mass upsurge. Though for a comparatively
short period, the Muslims rallied along with their non-Muslim
brethren in the anti-British movement.

These developments took place at a time when discontent
had spread among the people on an unprecedented scale.
During and after the war, the misery of the people worsened
day by day. As a consequence of the crop failure in 1918-19,
the production of foodgrains fell sharply. As against 9.9
million tons of wheat and 35.9 million tons of rice in 1917-18,
the production in 1918-19 was only 7.5 million tons of wheat
and 24.3 million tons of rice. This decline in production,
together with the plunder by traders in foodgrains created
appalling famine conditions in various parts of the country. The famine together with the epidemics that followed took a heavy toll of human lives, particularly among the rural poor. The estimated toll in this catastrophe was put between 12 and 13 million.

At the same time, the Indian economy as a whole was heading towards a deep crisis. For instance, the ratio of the prices of goods exported from India to the prices of goods imported into India was turning unfavourable to the country. Taking the prices of imported goods in 1913-14 as 100, it increased to 101 in 1914-15, 126 in 1915-16, 170 in 1916-17, 211 in 1917-18 and 268 in 1918-19. At the same time, the price indices of exports for the same period were 102, 103, 117, 125 and 150 respectively. It was in 1918-19 when the gap between the two was the widest that famine spread throughout the country.

Similarly, the relations between the peasants who produced the agricultural commodities and the wholesale traders in these articles were adverse to the producers. The price that the peasants got for essential articles like wheat and rice was only a small percentage of the price at which the daily consumer bought them. It was still lower for the bulk of the peasantry who were compelled to dispose of their produce immediately after the harvest. Thus, debt of the peasants increased continuously compelling them to sell their land. Therefore there was a rapid increase in the number of landless labourers who had to eke out a living by daily toil and of tenant-farmers who had to pay exorbitant rent. The number of landlords who rented out their land and their assets also increased simultaneously. This was the condition in the countryside.

In the urban areas, the exploitation of the workers was becoming intense. For instance, taking the wages of workers in 1913 as 100, their wages for the eight years from 1915 to 1922 were 100, 100, 100, 110, 120, 140, 150, and 150. During the same period the price index (1914 = 100) was 112, 128, 145, 178, 196, 201, 178, and 176. This meant that the cost of
living was much higher than the cash wages they got. Two labour leaders from England who came to study the living conditions of jute workers here were shocked at this state of affairs.

Along with the exploitation of the workers, the exploitation of the peasants who produced industrial raw materials too increased. For example, while the price of raw cotton increased by only 78 per cent, that of cotton textiles shot up by 108 per cent. In short, the British and Indian capitalists were making exorbitant profits by giving low prices to raw materials and low wages to the workers and charging high prices for the manufactured goods.

As a result of all these, discontent had spread deep and wide both in the country-side and in the urban areas. It was in these conditions that the Hindu-Muslim leaders of the Congress and the Khilafat Committee took joint initiative to organize a new mass upsurge on the issues of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Khilafat, and so on. Hence, it was natural that a high-tide of struggles swept across the country based on Hindu-Muslim unity, defeating the divisive policy of the British. Though the element of Hindu-Muslim unity lasted for only a short period, the common phenomenon of anti-imperialist struggle persisted. Thus the Hindu-Muslim unity that emerged around the Khilafat helped to sow the seeds of a country-wide mass movement which advanced in a step-by-step process, often weakening temporarily before rising again like the ebb and flood of an ocean tide.

IV. NON-COOPERATION

By the middle of 1920, the three principal issues that had till then created favourable conditions in Indian politics, namely, constitutional reforms, repression in Punjab and Khilafat, had assumed a more intense form. Both Houses of the British Parliament had approved the Indian reforms proposals on 5th and 19th December, 1919. On 23rd December,
they received the royal assent. As part of the same process, the work of the committee to determine economic relations between the Centre and provinces was completed on 31st March 1920. And the elections (to the provincial legislatures to be constituted under the new constitution) was due.

The attitude towards the forthcoming elections was discussed at the Amritsar Congress held in December 1919 which as noted earlier, gave rise to serious differences of opinion. Three trends had emerged at Amritsar. One section wanted to cooperate with the Government in the implementation of the new reforms, while another section stood for a complete boycott of the reforms. A third opinion was in favour of utilizing the new opportunities that would be open up to intensify agitations against the Government. Finally, a compromise resolution was adopted expressing the trust of the Congress that “so far as may be possible the will to so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government.”

Since this compromise was temporary, it had become clear that the issue would have to be discussed afresh very soon. However, problems relating to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Khilafat became more acute, which helped the resolution of the differences of opinion on the reforms.

Following the publication of the decisions on Turky on 15th May 1920, Gandhi suggested to his Muslim friends to adopt the path of non-violent non-cooperation for the solution of the Khilafat issue. The Khilafat Committee, at its meeting on 28th May accepted Gandhi’s suggestion. On the same day, the report of the official Jallianwala Bagh Enquiry Committee was published. The attempt on the part of the official majority to justify the actions of O’Dwyer and Dyer aroused protests all over the country. This together with the Khilafat Committee’s decision to take to the path of non-cooperation created an explosive situation in the country. In this background, the issue of reforms turned

2. A.M. Zaidi, Ibid P. 531.
out to be one of immediate importance. Gandhi who had pleaded earlier at the Amritsar Congress against taking a negative attitude towards the reforms changed his stand in the new situation.

It had been pointed out earlier that Gandhi had given leadership to implement a programme of non-cooperation on the Khilafat issue even before the Congress took a final decision on the elections on the basis of the new constitution. In a letter addressed to the Viceroy in his capacity as the President of the Khilafat Committee, Gandhi made it clear that unless the government was willing to find a satisfactory solution to the Khilafat issue, they would be forced to resort to non-cooperation towards the Government. This letter was signed, among others, by 90 prominent Muslim leaders. The Khilafat sub-committee for non-cooperation had issued a call to observe 1st August as a protest day with country-wide hartals and demonstrations.

It was in this background that a special session of the Congress was held in Calcutta to decide on the policy on the Reforms. This was the first session of the Congress held after Tilak’s demise. Lala Lajpat Rai, another renowned extremist leader, presided over the session. But what exerted influence in the Calcutta Congress was not the radical politics which had grown under the leadership of Tilak, Lajpat Rai and others, but the Gandhian politics which forged ahead pushing the former back. In place of the policy of conditional cooperation enunciated by the unquestioned leader of the extremists, Tilak, unconditional non-cooperation was adopted. And the person who led the Congress to adopt the new line was none other than Gandhi who had earlier pleaded for unconditional cooperation against Tilak’s conditional cooperation.

Such a basic change in Indian politics, as in the case of individual national leaders, did not come about all of a sudden. Indisputably, Gandhi and others had to brush aside a number obstacles in their path before they had adopted new approaches which every one and themselves knew were
contrary to what they had been taking for a long time. Many of them had to change the stand they had adopted in 1920, on the basis of new developments. The new situation which had brought about the change in each one of them was reflected in the discussions in the Congress.

For example, at the Amritsar Congress which met at the end of December 1919, there was only a minority in favour of non-cooperation. Had there been a voting on that issue, the policy of non-cooperation would have been defeated. All the top leaders, including Tilak and Gandhi, were then against non-cooperation. By the time the special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in September 1920 to decide the issue, the situation had completely changed. By then Gandhi had turned himself into an advocate of non-cooperation. C. R. Das, B. C. Pal, Annie Besant, Malaviya, Jinnah and other top leaders were in the opposite camp. In the subjects committee, the resolution on non-cooperation was adopted by a majority of seven votes. But in the plenary session, it was passed with a large majority, 1886 votes against 884.

According to the constitution of the Congress in force, a resolution adopted by a special session would come into force only if it was confirmed by the first plenary session held after it. Hence, it came up again for discussion at the regular session in December at Nagpur. By then, opposition to the resolution had dropped further. Thus the advocates of non-cooperation who were a minority just a year earlier at the Amritsar session became a big majority at the Nagpur session.

Many historians and political leaders attribute the "extra-ordinary abilities" of Gandhi to this change. But they forget the fact that Gandhi had often remained isolated amongst his colleagues in the Congress. For instance, Motilal Nehru who was an ardent supporter of Gandhi from the early days of non-cooperation strongly opposed later the policy of non-cooperation. Similarly, C. R. Das and some others who later switched on to the side of non-cooperation
subsequently rejected that policy and formed the Swaraj Party. None of Gandhi’s “extra-ordinary abilities” worked on such occasions.

How did then even those political leaders who did not subscribe to his ideologies and outlook accept his leadership during the non-cooperation movement as well as in the days of Salt Satyagraha and quit India struggle? The resolution on non-cooperation adopted at the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta as well as the approach Gandhi adopted in the various struggles in different periods to which he gave leadership provide an answer to this question. The programme of these struggles contained two important elements: a programme of action capable of drawing the masses into the struggle based on certain practical problems that were agitating them; a guarantee to the elite in general and to the bourgeoisie in particular that they would not lose anything but would gain much in the event these programmes were implemented. Consider, for example, the following items that contained in the programme of non-cooperation adopted at the special session at Calcutta.

(a) Surrender the titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;

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

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

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

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

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

(g) Boycott of foreign goods.

Needless to say, this was a programme, as distinct from the moderate-radical politics of the old generation as well as from the bomb politics, in which the entire Indian people could easily participate. There could not be a single individual in India who could not implement at least one item in this programme.

Even if the entire programme were implemented, no section of the Indian vested interests would have lost anything. On the contrary, the boycott of foreign goods, the last item of the programme, was in the interest of the developing Indian capitalists. (In the resolution formulating this seven-point programme the Congress had advised “adoption of Swadeshi in piece goods on a vast scale, and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and are not likely to do so for a long time to come…”)

Whenever it had become necessary to fight the British rule rallying the masses on a big scale as in the 1930-32 and in 1942 periods, the entire bourgeois political leadership had accepted Gandhi as their unquestioned leader as they did in 1920-21. And whenever it had became impossible to continue such a struggle, they had allowed him to withdraw it and switch over to forms other than that of mass struggle. That is, the bourgeois political leaders accepted Gandhi as their “commander-in-chief” during periods of struggle, while at other times they ignored him as an “impractical idealist”. We shall examine this in the later chapters. Presently we are concerned only about the non-cooperation programme of 1920-21. Gandhi adopted in the prevailing circumstances a form struggle which was more effective than what any other leader including Tilak, could have thought of. The programme of non-cooperation made millions feel that it would be useful to solve the three burning issues which agitated them then. The greatness of Tilak lay in the fact that he was able to perceive
this truth. It is worth remembering here Tilak’s words that though he felt that the path chosen by Gandhi was wrong, he would not stand in his way.

The political significance of the Nagpur Congress was not only that it adopted a programme of country-wide non-cooperation on the three issues of immediate importance, viz, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the Khilafat and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Organizationally too, it took certain important decisions to bring it into closer contact with the masses. The following are some such decisions which deserve special mention.

1) The Congress adopted a resolution directing the provincial committees and other bodies to organize workers into trade unions “with a view to improve and promote their well-being and secure to them their just rights and also to prevent the exploitation”. (At the same time, it took all precaution to keep trade union activities on moderate lines, away from the revolutionary path.)

2) It invited “the attention of the public to the policy pursued by the Government in the different Provinces of India of forcibly acquiring lands...in the interest of capitalists...thus destroying the hearths and home and the settled occupations of the poor classes and landholders.” (It is noteworthy that no anti-landlord slogans were raised.)

3) It took certain decisions on the organizational structure of the Congress which enabled it to transform itself into an organization with activities on a day-to-day basis under the leadership of permanent committees at the provincial, district and local levels.

4) For the first time, the Congress demanded reorganization of provinces on linguistic basis and incorporated that principle in its constitution. In place of the multilingual states formed by the British for administrative convenience, the Congress constituted provincial committees on linguistic basis.

5) As part of this, it adopted the mother tongue of each
province and Hindi-Hindustani at the Centre as official languages of the Congress. Non-Hindi-speaking people were permitted to use their respective languages or English for dealing with the Centre.

Briefly, the Congress which was a resort of a handful of educated elite, inaccessible to the common man, was remoulded by changing its style of work and mode of organization permitting to maintain a more intimate contact with the masses.

V. "SWARAJ IN ONE YEAR"

Gandhi was known to be the architect of the programme of non-cooperation adopted at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta in September 1920 and later at its regular session at Nagpur in December. Hence, the task of working out the details of the programme also fell on him. Gandhi became the unquestioned, in its very literal sense, leader of a mass movement with an unprecedented sweep in the history of the Congress.

The programme which he worked out and declared with the central slogan of "Swaraj in one year" created an unprecedented animation in the country. The programme had two aspects. One aspect may be called "constructive programme" consisting propagation of Swadeshi (especially the propagation of hand-spinning and hand-weaving), eradication of untouchability among Hindus, prohibition of liquor, collection of Rs. 10 million "Tilak Swaraj Fund" instituted in memory of Lokmanya Tilak, and enrolment of 10 million members in the Congress. The second aspect may be termed "negative" which included boycott of legislature, courts and educational institutions.

The constructive programme was intended to mobilize people’s strength. The content of the second was the form of struggle to win independence by utilizing the strength thus mobilized. A combination of the two would give rise to a
great movement with the direct participation of the masses on an unprecedented scale. Subsequent events demonstrated the correctness of this calculation.

Three distinct political tendencies were discernible in the Congress right from its inception up to the "Gandhian era".

1) Moderate politics in the early days when a handful of the intellectual elite met during holidays (mostly during the Christmas) and passed resolutions and occasionally between two meetings, presented petitions to the authorities, thereby trying to bring about minor administrative changes.

2) The second period that followed witnessed the tendency of attempts to win national independence or Swaraj (Home Rule) under the "extremist" leadership by inculcating political consciousness in the people and drawing them in agitational programmes.

3) During the same period, attempts were made by a handful of individuals to smash the administration by organizing a revolution through adventurist activities.

Of these three trends, the extremist politics was closest to the people. It was a movement with the active participation of the people of the lowest, low and middle layers of the society, such as workers, peasants, the artisans, the unemployed and students. This feature distinguished extremist politics from moderate politics, on the one hand, and from the individual revolutionary politics, on the other.

However, there was an element of similarity between the extremists and the revolutionaries in the matter of organization based on dedicated activists and in this both were distinct from the moderates. But unlike those who believed in the "politics of the bomb", the extremists considered it the task of the dedicated members of their movement to inspire and enthuse the masses of the people and bring them into a mass movement.

In fact, Tilak earned the fame as the tallest among the radical leaders by drawing the millions into active politics and by raising a group of dedicated workers to stand in the
forefront of the people. But there was an important difference between the politics of Tilak and the emerging Gandhian politics. The role of the millions participating in the politics led by Tilak was relatively passive. Their role was limited to listening to the speeches of the leaders, reading newspapers and leaflets and participating in demonstrations, whereas each individual rallied under Gandhi’s leadership had his own part to play in the struggle.

Every individual participating in the Gandhian movement was duty-bound to enroll himself a member of the Congress, contribute to the Tilak Swaraj Fund, do spinning on takli or charkha, renounce the liquor and the practice of untouchability and endeavour to build up Hindu-Muslim unity. Those who were in government service were to quit the job; those who held honours or titles conferred by the government were to renounce them; the lawyers to give up legal practice and parents to withdraw their children from educational institutions connected with the government. All these made an inseparable part of the non-cooperation programme. There could hardly be an individual who could not implement on his own at least one item in this all-embracing programme. It was thus a programme which attracted the Indian people as a whole to active politics.

Gandhi told the people that if they were prepared to do all these, the British Government would be compelled to concede the national demand of “Swaraj in one year”. Gandhi’s contribution to the national movement consisted in the fact that he drew the entire Indian people into action by linking up one’s daily tasks and duties to the demand of national independence.

The country-wide tour Gandhi conducted to propagate his programme inspired millions. The collections to Tilak Swaraj Fund surpassed all expectations (Rs. 1.5 million more than the target of Rs. 10 million). Thousands of students and hundreds of lawyers implemented the boycott programme. Although a number of them later stopped the boycott and returned to the class rooms and courts, many continued
to be active in Congress politics or in such constructive work as popularization of Khadi and Hindi, eradication of untouchability and so on. Many became whole-time activists in the national movement.

Boycotting foreign textiles was an important item in the boycott programme. Unlike the boycott of educational institutions or courts, the entire people could take part in it. It became a common practice to make a bonfire of foreign cloth worth several thousand rupees in public places. Although many prominent Congress leaders, including Vithalbhai Patel, publicly opposed this programme, the All-India Congress Committee, under Gandhi’s leadership, approved it.

The boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India was the most successful programme with the widest popular response. The rulers were expecting the Prince’s visit as an opportunity to wean away at least a section of the people from the Congress which was going ahead with the programme of non-cooperation. For this very reason, the Congress was determined to make the boycott of the visit a great success. In the major cities like Bombay and Calcutta, people participated massively in the protest demonstrations. Gandhi himself addressed a massive rally in Bombay. In Bombay and other cities, the workers came out of factories to participate in the demonstrations. The burning of foreign textiles also was widespread. All these were peaceful everywhere except in Bombay.

In Bombay where the Prince disembarked, the royalists had arranged a procession to welcome him. The people were furious at the Indians and Europeans participating in the royal procession. There were stone-throwing and other acts of violence like the destruction of trams and motor vehicles. Foreign hats of the Indian and British dignitaries were snatched away. Even the supporters of the royal procession were attacked.

Following this, there was firing by the police and armed counter-attacks by the royalists. Those wearing Khadi were attacked and a number of Congress volunteers were injured.
The riots that ensued lasted for five days. All communities and sections of the people, the Parsees, Muslims, Christians and the Anglo Indians in their respective areas and the mill workers in the industrial area came out on the streets. The Parsees, in particular, took to revengeful actions. Europeans, Jews and other royalists took law in their own hands and attacked Hindus and Muslims and all those clad in Khadi. Many shops were burned down and a Parsee temple was set on fire. Many prominent Indians who tried to pacify the people were roughly treated by the Parsees and Anglo-Indians. According to the official estimate, 53 persons were killed and 400 injured.

Gandhi said that 45 out of 53 killed and 350 out of 400 injured were either members of the non-cooperation movement or its sympathizers. Its meaning was obvious: the main culprits were the Government and its henchmen. That the boycott at other places was peaceful strengthened this conclusion.

However, Gandhi blamed the people, and not the rulers, for the violence in Bombay. Reacting to these violent incidents he said: "The Swaraj I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils."

This event had another repercussion. The civil disobedience movement scheduled to be launched in the Bardoli district of Gujarat on 23rd November was put off. This constitutes one of the peculiarities of Gandhi's non-cooperation-civil disobedience programmes. Whenever small incidents take place somewhere as people, responding to his call, start organized struggles against imperialism and its henchmen, Gandhi would immediately put off the struggle in the name of such incidents. This we would see repeatedly in the following chapters. Whenever he stopped struggles in this manner, he always left opportunities to launch it again when favourable conditions arose. That is, whenever he starts a struggle, Gandhi makes provisions to withdraw it when necessary and to restart it under favourable conditions.

Gandhi's slogan of "Swaraj in one year" was part of
this tactic. Gandhi, the pragmatist, understood that political conditions never remained the same over time. He knew that political conditions would change within a year, which would necessitate changes in the programmes and that what was essential was to make people realize about things to be done in the next one year. It was on this perspective that Gandhi formulated the programme incorporating certain practical items like raising the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

During that one year, many events took place which none, including Gandhi, had anticipated. Certain developments which Gandhi anticipated also did take place. As a result, both the British rulers and the Congress had to change their earlier positions. The political situation also changed as a sequel to the moves made by both the sides.

However, the Gandhian style of functioning of drawing millions of people into active politics around short term practical slogans and rearing up a group of whole-time political workers to lead them continued without any basic change till the attainment of freedom. So also Gandhi’s insistence that the masses who came into active politics should not cross the “bounds” of non-violence continued unaltered. The class which was to stand benefited by these tactics needs no specific mention.

VI. THE “HIMALAYAN BLUNDER”

The visit of the Prince of Wales to India and the protest demonstrations organized by the Congress led by Gandhi marked a turning point in Indian politics. Till then, the British rulers did not have a firm opinion as to how to meet the non-cooperation movement. They desired to seek the cooperation of Gandhi and other leaders of the movement to the extent possible. Viceroy Lord Reading had talks with Gandhi to persuade him to drop the protest demonstrations against the Prince. Since Gandhi was convinced during the talks that the Government was not willing to come anywhere
near the main demands of the non-cooperation movement, he decided to go ahead with the non-cooperation programme as planned.

Even at this stage, the authorities tried to rally whomsoever possible against the Congress and make them participate in the royal reception. But contrary to their hopes, they witnessed country-wide expressions of people's anger. As we have already noted, the protest demonstrations were peaceful everywhere except in Bombay.

This infuriated the ruling authorities, who adopted a policy of naked hostility towards the non-cooperation movement and the Congress. In a cable to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy pointed to the "dangerous situation" developed in the country following the 19th November incidents and to the futility of the ordinary criminal procedures to meet the new situation arising out of the mill workers, the unemployed and other sections of the people joining the non-cooperation movement. The Viceroy also informed him of the actions being taken by his Government, viz., giving permission to local authorities to freely make use of the military, banning organizations, subjecting people to large-scale arrests and punishing them in other ways, prosecuting newspapers and speakers promoting violence, and so on.

The governmental measures described in the message undoubtedly constituted an open declaration of war against the people and the non-cooperation movement. And the Congress leaders in different provinces came forward to meet it in the same spirit. Many prominent Congress leaders like C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai, and Maulana Azad disobeyed law and courted arrest. This was synchronized with civil disobedience by hundreds of Congress volunteers and members of the public at different places all over the country. Even members of the family and other relatives of prominent leaders participated in such actions. Prisons in many provinces were filled with volunteers and the common people. In some places, the authorities ordered the release of political prisoners to make rooms for the newly arrested and when
they refused to leave, they were forcibly ejected. In certain other places, as there was no room in jails, prisoners were taken to distant places and let off. It became clear to the rulers that a people unbending before repression was rising in India.

It was in this background that the Allahabad session of the Congress was held in December 1921. Since C. R. Das who was to preside over the session had been arrested a few days earlier, Hakim Ajmal Khan took over as president. But, a situation had developed by then wherein it would be Gandhi who would in effect be controlling the proceedings of the session, irrespective of who presided over it. Gandhi's was the final verdict on all issues which came up for discussion.

Two trends of thought contrary to that of Gandhi were expressed, very feebly though, in the Ahmedabad session of the Congress. Pandit Malaviya was of the opinion that the Congress should take the initiative to call a Round Table Conference in order to normalize the relation between the Congress and the Government. Maulana Hazrat Mohani, on the other hand, set the objective of winning complete independence severing all connections with British imperialism and argued for a revolutionary method in accordance with that objective. (Along with the latter, another trend of opinion with working class outlook was circulated before the delegates in the form of a leaflet entitled "Communist Manifesto to Ahmedabad Congress".

Many Congress leaders supported the first trend. Even some of those who were in jails subscribed to this view. Later, they left the Gandhian path and formed the Swaraj Party. The second trend had considerable influence among ordinary Congressmen. A section of them later on turned themselves into leftists Congressmen, socialists, and communists. But at Ahmedabad, both these sections were so weak that Gandhi was able to get the Congress adopt his own views and approve his programme challenging the British rule by organizing non-violent non-cooperation struggles.
Consequently, Gandhi was raised to the position of a leader with the powers of a commander-in-chief.

This turn of events was most disturbing to the moderates, both inside and outside the Congress. Jinnah who had left the Congress with the adoption of the non-cooperation programme, former Congress President Sankaran Nair, Malaviya, well-known as a moderate inside the Congress, and others continued their efforts to bring about an understanding between the Government and the Congress. In this connection, Malaviya visited C.R. Das in jail and held a talk with him. Subhas Bose who was a co-prisoner in the jail wrote:

The offer that he (Malaviya) brought was that if the Congress agreed to call off the civil disobedience movement immediately, so that the prince’s visit would not be boycotted by the public, the Government would simultaneously withdraw the notifications declaring the Congress volunteers illegal and release all those who had been incarcerated thereunder. They would further summon a Round Table conference of the representatives of the Government and the Congress to settle the future constitution of India.

The leader (C.R. Das) had a long discussion with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the outstanding Muslim leader of Calcutta and with Pandit Malaviya. ...Under the joint signatures of Deshbandhu Das and Maulana A.C. Azad, a telegram was sent to Mahatma Gandhi recommending for acceptance of the proposed terms of settlement. A reply came to the effect that he insisted on the release of the Ali Brothers and their associates as a part of the terms of settlement and also on an announcement regarding the date and composition of the Round Table Conference. Unfortunately, the Viceroy was not in a mood for any further parleying and wanted an immediate decision....Ultimately Mahatma Gandhi did come round, but by then it was too late. The Government of India, tired waiting, had changed their mind. The Deshabandhu was beside himself with
anger and disgust. The chance of a life time, he said, had been lost.³

When Sapru, Jinnah, and Malaviya started negotiating with the Government, the Congress Committee postponed the launching of the Bardoli civil disobedience. As the negotiations failed, the struggle was launched as an indication of the coming country-wide disobedience movement. People not only in Bardoli but all over India were highly agitated.

Bardoli was only the centre of the country-wide disobedience movement which took different forms in different places. The boycott of foreign cloths, picketing the shops selling foreign cloths, and propaganda for hartals and closing shops and for the boycott of educational institutions were carried out extensively. There were thousands of active workers and tens of thousands of people who participated in these activities in almost all districts.

However, the most important of all these was the civil disobedience conducted by the peasants. In Rae Bareily and Faizabad in U.P., Malegaon in Maharashtra, Giridih in Bihar, Dharwar in Karnataka, Chirala-palera in Andhra, in Malabar in Kerala and in many other areas, the peasants responded to Gandhi’s call for the non-cooperation form of political struggle making it part of their struggle raising their own demands. It was the most militant struggle fought by the peasants since the suppression of the 1857-59 revolt. Agrarian issues like taxes, rent, and eviction by landlords were raised linking them with the political struggle for independence. This provided for the first time, a mass base for the independence movement.

This was exactly what, in Gandhi’s views, “defeated” the non-cooperation movement. This was because, for the first time in the history of the freedom movement, the peasants who had stepped into the political field as an organized force were not prepared to remain within the bounds of non-violence set by Gandhi. They had their own aims and forms

³ Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, Bombay, Asia, 1964, pp. 67-68.
of struggle which did not always go hand in hand with those set by Gandhi.

The most conspicuous demonstration of this was the incident that took place in Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district. Following a picketing of shops conducted as part of the non-cooperation programme, there was none there to buy foreign cloth or liquor. Some of the volunteers who had created an atmosphere of national fervour were beaten up by a police officer. Hearing the news, volunteers from the adjoining villages rushed to the spot and a 500 strong crowd marched towards the police station. Some mediators pacified them and they returned. Some of the volunteers who were thus returning were again attacked by the police, resulting in a fight between the volunteers and police who opened fire killing a number of volunteers. But the clash still continued. Soon the police ran out of ammunition and ceased firing. The volunteers realizing this, rushed towards the police station. The policemen took refuge in the station bolting the doors. The people set fire to the station burning the policemen to death.

This type of events are not uncommon in the history of revolutionary movements. It is natural that such incidents take place when the state that strives to suppress people’s movements and the militant people come to a confrontation with each other. But Gandhi was not leading a revolution. Gandhi was a leader who, like the rulers, was afraid of “violence on the part of the people”.

We have already seen how Gandhi viewed the “violence on the part of the people” in Bombay when they were protesting against the visit of the Prince of Wales. This was exactly what happened in Chauri Chaura also. On the Chauri Chaura incident he said: The events in Malabar was a warning to me. I ignored it. Now through the Chauri Chaura incident, God has repeated that warning.

As the leader of the movement, he accepted the truth that the police had provoked the people at Chauri Chaura. But he was insistent that the people should maintain
non-violent in the face of any provocation. According to him, so far as the people did not have the necessary training for it, civil disobedience was dangerous. Hence, following the Chauri Chaura incident, Gandhi stopped the civil disobedience movement. He was of the view that to continue the move-in the existing circumstances would be a "Himalayan blunder".